



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

21.10.2014

B8-0181/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the presentation by the Commission President-elect of the College of Commissioners and their programme

pursuant to Rule 118(5), first subparagraph, of the Rules of Procedure

on election of the Commission
(2014/2811(RSP))

Ashley Fox
on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0181/2014

**European Parliament resolution on election of the Commission
(2014/2811(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its decision of 15 July 2014 electing Jean-Claude Juncker President of the Commission,
- having regard to the written and oral statements by each Commissioner-designate at the hearings with the parliamentary committees, and to the committees' evaluations of the candidates after the hearings,
- having regard to the presentation by the Commission President-elect of the College of Commissioners and its programme,
- having regard to the framework agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission approved on 9 February 2010,
- having regard to Article 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 106a of the Euratom Treaty,
- having regard to Rule 118(5), first subparagraph, of, and Annex XVI to, its Rules of Procedure,

Respect for the rights of Member States

1. Reaffirms the right of Member States to nominate their Commissioners; believes that Parliament should undertake the hearings process on the basis that these nominations should be respected except in extraordinary circumstances;
2. Believes that Parliament should therefore focus primarily on assessing the suitability of the nominees for the portfolio which has been allocated to them by the President-elect;

General remarks on the proposed new Commission and the allocation of specific portfolios

3. Welcomes in principle the cluster approach, aimed at giving the Commission more structure and focus; believes this should evolve into a more formal system over time; is concerned, however, that there is still a lack of clarity concerning responsibilities and a risk of unnecessary duplication or conflict;
4. Welcomes the fact that many Commissioners-designate have accepted the need for profound reform of the European Union in order to ensure that it respects the rights of its Member States and their citizens, reduces the burdens on European businesses so they can create jobs and generate wealth for Europe, and rebuilds public confidence in its future;
5. Regrets the fact that this approach is not shared by all Commissioners-designate and

that some continue to pursue an outdated and outmoded vision for Europe based on the 1950s model of European integration that is not fit to meet the challenges of the 2050s;

6. Calls on the incoming Commissioners-designate when taking office:
 - to act only when absolutely necessary and after due process, taking into account comprehensive impact assessments;
 - to adhere strictly to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
 - to act only when explicitly permitted to do so in accordance with the competences delegated by the Member States to the European Union, and to respect the sovereignty of the Member States;
 - to respect the difficult financial circumstances faced by the taxpayers and businesses of Europe and to bear down on expenditure;
7. Regrets the fact that some of those who were responsible for the mismanagement of the euro crisis whilst holding national office have been given portfolios which include responsibilities for economic and monetary policies;
8. Deplores the fact that Parliament's recommendation that the Commission include a designated Commissioner for budgetary control issues has been completely ignored and that as a consequence this Commission has in practice no member properly responsible for such issues, which implies either that the scale of the problem is not appreciated or that the Commission has given up any serious effort to secure a positive statement of assurance on its accounts from the Court of Auditors;

Specific issues arising from the hearings

9. Calls on the incoming Commission:
 - to prioritise unleashing the potential of the digital single market for jobs, growth, innovation and competitiveness, with a particular emphasis on reducing barriers and burdens for businesses in the single market and strengthening the single market in goods and services, recognising the importance of stepping up efforts to help industry 'reshore' production and jobs to the EU through a process of reindustrialisation with regard to Member States' potential and resources, which should be specifically focused on helping Member States improve skills, reducing red tape, optimising energy costs and supporting innovative products and processes;
 - to pursue an ambitious and open trade policy not only with respect to ongoing bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations, but also to possible new agreements with countries globally, in order to deliver tangible economic and social benefits through trade and investment to EU citizens and enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises;
 - to undertake the necessary action to obtain energy security in Europe by

investment in Europe's indigenous energy sources whilst recognising that in any attempts to build an 'energy union' the right of individual Member States to determine their own energy mix must be respected;

- to take initiatives leading to the equal treatment of all farmers in the EU;
- to respect the right of Member States to legislate on matters of family law;
- to abandon all plans which pursue the mutualisation of European government debt at EU level, including such ideas as an EU-wide single deposit guarantee fund or an EU-wide unemployment insurance scheme;
- to support proposals for reasserting the 'no bailout' principle in the EU Treaty (TEFU), in order to emphasise the responsibility of Member States for their public finances and further emphasise the sovereign right of each Member State to decide on its currency, taking into account the need to fully implement the new legislation establishing the SSM, the Single Resolution Authority and the European Stability Mechanism;
- to help develop a common approach in dealing with Russia, on the basis of a policy that demonstrates solidarity with those states which are associated with and seek closer ties to the European Union, recognises the security implications of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy and includes decisive measures to address the grave and unacceptable situation in Ukraine, whilst welcoming pledges that there will be no renegotiation of the DCFTA agreement with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova;
- to work with the Member States to ensure that in an uncertain global environment the mechanisms and markets exist to ensure food security in Europe;

The appointments and hearings process

10. Believes that the timetable for the appointment of Commissioners-designate and the hearings is flawed, since:
 - if senior appointments cannot be made before the summer, there is insufficient time for Commissioners-designate to prepare for hearings as they will only have been allocated their portfolios just a few weeks before the hearings;
 - with so little time to prepare, the temptation is for Commissioners-designate to resort to bland generalisations in their answers to the written questions and in the hearings so that the voices heard are those of Commission officials rather than the Commissioners-designate themselves, which discourages an open and frank discussion of the issues and stifles innovative thought;
11. Deplores the fact that a last-minute reshuffling of portfolios and the late submission of new candidates places those committees concerned in the humiliating position of having virtually no discretion concerning the nomination or the nominee's suitability for the portfolio, given the imminent plenary vote necessary to enable a new Commission to take office on 1 November; notes that this also sends a signal that an area of

responsibility concerned by such a last-minute reshuffle where a Commissioner-designate had previously been positively supported in committee is not amongst the Commission's work priorities;

12. Proposes that consideration be given to changing the scheduled date for a new Commission to take office from 1 November to 1 December, so as to allow the hearings process to take place in a more professional and thorough manner;
13. Calls for a revision of the rules for the hearings so that the Conference of Presidents is clearly put in charge of organising the process and that committees do not take it upon themselves to suspend proceedings and hold additional meetings without the proper rules-based authority to do so;
14. Believes that there is nothing wrong in principle with committees seeking to organise a follow-up hearing in specific cases, but that the procedure for doing so should be included in the rules of Parliament;
15. Believes that the deadline of a 24-hour response risks being unfair to candidates who appear later in the hearings schedule, which in turn has given rise to a culture of 'hostage-taking' to defend candidates who appear later in the process; calls for consideration to be given to asking for formal evaluations to be submitted for all the Commissioners-designate once the hearings process has been completed;
16. Believes that the format of three-minute questions does not work, given that Members have no opportunity for follow-up questions and that two minutes are frequently too short for a serious answer; regrets that in some cases associated committees were able to ask so few questions that they found it virtually impossible to reach a considered opinion; calls for the timetable for questions to be reviewed for future hearings;
17. Believes that in the interests of clarity there should be a systematic secret vote in the relevant committee(s) for each Commissioner-designate;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council and the Commission.