

Commitments made at the hearing of

ELISA FERREIRA

Commissioner-designate

Cohesion and Reforms



The commissioner-designate, Elisa Ferreira, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Regional Development. During the hearing, she made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to her portfolio, as described in the [mission letter](#) sent to her by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- Cohesion, reforms and a just transition

Please note that the quotes included in this document only make reference to oral commitments made during the [hearing](#). The [verbatim report](#) of the public hearing is available on the [Commissioners-designate hearings website](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



Cohesion, reforms and a just transition

Cohesion Policy

“Cohesion is at the heart of the European Project. And reform, with cohesion, must be at the top of our agenda, [...]”

2021-2027 budget for cohesion policy

“I confirm that I will fight in the College of Commissioners for the highest possible budget.”

“Personally I think that the new policies, at least in theory, should receive new funding. That traditional policies like cohesion policy and the agricultural policy cannot be simply seen as a constant source of new funds.”

No region, no person left behind

“From the Arctic to the Mediterranean, from urban areas to former industrial regions, from coal dependent regions to the outermost regions of the EU. From mountain regions to rural areas, from border regions to peripheral coastal areas, Europe must act, and been seen by citizens to act. An economy that works for the people, with intervention tools tailored to the needs of each territory, helping the transition to a digital, green and gender-balanced economy. No region, no person left behind.”

2021-2027 legislative framework for cohesion policy

“Ms von der Leyen emphasised - and I agree - the need for swift agreement on the legislative framework so that programmes can be up and running on day one. I count on your immediate support; let us work together.”

Just Transition Fund

“A new Just Transition Fund will also be an immediate task, inspired by a Parliament proposal to support regions where the transition to a climate neutral economy is more challenging, namely, industrial, coal and energy intensive regions. You will be hearing from us very soon, with a Commission proposal in the first 100 days.”

Simplification

“The Commission proposals are ambitious, for example, simplified cost options, freeing small beneficiaries from keeping mountains of invoices for years; saving up to 25% in administrative costs. We will be checking if these measures deliver as promised [...]”

“[...] Probably we will need to consult the beneficiaries, we will need to ask them what do we need to improve, what do we need to simplify, how could we make the

rules comparatively easy to fulfil, without the necessary bureaucracy. We need to look on the customer side. We have to keep what’s necessary, but we have to clear out all of the bureaucratic requirements which are not necessary.”

Structural reforms

“Reforms and cohesion must work together. They must reinforce each other, not come at each other’s expense. Taxpayers should not fund policies which contradict or ignore each other.”

Reform Support Programme / Budgetary Instrument for Convergence and Competitiveness

“I am committed to work closely with the Parliament [...]. We must work together to make visible progress within the first 100 days and to adopt the programme on time.”

European semester

“These reforms need to fit in with the principle of cohesion and should not go against cohesion.”

Short-term investment mechanisms

“We need to ensure that adjustments are less painful at times of crisis. There is another element, which is the compensatory mechanisms through investment. That is something that has not really taken place. We need short-term investment mechanisms; hopefully we will be filling that gap [...]”

Outermost regions

“I recognise the specific needs of these regions. [...] So I welcome the present inclusion of a specific outermost region dimension in no less than 21 different post-2020 legislative proposals: from fisheries to research, from transport to climate change. Some of these points have already passed trilogue, others we must fight to maintain [...]”

Cofinancing rates

“We shouldn’t change the co-financing rates without being aware of the impact that this will have.”

Review of the urban agenda

“I will kick off the discussion at the CITIES forum, January 2020 in Porto. If you can make it, I would love to show you my home town.”

Communication with the European Parliament

“My goal is to visit the regions to understand local concerns - and local aspirations [...]. I intend to always inform you when I go to your region. In fact, I will regularly update you on all my initiatives. I will ensure a

special relationship with the European Parliament, particularly with the committees here today.”

Climate change

“This is a crucial question because the fight against climate change cannot be allocated here or there. It has got to be horizontal. It has to be embodied in all the policies. And I think this Commission, and in particular the compromise that has been taken by the President-elect, is very clear on those grounds. Of course for these we have got to be very specific and to be able to organise the different instruments that we have at our disposal in a very careful way.”

Spatial impact of sectoral policies

“[...] policies that are managed centrally are going to have to be understood in terms of their spatial impact. We cannot have all of the strategic investments focused on the most developed parts of the countries. I think that this is very worrying when it happens, and we have to take this into account, we have to look at this spatial impact of sectoral policies.”

Partnership principle

“I think partnership is absolutely essential. Involving local stakeholders is absolutely essential. I will investigate the situation, I will see what is happening. In my experience the involvement of local stakeholders is the prerequisite for allowing the projects that are implemented to be good for the all concerned and to ensure that there is full participation of local communities in every project. [...] The principle is an accepted principle, it is an established principle within the Commission and the services.”

Rule of law conditionality

“It’s important that there should not be any automatic use of rule of law conditionality. We have to remember the importance of the proportionality principle. So an automatic application would not be desirable at all. It’s a very sensitive issue.”

Interreg

“I don’t think that the Commission would really like to reduce or reduce the impact of Interreg. We’ll be doing everything possible rather to try to ensure that Interreg keeps running.”

No-deal Brexit

“There would need to be emergency aid to those countries or rather the regions concerned to try and reduce the impact of a hard border caused by a hard Brexit. We would have to help the populations affected. [...] If that happens we would have to go over the details of every cooperation programme, in Interreg and elsewhere.”

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming

“I am very sensitive to that. [...] We will try in any possible way to address this capacity to implement programmes having this element in concern, there are new enabling conditions for the use of funds, lots of them are there and I think somehow this gender equilibrium can feed into more general principles that now are enabling conditions for the management of the funds.”

Brain drain

“This brain drain is something that really deserves our attention. [...] But it is a serious concern, I take it very much to heart and I can promise you that I will look carefully at it, so that we tackle this precise issue that you have mentioned.”

Conflict of interests

“[...] So if there is any personal aspect I will completely abstain, which means that I consider myself impeded to decide and it will be up to the President-elect to decide or to delegate someone else.”

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