

# Commitments made at the hearing of

## **JANUSZ WOJCIECHOWSKI**

### Commissioner-designate Agriculture



The Commissioner-designate, Janusz Wojciechowski, appeared before the European Parliament on 1 and 8 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. During the hearings, he made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to his portfolio, as described in the [mission letter](#) sent to him by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission. His future task will be focused on building a modern and sustainable agriculture, including:

- Concluding negotiations on a simplified Common Agricultural Policy post 2020 and ensuring that its future Strategic Plans strike a balance between EU-wide objectives and national priorities;
- Contributing to the EU “Farm to Fork strategy” looking at how the agri-food sector can improve the sustainability across the agri-food supply chain, including through organic production;
- Ensuring that agri-food production contributes to EU climate, environmental and biodiversity goals;
- Strengthening the system of geographical indications and developing a new long-term vision for rural areas under the Strategic Plans post 2020;
- Promoting Europe’s high-quality food standards worldwide.

Please note that the quotes included in this document only make reference to oral commitments made during the hearings [ [\(\\*\) meeting of 1/10](#); [\(\\*\\*\) meeting of 8/10](#)]. The verbatim reports of the public hearings [[\(\\*\) 1/10](#); [\(\\*\\*\) 8/10](#)] are available on the [Commissioners-designate hearings website](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of both hearings to which he provided written answers ([answers to the 1st EP questionnaire](#); [answers to the 2nd EP questionnaire](#)).



## To conclude negotiations on a modern and simplified Common Agricultural Policy for the post-2020 period

### CAP reform discussions

"I am open for further discussion [...] about the EU proposal [...]. The proposal of the Commission is not the Bible; we can discuss how to improve it" (\*)

"I will do everything possible to make the common agricultural policy more environmentally friendly, more friendly for the climate. But [...] this is not the end of our work. I'm open for further discussion on improvement of the proposals" (\*)

"We need common agricultural policy, underpinned by common goals, common intervention and common indicators [...]. I'm very much open to any discussion with the European Parliament [...] in order to preserve the community aspects of CAP where reform is underway, also preserving a room for flexibility. We need to strike the right balance [...] as to provide room for national interventions on the one hand, and community directives on the other hand" (\*\*)

### To create a long-term vision for agriculture

"One of my tasks – if I am approved by Parliament, of course – is to create a long-term vision for European agriculture. We have a long-term vision for climate policy, a long-term vision for energy policy, but we don't have a long-term vision for the future of European agriculture" (\*)

"One of my first actions, [...] will be to prepare a special report about the current situation in European agriculture: a report presenting where we are and where we are going, how many farms we have now [...], and what the generational situation is" (\*)

"I commit myself to join you in debates when you consider it useful, keeping open communication channels and always listening to you. As part of the dialogue, I'm keen for us to cooperate on the development of a long-term vision for agriculture. We need an informed debate on what we want for our farms and our farmers in the decade to come [...]. Let us create and share together a vision for our rural areas and our agriculture" (\*)

"I will cooperate very closely with the European Parliament to create the long-term vision for agriculture. The European Parliament will be my first partner for this debate" (\*)

### Cooperation with the Parliament

"I will engage in dialogue with you, honourable Members, as individuals and in this committee, and I will extend that dialogue to all our stakeholders: to farmers,

farmers' organisations and other NGOs with an interest in the agricultural sector. We should work together for the benefit of our agriculture and our countryside" (\*)

"I received a very clear signal from you. You expect the new Commissioner not only to be open to dialogue, not only to be able to speak words, but you expect concrete actions, you expect the support to European farmers. I want to declare that I am ready to take actions. The issues related to the rural areas, to farming and agriculture, are very close to my heart" (\*\*)

### Towards a fairer support to family farming

"How farms should be supported, where is the place for the small farms, and for the big farms? These are questions to which we should find a common answer" (\*)

"I will strongly support all actions that will be helpful for small and medium-sized farming, especially for family farms" (\*)

"I fully agree [...] that the main obligation of farmers, according to the treaty, is to ensure food security for all European citizens. Our obligation as European politicians is to support farmers to achieve this objective" (\*)

"I can declare that it will be a very important part of my mission as a Commissioner to strengthen the system of market intervention" (\*)

### Young farmers

"Policy for young farmers should be flexible. We should use the instrument appropriate to the situation in the Member State" (\*)

### Transfers between CAP pillars

"I will support the decision of the Member States about the transfers between pillars, from both sides" (\*)

### Convergence

"External convergence is a very sensitive political question. I think we are going [...] in the right direction, but political decisions on how far we will go with external convergence is in the hands of Parliament and the Council" (\*)

"We are very well advanced on the way to equalising payments in between States and Regions, farmers within National States. I'll do my best to speed this process up" (\*\*)

## To implement the Common Agricultural Policy post 2020 ensuring that the future Strategic

## Plans strike a balance between EU-wide objectives and national priorities

### CAP Strategic Plans

"I am generally in favour of a flexible approach, for the possibility for Member States to decide, because we have different situations" (\*)

"In my point of view, this is not renationalisation, but maybe we need more control at European level. I am open to discuss this with you and to improve this initial proposal" (\*)

"I think that we will be ready to start the new legislation, the new common agricultural policy from 1 January 2022" (\*)

### New Delivery Model

"The Common Agricultural Policy should be more flexible, because [...] we have different situations among the Member States" (\*)

### Transitional measures

"Transition regulation is necessary, because what else can we do? The common agricultural policy should not be interrupted" (\*)

## To contribute to the EU "Farm to Fork" strategy looking at how the agri-food sector can improve the sustainability of food production across the food chain

### Food chain

"The 'Farm to Fork' strategy [...] is not especially new for agriculture. What is new is the common structure of this proposal, but for agriculture it means that we should do more for the environment and for the climate, for the protection of biodiversity" (\*)

"My obligation as a Commissioner will be to ensure implementation of (unfair practices) regulation. This is the way to provide better protection for our farmers in their relations with retailers" (\*)

### Organic farming

"I will also support organic farming. Organic farming to a large extent, may contribute to the protection of natural environment and climate. I will come up with an action plan to develop organic farming within the European Union" (\*\*)

## As part of EU zero-pollution ambition, to ensure that agri-food production contributes

## to EU climate, environmental and biodiversity goals

### European Green Deal and Agriculture

"I'm convinced that green agriculture – environment-friendly farming – is the best solution for the future of agriculture" (\*)

"Under the second pillar, the 20% is a good starting point. I'm very much open to striking a deal in this respect" (\*\*)

"The most important thing is what we eat, but also how we produce our food, in which way. My obligation as Commissioner of Agriculture – if you approve me, of course – is to promote and to support sustainable agriculture" (\*)

"In my opinion, sustainable agriculture, the form of agriculture with a higher environmental standard, can be competitive if we will support these farms. [...]. We have no alternative. We should support such farming"

"Environment-friendly farming is not only about small farms. Small farms, in a natural way, are better prepared for this function, but this is not a problem of scale. The problem is about the kind of farming" (\*)

"We should support farmers [...]. We should help them, not fight against them" (\*)

"I will defend and support farmers. I will try to make sure that it is not prohibitions and bans, but rather incentives that will enhance their participation in a new European Green Deal, and the main instruments to this end, should be voluntary, voluntary operations in terms of eco-programmes, greening programmes and also voluntary operations within the second pillar of the CAP" (\*\*)

### Intensive livestock

"Intensive farming is not a good solution for the environment, for climate change, etc. I will be a Commissioner supporting non-intensive farming" (\*)

"Industrial farming is a threat to the environment and to the climate. We should send very clear signals to the public that the direction of the common agricultural policy is environmentally friendly" (\*)

## To strengthen the system of geographical indications ensuring that the EU cultural, gastronomic and local heritage is preserved and certified as authentic across the world

"Geographical denomination will be further developed since it protects traditional European culture. It is very much needed, especially in Central and Eastern parts of Europe" (\*\*)

## To develop a new long-term vision for rural areas ensuring that the needs of the rural citizens are specifically catered for in national Strategic Plans under the CAP post 2020

"I'm also quite worried that the budget for rural development is lower than previously thought. However, financing can be increased by Member States so farmers may not have less resources if the budget is maintained.. Of course, maintaining the viability of rural areas should be the main task of the Rural Development Fund" (\*\*)

"I observe [...] that many funds from the second pillar are addressed for the small group of beneficiaries, for the big farms [...]. It should be more democratic. More farmers should also be beneficiaries of the second pillar" (\*)

"We should support circular farming, local farming with local industry" (\*)

## To promote Europe's high-quality food standards worldwide

### Animal welfare

"I will support animal welfare [...]. To improve animal welfare standards, a lower density of animals, to use natural methods like summer grazing or, in pig farming, to use straw for the pig, etc. I will propose such proposals which are generally more environmentally-friendly" (\*)

"A system is more effective when we encourage farmers to improve standards. Not the repressive system, but to encourage for improvement of animal welfare standards" (\*)

### Standards required

"We should require the same standards from importers as from European producers" (\*)

"I will make sure that those standards will be also complied with for importation of food coming into the

European markets; so that the bar is placed exactly the same for our domestic producers and third countries producers" (\*\*)

### Antibiotics

"We should act to reduce the use of antibiotics in farming" (\*)

## Agriculture and Budget

"I will stand up and defend a strong and adequate budget for agriculture and rural development, so as to create jobs, so as to create dignified living conditions" (\*\*)

"I'm ready to fight, I'm read to stand against all other members of the Commission, those who want to interfere negatively with European farmers; fight against those who say that they don't need so much money.[...]. You can count on me" (\*\*)

"European agriculture needs more support [...] to ensure food security for the European citizens" (\*)

"I'm open for further political discussions [...] about the budget of the CAP, including the budget of POSEI" (\*)

## Agriculture and Trade agreements

"Farmers should be not victims of international trade agreements. If they are victims, our obligation is [...] to support them and to use market instruments for intervention to help them" (\*)

"I can declare that I will monitor the situation. Next year, in 2020, the Commission will prepare an impact assessment, an evaluation of all the potential consequences for European farming of trade agreements like Mercosur or other agreements" (\*)

"In line with the mission that has been entrusted by Madam President von der Leyen, I will promote in our negotiations with our trading partners the European Union standards in terms of protection of environment, climate and animal welfare, which are the top of the class in the world" (\*\*)

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