

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND
FOOD SAFETY

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COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEARING OF FRANS TIMMERMANS

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE

OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

(European Green Deal)

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2019

BRUSSELS

1-002-0000

IN THE CHAIR:**PASCAL CANFIN***Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety**(The hearing opened at 18.34)*

1-003-0000

Chair. – We are going to start this hearing.

Welcome to you, Mr Timmermans, to the hearing before the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), associated with the Committee on Industry, Research and Innovation (ITRE) and the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), with the Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) as invited committees.

1-004-0000

Vous connaissez les règles du jeu: vous avez 25 questions, une minute et 15 secondes par question et 45 secondes pour une question de suivi, si vous le jugez utile. Tout d'abord, 15 minutes d'introduction, de présentation, par M. Timmermans.

Quelques mots pour rappeler l'étendue du portefeuille du premier vice-président exécutif de la Commission européenne, qui a en charge le climat, bien évidemment, mais aussi, dans le portefeuille du «Green Deal»: les transports, l'environnement, les océans, l'énergie, la santé, l'agriculture et la cohésion. Ainsi, Monsieur Timmermans, vous avez sous la responsabilité du «Green Deal» les deux tiers du budget européen.

Nous avons été, dans la commission ENVI, très nombreux à saluer cette évolution de l'organisation de la Commission européenne. Nous avons noté dans vos réponses écrites à nos questions écrites quelques points sur lesquels j'insiste particulièrement en amont de votre propos.

Vous vous engagez à des ajustements ciblés sur le cadre financier pluriannuel. Vous évoquez bien évidemment la politique agricole commune qui, pour la première fois, relève du «Green Deal». Et vous avez été très actif à New York sur les questions de déforestation – la commission ENVI a déjà lancé des initiatives sur ce sujet. J'imagine que nous aurons largement l'occasion d'y revenir au cours de cette audition.

Je conclus cette introduction en vous rappelant les propos de l'oncle de Spider-Man – je ne sais pas si vous aimez les héros, Monsieur Timmermans, au cinéma ou en politique? L'oncle de Spider-Man disait: «Avec de grands pouvoirs, viennent de grandes responsabilités.» Vous avez de grands pouvoirs, il faut maintenant assumer les grandes responsabilités.

1-005-0000

Frans Timmermans, commissaire désigné. – Merci bien, Monsieur le Président, mais je ne compte pas finir comme Uncle Ben, tué dès le début du film. Merci pour cette introduction. En fait, j'ai très peu à ajouter mais je vais essayer quand même.

Honourable Members, I have really been looking forward to our meeting tonight. We have a lot to discuss, and I've come here seeking your support and your guidance. All of us here ran as candidates in the European elections in May. We went to our citizens with plans for the

future, and now you, as their directly elected representatives, will get five years to turn these plans into reality. I am here today hoping that you will give me your support to do my bit in the von der Leyen Commission in order to make sure that we deliver what we promised.

That this is not going to be easy is the mother of all understatements. We are faced with a challenge that is truly existential, and what we need to do will be truly transformational. This is about rebooting our society so that what we hold dearest is preserved, and improved, for our children, grandchildren and future generations. We cannot afford the luxury of screwing this up. I will keep the diagnosis of the challenges we face to a minimum, because, frankly, to repeat the science to you is a waste of everybody's time. You all know and we all know the problems.

We know the possible dire consequences for our habitat, health and future. We all know that our citizens want us to do something about it, and fast. They also want action that caters to the practical challenges that they face every day: putting food on the table, heating their homes, getting a job, finding a good school for their kids and decent care for their elderly parents, and just making ends meet in general.

The world and their world are one and the same. We can only succeed if both prosper. Neglect one, and both will suffer. That is why, if you decide to confirm the von der Leyen Commission, we will ensure that the profound transformation required is a just transition. We need to put fairness at the centre of our policies and base all of our future work on a set of just transition principles. We need a dedicated Just Transition Fund to support the people and communities most affected, including those in industrial, coal and energy-intensive regions.

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. 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.

In short, 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.

The next five years will be crucial. 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 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%.

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. On the other hand, there is no reason to despair either. Compared to 1990, the EU has achieved a reduction in greenhouse gases of 22% while our economy has grown by 58%. We have shown that tackling climate change does not harm the European economy. Now we need to raise the bar and aim for higher ambitions. This is something we can do – we have the skills, the brains and the people. We should also muster the necessary political will in every single Member State.

I could go on giving you targets and percentages; I could elaborate on the broadening of the ETS – and I'm sure we'll come back to that in your questions – but first I would like to talk

about what the Green Deal could do for Europe's citizens. For instance, for social housing tenants or homeowners, especially those already struggling to pay their energy bills right now – we're talking about more than 50 million Europeans, which is a completely unacceptable figure – we should not raise energy bills; we should lower them.

That's entirely possible by being more energy-efficient. Together with Member States and regional and local authorities, we should consider large renovation projects for social housing tenants and private homeowners to pay for insulation or double glazing, or the fitting of solar panels. We should set up fair financing schemes in cooperation with the EIB and InvestEU to ensure that residents don't have to find tens of thousands of euros upfront, which they simply don't have. We should support this investment, or give them a credit line so that they can use the energy savings to gradually pay off the costs. With initiatives like this, the Green Deal could mean lower energy bills for better and more comfortable houses. Everybody wins.

Public buildings, such as schools and hospitals, should also be eligible for support. Improving energy efficiency could free up more money for education and healthcare. And by the way, all of this renovation work would create stable and local jobs that cannot be delocalised.

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.

Dear friends, our citizens might live increasingly in towns and cities, but they also like to enjoy nature in their free time, and they are worried about what is happening around them and in ecosystems far away. All of us are, I think, very worried – very worried indeed. Whether it's the birds and the bees in our towns and countryside, the fish and incredibly fragile coral in our oceans, our rich forests, or the wild and wonderful animals in the remote corners of our planet – we are killing it all off, and at an alarming rate. We must stop this.

That is why we will present a robust and ambitious biodiversity strategy for 2030, and why the EU must champion the most ambitious commitments possible at the next UN Conference of the Parties on Biodiversity in China in October 2020. As with climate, we should lead on this worldwide. One way we can lead this work at home is in the food sector. This will be set out in the Commission's sustainable Farm to Fork Initiative.

But there's more that we need to do. The burning of the Amazon and other primal forests in Central Africa and South-East Asia has recently confronted us with the urgency of protecting our forests. Nobody has the right to say 'that's not your business!' to their international partners – these are global common goods.

However, we should not simply point at others while doing too little ourselves. So here's an idea I would like to put to you: trees clean the air, cool the city, sequester CO₂, shelter animal life and generally have the capacity to make us feel better. Let us embark on a massive project of reforestation across Europe. Let us restore our forests and create new green spaces in our cities. Let us make it a European plan so that we do it right all across the continent, and so that every city and every region is given the benefit of sharing the best and most successful practices from all across the European Union.

The Green Deal should not only be about international biodiversity conferences far away, but also about life around us. The beauty of this is that everyone can be part of this in a very tangible way, and you can see the results straight away. The Green Deal should benefit the health of our citizens. That is why 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.

Air pollution is still one of the biggest killers in Europe. Do you know that more than 400 000 premature deaths a year are a consequence of bad air quality. How can we accept this? To protect Mother Earth, we also need to stop extracting her limited resources. 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.

Honourable Members, 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. Why is it that people choose to spend more time sitting in an airport waiting for a flight than sitting on a train getting to their destination? In part, because it's cheaper and because we're not paying for the externalities. We're running up a debt on Mother Earth's credit card that she cannot afford to pay off.

This should not be seen as a threat to the transport sector; it's actually an offer. It's an offer because I want to empower the sector to roll out new, clean, efficient and affordable vehicles and infrastructure. I want Europe to have the best transport systems in the world. The Green Deal will only be successful if all Europeans are part of it. If you really bring the Green Deal close to home – in fact, into our homes – to take this project to the people, we will make the European Climate Pact a cornerstone of the Green New Deal.

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. Look at what you, as the European Parliament, have achieved in mobilising citizens in the 'This Time I'm Voting' campaign. Look at what the Committee of the Regions has set up. Look at the initiatives of mayors all over the world. Look at how the NGO community is mobilising people and putting concrete solutions on the table. But most of all, look at what our kids are doing – creating a global movement with the potential to change the world for the good. Everyone can lead by example. Good choices breed inspiration and imitation. There's nothing greater, I find, than to be inspired by your kids.

Dear friends, I have mostly spoken to you about what we need to do in Europe, but, of course, there is a huge international dimension. 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. With the Green Deal, Europe can lead by example, but we should also be prepared to consider other instruments. For instance, a carbon border tax to level the playing field for European products if other countries do not go as far as us, or refuse to go in the right direction.

As an economic giant, we have tremendous leverage in our trade relations. We can set global standards. We should use this leverage as best we can, combined with convincing arguments to show that – at the end of the day – we can all be better off.

Honourable Chair, honourable Members, we have a long-term goal, but we need to deliver short-term incentives. It is all very well trying to stop the end of the world, but we also need to take along the people who worry about getting to the end of the month. The transformations required are unprecedented and call for cooperation, determination and ingenuity.

I'm certainly not saying that this is going to be easy. I've never seen anything in Europe that's easy – at least, nothing that's worthwhile. Everything that's worthwhile is complicated, but that's a challenge and that's why we're here. If it were easy, we wouldn't need a Parliament and we wouldn't need a Commission.

It's because it's complicated that we need to do it, but also because it's the right thing to do. I want to sit here today before you as a partner and as a friend, ready to answer your questions and to work with you to build a brighter future. We do it for the people who have put us here – for the European citizens. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

1-007-0000

Esther de Lange (PPE). – Dank u wel, meneer de Voorzitter, en welkom Frans Timmermans. We hebben al een deel van uw indrukwekkende linguïstische repertoire gehoord vanavond. Ik denk dat we daar nog meer van gaan horen. Dus ik zal mijn vraag maar gewoon in het Nederlands stellen.

U schrijft in uw schriftelijke antwoorden dat u via de generatie van uw ouders en uw grootouders eigenlijk al een economische en een energietransitie hebt meegemaakt, met de sluiting van de kolenmijnen in Zuid-Limburg. Mijn opa werkte in Staatsmijn Hendrik in Brunssum. De uwe volgens mij in Heerlen. Wij weten allebei dat de sluiting van die mijnen er in die regio flink heeft ingehakt – en misschien nog steeds wel. Mensen in deze regio maken zich zorgen, en in andere regio's ook. Ze willen hun steentje bijdragen, maar kunnen ze de energierekening nog betalen? En behouden ze hun banen, veelal in de industrie? Daar wil ik het over hebben. Voor de EVP gaan een ambitieus klimaatbeleid en een industriebeleid dat opkomt voor Europese belangen van onze – vaak relatief schonere – industrie hand in hand.

Mijn concrete vraag aan u is dus: hoe gaat u samenwerken met vicevoorzitter Vestager, die samen met vicevoorzitter Dombrovskis verantwoordelijk is voor het industriebeleid, om juist die synergie te bewerkstelligen?

1-008-0000

Frans Timmermans, kandidaat-commissaris. – Fijn dat ik ook in het Nederlands mag antwoorden. Ja, ik kom inderdaad uit de mijnstreek en mijn grootvaders waren alle twee mijnwerkers. Toen die mijnen nog open waren, was de stad waar ik vandaan kom, Heerlen, de op een na rijkste stad van Nederland.

Het is nu vijftig jaar na de mijnsluiting, en van de vijf armste steden in Nederland liggen er drie in mijn mijnstreek: Heerlen, Kerkrade en Brunssum. Dus zelfs in een schatrijk land als Nederland kun je zo'n transitie soms niet goed voor elkaar krijgen.

Dus als ik kijk naar Galicië, Silezië of regio's in Griekenland en Duitsland waar men nog afhankelijk is van steenkool en waarvan men weet dat men er vroeg of laat afscheid van zal moeten nemen, dan denk ik ook aan mijn eigen geschiedenis. En dan denk ik daar niet makkelijk over. Dat is ontzettend moeilijk. Ik kan me ook voorstellen dat mensen die transitie als zo'n enorme uitdaging zien dat ze hem liever niet laten gebeuren.

Daarom hebben wij als Europeanen zo'n enorme plicht om die regio's ook op een juiste manier naar een nieuwe economie te brengen. Het zal ook best dat er ergens anders een nieuwe economie ontstaat, dat geloof ik wel. Maar in die regio's moet die nieuwe economie ook voet aan de grond krijgen. Daarom heb ik mijn collega's Vestager en Dombrovskis heel hard nodig, zodat we coherente plannen maken. Zodat dat wat dicht bij de markt is makkelijk kan worden gefinancierd – dat doen we al met InvestEU, het voormalige Junckerplan – maar ook zodat we dingen financieren die niet dicht bij de markt zijn. Mijnwerkers opleiden voor een andere functie: dat zal de markt niet betalen, dat zullen wij namens onze belastingbetaler mogelijk moeten maken. Dat zijn de grote plannen die we samen in een coherent geheel als hele Commissie zullen moeten aanpakken.

Dit is de eerste keer dat iets alleen kan slagen als iedereen bereid is dezelfde kant op te werken. Dat geldt voor landbouw, voor industrie, voor de kolen, voor andere industrieën die zich zullen moeten aanpassen. Ik kan dat niet in mijn eentje. Dat kan alleen met hulp van mijn collega's.

1-009-0000

Esther de Lange (PPE). – Ik wil het graag nog een beetje concreter. U noemde heel terecht bijvoorbeeld Silezië in Polen. Alleen al door het sluiten van mijnen en kolencentrales verdwijnen in die regio de komende tien jaar mogelijk vijftienduizend banen. We kennen allemaal het kaartje van Europa waarop te zien is dat de regio's waar de klap het hardst gaat aankomen, zich in Spanje en Centraal- en Oost-Europa bevinden. Ik snap dat die landen zeggen: wij willen nu zien dat deze banen met her- of omscholing of hoe dan ook veilig zijn vóór wij met u gaan werken aan die enorme transitie.

Ik hoor u en al uw collega's spreken over het Fonds voor een rechtvaardige transitie. Maar dat is nooit groot genoeg om al deze mensen financieel gerust te stellen. Er zal dus meer nodig zijn. Misschien wel minder activisme vanuit West-Europa en meer bruggen bouwen. Hoe gaat u ze meenemen? Zien wij de komende vijf jaar dus, naast dat Fonds voor een rechtvaardige transitie, een activist die vanuit het Westen de waarheid predikt? Of krijgt u de Polen mee en, zo ja, hoe gaat u dat doen?

1-010-0000

Frans Timmermans, kandidaat-commissaris. – Onze taak zal erin bestaan om Polen, Slowakije, Spanje, Griekenland, Duitsland – een hele reeks landen en regio's waar men weet dat men vroeg of laat uit de kolen zal moeten komen – een perspectief te bieden, dat duidelijk maakt op welke manier zij, zeg maar met hink-stap-sprongen, naar de nieuwe economie kunnen komen, want er zijn ook wel grote kansen.

De arbeidsmarkt, zeker in Polen en Slowakije, is gunstig op dit moment. Alleen niet noodzakelijkerwijs in de regio's waar het om gaat. Het is te makkelijk om te zeggen: er zijn elders wel banen, ga daar maar naartoe. Je wilt zo'n regio natuurlijk ook een nieuwe kans geven. Dat kunnen wij beiden met elkaar delen. Dus als je dat wilt doen, dan zul je in de nieuwe circulaire economie in die regio's ook perspectief moeten brengen.

Dat kan heel concreet. Daar heeft InvestEU inmiddels al ervaring mee opgedaan. Dan moeten we er ook voor zorgen dat alle fondsen die we in Europa hebben, deel uitmaken van wat ik dan maar een overgangsmechanisme noem, zodat alle fondsen echt gericht worden op het heel doelgericht helpen van die regio's in de transitie. Dan kun je veel meer geld mobiliseren – privaat geld, maar ook nationaal en Europees publiek geld.

Dan kun je denk ik ook, in de discussie die we nog krijgen over het meerjarig financieel kader, beide kanten ervan overtuigen dat wat het Europees Parlement vraagt en de Commissie voorstelt nodig is om Europa ook in de nieuwe economie succesvol te laten zijn.

1-011-0000

Jytte Guteland (S&D). – Verkställande vice ordförande-kandidat jag pratar på svenska i dag, lite av nyfikenhet om jag också får svaret på svenska. Jag har alltid velat göra det här. (Skratt!)

De kommande fem åren kommer du att leda Green Deal, en av de största och viktigaste omställningarna som det europeiska samhället stått inför. Jag vill i det arbetet att du är Greta Thunberg mot övriga kommissionen. Både forskare, medborgare och framför allt de unga som nu strejkar för klimatet, kräver att EU agerar mycket mer resolut. Konkreta och omedelbara åtgärder krävs för att Europa ska leva upp till Parisavtalets en och en halv grader.

För att lyckas så måste EU dels anta målet om att bli helt klimatneutralt till 2050. Men vi måste också höja våra klimatmål till 2030, om vi överhuvudtaget ska ha en chans. I de politiska riktlinjerna föreslår dock kommissionen ett tillvägagångssätt i två steg vad gäller EU:s klimatmål för 2030 och det här väcker allvarliga frågor, både politiskt och praktiskt faktiskt. Därför vill jag veta om du kommer att åta dig i kommissionen att inom de första 100 dagarna presentera ett lagförslag om att höja EU:s 2030-mål till 55 procent?

1-012-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Our arguments will be more convincing if we can back them up with science and research and facts. So that's what we're in the middle of doing right now, to get all the information we need.

I personally would be extremely surprised if that information leads to any conclusion other than that we need at least a 55% reduction in 2030. But I think my position will be stronger if I can back it up with the analysis we are doing right now. That's why we have said, as a Commission, 50% and preferably 55%, but let's do the research. 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.

This is how we need to do this mapping: start in 2050 and then look back to today – it's like with a TomTom, finding directions, when you need to take this turn, and then that turn, and then we need to map that out until 2050. Just having a target for 2050 is too easy, it won't get us there. We need to know exactly what are we going to do tomorrow, what are we going to do after 100 days, what do are we going to do next year, etcetera, etcetera.

1-013-0000

Jytte Guteland (S&D). – Tack för svaret. Men jag vill ju då naturligtvis också ställa följdfrågan: När får vi den forskningen till stöd så att du kan fatta detta nödvändiga beslut tillsammans med kommissionen?

Men jag vill också ställa en annan följdfråga och den handlar också om våra konsumenter som vill göra hållbara val och är väldigt medvetna numera om produkternas klimatpåverkan. Det gäller både produkter som tillverkas inom Europa och EU, men också de som kommer från länder utanför våra gränser, det vi importerar. På senare tid har vi sett hur konsumenters krav har fått globala tillverkare i detaljhandeln att annonsera ambitiösa åtgärder på området för att minska sin påverkan på klimatet. Håller du med om att det är nödvändigt att EU också arbetar för att minska sin klimatpåverkan från de produkter som både tillverkas inom EU förstås, men även för de varor som vi importerar, för att stärka insynen och ansvarsutkrävandet i hela försörjningskedjan?

1-014-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – On the first question, I would say if we really want to make an impression and lead in the world, we need to have our ducks in a row, our facts together, before the COP in Glasgow. That would give us a position to really lead

and not have to go to Glasgow and say, we don't know yet, we are still doing research. So that's my ambition. I hope we can get there.

On the second part of your question, yes, consumers need to be better informed. The only reason that we got a successful plastic strategy approved at lightning speed was because the consumers were better informed and they wanted us to do something about this. And I'm absolutely sure that consumers want to know that the stuff they put on their table when they eat was not created through deforestation. Our citizens don't want that.

I want to be able to tell them, at some point, this 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.

1-015-0000

Nils Torvalds (Renew). – Welcome to something which tomorrow's newspapers will probably headline as 'Welcome to the Frans Timmermans show', and then you have the drums in the background.

In the discussion last year on a Clean Planet for All, the information we got from the Commission indicated that all substantial changes should be made from 2030 onwards. Since then we have most probably entered into a new situation. How do you see the path forward? Would you rather tear up the old decisions concerning the Emissions Trading System (ETS), climate action, Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), the revised Renewable Energy Directive (Red II) and all the rest and start the new trajectory towards the Paris goals immediately after an impact assessment, or do you think that the flexibilities in the legislation are enough? Would you therefore rather wait for a 2030 window and start the trajectory with the necessary 10% linear reduction factor, and corresponding changes in the other legislations?

In the first case, you would probably be criticised for producing incoherent legislation and not helping companies to plan their investments and in the second case, you would be criticised for not being able to read what's written in very big letters on the wall. So which path would you take?

1-016-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I don't think it's a binary choice. It's not a choice between one or the other. I think we will need a mix of both. I think we need to extend the Emissions Trading System (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. Many directives will have to be reviewed. But I don't think it's a choice between one or the other. I think it will always be a policy mix between the two, but we can't waste any time, and in some areas...

By the way, I think industry has woken up to this. I think we have a broad understanding, and an increasing understanding in industry worldwide that we will have to toughen up and we will have to come up with even stricter norms. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report clearly points in that direction. If we want to prevent the heating of the world to go beyond 1.5°, we still have to do a lot more than we're doing now and sometimes it will be amending existing legislation, sometimes it will be creating new legislation, but that a lot needs to be done with your help, that's quite clear. I have seen the European Parliament and even the Council in a position to move very fast if the public wants us to do that and if the sense of urgency is there, so I'm not that worried about that.

1-017-0000

Nils Torvalds (Renew). – Your challenge will also certainly have a budgetary consequence. We need about EUR 200 billion yearly to meet the cost of what we should be doing, and the Member States are almost as niggardly as the Dutch. So you have work to do to make them pay, because without those monies I wonder if we would be able to meet the goals.

1-018-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Absolutely. But I've also seen a letter signed by the Dutch Minister saying that we need to reach minus 55% by 2030 – and by seven other ministers as well.

So there is a sense of urgency, in the Netherlands too, the country that watches spending very carefully – and I would hold out before you, I think, the possibility of putting a proposal on the table for the MFF that says 'OK, it's perhaps a bit more than you wanted to spend, a bit more than 1.00, but with that extra money we're going to help Europe make this transition to a sustainable economy much faster and in a way that will offer a proposition to citizens, and to people in industries that need to change, which is attractive. I think there is a deal possible there between different countries in Europe, including mine I hope.

1-019-0000

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – Mr Timmermans, good evening and thank you very much for your introduction and your inspiring presentation on the Green Deal.

Still, I would like to focus a bit more on the climate law and what we can expect next year, because next year is the year when we need to deliver. It's the last year before we can get into the official start of Paris.

You have already said you would not be surprised, from the analysis coming out, if it is minus 55%. But can you at least now make very clear that we are not going to have a two-track approach, because in your written answers that is still somewhat unclear. You say, well, we might do first 50% and later on 55%, which will never fit in that year. You say we need analysis, but, to be very honest, there's a lot of analysis out there done by the Commission, saying that Europe is on track already for minus 46%.

If we look at all the coal phase-outs that are planned we are already at minus 50%. So all the analysis that is there already tells you that 50% is business as usual. That means you can already say, here, that it will be minus 55% when you come forward with your climate law proposal next year.

Can we just seal that off so that we have that clarity?

1-020-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Bas is Bas, great! Really great question!

Look, my position is this. I would agree with you when you say we wouldn't have the time to have two different approaches. But I also hold before you that going from 45 to 50, to 55, especially from 50 to 55, then you will be asking for some really tough extra measures to be taken and you can't fault the Commission for wanting to analyse that and to analyse the feasibility of that.

That's what we're going to do and that's also what Ursula von der Leyen said before this Parliament, and in that context I reiterate: for me what is important is that as the EU we have a position that has a meaning internationally and that makes us the leaders in this, and for that I would say we need to be ready before the Glasgow COP meeting in the latter part of next year. So that would be my trajectory.

But I think I've been very clear, and I repeat that, that I would find it extremely surprising if we were to come to any other conclusion than that we need this minus 55%, but I think this will be more convincing if we can show what this actually means by analysing that, and we have the time to do that and we will do that thoroughly.

1-021-0000

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – Thank you for that. I will not push you further on the 2030 question, but I will push you further on the climate law because you will be coming forward with that in the first 100 days.

Until now, I have only heard an explicit statement on climate neutrality but, to be honest, the current Commission already has agreed to that. So what can we expect further into the climate law in the first 100 days?

I would like to give you a couple of proposals because these things have already been analysed by the Commission in its long-term strategy. All new cars put on the EU market to be zero-emissions by 2040 at the latest: that comes from the Commission analysis itself. And emissions from international shipping to be reduced by at least 88% by 2050, and emissions from aviation to be cut by 55% by 2050.

Are these the kind of proposals we can expect in the climate law, so that we will be ensuring that the transport sector too finally makes a move? Hopefully, we will also see that the responsibility for that remains with DG Climate because it means a lot of ETS (Emissions Trading System) efforts will be needed.

1-022-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – First of all let me be very clear: we will have to take additional measures in many sectors, including the maritime sector and the aviation sector, but we might, I don't know, we might come back to that later.

Secondly, it is something I will have to study. How much can you put into the climate law? I want to take a bit of time, because on the one hand you don't want it to be an empty shell, just saying, 2050 climate neutral, that's it. On the other hand, it's also a question of how much room to manoeuvre you give to different Member States to choose the right mix on the basis of their national plans to attain that goal, and how much you want to put into the law, and that is the process we're going to get into right now and the signals you're giving are very clear and that helps us also in this process. But 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.

1-023-0000

Silvia Sardone (ID). – Signor Commissario designato, questa Commissione sembra davvero pendere dalle labbra di Greta Thunberg. Purtroppo però sembrate un po' come molti studenti che vanno alle manifestazioni per l'ambiente e non sanno bene la motivazione per la quale sono lì.

Avete dichiarato di avere come priorità il clima, dimenticandovi totalmente della salute e della sicurezza alimentare. Avete mai davvero fatto i conti di cosa significhi raggiungere la neutralità climatica nel 2050, con un mondo che non emetta davvero più gas a effetto serra nell'arco di soli 31 anni?

Lo ha fatto la rivista *Forbes* per voi, vi do un po' di dati: per arrivare a zero emissioni dobbiamo rimpiazzare poco più di una mega tonnellata equivalente di petrolio al giorno di combustibili fossili, per 31 anni di fila. Tenendo conto dell'aumento della richiesta di energia nei prossimi anni arriviamo a circa 1,6 mega tonnellate.

A cosa corrisponde in concreto? Vi dico un po' di esempi: alla costruzione, per esempio, di tre centrali nucleari ogni due giorni per 31 anni di fila; oppure all'installazione di circa 1 500 pale eoliche ogni singolo giorno per 31 anni di fila.

Inoltre i pericoli per l'ambiente non sono sicuramente dovuti all'Europa. Come mai state assolutamente in silenzio su Cina e India, che hanno incrementato negli ultimi vent'anni quasi del 200 % le emissioni di CO₂?

E come mai nulla dite di paesi in Europa, ma fuori dall'Unione europea – parlo per esempio dei Balcani? Qualcuno svegli voi e la vostra amica Greta, la colpa non è dell'Europa! La lotta contro il cambiamento climatico sembra più una gigantesca operazione di marketing.

Io vorrei sapere se intende, Commissario, chiarire le conseguenze del *Green New Deal*, evitando obiettivi irraggiungibili e totalmente ideologici?

1-024-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissario designato*. – Quanto devono essere deboli gli argomenti se la gente ha bisogno di attaccare una ragazza di sedici anni?

(applausi)

Che vergogna quando vedo i *tweet* di uno che dovrebbe essere l'uomo più potente del mondo, che vergogna! Una ragazza che fa una cosa sola, ci dice "Agite, fate qualcosa! Adesso!". Greta ha ragione, io sono molto fiero dei nostri figli che fanno questo, e questo è il momento di agire, adesso, e dobbiamo farlo adesso.

E aggiungo un'altra cosa: ci hanno detto per anni che non possiamo fare niente, che è troppo difficile. Guardate un po' l'energia rinnovabile, oggi è già accettato che è meno cara di quella vecchia, già adesso!

Dunque, siamo in grado di cambiare questa società. E Lei vuole andare in Italia e spiegare agli italiani che le spiagge restino come sono oggi? Questo è accettabile in Italia? Direi di no.

Lei vuole andare in Italia a spiegare ai ragazzi che vivono nelle città che moriranno prima perché l'aria non è buona? No!

Anche se la scienza non avesse ragione, anche se non fosse vera, abbiamo un compito per i nostri figli, quello di assicurare un ambiente pulito, e per questo dobbiamo fare questo cambiamento.

1-025-0000

Silvia Sardone (ID). – L'ho sopravvalutata, Le ho dato dello studente, e lo studente normalmente risponde alle domande, Lei invece ha fatto mera propaganda, ma non mi aspettavo molto di diverso, non rispondendo minimamente alla domanda che avevo fatto.

Quanto deve essere debole la Commissione se, per parlare di ambiente, si deve nascondere dietro a una ragazza di sedici anni come Greta?

Le ribadisco la domanda. Io vorrei sapere, se la maggior parte dell'inquinamento di plastica nei mari proviene da paesi asiatici, come mai state in silenzio verso di loro? Sinkevičius ha detto che è cominciata la sesta estinzione di massa, spostando di fatto tutta l'attenzione su posizioni proprie degli ambientalisti più fanatici.

La Commissione intende seguire i paladini del no al progresso? Torneremo al carro con i cavalli? Oppure avete in mente di fare ambiente sono parlando con slogan e con Instagram?

1-026-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissario designato*. – Ma Lei crede davvero che le bottiglie di plastica sulle spiagge in Italia vengono dalla Cina? Ma di che cavolo sta parlando? Queste sono le cose che facciamo noi europei, in Europa!

(applausi)

Abbiamo il compito di pulire noi stessi il nostro ambiente! Io andrò in Italia e parlerò anche con i Suoi elettori, parliamo di questo. Vogliamo un ambiente pulito, sì o no? Se lo vogliamo dobbiamo cambiare, anche l'industria deve cambiare, anche l'automobile deve cambiare, perché non avere delle macchine senza emissioni? Questo è possibile e dobbiamo farlo! Dai, facciamolo insieme!

1-027-0000

Alexandr Vondra (ECR). – Well, welcome to the revolution!

It's a heated atmosphere and the dynamics are incredible. Just less than a year ago, or early this year, the outgoing Commission declared that it was neither necessary nor possible to boost the 2030 targets. Then, in July, Ursula von der Leyen pledged to submit a plan to increase the 2030 target to 55%, with some conditions, if the others follow. Now you are exposed to mounting pressure by a letter from eight countries intending to commit to 55% unconditionally.

Let me express my deepest concern here, with that kind of dynamic. I'm concerned that the European Green Deal will cost us more than our societies are able to sustain. It will raise the prices of all elementary human needs, including housing, heating, lighting, eating and transport. It will have a negative effect on middle-income families, not to mention the poorest people. They will have to bear the burden of the higher prices and higher taxes.

As a Social Democrat, is this what you want? Do you want yellow vests all across Europe? What is your response in concrete terms? You gave us nice words, but we need to count first before we can construct a house.

1-028-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissioner-designate*. – First of all, let me just say, Mr Vondra and I have known each other for a long, long time and I just want to express my respect for what he did when his country was still a dictatorship and he took a huge personal risk in fighting against that and I have deep admiration for that.

On this, we disagree. We spoke earlier about this and that's why, in my introduction, I mentioned the issue of housing and social housing. If we help people insulate their houses, perhaps even put solar panels on the roof where it is possible, help them take other measures that they cannot pay for themselves but we could help them with that; if we do that, their energy bills will go down, substantially down and emissions will also go down.

I will not hide that if we... you are absolutely right. If we only take extra measures for the environment without looking, for instance, at tax systems, there will be an increase in taxation for ordinary people. But the whole idea is that we also need to look at our taxation system. We are taxing the wrong things. I think we need to take a convincing argument to our Member States that they should also agree on the taxation system. That could have a huge alleviating effect for ordinary people, for middle incomes and lower incomes. These are the things we will need to talk about.

But on the other hand, and this I want to hold before you, on the other hand, if we do nothing, look at what's happening to our climate. If we do nothing, look at what's happening to the expiration of natural resources. Look how that is going to create conflict and who is going to die first if our cities become unliveable? The poorest because they cannot move to somewhere else. So that's why, yes, as a Social Democrat, I strongly believe in this way forward.

1-029-0000

Alexandr Vondra (ECR). – Yes, nice words, but I would expect enumeration before pledging – and beyond those neighbours there is no enumeration. We are doing something but if the others – like India, China, Russia, the USA and Brazil – won't join us, then leading by example is a nice idealistic approach but it's without substance.

What is our leverage to push them into following us. Are you willing to declare war on them if they don't?

1-030-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – These same arguments were used when the European Union created the single market. Exactly the same arguments – with high standards we will be too expensive, the rest of the world will not follow us, etcetera.

As with the single internal market, the rest of the world wants to be in our market. They want to be able to sell here, to trade here and to be active here. Our highest norms will become world norms if we play it right. At the same time, of course, there is a weakness in our reasoning if we cannot convince other big players in the world to go in the same direction.

But I'm rather more optimistic than you are. Yes, Europe only has 9% of the world's emissions, but we have a strong policy mix that can be convincing and that will also have to be adopted. The Chinese don't want to suffocate. The Chinese don't want to run out of water. The Chinese want to change, and perhaps we could have a partnership with them.

In the USA, yes, the Federal Government is not on our side. But talk to the cities, talk to the states. They have a completely different attitude. So we have friends out there. We could build coalitions. We could convince others. I strongly believe that it is our moral and political duty to do so, not just for the reasons I mentioned but also for international stability.

The lack of policies in this area will create conflict. We will have wars over water if we don't change the way we organise our societies.

1-031-0000

Silvia Modig (GUE/NGL). – Herra Timmermans, on kyllä hämmästyttävää, jos edelleen odotatte tieteellistä tietoa tukemaan sitä, että vuoden 2030 päästövähennystavoitteen tulisi olla vähintään viisikymmentäviisi prosenttia – sitä on olemassa. Jos haluamme, että rahavirrat ja investoinnit suuntautuvat oikein, meidän pitää mahdollisimman nopeasti saada päätöksiä siitä, miltä investointiympäristö näyttää vuonna 2030. Yhtäkään investointia ei ole varaa laittaa väärään suuntaan. Vetoan teihin: sitoutukaa siihen viiteenkymmeneenviiteen prosenttiin.

Mutta tänään haluan kysyä teiltä toisesta akuutista kysymyksestä, nimittäin biodiversiteetistä. Olen nyt kuullut useita komissaariehdokkaita, ja huoli biodiversiteetin heikkenemisestä ei ole helpottanut yhtään. On ymmärrettävä, että luonnon monimuotoisuudella on tietysti itseisarvo, mutta sillä on olennainen osansa siinä taistelussa, miten me selviämme ilmaston lämpenemisestä. Rikas luonnon monimuotoisuus ja hyvinvoiva biodiversiteetti auttaa planeettamme sopeutumaan lämpenemiseen.

Nyt te esittelette uuden biodiversiteettiohjelman. Mikä siinä on nyt erilaista kuin aiemmilla kerroilla? Meillä on sitoumuksia, meillä on ollut ohjelmia – suunta on edelleen sukupuoli. AGRI-komissaariehdokas ei tunnu olevan valmis tekemään CAP-järjestelmään mitään

uudistuksia, jotka tukisivat maatalouden osalta biodiversiteetin voimistumista. Mitä te aiotte tehdä tälle asialle? Mikä on nyt toisin, jotta tämä suunta oikeasti saadaan muutettua?

1-032-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – On your first point, the indication you give is very clear on the 55%, and I take careful note of that, and the clearer this indication is, the clearer it resounds with the European Commission.

On the issue of biodiversity. You know we are at the risk of losing 1 million out of 8 million species that form part of our natural environment: one million. If you look at coral reefs, half of them are dead or dying. If you look at the ravages of deforestation, at what that's doing, if you look at the consequences of pesticides and other substances, we have a huge emergency. I have the feeling that we are on the verge of the same international awakening to the risks of the loss of biodiversity as we had a couple of years ago, in Paris, on climate change. And the two phenomena are completely interlinked.

We are killing off carbon sink at an incredible rate through deforestation and that has an effect in terms of loss of biodiversity as well. So I want the European Union to be extremely well prepared, through an intensive dialogue with this Parliament, for the next biodiversity conference – in China in October next year – 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.

I also believe that the communication the Juncker Commission came out with on fighting deforestation can be an integral part of that, because to do this we need international partnerships. We need those countries in which this phenomenon is worst to be part of the solution, and no longer part of the problem. For that, we need to assume our responsibility, including for the way we consume, so that the way we consume does not have a negative impact on biodiversity.

1-033-0000

Silvia Modig (GUE/NGL). – Niin kuin CAP-järjestelmä, joka – jos se tällaisenaan menee eteenpäin – työskentelee eri päämäärän suuntaan, vastoin sitä päämäärää, mihin me ilmastotyössämme pyrimme, niin tekevät valitettavasti myös monissa jäsenmaissa julkiset hankinnat tai valtion tuet. Meillä on iso määrä yritystukia, jotka edelleen tukevat fossiilista energiaa. Ne eivät pelkästään jarruta muutosta, vaan ne ylläpitävät vanhoja rakenteita ja työskentelevät eri päämäärän puolesta päämääräämme vastaan.

Miten te aiotte vaikuttaa siihen, että tähän saadaan muutos ja jotta me saisimme kaikki rahavirrat suunnattua oikein tukemaan tätä yhteistä päämääräämme? Ja kuten tiedämme, monissa näissä kysymyksissä vaaditaan yksimielisyyttä päätöksissä. Oletteko valmis haastamaan yksimielisyysvaatimuksen, jos se sen vaatii?

1-034-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I think in some areas, especially in taxation and especially in the energy field, we would need to use the possibilities the Treaty offers for what we call in English, a 'passerelle', in terms of moving from unanimity to qualified majority voting, I think that will be necessary.

But the more fundamental point in reaction to what you say is this: I will have a responsibility to make sure that the Commission as a whole doesn't do contradictory things anymore. And that, arguably, is going to be my toughest task internally: to make sure that everything we do is compatible with our goal to be climate neutral by 2050 and to safeguard biodiversity and all the other goals we have.

And I could not say in good conscience today, that we have rooted out all contradictory policies of the Commission and of the European Union. We haven't done that yet, and in that

sense, we both have a task because also in the European Parliament different committees sometimes have different orientations and we both have a responsibility as institutions to make sure that, from now on, everything we do is geared towards this goal of creating a sustainable society with everyone on board and for that I think we need to revisit quite a number of our policies.

1-035-0000

Roberta Metsola (PPE). – The reduction of plastic in our oceans is one of our citizens' top priorities. We made the first step by legislating on a ban for single use plastics, but now we have to go deeper and further, and I fully agree with the point you made earlier about plastic bottles on beaches but ultimately currents have the potential of pushing plastic waste especially into seas of countries which border those of third countries.

We have also seen that the global trade in plastic waste which is supposedly earmarked for recycling is not necessarily sustainable and it is at most times unfairly designed and ultimately it does nothing for the environment except increase CO₂ emissions to ship it halfway across the world, only for it to be returned, incinerated or landfilled.

So would you agree with us that it is time for a global ban on the most damaging single use plastics and will you give us your commitment that the EU will push this through Member States and international fora?

1-036-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – The short answer to your question is yes.

I want to elaborate. We will have to come up with new measures because we are learning all the time how dangerous, for instance, microplastics are. I think that every time there is a new piece of research it points to a greater danger to our health and to our natural environment, so we need to do something about it.

We need to do something about packaging as well. I think we should push further on banning packaging or making sure that packaging is no longer used that has these single use plastics in them.

We also need to make sure that we take care of our own rubbish. I think it was a good move by China to say we no longer accept European single use plastics. But now, you know, we're exporting it to other third countries, and that's a shame; I think we should be ashamed of doing that. We should take care of our own rubbish and the only real way of taking care of it is not having it. The best rubbish is rubbish you don't have.

So I'm all for recycling but it's not the optimal solution. The optimal solution is not to have to recycle because you don't use it or if you use it, that you reuse it without recycling.

So for that we will have to tighten the policies and I count on your support when we come with proposals in this area.

1-037-0000

Roberta Metsola (PPE). – Moving on to air quality, the Commission is currently in the final stages of the fitness check on the Ambient Air Quality Directives, 10 years after these were completed. In 2019, as you said in your introduction, it was revealed that air pollution causes hundreds of thousands of extra deaths per year in Europe. This is something that is particularly worrying to the citizens of my country, in Malta and Gozo, where air pollution is increasingly becoming a concern for many families.

Now, of course, it is partly an enforcement problem at Member State level and the Commission's actions to launch infringement proceedings against non-compliant Member States are a necessary last move. However, it is of little consequence to those already exposed to dangerous levels of air pollutants. So how would you plan to ensure a chain of compliance when it comes to enforcing the Ambient Air Quality Directives and similar legislation?

1-038-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, the rules are very clear, and I think we should be doing more to enforce the rules in our Member States.

Of course, what the Commission does is first to try and find a solution through dialogue with the Member State. But Member States have signed up to this themselves. 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.

1-039-0000

Miriam Dalli (S&D). – Vice-President Timmermans, President-elect Ursula von der Leyen promised that she would steer a Commission that will increase the EU's 2030 ambition. However, as things stand today, the current target doesn't even include the greenhouse gas emissions of shipping, the sector that, until today, has remained exempt.

If the emissions from shipping remain unregulated, they will derail completely any other efforts that can be made by other economies or industries to achieve carbon neutrality. Today you mentioned extending the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to the maritime and aviation sectors. You mentioned additional measures on maritime and aviation transport, but in your written answers you said that you would act on any proposals coming from the European Parliament to extend the EU-ETS to include maritime emissions.

I urge you not to wait for the position of the European Parliament. Are you ready to come forward with a legislative proposal to extend EU-ETS to maritime emissions as part of any upcoming ETS review with a view to stepping up the 2030 EU greenhouse gas targets?

And a further, very important, question: as the Vice-President responsible for climate change, how will you ensure that DG CLIMA will be the Directorate-General that will have full responsibility for, and full leadership on, the implementation and future review of the EU-ETS, including the extension of EU-ETS to aviation and shipping?

1-040-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissioner-designate*. – Let me be very clear on the last point, because that question has already been put to me and I'm not sure I answered it clearly.

Of course I will remain responsible for this. And, under my steer will be the Commissioner for Transport, but also DG CLIMA because that's where the expertise is. So I wouldn't worry too much about that, and I take full personal responsibility for it.

On the other issue, of shipping: yes, the ETS 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.

You know, in some cities the pollution levels spike when there is a cruise ship coming in, because they burn the most horrible fuel, and I think our ports should be in a position to say 'If you want to come to our port, we will give you access to green or other electricity and you will shut off those engines that are polluting too much.' Why not?

And I think there are a number of other measures we could take. We could look at ships' emissions and how they use fuel, the speed at which they go – all these things, including the engines they use. All these things will have to be looked at because it is no longer acceptable that the maritime sector should be excluded from these measures. The engines they use are highly polluting and it would be unfair to other sectors, where we are asking for measures to be taken, if the maritime sector were excluded.

1-041-0000

Miriam Dalli (S&D). – Fair enough, on this point. I come from Malta so I understand the effects on citizens when you have a cruise liner coming into a port. That's why I'm asking you not to wait any longer, because we can't wait any longer and we require immediate action from the Commission too in this regard.

Air quality was mentioned, and there is another important transport sector of relevance here, namely road transport. So far, CO₂ standards have proved to be the most efficient form of regulation. Will you be opposing any plans or suggestions to include road transport in the Emissions Trading System? And I would like to know how you are going to ensure the enforcement of existing standards by car manufacturers?

Also, part of the equation in achieving clean-air mobility is the use of batteries. What are your plans to secure the use of sustainable batteries for energy storage and also for transport?

1-042-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – That's a number of questions, I'll try and go through them very quickly. First of all, let me be very clear, 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.

On the emissions trading system (ETS) in road transport: I'm not in principle against it and I think it could be part of a policy mix, but I do want to say very clearly that it cannot be used as an excuse not to attain the emission targets. That could never be. It's much more straightforward and much more successful than in the past just to have emission norms and have them comply with the emission norms. That doesn't mean that ETS could not be part of the mix, but it should never be an alternative to emission norms or even a way of weakening emission norms at all; that would be unacceptable.

Batteries: Maroš Šefčovič in the Juncker Commission has done tremendous work in finally getting the sense of urgency in the automobile sector that we need more batteries and now there is huge increase in trying to get Europe to be part of next generation batteries where we don't use primary products that are very bad for the environment or that we can't find or lead to conflict elsewhere, that can lead to a large number of storage, etc. But at the end of the day, there's only so much you can do with a battery. The battery is not the only solution for the storage of sustainable energy. We will need other forms of storage, especially. Hydrogen will be probably a very important way of storing renewable energy in the future.

1-043-0000

Fredrick Federley (Renew). – Mr Executive Vice-President-designate, I will actually switch to the language you still have not mastered, Swedish.

(Laughter)

I am certain that in a few years you'll get there.

Min fråga handlar egentligen om balans. Vi har en ganska grannlaga uppgift framför oss under det här mandatet att klara flera stora globala, europeiska och nationella utmaningar, för att klara Parisavtalets ambitioner. Vi ser med förskräckelse på vad som nu sker i Amazonas, men vi har inget bra europeiskt svar. Kanske kan handelsavtalet ge oss ett antal verktyg i den riktningen. Samtidigt är det uppenbart att i jordbrukssektorn är det en proteinstrategi vi behöver för att se till att vi inte bidrar till avverkningen i Amazonas.

Samtidigt ser vi avskogningar i delar utav Europas skogar också, samtidigt som det fungerar väl och långsiktigt hållbart i andra. Hur ska vi lagstiftningsmässigt hitta den här balanspunkten mellan att inte blanda in det som sker på andra kontinenter, men långsiktigt bevara biologisk mångfald på vår egen och se till att vi ökar mängden hållbart skogsbruk som kan hjälpa till i byggnadsprocesser, kemikaliska processer och annat?

1-045-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Correct me if I'm wrong, but as far as I know there is more forest in Europe now than there was 10 years ago, so we're getting more forest, not less. But it's not enough. We need a strategy for reforestation, and reforestation in a way that does not contradict other goals. You know, putting forest on peatland is not helping the environment. On the contrary. 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.

I also want to make sure that those people who are directly involved in forestry are part of the solution – are incorporated into the policies we develop. And I believe, too, that if we do this better in Europe, we have a stronger argument in talking to people outside of Europe who are faced with the same challenge.

Look how much forest is disappearing – and the argument is always that 80% of that is to create arable land for agriculture. I was in New York two weeks ago and I was talking to an activist from the Amazon who told me that not more than about 15% of the land that was deforested is actually used for agriculture. The incredible waste that we're creating in terms of biodiversity loss, in terms of loss of carbon sink, etcetera, is heart-breaking.

So we will need an international approach whereby we also take on board countries that are sometimes a bit reluctant because they see opportunities for economic development. And sometimes this will mean we will have to look at the products we import into the European Union, and convince them to make other products that do not need deforestation, and perhaps offer them more interesting trade arrangements on those products.

1-046-0000

Fredrick Federley (Renew). – Jag trodde jag skulle få ordet av herr ordförande, men jag fortsätter. De bitarna som till exempel rör bioenergi är också väldigt intressanta för att hitta nästa steg i utvecklingen. Det handlar om att hålla balansen, om det långsiktigt hållbara, den biologiska mångfalden, men också där restprodukter kan leda till energiproduktion, där det kanske till och med går att fånga koldioxiden som släpps ut. Då kan vi också nå ett steg längre och inte bara prata om hur vi minskar människans påverkan, utan också hur vi kan få minusutsläpp, alltså negativa utsläpp. Finns det någon plan hos kommissionärskandidaten att försöka nå en strategi för negativa utsläpp?

1-047-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I think it is entirely possible. But just because it's 'bio' doesn't mean it's good, and biofuels have done incredible harm over recent decades.

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.

If you want these emissions to go down, and if you want the dependency on fossil fuels to end, etcetera, you will also have to look at another energy mix. In that context, third-generation biofuels could play an interesting role in the mix, but let's be very careful not to give any blanket OK to the idea that because it says 'bio', it's good.

1-048-0000

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr Timmermans, I want to pull you back to your written comments. I was interested in your comments around the agriculture sector because you haven't dealt with that thus far, but you have introduced a new policy, which is this 'Farm to Fork' strategy. Frankly I'm confused as to why you need both. Perhaps you could answer me directly on that point, about these two policies and how they will sit together?

I was interested in your comments about contradictions in policy and I think that in agriculture and food and environment, and in trade, we have had huge contradictions.

What control have you over competition law? Because one of the views that I've expressed many times – and others, I hope, support me – is that competition law does nothing when it comes to paying for public goods which are embodied in food we eat. Competition law talks about products being cheap for the consumer, but it's cheap at a price.

How powerful will you really be to address these very crucial issues?

1-049-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Well, the short answer to your last question is, time will tell.

Simply because of my professional experience, I have been involved in the common agricultural policy since the mid or second-half of the 1980s. That's how old I am! And I've always seen, and this goes on and on, that those farmers who are suffering are used as an argument to protect the policies that benefit those that are making a lot of money, and somehow we are still not good enough at taking care of that problem.

I think the policy shift that Phil Hogan has started is leading us in the right direction and I know full well that we will not have a sustainable environment without the farmers. They can be part of the problem – they don't need to be part of the problem, they can be part of the problem – but they absolutely need to be part of the solution – without them we will not get there.

And I think the very beginning of the common agricultural policy was about assuring food security for Europeans after the Second World War who were starving. Now, the goal of the common agricultural policy is to make sure we have a sustainable food supply for our citizens in this millennium and I think we will need some policy shifts on that.

I think from Farm to Fork is the ideal way of looking at this – how much fertiliser do we need? Can we use innovations in animal feeds to decrease emissions? How much pesticide do we still need? Can we reduce that as well? What is the impact of what is happening elsewhere? Where do we get our animal feed from and is there any link with the other goals we would like to attain, for instance stopping deforestation? Is the food quality we want to guarantee for our citizens good enough as it is? Could we improve that?

And the one issue that you mentioned which I find the most complicated. One could argue that the success of the common agricultural policy is that the highest quality of foodstuffs at the lowest prices are now guaranteed, but at some point you have to ask yourselves, are we

not paying too little for food? But take that to people who have little money to spend and you tell them you need to pay more for food; they will chase you out of their house if you say that.

But at the same time, the situation as it is now is not providing for sufficient income for many of our farmers and this should be a great concern to us, because again – 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.

1-050-0000

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – I'm not enlightened fully as to what you're doing, how the Farm to Fork links with the common agricultural policy. It seems to me that there's a huge overlap and you didn't answer my question about competition law. I think it's a key issue.

You've nudged in that direction, but you haven't quite answered it because – if I may, I think I have a few seconds left – because fundamentally you are right, farmers' incomes are on the floor. Some are making plenty but the most are making very little, and while you said in your opening that we all love to go to the countryside – I do it as well; I live on a farm. I love going back, but I have an income, so I can enjoy it – but people are watching this and they know you're the person responsible for their farming future. What are you saying to them as farmers?

Remember they followed European advice in the 1980s. I'm old enough to remember it. We told them to rip out hedgerows, drain their land and lash on the fertiliser. I made television programmes about it. What are we saying to them now and how will you help them make a transition?

1-051-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I certainly feel a personal duty to go out to them, talk to them, listen to them and show what the plans are with 'from farm to fork', what we need to do on pesticides, what we need to do on fertiliser, and what we need to do to reduce emissions.

Like before, Sicco Mansholt had to get out and convince farmers who were absolutely unconvinced when he started. McSharry had the same problem when he started with his plans. This is part and parcel of the history of European integration, and we will have to do the same thing right now. I honestly believe that the goals, as enshrined in the Treaty, of the Common Agricultural Policy are more valid today than ever before.

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.

On competition law: I was not entirely sure what you meant by your question, but what you're saying is that they are competing at food prices that just don't give them an income with food coming from outside the European Union. I think that's what you were saying. We will have to take a hard look at that, and also talk to our international partners, because they have a problem if much of this foodstuff is also produced through creating more deforestation.

So this will have to be part and parcel of any trade negotiation we will have in the future, as we have done – I think, quite smartly – in the Mercosur trade negotiations.

1-052-0000

Javi López (S&D). – Bienvenido al Parlamento, de nuevo, vicepresidente Timmermans. Usted, hoy y reiteradamente, ha repetido la necesidad de hacer una transición ecológica justa que no deje a nadie atrás. Nosotros, como Grupo Socialista, venimos defendiendo esta cuestión durante los últimos años, así como la necesidad no solo de ser ambiciosos en la descarbonización de nuestra economía, sino de que esta transición, necesaria para nuestra forma de vida —eso sí, para nuestra forma de vida—, sea una transición justa. Una transición justa, que reparta los costes —que los tiene—, que tenga amortiguadores sociales y que, al mismo tiempo, también reparta los beneficios —que también los tiene— en forma de empleo o crecimiento económico. Y para eso, vamos a crear nosotros un fondo para la transición justa, que usted va a liderar.

Yo quiero preguntar sobre este fondo y sobre sus características. En primer lugar, si van a ser partidas en las que aseguremos que tengan como objetivo el impacto social de la transición. No como las de las nuevas tecnologías o demás.

En segundo lugar, si vamos a asegurar que son partidas nuevas; que no reciclemos otras partidas sociales o regionales para el fondo de transición justa.

Y en tercer lugar, si vamos a ser capaces también de asegurar que condicionamos estas ayudas y esta financiación al cumplimiento de nuestros objetivos energéticos y climáticos.

1-053-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I am in the fortunate situation that Valdis Dombrovskis already answered that question also earlier today, so you can hear that the incoming Commission speaks with one voice on this as well. Of course, there will be new money into this. It can't all be re-channelling of existing funds. But on top of that we need to make sure that we create – I would call it a mechanism – so that we make sure that all the instruments and funds we have in the European Union work in the same direction.

Some of the instruments we use in this transition will be for investment in things that are pretty close to market, like with the Juncker Fund and InvestEU, and there it will be relatively easy to mobilise also private funds. But in some areas – you know, if you have to re-school miners to do a job in the fourth industrial revolution – it will take some time. It will take some time and I'm not sure there will be a lot of private money willing to invest in this. So, then you're not that close to market and then you will have to find a mix of European money with national co-financing to look for that.

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. And I believe in this mix, we can make sure, because I think we cannot, as I said in my introduction, we cannot achieve this if we do not convince the people who will have to change that this change is not a loss, but a gain for them. Because too many people in our society today have the feeling that change means loss. We need to make sure that they understand that change can also be gain, not just a cleaner environment, but also a better job.

1-054-0000

Javi López (S&D). – Muchas gracias. Por lo que hace a los recursos —ha clarificado muchas de las características del fondo—, a mí me gustaría hablar de otro nuevo recurso que está ahora en debate y que ha apoyado, tanto en las preguntas por escrito como hoy: el mecanismo de ajuste en frontera, que además de hacer que nuestras empresas compitan de forma leal con el resto del mundo, evita el dumping ecológico.

Nosotros estamos de acuerdo con esta idea, pero la cuestión es si vamos a ser capaces de que, algo complejo como esto, usted lo lidere desde la vicepresidencia para un Pacto Verde Europeo. Y, al mismo tiempo, si lo vamos a hacer en un periodo corto de tiempo, ¿cuánto puede llevar la aplicación de una medida compleja —que sabemos que lo es— como esta?

Y en tercer lugar, este Parlamento ya ha dicho que estaría de acuerdo con que algo así —un mecanismo de ajuste del carbono en frontera— fuera un recurso propio de la Unión Europea en sus presupuestos. ¿Usted qué piensa de esta opinión que ya ha expresado el Parlamento Europeo?

1-055-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I'm on the same line. 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.

That would be the reasoning I would develop, and I think this could be WTO-compatible, but we'll have to analyse that. I think it is absolutely necessary: just imagine that we can have our steel industry producing steel using hydrogen. It's not impossible anymore. It could be possible. But that steel is obviously going to be, also in terms of climate cost, much more costly than steel produced with coal in China. Then would we not have an opportunity to look at the carbon footprint of a tonne of steel? We would not be able to correct that inequality, and that's why we might need a carbon border tax.

1-056-0000

Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Commissaire, vous nous parlez de la Terre mère, vous nous parlez de transition juste. Vos mots sont habiles, mais nous vous demandons des actes.

Votre pays a été condamné pour inaction climatique. La France, l'Allemagne, sont aujourd'hui poursuivies par leurs citoyens et par une quinzaine de jeunes du monde, emmenés par Greta Thunberg. L'Union européenne, elle aussi, est devant la justice, car l'inaction climatique est une violation des droits humains.

Vous nous promettez un «Green Deal». Je n'entends toutefois ni ambition ni cohérence. En effet, où est la cohérence quand, à rebours de tous les rapports scientifiques, l'Europe mise sur le gaz pour assurer sa prétendue transition et s'apprête à nous enfermer dans les énergies fossiles, à grand renfort d'investissements dans les infrastructures gazières? Où est la cohérence quand des produits issus de la déforestation, que vous avez notamment cités, sont commercialisés ici, en Europe, sur notre territoire et notre marché intérieur?

Monsieur le Commissaire, quand comptez-vous mettre un terme aux subventions directes et indirectes aux énergies fossiles, notamment au gaz? Vous engagez-vous à proposer une réglementation contraignante pour protéger les forêts du monde des violences environnementales commises par nos entreprises?

1-057-0000

Frans Timmermans, commissaire désigné. – Comme je l'ai déjà dit, je crois que l'une des tâches les plus compliquées que j'aurai à accomplir sera de garantir la cohérence de nos politiques, et je ne vous cache pas que cela sera extrêmement difficile.

Vous avez vous-même indiqué la complexité des sujets. Je ne me fais pas d'illusion, je ne pourrai parvenir à cette cohérence d'ici cent jours. En revanche, je peux identifier les

incohérences, puis déterminer les législations, les mesures ou autres démarches à engager pour éliminer ces incohérences. Cela reste, somme toute, l'une des tâches les plus compliquées, mais aussi l'une des plus importantes de mon portefeuille.

Vous dites que le gaz naturel constitue un problème. En effet, il ne s'agit pas d'une source d'énergie durable, mais ce gaz fera partie de la transition qu'il faut réaliser en faveur des énergies durables.

Vous parlez aussi des infrastructures. Personnellement, je sais qu'il existe des projets. Vous avez mentionné mon pays. Il y a des projets permettant de reconstruire très facilement ces infrastructures pour transporter également l'hydrogène. Par conséquent, dans un futur, je l'espère, très proche, nous pourrions nous servir des infrastructures créées pour le gaz naturel pour transporter une source d'énergie qui est absolument durable, à savoir l'hydrogène.

Il n'y a donc pas que des mauvaises nouvelles, mais vous avez raison, nous devons essayer de nous libérer au plus vite de la dépendance vis-à-vis des énergies fossiles. Je ne vous cache pas que cela sera très compliqué, mais si j'ai une tâche, c'est de garantir la cohérence des politiques. De plus, si j'ai la possibilité de démontrer, de montrer où sont les incohérences, je suis convaincu que les citoyens soutiendront la Commission européenne pour qu'elle élimine ces incohérences de nos politiques. Je vous donne absolument raison pour les incohérences qui existent effectivement aujourd'hui.

1-058-0000

Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE). – Merci, mais je crois que je vais reprendre ma question.

Comptez-vous, et, si oui, quand, mettre fin à ces subventions directes et indirectes aux énergies fossiles? Comptez-vous, pour la forêt comme pour le climat, contraindre nos entreprises à agir? On travaille sur le devoir de vigilance, par exemple, mais il y a d'autres formes d'obligations. Comptez-vous les obliger à réduire leurs émissions? Comptez-vous sanctionner celles qui ne le feront pas? Et comptez-vous interdire, punir, de sorte, aussi, à mieux prévenir les crimes environnementaux et les écocides?

Merci de répondre à ma question.

1-059-0000

Frans Timmermans, commissaire désigné. – Je compte prendre des mesures concernant les subventions aux énergies traditionnelles, mais je ne peux pas vous donner de réponse concrète à l'heure actuelle. Je donnerai cette réponse quand j'aurai analysé les possibilités de la part de la Commission. Je crois qu'elles sont assez limitées, mais je veux quand même en faire l'analyse. Je comprends votre question, elle est logique, cohérente, mais je ne peux pas vous donner de réponse complète aujourd'hui.

Concernant vos autres questions, il est certain que la Commission fera des propositions au Parlement afin de prendre les mesures nécessaires pour protéger la biodiversité en Europe.

Pour ce qui est des entreprises et de leurs effets sur la biodiversité, je crois que l'on devrait renforcer la transparence pour les consommateurs et pour les citoyens, afin qu'ils sachent si un produit a été fabriqué aux dépens de la biodiversité, ou en contribuant à la déforestation.

Ce serait déjà un premier pas, on pourrait envisager un étiquetage, on pourrait envisager d'autres mesures, on pourrait même envisager une interdiction, mais pour cela, il faut faire une analyse détaillée des conséquences. Et si j'ai pu proposer des mesures sur le plastique et sur les déchets ces cinq dernières années, c'est parce que j'ai d'abord analysé les conséquences, ce qui m'a permis de faire ensuite une proposition cohérente au Parlement.

Donc je ne veux pas me précipiter. Je veux faire cette analyse avant d'avancer des propositions concrètes. Mais j'ai bien compris votre question et la Commission sera en mesure d'avancer dans la bonne direction après cette analyse, qui nous permettra d'appréhender les conséquences.

1-060-0000

Aurelia Beigneux (ID). – Monsieur Timmermans, Madame von der Leyen souhaite présenter une stratégie de la biodiversité pour 2030. Parmi les objectifs envisagés, il s'agit de mettre un terme à la perte de la biodiversité, associée à la destruction des écosystèmes. Mais, paradoxalement, c'est justement la politique de l'Union européenne en matière de carburants renouvelables qui a conduit, par exemple, à la déforestation dans les forêts tropicales, sans oublier bien sûr les accords de libre-échange, toujours à l'ordre du jour et pourtant néfastes pour l'environnement.

Ainsi, comment comptez-vous réorienter les politiques de l'Union européenne en matière d'énergies renouvelables durables?

De plus, dans le cas où vous seriez favorable à une taxe européenne sur le carbone, quelles en seraient les modalités?

1-061-0000

Frans Timmermans, commissaire désigné. – Beaucoup de questions ce soir, comme les vôtres, visent le manque de cohérence des politiques de l'Union européenne. Vous avez raison de mettre le doigt là-dessus, parce qu'on a parfois introduit des politiques avec de bonnes intentions qui, en fait, ont un effet contraire à ce que nous voulons créer dans un autre domaine.

Encore une fois, je le répète, pour moi, ce qui sera important (et ce sera une bonne partie de mon boulot), c'est d'assurer la cohérence des politiques.

Par contre, je ne vois pas vraiment de contradictions entre le maintien de la biodiversité et l'introduction de l'énergie renouvelable. Je crois que les deux vont bien ensemble. Je vous prie de m'indiquer où sont exactement ces contradictions, et si vous me corrigez, je suis à votre disposition pour voir comment résoudre le problème.

Mais, vraiment, je crois que réduire les émissions à de serre, réduire l'augmentation de la température, réduire les menaces qui pèsent sur la biodiversité sont des choses qui vont de pair. Ce sont des choses que nous devons faire ensemble et de toute urgence.

1-062-0000

Aurelia Beigneux (ID). – Je vous remercie pour ces éléments.

Donc, dans cette logique de développement durable dont nous venons de parler, quel est votre calendrier quant à l'élimination progressive des combustibles fossiles et à l'éventuelle suppression des subventions à l'industrie de ces mêmes combustibles?

Concernant la décarbonisation voulue par Mme von der Leyen, ne risquez-vous pas de créer des conditions défavorables pour nos entreprises et donc, paradoxalement, de favoriser une augmentation des importations en provenance du reste du monde?

1-063-0000

Frans Timmermans, commissaire désigné. – Il est absolument indispensable de réduire et de supprimer les subventions qui continuent de favoriser les énergies fossiles. Il faut pour cela avoir un projet très concret et fixer des étapes que nous pouvons discuter avec les États membres. Mais c'est effectivement l'une des contradictions les plus manifestes qu'il faut essayer d'éviter, qu'il faut liquider.

Concernant le commerce international: tant dans le cadre de la conférence que nous aurons en Chine sur la biodiversité que dans celui des accords commerciaux internationaux, nous mettrons à l'ordre du jour des négociations notre volonté d'éviter les importations qui nuisent à la biodiversité, comme nous l'avons fait avec le Mercosur. Et à cette occasion, nous avons quand même contraint le Brésil à maintenir les objectifs de l'accord de Paris. Ce sont des atouts pour le climat que je trouve très importants.

1-064-0000

Anna Zalewska (ECR). – Witam serdecznie. Mam kilka konkretnych pytań. W Polsce mówimy, że dobrymi chęciami piekło jest wybrukowane. Stąd oczekiwania młodych ludzi protestujących, żeby pokazać konkretne plany, konkretne rozwiązania i źródła finansowania tychże działań. Pierwsze moje pytanie dotyczy zapowiedzianego nowego prawa klimatycznego. Bardzo proszę o kilka słów na temat założeń do tego prawa i jednocześnie proszę o kilka słów komentarza, jak to się ma do legislacji zakończonej w 2014 r. na temat redukcji do 40 %, która to legislacja jeszcze nie do końca została zaimplementowana przez poszczególne kraje. Wreszcie, jak nowe prawo i jego założenia mają się do deklaracji powtarzanej w odpowiedziach Pana Kandydata, mianowicie *one in, one out*, czyli które z przepisów będzie chciał Pan wyeliminować z obrotu prawnego Unii Europejskiej? Mówi Pan też o sprawiedliwej transformacji, ale, Panie Kandydacie, w budżecie przewidziano tylko 5 mld na siedem lat dla wszystkich krajów. Stąd pytanie: co Pan robi w tym kierunku? Polska potrzebuje setek miliardów złotych, by sprawiedliwa była owa transformacja. W jaki sposób będzie Pan rozmawiał z Europejskim Bankiem Inwestycyjnym, który już teraz chce być zielony, ale mówi o tym, że na przykład nie będzie finansował inwestycji w gaz?

1-065-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – The intention of the climate law is to put in law that the European Union and its Member States will have reached climate neutrality by 2050, and if you put that in law you then can count back from 2050 to today and then see which measures will be necessary to get there, and the climate law should include as much as possible of clarity on what steps we need to take to get there by 2050. That is, I think, a legal commitment then by Member States to do what is necessary in their Member State to get there on the basis of national plans, and I believe this is something that will be an integral part of much of the policy mix in the next decades of the European Union.

I also believe that also in Poland there is massive support, among the population, to do something about climate change. There's a very strong feeling that we need to do this. You know, I'm really encouraged by the research done in Poland on this and I'm also really encouraged by the way young people in Poland are mobilising. You mentioned yourself young people in Poland: they are really mobilizing on this issue and I see this with great admiration.

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.

On the issue of 'one-in, one-out' I believe Maroš Šefčovič has already gone into that in his hearing, but perhaps that was not with you. It is, of course, a global approach to the issue that we want to do these things. As I said five years ago, this is about better regulation. It's not about deregulation. It's not about lowering standards. We want standards to be higher, not lower, but we also want to do this with a minimum of red tape, with a minimum of burden on those people who have to work with that legislation.

I think we've made great strides in the last five years, but still – also thanks to Parliament helping us with an interinstitutional agreement on better law-making – but still there is room for improvement and I think that's the way Maroš Šefčovič explained it. But make no mistake, in this area we will need regulation. This is not something the market will take care of itself. Here we will need regulation and we will need European regulation.

1-066-0000

Anna Zalewska (ECR). – Niestety, Panie Kandydacie, nie uzyskałam odpowiedzi. Jest mi bardzo przykro. Unika Pan przede wszystkim dyskusji na temat pieniędzy i bardzo konkretnych zapisów w prawie klimatycznym. Ja chcę Panu pokazać, między innymi, absurd, z którymi mamy do czynienia na co dzień. Otóż został skończony proces uchwalania pakietu mobilności. Ja pomijam już dyskusję na temat sposobu, w jaki to zrobiono. To absolutnie nie ma nic wspólnego z solidarnością europejską i stanowieniem prawa, ale najważniejsze, Panie Kandydacie, jest to, że będziemy zwiększać emisje, dlatego że będziemy powodować, że samochody, duże samochody, będą wracać bez towaru po prostu dla kaprysu Parlamentu Europejskiego.

1-067-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I stand corrected. You had asked me a question about the money. The EUR 4.8 billion is actually the amount the European Parliament had earmarked for this, if I'm not mistaken.

So that's the amount of money that has been talked about. 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. So we will have to find a solution for that problem, and those areas that are heavily dependent on the coal industry – whether it's in Poland, or in Slovakia, or in Spain, or in Greece, or in Germany – have the right to European solidarity, because all of Europe profits if they make that transition.

I believe we will have to mobilise the funds, and I believe we will have to also look at existing funds and re-target them to that goal. Have we not achieved miracles in Poland thanks to cohesion funds, structural funds and agricultural funds in the last 10 years? I think we have.

Look at how Polish society has transformed itself. Look at the levels of economic growth – other Member States are jealous of those levels of economic growth. Let's put that to good use for the future of young Poles as well. Poland will have to make this transition out of coal, and it's going to be painful, but the rest of Europe should say 'we are standing by your side in this; we will help you in this, and we will make sure you have the funds to make that transition'.

This is coming straight from the heart as a grandson of two coal miners. I saw what can happen if it isn't done right.

1-068-0000

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender, verehrter Herr Timmermans! Die Europäische Union hat nach wie vor eine starke industrielle Basis. Wir leben also in Europa nicht nur von Dienstleistungen, sondern bei uns in Europa wird noch produziert – Gott sei Dank – im Maschinenbau, in der chemischen Industrie, in der Automobilindustrie, Papier, Zement, Stahl, Aluminium, Pharma und, und, und. Ich möchte Sie fragen: Wie wollen Sie sicherstellen, dass es durch den *European Green Deal* nicht zu einer Deindustrialisierung in Europa kommt? Ganz konkret: Wie wollen Sie erreichen, dass unsere europäische industrielle Basis, unsere Unternehmen, viele Mittelständler, die betroffen sind, durch den *European Green Deal* gestärkt und nicht geschwächt werden? Das ist meine Frage.

Sie hatten schon heute und auch in Ihren schriftlichen Antworten die *carbon border tax* angesprochen. Ich glaube nicht, dass das das Richtige oder das einzige Mittel ist, das wirkt. Das wird keine Abwanderung verhindern. Deshalb meine Frage: Wie stellen Sie das sicher? Ich hoffe, dass es uns nicht so geht wie mit der europäischen Solarpanelindustrie – da hatten wir noch vor zehn Jahren fünf von zehn Topherstellern bei uns in Europa, mittlerweile gibt es kein einziges in dem Bereich produzierendes Unternehmen mehr. Also meine Frage: Was machen Sie für unsere heimischen Betriebe, Unternehmen, an denen die Arbeitsplätze hängen?

1-069-0000

Frans Timmermans, designiertes Mitglied der Kommission. – Ich glaube, wenn ich mit Vertretern der Industrie rede, dann sind die sich alle einig, dass wir diese Transition machen müssen. Ich glaube auch, dass der Kontinent, der als erster diese Transition macht, auch als bester herauskommt. Ich bin fest davon überzeugt, dass, je länger man an dieser alten Industrie festhält, es umso schwieriger wird, diese Transition zu machen. Wir sind in Europa, glaube ich, am besten dazu da, das auf einer Ebene zu organisieren, die auch Sinn hat. Dazu sind wir natürlich manchmal darauf angewiesen, unsere Industrie zu schützen. Aber meistens müssen wir unsere Industrie dabei fördern, dass sie sich von der Abhängigkeit von den alten Energiequellen befreit. Ich habe diese Tatsache erwähnt, dass sich jetzt sogar die europäische Stahlindustrie aktiv darum bemüht, sich von fossilen Brennstoffen unabhängig zu machen, dass sie sich aktiv darum bemüht, dass vielleicht Wasserstoff dazu führen kann, dass man auch mit Wasserstoff Stahl machen kann. Das wäre doch vor fünf, sechs Jahren unvorstellbar gewesen! Jetzt ist das etwas, was vielleicht realistisch ist.

Also ich bin davon überzeugt, dass die europäische Industrie begriffen hat, dass diese Transition notwendig ist, auch für Arbeitsplätze in der Zukunft. Ich bin davon überzeugt! Man sieht das ja schon in den Vereinigten Staaten, dass man dort – nicht auf der föderalen Ebene, aber bei den Betrieben, in den Staaten – diese Schlussfolgerung auch gezogen hat. Ich sehe das doch auch in China. Das ändert sich jetzt massiv und sehr, sehr schnell.

Was wir verpasst haben, das ist das Internet. Da haben wir geglaubt, es geht um Telekommunikation und nicht um Internet. Das ist ein Riesenfehler gewesen.

Was wir noch nicht verpasst haben, ist die nachhaltige Industrie. Und ich glaube, Europa hat gute Chancen, da erfolgreich zu sein, wenn wir uns von diesen alten fossilen Brennstoffen unabhängig machen, wenn wir dafür sorgen, dass wir auch Brennstoffe machen, wenn wir dafür sorgen, dass wir auch – sagen wir mal – alles, was wir jetzt erfinden können, darauf einrichten, bei 5G erfolgreich zu sein, dass wir unsere Autoindustrie von den traditionellen Motoren unabhängig machen, dass wir dafür sorgen, dass wir auch unsere Infrastruktur schnell verbessern. Was wir bei der Bahn machen müssen, ist ja riesig! Das ist doch auch alles gut für die europäische Industrie, wenn wir das richtig machen.

Also ich bin eher zuversichtlich, dass wir das schaffen können, auch weil ich fest davon überzeugt bin: Es gibt einfach weltweit keine Alternative dazu. Und wer das am schnellsten macht, wird auch am schnellsten die besten Erfolge haben. Alle Studien erweisen, dass es in Europa zusätzliches Wachstum gibt, wenn wir diese Transition schneller machen.

1-070-0000

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Vielen Dank! Also Ihr Optimismus in Ehren. Ich hoffe sehr, dass wir dahin kommen. Ich kann nur sagen: Ich habe jetzt, wenn ich die Debatte hier verfolge, viel von Regulierung, Regulierung und Verteilung gehört. Ich glaube, wichtig ist vor allem, dass man in neue Technologien investiert und Geld für Forschung, Entwicklung und Innovationen zur Verfügung stellt. Aber das habe ich heute noch gar nicht gehört.

Ich hätte noch eine Nachfrage – auch das hatten Sie angesprochen: Nur 9 % der weltweiten Emissionen stammen ja aus der Europäischen Union. Die USA, einer der größten Emittenten, sind aus dem Pariser Klimaschutzübereinkommen ausgeschieden. In China wird zwar sehr massiv in erneuerbare Energien investiert, aber die Chinesen wenden ja Milliarden von US-Dollar auf, um auch Kohlekraftwerke weltweit aufzubauen. Meine konkrete Frage noch mal: Was machen Sie, um international gerade auch die Großemittenten hier in die Verantwortung zu nehmen?

1-071-0000

Frans Timmermans, *designiertes Mitglied der Kommission*. – Wie gesagt, ich glaube, mit den Chinesen wäre es möglich, ein Abkommen zu treffen. Die wollen auch in dieselbe Richtung gehen. Ich glaube, bei den Vereinigten Staaten handelt es sich um einen Riesenunterschied zwischen dem, was auf der föderalen Ebene gesagt wird, und dem, was wir mit den Staaten und Städten in den Vereinigten Staaten machen können. Da gibt es viele Verbündete, die schon wissen, wohin es gehen muss.

Aber ich muss ehrlich sagen, dass ich auch gespürt habe, als ich vor ein paar Wochen in New York war, dass es von den großen Industriestaaten zu wenige gibt, die jetzt schon sagen: Wir machen auch diese Transition – so, wie die Europäer das auch wollen. Also wir haben noch eine Riesenarbeit, auch international, vor uns, um andere zu überzeugen, in dieselbe Richtung zu gehen.

Ich wiederhole: Ich bin fest davon überzeugt, es gibt keine andere Wahl! Wir müssen diese Transition machen. Aber wenn das alles verzögert wird, dann wird es uns nicht gelingen, nicht an diese *tipping points* zu kommen. Dann wird es uns nicht gelingen, den Temperaturanstieg auf bis zu 1,5 Grad zu begrenzen. Also ich glaube, wir haben in den nächsten Monaten und Jahren eine Riesenaufgabe, andere internationale Partner zu überzeugen. Bei China bin ich ziemlich zuversichtlich. Ich glaube, auch mit den Vereinigten Staaten lässt sich einiges machen, aber es ist eine Riesenaufgabe – da haben Sie Recht.

1-072-0000

Jan Huitema (Renew). – Dank u wel Voorzitter, geachte heer Timmermans. We hebben het heel veel gehad over regelgeving, over begroting. Maar inderdaad, zoals de vorige spreker zei: we hebben het nauwelijks gehad over innovatie. Terwijl het juist heel belangrijk is dat we komen met nieuwe ideeën die misschien nu nog niet bestaan, maar een oplossing kunnen zijn voor de klimaat- en milieudoelstellingen.

Wat ik te vaak tegenkom, ook in de praktijk, is verouderde Europese wetgeving die misschien wel dertig jaar oud is. Of een wirwar aan regels die niet eenduidig zijn, maar elkaar juist ook weer converteren. Wat volgens mij ook nodig is in de Europese Unie, is veel meer experimenteerruimte voor nieuwe ideeën en innovaties.

Mijn vraag aan u is dus: hoe gaat u het innovatieklimaat in de Europese Unie – en dan vooral voor kleine en middelgrote bedrijven en start-ups – verbeteren? En een andere vraag is: zijn bepaalde innovaties, zoals kernenergie of biotechnologie, volgens u misschien ook taboe?

1-073-0000

Frans Timmermans, *kandidaat-commissaris*. – Er zijn geen taboes, maar er is wel de noodzaak om alles wetenschappelijk goed te onderbouwen. In kernenergie wordt nog flink geïnvesteerd, en in veiligheid, enzovoort. Op dat gebied hebben we ook een specifieke Europese taak, zoals u weet. Ik weet alleen niet of ik u kan volgen als u een tegenstelling creëert tussen regelgeving aan de ene kant en innovatie aan de andere kant.

Denkt u werkelijk dat in de auto-industrie zo geïnnoveerd zou zijn als in de afgelopen jaren als deze industrie niet geconfronteerd zou zijn met die hele strenge emissienormen? Ik geloof er niks van. Ik geloof dat die normen een enorme boost hebben gegeven aan de innovatie en ook iets versneld hebben wat eigenlijk al veel eerder had moeten gebeuren. Dus ook regelgeving en normen kunnen helpen om de innovatie te stimuleren.

Dat gezegd zijnde ben ik het met u eens dat we, zoals we in het verleden ook hebben gedaan, heel veel ruimte en stimulansen moeten bieden aan innovatie en nieuwe initiatieven. Daar hebben we natuurlijk ook het zevende kaderprogramma voor dat heel goed werkt in die richting. En onder ons, Nederlanders, mag ik zeggen dat dat ook voor Nederland heel goed heeft gewerkt, zoals u weet. Daaruit zijn, zeker in de hernieuwbare energie, fantastische projecten voortgekomen.

Omdat we het toch over hernieuwbare energie hebben: al die projecten die daaruit zijn voortgekomen... Recent hoorde ik zelfs van een nieuwe innovatie waarbij je met zonnepanelen, met zonne-energie, rechtstreeks waterstof kunt maken. Niet eens via elektriciteit! Op redelijk kleine schaal worden dit soort dingen bedacht en later opgeschaald.

Ik zou graag zelf kennis willen nemen van een hele hoop van die start-ups. Het is ook echt mijn intentie om overal naartoe te gaan om vervolgens misschien contacten en verbanden tot stand te kunnen brengen. Want dan kunnen we echt iets bereiken de komende tijd. Daar zit de kracht van Europa. Hernieuwbare energie kun je niet delokaliseren, die moet lokaal opgewekt worden. Zonnepanelen moeten op een dak komen. Auto's moeten in Europa [...], dat net moet in Europa komen. Dus het heeft ook nog een directe positieve impact op de werkgelegenheid en op de positie van het midden- en kleinbedrijf in Europa.

1-074-0000

Jan Huitema (Renew). – Ik denk dat het ook heel belangrijk is voor het draagvlak onder de bevolking dat we nu niet gaan investeren in zaken die helemaal niet renderen of later de techniek zijn die beter rendeert.

Verder wil ik graag benadrukken dat het juist voor kmo's en start-ups wel betaalbaar en behapbaar moet zijn. Dat het heel moeilijk voor hen is om te investeren in groen als ze in het rood staan en dat ze daar heel bang voor zijn, bijvoorbeeld in de landbouw, als het gaat om een kringlooeconomie. Er is net in Nederland ook weer een rapport gepubliceerd voor Carola Schouten.

Maar de grootste uitdaging is het verdienmodel voor “van boer tot bord”. Hoe gaat u dat verbeteren? Want heel veel boeren willen best biologisch worden, maar er is simpelweg geen vraag vanuit de markt. Hoe gaat u die meerkosten uit de markt halen? Zeker ook omdat landbouwproducten als geen ander gerealiseerd worden door wereldmarktprijzen.

1-075-0000

Frans Timmermans, kandidaat-commissaris. – Zoals ik al eerder tegen mevrouw McGuinness zei: er is op dit vlak heel veel mogelijk wat we nog niet hebben gerealiseerd. Ook omdat vanuit de agrarische sector zelf de vraag komt.

Boeren zijn slimme mensen, die zien dat zij de verandering ook mee moeten maken. En soms – dat hebben we afgelopen week in Nederland gezien – is de wanhoop te groot. Dan gaan ze de straat op omdat ze niet meer zien hoe.

Ik vind dat wij dan een collectieve taak hebben, of het nou nationaal is of in Europa, om ook onze verantwoordelijkheid te nemen en te zeggen: het kan zo. Het kan zo als we dit doen bij de mest. Het kan zo als we dit doen in innovatie, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van diervoeder, waardoor de emissies afnemen. Het kan zo in nieuwe gewassen. Het kan zo in een extensievere veehouderij of landbouw, waardoor je ook bij de natuurbescherming een grote rol krijgt.

Ik vind dat we dat de komende jaren ook veel explicieter moeten maken, en dat is voor mij onderdeel van “van boer tot bord”. Wij moeten de agrarische sector in Europa toch perspectief bieden, perspectief dat ook uitkomt bij duurzaamheid. En daar moet deze Commissie deel van zijn.

1-076-0000

Eleonora Evi (NI). – Signor Commissario designato, io torno sulla questione odiosa e macroscopica dei sussidi alle fonti fossili. Ne ha già parlato, però vorrei tornare nuovamente su questo tema perché ancora esistono a livello europeo. Dati della stessa Commissione europea suggeriscono che 55 miliardi all'anno ancora vanno in sussidi alle fonti fossili.

Io mi rendo conto che gran parte della responsabilità ricade sugli Stati membri e mi rendo conto che i piani “energia e clima” che sono stati presentati spesso non sono ambiziosi e sono molto vaghi, confusi e poco chiari sulle strategie che gli Stati membri intendono mettere in atto per eliminarli quanto prima. Fortunatamente ci sono delle eccezioni e, con sollievo, posso dire che l'Italia oggi si mette tra quei paesi che fanno eccezione. Su questo, ovviamente, resta però molto, moltissimo da fare.

Io Le voglio chiedere cosa intende fare concretamente nei confronti degli Stati membri a questo riguardo per accelerare questa eliminazione così necessaria.

E poi Le voglio fare un'altra domanda: partendo dalle grandi differenze che esistono tra i vari Stati membri, alcuni in grado di fare molti investimenti senza troppi sacrifici rispetto ad altri Stati membri, Lei non ritiene che tutti dovrebbero essere messi nelle migliori condizioni per affrontare l'urgenza delle sfide sociali e climatiche e quindi non pensa sia arrivato il momento di cambiare le regole fiscali e di bilancio ed escludere gli investimenti verdi e sociali dal calcolo per il deficit a livello nazionale, nell'ambito del patto di stabilità e crescita? Intende finalmente sostenere apertamente questa proposta?

1-077-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissario designato. – Io direi che, se vogliamo arrivare tutti alla neutralità climatica nel 2050, tutti i paesi dovrebbero avere dei progetti su come arrivarci.

E se i paesi hanno questi progetti dovranno anche spiegare che cosa fanno con l'energia classica. Lì credo che dobbiamo stare molto attenti nell'aiutarli ad evitare investimenti che vanno nella direzione opposta.

Dunque io credo che quello sarebbe lo strumento per avere un dialogo con gli Stati membri sui progetti che hanno, partendo dalla legge sul 2050.

Riguardo alla seconda domanda, che adesso mi sfugge...

1-078-0000

Eleonora Evi (NI). – Exclusion of green investments from the calculation of the deficit from the Stability Package.

1-079-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissario designato. – Ah sì, forse è perché sono olandese che mi è sfuggita questa domanda.

Credo che oggi già Valdis Dombrovskis abbia dato delle indicazioni su questo: io direi che quando guardiamo allo sviluppo economico dei nostri paesi membri dobbiamo anche tenere conto tutto di quello che ci aiuta a creare una società sostenibile.

Dunque lì farebbe parte dell'analisi della situazione economica di un paese, ma io non propongo di escludere certi investimenti, in genere, dalle regole fiscali dell'Unione europea.

1-080-0000

Eleonora Evi (NI). – La ringrazio per la risposta.

Passo a un altro argomento, che riguarda in realtà un tema che Lei ha già toccato: la strategia "*farm to fork*", perché ci sono sempre più prove scientifiche che ci dicono che l'agricoltura intensiva, in particolare l'allevamento industriale e l'allevamento intensivo, esercita un'enorme pressione sia sulla biodiversità ma anche sulle emissioni di gas a effetto serra.

Lei farà in modo, tornando sempre sulla questione finanziaria, che non venga utilizzato denaro pubblico per finanziare e sostenere allevamenti intensivi e che esso venga piuttosto utilizzato per incoraggiare un minor consumo di prodotti animali ma, soprattutto, di migliore qualità, nonché una maggiore quantità di frutta e verdura?

1-081-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissario designato*. – Questa è una domanda che viene anche dagli agricoltori stessi, non è una cosa che è stata imposta o che dobbiamo imporre dall'Unione europea.

Questa è una domanda che viene da loro e io credo che dobbiamo guardare alla politica agricola comune da questa prospettiva, di stabilire come possiamo dare un futuro agli agricoltori europei, basato su un cibo che è "giusto", che non inquina più.

L'intensità giocherà un ruolo molto importante su questo e ha già fatto parte delle riforme della Commissione Juncker, ma farà parte anche della strategia "*from farm to fork*".

1-082-0000

Simona Bonafè (S&D). – Signor Commissario designato, vorrei tornare su un punto che è già stato trattato ma che ritengo centrale, ovvero il legame imprescindibile che c'è fra il raggiungimento di un *Green Deal* europeo e il livello di investimenti messi in campo.

Se noi vogliamo realizzare un *New Green Deal* europeo, dobbiamo agire trasversalmente – Lei lo ha già detto – su molti settori: penso a quello della mobilità, dei trasporti, con infrastrutture sostenibili. Penso alle industrie, ad esempio nuovi processi produttivi che utilizzino le risorse in maniera più efficiente ma penso anche – e Lei ne ha già parlato – a misure di sostegno a lavoratori che sono impegnati in settori altamente inquinanti e che verranno successivamente meno, o anche a misure di riqualificazione per lavoratori in nuove professioni.

In una parola, tutto questo richiede grandi investimenti e grandi risorse. Solo per l'accordo di Parigi si stima che servano fra i 180 e 200 miliardi di euro all'anno. Ora Lei ha già parlato degli investimenti privati, di InvestEU, della necessità di cofinanziare con gli investimenti privati, però non Le sfuggirà che servono anche tante risorse pubbliche, europee e nazionali.

La mia domanda è molto semplice: quali sono le Sue idee per garantire che una quota sufficiente del bilancio dell'Unione europea possa effettivamente finanziare il *Green Deal*?

1-083-0000

Frans Timmermans, *Commissario designato*. – Quando parlo del "*Just Transition Fund*" all'interno della Commissione, parlo anche di "*just transition mechanism*", perché dobbiamo assicurarci che tutto quello che facciamo vada nella stessa direzione. Parlo di tutti i fondi che abbiamo a nostra disposizione e parlo anche del cofinanziamento degli Stati membri.

E lì credo che ci sia ancora molto lavoro da fare perché, come Lei sa, i fondi lavorano nella loro stessa logica, a volte hanno già incorporato che devono dare il 25 % di tutto quello che fanno per andare in questa direzione, ma il mio ideale sarebbe che diamo il 100 % di tutti i fondi per andare nella stessa direzione. Almeno con un primo passo evitiamo di fare delle

cose che vanno in un'altra direzione, e lì non sono sicuro che oggi possiamo dare questa assicurazione.

Lei ha ragione, soltanto per Parigi già abbiamo bisogno di 200 miliardi all'anno. Se vogliamo anche combattere l'attacco alla biodiversità e preoccuparci della qualità dell'aria, eccetera, avremo bisogno di ulteriori fondi e in questo dobbiamo anche essere realisti.

La totalità del bilancio pluriennale non sarà molto maggiore di quello che ha proposto la Commissione e ha chiesto il Parlamento europeo, già sarà difficile convincere gli Stati membri. E se facciamo questo, dobbiamo avere veramente all'interno di tali fondi un riorientamento che ci dia la possibilità di vedere che quello che facciamo è coordinato per andare nella stessa direzione e questa sarebbe, credo, oggi la risposta a questa domanda.

1-084-0000

Simona Bonafè (S&D). – La ringrazio molto per questa risposta.

Vorrei però tornare sull'investimento privato. Lì sarà necessario disporre anche di un quadro legislativo chiaro e stabile per identificare ciò che può essere considerato, a livello europeo, come investimento sostenibile. Questa delega, però, non appartiene solo a Lei, questa delega è condivisa dal Vicepresidente Dombrovskis e anche dal Commissario Gentiloni.

Allora la mia domanda è: come collaborerà con loro per garantire che il lavoro della Commissione corrisponda effettivamente alle ambizioni e garantisca un adeguato finanziamento del *Green New Deal*, sia a livello europeo sia chiaramente anche a livello nazionale?

E ancora – ne ha già parlato, però vorrei entrare un po' più nel merito – quale sarà il ruolo che Lei ritiene debba ricoprire la BEI, in quanto banca climatica europea, a tale riguardo e in particolare per quanto riguarda le prossime discussioni in merito a investimenti in materia di combustibili fossili?

1-085-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissario designato. – Ho letto con attenzione quello che ha detto Paolo Gentiloni qui e anche Valdis Dombrovskis già oggi, vanno nella stessa direzione.

Dunque noi siamo assolutamente d'accordo su questo e lavoriamo mano nella mano. Questo mi dà veramente voglia di iniziare, perché credo che stiamo andando nella stessa direzione e vorrei veramente dimostrare al Parlamento che questo è possibile.

Sulla seconda domanda, ho già parlato con il Presidente della BEI, e anche lui è molto molto impegnato per andare in questa direzione. Dunque io credo che la BEI, dopo i successi del piano Juncker, sia adesso pronta a dire esattamente che cosa vuole fare con gli investimenti che sono possibili, che dovranno andare in questa direzione, e anche per aiutare gli Stati membri a liberarsi dall'energia che non ha futuro. Quindi anche lì sono abbastanza ottimista sul fatto che potremo avere un programma molto specifico con la BEI per dimostrare che possiamo fare questi investimenti già l'anno prossimo, già quest'anno, non lo so di preciso, ma con velocità.

1-086-0000

Jens Gieseke (PPE). – Herr Timmermans! Schön, dass Sie da sind. Ich habe Ihr *mission letter* und auch die Antworten aufmerksam gelesen, höre Ihnen jetzt hier schon seit über zwei Stunden zu, und ich muss sagen: Noch haben Sie mich nicht überzeugt, aber es ist ja noch etwas Zeit.

Ich komme noch mal auf den *Just Transition Fund* zurück. Sie wollen die unglaubliche Zahl von 1000 Milliarden Euro in einer Dekade investieren. Politik beginnt mit dem Betrachten der Wirklichkeit, und bei den Mitgliedstaaten sind wir aktuell kaum bereit, 1 % zu zahlen. Das

heißt, da müssen wir mal gucken, ob Sie auch im Rat die Damen und Herren überzeugen, tatsächlich Geld zu investieren.

Wenn Sie über Verkehr sprechen – ich bin Mitglied des Verkehrsausschusses –, sehen Sie die Politik ja immer durch Belastungen – zusätzliche Belastungen für die Schifffahrt, für die Luftfahrt, *additional burden* –, und da ist die Frage der Refinanzierung. Wenn Sie diesen internationalen Sektoren Geld wegnehmen, geht das Geld dann zurück in die Sektoren, um die Investitionskraft zu stärken, oder wollen Sie es einfach in den Haushalt packen und dann nach Gutdünken darüber verfügen? Also mir wäre bei diesen Sektoren wichtig, dass wir dort dann auch sozusagen die Innovationskraft in den Sektoren, bei der Schifffahrt und bei der Luftfahrt, lassen. Das ist eine wichtige Perspektive des Verkehrsausschusses.

1-087-0000

Frans Timmermans, *designiertes Mitglied der Kommission*. – Was mit dem Geld geschieht, müssen wir dann natürlich mit den Mitgliedstaaten besprechen, und auch, was in den europäischen Haushalt geht und was zurück an die Mitgliedstaaten. Ich finde es logisch, dass das, was an Geld hereinkommt, auch benutzt wird, damit wir diese Transition auch in diesen Sektoren besser machen können. Was ich aber nicht verstehe, ist, dass man so tut, als ob die Schifffahrt oder sogar Flugzeuge schon so belastet werden, dass man vorsichtig sein muss.

Wie kann man es einer Bürgerin oder einem Bürger erklären: Wenn man Auto fährt, zahlt man für den Treibstoff Steuer. Wenn man mit dem Zug fährt, muss die Bahn dafür auch bezahlen. Aber für Kerosin braucht man keine Steuern zu zahlen. Das kann man doch in dieser Zeit keinem mehr erklären. Dann müssen wir doch versuchen, auch bei Steuern etwas ehrlicher zu operieren. Das kommt doch der ganzen Gesellschaft zugute, wenn wir das so machen.

Und ich hoffe, Sie haben auch gehört, wo ich am Anfang gesagt habe, dass es nicht darum geht, die Leute aus dem Auto zu bekommen, sondern dafür zu sorgen, dass wir Autos haben, die nicht mehr verschmutzen – das ist unser Anliegen. Das können wir als Europäer in den nächsten Jahren auch schaffen. Und auch bei der Schifffahrt: Haben Sie mal gesehen, wie verschmutzt diese Schifffahrt ist? Da sind wir uns doch einig, dass wir – hoffentlich über die IMO, aber wenn das nicht geht, auch in Europa – etwas machen müssen. Haben Sie mal gesehen, was in Hamburg geschieht, wenn dort ein Schiff einfährt – ob das jetzt ein Kreuzfahrtschiff ist oder ein anderes Schiff –, wie die unsere Häfen verschmutzen? Das ist doch unerträglich! Da müssen wir doch dafür sorgen, dass das in der Zukunft nicht mehr passiert. Das sind wir uns doch hoffentlich einig.

1-088-0000

Jens Gieseke (PPE). – Da sind wir uns sicher einig. Auch in Amsterdam oder in Hamburg. Da machen wir Innovation. Sie muss aber möglich sein. Das Geld muss da sein.

Das ist ja hier ein bisschen wie ein Puzzle, das zusammengefügt werden muss. Zu Beginn, auf die Frage von Esther de Lange, waren Sie eher der Teamplayer und wollten mit Frau Vestager zusammenarbeiten. Aus der Verkehrsperspektive klang eher so die Alleinzuständigkeit heraus: Das mache ich so. Sie wissen ja, in Rumänien wird gerade ein Verkehrskommissar gesucht. Können wir die Suche dort abbrechen, machen Sie das alles mit? Sind Sie eher Teamplayer, oder sind Sie für alles alleine zuständig?

1-089-0000

Frans Timmermans, *designiertes Mitglied der Kommission*. – Na ja, ich habe, glaube ich, in den letzten Jahren gezeigt, dass ich Teamplayer bin, und vielleicht muss ich Ihnen in Erinnerung rufen, das alles, was ich jetzt sage, aus der Rede von der Frau von der Leyen vor dem Europäischen Parlament kommt. Ich habe den Eindruck, Sie haben das ein bisschen vergessen, oder?

Okay, Sie haben es nicht vergessen, das ist schön. Ich habe in den letzten fünf Jahren immer sehr eng mit den Kollegen zusammengearbeitet. Ich habe auch heute Abend gesagt: Einer alleine kann das alles nicht machen, das müssen wir in der Kommission als Team machen. Unter Führung von Ursula von der Leyen müssen wir das alle zusammen machen.

Ich brauche die Kommissare in den verschiedenen Bereichen. Ich muss nur dafür sorgen, dass das, was wir machen, auch – sagen wir mal – alles in dieselbe Richtung geht. Das gilt beim Verkehr, das gilt beim Agrarbereich, das gilt bei der Energie, das gilt bei der Umwelt – das muss alles koordiniert werden. Das ist meine Aufgabe, und ich werde das mit meinen Kollegen machen, wie ich das auch in den vergangenen fünf Jahren gemacht habe.

1-090-0000

Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL). – Voorzitter, meneer Timmermans, als beoogd klimaatcommissaris moet u ervoor gaan zorgen dat de Europese Unie zo snel mogelijk uitstootvrij wordt. Ik heb heel veel woorden gehoord, maar nog niets over de veehouderij. Feit is dat de veehouderij wereldwijd meer broeikasgassen uitstoot dan alle auto's, vrachtwagens, boten, treinen en vliegtuigen bij elkaar. Een uitstootvrij Europa kun je dus niet bereiken zonder de intensieve veehouderij ook aan te pakken.

Europa doet echter precies het tegenovergestelde! Het pakt de bio-industrie niet aan, maar sponsort deze elk jaar met miljarden euro's aan landbouwsubsidies. Deze miljarden zorgen voor een nog grotere bio-industrie, nog meer uitstoot en nog meer dierenleed. En, niet te vergeten, nog meer ontbossing wereldwijd.

De hamvraag, meneer Timmermans: hoe gaat u de vleesproductie en de consumptie verminderen? Gaat u de miljardensubsidies voor de bio-industrie aanpakken? En is er in uw *Green Deal* ook aandacht voor dierenwelzijn? Ik stel deze vraag specifiek omdat u ondanks mooie beloften de afgelopen vijf jaar vooral nieuwe regels heeft tegengehouden, zeker op het gebied van dierenwelzijn. Dieren zijn daar de dupe van geworden, het klimaat is daar de dupe van geworden. Ik ben benieuwd naar wat u de komende vijf jaar gaat doen.

1-091-0000

Frans Timmermans, kandidaat-commissaris. – Ik hoor graag van u welke regels ik de afgelopen vijf jaar heb tegengehouden die dierenwelzijn ten goede kwamen. Dat is mij niet bekend. Maar ik word daarover graag door u bijgepraat.

Dat de intensieve veehouderij onderdeel van het probleem is, dat weet de agrarische sector zelf ook. En dat weet iedere individuele boer ook. Dat de agrarische sector en de veehouderij ook onderdeel van de oplossing kunnen zijn, daar moeten we naartoe zien te komen. Ik zie daar meer mogelijkheden toe dan alleen maar – zoals u bepleit, als ik u goed begrijp – het beperken of zelfs helemaal beëindigen van de veehouderij.

Ik denk dat het verstandig is dat mensen nadenken over het dieet dat ze volgen. Dat is in mijn geval ook verstandig. Ik denk dat het verstandig is dat we ons bewust zijn van de belasting op het milieu die daaruit voortkomt. Maar ik denk ook dat het verstandig is dat we de agrarische sector helpen om die transitie te maken, bijvoorbeeld door te innoveren in het diervoeder dat gebruikt wordt, door ook een intensievere veehouderij mogelijk te maken, door te incorporeren in andere vormen van landbouw, zodat de druk op mens en milieu afneemt. Dat zijn allemaal mogelijkheden die we kunnen gebruiken in het Europese landbouwbeleid.

Ik vind dat die verandering de afgelopen vijf jaar door mijn collega Hogan al in de goede richting is ingezet. Ik zie dat ook in Europa veel meer aandacht voor dierenwelzijn is dan we in het verleden hebben gezien. Dat heeft ook tot veranderingen in de agrarische sector geleid, en boeren willen daar ook onderdeel van zijn. Dus ik ben iets minder pessimistisch dan u lijkt te zijn.

Ik wil ook dat de Europese Unie ertoe bijdraagt dat – wat nu nog vaak een probleem is – de intensieve veehouderij zich tot een veehouderij ontwikkelt die een bijdrage levert aan de verbetering van het Europese milieu en ook een bijdrage blijft leveren aan de voedselvoorziening, die voor Europeanen erg nodig blijft en die ik liever in eigen hand houd dan alleen maar aan de wereldmarkten overlaat.

1-092-0000

Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL). – Ik ben toch wel teleurgesteld in uw antwoord, want het is namelijk heel makkelijk om hele grote stappen te zetten door het meest klimaatonvriendelijke, milieuonvriendelijke, dierenonvriendelijke en ongezonde deel van onze voeding niet meer te subsidiëren. En het levert u nog vele tientallen miljarden op ook. Dan hoeft onze honger naar goedkoop veevoer niet langer gestild te worden door het kappen van het Amazonewoud en hoeft u niet te gaan herplanten. En hoeven we bovendien niet te investeren in kernenergie, omdat de klimaatdoelen veel dichterbij komen.

Maar ik heb een concrete vraag. U zegt: misschien moet je in het kleine denken. Ik heb een kleine vraag aan u om even te kijken hoe groot uw invloed zal zijn op de rest van de Commissie. Brussel betaalt namelijk niet alleen mee aan het produceren van vlees, maar geeft ook miljoenen uit aan het promoten van dat vlees! Denk bijvoorbeeld aan “*What a wonderful beef*”, de slogan van een Europese reclamecampagne om Spaans rundvlees in Hongkong te promoten. Bent u van plan om dit soort subsidies te stoppen of niet?

1-093-0000

Frans Timmermans, kandidaat-commissaris. – Nou, eigenlijk niet, als ik heel eerlijk ben. Ik ben van plan om beleid te voeren dat ertoe leidt dat de veehouderij op een manier wordt ingericht die duurzaam is. Ik ben ervoor om beleid in gang te zetten waarbij dierenwelzijn meer onder de aandacht komt en we verbeteringen op het gebied van dierenwelzijn tot stand brengen, of het nou bij het houden, het transporteren dan wel het slachten van dieren is.

Dat zijn maatregelen waarvan ik vind dat de overheid – en zeker de Europese overheid – er zich nu op moet richten. Ik denk dat dát moet gebeuren. Nog één opmerking over wat u zei: stop met al die subsidies, doe het meteen! Natuurlijk is er heel veel ruimte om subsidies anders in te kleden, een andere richting te geven. Ik ben er ook heel sterk voor dat we het landbouwbeleid hervormen. Maar om zo makkelijk te zeggen: stop het maar allemaal meteen... Heeft u enig idee welk niveau van sociale ellende u over het Europese platteland afroept als we dat van vandaag op morgen zouden doen?

Dat moet ook onderdeel zijn van de beleidsmix die we op Europees niveau maken, en dat moet ook een zorg zijn voor mensen zoals ik die de samenleving meer in een duurzame richting willen duwen. Je moet wel de mensen meekrijgen als je dat wil bereiken! Daarvoor moet je ook oog hebben voor de moeilijke situatie waarin helaas veel te veel mensen in de agrarische sector in Europa vandaag de dag verkeren.

1-094-0000

Seb Dance (S&D). – I want to return to the Commission's paper on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the scenarios that were outlined. It's unthinkable that any scenario other than Scenario 1 would deliver the results and get us to the place that we need to be in.

What would you say we can do to get Member States individually to meet their SDG targets?

Do you foresee any binding SDG implementation at EU level? And how would that work?

In particular, you mentioned the biodiversity conference in China, and SDG 15 on biodiversity. What would a headline ambition look like for biodiversity at global level?

1-095-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, it's interesting to see how quickly the thinking about the SDGs has evolved. I remember the difficulties I had to get this document done in the Commission, and even to get the three scenarios in. But now nobody seems to be talking about anything else but the first scenario, which I welcome very much.

Concretely on your question, I believe there is sufficient commitment to the SDGs in the Member States that it's time for the Commission to ask 'What does this mean concretely? What are you going to do concretely to implement these 17 SDGs and how are you going to do it? What is in the different areas of your plan?'

And I believe that if we want to be successful in the next conferences, whether in Chile, in Glasgow or in China in October next year, we have to start becoming more concrete on these issues. Especially the problem with biodiversity. And there, I've asked for scientific advice. I said it again two weeks ago in New York: the problem is, what is your benchmark? How do you quantify? With emissions, it's relatively easy but with biodiversity it's scientifically far more complicated.

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.

1-096-0000

Seb Dance (S&D). – I'm pleased you said that because I think one of the reasons we're missing current biodiversity targets is because we don't have that tangible goal.

Would you say that – in terms of a domestic agenda, in terms of the Union – giving DG CLIMA more of a say over the First Pillar of the CAP would be a sensible way of ensuring that we in the EU, notwithstanding that we don't know what that headline goal will be, will meet our diversity targets?

1-097-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I think it would be sensible, as a Commission, to discuss the division between what we put in the First Pillar and in the Second Pillar. And I believe – if you look at the difference in numbers and if you really want European agriculture to move in the direction we want it to move in – that the Second Pillar should have more room to manoeuvre than we have now in the First Pillar. So I would like to have a discussion about the correspondence between the two pillars and whether we could create a situation where we help the agricultural sector to make these structural changes through an increased possibility for the Second Pillar.

1-098-0000

Michael Bloss (Verts/ALE). – Mr Timmermans, you said you want more research, but we have the research already. It's here, it's the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report with the 1.5° goal, and it's very, very clear. It says we have to act now, but we can go to a 1.5° goal, and it establishes a CO₂ budget for it.

Today's calculations show that we have around eight years' time to reach the 1.5°. In eight years this CO₂ budget will be gone. So I want to ask you: will you follow science, will you include in the climate law a carbon budget approach?

I also wanted to press more on what is contained in the climate law, though it seems there is not so much I can get from you on that. But when will the measures that you propose take effect? I think this is what the people on the street protesting want to know. When do we act?

Secondly, you were speaking about the contradictory policies you want to erase. I'm very happy with this. You have a lot of power now. You have a huge portfolio. You are a team player, but you also are the machine. Will you commit to completely phase out unsustainable biofuels, like palm oil and soy, so that our energy policy stops contributing to global deforestation?

Will you put forward a legislative proposal to tax kerosene and maritime fuels? And will you press infringement procedures on Member States that do not present concrete plans to phase out fossil fuels, as they are obliged to by the Energy Union governance regulation?

1-099-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – To get done what we need to do, we need targets and good instruments. You've mentioned this before to me, so I asked for some advice on that. What you want to achieve, given what we've done in the European Union, is achievable through the targets we have set. If we make the targets more specific in the short run, it will become achievable. To add another way of calculating to that, with all the uncertainties that surround it in terms of moving targets, would probably more complicate things than help us achieve what we need to achieve.

Now the second part of your question is about 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.

We need to help them – and I'm encouraged by some of the movements I see, especially in Asia – to avoid deforestation for their production too. So we also have a global responsibility, but at the end of the day, that we would have to propose forms of legislation to avoid contributing to further deforestation is probably inevitable.

You also asked when I am going to act. Well, I'm going to act as soon as possible. I say this knowing that there's a huge sense of urgency in society, but I also want to stress one thing: if we shoot from the hip and we get it wrong, we discredit everything we do. That is my experience of the last five years. So if we really want to have this transformational change, and we want legislation that does that, we need to be well prepared and do all the preparation and do all the impact assessment that we need to do. That will give us far more credibility and far more possibility to act. But when you ask me when, I say to you as soon as I can get it ready.

1-100-0000

Michael Bloss (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, at least that was an answer to the CO₂ budget.

Another scientific approach is taken by the German Environmental Agency. They calculated that the cost of one tonne of CO₂ for the whole of society is EUR 180. So, the people and the environment pay the price for the pollution from coal and lignite and you, yourself, in the campaign, said that you want to put a price on CO₂. You spoke about a euro-wide CO₂ tax but you know that this requires unanimity in the Council, and you could put a price on CO₂ by creating a carbon floor price in the Emissions Trading System (ETS). Will you put a carbon floor price in the ETS of at least EUR 40?

And then, I was not asking when you will start acting, I was asking when does the measurement take effect? When will we reduce the first tonne of CO₂ from the measurements that you propose?

And on this also, there is a possibility, for instance through the Just Transition Fund, when you make it conditional on phasing out coal. That would be a possibility of going to the [inaudible]. Will you do that?

1-101-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – First, I don't see the merits in introducing a floor in the pricing of carbon. I think the price as it is developing is going in the right direction and I'm pretty confident it will continue to do that.

Secondly, when will it take effect. Well, that's a question to me but also to you. It depends on when we get legislation approved by Parliament and the Council. I know – at least that's my experience – that the chances improve if you are well prepared and if you have the facts on your side. That's why I'm saying let's not shoot from the hip. But I count on your support and this Parliament's support, to be ambitious, to deliver on what citizens are asking of us.

I'm so sorry, the last one has slipped from my mind.

1-102-0000

Michael Bloss (Verts/ALE). –It was the conditionality of the Just Transition Fund's money for...

1-103-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Well yes, I believe that we need to make sure that, first of all, nothing we do is contradictory, but secondly, that if we want to convince European citizens to put taxpayers' money, to put their money on the table for transition, we have to be able to prove to them that that transition goes in the right direction, and makes us less dependent on fossil fuels and reduces emissions.

And I think there's nothing wrong with introducing that conditionality into the funds we spend on transition and on modernising Europe's economy.

1-104-0000

Andreas Glück (Renew). – Vice-President-designate Timmermans, the Emissions Trading System (ETS) is a success. All sectors that are part of the ETS have reached their individual goals. The sectors not part of the ETS are struggling.

At present there are discussions about whether to extend the ETS or not. Also, the ETS guarantees a decreasing amount of CO₂ emissions, as the number of certificates is getting less year by year – and, by the way, this is an advantage we would not have with the CO₂ tax. A further advantage is the fact that it does not dictate which technological solution will be implemented. The ETS is a technology-open, economical approach to the challenge of global warming, and, in my belief, if you really want to have success in fighting global warming then ecology and economy have to go hand-in-hand.

However, further action is needed not only in the EU but also in the rest of the world. We've been talking already about a carbon border tax, but what do you think about the idea of extending the ETS to third countries outside of the EU who would want to take part and who could thereby avoid such a carbon border tax?

And, if you agree with the idea, which countries would you consider suitable to participate?

1-105-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I think it is always a good idea because we will be put before a choice at some point. How do we make sure that we are not punished for the steps we take in terms of getting competition at lower prices from countries where they

don't take the measures that are necessary? And then, basically, you have two choices. Either you convince the countries to do the same thing and then tell them: 'if you take part in the Emissions Trading System (ETS), if you put a price on carbon, if you reduce emissions, if you do all that, of course you will be our trading partner and we don't need to correct the difference in carbon footprint with a fiscal measure at the border. If you don't want to do that, then we're very sorry, we have no other option but to correct this difference in carbon footprint at the border with tax.'

I think this is an interesting proposition and I do believe this is WTO-conform. It doesn't violate the rules in the WTO but I think it goes hand in hand, because the positive proposition should be: take part in operations, whether it's the ETS, the way we do it, or other ways of putting a price on carbon which would allow us to create a level playing field. If there is no level playing field we will have to correct that through fiscal measures at the border.

1-106-0000

Andreas Glück (Renew). – I feel really happy about your answer. You have talked about technology open solutions already before and you've talked about hydrogen already before, and indeed hydrogen is a really interesting point when it comes to energy storage but as well when it comes to mobility. A combustion engine, for example, is neither good nor bad. It just depends on what you burn in it. Still today, we don't have a hydrogen strategy. So, my question is, will you work on a hydrogen strategy and what's your time schedule and when do you expect it to be effective in terms of CO₂ reduction?

1-107-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – 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.

In my dreams, we would create a partnership with Africa, especially North Africa, and we would help install a huge capacity of solar energy in Africa and transform that energy into hydrogen. Then we would transport that hydrogen to other parts of the world and Europe, through existing means that we already have. It is not that difficult to change the pipelines you now use for gas into hydrogen. It's not that difficult to use LNG terminals for hydrogen.

This is my dream of the future energy. Let's not kid ourselves, if we don't incorporate a perspective for North Africa or Africa in all of this, we will be weakened from that side as well.

So hydrogen could be a huge opportunity for our economy. If people in the steel industry are already saying now that we could create a situation where hydrogen could be the fuel to have a competitive steel industry – these are huge opportunities that we should try and use to the maximum possible extent.

1-108-0000

Peter Liese (PPE). – Mr Timmermans, like some other colleagues, I'm not 100% happy with your answers on agriculture, aviation and the ETS. They could be better, but thank you very much for your commitments and I like your readiness to work with Valdis Dombrovskis on the industry issue. This is necessary.

I also very much support your line in following Ursula von der Leyen's speech on the target. We want at least 50% and we want to go to 55%, but some conditions have to be met.

We talk a lot about science. Science doesn't respect borders, so your main task will be to convince other partners in the world to do more.

We also spoke a lot about Greta. Greta is not in Europe, and I'm not asking you to sail to the USA, but I would ask you to spend a lot of time, and to dedicate a lot of staff, to convincing third countries. Are you ready to do this and what exactly will you do to convince the other Member States to do what Europe is doing, namely to increase their nationally determined contribution (NDC)?

1-109-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I believe, as I said in my introduction, that a big chunk of what I need to do internationally is to convince others to go in the same direction. Now, I have to say, even those who declare that they don't want to – or who don't think it should be done with the speed that is necessary – are making plans or are transforming, or their industry is already taking measures to transform. So I'm not that pessimistic.

The thing most lacking is political will. So, if that is the biggest stumbling block, then it's about political engagement, international negotiations, trying to convince, showing examples at work, and also making offers. As I said before, if we have a level playing field, trade can increase. If you don't want a level playing field, it will have consequences for our relations. These things, I think, could work.

And let's not forget that, in other parts of the world, what is happening is coming as a shock to everyone: what is happening in our climate, this erratic weather we're seeing, what is happening in many of our inner cities. Go to China and look at the inner cities: they are suffocating there if they don't take drastic measures.

What is happening with our biodiversity? Just let it sink in that, out of eight million species on Earth, one million could disappear.

All of this warrants very active international action, and you're absolutely right to point to that necessity. However, I want to caution those who say 'But you're not saying this, I know where you're coming from', and the others who say 'Because we're causing only 9% of the emissions, others should be acting first before us'. I don't think it works like that. I think it works like this: if we can show that it works, if we can show that it helps our industry innovate, if we can show that it creates jobs, and better jobs, then that will be the most convincing argument to get others to tag along.

I would want to invest a lot in that, but also in those players, whether in industry or in regional or local government, in the USA and elsewhere, who do believe in this and are taking measures on this.

And let me come back to the pact I want to have. In our society, too, everyone needs to be part of this. If this is something that is perceived as being imposed from Brussels or from Berlin or from elsewhere, it will not happen. But if people feel they have a stake in this and a say in this, and they have an influence in this, I think we can make this happen. That I will never be able fully to satisfy Conservatives, I think, I see as a compliment.

1-110-0000

Peter Liese (PPE). –Thank you, and I think the EPP is ready to work with you on that. You mentioned people inside Europe but I think people outside Europe too will be more easily able to be convinced if we don't speak only about regulations and rules.

You were not so clear on 'one-in, one-out'. Isn't it a good idea to identify some rules that are hindering people who want to invest in clean technologies? Maybe we need more rules for the climate, that's true, but shouldn't we also identify rules that are bad for climate-friendly technologies, and abolish those ones?

1-111-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – I'm all for that, but in my experience in the last five years, also when I headed the taskforce on better regulation, I challenged national parliaments, I challenged everyone – Give us a list! What do you want to have abolished? I challenged everyone. The list was very short, I have to say.

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.

Let me give you one example. 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.

We perhaps don't agree on that, but there's some way the airline industry will have to contribute to this, whether it's with stricter ETS or whether it's with taxation, but they can't be left out of this, can they?

So you know, I'm all for better regulation. I'm also all for scrapping regulation we no longer need or that is obsolete. I think we've started doing that. So, you will find me on your side with that. But then also the onus is on those who are asking for it to give us a list of what they want us to scrap and then I'm sure we will be able to do that.

1-112-0000

Chair. – It's time now for your concluding remarks, Mr Timmermans, for five minutes.

1-113-0000

Frans Timmermans, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Chair. Let me say that I know that the hour is late and that you probably have better things to do than to listen to me for another five minutes, but I do want to close with a message that I believe I should share.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, we've often had this discussion – the EU, what is it good for? It even led sometimes to a discussion that has compelled the majority of the citizens in one Member State to vote to leave the European Union, which I think is extremely sad. But it puts a burden on our shoulders to demonstrate to our citizens what it's good for. If there is one area where we need little effort to convince our citizens, it is this area of transforming our society into a sustainable society.

I honestly believe, if you look at the analyses that made more than 90% of Europeans want us to act in the climate crisis, to fight the climate crisis, more than 9 out of 10 Europeans want us to do something about that. So this gives you and me a unique opportunity to demonstrate what we're good for, namely to help this society regain the self-confidence to transform itself into a sustainable society and to lead in the world. We can be the leading continent in the world that takes the world into a brighter future and to a more sustainable future.

This is an opportunity we could actually take or lose now, because 2050 seems an awful long time away, but if we don't get the legislation in place in this mandate, in the next five years, then we will never be able to attain the goals in 2030, let alone the goals in 2050. It will be impossible.

If we don't get this framed within the first 100 days of the von der Leyen Commission, we will not be able to get the legislation ready in the next five years. So in the next 100 days, after 1 November, you and I have a collective responsibility to get this right.

If I look at what our kids are asking of us, and when I look at the level of despair in parts of our society, at this feeling that nobody is in charge, we're on a runaway train, and we don't know where we're going, we need to change that. We can do that at the European level with European answers to European challenges. If we do this well in Europe, it will have an effect on the rest of the world.

I honestly believe it is in your hands to make this happen. I came across something in 'The Gathering Storm', which is Nobel Prize-worthy book by Winston Churchill. He wrote about appeasement in the 1930s and he found a poem in Punch about a runaway train in the 1890s. The train was runaway because the train driver had fallen asleep at the wheel, and the poem ends like this: 'for the pace is hot, and the points are near, and sleep hath deadened the driver's ear, and signals flash through the night in vain, death is in charge of the clattering train'.

We should never let it come to that. We should show that this train has a driver and the driver is listening to the European population. The driver knows where we need to go, and the driver charts a map that will take us there.

This is your task. I will try to do my best to make this task possible for all of us. I believe that if we do this collectively, we can charter a future for Europe that our children will be proud of.

(Applause)

1-114-0000

(The hearing closed at 21.20)