

Commitments made at the hearings of the Commissioners-designate

Von der Leyen Commission, 2019 - 2024



October 2020 - Changes in the European Commission

This document is a compilation of salient points and essential commitments made by the Vice-Presidents- and Commissioners-designate at their respective hearings before the European Parliament. It is intended to provide you with a practical and concise tool to follow-up on the efforts and actions of the future Commission.

For an exhaustive list of all commitments made and positions taken by the candidates, the full verbatim report of each public hearing is available on the dedicated [2019 hearings website](#) of the European Parliament, as are the written questions and answers.

This document includes an addendum containing the commitments made at the [hearings of October 2020](#).



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Von der Leyen Commission
2019 - 2024

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Commitments made at the hearing of

FRANS TIMMERMANS

Executive Vice President-designate European Green Deal



The Executive Vice President-designate, Frans Timmermans, appeared before the European Parliament on 08 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). During the hearing, 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, including:

- A European Green Deal; and
- Climate action.

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 Executive Vice President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



European Green Deal

"[...] the European Green Deal must put Europe on the right track to a sustainable future, and ensure that every European is on board and that no one is left behind. Our ambition is to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent. We can achieve this by 2050 if we plan well and start straight away."

"It is our task to demonstrate clearly and concretely to our citizens that the Green Deal can help solve problems and improve life for them now, and not just 20 or 30 years down the road."

"National initiatives and local jobs, backed by public and private financing and European support programmes, to share knowledge and capacity. That is, in my view, how a European Green Deal can work directly for the people."

"[...] I think one of the most complicated tasks I'll have to face is to make sure that there is joined-up thinking, there is consistency there [in our policies] [...]. I am under no illusions that I am going to be able to take the 100 days and sort everything out. But to identify where there is a lack of consistency and then move on to come up with steps and legislation that need to be taken to eliminate these inconsistencies, that I think would be a very complicated task and yet one of the most important tasks I face in my portfolio."

"[...] reducing greenhouse gases, reducing the increase in temperature, global warming, attacks on proceeding with biodiversity are things which go together and which are now a matter of urgency."

"We'll certainly work on a hydrogen strategy because I also believe Europe can really lead on this. We would still have an advantage vis-à-vis other parts of the world if we speeded up. I also believe in it because you have no energy loss when you store energy in hydrogen."

2030 Emission Reduction Target

"I will also start work immediately to deliver a higher level of ambition for 2030. As soon as possible, I will put forward legislative proposals that will help us to reduce emissions by at least 50%, or even better, by 55%."

"But I think my position will be stronger if I can back it up with the analysis we are doing right now. [...] Again, however, let me be clear: I would be extremely surprised if the outcome of this were anything other than at least a 55% reduction by 2030."

Lead international negotiations

"We need to work to convince others to step up their ambition as well. I am fully committed to strengthening

our international climate diplomacy and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals."

Just Transition Fund

"We need a dedicated Just Transition Fund to support the people and communities most affected, including those in industrial, coal and energy-intensive regions."

"[...] all of us have to have consistent, coherent plans [...] we need to finance things also where [...] there are no market forces which would do that and we need to step in."

"So, that is what we want to put in the Just Transition Fund: a mix of fresh money combined with co-financing nationally, also linking to the different funds we already have – whether it's the Agricultural Fund, the Structural Fund, the Cohesion Fund – and also making sure that there is, through the help of the EIB that has been extremely successful in InvestEU, that there is a huge access to funds to make this transition to the green economy."

"It is absolutely clear that for this transition, especially in those countries still heavily dependent on coal, we will need much, much bigger funds than even what a Just Transition Fund can muster. But it's also absolutely clear to me that there is no future in coal."

Protecting biodiversity

"[...] we will present a robust and ambitious biodiversity strategy for 2030 and [...] the EU must champion the most ambitious commitments possible at the next UN Conference of the Parties on Biodiversity in China in October 2020."

"What I want to do is to engage with the scientific community to make sure that we're able to find some benchmarks against which we can then devise our policies, and we need to do this before we go to Beijing."

"So I want the European Union to be extremely well prepared, through an intensive dialogue with this Parliament, for the next biodiversity conference [...] so that we have concrete proposals on the table to try and convince the rest of the world that we now need to take urgent action on safeguarding our biodiversity."

"We need a strategy for reforestation, and reforestation in a way that does not contradict other goals. [...] So we have to look at this in a sensible way and I think the only way we can do that is to have a Europe-wide strategy to help reforestation."

"[...] consumers need to be better informed. [...] I want to be able to tell them, at some point, this [product] is deforestation-free. We can't say that today. So we need to work with our international partners to make that happen in the future, because now 80% of deforestation is a consequence of the search for new arable land to create new foodstuffs and sometimes it's the food we import directly. Sometimes it's even the feedstuff we give our animals that are produced in Europe. So we have a lot to do to inform our consumers and we will have to regulate in that sphere as well."

Zero-pollution ambition

"[...] Europe needs to move forward towards a zero-pollution environment to tackle environmental degradation and pollution, address air and water quality, hazardous chemicals, industrial emissions, pesticides, endocrine disruptors and microplastics."

"Clean air in our cities and clean water in our rivers and oceans – that is what we need so that we can lead healthier lives on a planet that can sustain all of humanity, and where the economy grows to the benefit of the many, not the few, with jobs for everyone."

Transport

"[...] transport is one of the most polluting sectors of our economy. We need to tackle this head-on. All over Europe, people depend on their cars for the quality of their daily lives, not seldom even for their livelihoods. I know that, and I don't want a car-free Europe; I want emission-free cars in Europe, and I want people to use clean public transport."

"We need to cut emissions in the aviation and maritime sectors in particular if we are to meet our climate goals. This requires a careful mix of tools. We need to invest, for example, in our railways."

"I want Europe to have the best transport systems in the world."

"[...] the ETS [Emissions Trading System] should be extended to shipping. But we also need a broader policy mix. I want us to have green ports. I want us to be able to force shipping to take the electricity that's offered to them in ports rather than burn the most horrible stuff when they're in cities."

"We need third-generation biofuels. They can be a constructive part of our energy mix because in some areas – take aviation – we will probably need more biofuels. I might be short of imagination but I don't see electric flying happening on a huge scale any time soon."

Circular economy

"We need to take our work on the circular economy to a new level, focusing on sustainable products and waste

prevention. We must reduce, reuse and recycle to unlock all its potential for a low-carbon economy. We will propose a new Circular Economy Action Plan, focusing on sustainable products and resource use, especially in resource-intensive sectors, such as textiles and construction."

Farm to Fork strategy for sustainable food

"[...] I want to underline this – without our farmers we will not attain our sustainability goals and we need to find a Common Agricultural Policy that supports this and that also leads to fair competition for our farmers, also internationally. I think the reforms set in motion by Phil Hogan lead us a long way in that direction and let's check where we can improve this using the Farm to Fork principle."

"[...] what we have to do is to look at the Common Agriculture Policy against that backdrop [of funding intensive farming], how we can guarantee a future for European farmers and produce food which no longer pollutes. [...] that has already been placed into the reforms during the Juncker period, but that's also going to be the front and center in the Farm to Fork policy as well."

"We need to make sure that we put sustainable food on the table. We need to make sure that we put farmers in a position where they can maintain our rural areas and they can have a constructive relationship between the rural areas and the more metropolitan areas in the European Union. We cannot do this without the farmers."

"My intention is to make sure that policy is framed, [...] that animal husbandry can be done in a manner, and is done in a manner, that is more environmentally friendly. I'm prepared to work hard to make sure that animal welfare is given greater attention and there're improvements in animal welfare whether it is in animal husbandry or transporting or slaughtering of animals. Those are measures that [...] the European authorities indeed ought to be taking."

Tax policies to deliver on climate

"My idea would be to say to our international partners that we are making this transition to a climate-neutral continent by 2050. To do that, we will take these measures. These measures will obviously have an impact on our economy. If you take the same measures, or comparable measures but going in the same direction, we will make this voyage together. If you don't do that, then of course we have no choice but to protect our society and our economy, and then we will have to have a carbon border tax."

“I think that it is unescapable that we’ve got to reduce and phase out subsidies which are still being directed towards fossil fuels. I acknowledge that we need a very practical timetable with milestones, step-by-step, which can be discussed with Member States. But that’s one of the most manifest, one of the most flagrant contradictions that we have to avoid going forward.”

“Our Energy Directive is nowhere near where it needs to be, we need to revisit that. And I want to have the possibility to at least have the possibility to envisage taxation of kerosene, because I don’t see the logic of why that energy source should be exempt from tax.”

Enforcement and implementation

“Well, the rules [of the Ambient Air Quality Directive and similar legislation] are very clear, and I think we should be doing more to enforce the rules in our Member States. [...] This is legislation that is urgently needed, but it is not applied in many Member States. I think the Commission will have to toughen up in terms of starting infringement procedures and it is, I feel, my personal responsibility to make sure that that’s going to happen.”

“[...] we will enforce the emissions legislation with every instrument we have. I think the car industry has outlived its position of being in a comfy position. They need to deliver. They have not delivered in the past, they need to deliver and the Commission will enforce what they need to deliver.”

“[...] [Concerning] what I will enforce in terms of removing contradictions in the policies we have. Already, I believe, we’ve made a step in the right direction in terms of palm oil with the decision taken by the present Commission, but we will have to look at more of these commodities to make sure we remove actions that add to deforestation. We need to create more transparency to know exactly where that is headed, but to do that, we will also need a dialogue with the countries of origin. They of course have their own demands in terms of fair trade and in terms of the relationship with the European Union.”

Climate action

European climate law

“I will propose a climate law within 100 days of taking office to enshrine in legislation the EU’s 2050 climate

neutrality objective. This law will set the long-term direction of travel for all our policies.”

“[...] I want to come before Parliament with a draft climate law that goes as far as we can in terms of stipulating exactly not just where we need to be in 2050, but also what we need to do in intermediate steps to get there by 2050.”

“I honestly believe that this climate law will give us the framework which we urgently need to discipline Member States to come up with plans that are concrete enough so that we can sort of look at the stages we will have to go through to get where we need to be in 2050. Some Member States have done some of that work already but many Member States still need to do that. So in that sense, I think it’s the best framework we can have for our common future.”

Implementation of the legislative instruments

“We will review and update our existing climate and energy legislation. It is also clear that we have to consider additional measures to achieve our goals of cleaner transport, less energy-hungry buildings, a more sustainable food system. We cannot afford the luxury of complacency.”

“I think we need to extend the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to other sectors such as aviation and the maritime sector but I also believe we have in existing legislation the possibility to look for tougher norms, if that is necessary, emission norms or in other areas. We will also have to review our energy directives and other directives.”

“So, yes, I believe there is room for better regulation. Yes, I believe there’s room for more tailor-made regulation. I also believe that by doing decent impact assessments, by having a Regulatory Scrutiny Board which looks into this, we already have better regulation. I also believe that we need to look at a lot of existing regulation in a lot of areas to see whether it’s fit for purpose.”

European Climate Pact

“The Climate Pact will bring together initiatives and pledges from communities, companies and neighbourhoods, sharing knowledge and data, helping and inspiring each other with best practices and concrete results.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

MARGRETHE VESTAGER

Executive Vice-President-designate Europe Fit for Digital Age



The Executive Vice-President-designate, Margrethe Vestager, appeared before the European Parliament on 08 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). 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:

- A Europe fit for the digital age; and
- Competition.

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 Executive Vice-President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



A Europe fit for the digital age

Long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future

"We need a strategy for Europe's industrial future that is based on what makes Europe strong: our openness and our diversity. So, the industrial strategy must be for everyone: it must be green and it must be based on fair competition."

"We cannot have an industrial strategy that doesn't care about the greening of our economy and the transition into a carbon-neutral continent. It has to be two sides of the same coin."

"Digitisation has enormous potential to make our lives better, but to unlock that potential we need the right rules, in order to give people confidence in the digital transformation. It should serve citizens. It should respect our fundamental values."

"If we push innovation, including in how we organise ourselves, we could make much better use of the technology that we already have, and that will help us to accelerate how we fight climate change. Part of this can be done by digital means because you can follow resources to different degree[s] than you could before."

"We will bring together entire value chains – universities, suppliers, manufacturers – all the way to those who recycle the raw materials that are used in manufacturing."

"This strategy [...] needs to reach beyond the Single Market."

"A good industrial strategy also makes Europe fit for the digital age."

New SME strategy

"This work [on the industrial strategy] will include coming up with a new strategy to support the heart of Europe's economy – the small and medium-sized businesses."

"The first point, of course, is to make sure that such a strategy is not just for big business, because Europe is not just big business, it's also many small and medium-sized businesses, also when it comes to industry. A lot of businesses have subcontractors, they have more than one subcontractor, and that is the importance of the European fabric of industry, that you find it like that, so it should be for all of industry."

"We should also make sure that we have instruments that can provide for financing. The Juncker Investment

Plan provided for financing for 900 000 small and medium-sized businesses, and I think that is a good act to follow, to make sure that you can actually provide financing and allow people to grow."

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

"[...] we need rules to make sure that Artificial Intelligence is used ethically, to support human decision-making and not to undermine it. I will put forward proposals developing the European approach to Artificial Intelligence within the first 100 days of my term in office."

"So we indeed have something to build on, not necessarily just to catch up, but also to develop, in Artificial Intelligence, in quantum computing. Where we have European programmes, obviously they will have to be financed. So again I call upon you to help us pass the budget in order not to lose time for these crucial investments."

"[...] the only way that we can be successful is to build the AI that we can trust. To build AI that is based on fundamental values."

"[...] this question about how to avoid biases is one of the core questions when we are to discuss how to put a framework in place that will allow us to trust the technology."

"And we will have the results [of the assessment of the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI] in by December. That, of course, will inform the work that we do [...]."

"Because, obviously, more investment is needed. Europe is behind on a factor of I think three or four when it comes to investing in AI [...]."

Digital Services Act

"[...] we need to engage with people's concerns about technology and, in that process, to build trust. I will work on a Digital Services Act that includes upgrading our liability and safety rules on digital platforms, services and products. We may also need to regulate the way that companies collect and use and share data – so that it benefits all of society."

"[...] it's important that we make the most of what we have, since we're in a hurry. It is important to take stock of what I would call digital citizens' rights – the GDPR – so that we can have national authorities enforcing that in full, and hopefully also have a market response, so that we have privacy by design [...]."

Digital taxation, CTB, Country-by-Country Reporting

“We were not successful in the first push for a digital services tax. Individual Member States have then taken it up to do that themselves. I admire that, because obviously they do something extraordinary. I hope that will give the much-needed pressure, first, and hopefully, to find a global solution, a global agreement as to how this is done. If that is not the case, I think that we should do it ourselves. Obviously, we commit to producing a proposal if there is not a global agreement by the end of 2020.”

“[...] we have a couple of very important pieces of legislation that have not been passed. One is the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, and that is important because, even if we start talking about a minimum corporate tax, if you can play around with the tax base, then the minimum level of tax may not mean anything, so you need both if you want to progress in this area. The second thing we are still missing is public country-by-country reporting. It works in the financial sector. The last time I looked, we still had a financial sector, so it doesn't seem to be too damaging. I think any CEO could be proud to tell the number of employees, activities, turnover, profits and taxes paid. And that will also allow us to have a completely different perspective on taxation, also as individuals.”

“Yes, I find that the possibilities of using Article 116 are indeed there. Now we have a process where every Member State, obviously, is invited to take part, but 116 will say: well, if a Member State or some Member States have provisions that are harmful to competition, you can take up negotiations with that Member State in order for them to change those provisions. If that is unsuccessful, you can table proposals, and those proposals can be decided in a normal or the ordinary legislative decision-making process, and I think definitely that we should start exploring what that would entail. I don't think that it's a given that it would be successful, but I think it's important that we take the different tools that the Treaty gives us and use these tools if need be.”

Competition

Strengthening competition enforcement

“Markets are moving fast, the law is moving the way the law is moving. Obviously, to some degree, there is an inherent asymmetry here. There's a limit as to how fast law enforcement can work, because we will never compromise on due process. On the other hand, we should be able to work as fast as possible. We actually have a case right now where we are trying to use what we call interim measures, where we're saying to a

business: you've got to stop what you're doing because we think that you're harming competition, and when you stop, we will then do, of course, a full casework in order to prove the harm that's been done. That, of course, is the first for 20 years, but I think it's a good reflection of the fact that we find it a very high priority to speed up in what we do.”

“On the question of breaking up companies, well this is a tool that we have available: it can be done. The thing is, I have an obligation to use the least-intrusive tool in order to restore fair competition, and since it is quite a thing to break up a company, obviously I have an obligation to try what else could be a good tool to solve the situation that we are in.”

Review Europe's competition rules

“These are challenging times and they are also challenging in terms of competition enforcement because markets are changing fast – and we have even bigger changes ahead of us. Human nature though – with basic motives like greed and fear – does not change. So the principles that guide our competition rules are as relevant today as they were when the Treaty of Rome was signed more than 60 years ago. But we need to make sure that the way we apply those principles is fit for a world that's changing fast. So, I will move forward with the review that we've started of our rules on antitrust, mergers and state aid. In this process, we'll be guided and helped by the insights we've gained from looking into how digitisation affects competition – including the independent report by three special advisers, which they delivered earlier this year.”

“[...] we have started a full first fitness check and then eventually a review of a huge number of our guidelines. One thing is running ahead of that programme, and that is the guidelines for the Emissions Trading System, the ETS. That is because we want to be ready when the new trading period starts. So that is a thing to be aware of, that we will start a public consultation on that within a relatively short timeframe.”

“[...] we will continue. We still have open cases and we have just asked every Member State to give us a status of how they use tax rulings in order to update all the material we have from when we did this the last time a couple of years ago.”

Industrial strategy

“[...] we have a dual challenge here: on the one hand to secure fair competition within our Single Market, so that customers and consumers are well served; and at the same time to stand up for our European businesses when they are met with unfair competition outside of Europe.”

“The public procurement market in Europe is 14-15% of European GDP. It is EUR 2 trillion. It’s a 2 with 12 zeros in euros. It’s a lot of money. We invite people to come and do business and we are not invited back. And where I come from, if you’re not invited back, well then you stop inviting people.”

Foreign state ownership and subsidies

“Obviously, we welcome investors, but they should come here for business reasons. One of the open questions is, of course, to make sure that if a state-owned company from abroad buys a European business, that no foreign state aid is coming into Europe undermining the level playing field here. And here, we work with colleagues working on trade and on the Single Market in order to get a functional tool, because that, unfortunately, we don’t have yet but it’s a matter of high priority.”

Managing a dual portfolio

“[...] independence in law enforcement is non-negotiable; because it rests on the evidence of the case, the facts, the case law, not what country you are, not what size, nothing else.”

“[...] we have the independent advice of our chief economist and we have the advice of the Legal Service.”

“I’m still responsible to my colleagues. When we have an important decision, obviously it is by the College. So far we have had no in-depth discussion in College about competition decisions, but obviously we follow every procedure. We go through the different steps of the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet before we get there, so that it is true collegial decisions, because that is how things are supposed to be.”

“[...] I think it’s a very impressive portfolio that I’m going to have. But the legislative proposals will be with my colleagues. They will be with my colleague of Single Markets, of Home Affairs. That will not be my pen that will draw them. I will work with them, yes, but when it comes to the individual proposal[s], it will be for my colleagues to write those.”

“I also hope that you will bear with me, that I will come back and ask you, what do you think? Because some of these questions, we will not have the answer beforehand. We will consult with you, just as well as we will consult with NGOs, civil society, industry as well.”

“[...] I will continue this open and cooperative way of working with [the European Parliament] at every step of the legislative process.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS

Executive Vice President-designate An Economy that Works for People



The Executive Vice President-designate, Valdis Dombrovskis, appeared before the European Parliament on 08 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL). During the hearing, 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, including:

- An economy that works for people;
- Economic governance; and
- Financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union.

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 Executive Vice President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



An economy that works for people

Objectives

"[...] we want to put a strong focus on inclusive and sustainable growth. We want to see a strong link between economic development, social concerns and sustainability. It's true that we do not need economic growth for the sake of economic growth, but for the sake of the well-being of the people."

The European Pillar of Social Rights - action plan

"We will present an action plan for implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights effectively across the EU."

"So let me mention some concrete proposals which are in the pipeline. [...] a legal initiative on fair minimum wages, and that was in first 100 days of the mandate; a European child guarantee; a strengthened youth guarantee; a European Unemployment Benefit [Re]insurance Scheme [...]; an updated skills agenda; improved labour conditions for platform workers [...] and also a new European gender strategy, including measures on binding pay transparency."

Role of social dialogue

"[...] we intend to continue to develop social dialogue."

"Of course we are open to discuss possible legislative amendments there, but [...] social partners are already involved in the European Semester [...]."

"[...] involvement of social partners in the European Semester at European and national levels, consultations on key policy proposals [...], support for capacity building, and we will continue along those avenues."

"[...] we have always very strongly emphasised that we want to respect collective bargaining models in different Member States, especially where those models work very well, like in Nordic countries. [...] this is our guiding principle and will be so in the future."

"We also need to strengthen the effectiveness and functioning of cross-industry and sectoral-social dialogue [...]."

"[...] we intend to work closely with the European social dialogue committee for construction."

Social security systems

"[...] what we need to ensure is that [...] people, also in the digital economy and platforms [...] contribute to the social systems and they are covered by the social systems."

"[Regarding] [...] portability of pensions in cross-border situations [...], this is a right that should be available to

mobile workers. So we are ready to work to improve the practical situation on the ground."

Anti-discrimination and equal opportunities

"[...] we will continue to promote adequate income and income support [...] to those in need. [...] the principle of equal opportunity is there and the Commission will continue to rigorously apply it."

"On gender, there will be a dedicated strategy, among other things, looking at, for example, women's access to the labour markets and also the pay gap."

"[...] further supporting people with disabilities is also something which is going to be on the Commission's agenda."

Tax fairness

"[...] there is no social fairness without tax fairness."

"I will keep the fight against tax avoidance high on my agenda [...]. Multinationals must be taxed effectively, so that our citizens and SMEs don't have to bear an unfair tax burden."

Support for the green and digital transformation

"My [...] objective will be to use fiscal, economic and financial policies to support the green and digital transformation."

"The green and digital transformation can only succeed if it is seen as socially fair. [...] So my [...] objective is to make sure that our social policies evolve to accompany these transformations."

"This [digital divide] is an important part of our skills agenda, because to equip people for the digital age, you obviously need digital skills, and there clearly is a shortage."

"[...] we will help to support the people and regions most affected by the green transformation through a new Just Transition Fund."

"[...] we will be working closely with the European Parliament [...] to see what additional elements are needed and how they can be integrated within the MFF framework – for example the Just Transition Fund."

Sustainable Europe Investment Plan

"[...] there will be several work strands. So, first it's a financial work strand: support from the EU budget and the EIB to attract investment and also advisory support to create a pipeline of eligible projects. Because we don't only need to mobilise money, we also need good-quality projects which actually enable the sustainable transition."

"[...] the aim is to mobilise one trillion euros in sustainable investment by leveraging private money via the InvestEU programme, via the EIB, where we, as you know, intend to move up this target for climate financing from 25% to 50%. That's going to be fresh money, and through other contributions in the EU budget."

"[...] when I mentioned EIB lending targets, this is fresh money to compare with the current situation, and it amounts to many tens of billions of euros."

"We will also encourage Member States to allocate up to 5% of their funds under shared management for the InvestEU programme, which again will allow us to leverage substantial amounts of fresh money."

EIB as a climate bank

"[...] the flagship part of turning the EIB into a climate bank is to increase the share of its financing which is dedicated to climate from the current 25% to 50% [by 2025]. So that's a first important step, and phasing out the financing of fossil energy is part of this strategy."

"In terms of estimates, you mentioned EUR 50 billion per year. Well, with additional EIB financing typically you can leverage at least two-thirds coming also from project partners, so at least EUR 45 billion per year. So if we are talking about a 10-year time period, that already brings us to EUR 450 [billion]."

Economic governance

Refocusing the European Semester

"We must continue to build on the European Semester. Social considerations already account for nearly half of our country-specific recommendations. I intend to keep this focus in our future economic governance. We will also integrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals into the Semester objectives to promote both inclusive and sustainable growth."

"There should be regular monitoring of progress towards sustainable development goals – targets within the Semester. We will also put forward systemic considerations in policies relevant for green transition, like a green investment, circular economy, resource efficiency and just transition across all policy sectors."

"[...] we'll assess how to integrate sustainability into the macroeconomic imbalances procedure, but we also have binding sustainability targets, for example emission-reduction targets in other policies like in energy union, and lock in our commitments to implement the Paris Agreement."

Simplification of the Stability and Growth Pact

"[...] we will be working on the basis of the report of the European Fiscal Board, which sets out some ideas on simplification of the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, so that they are also simpler to apply and simpler to explain to the broader public because currently the rules are – as we know – actually too complex."

"[...] on EU fiscal rules, we can indeed take the work of the European Fiscal Board on expenditure benchmark with a debt anchor and as I put it, a 'limited golden rule', as a basis for our considerations. Of course it will be important to build a broad consensus so that we agree on the way to adjust and simplify our fiscal rules."

"[As regards red lines in relation to flexibility in the Stability and Growth Pact] I think, as a general principle in Europe, we should avoid drawing too many red lines and rather work in a spirit of compromise. That's how the EU is working."

European Stabilisation Function

"[...] we have put forward two proposals. One is the reform support programme, on which basis we are now discussing a Budgetary Instrument for Competitiveness and Convergence. [...] And the other proposal was on the stabilisation function: we put forward a concrete proposal on the European Investment Stabilisation Function [...]. Now we are considering to what extent we can find synergy with the [...] proposal on the Stabilisation Function and a European Unemployment [Re]insurance Scheme."

Financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union

Completing the Banking Union

"[...] the Banking Union finalisation will be high on the European Commission's agenda."

"From the Commission's side [...] we will continue to look at how to break the current deadlock, or current very slow progress, on EDIS [European Deposit Insurance Scheme] in the Council but also, it must be said, so far in the European Parliament. [...] We will be ready to facilitate this by putting, if necessary, new elements on the table to facilitate discussions."

"[...] we need to find a solution for this issue of liquidity in the resolution, so we'll be working together, also with Member States and the ECB on this."

"On a safe asset, as you know the Commission has put forward a legislative proposal on sovereign bond-backed securities. Unfortunately, this work has not been picked up very much in the Council, so we will need to see how we can try to reinvigorate this discussion."

Financial technologies and crypto-assets

“I will put forward a new strategy for Europe to get the best out of FinTech and to compete globally.”

“[...] we must address risks such as unfair competition, cybersecurity, and threats to financial stability. For instance, Europe needs a common approach on crypto-assets, such as Libra. I intend to propose new legislation on this.”

“[...] we will need to regulate Libra to supervise it on EU level, both from the point of financial stability and the protection of investors [...].”

Access to finance for SMEs

“The new Commission will propose a new fund to help SMEs to go public. Together with my colleagues, I will propose a strategy to help SMEs tackle challenges relating to the green transition, digitalisation and changing trade patterns.”

“So, a concrete new initiative, which we intend to put forward [...] is a dedicated public-private fund to support initial public offerings of SMEs [...] and of course we still need to look at conditions and cost of access of SMEs to the regular capital markets.”

New strategy for green financing

“[...] we will continue to be ambitious in the area of sustainable finance and we see it as a part – as a regulatory arm – of our green transition.”

“Taxonomy will provide a basis for many other actions, including rolling out green bond standards, ecolabels and many other elements. [...] we will be expanding taxonomy also in other areas.”

“[Regarding] the creation of an EU green bond standard, which should be available to any type of listed and unlisted European and international issuer [,] I will be supportive of this work and bring it forward under the next Commission.”

“Regarding transparency, issuers will have to provide details of all the proposed uses of proceeds and of issuers’ green bond strategy and processes.”

“We will soon publish a fitness check on corporate reporting, including a review of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive, and [...] intend to expand the scope of the Directive to other financial institutions and also streamline the disclosures by financial institutions.”

“Also we are working now on measures which are targeting more sustainable and mainstream financial actors and figures, so we can have a new look also at ESG [Environmental, Social and Governance] risks in the duties of asset managers and institutional investors [...].”

Combating money laundering

“[...] the application of EU anti-money laundering rules has been uneven across the EU. And, therefore, we need to rethink how our framework is working. And, in this context, we see a lot of merit in conferring certain anti-money laundering tasks and their coordination to a Union body.”

“We see that there is definitely scope for more coordination at EU level: exchange of information, using best practices but, in the event of a non-cooperative approach, the [EU] authorities also need to have the possibility to act directly.”

Banking prudential regulation

“[...] when implementing completion of the Basel III, we will need to take into account European specificities. [...] we will continue to be supportive of the SME Supporting Factor.”

“As the Basel Committee said, completion of the Basel Agreement should not lead to a significant overall increase in capital requirements.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President-designate of the European Commission



The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President-designate of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, appeared before the European Parliament on 7 October 2019 to answer MEPs' questions. During the hearing, 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.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



A more strategic, more assertive and more united Europe in the world

'We should pool our national sovereignties together to multiply the power of individual Member States [...]. [...] we need a truly integrated foreign policy that combines the power of Member States, acting together in the Council, with all the policies managed by the Commission and the democratic legitimacy of this House.'

'If I am confirmed, the heart of my work, as Vice-President and High Representative, will be to bridge the foreign policy of the Member States with the external action of the Commission.'

'[...] to be geopolitically relevant we need unity, much more than what we have. I will work with all Member States, big and small, to achieve this unity.'

'[...] the EU system has to be more fit for purpose, to avoid duplication and bureaucratic routine, producing a stronger and deeper strategic analysis. I think we don't do that enough. We have to regain a sense of initiative and action. You can ask, you can wait, you can hope to get something from me, and it is just that – to regain a sense of initiative and action.'

Taking decisions in a faster and more efficient way

'We should remember that the Foreign Affairs Council is a decision-making body that has to bring out orientation debate, yes, but it would be much better to arrive at concrete outcomes and common actions. I am a member of the European Council. It is my duty to go to the European Council and put there the most important issues of foreign policy. It is an extraordinary privilege to be able to do that and I am willing to do so.'

'[...] the role of the High Representative is to act not only as a mediator, [...] but to have a proactive attitude to iron out the differences that inevitably exist between us. [...] Therefore, I will go beyond the lowest common denominator. [...]

'I will take the risk that the Council will not accept my proposals. I will take the risk of being in a minority in front of my colleagues. I will try, for instance, that in some cases we use the provisions of the Treaty itself so as not to always have to agree one hundred percent. On sanctions, human rights and CSDP missions, we might not need unanimity because the Treaty [...] allows us this. [...]

'[...] Let's start by using qualified majority on sanctions, in the case of Russia, to avoid the need for unanimity, on human rights, and on peace missions. Then we can go, if we are able to build this strategic common culture, to agree on such sovereignty-related issues. [...] So we have to go step by step, but the final purpose is to get

decisions taken by qualified majority when the time comes.'

Ensuring we better link the internal and external aspects of our policies

'[...] we need coherence between internal and external policies and we have the instruments to play power politics. Our challenge is to put them together at the service of one strategy.'

'I believe that one of the major problems of the European foreign policy is its separation into silos, which derives from its own institutional structure: the Commission has some functions, the Council has others... However, in the world in which we live [...] we need to bring together all our capacities'

'Article 18 of the Treaty expressly gives me the task to coordinate the external action of the Commission. The external policies (fully external) are one thing and another are the internal policies that have an external dimension. And on those I will naturally have to collaborate with the President.'

On the EEAS

'[...] Gender equality is one of the cornerstones of European policies. [...] Gender equality in foreign policy doesn't only mean equality between men and women in high posts. We have to achieve that. [...] To be frank, I think that it is going to be impossible to reach 50 % [by 2024]. [...] A good target, the one we have to fight for, is about 40 %. Remember that one third of the External Action Service posts are provided by the national diplomatic corps, and they also have to fulfil requirements on the number of women, so today there is a kind of conflict for the scarce resource that is highly qualified women in the diplomatic corps.'

'We have to introduce gender as a value in diplomatic and military activities.'

'The institutional system of the External Action Service and the Commission is, to my understanding — and it is not a criticism of anyone — policy-light and process-heavy. I think we must develop the provision of real added-value to whatever Member States need and want.'

On relations with Member States

'Foreign ministers could help the High Representative a lot. I don't have the capacity of being everywhere but there are 28 – well, maybe soon 27 – Foreign Affairs Ministers who can help, who can be tasked to ask and to work and to talk and to travel as Chefs de File on particular issues that their countries know much better than others. This innovation could enhance Member States' ownership of the European Foreign Policy.'

On cooperation with the European Parliament

'Parliament has a very important role to play [...] You are a policy shaper. You shape the Union's foreign policy, the more you are heard and the better you are understood. [...] I must commit myself here to continue the positive dynamic following the declaration on political accountability from 2010, and this implies consulting the Parliament, in plenary, in the committee and in the special committee, to explain to you the most sensitive elements of the foreign, security and defence policy.'

'I also commit to explain to the Members all levels of the negotiations of international agreements, because this is a requirement of the Treaty of the Union, to hold at least five times a year the joint consultation meeting on the execution of the CFSP budget, to resume the negotiations, which were at a standstill, on the exchange of information about international agreements, in line with Article 40 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making from 2016.'

'I will be happy to work in close collaboration with the European Parliament, because I am convinced of the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, because I am well aware that your resolutions, mediation, election observation missions have a fundamental role in defining a credible European foreign policy.'

Security and defence

'Our strength lies in our ability to link diplomacy, mediation, crisis management and the internal and external aspects of security [...].'

Defence is part of our security and sometimes threats start far away from our borders. We have recently put in place instruments to develop more usable defence capabilities. We have to go further.'

'[...] we lack a common strategic culture. We have made progress in this direction, at the political level with Permanent Structured Cooperation (PECSO), at the industrial level with the European Defence Fund and at the operational level with the missions. We have made progress in these three areas. This is not enough.'

'[...] NATO is and will remain the cornerstone of our collective alliance, of our collective defence. By developing European defence, we will reinforce the Atlantic Alliance, and by carrying more weight in NATO we will contribute to a more balanced transatlantic relationship.'

'[...] Article [42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty] needs to be made operational [...] This article, as well as the other article — I think it's 212 — that deals with a common response to terrorist attacks, terrorist or natural disasters [...] should both be protocolised. It is necessary to specify how they should be implemented and, of course, as I said before,

you [the EP] are 'shapers' of foreign policy [...] We should have clear guidelines.'

'Member States are deploying 35 000 women and men worldwide in different types of international missions. That is impressive, but we have to do more.'

'Our military spending is roughly half the GDP of Belgium. More than China. Much more than Russia. Second only to the United States. [...] but our capacity is much less because of fragmentation and duplication. We have to spend together.'

'We have to be more operational on the ground. We have to deploy forces, starting with our neighbourhood.'

'[...] we have agreed on a capability development plan, which identifies 11 defence priorities. These include [...] cyber-responsive operations, air-to-air refuelling, and ballistic missile defence. [...] '... these capabilities, we need them for our operational engagement, and we have to take into account also their compatibility and complementarity with the NATO priorities.'

'The lack of cooperation between Member States in the field of security and defence costs us about EUR 30 000 million a year. We need to develop PESCO and the European Defence Fund.'

'Also we have to pay attention to the civil management which is for me equally as important as military missions, and for that we need another, different kind of capacity: policemen, judges, public prosecutors, and other experts.'

'[...] the [...] battle groups [...] remain the primary tool for our military rapid response, and they are the only military forces on standby in the European Union for deployment at short notice. I think we have to increase the common funding, which is currently under discussion in the context of the European Peace Facility [...] to provide an incentive for future deployments [...].'

Non-proliferation and arms exports control

'[...] we are entering an era of nuclear instability because all the agreements that had built a safety net against the proliferation and the possible use of these weapons have fallen away, one after the other. In this respect, we in the EU, must continue to play our part to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We support it through its three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.'

'With regard to the export of arms, not only do I believe that we need to keep the 2008 [Common Position], I believe that we need to give it a large update. Because 2008 is now long ago. And this common norm of European countries for the control of arms exports needs to be revised.'

What we have to do is to renegotiate the 2008 agreement in order first to exchange information. We should know what every country is doing, what are the exports that every country is making, to whom, how, and make, as some countries do, a follow-up on the use of these arms.'

Threats

'We have hybrid threats, including disinformation campaigns and cyber attacks that jeopardise our democracy. I am conscious of the gravity of these threats and I will advance on going on.'

'Obviously, terrorism is a major, tremendous threat. [...] What can the EU [...] do to tackle it? We have a whole range of instruments including diplomacy, the relations with those countries that in the past have been the origin of this tremendous threat against us, but which we will not be able to solve alone...'

'[...] there is a process of disinformation which is seriously affecting the democratic health of our countries. And disinformation will be [...] one of the biggest problems we are going to face with artificial intelligence. [...] We have three strands, one of them dedicated to Eastern Europe. We have the rapid reaction cell against disinformation. We have a reduced intervention capacity. We should have much more, because the problem will get worse...'

Human rights

'[...] The European Union is a guiding light in defending human rights, more than anyone else in the world. And they must be an integral part of our policies. The promotion of human rights should not only be an issue of external policy that you relegate to a corner, it must be at the centre.'

'[...] the countries benefiting from trade preferences must comply with the conventions on human rights and labour rights.'

'[...] I assure you: for me, human rights are not just the cherry on the top of a trade agreement. It is an integral part of it, not only during the drafting of the agreement but also when it comes to monitoring its implementation.' [...] I will see that a human rights

clause be included in all bilateral trade agreements [...]. 'We have an action plan [on human rights] for the period 2020 to 2024. [...] Now, we have to see how we can implement these plans in concrete terms. And I ask Parliament to work with me to ensure that it does and that the EU remains an example for the defence of human rights in the world.'

Priorities and challenges

Neighbourhood and enlargement

'Let me stress from the beginning my intention to engage on the reforms and integration processes in the Western Balkans, to support democracy and territorial integrity of Ukraine, address the challenges in our Southern neighbourhood [...], develop a new comprehensive strategy towards Africa, working out a politically rounded strategy in and with Asia, stepping up our cooperation with Latin America, and 'resetting' Transatlantic relations'.

'I really believe that the Balkans and Europe's Eastern border are the main priorities of our foreign policy. We cannot say we are geopolitical if we cannot solve the problems in our immediate neighbourhood. [...] We are perhaps not aware of the huge threat that a destabilised Northern Africa would represent.'

'[...] the first thing we should do in the Balkans is to open borders [...].'

'One thing is clear: Kosovo and Serbia have to reach an agreement. [...] I will do my utmost in order to fulfil this priority. In fact, my first visit will be to Pristina.'

Migration and climate change

'European citizens say that the two biggest challenges they face are climate change and migration. Both are geopolitical challenges because we cannot solve them alone. [...] Climate change [...] is the driver of instability and migratory pressures that we will have face both at home and abroad. That's why they are geopolitical issues.'

Migration and asylum have profound geopolitical implications [...] Migration has to be fully embedded in the foreign policy.'

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Commitments made at the hearing of **MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ** Vice-President-designate Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight



The Vice-President-designate, Maroš Šefčovič, appeared before the European Parliament on 30 September 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Legal Affairs, on Constitutional Affairs, on Industry, Research and Energy and on Petitions. During the hearing, 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, including:

- Interinstitutional relations and better regulation; and
- Putting foresight at the heart of better policymaking.

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 websites](#). The Vice-President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



Interinstitutional relations

Strengthening the special partnership with the European Parliament

"It will be my priority to take our cooperation a step further into a special partnership based on trust amongst ourselves, as well as with our citizens. In particular, I will propose that our partnership extend beyond the legislative domain. It should apply more fully throughout the whole political cycle."

Enhancing cooperation in the agenda-setting stage

"[...] I foresee close-knit cooperation between our institutions in the agenda-setting stage. As you know, I should support the President-elect by developing the Commission Work Programme. This will be a matter of priority [...]. From day one, I will therefore work with my colleagues in the Commission as well as reach out to you, to political groups, and to the Conference of Committee Chairs in the Parliament. On this basis, we should also adopt a Joint Declaration on legislative priorities between our three institutions."

Commitment to act on Parliament's Article 225 TFEU resolutions on legislative initiatives

"[...] a Right of Initiative for the European Parliament that would mark the start of a new institutional era. As announced by the President-elect, when the Parliament, acting by a majority of its Members, requests a legislative proposal, the Commission will respond with a legislative act, in full respect of the proportionality, subsidiarity and better law-making principles."

"To deliver swiftly, I will propose that our institutions engage in the earliest phases of conception of parliamentary resolutions and work hand in hand at every stage in designing them. I want to put in place an early warning mechanism to ensure constant dialogue between the Commission and Parliament."

"Once a parliamentary resolution is adopted, I will ensure that the College of Commissioners holds a political discussion on the subject [...]."

Commitment to resume interinstitutional negotiations on Parliament's right of inquiry

"[...] I will encourage to revive discussions on pending institutional files, in particular on the Right of Inquiry. I have full understanding for the Parliament's attempts to review the Regulation. As the discussion has been stalled over institutional and legal concerns, I stand ready to engage in trilateral discussions."

Encouraging the Council to participate in the Framework Agreement of 2010

"[...] what I will do would be to approach the Council again. Here we have a Framework Agreement, let us look at it to see [...] what needs to be updated, and how can we get the Council to cooperate closer with us, also on the basis of this Agreement."

Parliament's role in the Conference on the Future of Europe

"[...] as regards the Conference on the Future of Europe, we clearly have to work on it together. The President-elect was very clear that she is absolutely ready to work in close cooperation with the European Parliament, and she is ready to accept that the European Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament will lead this conference."

Transparency

International negotiations

"Regarding international negotiations, I will work with the relevant Commissioners to ensure that the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations."

Increasing transparency in the Council

"It is important that there should be a high degree of transparency [...]. What I want to do is to appeal to the Council to discuss this issue with the Ombudsman."

Transparency Register

"[...] when it comes to the transparency register I think what we need to do is complete this effort. That means finding how the European Parliament and the Council can be part of this effort and I am ready to engage fully, to discuss it with you and look for the best possible solution."

Comitology - Register on expert groups

"We are trying to put together the register on expert groups and the register on comitology. [...] I hope that next year together we can launch it and you will see if that new tool works to your satisfaction."

Petitions

Pledge to improve Commission's handling of petitions

"As input from citizens to detect and, where appropriate, to act upon breaches of EU law, I will work closely with the Committee on Petitions throughout the year and of course, attend its presentation of the annual report."

Moreover, should we see a significant number of petitions on one topic, I will encourage the presence of the Commissioners responsible to discuss what can be done to remedy the concerns expressed.”

Timely responses from the Commission

“If [...] you will just send us really the petitions for which the Commission can do something, and is responsible for, I’ll do my utmost that they will get a good answer in three months and you will have the Commissioners ready to be in your committee.”

Better Regulation

Commitment to adopt the Multiannual Programme

“I will [...] propose to adopt the first ever Multiannual Programme as foreseen in the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.”

Coordinating the Commission’s work on Better Regulation

“[...] I want to work with you on Better Regulation and its effective and transparent implementation. Our objective should be to adopt and implement a future-proof legislation that can stand the test of time, which does not create unnecessary burden, and delivers results at minimum cost. To this end, I want to advance the Better Regulation agenda further.”

Relations with National Parliaments and respect for the principle of subsidiarity

“In the first two years of the mandate, I plan to visit all national parliaments to better value their important work in relation to active subsidiarity and proportionality, and I will discuss with them our Multiannual Programming.”

“This is the concept of active subsidiarity. We should look for ways in which we can consult, or bring into our European debates, the national parliaments, regional authorities, or – if they exist – regional parliaments, earlier on.”

“What I am explaining to our colleagues – and I am ready to work on it even more in the political sense – is that once we in the Commission see that the proposal we might table would face the opposition of more than 50% of the national parliaments, we are not even going to put it on the table.”

Alleviating the regulatory burden for people and for business

Applying the new ‘One In, One Out’ principle

“I will apply the ‘one in, one out’ principle, [...], meaning that every legislative proposal with a new burden for

the users should be offset by an equivalent reduction elsewhere.

This is particularly key for small and medium enterprises, and I will make sure that this new principle is applied in all areas. However, [...] I say a clear ‘no’ to a mechanical approach and to endangering our high standards, especially social and environmental.”

Commitment to work closely with the Member States to avoid additional red tape

“I also aim to engage more actively with the Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add an unnecessary administrative burden.”

“The EU institutions should be warned when a Member State introduces measures going beyond EU legislation requirements, and I will involve the Commission Representations in this, and I will make sure that the Members of the European Parliament are properly informed as well.”

Alleviating overregulation for SMEs

“I’m ready to work with you on this to make sure that our SME sector is satisfied with the new changes we are going to introduce.”

REFIT Platform

Rebranding the REFIT Platform into a ‘Fit for the Future Platform’

“I will propose that the REFIT Platform is rebranded to a ‘Fit for the Future Platform’. I am convinced that our legislation should be for instance, fit for e-government and digital use. Regularly, I will report to Parliament on the platform’s findings.”

Including Artificial Intelligence in the REFIT Platform

“[...] we also want to bring in new rules on how to develop artificial intelligence in Europe. But, at the same time, I also want to assure you that we will approach all the tackling of the administrative burden with the utmost care, with sensitivity, and as a top priority and that in no way are we going to drop our standards.”

“[...] we have to make absolutely sure that our data is well protected, that our fundamental rights are respected, and that we know who is liable, who is responsible, and that humans must be always in control.”

Representing the Commission in the General Affairs Council and in discussions on cross-cutting issues in the Parliament

“I would like to be equally close to the European Parliament and to the Council because I believe that it helps to translate sometimes the grievances of the European Parliament towards the Council and again explain the Council’s position to the European Parliament [...].”

Strengthening evidence-based policymaking

A Common Evidence Register

“I [...] want to safeguard the quality of evidence and to reinforce its transparency. In practice, I will explore with the other institutions the setting up of a Common Evidence Register – open to the public – where we will share the evidence used in our legislative proposals.”

“It would be [...] under your control, it would be interinstitutional [...].”

Improving Commission’s Impact Assessments

“We will have to bring in many new elements to modernise the impact assessments and, therefore, we would like to combine it as much as possible with foresight [...].”

“When it comes to the impact assessment, we clearly need to improve the quality and transparency even further.”

Enhancing Public Consultations

“[...] we will need to take out public consultations much more to our countries, to our regions, talk to professional associations, to make sure that we will have a better response in the future.”

Supporting the Regulatory Scrutiny Board

“What I want to do is to support them (the external experts) [...], to give them more resources to do their work even better, and also to use the potential of the Joint Research Centre on some of the issues where we would need more scientific evidence [...].”

Strategic foresight

Pledge to build foresight capacity

“[...] I will propose that we strive for world-class anticipatory governance, building foresight capacity inside the Commission to serve our policy goals, and my intention is to mobilise the resources of the Joint Research Centre as a crucial enabler.”

Setting up the EU Network of Strategic Foresight

“We need to set up an EU Network of Strategic Foresight, bringing together the best of EU institutions and the Member States.”

Producing a yearly Foresight Report

“[...] the President-elect’s mission letter gives me mandate to prepare a yearly Foresight Report on the most relevant emerging trends. This Report will inform the State of the Union speech and our programming exercises. Based on it, I will champion strategic debates in the European Parliament as well as at the European Council. I want us to agree on transformative megatrends that we need to approach strategically and develop our long-term vision for Europe [...].”

Coordinating the Commission’s work on the European Battery Alliance

Linking the European Battery Alliance to other strategic sectors

“[...] I would like to use these foresight responsibilities to come to you and tell you in which other strategic sectors we should do the same and establish such an industrial pact, so that we can really keep up pace with our major global competitors.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

VĚRA JOUROVÁ

Vice-President-designate Values and Transparency



The Vice-President-designate, Věra Jourová, appeared before the European Parliament on 07 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Constitutional affairs, on Civil liberties, justice and home affairs, and on Legal affairs. 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:

- Strengthening democracy and transparency; and
- Upholding Europe's values and rights.

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 Vice-President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



Strengthening democracy and transparency

Moving forward with the issues on lead candidate system and transnational lists

"[...] we need to improve the lead candidate system, including by addressing the issue of transnational lists. I will use my role as Chair of the Commissioners' Group on a New Push for European Democracy to ensure that the Commission makes a strong contribution to the work on the Conference on the Future of Europe on these issues and acts as an honest broker between the institutions."

Setting up a working group under the Conference on the Future of Europe

"[...] What I will do in this role is to set up the group under the Conference on the Future of Europe, where we will look back on the initiatives and compare different options for the system of lead candidates and transnational lists. I will seek a mechanism that will fulfil the necessary criteria of voting arithmetic, so that no country is somehow placed at a disadvantage or in a position that would break the balance in the election system."

Lead candidate

"The lead candidate should be the candidate for the President of the Commission. I will do my best. First of all, there will be the expert debate, and later the political debate. According to a realistic timetable, I would count on coming back in the summer of 2020 with the first proposals."

Transnational lists

"I will also look at the feasibility and workability of the system of transnational lists."

Electoral law

"[...] we will work on the new push for democracy, which will cover elections, and thus electoral law, disinformation and again media pluralism in a wider scope."

Paid political advertising and financing European political parties

"[...] I will work on solutions to bring more transparency on paid political advertising and more clarity on financing European political parties."

Building the resilience of our democratic systems

"Then there is creating the resilience of society and the volatility of the timing, especially before the elections. [...] according to different surveys, the political parties are very active producers of fake news and disinformation, [...] and that's why we want to look at

the political campaigning rules. Here I see the way forward in some very concrete steps."

Code of Practice on Disinformation

"[...] I will also assess carefully whether platforms have fulfilled the obligations they accepted under the Code of Practice on Disinformation."

Comprehensive approach to counter disinformation

"So, to effectively counter disinformation and to build resilience, we must have a comprehensive approach, involving governments, political parties, platforms, journalists, researchers, educators and civil society. And in developing this important policy, I will want to stay in close dialogue with you and will very much appreciate your input."

European Democracy Action

"[...] I will design the European Democracy Action Plan [...] as a vehicle for a new push in addressing the issue effectively so that our democracy is more resilient. This requires putting in place a smart regulatory framework, as well as coherent and interconnected structures."

Taking citizens on board

"[...] I see my role as being a strong advocate of the people. I want to make their individual and collective voices heard, not ignored. I want to see their rights respected, not trampled."

European citizenship

"I plan to look very closely into how we will design the Values and Citizenship Programme [...] I want this money to be used on the things which we need."

European Citizens' Initiative

"I will use the best of, or take the most from, the new legislative version of the Citizens' Initiative, which will come into force on 1 January. [...] we have to speed up the electronic system for communicating with the organisers, and consider some helplines and some active support, so that people who want to bring forward an initiative know what we want them to do in order to fulfil the legal obligations. I promise I will do my best to change this."

Media pluralism

"[...] We should continue to use our funding for independent projects monitoring media pluralism, map violations to media freedom, and support journalists whose safety is under threat. I will use all the political and legal tools I have to follow up on ideas like the Report of the High-Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism."

Freedom of expression

"[...] This is untouchable unless there is some content which is prohibited by the law. This is the principle which we keep, for instance, in what we do against online hate speech. I will not promote any solution or any proposal involving somebody being the arbiter of what should be written or what should be announced in the media. There will be no Ministry of Truth, there will be no Commissioner of Truth – nothing like that."

Suing journalists for defamation

"[...] I will be mapping all the possible situations of the abuse of litigation against journalists. [...] we will be considering some legal aid or some funding for the journalists who suffer from such abuse of law."

EU-wide anti-SLAPP legislation

"In the first year of my mandate, I will work intensively on the proper designing of the funding programme which is under the Creative Europe programme and is intended to support independent journalism. [...] we have to come up with systematic measures which will cover all the Member States to protect better – not only in situations when systems in the Member States are endangering journalists, but also individual threats to individual journalists. So we will look at the best possible use of this funding."

Improving transparency

"[...] on transparency, I would like to come with initial proposals to Parliament and the Council already this year. So this should be started as soon as possible."

Transparency of the legislative procedure

"[...] this is one of my key tasks, so I should start working on it immediately – and having some partial results maybe over the next half of the year. [...] We need to improve it now. So I will be quick."

Access to documents

"[...] we should look into the possibility, especially of improving access to documents based on the Ombudsman's proposal. [...] these are very important things to discuss in the renewed dialogue. We need to start looking at these things afresh."

Transparency of the discharge procedure

"[...] I will [...] seek the advice of my experts as to whether that is the legal condition that enables the Council to

fully share the information and documents. [...] if there is no legal obstacle, I don't see any reason why the Council should not share the information."

More transparency to the legislative process

"[...] we should look at all the stages and we should also look at the comitology procedure."

Transparency in trilogues

"[...] especially for the trilogue as the final stage of adopting the legislation we should be as transparent as possible. [...] we will come back to the debate about how to make the trilogues more transparent with the Commission's older proposals. And again, we have to invest some energy in it or to achieve a better model."

Common transparency register

"[...] we should work towards a common transparency register [...]."

Right of initiative

"[...] I can see that Parliament wants to have this fixed in a formal procedure, and this is what I want to support, in line with what the President-elect promised."

Implementation report on better law-making

"We will have to do more on this and to publish the report on implementation, I see this as a very possible solution."

Setting high transparency and ethical standards for all institutions

"[...] I want to fight for people's trust in Europe by improving the way we select EU leaders and by setting high transparency and ethical standards for all institutions."

Independent ethics body common to all EU institutions

"[...] I will analyse or look into the systems and staff regulations and the codes of conduct of the European institutions and will try to filter out matters which might go under the remit of the ethics body. In my view, it could be an advisory body – a body which will recommend the possible steps in the case of concrete cases or possible sanctions against the different institutions. But this is just at the beginning, I am only confirming my very strong determination to start working on this very soon."

Bringing relevant policies under one roof

"I would also work very closely with colleagues, in particular the Justice Commissioner, and use my horizontal role to break silos and bring under one roof all relevant policies."

Cooperation with Parliament

"[...] I will always be ready to engage with Parliament, and your committees in particular, at all stages of our policy-making process and political dialogue in the spirit of loyalty, trust and full transparency."

Upholding Europe's values and rights

Rule of law culture based on mutual respect

"[...] This is why we need to build a rule-of-law culture based on mutual respect. We should prioritise dialogue and prevent crisis situations from happening, but equally, we have to address problems where they exist. I will be principled and act with determination, if needed, using all the available tools."

Annual rule of law review cycle

"[...] I will join forces with the Justice Commissioner to further strengthen the toolbox to deliver on the rule of law, notably with the annual rule-of-law review cycle."

Parliament's role in Article 7 procedure

"I cannot imagine how the European Parliament could be exempted from the procedure on Article 7 when Parliament was the one which triggered the Article 7 process, so I say this this way."

Corruption

"First, on corruption, indeed, we want to include an annual assessment of corruption in the Rule of Law Annual Review because it belongs there. [...] So we will look at corruption in a systemic manner."

European Convention on Human Rights

"[...] I want to ensure that the EU accedes to the European Convention on Human Rights: this will be a strong sign of our commitment to fundamental rights."

Defending fundamental rights

"I am very conscious of the need to defend people and their fundamental rights every hour, every day and every time they are under threat. We will not leave anyone behind."

Charter of Fundamental Rights

"I will pursue [...] to promote the Charter of Fundamental Rights. [...] I want to promote fundamental rights in everything we do. I want to see fundamental rights in the design of the Commission's policy-making; be it on artificial intelligence, be it on digital transition or equality policies."

Update on the strategy on fundamental rights

"The third thing we will work on is updating the strategy on fundamental rights. This is the Holy Trinity for me. Fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy, which we will be covering through three strands of work and where I count on the very strong engagement of Parliament."

Engaging to fight all kinds of anti-semitism

"Here, we have to join forces and be absolutely clear in one message – that this is absolutely unacceptable."

Dialogue with churches and religious associations or communities

"I am glad that there is provision in the Treaty for dialogue with churches and philosophical and non-confessional groups. [...] It's envisaged twice a year. I am still thinking about the arrangements and method, but I will be happy to engage in this dialogue."

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Commitments made at the hearing of **DUBRAVKA ŠUICA** Vice-President-designate Democracy and Demography



The Vice-President-designate, Dubravka Šuica, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Constitutional affairs and Employment and social affairs. 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:

- Conference on the Future of Europe; and
- Supporting Europe through the demographic 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 Vice-President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



Conference on the Future of Europe

Agreeing on the concept, structure, timing and scope

“The President elect has set an ambitious timetable by announcing that the conference will start in 2020 and it will run for two years. This is why [...] I will work with this House, with the Council and all others involved to agree on the concept, structure, format, timing and scope of the conference. I will put forward my ideas very early in my mandate and I want to stress the importance of working together with you, Members from across this House.”

Format of the conference

“[...] this advisory board will be chairing this conference. It’s a conference, but in fact [...] it will be a series of conferences all over Europe. So this is what we want to do.”

Advisory board

“Definitely, there would be an advisory board, which will be chaired by me but co-chaired by someone from this Parliament.”

Defining the topics

“[...] I think we have to stick to these six pillars which are embedded in the political guidelines of the President elect: a European Union New Deal; climate; digitalisation; an economy that works for people; a stronger Europe in the world and European way of life. Then this one: a new push for European democracy. I think that this should be the scope of our topics, but I won’t decide this. I would come here and it will be my first task within the first 100 days. So I’ll come to you and we’ll see how to go on. We have to do it in cooperation with the Council, of course, but I think you will be the first one involved.”

Parliament’s role and involvement in all stages

“Strengthening Europe’s democracy cannot be done without the most important body, which is the European Parliament, the body which has active participation of our citizens. I’m fully committed to work with you and the Council in all stages of the conference.”

Visits to each Member State

“[...] We have to visit each Member State in the first part of our mandate.”

Involving national parliaments, NGOs and civil society

“So, national parliaments, of course, then NGOs. [...] Civil society is also very important and I won’t abstain from this. Be assured that I will incorporate all of them but together with you, since we will be co-chairing this so I won’t do anything without coming again and talking to you, agreeing, as I said, on the concept, on the scope, on the timing, we will do everything together.”

Involving local and regional authorities

“We have to contact everyone – NGOs, local and regional authorities, national parliaments. But local and regional authorities will be the most important because this is the easiest way to reach the citizens, and we want to reach any citizen who is interested in our common future.”

Citizens’ participation

“[...] we don’t select anyone, it will be completely open, and it will be completely inclusive. So we will talk to them, listen to them and then we will agree on the results.”

Reaching citizens in rural areas

“[...] I think we have to go to rural areas to reach every citizen.”

Making participation in person or online as easy and accessible as possible

“[...] We need to engage with Europeans across our Union, to listen to their hopes, expectations and their concerns, which are related to their realities: those linked to climate, economy, digital development, global transformation, demographic changes. The President elect has tasked me with finding ways to make participation in person or online and make it as easy and accessible as possible. I will make this an absolute priority.”

Ensuring the follow-up on what is agreed

"[...] this conference must lead to results. Listening to citizens is essential, but is not an end in itself. Real understanding means taking real action. We need to make sure that whatever is agreed is enacted. This was an explicit commitment of the President-elect in her political guidelines and I will work with all my colleagues within the Commission, as well as with this House, and with all committees [...] interested – and all other institutions to make sure we follow up on what is agreed."

Potential treaty changes as follow-up actions

"If there is a need to change the Treaty, I will be open for further debate – not only me, but all of you. I saw that this was an idea in this committee and it is very important for Parliament to be stronger, to be more powerful, and since I'm one of you, I would be in favour of this. But you know that the Commission will be working in a collegiate way – we will be a team. So if we have a unanimous approach I will be in favour of this but let's first talk to the citizens and see if this Treaty is enough – if we have used all the possibilities it offers us. If not, then we have to start debating the changes."

AFCO reports on the Future of Europe

"Of course, I agree with these reports. I was in favour of them during plenary sessions, and I even took part in debates and, of course, I share the content of these reports."

A right of initiative for the European Parliament

"[...] the Committee for Constitutional Affairs was dealing with the right of initiative for many, many years and it is enshrined in all of your reports. [...] Madam President, if she is willing, I'm willing, too, we will be willing together to change this and to give the right of initiative if necessary. [...] I won't be against since I come from Parliament, and I want to empower Parliament and I know that this is very important for all of us and for all of you. So I will come here and talk to you and we'll see how the situation evolves."

Subsidiarity

"[...] I'm definitely in favour of subsidiarity [...], and I will keep to this. Of course, when it comes to the social pillar, of which I am in charge, I have to take care of Member States' competences. However, when we can help, why not help by providing funding or doing things that can help, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and in the less developed countries?"

Proportionality

"The principle of subsidiarity, but also proportionality, is already included. So we have always to have this in mind and take this into account. Of course, I think proportionality is also very important and we don't have to make any extra burden on anyone, especially not on local and regional authorities."

Establishing a "red card" in case a national parliament should decide that the measure is in conflict with subsidiarity

"[...] The 'yellow card' has been used three or four times so far. This means that we have to use all the possibilities, from the 'green card' up to the 'red card'. I can't tell you, but why don't we discuss this within the scope of a conference on the future of Europe? If this will be the conclusion, I would not oppose it. We are completely open and completely inclusive. This is the spirit of the new College and the new Commission."

Rights of European citizens living in the UK and for British citizens living in the EU

"[...] Citizenship is very important, especially when we talk about Ireland and Northern Ireland, and we have to take this into consideration. Of course, generosity won't be enough. We will have to do more for those people – both for UK citizens here in Europe, and for us Europeans in the UK."

The Union's founding values

"The Union I will promote is a Union of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women prevail. I will stick to Article 2 and I will always keep to this [...]."

Lead candidate system and transnational lists

"In my mission letter and in many other mission letters, we are obliged to put this on the agenda and come to you, and it has to be finished. It will be the first topic on the conference on the future of Europe: the *Spitzenkandidaten* system and transnational lists. By the end of summer 2020 we will have to finish this debate and see how to go on."

Supporting Europe through the demographic transition

Impact of demographic change on different groups

"[...] I will look at every aspect of demographic change and how it impacts the different groups affected."

Mapping based on Eurostat data

"[...] whatever I will be doing, it will be done on the basis of mapping [...] I will use Eurostat data and on this data, everything will be evidence-based. So we won't start this procedure and we won't start enacting any legislation without having concrete data, which will be obtained by Eurostat."

Mapping timeline

"[...] I have a duty [...] in the first six months to do mapping and see what to do. This will be my first report, in my first six months."

Long-term vision for rural areas

"I want to focus on rural areas, which are often the most deeply affected by declining population, lack of opportunities leading to a brain drain, a severe shortage in frontline services, and higher risk of poverty. I will also coordinate the work on the long term vision for rural areas in close consultation with local and regional authorities. We need to enable them to make the most of their potential and support them in facing up to their own unique set of issues."

Fighting poverty

"I will do all my best to fulfil my duties, my activities in the mission letter and to help European citizens and those in need and those in poverty and those left behind to live decent lives."

Brain drain

"I will focus on the issue of the brain drain, supporting the regions most affected, notably through the Youth Guarantee."

Green Paper on ageing

"I will put forward a Green Paper on ageing to assess what can and needs to be done, notably to foster active ageing and look at whether our social protection systems are fit for an older population. This will be done in close cooperation with this House, and of course with Member States, who have the competencies in most of these areas."

European Pillar of Social Rights

"[...] as a part of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, I will coordinate the work on better reconciling work and family life."

Reconciling work and family

"So we have to find better working hours, better infrastructure for mothers and fathers [...] why not care for families and have a family friendly policy? So I'm in favour. This is one of the key pillars of the European Social Pillar."

Protecting children's rights

"This is the decision of this Parliament, [...] the European Social Fund Plus. This Parliament asked for EUR 5.9 million to be incorporated into the next Multiannual Financial Framework for child protection and for child guarantee. I would be in favour of this. I will ask for more, if possible, but let's ask Commissioner Hahn what he thinks about it. [...] I will always take into consideration the decisions of the Parliament and of all of you [...]."

Investing more in the future of our children

"I will lead the work on investing in our children. [...] There is no more important investment we can make [...]. I will coordinate the work on a new child guarantee and present a comprehensive strategy for the rights of the child."

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Commitments made at the hearing of

MARGARITIS SCHINAS

Vice-President-designate

Promoting the European Way of Life



The Vice-President-designate, Margaritis Schinas, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, on Culture and Education, and on Employment and Social Affairs. During the hearing, 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, including:

- Skills, education and integration;
- Finding common ground on migration; and
- Security Union.

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 Vice-President-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



Skills, education and integration

Union of equality and diversity

“My job will be to ensure we pool expertise across policy areas, with a focus on people and concrete outcomes.”

“I think cultural expression and freedom are part of what it means to be European [...]. Together with Mariya Gabriel and our services, I’ll be very happy to look at cases or matters [of censorship and artistic repression] that come under our remit, because it would be interesting for us to know what’s going on and what we can do to help.”

Culture and sport / European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU

“I agree with the many opinions expressed that, in DiscoverEU and the European Solidarity Corps, people who participate should not only travel. They should bring back some experience, they should be exposed to some sort of skills and they should bring back some knowledge to the wider society and I am willing to work on that.”

“There is no doubt that there is an element of youth participation that revolutionises the way we look at climate and the environment [...]. So, through our youth programmes (European Solidarity Corps, DiscoverEU), I will try to do as much as I can to promote the sustainability drive involving our youth.”

“We must not forget one of Europe’s treasures: our cultural heritage that we must continue to invest in and promote inside and outside our borders”.

“I want to exploit fully the synergies between Mariya Gabriel and her work on sport and Stella Kyriakides on healthy lifestyles [...]. Grassroots contributions that we can make in sport [...] is where we should put our money and this is where we should help.”

Education / European Education Area

“We will work to make the European Education Area a reality and incentivise Member States to reform and modernise their education and training systems, including in digital learning. I will ensure we use the Erasmus+, the DiscoverEU and the European Solidarity Corps programmes to empower our youth and offer new mobility opportunities.”

“We need to create this European education area by 2025. This is our main priority. To get there, we need to be able to address all levels of education from schools to universities. We need to create a European student card. We need to build on the European university alliances that we started already. We need to value teachers.”

“The Erasmus+ fund [...] is one of the most successful programmes in EU history and we fully support your idea to triple the resources attributed to it [...]. There are some aspects in Erasmus+ that stop some people participating because of lack of resources or for whatever reason [...]. I am going to discuss this with my colleague Mr Schmit [...] to see whether we can find the funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to enable those young people to also take part in Erasmus+.”

“To help ensure that no child is left behind, we shall introduce a European Child Guarantee to ensure children at risk of poverty or exclusion have access to most basic rights like healthcare and education.”

“I pledge that you will see me a lot on the ground [...] at training centres, at schools, at universities.”

Identification of skills shortages and reskilling

“In terms of skills, I think we have to do two things at the same time. First [...], we need to keep investing in skills for the job market and to fight inequality. [...] But there is something else which is skills-related, and where we have to do more. This is the question of soft skills that relate to inclusion: not skills that necessarily lead you to the job market but skills that can lead you to better inclusion into the society around you. Talking to others, doing sport, visiting museums, engaging in civil society activities. We are determined, with the help of Mariya Gabriel and Nicolas Schmit, to address both these strands of work: by law, because already we have legislation on that; by our instruments; by the ESF, Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU.”

“There are two things to do [...]: first, ‘upskilling’ is how we make sure that parts of our society that are practically cut out of certain skills can be brought to a level that can benefit from digital technology [...]. This is the work that we can do on the social strand of the portfolio. The other part is bridging the skills gap. This is: what can we do to face up to the fact that we will be needing in the next year 250,000 skilled workers in digital [...]. And that’s where legal migration comes in, that’s where positive intervention through what Mariya Gabriel described to you – the Digital Education Action Plan – through how we use our educational stream in the European education area to produce these skills that we lack.”

“So, to accompany lifelong learning is a priority. We have to do it through a comprehensive set of instruments, the New Skills Agenda, Erasmus+ and the ESF. There we have to very clearly help Member States identify the specific needs for lifelong learning [...]. I continue to pledge that we have to start bottom-up.”

We have to go to the Member States, identify needs and then match with policies and instruments from the EU.”

“Traineeships simply cannot be seen as an opportunity to get young people into work but in insecure conditions and distorting the concept of training. So traineeships only make sense if they are for a limited period of time which is precisely set out in terms of what skills and learning is involved. And I think it is very important also to talk about pay. And if these conditions are not met, then traineeships are no longer traineeships. So I think that the Commission will continue working on this with Nicolas Schmit, so that it becomes a universal principle for this kind of work.”

“I’m not happy that many of the issues we discussed, like lifelong learning, like youth unemployment, like skills, like upskilling, are scattered around the Commission. So we need – and that’s, I think, my role, together with the Commissioner for jobs, together with the Commissioner for culture, education, youth and sport, together with the Commissioner for equality, together with the Commissioner for health – to bring all this together”.

Improving the integration of migrants and refugees

“I intend to revisit the 2016 Action Plan on integration of migrants and refugees. [...] I was glad to see that the longer-term integration of migrants and refugees will be incorporated under the new European Social Fund Plus. This will allow us to have more tools and more resources to support inclusion initiatives.”

“There is scope to review our long-term labour resident legislation [...] which clearly needs a review. And there is a review scheduled. [...] I am very willing to consider a legislative amendment of the long-term resident legislation precisely to address any obstacles so that legally residing people can have a chance to benefit from labour mobility across the EU. “

Finding common ground on migration

New Pact on Migration and Asylum

“Delivering the New Pact on Migration and Asylum [...] is a tall order, but one I believe we can achieve by mobilising our strengths and learning from the past. This new pact must be cross-cutting and marry internal and external policies. When it comes to the reform of our Common European Asylum System, the first thing we will do, together with the Commissioner for Home Affairs, is engage in a dialogue with you and our Member States. [...] We will present you quickly with options that we would like to discuss and find consensus on, but only then will we be putting something formally on the table..”

“I think that we have to start keeping our emphasis on the reform of Dublin and the corresponding procedures but to unblock the situation, bring in all the other elements that combine the full picture: returns, new readmission agreements and arrangements, Schengen, borders.[...]. We have to maintain the progress we have achieved in the five legislative texts you have worked very well in the European Parliament. [...] Secondly, we have to concentrate on the two texts that are missing: the Dublin one and the Procedures one. [...] To get around the impasse that exists in the Member States that are blocking this we have to be able to come with the new elements [...]. First of all, returns and readmission arrangements [...]. Then we have to review the Schengen proposal because internal freedom is linked to the way we protect our borders.”

“Our intention with the relevant Commissioner-designate is [...] by the end of this year to unveil a scoping paper [...] which will set out the main issues that have to be addressed [...]. And then [...] we will be able to create this new impetus with the support of whole college of Commissioners and the President-elect at the beginning of the next year.”

“As a stop-gap, [...] until a new truly asylum system comes into force, we need to support Member States in including temporary arrangements on disembarkation. For me, part of this must include pursuing a proper dialogue with the many NGOs doing commendable search and rescue work in the Mediterranean.”

“All proposals and initiatives of the new pact will be done with the aim – a parallel aim – of lifting internal border controls and returning to a fully-functioning Schengen area.”

“I will lead a renewed drive to set up returns of those with no right to stay: firstly by completing the reform of our EU internal rules on return, and secondly by concluding readmission agreements and arrangements with priority countries of transit and origin.”

Creating pathways to legal migration

“So moving and doing something meaningful on legal migration is not something that depends on fighting illegal migration. It’s something that we have to organise properly, positively. [...] These pilot projects that allow some of our Member States, with our help, to start engaging in some sort of legal migration skills – this is a good start. We need to do more along these lines. Then, I’m new to this, but I’m very happy to review our Blue Card proposal. Let’s see what went wrong there.[...] we have to continue these humanitarian corridors combined with resettlement, because this is another orderly way to bring in people legally.”

“Building on pilot projects on legal migration, which are under way, I will promote modern and targeted legal migration schemes that respond to the needs of the EU economy, labour market and demographic challenges, and we will ensure that humanitarian corridors are set up along the model of the emergency transit mechanisms to Niger and now also Rwanda.”

Coherence of the external and internal dimensions of migration

“One of my priorities would be, together with Jutta Urpilainen [...] to start, early on in the mandate, a new wave of readmission agreements with countries of transit and origin.”

“It is very important to talk first [...] with third countries. [...] We have to look for [...] global agreements, win-win solutions. And in these agreements we have to look at the root cause of the problem and address that. We also have to look at the development needs of these countries. We have to look at the opportunities that exist for young people to live at home and have a decent life [...]. That is my ambition and that is what we have talked about with Ylva Johansson.”

“It is true that EU-Turkey Joint Statement was delivering results until recently [...] It is also true that some aspects of the agreement were left hanging in the air [...]. I think that we have to revisit the agreement, to refresh it [...] We are going to discuss this with the Turkish government [...]. Greece will not be left alone to manage migratory flows, we cannot leave Greece on its own [...]. I hope that in the next weeks we will be able to take a fresh look at the EU-Turkey agreement in a positive way.”

Security Union

European Security Union

“This is the same Union that sets world standards on data protection and privacy, and [...] my role is also to

ensure that whatever we do in security respects fundamental rights. The respect of fundamental rights needs to be designed into policies from the start. This will also guide my work in implementing the interoperability proposals, which will be particularly important as we move to launch our new information systems.”

Better link Commission’s work on internal and external security

“This work on data retention now is something that will continue within the Commission. We will continue evaluating the situation after the ECJ decisions, but I also understand that there are many other court cases which are pending. I discussed with the services and I understood that they would feel safer if they allow for these pending cases also to conclude before we decide on the next steps.”

Enhance EU’s stability to prevent, detect and respond to hybrid threats

“I will place a relentless emphasis on implementation of what we have collectively agreed. I will promote a coordinated approach to protecting Europeans online, through the adoption of our Terrorist Online Content proposal, by inputting the Digital Services Act to come and by investing in the work of the EU Internet Forum. I will use any possibility I have to build the EU’s resilience and response to hybrid threats, which threaten our systems and our very democracies.”

“I think that would be more for me – is to make sure that when the Digital Services Act is produced [...], that this is the moment where clearly we must find the right balance between policy, security and guarantee. [...] I think that we can sufficiently address these concerns by this assurance that our security policy should be driven by fundamental rights [...] And fundamental rights should not be seen [...] as an impact assessment that we have to do at some point at the end. [...] It has to be done when we decide policy from the very start.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of **JOHANNES HAHN** Commissioner-designate Budget and Administration



The Commissioner-designate, Johannes Hahn, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Budgets, Budgetary Control and Legal Affairs. During the hearing, 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, including:

- the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework;
- modernisation and digitalisation of the Commission; and
- protection of the financial interests of the EU.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



The multiannual financial framework (MFF) and own resources

The way forward on MFF

"You can rely on me to make a strong case that the impact of a budget smaller than proposed by the Commission [1,1% of GNI] would be damaging for our policy ambitions and would compromise the Union's capacity to deliver efficiently". "This is the minimum".

"This is the right way forward: to have a bottom-up approach, then identify where you land and then try to negotiate". "I will try to convince in particular those which are very much focused on this 1% issue to see that new challenges, new tasks, need more flexibility on their side". "I want to make it clear to them what is necessary. And I will also speak to the media". "We will be standing by your side in the debate with the Council. Many Member States [...] have understood that appropriate resources are really required".

"Whatever the size of the budget is - 1.1% or 1.3% of Gross National Income - it would not be sufficient to finance all the needs and projects with European value added. The Union budget should be seen as a crucial catalyst of public and private investments, channelling them towards EU political priorities".

"it's not only about the money, it's about the other issues you rightly refer to, i.e. own resources, keeping and even increasing the level of flexibility, and introducing the Rule of Law. It's about all of this, and modernising the policy. [...] The main issue is to go to our citizens and explain why we need this budget. [...] If you produce EUR 100 you have to pay EUR 50 to the state, EUR 49 stays in the national budget and only EUR 1 is sent to the European Union - for all the policies which are very much needed and asked for by our citizens".

Own resources

"I am convinced that reaching an agreement on the revenue side is crucial for concluding the negotiations on the MFF. The European Parliament has made clear that own resources reform and the diversification of revenue sources is a condition for counting on its consent on the future framework. I will remind the Council of that position".

Plastic fee and extension of ETS (Emissions Trading System) auctioning revenues: "these are two areas where I believe a very concrete and very quick result is feasible". CCTB (Common Corporate Tax Base) and digital tax "could and should be added". "There is an openness on the cross-border carbon tax". "If raised it should be ring-fenced to climate-related initiatives".

"We should gradually increase the share of own resources in the overall budget". "This differentiation between beneficiaries and net contributors is no longer valid, [...] net contributors very often benefit from the investment in the beneficiary countries". "I would like to overcome this division".

Timing and contingency plan

"I will spare no efforts to facilitate a timely agreement on a financial framework that is fit for purpose". "The faster we are, [...] the earlier we can enter into concrete implementation and can pursue all our political aims". "An agreement in good time, that means that we get a result towards the end of winter".

"That has to be at the center of our attention, but I'll be honest with you: the Commission has to be prepared, staff are of course preparing emergency measures in the event that we don't get a timely agreement. [...] I can certainly promise you that if a situation like that were to occur that we will be putting forward the necessary draft texts".

Minimizing payments backlog

"We need a fast and quick agreement on the MFF because last time, the fact that [...] the decision was only taken two weeks before the expiry date caused the well-known backlogs, because it took a couple of months to agree about the sectoral programmes and on top of this we had delays in the programming".

"You have introduced flexibility instruments and these flexibility instruments can be used in case there are payment constraints".

Mid term revision

"Full support. Yes, it should take place, it makes sense and as far as the timeframe is concerned as we see it [...] we need a little bit more of flexibility so that we don't just wait for the mid-term review; as soon as we recognise that one programme or other is not being properly absorbed or achieving the desired effect then of course we have to work on the indicators". "We have to be doing this before the mid-term review and if there are any necessary adjustments to be made before then, that would also make sense".

Climate - Just Transition Fund - Distribution and absorption of EU funds across the EU

25% climate-related EU budget spending "is not the end of the road and cannot be allowed to be the final limit". "A lot has already been set forward but now we need to look at these [...] objectives at programme level". "If there's a broad agreement that adjustments are required then of course, I will be open to you".

Tracking climate relevant spending: “that’s something that we need to address and I will be bringing specific measures to do that. [...] We have to be clearer in the way we set out programmes because then a lot of very meaningful projects will come to life”. We have to “ensure that our funding streams do not contradict one another”.

Concerning the European investment Bank (EIB) “one element [...] could be to renounce providing loans, guarantees, financial products, or anything else for the construction of energy production sites run using coal or lignite”.

“A priority for me in the MFF negotiations will be to include the new Just Transition Fund. The EU budget will show the way and channel funds to regions and communities most in need”. “We want to support those regions which have high CO₂ emissions”.

“We have to help some countries to improve their take-up rate so that the money available is actually used”.

Modernisation and digitalisation

A policy and data driven budgetary cycle

“I’m committed to improving the link between spending programme performance and budgetary planning, implementation and reporting. I also agree that any such budgetary framework should be clearly policy driven and allow a true re-adjustment of programmes in line with political priorities on the basis of performance information and its assessment”.

“While Member States continue to be responsible for shared management, I will also work towards ensuring a more comprehensive overview of expenditure and key data”.

For speeding up the discharge procedure: “one factor is whether the Member state is in a position to deliver the data rapidly enough”.

“We have taken note of your recommendations to improve and streamline the Commission’s reporting. I will make specific efforts to address this with regard to the annual activity reports of each directorate-general, the programme statements accompanying the draft budget, and the annual management and performance report”.

Digital administration

“There is a very varied landscape of IT systems. One major task for the future [...] is to try and harmonise all of the different systems out there [...] it is not just a question of [...] digitalization within the Commission, it’s a question of interoperability with the systems that our Member states have, and our various Member states’

institutions; that should allow us to be faster in reporting”.

“I will [...] ensure that the European Commission has the right tools and capabilities to achieve its digital transformation without exposing itself to new risks”.

Human resources strategy

“In the near future we will have a HR strategy that we will put to you”. “We have to look at how these positions can be made more attractive”. “Currently, ten nationalities from the pre-2004 Member States are significantly under-represented among the junior grade administrators in the Commission. I will do my utmost to reverse this trend within this term”. Loss of Contractual agents’ experience at contract end: “an issue that has to be addressed”.

“Transparency, integrity, accountability, professionalism and commitment to public interest should remain tenets of our administration. I will make sure that the Commission leads the way in setting high standards for its members and staff”.

“[The] staff strategy [...] will also look at management positions and how they are filled, [...] despite the provisions of the staff regulations there’s always room for improvement”.

Diversity and Inclusion Charter / discrimination / harassment: “each individual case is one case too many, and therefore we have to train our people, we have to train our management”. “We have created, based on the previously mentioned strategy, respective contact points [...] but there’s always room for improvement”.

Gender perspective

“I am committed to deliver on gender equality”. Gender quotas: “this could be something we have to introduce also here in Brussels”.

Gender budgeting: “I have every interest in having more aggregated figures in order to get a better survey about where we are in terms of implementing gender equality, via our budget, via our Member States, via our partners. [...] I will come to you [...] to work together in an informal/formal working group to look at what kind of measures can be taken in order to now really achieve our goals. I agree that we are lagging behind, but it’s also due to the complexity of the way in which we spend money, in particular via the many projects with shared management”.

Protection of the financial interests of the EU

“It is imperative to put into place the Rule of Law mechanism ensuring the protection of the Union’s budget in case of generalised deficiencies in Member States”.

"I will do everything in my power to ensure that [...] it is something separate". "It should remain valid even beyond the next MFF [...] that's what we are working on". "The Commission in office decided that a Rule of Law assessment would be carried out for all Member States [...] that will then give us a comprehensive picture so that we don't give the impression of unequal treatment". "Honest broker does mean treating everybody equally regardless of how large or small a Member State is".

"I will dedicate necessary resources to the coordination of the Commission services' actions as regards conflict of interest issues and cases, as well as to the setting up of a closer relationship with Member States to tackle potential issues at an early stage".

The absence of Council discharge: "Point taken I will address that. The Parliament has the lead on this issue and we do need to generate public support for this, to raise awareness about this because the tax payer is not going to understand why this is happening and I think that will help push to a more rapid solution".

"The share of fraud amongst errors is less than 1% – though that is too much; 0% would be ideal – but it is important [...] to distinguish between error and fraud. [...] even if there is error, there have to be financial corrections. One of the reasons why we still have errors, why there is always a risk of errors, is indeed that sometimes our regulations are too complex, too difficult. A big issue is to simplify. [...] We are on a good path, but still more has to be done".

"Sound financial management and the fight against misuse of funds need to be ensured up to the highest standards, while at the same time trying to maintain proportionality and cost-effectiveness of controls."

"If the EIB is using EU money for certain projects, there is an opportunity for the Court to audit this specific project".

"Concerning the staff of OLAF [European Anti-Fraud Office] and the EPPO [European Public Prosecutor's

Office], [...] they will work together". "The EPPO has to get up and running and then we will see what the additional needs are. But in general OLAF is extremely important for its investigative work, and this will be the case in the future, and the largest part of OLAF people will stay in Brussels". Joining EPPO: "Concerning [...] those who are not yet members, I cannot force them but I will not miss any opportunity to urge them to follow. Ultimately, it's also a question of reputation for those countries which have not joined EPPO, and in the long run it's not in their interest if they stay on the sidelines". "It's important that it starts to become operative. This will be by 1 January 2020".

"The Commission has zero tolerance for infringements [...] for what concerns own resources, and strictly pursues any irregularities. I am committed to continue this policy".

Interinstitutional relations and better policy making

"I will do my utmost to provide open, honest and impartial facilitation between the two arms of the budgetary authority".

Improving annual budgetary negotiations: "I fully agree, and I fully understand your dissatisfaction, [...] it's really dissatisfying if you have a conciliatory timeframe, but then this timeframe is not used and [...] at the very last moment, there are quasi faits accomplis. I will do everything to avoid this, to set up different meetings, or at least to push for different meetings, but also to try to figure out what are technical issues that can be resolved quickly, and what are less highly political issues that can be resolved faster, in order to end up finally only with the two or three main topics which apparently are contested or challenged by the Council or by the Parliament. Then we can really use these three weeks in order to get an agreement".

"For me, the budget is the policy cast in numbers".

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Commitments made at the hearing of

PHIL HOGAN

Commissioner-designate Trade



The Commissioner-designate, Phil Hogan, appeared before the European Parliament on 30 September 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on International Trade (INTA). During the hearing, 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, including:

- A level playing field for all;
- Strengthening Europe's global leadership;
- Trade for sustainable development and climate action; and
- Making trade more transparent.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



A level playing field for all

Multilateralism and the WTO

"Firstly, we must support a stable, predictable and rules-based trading environment by strengthening the World Trade Organization (WTO)." [...] "If confirmed, I will therefore do my utmost to prevent the collapse of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, and find a systemic solution to reform the Appellate Body. At the same time, I will work hard with other WTO Members to reinvigorate the negotiating function of this organisation. We should focus first on concluding negotiations on fisheries subsidies, as mandated by Sustainable Development Goal 14.6. Domestic regulation in services and investment facilitation will require an extra push [...]."

Airbus/Boeing: "I would ask the United States to negotiate with us, rather than actually having a 'tit for tat' trade war."

Multilateral Investment Court: "[...] we are actually in favour of establishing the multilateral courts, and the necessary work is under way [...]."

E-commerce

"I am also keen to work with others to advance the e-commerce negotiations; and to prepare an initiative in the second half of 2020 to build a new way forward for the WTO."

"I will be working with Vice President Vestager in order to develop a tool that will address the distortive effects of foreign subsidies in the digital area, especially in our own internal market, and how state-owned enterprises in China, for example, have been used for this purpose in the internal market of the European Union."

Unfair trade practices

"I also share your concern that we should do more for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises."

"We must promote reciprocal trading conditions and fair competition by levelling the playing field both internally and externally. For example, using instruments such as the International Procurement Initiative (IPI), [...]. We must also tackle unfair competition by addressing more forcefully foreign subsidies which affect EU companies [...]."

Foreign Direct Investment screening

"We also need to strengthen the security of our critical infrastructure and our technological base, as outlined in the March 2019 Communication on China. We have enhanced our internal toolbox with measures such as the EU mechanism on investment screening, and we are working on how to address the distortive effects of

foreign state ownership and foreign subsidies in the internal market."

"I'd like to see a coordinated and harmonised approach for all Member States of the European Union. [...]. We have to work together to see whether we can get an EU position on this, as beefing up this particular screening mechanism is essential if we want to protect our critical technologies and our critical infrastructure."

Enforcement

"I believe therefore it is essential that we step up our efforts to implement and enforce existing agreements. The appointment of a Chief Trade Enforcement Officer will create a focal point for this work and I will ask him or her to work closely with you in taking our enforcement agenda forward."

"I would like to proceed with this work as soon as possible in 2020. I think we would need to engage the committee with myself and all relevant stakeholders to see what the criteria is in terms of reference that we can put together for the purposes of this particular new position. It should be politically accountable, [...]."

"I see this, at a deputy Director-General status in the Department of Trade, and that it would have terms of reference that will actually give it some teeth in relation to the position."

"[...] it's not going to have the same resources that will duplicate a European Union Ombudsman or a particular complaints procedure. But I am willing to discuss what you have in mind in relation to maybe a more focused approach towards those complaints [...]."

"we will have a monitoring system for our GSP to ensure that there is responsible investment in these countries, and not dumping as we often accuse others. [...] We are very much keen to do the reform based on the evaluation that was carried out in 2018 by your committee and by the European Commission and the Parliament together [...]."

Strengthening Europe's global leadership

"How we trade testifies to who we are and to our values and beliefs. [...] The European Union will need to be a stronger global actor and we need to strengthen Europe's global leadership in trade. Every aspect of EU trade policy should demonstrate, locally and globally, the scale of our commitment to peace, to prosperity and to ending environmental despoliation."

US

"I am committed to work on a positive transatlantic agenda and I will be open to the rapid resolution of trade disputes with my US counterpart."

"I'm ready to engage politically with the USA to resolve our trade differences. [...] while standing up for the interests of the European Union. The key, I believe, is to focus relentlessly on the mutually beneficial dimension, and the recent conclusion of a deal [...] on beef last July is a clear example of the European Union's willingness to resolve an issue [...], but to do so through dialogue and cooperation."

China

"I will pursue active dialogue and engagement, including in areas of common interest, such as climate change, environmental protection, the reform of the WTO, including discipline on industrial subsidies. I will also prioritise our ongoing investment negotiations, with the objective of re-balancing our investment relationship with China. We have to stand firm in defending our interests and values, and I am well aware of the concerns of this Parliament in this regard. Our approach to China should entail rebalancing our trade relationship and addressing unfair trading practices. I will not shy away from using our trade defence instruments to this end, and our relations should be based on effective reciprocity in access to markets and opportunities for businesses and investors."

"So it is a priority for me and a priority for the Commission that in the context of concluding an investment agreement by the end of 2020 we include the issues very much that you have mentioned."

"the definition of development status of a country is now under discussion again. [...] So long as we have countries that are looking for special and differentiated treatment, it should be on the basis of needs and evidence rather than actually on some of the more powerful economies that we see under that category at the moment."

Africa

"Africa must become an even greater priority for us as well. The recently agreed Africa-Europe Alliance, based on a policy and investment partnership of equals, points the way forward."

"[...]I think tomorrow is going to be a new day in relation to our engagement with eastern Africa in terms of developing a new EPA, and perhaps we can upgrade this to an FTA, which would include all of the issues that you have mentioned, including gender equality."

Other countries and issues

"On ASEAN, all in all, I don't see progress on a region-to-region basis, but I see a lot of progress on a country basis."

"We must also ensure that agreements reached with our Eastern neighbours are delivering their full promise, while continuing to develop our ambition for deep and comprehensive free trade areas with our Southern Mediterranean partners."

Brexit: "[...] the Commission has prepared exhaustively for a no-deal Brexit. [...] The European Parliament and the European Council I'm sure will have a lot to say about the mandate that will be given to the Commissioner for Trade in order to negotiate [...]."

Trade for sustainable development and climate action

"[...] Trade must not only be fair and open, but also sustainable. Trade policy must contribute to addressing global challenges such as climate change, protecting the environment and strengthening labour standards. This is why the Sustainable Development chapters in each of our agreements with their binding commitments on labour and the environment are so important. To pursue these goals, I will be ready to make full use of the different instruments at our disposal, through trade preferences, through bilateral trade agreements, through action at multilateral level, for example on opening markets for environmental goods and services to help meet our international climate and environment commitments. If confirmed, I also intend to work with you to renew our Generalised System of Preferences, which offers preferential access to exports from developing and least developed countries."

"It will be certainly an objective of mine, through the WTO process, to integrate the sustainable development goals as part of our work programme for the WTO [...] the 15-point [...] plan on [...] the TSD Chapter, is very important to me. It requires greater involvement of civil society [...] to ensure that we implement, also through supporting financially, complaints."

"The Mercosur agreement is certainly one where we are going to do a sustainability impact assessment, an economic analysis, and these will all be available, and we're going to do a cumulative impact assessment in 2020 as well, to see what are all the trade deals, including Mercosur, meaning for farmers in terms of their business and their vulnerabilities in particular commodity areas."

"All of us are appalled at what we see in the Amazon, but we don't have the tools at the moment, outside of the European Union, to deal with them effectively, without actually some leverage through trade policy, and I think that the final ratification stage is where you can actually have a lot of leverage."

Precautionary principle: “We eventually persuaded them to do so because it was becoming a red-line issue for the European side and there would have been no agreement in my view, without including this provision [...]”

Carbon border tax: “The objective is to avoid carbon leakage and ensure carbon companies can operate on a level playing field, combining this tax with free allocations in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, because with free allocations there’s no cost to be adjusted. [...] The trade policy in terms of how it becomes involved is certainly something that I will have to tease out and work closely on with Mr Timmermans and Mr Gentiloni. [...] I think that we will have to see what the options are very closely because we don’t want to have a situation where we are doing everything that we should be doing and our competitors around the world are doing nothing.”

“Of course, trade policy can do more to exert leverage on human rights, on torture or on other issues, such as gender equality. These are all important issues, on which trade can play its part. If you decide to put forward from this committee a right of initiative in this area, I will be very glad to support it.” [...] So I look forward to working with this committee – if this becomes a priority for the committee – in relation to whatever technical support or reports, or hearings are required to develop the proposal from this committee in relation to due diligence. My services will, I hope, be helpful in this regard and I would encourage it.”

“[...] and if this Committee decides to prioritise this initiative on due diligence as part of your work programme for the future, as part of an initiative taken by the European Parliament, under the political guidelines of Ms von der Leyen, President-elect – I’d be very happy to engage with you in relation to what the scope of that particular proposal should be.”

“Yes, I will build on Ms Malmström’s great success in relation to the gender equality agenda. [...] I intend in terms of policy development to instruct my services to consider gender impact when policy initiatives are initiated in the future”

“I would like to see our international conventions and our international agreements being enshrined in our free trade agreements and to be capable of being enforced on a multilateral or bilateral basis – through the disciplines [...] for the sustainable development chapters.”

“[...] you have my undertaking that we would consult all stakeholders, including this Parliament and including this Committee as well as the Council.”

“For the first time in a free trade agreement we had this particular provision in the 2009 agreement. It’s now been invoked by the European Union [...] to have an action plan to ensure that South Korea honoured its commitments in each chapter. So we are taking the next step, which is a dispute settlement mechanism, which is in line with what was agreed in the agreement.”

Making trade more transparent

“I will continue to build on the transparent way in which trade policy has been made during the period of the last Parliament. I will be a regular visitor to this committee and in the plenary to respond to your issues of interest. I will also ensure that you have timely access to all the information you need. [...] I will be supportive in encouraging the Council to listen to your views, in making progress on legislative files, and in avoiding provisional application of trade agreements before you have had the chance to give your consent. And I will work with you to project, explain and promote our trade policy to people across Europe and beyond. Accurate and professional communication of our trade relationships is important. So we are open to whatever discussions that are necessary to communicate the benefits of trade.”

“I would be very happy to support that initiative of fair and ethical trade [...] and I’m very happy to support the awards again in 2020 and beyond. [...]. Trade [...] leverages a lot of other important actions that we want to integrate into those agreements as part of our other public goods policies [...]. So you have my undertaking that we would consult all stakeholders, including this Parliament and including this Committee as well as the Council.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

MARIYA GABRIEL

Commissioner-designate Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



The Commissioner-designate, Mariya Gabriel, appeared before the European Parliament on 30 September 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and on Culture and Education (CULT). 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:

- Education, research and innovation; and
- Culture, youth and sport.

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](#).



Education, research and innovation

Ensure swift agreement on and full implementation of the future Horizon Europe programme

"[...] no decision will be taken unless Parliament has been consulted beforehand and has been kept informed."

"As for the budget, I am clearly on the side of the European Parliament. I will vigorously defend the budget increase for the Horizon Europe programme, because it will have to be understood that the budget for Horizon Europe is not an expense, it is an investment."

"Therefore, I intend to work extremely closely with Parliament right now. I will not wait until, for example, missions begin in 2021 to keep Parliament informed of what is happening. That's why I suggested for the mission councils, the mission boards, to designate each time a person who will be the interface of the Parliament to be able to answer at any time and indicate what are the evolutions and how the decisions are taken."

"Then, to go even further, I would like to insist on the possibility of launching an information campaign and making sure that 'science meets young people'. That's why I'll be organising a 'science meets regions and schools' initiative so that researchers show our young people the results of their research and inspire them to take this path."

"As for the humanities and social sciences, I am very clear: I want to integrate them throughout the Horizon Europe programme, not only in the missions, but also in the first and third pillars. First, because I would not want to put them in silos. I would like them to be taken into account every time we try to innovate under the third pillar or we will have missions under the second pillar."

"If we really want to make sure that there is no selection that does not meet the criteria we believe in, for me there is one word: it is transparency. If we really want to know how the European Innovation Council selects these projects, we need to receive regular information on the selection process."

"I would like to make a real commitment with my services, before the implementation of Horizon Europe, to go to the regions, in the different countries, and to talk about Horizon Europe."

Ensure sufficient investment flows to disruptive research and breakthrough innovations

"I will therefore be extremely careful that, as part of the next industrial strategy, through research and innovation, Europe is investing smartly, Europe is counting on its assets, but Europe as well, does not hesitate to be at the helm of the next wave of innovation."

Build a true European Research Area

"I want give a new life to the European Research Area."

"I really want to help revitalise the European Research Area: one of the issues I would like to bring to the fore is exactly the brain drain and how to attract and retain talent."

"I will touch on a much more sensitive question, it is the salaries of researchers. We have made the commitment to do a study, to follow the evolution and I am sure that this evolution will give us many lessons to be able to act more quickly."

"[...] we are committed to thinking about [an] incentive, a scholarship that will allow a researcher to return to their own country and be able to do research there."

"The European Commission will issue a Communication on the European Research Area in the second half of 2020."

Ensure that research, policy and economic priorities go hand in hand

"In the next Horizon Europe programme, SMEs will be a prime target of the third pillar "Innovative Europe", thanks to the creation of the European Innovation Council. Our ambition is to create a one-stop shop for SMEs, so that they can bring us innovative ideas and products and help them access the market faster. They can also participate in other activities. I am thinking, for example, of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the different Knowledge and Innovation Communities. We must ensure synergies between the two."

"We must help the energy-intensive regions and coal areas in their transition towards a low-carbon economy, we must provide skills. Education and learning will have a key role here. We must ensure that these regions can count on resources so as not to lose their competitiveness at all."

"I will support space technologies, especially since their potential is huge, but also and above all because space services open up markets in new markets and new applications."

"I will insist on the European Innovation Council as a one-stop shop where SMEs will have access, this will be the target group. Especially since the Parliament was very clear: 70 percent of the budget will be dedicated to SMEs."

"Now, what I would like to happen is that SMEs in all regions are aware of these possibilities, it is clear that we do not form closed clubs. That is why I will also pay particular attention to the activities of the European Institute of Innovation, because they also have initiatives aimed at regional innovation. They are also aimed at small and medium-sized businesses."

“We are very strong in science, we are at the forefront in science. And at the same time, we must cherish science because it is our raw material. But we have fallen behind on innovation. Therefore, I will place a strong emphasis on the change needed to integrate this culture of exploitation and commercialisation as early as possible, including in universities.”

“If we want to succeed in the climate transition, if we want to have this famous European Green Deal, it will not be possible without research and innovation. That is why, of course, I will support all those projects that will allow us to reduce emissions, to have investments in hydrogen, and perhaps to have other solutions that we are not aware of yet.”

“If we really want to succeed in being autonomous, if we want to take the new wave of innovation, it's time to invest. Europe has its assets and now is the time to invest in order to then ensure our technological sovereignty.”

Support the objective of tripling the Erasmus+ programme

“I will strongly support the tripling of the Erasmus budget, which the Parliament called for and which has been accepted as a commitment by the President-elect of the Commission.”

Delivering a greener and more inclusive Erasmus+ programme

“I will also propose a green Erasmus. I think that our young people have sent us a very strong message: protecting the environment and changing our habits require us to act. This is a concrete idea.”

“Erasmus is a symbol that we are very proud of. I will support all measures that make it more inclusive, for vocational education and training and for teaching staff [...]. What I would like to see in the future is more projects taking into account local specificities in local communities and I want to see these initiatives multiplied [...]. I would like to see Erasmus focusing on informal levels, small organisations, local authorities, to see how we can try creating some very different projects.”

Make the European Education Area a reality by 2025

“I would also like to insist on the new idea of the European Education Area. From this moment onwards, we need to ensure that research is fully integrated in a new vision for European universities.”

“I would really like to introduce the European Student Card by 2021 [...] as an addition to national cards [...] so that each student can use this card when they are abroad as well.”

Promote excellence and networking among European universities

“As for European universities, we are right at the very beginning of a long road [...]. My question for the universities will be: do you share a strategic vision and are you all moving in the same direction? Do we want common strategic programmes that can ensure that education and professional development are taken into account?”

“We do not just learn within the four walls of a school, university or work place. That is part of the thinking of lifelong learning and developing skills without distinguishing by age [...]. That is the objective of Erasmus+ and I want to ensure that it is more open [...]. It is important to diversify careers and personalise possible pathways. I will pay attention to how European universities take that into account.”

“I will wholeheartedly defend academic freedom. I will defend the freedom for research to be led by curiosity [...]. This is something really important to me. It is not just in terms of research freedom or funding. It is one of our principles. We have charters at the European level and they are not coincidental. I will really try to do my best to ensure that they are complied with.”

“I will pay particular attention to the research that will allow us to make breakthroughs. That's why I quoted the European Research Council and insisted on the importance of keeping Frontier Research.”

“[the question of open science] is dear to me and I will work on it. [...] I think, for example, in the European framework of research, how to encourage researchers who support open science [...].”

Lead on the updating of the Digital Education Action Plan

“Critical thinking equips you to take informed decisions. That is something we welcome and we will continue in that direction. As part of the next digital education plan, which I want to have updated by next year, we are going to address media literacy. For me, this is the key element to combat misinformation.”

“On fake news and misinformation, you are touching on an issue which is very close to my heart. I have always been extremely clear about the importance of this balance between freedom of expression, free access to information, but also transparency and responsibility.”

Culture, youth and sport

Ensure the full implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture

“Culture will always be right at the top of my agenda. Culture is our opportunity to work on a more inclusive

Europe, a more innovative Europe and to help us cope with the new global challenges.”

Develop ways to strengthen Europe’s commitment to preserving and protecting our cultural heritage

“By preserving our heritage, supporting our artists’ creativity and promoting technological innovation, we will help build more united and peaceful European societies, which should be stronger in an ever more unpredictable world.”

“I will devote attention to digitalisation of the cultural heritage. [...] I will also use “Europeana”. We need initiatives that are more attractive to young people and people who do not have access to culture.”

“The first pillar of our cultural [heritage] policy has to be increasing accessibility. Digitalisation is doing that and new partnerships with European innovation capitals, for example.”

Promote creative industries as a catalyst for innovation, jobs and growth

“The portfolio that the President-elect has in mind for me [...] incorporates such prominent programmes as Horizon Europe, Erasmus, Creative Europe or DiscoverEU. This forms a consistent whole and we need to build synergies, we need to make it all work. The common denominator among all these areas is that they touch on citizens in their daily lives, embody a Europe of talents and a Europe of hearts.”

“I will remain faithful to the increase [of the Creative Europe budget] that we called for. I’ll secure it and try and achieve the best possible impact by working together with other programmes, such as Horizon Europe.”

“I reiterate my support to SMEs, particularly regarding culture, that’s where we can really count on creativity and innovation. In the Creative Europe programme, there is the idea of creative innovation laboratories. [...] I expect SMEs to have privileged access to that. [...] It’s also very important to ensure they get their fair share under Horizon Europe. We also need to give more visibility to different examples that already work.”

“We must here synchronise as much as possible our actions with Commissioner-designate Goulard. [...] what

I will try to do is really to create more synergies with the possibilities that exist within Horizon Europe.”

“The European Institute of Innovation and Technology, plans to create a new KIC [Knowledge and Innovation Communities] in 2022 on the creative and cultural industries. It would be very important right now to think about the possible synergies, to see how they can cooperate, and then to cooperate with what is already being done at Horizon Europe level. That will require constant cooperation and coordination to make sure that the issues as regards audiovisual content are not left solely under the MEDIA programme and to ensure instead that there are other outlets with research and innovation under Horizon Europe and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.”

“We have created exceptions for research, education, libraries and cultural heritage [in the Copyright Directive]. What I would like now is to follow the process more closely to see how it is implemented.”

“Today we need to adapt our [E-Commerce Directive] rules to the new realities of the digital transformation.”

Promote sport as a tool for inclusion and wellbeing

“The sport part [of Erasmus+] can be very effective for integrating migrants, we’ve got programmes underway, including on prevention of radicalisation, preventing people from dropping out, from falling behind culturally.”

“In the area of sport [...] my key word is inclusivity. I want to ensure that people with reduced mobility can be included.”

Foster cultural cooperation as a part of the Union’s partnerships with countries around the world

“Cultural diplomacy is a real soft power tool and allows us to keep an open dialogue. [...] Our partners in the Western Balkans need to hear that we will provide them with some palpable support. [...] There is a wonderful nursery of young talents there. The creative industries and culture are much appreciated and this is an area in which we will continue to have very close cooperation.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of **NICOLAS SCHMIT** Commissioner-designate Jobs and Social Rights



The Commissioner-designate, Nicolas Schmit, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). During the hearing, 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, which focused on:

- strengthening Europe's social dimension;

as well as additional points he made during the hearing, which included:

- promoting employment and a well-skilled workforce;
- ensuring decent working conditions and health and safety at work; and
- cooperating closely with the European Parliament.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



Strengthening Europe's social dimension

The European Pillar of Social Rights

"In close cooperation with Parliament, I will develop an action plan to implement the Pillar both at Union level and in each Member State, building on the achievements made under the Commission of President Juncker and on the political guidelines of President-elect von der Leyen."

A fair minimum wage

"I will put forward a legal instrument to ensure that every worker in our Union has a fair minimum wage. It is not about setting one single EU wage level, and I will pay particular attention to social models of different Member States."

"[...] this frame for minimum wages by no means [...] will put into question the system based on collective bargaining, which provides for good wages in the countries where it applies, and we will not force – by no means – these countries to change their very old and very well-established tradition."

"I think we will not put disturbance or put this system into trouble by creating this kind of a European frame for minimum wages. We have to preserve what works well. Don't fix what works well. So this is a guarantee I can give you."

European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme

"The resilience of the Economic and Monetary Union depends on stabilisation functions. A future European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme requires a careful design to ensure rapid responses to shocks while preserving adequate unemployment protection."

"Shocks to the economy, and very often asymmetrical shocks, sadly are part and parcel of our economic model. And we have to cushion these shocks - that's the point. Not to organise some kind of permanent transfer from one to the other, but to ensure, first, that in the event of such an asymmetrical shock the economy concerned does not topple into a bottomless pit, and second, that the people in that economy have access to some kind of safety net, even if the state, for financial and budgetary reasons, has great difficulty in continuing to provide it."

The European Labour Authority

"[...] the newly-created European Labour Authority can play an important role, ensuring cooperation between national authorities, namely carrying out joint inspections. From the discussion in this Committee last week, I know that the practical set-up of the European Labour Authority is an important issue for many of you.

I assure you that it will be rapidly put into place and provided with the adequate means to fulfil its tasks."

Promoting social dialogue

"Social dialogue should be promoted at all levels, as the Union's social dialogue can only work when built on strong, autonomous national social partners. Likewise, collective bargaining should also be supported, as it constitutes an important feature of our social market economy."

"It is important that in this economic upheaval, we make sure that social partners on both sides are strengthened again. The European Union, the Commission, has the means to do this. In the context of this institution building, we have a number of options - including financial options - and these have to be targeted particularly at countries where social partnership is almost unknown."

"My idea is to ask the Economic and Social Committee for a study on how to strengthen and promote collective bargaining in Europe again. The OECD is (also) working on this question, as is the ILO, and we have to draw inspiration from their findings as well."

The European Social Fund+ (ESF+)

"Investment in people needs to be recognised as an investment in a better future. The European Social Fund+ is the Union's prime instrument. It is a tool to support the implementation of the principles of the Pillar by providing resources."

"[...] certainly, the funds we have to dedicate to youth unemployment, we have especially to dedicate them there where youth unemployment remains a major problem. Where youth unemployment is very low, they can tackle their problem more easily, but it's where the concentration of youth unemployment is high that we have to focus our resources."

Strengthening social protection

"Everything in the programme presented [...] has one objective: strengthening social protection [...] in Europe. Strengthening, reactivating social progress while adapting it to a changing economy, to a changing economic environment, and in particular to globalisation. And we cannot be naive facing this globalisation, that's why we need to come up with our own ideas, our own concepts on how to manage [it]."

Developing a European Child Guarantee

"Child poverty is destroying the future of this person, because being a poor child very often means that you will be a poor adult. [...] We have to refocus [...] [existing] actions [on improving the situation of poor children]."

[...] We have to concentrate them first on those who need it most in our societies [...]. [...] I could imagine basing [our approach] on the work which has been done in the Parliament to have some kind of recommendation. [...] I have understood that you cannot have an ambitious policy good for everybody without funding. I've noticed what the European Parliament has said, and [...] I will certainly bring that into the discussion, including with the Council."

Standards for a minimum income

"[...] there is [...] common interest in having a guarantee for every European citizen to be able to live decently, even if this person cannot be tomorrow on the labour market and [...] make a living of his or her own, and therefore we have to look after some kind of criteria, of benchmarks, to permit people to live decently. [...] it has to take into account the overall living standard and the situation, the economic, financial, budgetary situation, but it has also to guarantee to each European citizen, wherever he or she lives, a decent living."

Promoting employment and a well-skilled workforce

Non-discrimination and inclusion

"I will promote a European labour market that guarantees access and good opportunities for everybody and in particular for persons with disabilities, migrants, Roma communities and the most deprived."

"[...] certainly I will fight [...] to make sure that this principle of non-discrimination for any reason is really applied and enforced."

"[...] we have to dedicate more means, more resources – also from the ESF – into policies which include all categories of persons who have greater difficulties on the labour market, and disabled persons are among them. [...] I would really like to make out of this subject one of our big objectives, one of our big aims of the next years: to give the opportunity to everybody, including also people with disabilities."

"[...] there has to be a progressive integration of [...] persons [with disabilities] into the world of work, into a job. The companies which are doing that have to be accompanied, have to be helped. [...] [The] social economy also can be an answer to this issue."

"Certainly not every country knows exactly the same model of social economy. We have to respect the different cultures [...]. But I think there is a lot of room for action together. In 2011, Commissioner Barnier and Commissioner Andor, and also Commissioner Tajani, had a social business conference which really created a positive dynamic for social economy in Europe. So my

idea would be, again with other Commissioners [...], to really replicate such an initiative, to bring actors together and to have a plan to promote social economy."

Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

"[...] we have to revamp, we have to rethink, we have to adapt the Youth Guarantee to the present situation. [...] the situation of the digital transition is something which is everywhere and, unfortunately, even young people [...] are not always equipped with the knowledge to enter this new digital area. So one of my ideas will be to introduce for every young person going through the Youth Guarantee or being unemployed, a basic fundamental digital training adapted to her or his knowledge, adapting also to the job they are aspiring to, but every young person has to get the tools to enter the digital labour market."

Updating the skills agenda

"People need to be accompanied in the upcoming transitions, enabling them to keep their skills updated as the economy evolves. This requires investment as well as a career and skills policy with improved tools to accompany all career transitions at all ages. I will explore the idea of individual learning accounts for people of working age."

"[...] vocational training is essential, and vocational training is not the second best. [...] - no. Vocational training is one of the best [...] and therefore we have really to sustain, to support vocational training."

"[...] upskilling is the central issue for the forthcoming years. We have really to make sure that not only the young people have the right skills, [...], but also those who are in a job now get the upskilling or re-skilling to face the transformations of their jobs [...]. [...] ESF+ has to dedicate more money to skilling and upskilling. This is a central issue, and this has really to be integrated also in the country-specific recommendation[s] [...]."

Health and safety and working conditions

Dignified, transparent and predictable

"Working in an SME or working in a big company, that's not the question. Every citizen, every worker in Europe has a right to have a correct salary [...] and correct working conditions. [...] We have to support SMEs in these changes: that's obvious. We have to make them fit for a new economy, for the digital economy. [...] [But] we cannot build the future of SMEs on bad working conditions and very low salaries – that's not the future for the economic model in Europe."

Working conditions of platform workers

“Our labour markets will be changing due to automation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence. We have to engage decisively to mitigate the risks, shape the transitions and seize the opportunities. It is crucial to ensure trust in the digital future. Therefore, we need to address the labour conditions of platform workers and actively address new forms of precariousness.”

“This is an overarching goal [which] we have to tackle quickly. [...] This sector is expanding quickly, becoming more and more important; it doesn't have only downsides, but it is absolutely necessary to introduce social regulation. The social aspect cannot be lagging behind technological evolution.”

“We have to make sure [...] that people working on the platforms have the same social rights as all the other workers. They should have the right also to have collective bargaining [...] we have to sort out that when people come together, also platform workers who are considered to be self-employed, that they are not opposed to competition law, because that's absurd. [...] My idea would be to gather very rapidly a big conference with all the stakeholders to discuss this and then work on a good standard for people in the new digital economy.”

“In the end, the most valuable capital we have in the digital economy is not machines, but human beings. Building a digital economy that is human-centered - that is our goal.”

Health and safety issues

“One of the areas I personally care much about it is health and safety at work. It is not acceptable that in 2019 people in Europe are still at risk at their workplace. I will promote the adoption of further measures against carcinogens in the workplace. The changing world of work [also] requires new reflections on occupational health and safety.”

“[...] [The renewal of the EU compass for action on mental health] is an issue which we have to follow up. [...] So I would certainly have a look at that, and together with the Commissioner in charge of health, we will do so. [...] What we have to have is a strong prevention

policy [for mental diseases at the workplace, like burnout and stress].”

Posting of workers and social dumping

“The vital principle [...] which we absolutely have to implement, is that of equal pay for equal work in the same place.”

“We now have to properly [...] implement this directive in the interest of everybody, not just of the receiving countries, but also of the sending countries. For in the end, no country can use some form of social dumping for its own workers. That flies in the face of the European spirit. I very much count on the European Labour Authority to ensure that the system works properly, that we fight any abuses, and that everyone is on an equal footing as far as possible.”

“I also say quite clearly that Member States have to give themselves the necessary means and resources. [...] You can't talk about social dumping on the one hand, and on the other, not adopt the necessary instruments to deal with the issue.”

Cooperating with the European Parliament

“I will work closely and regularly with the European Parliament, the Member States, social partners and all stakeholders to pursue a fairer, more social and inclusive Europe.”

“I will listen to your comments, your ideas, your objections, and I can assure you that over the next few years, I will be committed to close cooperation with this House. We must work together if we wish to earn the trust of workers, families and citizens.”

“[...] I will come back whenever you ask me to, or whenever I have the urge to talk to you, to take your advice and your opinion – very diverse, very different, sometimes quite critical, I must say, but I think this is what makes our European politics lively and really democratic. So I make the commitment today to be often with you and to continue what we started today [...]. [...] you are the voice of our citizens and we have to listen to that voice.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

PAOLO GENTILONI

Commissioner-designate

Economy



The Commissioner-designate, Paolo Gentiloni, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and on Budgets (BUDG). During the hearing, 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, including:

- Economic and financial affairs;
- Fair and effective taxation; and
- A strong and modern Customs Union.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



Economic and financial affairs

Stability and Growth Pact: implementation

"I will oversee the application of the Stability and Growth Pact to ensure sustainable public finances. I will make use of flexibilities with the rules, when they are needed, to deliver an appropriate fiscal stance, enable fiscal policy to play a stabilising role and promote much-needed investment. In implementing our rules, I will focus on public debt reduction as someone who cares deeply about the potentially destabilising impact of high debt in bad times. I will also deal with an adequate use of fiscal space to face the risk of a slowdown in our economy."

"[...] I will give this [Italian] draft budget plan exactly the same attention, attitude of dialogue and seriousness about the rules that I will give the other 26 Member States."

"I will be crystal clear on the fact that we will not have double standards in implementing our rules. This is a matter of trust, I understand. You can expect this from what I said this morning. You can look at my biography. But apart from this, it is a matter of trust. This is my commitment, no double standards."

Stability and Growth Pact (SGP): revision

"Of course, the Stability and Growth Pact is not perfect. I will use the opportunity served by the review of the Six- and Two-packs to reflect on the right way forward, based on evidence from the past and taking into account the contribution from the European Fiscal Board. And you will, for sure, have a say on this."

"The risk of pro-cyclical effect is very clear. I think that the European Fiscal Board also stated this risk in a very clear way. What we will have to discuss at the end of the review that is ongoing, that will be concluded in the middle of December, of the Two-pack and Six-pack, is the way forward. I personally, I have to say, appreciated the European Fiscal Board's philosophy: simple, enforceable and anti-cyclical. This philosophy is also considering many objections that were made also this morning, towards some too complicated and too discretionary elements of the SGP rules until now."

"But we have to know that the decision on how to go forward after the review will be taken by the College and by the European institutions and it will not be an easy decision. Personally, I always stress the word 'ambition'. I would like very much to change our rules in a more anti-cyclical, more simple and more enforceable way, but I respect the opinion that says, okay, be cautious, because we can solve the same problem with some interpretation tools and without opening the box

of legislative changes. We will decide before the end of this year."

EMU deepening/BICC

"Yes, I think that the proposal for this new instrument – the Budget Instrument [...] [for] Competitiveness and Convergence – which was confirmed at the Euro Summit in June is relevant, needs to be seriously funded and should also be considered as a tool for stabilisation. We know that the discussion on the stabilisation tool has always been difficult in the European Council but this proposal, I think, is very targeted. The target is to strengthen structural reforms and convergence, and this should be seriously funded and have a serious follow-up. This is the commitment that I personally take with your committee."

"Yes, we will discuss together these criteria of governance and the priorities of this instrument, and the climate priority will certainly be seriously taken into account."

Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure

"Yes, the analysis of macro imbalances I think was very helpful because it was useful to give both the Commission and Member States guidelines, ideas, suggestions – not only on the traditional financial issues, but on other issues such as private debt, the housing market [...] and the health situation. These conditions are fundamental and I think that we should work on strengthening them in the near future."

InvestEU and Sustainable EU Investment Plan

"I will launch InvestEU and the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan as a matter of priority."

"The one trillion figure is very impressive, I agree with you. I think we will work very strongly, personally, with Vice-President Timmermans and with Vice-President Dombrovskis because we need to create a good environment to mobilise private capital, obviously. But I think that to reach such a commitment, we need to join to capital, to private investment, also public grants and mobilising public investments around Europe. This plan, the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan, is starting in parallel with the InvestEU plan and I think that the InvestEU plan will give a strong contribution to the Sustainable Plan because of the capacities that the InvestEU 'hub', as we call it, will have to contribute a new project capable of having strong capital participation. We should also continue in the ongoing work on defining a standard for green bonds. This, I think, is one of our goals for the near future, and the work is already ongoing, as you know."

"It is, as I said, an ongoing work in our ECFIN services. The message is very clear. There is growing capital investment availability all over the world on investment with a purpose, and specifically on investment with environmental purposes. So our capacity to give, with our green bonds, a benchmark to the markets will, I think, be very useful and appreciated and will fall in a very positive and favourable environment from investors. It would be strange that the EU could be absent in this field that is now very positive all over the world in capitals."

"We have two different tools: one, InvestEU, is something that the Parliament already discussed in the framework of the Multiannual Financial Framework. It is targeted to different priorities and will have, I think, a technical, strong capacity in its InvestEU 'hub' that will also be very useful to promote the investment of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. So, we will work hand in hand, with Commissioner-designate Dombrovskis specialising more on raising private capital in the project of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. We have, as you know, an ambitious target of one trillion euros and I, myself, will be concentrating more in the definition of the plan and the promotion of the InvestEU programme."

"We can't accept the idea that such a relevant plan for us, InvestEU – supposed to raise something like EUR 650 billion – is limited to areas or single countries. So the commitment that I make is to have an equal distribution of this plan across the entire Union."

Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme

"One of the key actions will be the delivery of the European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme. I know that this House has been calling for such a scheme for a long time. Politically, it will not be easy but together we can deliver a scheme that will offer protection for citizens during difficult times in their lives."

"I think that this proposal has, in fact, a dual goal. We have not to underestimate one goal, perhaps the first one, at least towards our citizens, which is the social goal of having an instrument to strengthen national instruments against unemployment. This is a relevant point because, in this case, we can join together a tool having a clear social message and a clear social intention and also a stabilisation consequence. But it is not only a stabilisation tool, this is what I wanted to stress. What the Reinsurance Scheme should not be – you have already said it – is a tool for permanent transfers from country to country. It should not weaken the structural reform process undergoing in single Member States. It should be concentrated on external relevant shocks and be very quick, having automatic dispersion mechanism. [...] I am tasked to define the mechanism and this will be one of the main issues,

technically and politically. Will this scheme be concentrated on loans or on direct support to national budgets? This discussion is very relevant. It is not sure that these two scenarios should be in complete contradiction one to another. You can begin with one but this is something we have to work on in the next weeks, very quickly and effectively."

"I will work immediately. The term 'immediately' depends on the political evolution but I mean that, if confirmed, I will work on this immediately with my colleague Schmit and with the College."

"So this will be, I think in a few weeks, the definition of the scheme and of the different consequences on our methods in our Community decisions."

European Semester

"I am personally strongly committed, on the basis of my personal experience as Prime Minister, to the fact that we need, first of all, cooperation with social partners in our economic choices, and so my commitment taken will be together with my colleague Nicolas Schmit. As far as our rules are concerned, the European Semester in the last couple of years, began to seriously include a social dimension in its process. This was mostly the consequence of the Gothenburg decision on the European social pillar. I think that now this task should go on beyond this, and it is clear that I received the mandate to integrate the sustainable development goals of the United Nations into the process of the European Semester. As we all know, the chief goals have a strong social dimension, not only a strong environmental dimension. This will be a new tool to give this social priority the room that it deserves."

"I think that we need - and it is also a problem of public awareness - to involve social partners, also in the Member States, in the dialogue that we will have with Member States' governments. This would help this dialogue and would help the European Union to obtain a better understanding of what we are deciding, during the Semester, for Member States."

Eurostat

"I attach great importance to defending the professional independence of Eurostat and the national authorities. I will make sure that Eurostat remains the trustworthy point of reference for statistics and data on Europe."

Fair and effective taxation

"I am determined to work towards fair and effective taxation in the EU."

"[...] to keep fighting against tax fraud and evasion [...]. I want to benefit taxpayers who play according to the rules and focus punitive action on those that do not."

Environment taxation

"[...] 74% of citizens agree the EU should do more to fight tax fraud. [...] My first priority will be to make sure that taxation fully contributes to the European Green Deal. For my part, I will work for a new environment taxation framework to steer the behaviour of users, consumers and producers towards a climate neutral economy. I will assess a range of measures, including updating the Energy Tax Directive to align it with environmental objectives and working on a carbon border tax at the EU level compatible with WTO [World Trade Organisation] rules. In so doing, I will be vigilant that this framework is just and socially balanced. I also want to assess the use of [...] other legal instruments in the Treaties that allow tax proposals to be adopted with qualified majority votes and by co-decision."

Reform of the international corporate tax system

"My second objective is the European contribution to the reform of the international corporate tax system to make it fit for the 21st century. It is clear to everyone that the current system is out of date. The transition to a digital economy has led to a growing disconnection between where value is created and where tax is paid. Moreover, tax competition distorts business decisions and leads to tax policies aimed at short-term revenue collection. Discussions on modernising international corporate taxation are now underway in the G20, supported by the OECD. By the end of next year we will need to take stock of the international discussions. If no consensus emerges, I am tasked to lead efforts for a fair European digital tax and for a common corporate tax base."

"This means that in the third quarter of next year we will work on the European proposal. We will not jump the gun on the European proposal during the international debate, but I am very serious in committing myself and the Commission to have our proposal next year if international consensus is not there."

Digital taxation

"Yes, we will have an international commitment on digital taxation. I think that we have now the concrete

possibility to reach a result. It was not the case until a few months ago. The evolution of the discussion in the OECD framework is mostly going towards general taxation of big business – not only digital platforms, but big business in general. I think that this is acceptable because digitalisation is going on in all multinationals and not only in digital multinationals, and this is something that Europe easily accept[s]."

"The digital revolution has brought us for the first time to a situation that we cannot accept; that value is created, and is created frequently, through data and through our data – our personal data. But taxes are not in the same places where value is created."

"[...] we decided, after some internal difficulties among the Member States in delivering on the Commission proposal, to try to take the best from the international discussions, from G20 and OECD discussions. When this was decided it could appear like a sort of exit strategy in front of difficulties. But now, what I understand is that there is a real worry, coming from the United States especially, a real concern and a real availability to find a compromise in the OECD. Europe has a very relevant role in this case and I am rather optimistic that we can find a solution at global level next year."

"If there is no consensus emerging next year we will have a European proposal [on digital tax]. This means that in the third quarter of next year we will work on the European proposal."

In the interest of citizens and public opinion

"How to try to give immediately the message that yes, we are committed on these issues: environment, corporate, digital, tax fraud, etc.? A good way would be to propose to the College a plan concentrating the interest also of our citizens and public opinion on these subjects."

A strong and modern Customs Union

"Many take the Customs Union for granted but tensions around the globe on trade security, changing business models and the rise of e-commerce reinforce the need for a strong Customs Union. I will strive to bring the Customs Union to the next level of effectiveness."

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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 ready 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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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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Commitments made at the hearing of

OLIVER VÁRHELYI

Commissioner-designate

Neighbourhood and Enlargement



Commissioner-designate Olivér Várhelyi appeared before the European Parliament on 14 November 2019 to answer questions from MEPs in the Committee on Foreign Affairs (the Committee on International Trade was invited). This document highlights a number of commitments which he made during the hearing. They refer to his portfolio, as described in the [mission letter](#) sent to him by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- Western Balkans and Turkey;
- Eastern Neighbourhood;
- Southern Neighbourhood.

Please note that the quotes included in this document only make reference to the 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 he provided [written answers](#). Following the hearing an additional questionnaire was sent, and the [additional written answers](#) were received on 18 November 2019.



“As a Commissioner, from the day I am elected, I would be acting in a completely independent way. I would take no instructions from any government, any institution [...] I would act in a collegial way and I would be pursuing the EU line and only the EU line.”

“I will pursue the European Union position when it comes to the rule of law – be it the Western Balkans, be it the Eastern Partnership, be it the Southern Neighbourhood.”

Enlargement policy

“The methodology would need to be enhanced in a way that creates more dynamism, the possibility for more dynamism for those candidate countries who can and who wish to move faster. On the other hand, for those which are going slower, we will have to slow down also the enlargement process.”

“In the enlargement process we have the ‘fundamentals first’ principle, which means if there is no progress or back-tracking on the fundamental rights, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, negotiations can be halted, chapters cannot be closed or even financial assistance can be suspended. I will not be afraid to make use of any of these tools at my hand if it is going to be necessary because the conditions are not met.”

Western Balkans

“I intend to increase the pace of structural and institutional reforms, with a strong focus on the fundamentals of the rule of law, economic development, the functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform.”

“I will engage with all institutions, businesses and civil society to accomplish this.”

“The European perspective is unchanged and I will fight and work for that all the way.”

“I’m willing and able, capable, to work with those Member States who had concerns, and I will engage right away with those Member States to address them.”

“When it comes to the rule of law in the Western Balkans, we have very clear criteria that they have to meet and I do not intend to change or propose any change to those criteria. On the contrary, [...] I think that we need to intensify work with our Western Balkan neighbours to achieve more.”

“[...] my priority will be to have a common assessment of the Member States and the Commission when it comes to facts on the ground. I want to include the Member States in our field missions at expert level to come and cover the whole region together, look at the facts, look at the developments and let’s assess them together so that we can avoid another failure. That way, we will have

a clear list of achievables on both sides – both sides meaning the Western Balkan countries and us, and then there will be no surprises.”

“We might come to a critical point that we have one or two or three of the candidate countries who accomplish to meet all the conditions. I have no *a priori* on this. [...] It is possible to abandon any group approach, but it might happen that we will have a group. So let’s not rule that out.”

“Five years from now, my vision would be to have a much more developed Western Balkans, having peace between Kosovo and Serbia, Kosovo having full visa liberalisation and free travel and accession negotiations very much advanced with North Macedonia and Albania, maybe close to an end, and a Serbia that is ready to join.”

Turkey

“I will also work as a team with Josep Borrell on our future relations with Turkey, a key partner for the EU in a wide range of fields. There is clear scope to get more out of our relations to better serve our mutual interests. As Turkey continues to play a vital role in hosting and addressing the needs of almost four million refugees, we should continue assisting Turkey in this and in managing increased irregular migration.”

“Accession negotiations have effectively come to a standstill. The next Commission should therefore start a reflection, in consultation with this House and together with the Council, on how to develop a strategic partnership, based on common interests and rooted in existing frameworks.”

“When it comes to the accession process of Turkey into the European Union, we see that it is already at a standstill. However, stopping or finishing accession negotiations without accession is a major political and strategic decision to be made by this House and to be made by the Council. This is not something that the Commissioner will decide upon. So when we have a full discussion about our future relationship with Turkey of course this is going to be a strategic question that we need to look at.”

“[...] when we come to the financing – the IPA financing. [...] I know that this is an issue in this House and this House has a very firm position on cancelling fully IPA support to Turkey. I would have a more cautious approach. It has already been cut from EUR 600 million to EUR 250 million, and we are in the process of cutting it further down to around EUR 130 million, but this is the very core of our financing and this finances civil society. If we cut those funds, we will disappear from the Turkish society, so we need to continue. We need to continue to engage.”

Neighbourhood policy

“There is a major development gap between the EU and its neighbours. My objective will be to reduce it by unleashing the untapped potential of the region.”

“We have developed a very comprehensive set of cooperation, but also of conditions, when it comes to the respect of human rights, freedom of the press, and independence of the judiciary. I intend to continue in that footpath, and I will ensure in all our relations, that these conditions are observed.”

“My portfolio will cover the external relations of the migration dossier and there I will continue to defend the EU line, which is that we have to help our partner countries [...] to protect their borders and to withstand external pressure from illegal migration, but also to help them to cater for those migrants who are on their territories.”

“Should there be a proposal from a group of Member States [to introduce an EU human rights sanctions regime], of course I’m willing to look into it and work with them to see what benefits such a system may bring.”

Eastern Neighbourhood

Future of Eastern Partnership

“I want to see the Eastern Partnership strengthened in light of the ongoing consultations on its future. I will work on proposals for the Eastern Partnership’s long-term policy objectives, to be presented by the Commission in good time ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels in June 2020.”

“My idea about reinvigorating or reinforcing the Eastern Partnership would be to try to help them to create a market economy that will improve their chances of withstanding outside pressure but also to create a climate for investment, which will be for the prosperity of their nations.”

Differentiation and deepened sectoral cooperation

“Some countries in the east, Georgia, Ukraine, and more recently Moldova, [...] are showing determination, sometimes in very difficult contexts, to tackle reforms, others less so. Hence, intelligent differentiation across the portfolio remains key to exporting stability.”

“There is still work to be done to deliver on all the benefits of the DCFTAs, but should they like to engage with us more, be it economic development, be it basic infrastructure, such as transport or energy, or be it the Green Deal or digital, we should be able to engage in a more meaningful way with them on those areas.”

“[...] we should be ready to engage and integrate them into as many policy areas as they feel able to do. [...] It could also be on security.”

Ukraine

“Ukraine [...] is of key geopolitical importance for the EU. We will continue to support its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, efforts to bring the conflict in Donbas to an end and to support reforms, whether on the rule of law or the economy. We should make full use of all our tools, including the Commission’s Support Group for Ukraine.”

“[...] we will have to stand by them and we will have to defend them, including any possible prolongation of the sanctions in relation to Russia, for as long as we do not see any progress in the Minsk process. [...] I will help Josep Borrell with all the tools in my portfolio to make that happen, and meanwhile back up all the actions to help Ukraine regain its sovereignty.”

“So far, we have not offered this possibility [of full integration into the EU] for Ukraine. But what we can do [...] is to help them to create a solid market economy that attracts foreign direct investment, that creates growth and jobs locally and that strengthens that country. To me, that is going to be a priority.”

“I will engage with the High Representative, especially in Ukraine, where it also seems that [disinformation] is a phenomenon that is affecting the public the most. I will deploy all financial means as well so that Ukraine can fight that phenomenon.”

Other eastern neighbours

“Azerbaijan can be a key partner in the energy sector but we have to keep the rule of law and democracy on the agenda.”

“With Armenia we need to focus on economic development, and with Belarus, help the country’s modernisation while keeping the development of core democratic values on the agenda.”

“I will continue to engage with Belarus to ensure [nuclear safety]. [...] We need to make sure that our experts can also look at the site and can go there and make sure that nuclear safety is going to be ensured according to our standards.”

“I will work with Moldova and for Moldova, so that the reforms are not halted or not backtracked. We have to make sure that even if there is internal crisis, reforms continue. If they don’t, we will have to suspend financial assistance, like it has been done in the past. It is clear that financial assistance is clearly and unconditionally linked to progress in reforms.”

Southern Neighbourhood

“We will renew our partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood based on the ‘more for more’ principle while focusing on the economic development of our partners.”

“In partnership with our southern neighbours, I will focus on promoting good governance, protecting the environment and climate, as well as developing a more effective approach to migration issues. I will give utmost importance to economic growth and the success of employment policies, especially for young people.”

“Some partners have progress and reforms hindered directly by conflict like Syria in Libya or its fallout in Lebanon. [...] Morocco and Tunisia are showing determination, sometimes in very difficult contexts, to tackle reforms, others less so. Hence, intelligent differentiation [...] remains key to exporting stability.”

“I intend to quickly formulate new proposals on the partnership priorities in order to intensify our relations with these countries which are engaged in demanding reforms.”

“Morocco is willing to engage with us, not only in areas that are of interest to [...] it, but also that are of interest to us, and therefore we can continue and develop this partnership further with them. [...] This could be a model for the entire Southern Neighbourhood.”

“I will see to it that we provide all assistance, not only financial but also expertise [...] once there is a government in place in Tunisia [...] to help them put in place an administration that works for the people [...]”

“There are encouraging developments [in Algeria] by the elections coming up in December. [...] We will, of course, encourage them to go ahead on a democratic path but it is for the Algerian people to decide on that.”

“Relations with Libya and Syria are more complex. The first of my goals will be to work to restore and protect peace and stability, in coordination with the United Nations.”

“In Libya [...] we need to intensify our efforts to improve the humanitarian conditions for migrants [...]”

“We will have to support voluntary returns to Syria, if the basic principles of voluntary, safe and dignified return are respected, in close coordination with the UNHCR.”

“We must support Lebanon and Jordan, two countries that host a very large number of refugees.”

“We will continue to support economic and political reforms [in Egypt]. At the same time, we will continue our close dialogue on human rights.”

“I continue to defend the EU line, which is that only a two-state solution can bring long-lasting peace in the Middle East and we will have to engage with Israel and with Palestine to achieve that. [...] I have the tools at my disposal to encourage this process.”

Financing instruments

“My principle in relation to [the financing instruments under the next MFF] is that we want to have financial instruments that are available, that are pragmatic, that are effective, and which are flexible.”

“The governance [of the financing instruments] needs to be looked at, and I will make sure that the views of the European Parliament will be taken into account.”

“[...] it is clear that IPA will be used solely for the purpose of the preparations for accession – capacity building, rule of law and all the other areas that are key to be developed in these accession countries.”

“We will have another financial tool in the making, which is the NDICI, where we have allocated funds for migration. So there will be no interference [...] between IPA and migration actions.”

Relations with the European Parliament

“I am determined to work closely with the European Parliament. [...] I see an important complementarity between our roles. I will count on fully using parliamentary diplomacy and relations with governments in the interest of the European Union. I will provide all the support you need to work efficiently.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

STELLA KYRIAKIDES

Commissioner-designate Health and Food Safety



The Commissioner-designate, Stella Kyriakides, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). 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:

- Protecting and promoting public health; and
- Food safety and animal and plant health.

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](#).



Protecting and promoting public health

Supply of affordable medicines

"I want to ensure that we have the right means to keep our citizens healthy, and for this, a steady stream of affordable medicines is vital. The EU pharmaceutical system has given citizens access to high-quality and affordable medicines for decades."

"There is a legal obligation on the pharmaceutical industry to ensure that patients have access to and supply of medicines. We need to work closely and try to have a holistic pharmaceutical strategy, so as to be able to deliver what we need for patients."

"We need to ensure access to innovation and to medicines for people with TB, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. [...] These diseases have an impact on a very large number of European citizens. That would be my first priority to take up in the new Commission."

Medical devices

"I will focus on implementing a modernised and more robust legislative framework for medical devices. This needs to be done in order to improve patient safety and consolidate the EU's role as a global leader in this field."

Health Data Space and e-health

"Digital technologies and artificial intelligence need to be leveraged in this effort, as they can bring concrete benefits to patients and to healthcare professionals. I want to maximise this potential and I see the creation of a European Health Data Space as an important step in the right direction."

"Digitalisation is a very important part of any health agenda and it is extremely significant for citizens. [...] We are committed to digitalisation as a Commission. It's something that would promote research and innovation, we already have the European reference networks and these are allowing people with rare diseases and paediatrics, to be able to have this access and I believe that it can radically change patient care and treatment."

"Unfortunately, one of the drawbacks of what we see in today's digital age, is how easy it is to spread misinformation through so many media. [...] So we need to work together through education and through health in order to fight and challenge the misinformation that is now out there and that is directly impacting on human health."

"[...] we need to be careful as well with data protection for patients. So this is something that we should always have in mind when we're talking about e-health."

Anti-microbial resistance

"[...] I will advocate for an international agreement on the use and access to anti-microbials. For that main reason I will also prioritise the implementation of the European one-health action plan against anti-microbial resistance."

"I have mentioned industry and innovation. I believe that the European Union must lead by example in this, in moving forward so that we have new anti-microbials available for patients."

Vaccination

"We have the science which shows us that it is important that we use vaccines and yet we have in the last few years seen a number of diseases breaking out in Europe: we have measles because of vaccine hesitancy. And I will not say that that is only due to misinformation, because it is also related to the programmes that Member States have for vaccination – there seems to be no uniformity. [...] we need to fight any source of misinformation which in fact impacts negatively on where we know that there is a solid science."

Beating Cancer Plan

"I see our Beating Cancer Plan touching upon all the actions in my mission letter, farm to fork, the Green Deal, anti-microbial resistance, innovation, affordability of medicines. It needs to address prevention, diagnosis, treatment, research, survivorship and palliative care. It needs to involve sectors and industries beyond the health sector, including education and environment."

"Making a difference in the life of cancer patients has always been my guiding principle. And speaking from personal experiences, I can assure you that it will continue to be my guiding principle in my current mission [...]."

Organ donation

"[...] whether we put forward an umbrella strategy for Europe on organ donation, I would like to see the evaluation which is expected at the end of 2019, so as to be able to see where we are and how we move. We need to move with evidence, with science, so we're making the right decisions."

Health technology assessment

"[...] this, I believe, is something that I would work really very strongly towards, trying to build a consensus so that, finally, the Commission proposal of 2018 concerning health technology assessment moves forward, because I think it is an imperative part of any health system that we, as Europeans, want to promote."

"[...] I would work very closely with patients, but I would also work closely with all other stakeholders in order to try and find a way forward for this consensus for health technology assessment. It's become obvious that the voluntary way is not working. We need the standard and we need to move forward."

Mental health

"[...] I would do my utmost to put it [mental health] back on the agenda. Because I believe that mental health is an area that for many Member States does not receive the attention that it deserves, and it is important that we do something to reverse this trend. I'm not only speaking about depression in adults, but if we look at the problems that we're seeing with adolescents in terms of behavioural problems, in terms of increases in self-destructive behaviour, we need to work preventively."

"[...] I would work with other Commissioners to bring in a mental health thread across many of the policies. I believe that I would be able to be a voice for this and I intend to be a voice for this."

Human rights

"I would put as my primary foundation, the uppermost for me, is the protection and promotion of human rights. I believe that this needs to be in an area like psychiatry, something which is extremely sensitive because it's extremely easy to put a label in terms of a psychiatric diagnosis and this can sometimes be very subjective, depending on the culture from which someone is."

Research and innovation

"We are committed to innovation. We are committed to moving ahead and investing in research. The Horizon 2020 programme has already committed to that. So, I would definitely consider this to be a priority because moving ahead with innovation and science can only be more effective for European health. Because this will affect industry, it will affect medicines, it will affect the Green Deal, and it will affect the food we are eating."

"So what I would aim for is having a very responsible voice in the College, using science as a basis, but also taking into consideration and sharing other concerns, to be able to convince others that we need to move forward with many of the policies that we know are needed to protect human health."

Food safety and animal and plant health

Pesticides

"[...] I can commit to decreasing the dependence that we have on pesticides and to trying to invest and

encourage the finding of low risk alternatives. [...] I intend to follow this very closely so as to be able to deliver."

"The general food law will, I hope, change the level of transparency that has been a big problem in creating citizen mistrust, but I can't commit in a louder way to the lowering of the dependence of pesticides and to finding low-risk alternatives."

"But what I would like to be absolutely clear on, is that this is not something that is in isolation to everything else. It's part of the Green Deal that we're all going to work towards and it's part of farm to fork. And building this into it, we cannot have an effective farm to fork strategy or an effective Green Deal if we are not facing and able to face and deal with issues such as pesticides."

"What I can commit to [...] is that there will be no lowering of the bar on the protection of bees and other pollinators. [...] Bee protection needs to be a centre of our policies and this is also part of the policies of the Green Deal [...]. For myself, decreasing the use of neonics and finding alternatives is a primary concern."

Endocrine disruptors

"I know that they [endocrine disruptors] impact on human health and I know that we need to do something about it and this is going to be my commitment to taking this up. We're waiting for the fitness check. I would look forward to working with you to seeing what we need to do to move forward, because it is definitely not an area that we can afford to leave behind and I'm clear on that."

"So I think it is extremely important when we were talking about endocrine disruptors, about neonics, about new breeding techniques, and about pesticides, that we do look at the science that is there."

Improving consumers information

"It [nutrition labelling] is in fact mandatory on pre-packed food. Citizens want this. They want nutrition profiles. It's obvious that when we're going to pick something off the shelf, we are more and more looking to see if what we are reading is something that we want to buy. [...] The nutrient profiles are important. They are important for citizens. There is a 'front of pack' report coming out at the end of this year. I would wait to see the results and move forward, and I would like to see a common approach across Member States [...]."

"We need to find common ways [for origin labelling] so that consumers have access to reliable information when they are purchasing or having access to food. This is something that is now being evaluated. I would look at all the information and then come forward with a proposal."

Animal health and welfare

“First of all, I want to be absolutely clear that I consider animal welfare and animal health as part of my one-health [...]. [...] we cannot talk about one-health if we don’t look at the whole area, and this includes human, environment and animal and plant health.”

Food waste

“[...] I would like to be able to deliver a five-year action plan to deal with food waste because I think it’s a very important part of the sustainable food effort that we’re making.”

Food contact materials

“This [food contact materials] is an extremely important subject, as it’s about substances entering into the food and potentially changing or affecting human health, but also changing the constituents of the food. [...] I would look at the science and I would move ahead with prioritisation, starting off with those that we know are potentially more harmful to human health.”

Relations with the European Parliament

Cooperation

“I will work with the European Parliament, with Member States, stakeholders, my fellow Commissioners, to improve public health and secure a sustainable future

for Europe. Where we diagnose weaknesses in our systems, we must come together to deliver a cure, working with energy, ambition, and commitment. Building partnerships based on trust, honesty, transparency and accountability.”

“Yes, I always respect democracy, and the second one, and it wasn’t empty words, is that I will listen to Parliament and I intend to be available and work closely with you, because on a lot of these issues, like GMOs, like new breeding techniques, Parliament has played a crucial role in highlighting them, bringing forward resolutions, and that has led to change.”

Transparency and accountability

“Transparency needs to be at the heart of what we are doing and, if we’re all honest in this room, with ourselves, one reason that we have lost citizens’ trust in a lot of what we do in terms of food safety, in terms of innovation, in terms of protection, has to do with the fact that they feel that there isn’t the transparency of many of the results that they should have access to. In this sense, I have mentioned before the changes in the general food law, based on transparency, that will, I hope, help us build a better relationship and citizens’ trust. I think that this is imperative.”

“[...] I’m going to hit the ground running if I’m appointed Health Commissioner, and I will always engage transparently and constructively with you, because after all we are accountable to you.”

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BRIEFING

Commissioners-designate hearings
September - November 2019



Commitments made at the hearing of

DIDIER REYNDERS

Commissioner-designate Justice



The commissioner-designate, Didier Reynders, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection. During the hearing, 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, including:

- Upholding the rule of law; and
- Justice and consumer protection.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



Upholding the rule of law

Comprehensive discussion on Rule of Law, fundamental rights and democracy

"I will ... work on the report on the rule of law – about how it's possible to build a process – with an interinstitutional discussion on the whole, comprehensive issue ... of the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy."

European Rule of Law Mechanism

"In July, the Commission presented its proposals for a comprehensive European rule of law mechanism. I will promote a rule of law culture, prevent the development of rule of law concerns and respond when necessary."

"I ... want to see this new mechanism up and running next year, with an inclusive non-discriminatory and preventive annual process. This will lead to an annual report and be backed-up by the justice scoreboard."

Monitoring Rule of Law in the Member States Dialogue and cooperation with Member States and other institutions

"The monitoring will cover all Member States, but will go into more depth in Member States where particular risks have been identified. I will pay particular attention to ensure the objectivity and fairness of this monitoring how we build dialogue and ensure that we share best practice to help Member States.."

Using the full toolbox, including sanctions

"We must use all the tools at our disposal ... Trust me, I will not hesitate to act whenever the rule of law is in danger. I will not compromise when democracy is at stake."

Recommendations

"[I]t's also very important to send recommendations to all the Member States and to make remarks to all the Member States without any discrimination ... I was surprised that for so many years it has been possible to make remarks on the budgetary situation – it's a necessity to do that—but not so evident to make remarks about the values that we share."

Article 7 procedures

"[I]t is very clear: I want to go forward with the Article 7 procedure, not only in the actual cases that we have but, if it's needed, in other cases. I know that there may be other different kinds of problems in other Member States, and if it's needed we need to apply it in the same way."

EP to present its initiative on Art. 7 procedure on Hungary in the Council

"[A]bout Hungary – and you have seen that there is a procedure now – that I have asked in the Council, and this is also the position of the current Commission, for it to be possible for Parliament to come and explain Parliament's position – because this procedure started

in Parliament – exactly in the same way and on a very solid basis."

Annual cycle, media and democracy

"My first task will be to lead the work of the Commission to produce a report on human rights, it is going to be not just on rule of law, but it will also have a wider area. In the first year of the Commission I would come back with a paper which will be a basis for discussion both in the Parliament and, I hope, in the Council."

Rule of Law conditionality

"I believe that we will get an agreement rapidly between the co-legislators on that subject, because this will then mean that it is possible to take the right budget action with suspension, or losing money all together in the event of a generalized failure to uphold rule of law obligations."

Reports on a New strategy for Democracy and on the Charter of Fundamental Rights

"The Commission also intends a report on the Charter of Fundamental Rights so it's possible to come with a report on that. We will work on a new strategy for democracy so maybe with a report on democracy."

Interinstitutional arrangement

"[I]t's possible to discuss an interinstitutional arrangement. I don't know if it will be a formal one because it will be long – maybe for the medium term – but to start immediately."

Working Group of Commission, Council and European Parliament

"I will propose organising a working group with the three institutions ... and to see how it's possible to build the process together. I will of course first work on the report on the rule of law – about how it's possible to build a process – with an interinstitutional discussion on the whole, comprehensive issue, as you said, of the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy ... So I'm hoping that it will be possible to start such a working group as soon as possible ... I'm not against some possibilities to consult and to discuss with independent experts, independent bodies, but maybe not to create a new one."

Article 2 in external relations

"I am very much committed to Article 2 being respected within the EU and also in exporting our values."

Minorities and vulnerable groups

"[I] am committed ... to defending minorities and certainly the rights of minorities. You spoke about LGBT and it's the case in all the possible occasions. Of course it will be one of the concerns, they are all vulnerable groups, you know that, but we need to be very active on the ground and not only in the general procedures that we have in our toolbox."

Justice and consumer protection

Developing the Justice area through judicial cooperation

"We need to strengthen judicial cooperation in civil and political matters. European citizens have the right to live and work in the EU with the full respect of the freedom of movement."

Mutual trust

"It is also about respecting our diversity but guaranteeing on our different legal traditions at the same time, but they should not be an obstacle to our freedoms or security. I will work to build an atmosphere of trust between our different legal systems."

Fundamental rights protected in law enforcement?

"[T]he answer is yes ... [I]f I have such a portfolio, I will be defending fundamental rights ... Certainly ... [I]t's very clear."

The European Arrest Warrant

"Concerning the European Arrest Warrant, I will continue to monitor its application and work closely with you and with the Member States to continue to improve it ... We will consider whether infringement proceedings are necessary in light of the compliance assessment. I will also seriously consider whether to bring forward a proposal to revise the European Arrest Warrant."

Prisons conditions and pre-trial detention

"I will also look into how prison conditions in the Union could be improved, and I will explore the idea of establishing minimum standards for pre-trial detention in order to strengthen trust."

Europol negotiations with partners

"I think we should be able to pay attention, there too, to fundamental rights, to human rights, in the way we negotiate and conclude agreements. I will, of course, be watching over agencies that are more directly dependent on DG Justice."

European Public Prosecutor's Office

"[M]y first concern is to be sure that we will have a correct implementation of the EPPO at the end of next year. I will work with the Chief Prosecutor and the ad interim administration to do that and we have a lot of steps to take to go in such a direction ... First, we need to have a College of Prosecutors. So we need to put pressure on the Member States to organise a College. Second element, we need to put more pressure to have correct implementation of the PIF Directive, because without that it would be difficult for the new European Prosecutor to work on the situation in the European budget. And then ... it will be important to give enough resources – human resources and financial resources – to the EPPO, and I will take care that in the MFF it will be possible to protect it."

Eurojust

"In the area of justice, Eurojust in particular is there to facilitate the coordination of judicial bodies, particularly when it comes to the fight against intellectual property crime. It is therefore an element on which stronger action is desirable, and Eurojust is preparing a report on judicial challenges and best practices to deal with this type of crime. We will therefore be able to work on exchanges of best practices between States."

General Data Protection Regulation, promoting the European approach as a global model

"One of my priorities will be to ensure that fundamental rights are fully protected in the digital age ... We need to make sure that the new legal framework is fully implemented and at the same time continue to promote our values and standards on the world stage ... I often hear criticism of the general regulation on data protection, which nevertheless contains simplified mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises. It is therefore in this spirit that I will try to work, in order to remove, if possible, a number of unnecessary constraints on small and medium-sized enterprises or start-ups."

Fundamental rights, human and ethical implications of artificial intelligence

"[I]n the first 100 days we will try to work on new horizontal legislation, about the human and ethical aspects of the artificial intelligence ... [W]e need to ask for more and more information about the algorithms and the logical working of the algorithms ... So with the Commission, we need not only to put into place new legislation, we need also to help national authorities to organise tests and controls to receive information ... [W]e will work in sectorial situations, because the difficulties are more detailed in the transportation sector or in healthcare and other kinds of activity."

Golden Visas

"[T]here are some rights to freedom of movement, the capacity to vote for the European Parliament, so we need to be strict ... Because there are risks, you have said: corruption, money laundering, but many other risks due to that. So I'm committed to fight against that, because we need to protect the European citizenship. It's a real important element of our values."

Whistleblowers

"[I] believe that not only must we move towards the application of the Directive by all the Member States, but it is quite possible, and I wish to debate with the Member States, that we adopt additional measures, as I said, of assistance and of support.

This can go through legal assistance, financial, as I mentioned, psychological assistance too.

And so, on these different points, I am quite ready to see whether the Member States want to go further and if it is necessary to go further also at European level."

European citizenship

"I want to continue to advance on priorities: ... to protect the free movement of citizens, especially in the context of Brexit, which will be again on the agenda very quickly."

Company law

"I am very committed to work with you and with the Council, about the way to install new requirements into company law. You also spoke about human rights ... There are some voluntary commitments for the moment at the level of many companies, but it is not enough. I am sure that we need to go through a real change in company law to ask more obligations about the social interest of the companies, and I'm also sure that it is quite important to discuss about the supply chain."

Representative actions

"I will ... push for swift adoption of the proposal on representative actions. Collective redress possibilities are very much needed by European consumers."

"...we need first to adopt the new directive, the Representative Actions Directive, to organise a collective redress, because you know that we need to get to a Council position if it's possible in November, so we are at the first step and I fully share the view that we need to do that and we need to organise the process."

Dual quality products

"We must continue to crack down on dishonest and aggressive selling and protect vulnerable consumers. We need to keep a high level of vigilance about the risk of dual quality products ... We expect the same fairness wherever a consumer lives."

Product Safety

"I will look into updating the General Product Safety Directive so that all players in the online supply chain reduce the number of unsafe products. I also want clear rules in terms of liability for all providers involved in the online consumer journey."

Liability in AI

"[A]bout the human and ethical aspects of artificial intelligence and we need to see how it's possible to go further with liability ... Safety is a very important aspect, human and ethical aspect and liability, but in the first

100 days, I don't want to assure you that we will have a new regulation on liability. It may be longer than that."

Effective enforcement of consumer law

"[I] intend to place particular emphasis on effective enforcement. ... We now need to ensure it is effectively enforced both inside the Union and with our international partners."

Strengthening consumers' capacity

"In the Green Deal strategies, in the first 100 days, we will try to see how it's possible to work more with the supply side and see how it would be possible for the consumer to take part in a more rapid transition to the green economy. I'm sure that we need to give more information to consumers, as a first element of course, to have the capacity to decide to make another choice and to go another product."

Sustainability, durability, repairability

"First of all, we are all committed as European Union Member States to fulfil our engagement about the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals, on the UN level."

"I want to repeat that, as I've said in my introductory remarks, it's very important to use the demand side – so consumer capacity – to organise a real process to a sustainable economy, and I'm sure that if we want to fully respect our commitment on SDGs at the UN level, we need to do that and to be very active on that."

"I said very clearly that I believe that, on a number of issues concerning sustainability and sustainable development, we need to effectively inform consumers. And so, it is up to companies to provide correct information, for example on ... the durability, the repairability of a number of products but also the availability of spare parts. And with respect to reparability, I would add ... reparability by third parties and not necessarily by the company that sold the product ... So on all these points, I think that it will probably be necessary to legislate... We will examine all situations to see if we move towards a sustainability obligation."

Programmed obsolescence

"And when you talk about planned obsolescence, I think that if it is actually planned, it must become an offense and allow the authorities to punish. We can not imagine introducing this logic of obsolescence into products on a voluntary basis, without any consequence."

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Commitments made at the hearing of

ADINA-IOANA VĂLEAN

Commissioner-designate Transport



The Commissioner-designate, Adina-Ioana Vălean, appeared before the European Parliament on 14 November 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Transport and Tourism. 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:

- a sustainable, safe and affordable transport.

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](#).



A sustainable, safe and affordable transport

Cooperation with the European Parliament

"I know how important it would be for a Commissioner to build on the expertise and experience of the Members of the European Parliament and I commit to you that I will share with you from the very beginning ideas and projects and we will work through the whole chain of producing legislation."

"I commit to provide good solutions to work with all the stakeholders, to work with the Parliament to solve problems and find the right ways to have people connected, moving, at an affordable price, to have a fair and inclusive transport including aviation."

"[...] There will be a lot to be done for transport and tourism on which [...] the Commissioner for Transport should commit to with the European Parliament, and [develop] this work and then [discuss] it in the College of Commissioners."

Strategy for sustainable and smart transport

"I will work hard to reduce the environmental footprint of mobility and transport activities, and make sure our actions further contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions and improved air quality."

"I will support value chain partnerships with industry as part of the European Green Deal."

"I will push to make a fully-developed Single European Sky finally happen [...] I will not go in the direction of saying that we need less flights, but we need to be more efficient, more sustainable and have a better, efficient system on traffic management."

"If you talk about ports, I would say that maritime is of course a huge business for Europe. We have to protect it, consolidate it, make it more sustainable, more green, but this should be part of a positive solution — greener and competitive [...] all third country actors in our markets should respect our rules, and this is something, part of the job of the Commission to follow and make sure this remains true."

"[...] sustainable urban mobile planning strategies [...] I would prefer to have a European approach to that and not to have too much fragmentation, because fragmentation in this respect is bad for cross-border travellers [...] we will see if further action is going to be needed at European level."

Internalisation of externalities/Energy taxation

"By 2050, we want to be carbon neutral and that needs additional policies and efforts."

"So, we need to internalise part of these externalities [...] the user has to contribute more in what is polluting."

"I can commit and say that I won't exclude taxation, it is absolutely obvious [...] I commit on the fact that my focus will be, how we can develop and make train more affordable with lower prices."

"And then sustainable alternative fuels and then taxation, it is all on the table, I don't want to hide on anything and I commit to work on all of them to reduce emissions in aviation and to make rail a more attractive way of transport for people and goods."

The extension of the Emissions Trading System

"Reducing the allowances to airlines, with the aim of eliminating them over time, is part of my mission, as it was entrusted to me, and extending the emissions trading scheme to the maritime sector is something which will bring a valuable change. In general, it should be the users who shoulder the cost of their trips, not society as a whole."

"[...] ETS in aviation will have to reduce emissions. We have CORSIA: when it is adopted, we will be immediately committed to implement, so we can offset emissions."

"[...] EU ETS [...] I am committed, and we should be committed together, to introducing such an instrument for cutting emissions in maritime."

"[...] when we will deploy the EU ETS for maritime [...] we will be careful and will try to maintain the competitiveness of the sector because this is absolutely very important for us."

Uptake of sustainable and alternative transport fuels for road, maritime and air transport

"I will work with Member States and private investors towards deploying a significant increase in publicly accessible recharging or refuelling points. I want to promote the uptake of sustainable fuels across road, maritime and air transport."

"[...] the deployment of more sustainable fuels. In maritime [...] my aim – my commitment – would be to support those which are more sustainable and viable at this stage and to encourage new technological developments, new research programmes."

"So a basket of measures – the important thing is to decarbonise, to be more environmentally friendly and not to lose competitiveness."

Digital innovation and continued modernisation of key transport systems

"We need to take full advantage of digitalisation to make transport safer, cleaner, more efficient and more accessible."

“A real market for digital solutions is emerging and I want the EU to remain a leader: from blockchain and digital mapping and tracking, to connected and automated vehicles, planes and vessels.”

“We need to integrate rail with logistic changes through new technologies, we need to open data for example on expected arrival times and we absolutely need a new signalling system.”

Social dimension

“Jobs will be impacted, therefore I will prioritise investment in reskilling to keep, for example, the automotive regions thriving socially and economically.”

“I want to take the ‘Women in transport’ platform initiative further, and I want to see the potential of gender balance and gender mainstreaming thrive.”

“We have to explain to [the people] and get their support so that they don’t get scared that the modern future for transport means someone will be left behind. I will be completely committed to this approach, and I will follow up on all the work which is already going on.”

“The aviation sector is very competitive...We need all the members on board, the Member States, the airlines, the aircrew associations, workers and employers’ organisations and the Parliament... Actually I’m going to say that I will take all the needed measures, legislative or not, to address all these shortages, all of these issues.”

“I [want] to work together with my [colleagues Commissioners] to take good action in various areas, so that the workers, or the working environment in transport is protected against fraud and abuse, against bad working conditions. So this, I would say, is a humanist commitment.”

Military mobility

“Transport infrastructure is vital for enabling a European defence strategy. Improved mobility for our troops and equipment should not be overlooked when we invest in infrastructure, and dual use facilities, for civilian and military purposes, are a major opportunity for our Union and should be a strategic choice.”

Leading role in international forums

“Thinking globally, the vision of the President-elect is one of a geo-political Commission. This is exactly what we need. We need Europe to maintain its multilateralism on the global stage. For transport, that means Europe needs to be a hub for all neighbouring regions but more importantly, for global supply chains and passenger flows, and this will be extremely important for our competitiveness.”

“Our competitive advantages can be reinforced if we act properly in our international bodies like the

International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to take on board the benefits of our success stories.”

Cooperation with key partners

“Then we have agreements and in the agreements we have rules which need to be enforced. And I think we have to have a level playing field for our companies and for those who are accessing our market [...] This will be a continuous part of the work.”

“[...] we need to enforce competition on the market, so that we will get a good system of prices [...] What I will do is to follow and assess what exactly is going on and what is not implementing and try to enforce implementation.”

“[...] where things are not progressing, of course, we will come with infringement procedures.”

“Well, we all are aware on this contentious issue you have with the airport in Gibraltar [...] of course there is no doubt that if Brexit happens I will be a Commissioner for the Member States of the European Union.”

Trans-European Transport Networks

“I have opposed the cuts under the current multiannual financial framework (MFF) and I commit before you that I will defend the budget for the Connecting Europe Facility for the next financial framework.”

“We need to complete the core network, we need to support the role of airports and ports in regional and local places.”

“We are also going to revise the guidelines for 20 networks in 2021, I know there is a commitment [...] we have to contribute better to the projects emerging in this network, in rail in particular.”

“[...] to introduce a single authority to deal with all the procedures [...] it might introduce a supplementary layer of bureaucracy [...] we do not want that, and also to introduce some more shorter periods like two years for implementation.”

Missing infrastructure links and Connectivity links

“So we need to invest on the one hand in the infrastructure itself – in the multimodality.”

“Connectivity remains the most important thing and we are going to invest in connectivity. As I mentioned earlier, local or regional airports and ports will need to be further supported within the framework of the competition policy of the European Union.”

“I favour the night trains as long as they have a competitive case and a PSO can be used for night trains.”

Affordable, reliable and accessible transport for all

“I want to promote mobility as a service, make alternatives to conventional private cars affordable, adjust infrastructure and embrace smart and collaborative solutions.”

Safety standards

“25 000 road deaths per year is simply unacceptable. We should share the objective of halving the number of deaths and serious injuries by 2030 compared to 2020. I will put all resources available into convincing ministers, investors and developers to internalise this safety pledge permanently and I need you to support me in this quest.”

“I think we are committed to a zero vision, meaning zero deaths by 2050. There is a strategy we will put in place and I’m planning to promote it strongly.”

Passenger rights

“Travellers with restricted mobility need to be able to move around with the same ease as everyone else. Those in remote areas need to be better connected to our transport network...Europe has today a very comprehensive passenger rights framework but we need to take this further.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

HELENA DALLI

Commissioner-designate Equality



The Commissioner-designate, Helena Dalli, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, on Employment and Social Affairs and on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. 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:

- Fight against discrimination and Work–Life Balance Directive
- Rights of Persons with Disability
- European Gender Strategy and International Partnerships: Empowering women and girls
- Cooperating with the European Parliament and with other Commissioners

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](#).



Fight against discrimination

Equality for all

"I want to focus my work in particular on three strands: the fight against discrimination in all of its senses; the inclusion and empowerment of women; the promotion of equality and full participation. All these for women and men, racial and ethnic minorities, religious and non-religious minorities, persons with disabilities, older and younger persons, and LGBTI persons."

Equality legislation

"I will do everything in my power to advance key legislation in the equality area."

"As a Minister, I participated in endless debates in Council on proposals that have remained blocked for too long. The Horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive was proposed more than 11 years ago. The Women on Boards Directive dates back to 2012. The proposal for the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention dates from 2016. How can I explain that to our citizens? In this framework, should I not be able to remove the outstanding stumbling blocks and convince the remaining sceptical Member States in Council, I will not hold back from finding new remedies and proposing new legislation."

Equal treatment Directive (Anti-Discrimination Directive)

"I shall first wait for the outcome of the EPSCO meeting on 24 October, which should be discussing this anti-discrimination directive, and then I shall proceed from there. It is my will to unblock this directive."

"So of course it is a challenge, as you know, because unanimity is required in the Council, but I will speak to all the Ministers concerned because we need to find a way forward fast."

"I will explain that sexual orientation is not a choice, so if this is the reason why the directive is being blocked, I will want to understand that."

Promoting equality horizontally

"Equality mainstreaming is the way forward."

Task Force on Equality

"I will establish, within the first three months of this Commission mandate, the Task Force on Equality operated by high-level officers in all the DGs. It will be mandated with the complicated mission of swiftly building an intersectional approach for equality in all the policies of the EU."

Roma Framework Strategy

"This framework is coming to an end, and we will be reviewing this strategy. That is why I want to visit a Roma settlement so that I know more about what I am reviewing and we will evaluate how best to proceed in terms of follow-up. The post-2020 framework will also have a stronger focus on anti-Gypsyism. I can assure you that a lot of work will be done in that area."

Rights of Persons with Disability

Implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

"I commit to do everything in my power to ensure that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is implemented fully and without exceptions. I will also make sure that disability is mainstreamed, including by means of the task force and I will also extend the principle of equality vetting. Additionally, as I had the opportunity to tell you, I will work very closely with the Disability Intergroup and with the European Disability Forum."

European Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020

"As I said, we shall now be evaluating the strategy to see what has been done, what needs to be done and what needs to be done better."

Mainstreaming disability

"I will prioritise the inclusion of persons with disabilities. I will make sure that all EU sector legislation pays attention to the issue of disability."

"Yes, disability will be in the gender strategy, because again we are speaking about mainstreaming."

Vetoing Commission proposals

In her reply to the question, whether she is ready to veto every Commission proposal, which is in conflict with the right of inclusion, ready to stop all legal proposals hampering inclusion, and whether she will veto Commission proposals concerning their possible non-compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Commissioner-designate said:

"My answer is yes."

European Gender Strategy

"I will put forward a new European Gender Strategy, which will include new legislative proposals, as well as inclusive policy measures."

"[...] this Gender Strategy will contain pay transparency, gender participation, the pay and pension gap and violence against women. It will address gender stereotypes because, as you know, it is pointless legislating unless we change attitudes and unless we change cultures, so there will be a specific section on how to address gender stereotypes. There will also be a chapter on work-life balance."

"I will also be taking into account views of the stakeholders."

Gender pay gap

"During the first 100 days of this Commission, the Political Guidelines will set out that we will table actions to introduce binding pay transparency measures. This will be a key to our work, feeding into a comprehensive policy to address the gender pay gap. This means confronting persisting stereotypes, strengthening women's empowerment in decision-making, ensuring implementation and take-up of the rights in the Work-Life Balance Directive (especially by fathers), and combating the gender pension gap due to unpaid work."

"I will insist we continue working on the gender pay gap and the pension's gap."

Also in the Gender Equality Strategy, there will be a section on pay transparency, as well as measures to ensure equal work pay for work of equal value. We know that this gender pay gap is resulting in the pension pay gap, which can be up to 36%."

"Yes, of course, the social partners are very important [...] that they are part of this policy, of this proposal, which we will be presenting."

"And yes, of course, we will have measuring instruments and indicators to see how we can proceed and assess the results and revise, amend and improve."

Women on Boards Directive

"Yes, certainly I will be working to unblock the women on boards directive. [...] I will engage with the Member States and convince them of the added value to unblock this file in the Council."

"I think it is a balanced proposal and I will meet with all Ministers who have a reservation on this proposal and push for a general approach in the Council."

Exploitation of domestic workers

In her reply to the question whether she intends to take measures to improve the working conditions of domestic workers, including those of migrant women, she replied:

"Yes, of course, this is an area which should be addressed and will be addressed [...] the taskforce is where we can work together."

"[...] there is the Race Equality Directive [...] the protection is there, but we will have to see how to check on the implementation of this directive. Therefore, I should be working with other Commissioners also on this issue."

Gender mainstreaming

"I will engage further and also develop the necessary tools to bring gender mainstreaming across EU policies to another level. As you know, this will also be the work of the task force, which will be working across DGs in order to see that gender mainstreaming is really materialising."

Gender stereotypes

"Stereotyping is a very important issue and, in fact, it will be addressed in our gender strategy."

"I will continue to work throughout my mandate on women's empowerment and see – together with Member States – that gender stereotypes are tackled."

"With regard to the glass ceiling, yes, it's still very much there. [...] I am a firm believer that we should eliminate stereotypes and have more women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Incidentally, I happen to be the person who promoted the International Day for Girls and Women in Science at the United Nations. [...] STEM is close to my heart, and getting women and girls in STEM - girls to study and women who are already there to have decision-making positions in STEM."

Barcelona objectives: childcare

"I will [...] see – together with Member States – that [...] childcare and care facilities are improved."

In her reply to a question on the Commission strategy to achieve the Barcelona objectives, Helena Dalli said:

"Yes, we must work on this. We must find ways to have, at the least, affordable childcare."

"I shall certainly be pushing [...] for funds, in order to come out with measures to help people to have affordable childcare."

Sexual and reproductive health rights

"I am a committed feminist and you have my word that I will do all possible in order to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). So I will work with the task force to mainstream SRHR, especially in dialogue with the Health Commissioner."

“We also need to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on women’s health and universal access to sexual and reproductive care and family planning and education.”

Work–Life Balance Directive

Implementation

“As Commissioner for Equality, I will closely monitor that the work-life balance directive is fully and properly implemented in all Member States.”

“I will monitor Member States – to see how they are implementing this directive, and maybe even hold workshops and presentations – in order to raise awareness of this issue to make them aware that this is added value to the place of work. I intend to target EU funding for such awareness-raising.”

In her reply to the question what she would propose to address the gender imbalance between those taking up leave for caring responsibilities and what she will propose so that families don’t risk poverty when taking parental leave and how she will push Member States to provide for decent remuneration levels for this leave, the Commissioner-designate said:

“Obviously, we want to do more and, as I mentioned, in three years, [the Directive] will be reviewed.”

“Once we review the directive and see how it worked and if there is – there probably will be – scope for opening it up then we will consider these proposals which you are making.”

Gender-based violence and better support for victims

“I would [rather] first concentrate on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Let’s concentrate on that first, but I also have to say that making violence against women a European crime also requires unanimity, so we’re basically in the same position. We can also strengthen the Victims’ Rights Directive – and there I will have to work with Commissioner-designate

Reynders. We can strengthen non-legislative action to combat violence against women, but my preferred route is the ratification of the Convention by the EU.”

“Yes, of course, that will be included in the Gender Equality Strategy. We are also including online violence against women in the Strategy.”

International Partnerships: Empowering women and girls

“I will ensure that the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations in areas under my responsibility.”

Cooperating with the European Parliament

“I intend to work in dialogue with you, the Members of the European Parliament, as well as Member States and civil society. I intend to work collaboratively with all, free from fingerpointing to elevate this area both within the European Union and also externally.”

“I want to engage with each and every one of you in particular areas.”

Cooperating with other Commissioners

“Commissioner-designate Schinas and I agree that equality is a European way of life.”

“The issues [in the Work-Life-balance Directive] which you mentioned are issues which I shall be discussing with Commissioner-designate Schmit, whereby we can discuss these conditions of work which you mentioned and we’ll see [...] how we can propose ways forward.”

“In fact, I have already spoken with Commissioner-designate Schmit about these realities [of female precarious work].”

“We can also strengthen the Victims’ Rights Directive – and there I will have to work with Commissioner-designate Reynders.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

THIERRY BRETON

Commissioner-designate Internal Market



The commissioner-designate, Thierry Breton, appeared before the European Parliament on 14 November 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on Industry, research and energy (ITRE) and Internal market and consumer protection (IMCO). During the hearing, 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, including:

- The digital economy and society;
- A future-ready European industry and single market; and
- Defence industry and space.

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 [Commissioner-designate hearings website](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



The digital economy and society

Enhancing Europe's technological sovereignty

"There is an urgent need to prepare tomorrow's growth by investing today in the critical technologies of the future. I'm thinking of 5G, of course, but you also have to start preparing for 6G, artificial intelligence, the cloud and already the post-cloud, edge computing, the internet of things, cybersecurity of course, the blockchain [...]. And then, it will not surprise those who know me, for quantum technologies."

"In terms of strategic sovereignty, we must, with Mariya Gabriel, accelerate the development of a European Innovation Council, which is a kind of European DARPA, which we need on our continent."

"We will have to reinvest massively in key technologies. They will concern, obviously, all that pertains to industrial property, but also cybersecurity because, in this subject, cybersecurity will become an essential issue."

"First, it is absolutely essential to diversify the sources of supply. I would remind you that in 2017, 27 critical substances were published. A new publication is expected in 2020, I will really look at it because it is a subject I know well. I'm going to look at it very quickly."

Artificial intelligence and the new Digital Services Act

"We will thus present in the hundred days, with Margrethe Vestager, a European framework of artificial intelligence. I want to accompany it with a European strategy towards the establishment of a common data market."

"I'm not saying we're going to regulate in those 100 days. We'll see what the college says, I'll see what happens. I will be extremely supportive, but I will not, for the time being, speak for regulation. First of all, I would like us to try to see together, to have a vision together, to be able to share with you, of course. We will consult a lot during these hundred days and the Parliament will be fully involved in this reflection, because you represent the 511 million of our fellow citizens, you have your say, we will hear it, that's for sure. In the back, obviously, we're going to have guidelines, I would say, to know what we can do and what we can't [...]."

"Data are my life, so you can be convinced that I want a Europe that masters its data, that can also share it, according to clear criteria, especially now in an

industrial aspect, it will be essential for the Internet of Things and industry 4.0."

"Artificial intelligence for the industry is an absolutely major issue, it goes beyond industry 4.0."

"We have not lost the artificial intelligence war against the Americans and the Chinese at all, I tell you. I will be there, I hope, with all those in the four corners of the continent who will accompany me in this fight. This is my deep conviction."

"Thank you for allowing me to clarify. I take the obligation not to put in question [the limited liability clause of the E-commerce directive]."

"[Looking into the future] involves as well an evolution of rules of the Internal Market which need to be completed in the light of the real needs of our enterprises. This will be done by means of the Digital Services Act with aim to regulate, in particular, big, digital platforms."

"[...] with reference to the Digital Services Act and a potential modification of E-commerce directive [...] obviously there will be no introduction of general surveillance, no review of the origin principle nor modification of responsibility. Clearly, obligations and responsibilities of platforms will be addressed."

"I will introduce a media and audiovisual action plan."

Single market for cybersecurity and joint Cyber Unit

"The cybersecurity dimension is naturally essential to prevent our information space from being torn up one day. This is a subject that is close to my heart, as you all know, for a long time, and on which I intend to get personally involved in all the components of the portfolio. It concerns all activities of the internal market, end to end. It is therefore clearly structuring."

"We will have to ask ourselves the problem of cybersecurity, including when we manufacture objects [...]. So cybersecurity by design is something I really want to work on with you on, because it's something I think we need to go further."

A future-ready European industry and single market

Long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future

"For this purpose, I will work on three main priorities. First, the modernisation of the single market. There is still a lot to be done and we know that. We need a critical mass. Borders must obviously be lowered [...]."

“What is absolutely crucial in this portfolio is that all sectors of our business are involved economy - services in their multitude, industry (and industry, it is obviously 99.8% of the SMEs, but they are also cultural industries and of course tourism) - are affected by the digital. And so, my role will really be to be an actor everywhere to help the whole of our industries to transform.”

Circular Economy

“Together with all my colleagues at the college, I will contribute to an ambitious Green Deal to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. And with Frans Timmermans, I will bring together the industrial pillar of the "Green Deal", a new strategy for the circular economy, a reorientation towards public procurement policy, or still a transition to zero emission vehicles because we have to learn the lessons and get out of the dieselgate.”

“For the rest, green policy is at the heart of my activity. I said that we will invest massively in transitional technologies [...] this is a subject where Europe can, must and will win.”

SME strategy and SME Envoy

“My role will also be to protect SMEs, start-ups, and support new forms of employment by ensuring fair competition with giants from other continents, and in particular by ensuring that everyone enjoys social rights.”

“We must help SME to adapt, but also simplify their lives, by all means, so that they can grow in and through the internal market, for example by facilitating access to dedicated funding, public procurement or helping them protect their knowledge.”

“[The five components of the SME strategy will be:] The first point is removing regulatory and administrative barriers. The second point is to improve the application of the Late Payment Directive. This is still the reason for nearly 30% of SME bankruptcies. The third point is to actively support SME financing. And there are tools, we will increase it. The fourth point is to adapt the single market to the specificities of SMEs, we talked about the barriers. And then, the fifth point is to develop skills, especially digital skills. I said it and it's very important. I did not talk about it before but it's very important too: sustainability. Because, obviously, when we talk about the building, there is all that is insulation, zero energy buildings, zero CO2. That's a lot of skills to have. This is a subject I have already discussed with Commissioner Nicolas Schmit; we are obviously going to work together on this last point. And then I say it again, but it's an important topic, the SME Envoy I have not named yet, of course, I have not seen anyone yet, it's very

premature - will play a role very important to be the relay of the Commission on the ground.”

Day-to-day functioning of the single market

“I will work on [...] modernisation of the Internal Market. There is still a lot to be done. We need to achieve the critical mass. Obviously, we need to lower barriers [...]”

“[...] all sectors of our economy [...] are affected by the digital. Therefore, my role will be to help entire industry in its transformation.”

“For the single market within this portfolio, I would say that what I want is a three stroke engine it is about protection, transformation, and then looking to the future.”

“First of all protection, so for the Internal Market and the rules that pertain, allow millions of products to be sold and bought every day, whilst bringing about consumer protection. This Internal Market protection is also for European workers who may freely provide their services in all Member States of the Union through the recognition of their professional qualifications.”

“We also have to ensure that rules of the Internal Market are properly applied so that they can continue to promote convergence and growth for all the countries of the Union. I stress all countries, without bringing prejudice to the protection of workers and their work conditions.”

“I will also ensure that the single market protects from the competition from outside when it is unfair.”

“It is a question of anticipating and accompanying this transformation, which is also an opportunity to help all those who need to qualify themselves or requalify or reskill for new jobs. The third challenge, the social challenge, will be just as important to my portfolio as the other two, the environmental and the digital challenges.”

“I would like to indicate very clearly that I am against any new barriers. It is a sensitive topic. We sometimes saw barriers being raised and some states did not play according to the rules. Therefore, I will support the Parliament in the effort to make sure that the rules are respected.”

“I would like to indicate very clearly that I am not going to reopen the Services Directive. [...] However, I plan to improve its implementation because it is there and should be applied according to the rules.”

“I will fight against regional protectionisms.”

“I gladly accept the obligation [to remove obstacles to cross-border service provision].”

Level playing field

“Let me say on this that we have to support a new growth strategy for Europe. The single market should have favourable rules for all companies, and I stress all companies. Small, medium and large.”

Defence industry and space

Oversight of the European Defence Fund

“Obviously, the subject of defence will be an absolutely major point, thanks to the European Defense Fund which will benefit, I will be particularly careful, to all SMEs.”

Strong and innovative space industry

“Let me be clear: the space industry is absolutely essential. Europe is the second largest continent in the world in terms of space, and it will remain so. This is essential for our autonomy, for our independence.”

“To project oneself, it is finally to show ambition in defense industry, in the field of space. Europe must of course have autonomous access to space, but also continue to invest in world-class systems such as Copernicus or Galileo. Obviously, I'm going to work on it.”

Tourism

“Our goal must be to create [...] a value chain strategy, and value chains in all sectors, [including] tourism, which will have to accompany the transformation of the entire ecosystem in the face of mass tourism and the emergence of new platforms, in order to maintain Europe as the first global destination in the tourism sector.”

Conflict of interest and ethics

“It means very precisely that I sold through the market all the shares I owned, even before I came to you. I also resigned from all my mandates, I say all. [...] On this point, I also want to be clear: this eventuality is strictly impossible. There are rules that have anticipated these issues within the European Commission. These are very specifically Articles 2.6 and 4 of the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. I will simply be held, like all the other commissioners, to respect them scrupulously and transparently. So, as provided for by the code of conduct, on any financial subject directly related to the company I just left or one of its subsidiaries, I will automatically recuse myself, in agreement with the president.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of **YLVA JOHANSSON** Commissioner-designate Home Affairs



The commissioner-designate, Ylva Johansson, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. 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:

- General approach
- Common European values
- A fresh start on migration and
- Internal security

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](#).



General approach

"I'm committed to a solid and evidence-based [...] policy-making in the areas covered by my portfolio. My aim is to apply the principles of better regulations to the preparation of future proposals in my portfolio."

"[...]it's important for me to have a gender perspective in all actions that we take."

Common European values

"The European Union is based on values, and these must be our guiding principles. I will not only defend and speak up loudly for these values inside the European Union, but also to the rest of the world. For me, it's crucial to protect our democracies against populism and extremism and to always speak up for human rights."

"The best interest of the child and a gender perspective are preconditions for what we do and need to be present in all our policy-making and that I will assure you."

A fresh start on migration

New Pact on Migration and Asylum

"My top priority [...] is to develop the new pact on migration and asylum. It's going to be difficult, but [...] failure is not an option[...] We must have a common European pact on migration and asylum."

"I must rely on the willingness of Member States to welcome resettled migrants. We have had an increase in the number of resettlements in the last years in the EU. I'm proud of that. I think that we should continue further along that way [...]"

"[...] let me be clear on one thing: the solidarity mechanism is not voluntary in the European Union and should not be."

Relaunch the reform of asylum rules

"[...] each Member State has the obligation to receive their asylum applications, to process these applications and to establish whether people will return or if it's not possible to effect the return on account of the principle of non-refoulement. [...] The Commission can help and facilitate the Member States in dealing with this, but [...] This is something for each Member State. It cannot be done by the Commission."

Close loopholes between asylum and return rules

"While we must honour our values and legal responsibilities towards those in need of international protection, we also have to ensure that those not eligible to stay are returned. Last year, only one third of those ordered to leave were actually returned."

"Yes, I will step up with the efforts on return. I think, [...] we have to be clearer, we have to have better processes and we have to close the loopholes between those who are eligible to stay and those who have to return."

"I do think that we should develop more readmission agreements with third countries. This is a very important aspect, and the Commission can help to build that. I know that, in some cases, Member States have their own agreements and I think we also need cooperation between the Commission and Member States so that we can find the most efficient way for readmission, because we need that."

Search and rescue

"A crucial element of the new pact on migration and asylum will be a more sustainable, reliable and permanent approach to search and rescue. I have a clear mission to replace ad hoc solutions."

"I know that Parliament had been asking for some guidelines on a clarification, where they have to clarify that genuine humanitarian assistance never should be criminalised. This is an issue which I look forward to looking into more closely and that might be a way forward."

Legal pathways to the European Union

"I will work with Member States to step up resettlement and to look at developing humanitarian corridors for urgent needs."

"It's also through cooperation that, with for example the UN authorities, we can help migrants. I think that we should continue having agreements with third countries, and I think that an important part of that kind of agreement must be to develop legal pathways to the European Union. This is why we also need that kind of cooperation with third countries when it comes to migration."

"I agree that it's important for economic migrants that we should find better ways for our legal pathways to Europe, both for resettlement and for legal migrants that come to work in Europe."

"I am aware of the proposal of humanitarian visas. That could be a discussion that we can continue on."

Stronger cooperation with countries of origin and transit

"EU cooperation with Turkey and Libya is not [...] harming the human rights of migrants. Migrants' rights are being harmed and human rights are being violated, but this is not by the cooperation. It's also through cooperation that, with for example the UN authorities, we can help migrants. I think that we should continue having agreements with third countries[...]. This is why we also need that kind of cooperation with third countries when it comes to migration."

Fight against human traffickers and smugglers

"Saving lives at sea is our moral duty. This is linked to stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers. We need to do more to break up the cruel business model of smugglers and the criminal networks behind"

"I think to destroy the business model of the smugglers is really, really important. We can see that those who are smuggling people are also smuggling other things. These are organised criminals that are really making a lot of money out of this actually, so we have to fight this business model."

"I think it's extremely important that we step up the fight towards trafficking and I must say I am ready to consider new legislative proposals in this area[...]."

Reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency

"[...] to secure our external borders, it's very clear that the Commission has a role to play to assist Member States with protecting the external border. That's why we are stepping up so very much on Frontex, for example. It's, of course, to be able to better protect our external borders and the role of the Commission and the agencies is to do that together with the Member States [...]."

Schengen Area

"[...] swift return to a fully functioning Schengen area without internal border controls will be a key objective for me."

"This hopefully will also pave the way for further enlargement of Schengen."

"[...] the last thing is always to start an infringement procedure. That is the role of the Commission, so that could always be the case. But I do think [...] that shouldn't be my first thing to do. I think I should start with a dialogue with the countries and try to find ways

forward in other aspects before starting an infringement procedure."

Internal security

"[...] we can't face our citizens who are victims of organised crime or terrorism saying 'we couldn't defend you because they used new technology'. I understand this is not what you are saying, but it's important that we can step up to this."

"Too often the most vulnerable members of our society are the victims of those crimes. I firmly believe that society has to protect them and I will be their strongest advocate."

Prevent, prosecute and respond to terrorism

"I will focus on filling the gaps in our approach to EU internal security and to ensure that the Union is equal to the task. My aim is to build an effective security union [...] This means ensuring that the laws in place are effectively implemented. It means closing remaining gaps in our security framework. Organised crime, drugs, human trafficking, child sex abuse and exploitation are all major priorities for me."

"We can see that organised criminals are being more and more professional and developing their business model, and we have to step up to that at European level to be able to fight them in the right way."

"When it comes to terrorist fighters that might come back to their home nation, this is a decision for each Member State to take, but the Commission can help to facilitate cooperation so that people can really be brought to court and be punished for their terrorist actions."

"We must improve the cooperation between the police forces and also together with Europol in the European Union. As I answered to another question earlier, the most urgent thing, I think, is trust."

Fight against radicalisation

"Fighting all forms of radicalisation is also on top of my agenda."

"[...] to fight radicalisation. This, I think, is also very, very important and this is a task that has to be tackled in an holistic approach in each Member State, but the EU can help and can also offer expertise in this area and I think this is very, very important."

"I will work tirelessly to close down the space for terrorists to plan, finance and carry out their attacks."

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Commitments made at the hearing of

JANEZ LENARČIČ

Commissioner-designate Crisis Management



The commissioner-designate, Janez Lenarčič, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Development, and from the Committee on Environment. During the hearing, 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, including:

- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid.

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 he provided [written answers](#).



European Civil Protection

Efficiency and effectiveness

“The EU must upgrade its capacities to be able to help more people in need, swiftly and efficiently.”

“As Commissioner for Crisis Management, as well as the European Emergency Response Coordinator, my first goal will be to support people in need, as rapidly and efficiently as possible, in full respect for humanitarian principles. In this regard, I will maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our crisis response so as to reach as many people in need as possible.”

“I intend to strengthen the EU’s Emergency Response Coordination Centre, so that it can respond swiftly and effectively to a broad range of crises.”

“I intend to work on building the capability of the European Union to respond to such a low probability high impact crisis as a radiological or nuclear one.”

“I intend to work first on making sure that we have the required number of firefighting planes.”

RescUE

“I intend to vigorously pursue a strengthened implementation of rescEU – the enhanced Union Civil Protection Mechanism – in close collaboration with the Member States. We need reinforced capacities to deal with forest fires, acute medical emergencies, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear disasters.”

Disaster preparedness

“Recent events, including the deadly forest fires in Portugal, have shown that we must get better at preventing disasters, and we must be better prepared to respond when prevention fails.”

“There are already things that we can no longer prevent, but we can at least adapt. I will work on that. I will speak with Executive Vice-President Timmermans and argue in favour of including the disaster-risk strategy in all the climate activity of the Union.”

Cooperation with Member States

“We do have to take into account the fact that civil protection is primarily the competence of Member States, and the EU only plays a supporting role. But I intend to take this role seriously and work intensely. I intend to work with the Member States to persuade them that this is something that we need, the whole European Union and its Member States because when things happen, and we are not prepared, it will be too late.”

Humanitarian aid

“I will dedicate all my energies and almost three decades of experience in international and European fora to help alleviate suffering and provide relief to people affected by crises, thereby confirming European solidarity – a value I strongly believe in.”

Humanitarian principles

“The EU is highly respected for its strict adherence to basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. I intend to firmly defend these principles also in the future.”

“Among them is the principle of impartiality, which I intend to vigorously defend. This principle means that we go with humanitarian aid where it is most needed, without regard to any personal characteristics, including religious beliefs.”

“Decisions on allocating humanitarian assistance should be taken independently from the European Union’s other objectives – political, military, economic, strategic, whatever. This independence is something I will defend also at the table of the external action cluster.”

“The adherence to these (humanitarian) principles, including the principle of independence, of neutrality, this is an operational necessity. We cannot afford to be perceived by let’s say any side, anybody involved in an armed conflict, as being on the other side, because if we are perceived as such, we would endanger the access to humanitarian assistance by the affected population. We would endanger the affected population itself and, above all, we would endanger the safety of humanitarian workers. [...] this is the sine qua non for the European Union’s humanitarian aid.”

Humanitarian aid and EU’s external action

“Humanitarian aid is undoubtedly part of the European Union’s external action. However, it is a very special part. It’s a part which is governed with a clear set of principles that are different from whatever guides our other external action activities. So my intention is to work closely with colleagues in this external cooperation cluster, and at the same time to defend the humanitarian space and humanitarian principles.”

International Humanitarian Law

“I will strongly focus on advocating globally in support of international humanitarian law. In my contacts with state and non-state actors, I will firmly urge the preservation of humanitarian space. It is unacceptable that humanitarian actors are increasingly being targeted, and their access to people in need regularly blocked.”

"I intend to work with those organisations that have privileged access to armed actors, be it state armies or non-state armed actors, to draw their attention to the importance of respecting international humanitarian law."

"I intend to [...] insist that such training (missions in the security sector) include topics like international humanitarian law, gender issues."

Humanitarian aid and civil protection

"Our humanitarian aid activities are fully complementary with civil protection activities. There is no contradiction in that. There is room for both tools, both mechanisms when we deal with emergency responses, but also when we deal with measures like prevention and preparedness."

Resilience and disaster preparedness

"I intend to intensify the EU's efforts to prevent disasters from occurring in the first place, while also strengthening our capacity to adapt to a changing environment. In light of climate change projections, protracted conflicts and increasing instability around the world, we – the European Union and its Member States – must work in an integrated manner."

Inter-institutional cooperation

"I can assure you that I have every intention to work with you (the European Parliament) in partnership, to keep you informed, and to listen to your views and concerns."

"I intend to work closely with the High Representative / Vice President and other Members of the college responsible for areas such as climate change, the environment and development. The aim is to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes an integral part of our efforts to enhance the resilience of our societies and ecosystems – starting with the European Green Deal."

Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus

"I see a role for development, the so-called humanitarian development Nexus. I will advocate the involvement of both my colleague for international partnerships, Commissioner-designate Urpilainen, and her Commission services, to get involved as soon as possible from the outset, because if you tackle long-term needs and the root causes of the assistance situation, this can also facilitate the transition from humanitarian aid to development cooperation."

"We need to move people out of the 'emergency ward' as fast as possible into recovery, so that they can benefit from more long-term, sustainable solutions."

Collaboration with local actors

"We must take local specificities into account, deliver the best possible assistance to those in need, while paying particular attention to the most vulnerable groups, like women and children."

"I want to do more to empower local actors in delivering aid on the ground. They know the context best, they can work more efficiently, and they know what works."

"I will consistently promote the inclusion and engagement of local partners, both in humanitarian activities as well as in building their capacities in this field and including them in national coordinating mechanisms, for instance, so that they participate in a very active manner in the entire cycle of humanitarian assistance."

Management of EU funding

"I want to build on the strong support the European Union's humanitarian aid already enjoys among European citizens, and I want to reassure them that every single euro spent in this area is a euro well spent. Our most important audience should be EU citizens and beneficiaries. I will, therefore, place high priority on communication with them."

"I will guarantee that funding is disbursed to those in need, transparently and on the grounds of sound financial management."

Collaboration with international partners

"We rely on our partners, partners that come from the United Nations system, like UNICEF, like UNHCR, like the World Food Programme."

"The United Nations, and in particular its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should have the overall coordinating role (in the international humanitarian universe). It will be one of my first steps if I'm confirmed to enter into contact with the United Nations and its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs."

Collaboration with NGOs

"NGOs are important actors, especially in the area of humanitarian assistance. We have the most positive experience with working with NGOs; they are our trusted, reliable, effective partners."

"Humanitarian activity should never be subject to criminal sanctions. [...] People cannot be prosecuted for their efforts in the humanitarian field."

Humanitarian aid and migration

“Humanitarian aid is not a migration management instrument. The European Union has other instruments for that area, and humanitarian aid is not one of them.”

“When we assess whether there is a need for humanitarian assistance, we usually focus on people that are forcibly displaced, mainly refugees. That doesn’t mean that we would deny humanitarian assistance to migrants, let’s say economic migrants. [...] we provide humanitarian assistance on the basis of the need and not of the status.”

“I will pursue the principled position when it comes to returns. That means we will support returns and promote returns that are safe, that are dignified and that are sustainable, and – perhaps even more importantly – that are voluntary.”

The role of the private sector

“We should look at the possibility of involving the private sector. When we do so, one thing should be made clear: this should not be done at the expense of our adherence to the principles that govern humanitarian assistance. That’s clear.”

“Nobody should be in a position to make business, so to say, out of humanitarian assistance, that should also not be possible. It should not be an option. Humanitarian aid is a noble mission. It is not a commercial activity and should never become one.”

Climate change

“We need to do much more and much faster in the area of facing the challenges posed by the impact of climate change that we already feel.”

“I do commit to work, especially with the United Nations because the United Nations is the custodian of the UN Convention on the status of refugees. I will work with our partners on the definition of the phenomenon that you describe (people who have been displaced due to climate change) because one thing is clear: these people need protection.”

Women and girls

“I cannot imagine humanitarian aid without addressing, taking special care to address the specific needs of

vulnerable groups, especially women and girls. [...] So our humanitarian aid should bear in mind this specific situation of women and girls, and should include measures in all the stages of our humanitarian work – prevention, protection. [...] We should bear in mind these special needs, and in my view these special needs also include sexual and reproductive health services whenever we are dealing with victims of sexual and gender-based violence.”

Education

“Education will be one of my priorities when I go about the humanitarian aid. Traditionally, humanitarian aid was focused on food, shelter, water and sanitation, and basic healthcare. But we know that when September comes, kids have to go to school, they cannot wait for the humanitarian situation to be solved and for development to take place and so on.”

“There is no distinction when it comes to education, absolutely no distinction on the basis of gender. Not at all. This is one of the key European values and I will insist that we provide education in emergency situations, that we deploy sufficient funding for that, because we cannot afford to lose generations of children who don’t go to school because they are in emergency situations. We should work on expanding this concept of education in emergencies.”

Financing of humanitarian aid

“I will insist on faithful implementation of all the commitments that the EU entered into, and in particular of the Grand Bargain.”

“We need to move towards the needs of the NGOs, but at the same time demand the right measures of control and assurances with regard to the financial management of the funds that are actually EU taxpayers’ funds.”

Armed conflicts

“It will be my duty if I’m Commissioner for humanitarian aid and crisis management to point out the fact that yes, we should behave consistently, we should not export arms in such a way that would aggravate a humanitarian crisis.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of

JUTTA URPIILAINEN

Commissioner-designate

International Partnerships



The Commissioner-designate, Jutta Urpilainen, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on 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:

- Building sustainable partnerships.

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](#).



Building sustainable partnerships

Comprehensive strategy for Africa

"If confirmed as Commissioner, it is my intention to build on the EU-Africa Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, towards a comprehensive European strategy for Africa. In this effort, I will work alongside the High-Representative and Vice-President and other fellow Commissioners. The partnership with our neighbouring continent has deepened economically to the benefit of both African and European citizens, with the private sector involved in creating jobs and providing new skills. I want to continue on this path, deepening our mutual interests and our capacity to reap opportunities jointly. We must turn our backs on the old narrative of Africa as a continent of instability and poverty. Instead we have to welcome, with open arms, Africa as a young continent of hope and prosperity."

"I think that in that comprehensive strategy for Africa we need to have agriculture involved, we need to have trade involved, we need to have environmental aspects involved. I think that that strategy gives us a new opportunity also to support agriculture in Africa. So I think that's the one new tool we are able to use."

"When it comes to the role of Africa, I see that the future of Africa is the future of Europe. These two continents are connected to each other. So, of course, I would like to change the narrative, [...]. There are 1.2 billion people living in Africa and over half of them are under 25 years old. So it's a continent of opportunities and, of course, we need to support that positive narrative."

"[...]my personal view is that an Africa strategy – a comprehensive strategy for Africa – is one tool for that. It's one tool to have a partnership with Africa but also to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It should be a comprehensive strategy so that different political policy sectors are part of that approach. Trade needs to be present, agriculture, the environment and so on. This is something I'm starting to prepare, together with High-Representative/Vice-President Borrell, but I want to stress the importance of the commitment of the whole College. It can't be my process; it can't be our process. It needs to be the process of the whole College."

"I personally see [...] that transparency is a very important value for me, and I also understand that in the future, of course, if we are thinking about what will be the future of the Africa Trust Fund or generally different kinds of trust funds, I think that Parliament should have an important role."

Post-Cotonou Agreement

I will also make it my priority to conclude negotiations on the post-Cotonou Agreement. We need to complete a modern, strategic and influential alliance between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific States on the international stage – one that serves our common interests and all our people. And let me assure you today that I will not waiver in my commitment to the appropriate parliamentary dimension of this future partnership. The European Union draws its strength from all its institutions. So I want to emphasise my commitment to working with the other institutions towards the same objective. We will cement the EU as a world leader in international cooperation and development support. As a parliamentarian, I truly believe in representative democracy, and I will do my utmost to make the special relationship between the Commission and the European Parliament ever stronger and deeper."

"I also see that the parliamentary dimension has to be present in future ACP cooperation. It has to be part of that cooperation. [...]. I think that the most important thing for me is to take care that somehow, in one way or another, the parliamentary dimension will be present. This is something we will definitely discuss if I start my work as a Commissioner at the beginning of November. It will be one of my priorities. I intend to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly in November in Rwanda"

Comprehensive partnership with countries of migration origin and transit

"[...] around 85% of migrants are living in the developing countries. So I think through development cooperation we can also support those countries – so countries of origin, but also countries of transit."

"We need to respect the rule of law and human rights. That's very, very clear to me, and of course, I'm very committed to that approach as a Commissioner-designate"

"I don't really believe that only conditionality could solve the migration crisis or migration generally [...]. So from that perspective, as I said earlier, I think the Commission should have one migration policy, and of course the whole college is representing that policy and development cooperation and development aid is one part of that package, but it can't be the only tool. So for me that is very clear."

Sustainable Development Goals

“The European Commissioner for International Partnerships delivers on the implementation of SDGs in the world. My ambition is to eradicate poverty through international cooperation and development support. Our global responsibility is set out in the Treaties and in our alliance of values of human rights and human dignity. My ambition is to do it in a strategic and effective manner, ensuring it evolves with new global realities”.

“Back in 2015, when the global community moved from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, it abandoned the formula of ‘north-south’, ‘donor-recipient’, ‘developed-developing’. Instead, the global community set out a universal, ambitious and far reaching blueprint agreed by all and for all. As a European Commissioner, I would make sure that the EU is a reliable and solid ally for partner countries in their SDG journeys.”

“Policy coherence is important, and [...] we need to improve policy coherence in everything we do.”
 “[...]without policy coherence we are not able to achieve the sustainable development goals. So, [...] I see Agenda 2030 as a kind of compass. It’s a framework through which we should see and analyse all the policy work we are doing in different spectrums. Of course, we cannot do this just via the European institutions: the Member States need to be part of that process. And, [...] joint planning, joint programming, and then also joint follow-up so that we are able to see the results and achievements, is an important tool to be used. [...] Without policy coherence, including agriculture, trade, external relations, we are not able to achieve sustainable development goals. It’s the key. “[...]”

“I will focus on SDGs, fighting inequality and poverty eradication”. “[...]my personal commitment will be to fight against inequalities, because I think this is a huge challenge, not only for the middle-income countries but also almost in every European Union Member State. So these will be the guiding principles for me, that we are able to fight against inequality with different kinds of tools.”

“[...] if we want to achieve the sustainable development goals by the year 2030 we need to get the private sector involved, that is necessary. Otherwise, we won’t achieve the sustainable development goals. Action has already been taken through the alliance initiative made by President Juncker. I think the results have been quite good. But in the coming years we need to get more investments to Africa and, of course, a private sector has to be part of that approach. [...] So we all understand that, even if we are able to increase the public finances

to development cooperation, we are not surviving. So we need to have the private sector involved, but of course we also need to have regulations and rules”

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

“[...] let me assure you today of my deep commitment to prioritising gender equality and mainstreaming it in all our policies and programmes”.

“Sexual and reproductive health will be a central focus of our work for gender equality, that’s very clear for me. [...]I think the Spotlight initiative is an important initiative, and I’m very committed to continuing that work in the future. I also see that in the field of gender equality and gender parity we need strong partnerships around the world. Access to health services is [...] of course something I would like to improve and strengthen [...], because I think that to be able to access health services is a basic right for all of us, and it should also be a basic right in our partner countries.”

“I can promise you, here in front of the Parliament, that we are going to make a Gender Action Plan III. This is something I will propose and I’m very committed to preparing, so I think that is one tool for us to provide and promote gender equality.”

“Gender equality is a key priority for me, so of course I will try to look for more resources for that as well. I fully agree with you that we need to mainstream gender equality. We have to remember that gender equality is part of the Sustainable Development Goals. We have all committed ourselves to those goals, so also from that perspective, I believe that if we want to improve the living conditions and political or any kind of participation of women, we need to have this kind of holistic approach and I’m ready to work on that.”

Supporting civil society around the world

“Civil society organisations are perhaps our greatest allies and must be at the heart of the European Union’s work on international cooperation and development. It is in everyone’s interest to involve them as much as possible in policy-making and the design and implementation of our programme. We need politics for our planet, for humankind. European citizens are expecting us to act. The youth – they want more. Our children deserve that we do our best. I want to build trust together with you – trust, that our partners see a strong EU delivering SDGs and fighting poverty. Trust, that our citizens understand the reasoning and results of our development and cooperation work. Trust between people and institutions, because a more equal world is achieved only together.”

"[...] we need to cooperate with international organisations, civil society, national governments and so on. Because only through cooperation are we able to achieve results."

"[...] civil society and NGOs are doing excellent work in many very difficult and fragile countries and areas. So, of course, I'm willing to cooperate with them and other stakeholders as well and also learn more from the experience of our small and big Member States."

Facilitate a swift agreement on the post-2020 Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

"I intend to work with you and others to facilitate an agreement on the neighbourhood development and international cooperation instrument."

"I am very committed to improving our transparency"

"[...] I'd do my best to reach a common understanding with all the institutions, but we need first to get the MFF ready and negotiated because, of course, NDICI will be part of the MFF."

"I definitely want to do everything I can to increase financial resources for the least developed countries in the world. We have committed ourselves to a target of 0.15 or 0.2%, but unfortunately we haven't achieved that, and that's something we need to work together on in the future."

"I will commit to using our assistance also for leveraging more domestic revenue and more private-sector capital"

"I will continue driving work with Member States on joint analyses, joint programming and joint implementation, as well as on achieving the Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% of Gross National Income."

"I personally believe that we should integrate finance ministers and heads of States into this 0.7 target discussion and I'm ready to try to do that."

"I'm ready to commit myself – to use, through NDICI, this 20% of our financing for human development. This is important for me. What concerns me is the quality of education, because it's not only a question of access to education, but also of the quality of education[...]. For me it's very clear that education is key for poverty reduction and will therefore be my priority."

"I know that the European Union is using over 20% of its development funding for climate environment already, but I fully agree with you that we need to do more." "I know that the European Union is supporting oceans, and the development amount is something like EUR 720 million – so quite a lot, but definitely this will be very close to my heart in the future."

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Commitments made at the hearing of

KADRI SIMSON

Commissioner-designate Energy



The Commissioner-designate, Kadri Simson, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). 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:

- Safe, secure and sustainable energy; and
- Empowering people and regions.

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](#).



Safe, secure and sustainable energy

Energy-efficiency and renewable-energy legislation

“Energy efficiency remains a priority. The principle ‘energy efficiency first’ should be taken seriously across the board. Improving the energy performance of buildings and speeding up renovation rates can be a game changer. The obstacles are well known, but we can explore new solutions, especially in financing. Good examples in local and social housing can be found in many member countries.”

“I am convinced that a genuine Internal Market brings significant benefits and is essential in promoting renewable deployment.”

“[...] we also have to do more to accommodate renewables: we have to invest into research and innovation for providing storage for renewables.”

To speed up the deployment of clean energy

“The thousands of people who take to the streets in Europe and around the world remind us constantly that there is nothing more urgent than climate and energy action. This is the number one concern of European citizens. That is why the President-elect has identified the European Green Deal as a flagship priority for her Commission. Energy policy will be essential to deliver on this priority. I know from personal experience – I was the Minister for Economy and Infrastructure, also responsible for energy – how challenging it is to work in this field. I know how important the task ahead is and how enormous the responsibility it entails.”

“I embrace the mission of making Europe a climate neutral continent by 2050.”

“I can confirm to you that this Commission will be very committed to our climate targets, not only at my level – responsible for energy, but this is the commitment of the President-elect. This is the overarching priority. This will be the main responsibility for Vice-President Frans Timmermans, who is responsible for the Green Deal.”

“There will be a climate law and there will be a clear action plan, but my responsibility as the Commissioner responsible for energy is also to ensure that, in fulfilling all those targets, we still stay in the position where our energy security is good, our customers will have affordable prices and our industry will remain competitive compared to other regions in the world.”

Regional cooperation

“If appointed Commissioner, I intend to mobilise energy policy in the service of the climate neutral objective by

further developing an integrated, interconnected and properly functioning Single Market.”

“In the electricity market we need a power system largely based on renewables with improved energy storage and increased interconnectivity. There are still too many blockages to cross-border trade and bottlenecks that need to be removed. We must make sure that interconnectivity targets are reached and that 70% of interconnector capacity is available to the market. I will endeavour to strengthen regional cooperation, in particular the existing four high-level groups and make them work in greater synergy.”

Liquefied natural gas

“Talking about gas, we also have to keep in mind that it is very important to diversify the different sources.”

“There is indeed a paragraph in my mission letter about promoting liquefied natural gas (LNG) and I do see it as a way of securing our energy security that our gas supplies will come from diversified sources and to different parts of the European Union.”

Energy Taxation Directive

“About energy taxation, this is also mentioned in my mission letter, and I will closely cooperate with Commissioner-designate Gentiloni about that. It is true that the Energy Taxation Directive that is already 15 years old doesn’t help us in the way it could to reach our energy and climate targets. I do especially believe the difficulty is that it still allows tax exemptions in some ways for fossil fuels, and that makes competition between fossil fuels and renewables difficult. We should address this issue.”

Enhancing nuclear safety and safeguards

“Nuclear power will be part of the energy mix and the energy mix is decided by each Member State.

So I know that right now we have countries who are phasing out their nuclear power and there are Member States who are planning to build new plants to replace phasing-out coal power plants – there is Finland, which has just opened the new Olkiluoto power plant.”

“So it is a decision for every individual Member State as to how will they use their energy mix and what will be the sources. At EU level we have to secure that nuclear power plants are safe, that the waste management is safe for our environment – and not only inside [the] European Union, but also in our close neighbourhood.”

“So what can we do about new nuclear power plant sites that are built in third countries? We can provide assistance so that the building and maintenance will take place under the highest security standards. We can provide also financial assistance to the sites in third countries so that these procedures are made, and of course we can insist that all their test results will be taken very seriously.”

Empowering people and regions

Consumers at the heart of our energy system

“We can do more for the open and competitive market if there are many providers, then the prices should be more affordable for consumers and enterprises. And if our markets are interconnected – and they are not yet; there are missing links and bottlenecks – but if they are interconnected then this helps to provide renewable energy for larger markets. This was the main goal of the green energy package: that consumers will be in the heart of the energy market and the price will stay affordable.”

“Being responsible for energy, I will have to ensure that in parallel to those ambitious climate targets, we secure our consumers and our businesses with affordable and competitive energy. For that we have to invest in our energy networks, but at the same time we have to make use of the existing framework.”

“[...] I will be attentive to energy prices and costs on consumers and businesses and, in particular, to the impact that climate transition has on energy-intensive industries.”

“It is also important to show that consumers can benefit from this transition and we have to take advantage, too, of all the newest innovation. So this might also be part of the European Innovation Initiative – like solar tiles that provide both insulation and renewable energy.”

“Well, energy consumers will be at the heart of our energy policy. My task is to provide affordable energy by diversifying our sources, by making policies that all energy grids, DSOs and providers will be very transparent, by making investments that will help to upgrade our grids, and by building the missing links and interconnections.”

Just Transition Fund

“The Just Transition Fund will indeed be very close to my heart, because this is the tool that we can use to secure that during our transition towards carbon neutrality, no region, no country will be left behind.”

“The President-elect has committed to establish a Just Transition Fund to support coal and carbon-intensive regions and islands affected by the transition. [...] I see this Fund as a way to enable regions to develop and finance concrete projects, which can transform economies and create jobs.”

“We can build on the existing Coal Regions in Transition Initiative to make the Fund a success. To me, fairness also means a renewed fight against energy poverty.”

“[...] I see that the Just Transition Fund will build on the project for coal regions in transition, and it will also help small islands which do not have connections with the mainland. This should help each region to be better prepared for the transition from fossil fuels towards renewables. The exact amount of this fund is under negotiation, but because it will be part of [the] next MFF, it is an initiative that will be on our table in the first weeks of the next Commission’s mandate. So I predict that, by the end of November, there will already be concrete answers. But I will do my best to make sure that it will be big enough to support those regions to prepare for the transition.”

Energy Poverty Observatory

“It is not acceptable that 8% of the European population – this is 50 million people – are unable to properly heat their homes, and many more Europeans than this struggle to pay energy bills.

I want to use the Energy Poverty Observatory and rapidly implement the legislative provisions on energy poverty. I intend to engage more with the Member States and the Covenant of Mayors. The report by Theresa Griffin presented last year has laid the groundwork for this.”

“Yes, I do agree that energy provides social inclusiveness and that’s why it is a very needed service. At the same time when we are talking about energy poverty, we are not talking about energy as a commodity, as such, we are also talking about taxes, levies, grid tariffs and this all together has to be under our attention and you asked what we can do concretely for those people who are in trouble paying their heating bills. We can provide more efficient ways for heating. This is not something we can do everywhere tomorrow, but there are different technologies that will bring down heating costs and of course once again the renovation of a building stock plays an important role too.”

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Commitments made at the hearing of **VIRGINIJUS SINKEVIČIUS** Commissioner-designate Environment, Oceans and Fisheries



The commissioner-designate, Virginijus Sinkevičius, appeared before the European Parliament on 3 October 2019 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committees on ENVI and PECH. During the hearing, 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, including:

- Conserving Europe's natural environment; and
- Prosperous and sustainable fishing and a thriving blue economy.

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 [Commissioner-designate hearings website](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



Conserving Europe's natural environment

Delivering the new Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

"In my mission letter it's clearly stated: deliver the EU biodiversity strategy. It is important that, working together with Frans Timmermans, we will make sure that it's actually included in other legislation: agriculture, energy, transport and so on, basically everything that is causing trouble today and leading to the sixth mass extinction."

"[...] we will definitely have targets and they will be ambitious—because there is no other way—for 2030. [...] They have to be measured and monitored. It is important to have a review mechanism."

"[...] targets for protected areas can be increased. For the oceans and sea basins, they can be increased, for example, to 30%. But I think I'll definitely be flexible here regarding biodiversity 2030 targets, and I'll be open to discuss these also with the committee."

"[...] it is of the utmost importance, talking about major causes, because it's land and sea use change. [...] So we have to fight the causes and [...] that will need funding – especially recreation of species, Natura 2000 areas and proper protection, that will need funding."

"I will definitely be vocal about the need for an increased budget [...] strategic goals have to be funded sufficiently."

"We'll have to check and see whether Member States are using all of the means that are granted to them [for the implementation of the Habitats Directive]."

"[...] we have to reassess our footprint [concerning deforestation], and I will definitely be working closely with the other Commissioners. It is important that resources – funding – that we are allocating to other countries won't actually lead to deforestation. [...] it is important to improve labelling and [...] have deforestation-free supply chains. But, in order to reach that, we have to improve monitoring mechanisms, and I'll definitely be working on that."

"EU's ambitions for the CoP 2020 to the Convention on Biological Diversity

"[...] it is important to have measurable goals that can be monitored. [...] If I am confirmed in post, I would love to travel to China not on my own but with a delegation from the ENVI Committee so that we represent a strong position with, of course, a discussion and dialogue on possible goals."

"When I was thinking about what those goals might be – and this is purely my opinion – I think 30% would be a great goal for the percentage of protected areas in the world, and then 70% sustainably maintained. On top of

that, I think we have to have a separate article on Arctic policy."

Deliver on the zero-pollution ambition

"I look forward actually to including REACH as one of the key pillars of the non-toxic strategy. On the basis of what we have in REACH in terms of data, we can build a very strong non-toxic environment strategy, especially with regard to chemicals, and then even go beyond, for example to endocrine disruptors. These are currently under review, but as soon as we finish we will definitely be working on them."

"[...] pharmaceuticals are already included in the water legislation but also the directive for water is undergoing its check and we'll see if there is a need. After the check we can then say, is there a need to include additional pharmaceuticals or not? As I said, I'm open for additional discussions with the Environment Committee on this issue after the check is done and then present it to you."

"Specifically on endocrine-disruptors, of course, it is important to fully implement the new strategy, which would be a serious step forward. [...] And I think that endocrine-disruptors have to be standardised and perceived as the CMR in the same level. [...] It is important that endocrine-disruptors would be prohibited from toys, cosmetics which we apply directly on our skins, food-contact materials."

"I think we should help our industry to be competitive. Let's look where the industry is going – hydrogen, electricity. [...] we already see that they [our car manufacturers] are shifting. We have to help them through research. We have to help them through public transport, which has to be green and, of course, uses clean alternative fuels."

"Regarding the Euro7 standard, I think, and there is a mandate for it, that in five years it will be possible to have Euro7, working together with the Commissioner-designate for the Internal Market."

"Regarding environmental laws, the President-elect was very clear and it's stated in the mission letter as well: zero tolerance for non-compliance. [...] I will definitely be looking at all the possible tools in the toolbox."

"[...] I will present for the College's endorsement a clean air action plan, setting out, first of all, a zero-tolerance policy on non-compliance with the current air quality standards. We have to address the EU legislative framework, mapping it and adapting it to the latest WHO recommendations."

"Our journey to a green climate neutral planet has started - it will be hard. As a Commissioner, I will do everything in my power to take us down that road."

"The new Circular Economy Action Plan

"It is important also to mention the construction sector, which is responsible for one third of waste, and it will be among the priorities in the action plan as well."

"[...] the circular economy will only be successful when we actually find a way to have a non-toxic cycle. So basically, with plastics that are made of friendly chemicals –let's call them this—we know that we can reuse them in many, many other ways, and they can then be applied in different sectors. This is the only way for a successful circular economy, and throughout my mandate I will be reaching for that."

"I will definitely ensure that, in decreasing the administrative burden, we don't lower our environmental legislation, which is important and which we will have to increase."

Addressing the issue of microplastics and aiming at plastic-free oceans

"I am going, of course, to seek the full implementation of the plastic strategy, but the next step has to be microplastics, especially in textiles, tyres and pellets, that's where the main source is; biodegradable plastics, [...], we have to establish a clear regulatory framework and identify some applications for which biodegradable plastics are made of – chemicals, mainly – and then of course plastic packaging."

"[...] in the UN and the G7 but also in bilateral relations with our partners, we have a great example to show, a great example to follow and I will definitely do so."

"[...] under the EU Green Deal, I will, under my mandate, develop an initiative for clean, healthy and of course sustainably managed seas and oceans. It is important for reaching the 30% goal of marine protected areas under Natura 2000, and not only that 30%, but, of course, it has to be very well maintained, very well implemented."

Prosperous and sustainable fishing and a thriving blue economy**Focus on the full implementation of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy**

"[...] we have to assess as many as possible stocks, because stocks are not assessed properly, and if we will gather as much as possible data, then we can provide a proper sustainability approach to fishermen and -women communities."

"I want to work with you to make sure that our fisheries control system is fit for purpose and ensures a level playing field. I will address shortcomings wherever I find them."

"It is a sensitive period we're living in: Brexit might happen, and we will have it in that period where EMFF funding has ended, and it will only start in 2021, so a further delay of the EMFF funding would also not be acceptable."

"We will be prepared, of course, to talk with Great Britain and there will be negotiations on a Brexit deal. That could be a Brexit with a deal, which would, of course, be easier and we would have a transition time. With a no deal Brexit, there are a few scenarios which will be discussed afterwards. But let me assure you that we are prepared."

"Regarding the EMFF and possible building of new boats, we need to have a further discussion on that because [...] I'm not sure that building new boats would definitely go in line with our goals which are agreed under the CFP implementation."

"In regard to more selective gear, I think we definitely should look for it through research, through science, but improve it, and this is where we can definitely invest public money – into research, into new decisions, which will help our fishermen and fisherwomen fish more sustainably and more selectively and provide the best possible solutions."

"Indeed, this problem [funding for the scrapping old vessels] will be one of the first things to tackle if I am confirmed."

Evaluate the Common Fisheries Policy by 2022 to identify how to address issues not sufficiently covered in the current policy

"By 2022, I will evaluate the Common Fisheries Policy to identify how to address issues not sufficiently covered in the current policy, because we need policy that works for our fishermen and women, our coastal communities and our environment."

"I will have it in my mandate to review it by 2022. We will definitely address the shortcomings [...]."

"By striking a balance between social, economic and sustainability concerns, we can ensure for them that there is a future within the sector and then, of course, through the EMFF funding and through other funds, we can improve conditions and help our fishermen and fisherwomen out there."

"It's women, and they have to be paid, they have to be equally respected, and I will try to do it by arranging it, first of all, that we have to have in advisory councils, equal representation. In our events and so on, setting by example of course, we have to go even deeper and discuss it with the sector and with the stakeholders from small to large."

"First of all, the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is important and it will include oceans."

“My greatest ambition, if confirmed, would be to make the Green Deal a reality on the ground. A deal that works for oceans, for the environment and for our citizens who should be front and centre throughout.”

“Indeed, climate change is the reason behind it, the water temperature in the Baltic Sea has risen and this has had an enormous effect on the eastern cod.”

Contribute to the 'Farm to Fork' strategy on sustainable food

“I see my mandate in ‘Farm to Fork’ as concerning the fishing sector, so that we know and we can trace fish from the net to the can, and so that we know what is being served up here in the EU.”

“[...] I want to invest in the potential of sustainable seafood to deliver farm to fork strategy on sustainable food.”

“Regarding traceability, I think we all agree that we like good quality food and it is important for our EU standards to be maintained. One of the key things is, of course, labelling, so that a consumer knows what he is buying and that the green label really means something.”

“Origin, as we said, is very important, but we have to make sure, first of all, that what is on a label is true information. This is the important step to tackle and I think it is possible to do through digitisation processes for our market.”

Lead the way on international ocean governance

“Our efforts for sustainable fisheries and healthy productive oceans must not stop at our borders. The EU is a global leader in ocean governance. I would use that leadership to enforce our sustainability principles worldwide, to make sure that we can deliver on sustainable development goals for life below water.”

“We know the main issues that have to be tackled: over-fishing [...]. We also have to improve the international legal framework so that not only EU Member States will

be on board, subordinate to and observing the rules, but the others as well.”

“On the high seas and pristine areas, like the Antarctic, we need new rules for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on the high seas.”

“I will push for more Marine protected areas, and for more effective management in our waters.”

Take a zero-tolerance approach to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

“And I will continue our fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.”

“It is important to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. So, I think this is the best way to spend resources: helping our partners, as well, fight with the causes, help them by giving best advice, by showing our best practices and having them on board, that’s the only way. Of course, the EU has a unique position to lead this way.”

“First of all, of course, it is going to be important to work closely with the Commissioner-designate for Trade, Phil Hogan, and it is important to raise those questions for attention at the World Trade Organization (WTO).”

“And of course, it is important also to protect our market, as we said, from unsustainable supply chains.”

Find a global agreement to ban fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing, illegal fishing and overcapacity

“I will work with the Trade Commissioner-designate Phil Hogan to reach a global agreement on banning harmful fishery subsidies.”

New approach for a sustainable blue economy

“I will also lead to develop a new approach for a sustainable blue economy. This should bring together everything from marine knowledge and research to maritime spatial planning. Marine renewable energy, blue investment and regional maritime cooperation.”

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Addendum

Changes in the European Commission - 2020

Following the resignation of Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan, Mairead McGuinness was proposed as the new Commissioner in charge of Financial Services, Financial Stability and the Capital Markets Union, while Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis was assigned the trade portfolio.

MEPs held hearings on 2 October to evaluate the candidates. The following pages contain a list of commitments made at these hearings.

For an exhaustive list of all commitments made and positions taken by the candidates, the full verbatim report of each public hearing is available on the dedicated [2020 hearings website](#) of the European Parliament, as are the written questions and answers.

Commitments made at the hearing of

MAIREAD MCGUINNESS

Commissioner-designate

Financial services, financial stability
and the Capital Markets Union



The Commissioner-designate, Mairead McGuinness, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2020 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. 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:

- Banking Union;
- Capital Markets Union and SMEs access to finance;
- Sustainable finance;
- FinTech Strategy and cryptocurrencies;
- Comprehensive approach to fighting money laundering; and
- More resilience to extraterritorial sanctions.

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 European Parliament pages on the [Changes in the European Commission 2020](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



Completing the Banking Union

“One of my key priorities will be to inject fresh energy into completing banking union. [...] I will not shy away from building consensus on banking union [...].”

“[...] if you were to trust in me [...] I can – with you, [...] deliver on banking union and indeed make progress on the capital markets union as well.”

“[...] my priority is that banking union and capital markets union go hand-in-hand [...], and I will [...] do my best to advance these areas in a structured way, working with this committee.”

European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS)

“Agreement on [...] a European deposit insurance scheme (EDIS) is essential. I will work with this Committee and Member States to find a way forward.”

“[...] we need to focus on areas where we have broad support. In that regard, [...] as a priority during my tenure, [...] the work of the Commission will focus on bringing forward a review of the crisis management and deposit insurance framework [...].”

European Stability Mechanism (ESM) reform

“[...] in the short term, my focus will be on finalising the ESM reform package [...]. It is well advanced and it's ready for closure and this includes the common backstop [...] to the Single Resolution Fund (SRF).”

“Agreement on the common backstop to the Single Resolution Fund (SRF) [...] is essential. I will work with this Committee and Member States to find a way forward.”

Non-performing loans (NPLs)

“[...] non-performing loans [...] will receive my highest attention.”

“[...] we do need to find a mechanism [...] to unburden banks with non-performing loans, with sufficient consumer protection when we do that [...].”

“[...] if we turn a blind eye to the problems of non-performing loans, we then have problems in banks [...] but [...] people and their homes should be protected. [...] you'll have a champion in me on that issue.”

“[...] we cannot allow the bundling of people's homes to be sold in a very inappropriate way. That the connection between the borrower and the lender should not be broken when, and if, loans are sold on.”

“[...] I would be absolutely opposed to [...] the bundling of mortgages that have got into trouble, [...] because [of] the pandemic [...].”

“[...] we are working on an action plan on NPLs, which will be coming later in the year. It is being worked on to

provide a collective response to what is happening in all our different Member States.”

“What works, if it's done correctly and which should help the workers and families [...] is that the secondary [NPLs'] markets operate and are regulated, so that we know what's going on. So my commitment [...] is that I would be very mindful of how these secondary markets operate.”

Banks' sovereign exposure

“We have to move ahead with all the other streams, and [...] the treatment of sovereign exposures, amongst other things.”

“[...] we need to look at what impact this has on the financial markets, and we have to work with the supervisors [...] to see if there is any merit in changing from the existing regime [...].”

Capital Markets Union (CMU)

“I fully endorse the recently-launched capital markets union action plan, which outlines a very clear way forward. I hope we can make quick progress on the SME IPO fund, but we will also need to tackle some difficult issues.”

Tackling the barriers of the flow of capital

“[...] we need to look very closely at where the blockages are when it comes to people borrowing across borders. [...] I can give you a commitment to look carefully at this issue [...].”

“[...] one of the [...] reasons we don't have a strong capital market [...] is [...] fear that [people] will not get the right information and make poor investments. [...] we need to look at the impact of inducements [...]. If we don't have the trust of citizens that when they invest they're doing so with full information, then we can't make progress at all. I think it's a high priority for the Commission, and it certainly would be a high priority for me.”

“To break down barriers, we will also need to look at insolvency proceedings, withholding tax procedures and supervision.”

Insolvency proceedings

“I think we can make very important progress towards greater convergence and to make insolvency processes more efficient. [...] But we need to be careful and consider whether we need a new law, or indeed some non-legislative initiatives in this area, [...] I don't have a fixed mind about which is the best way – we need to look at the details. But we do want to avoid legal processes that just impede progress.”

Withholding tax procedures

"I think it's important to address the disadvantages of cross-border investors and find the proposals in the CMU action plan to address these burdensome tax refund procedures, a very good way forward. It won't be very easy to do, but I think it's absolutely essential."

SMEs access to finance

"[...] we should use everything, all efforts, towards giving support to SMEs, whether that is finance, but also advice, guidance and other measures that would help them access capital and markets."

"One of the initiatives [...] is to develop the SME IPO fund, and I think we need to do that."

"[...] what we want to do is to move from a greater reliance on banking finance towards a more balanced situation, so [...] I will do whatever I can to make sure it becomes a reality."

Sustainable Finance

"I will prioritise a new action plan on sustainable finance, accelerate work on an EU green bond standard, eco labels, green, sustainable investments, and improved disclosure of climate and environmental data by companies, helping investors and industry identify sustainable projects."

"[...] We have a lot of work to follow up in on the green-bonds standard and [on] biodiversity, [...] you can count on me [...] to work hard in that direction."

"In relation to the Green Bond Standard, [...] there are three priorities [...] we need it strongly to follow and link with taxonomy, [...] we would want to be market leaders in this, [...] and we would also want to make sure that if you claim to be a Green Bond, that there is verification."

"[...] we no longer can have a situation where a company or a country makes a claim [...], but behind it there is no verification [...]. [...] we have [...] to work quickly but cautiously [...]. I am fully committed to do that."

"[...] sustainability isn't just environment or green, [...] we have to see inclusive society, which is about social sustainability. [...] I support the concept behind a more socially inclusive Europe and that requires a more socially inclusive financial system."

FinTech Strategy and cryptocurrencies

"We need to tackle fragmentation in the single market for digital financial services and strive for a European financial data space to promote innovation."

"[On] cryptocurrencies, we really need to work collectively – Commission, Parliament and Council – to do the right thing for a future which [...] will bring [...] opportunities but [...] risks as well."

"Cryptocurrencies [...] can hide financial fraud. [...] these entities have to be subject to financial supervision."

"We will look carefully at what comes out of [...] the investigations around Wirecard and act accordingly."

Comprehensive approach to fighting money laundering

"Money laundering is part of a criminal chain of activity that wreaks havoc on our society [...] I [...] will continue to work towards a legislative package next year, taking into account this Parliament's resolution in July. We need a single EU rulebook, one that's not overseen just by national supervisors but by a very strong, independent EU anti-money-laundering supervisor. And we need enhanced cooperation between financial intelligence units."

"What I will commit to you is a strong architecture with overall European-level supervision. We will have the national, but we will also have the European."

"The central regulator, supervisor role, would also in my view take control of very risky areas of banking that need central supervision. [...] a central control is vital with linked financial units across our Members States."

"In terms of the instruments to use. I am very open on that. Sometimes if we want absolute clarity we go for a regulation, but we haven't come to a final decision [...]."

"The fact that [...] money laundering persists [...] means that we do need to have sanctions. I will look at this in more detail. [...] but the punishment needs to fit the crime."

"So, what do we do about poor implementation [of anti-money laundering legislation]? [...] I think it's really important that the Commission does work much tougher on this. [...] So I will look at where there are infringement proceedings, I will look at where I think there should be and I can give you that commitment because it is really, really, an area of huge concern [...]."

Extraterritorial sanctions

"[...] I will look at ways to defend ourselves from unwarranted extraterritorial effects on our interests of sanctions adopted by others and will work on our ability to impose sanctions."

Risks to financial stability

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

"[...] we need a strong banking union and a strong capital markets union. [...] and I think that COVID-19 propels us to take brave steps now [...]. For financial stability I think it's important that we move ahead."

"[On] Basel III [implementation] there is a one-year delay – rightly so, because of countries dealing with COVID-19 [...]. I can give you assurances that there will also be an impact assessment, and it will take into account the impact of COVID-19 on banks' financial situation. [...] I think that implementing Basel III in the way that I've mentioned respects our commitments to the process. We will also be very conscious of respecting the fact that the European banking system has a very different structure. So it will be done in a very appropriate way."

"[...] when it comes to shadow banking, we just have to be really mindful of these risks, as [...] that might shift from banks to non-banking sector and [...] review our regulations, our control mechanisms to make sure that they are fit for purpose [...]."

Brexit

"[...] I want to make sure that we have a strong European financial system, and that the services that underpin our financial stability are under our rules and our supervision."

"[...] we certainly will not take risks with financial stability. I think it's also fair to say that we want a cooperative relationship with the United Kingdom, [...] but at the end of the day what I need to do, and the Commission collectively, is to make sure that we look after the interests of the European Union."

"In my view we need to take a precautionary approach, I think we need to build up our own infrastructure because, [...] we do not know what the intention of the United Kingdom is, particularly on financial services, but we do know they plan to diverge."

"[...] unless and until we get clear answers from the United Kingdom about their intentions, whether they intend to deregulate or [...] to diverge slightly or significantly, then we have to be open as to how we respond."

Other relevant issues

Gender balance

"I also think we need to work with colleges and financial institutions and networks effectively to make sure that

women and men – but in terms of the balance in the financial sector we need to look at more women – are pointed in the direction, that they have the skill set."

European commitment and personal independence

"I'm going to be very, very clear on this. If I am approved by this committee, I will be a European Commissioner, defending the European interests, and that's absolutely essential to stress. Commissioners take an oath to leave their national hats at the door. I don't wear one, but I certainly will leave my national hat at the door when we take office."

Taxation

"As a European Commissioner, I can absolutely confirm that I would take a Community approach to taxation."

"[Regarding] country-by-country reporting [...] I believe very strongly in it [...]. We need to move in that direction. [...] We want this to proceed. [...] we have to try very hard. [...] I'm on Parliament's side on this. It's a good initiative. It needs to be done. I hope we can unlock it."

"[...] I would support the work on the financial transaction tax [FTT]. [...] we work and will continue to work on the FTT, see if we can do it in a way that brings in the revenue and also that works not against the financial interests of the European Union in terms of the global financial situation."

"On tax generally [...] work is going on at OECD level. I [...] would like that we do this globally, so that there is a move around [...] taxation of companies in a way that they pay their fair share of tax – and it is transparent. If it doesn't deliver, if the OECD process becomes bogged down in politics, then the European Commission will come forward with taxation proposals, and I support that."

"[...] my commitment to you is that I would strongly support the College's efforts to promote fair, simple and sustainable taxation in line with the Commission's package of July."

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Commitments made at the hearing of

VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS

Commission Executive Vice-President /Commissioner-designate Trade



The Commission Executive Vice-President/Commissioner-designate, Valdis Dombrovskis, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2020 to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on International Trade, in association with the Committees on Foreign Affairs, on Economic and Monetary Affairs, on Development and on Budgets. During the hearing, he made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to his portfolio as Trade Commissioner, as described in the [mission letter](#) sent to him by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- A level playing field for all;
- Strengthening Europe's global leadership;
- Trade for sustainable development and climate action;

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 European Parliament pages on the [Changes in the European Commission 2020](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which he provided [written answers](#).



A new roadmap for the EU trade policy

"[...] I will bring forward a new roadmap for trade policy. This roadmap must fit into our wider plan for sustainable and digital recovery. It must be modern and up to date, in support of our values and wider geopolitical goals" [...] "Europe needs to become more assertive by protecting our companies, securing our strategic interests, strengthening reciprocity and levelling the playing field."

"The public consultation on the trade policy review ends on 15 November. When we have reviewed the findings I will come back to this committee to discuss them with you and your views will be incorporated in the Commission's communication, which we intend to publish in early 2021. The communication will set out trade policy directions that truly respond to the challenges and opportunities of the coming decade – Europe's green and digital decade."

"[...] we will be coming with the communication on the EU's economic sovereignty or autonomy, where strengthening the international role of the euro will be also featuring," [...] "we are discussing open strategic autonomy, when we are discussing the resilience of the EU economy, one of the lessons learned from this crisis is the question of the resilience of supply chains and what we need to do to avoid a situation where we are depending on a single supplier or single supplier country of critical goods, like medical supplies during the COVID-19 crisis, which clearly exposed this weakness." [...] "we are looking at different options. Onshoring, nearshoring, stockpiling, diversifying, shortening supply chains, this is a whole toolkit which we can explore."

"[...] later this month I will launch the Access2Markets portal. This will be a one-stop shop in all EU languages to help SMEs navigate the world of international trade."

Unfair trade practices

"We must strengthen our defence and enforcement; this is how Europe's trade policy will help to build a Europe that protects." [...] "We must also sharpen our trade defence tools. I will support the efforts to launch a new legal instrument dealing with distortions from foreign subsidies in our internal market. I will work with Member States to ensure that screening mechanisms for foreign direct investment are working well on the ground. I will also look for your help to conclude the work on dual-use exports and the International Procurement Instrument. And, to strengthen our hand in defending the EU against unfair practices of others," [...] "the Commission will propose a dedicated anti-

coercion tool as a legislative proposal next year to allow that the EU is able to react effectively to that kind of action [...]."

"steel safeguards: [...] I think we should stick with the WTO framework, and that's why we are currently looking at how we can achieve the same result for the European steel industry through anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures within the WTO rules, instead of stepping out of the WTO rules and risking retaliation. "

Enforcement

"The Chief Trade Enforcement Officer (CTEO) will work to implement our agreements. [...] With your support, I hope we can swiftly agree on an updated enforcement regulation." [...] "we should broaden the scope of the enforcement regulation to cover areas of services and intellectual property, and it also concerns our investment, the international procurement instrument, and we will be coming with a new anti-coercion tool in case third countries, [...] step out of the WTO rules and act in breach of international rules, that we are able to respond in the effective way" [...] "while the role of a CTEO in pre-ratification is something to be explored," [...] "implementation and enforcement of trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapters should be stepped up." [...] "And we will establish a more systemic approach that also involves civil society in enforcement and environmental and labour commitments, [...]."

EU resilience against extra-territorial sanctions

"[...] extra-territorial effects of the third country sanctions. This is definitely a concern, [...] we have a blocking statute as a main instrument to protect our economic operators" [...] "We continue to strengthen the EU's stance, the EU's resilience, vis-à-vis extra-territorial sanctions. This is going to be part of our communication, well according to the current planning we are going to publish in December, which concerns the strengthening of the EU's economic sovereignty or autonomy [...]."

Transparency

"I pledge to maintain a high degree of transparency in my dealings with the European Parliament. I will ensure that you have all the information you need in good time. I want to reassure the group coordinators that I have taken good note of the expectations you expressed in the context of my predecessor's hearing last year."

Strengthening Europe's global leadership

"Only a Europe that is open to the world can shape the trade policy of the 21st century. So I propose to drive forward our trade policy in order to reform the rules-based multilateral order; rethink trade policy to deliver for our sustainability goals; reinforce free and fair trade, by engaging with our partners while at the same time strengthening our trade defence and enforcement; and finally, redouble our leadership in trade by managing our key relationships."

Multilateralism and the WTO

"[...] one of my first priorities will be to reform the rules-based system of global economic governance. [...] make it fit for today's world. This means a WTO that settles disputes quickly and efficiently, with strong rules to ensure a level playing field. A WTO with Sustainable Development Goals and climate change at the core of its work." [...] "on the WTO dispute settlement mechanism: [...] We are ready to engage with the US to discuss how exactly this appellate body should look and address the shortcomings which we agree exist in the way this settlement system was functioning before [...]."

"I am happy to announce today that I will launch a WTO trade and climate initiative, focusing on green goods and services." [...] "building on the initiative of environmental goods, [...] we want to expand it not only for goods but also from services, and [...] to have something on the table already for the next Ministerial Council. So we will be working with like-minded countries, with the so-called FAST Group, with the Ottawa Group, and seeking to revitalise this workstream and have concrete proposals."

E-commerce

"[...] I will prioritise negotiations on e-commerce. Of course, it will be very important that we uphold our GDPR rules on personal data protection." [...] "we are discussing in the WTO that the free flow of data should be insured; [...] restrictions have to be in line with international obligations, and the Commission will continue in its role of monitoring and addressing such restrictions in third countries [...]."

"Then bilaterally, yes we have digital trade chapters and digital trade points in our negotiations. I can mention, for example, New Zealand and Australia, where these feature very prominently. [...]"

US

"I will spare no effort in revitalising our strategic partnership with the United States. I will bring a fresh impetus to transatlantic work on trade, technology,

taxation, the reform of the multilateral trading system, including disciplines on industrial subsidies. The recent deal on tariff reduction represents a first step of this renewed cooperation. However, if the US continues to disengage from multilateralism and pursue unilateral actions, the EU will not hesitate to defend its interests and respond in a proportionate way."

"[...] the Airbus-Boeing case. Our approach has been very clear. We prefer a negotiated settlement in this regard." [...] "in the absence of a negotiated settlement, of course we will have no chance but also to impose our tariffs in line with the WTO ruling in the Boeing case. [...]"

"[...] we are working in the OECD context on digital taxation. But in the absence of an international agreement we are ready to put forward our EU proposal [...] and we are engaging with the US also on this [...] to make sure that they are meaningfully engaging in the OECD context to have an international agreement on a digital tax."

China Bilateral Investment Agreement

"[...] we emphasise substance over deadlines. This means that we need to see a significant rebalancing of our economic relations and so significant movement from China on market access to be able to conclude this agreement." [...] "our partnership must be restructured to be reciprocal, balanced and fair. European companies in China need fair treatment and real market access." [...] "we will continue to insist and ensure that we are also making progress on the investment and sustainable development chapter in our agreement with China." [...] "In terms of negotiations, the immediate priority is to finalise the investment agreement with China. [...] from there, we can see how we proceed with investment agreements in the region."

MERCOSUR

"[...] it's important that we have a meaningful commitment from Mercosur countries on deforestation and on the Paris Agreement in order to be able to successfully move forward this ratification" [...] "we will need something real, something which is being implemented, in order to move forward with ratification. So as it stands now, we will not put forward this ratification" [...] "on re-opening of Mercosur. Well that would not be the most straightforward course of action."

Other countries and issues

"[...] agreements with Australia and New Zealand are well underway" [...] "we are pursuing, I would say, strong engagement with relations with Latin America and will continue to do so" [...] "I am committed to reinforcing

our economic partnership agreements with Africa, building resilient value chains and boosting sustainable public and private investment in sectors of mutual interest. Our long-term objective is to achieve a continent-to-continent agreement." [...] "we need enhance our cooperation with our neighbourhood region. [...] Likewise, we must continue to support EU candidates and potential candidates, including through the extension of our autonomous trade measures. I count on the co-legislators to have the new regulation in place in time, and I very much welcome the recent vote in the Committee on International Trade (INTA) in this regard." [...] "our negotiations with the United Kingdom. It is in the strong interest of both sides to construct the closest-possible trade relationship, but I should underline that progress will depend on both sides respecting their commitments under the Withdrawal Agreement."

"[...] we want a reform of the Energy Charter Treaty, to allow members to phase out the protection of investment in fossil fuels, that's the main aim of the reform." [...] "On GSP, we will certainly strengthen the link with sustainability, including the Paris Agreement, in the review of the GSP next year."

Trade and sustainable development

"[...] I am open to explore whether we can already have more [...] enforceable or gradually enforceable TSD chapters, for example in our negotiations with New Zealand." [...] "Then, of course, we must see how we move forward. We have a 15-point trade and sustainable development action plan, established in 2018 with a review in 2023. [...] I will bring forward its review to 2021, and also factor in COVID-19 effects and current priorities. Then, looking at future agreements and also what you asked about possibilities for a more granular enforcement – so, something between a simple dialogue and suspending the agreement, which is the nuclear option – I took a close look at a Franco-Dutch paper on conditioning tariffs on certain sustainability outcomes, and this is an idea I am willing to explore" [...] "what it actually contains, especially, is ideas on how to design and implement explicit conditionalities and how to express them in terms of tariff reductions or non-reductions, in case of lack of

implementation of certain ILO conventions or environmental agreements. So that's exactly the approach we can follow."

[CTEO] will provide for a single access point both to affected companies but also civil society concerning TSD chapters, where it will be possible to file complaints, to engage on specific problems which had been identified.

"[...] I would propose launching a comparative study to see what countries around the world are doing on enforcement of TSD chapters."

Carbon border adjustment mechanism

"We aim to put forward a legislative proposal in the first half of 2021 – well it's DG TAXUD and Commissioner Gentiloni who are leading this, but of course trade is closely associated exactly because of this WTO compatibility issue [...]."

Due diligence

"[...] a comprehensive agreement on investment, this investment will have to respect ILO conventions on forced labour." [...] "including strong action to eliminate child labour. [...] I will work closely with Commissioner Reynders to advance the Commission's proposal on mandatory due diligence already next year."

"[...] DG Trade is doing a study on women's participation on trade, well focussed on trade in goods [...]. We will have a follow-up then also on women's participation in trade also with a focus on services." [...] "This is an area which we will strengthen and [...], we will prepare an EU gender action plan for 2021-2025 for external relations, and trade will be an important component also there."

"[...] from the Commission's side, we are ready to continue to work on the UN binding treaty on business and human rights:" [...] "the sustainable cocoa initiative, [...] is a good model of multi-stakeholder initiatives and something we may seek to replicate also in other areas – as you mentioned, textiles, and potentially other areas."

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