

QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS DESIGNATE

Stéphane Séjourné (Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy) Questions

Lead: ECON, ENVI, IMCO, ITRE

Invited: BUDG, EMPL, INTA

ECON

Capital Markets Union (CMU)

1. What are the key obstacles and which priorities would you set for the development of the Capital Markets Union/Savings and Investments Market in order to boost private and public financing to invest in high-growth projects and have capital markets investing in innovation? How will you ensure that efforts to enhance the competitiveness of the EU financial sector will not undermine financial stability or lead to excessive risk-taking? How do you view the role of securitisation in this agenda?

Competitiveness Coordination Tool

2. What should be the main pillars of the newly proposed Competitiveness Coordination Framework? How does this interact with the European Competitiveness Fund?

Investment

3. How do you envisage the future of the InvestEU programme? How do you envisage your cooperation with the EIB? What is your plan to unlock private investments to support the European economy? What are other tools you would be inclined to mobilise to address the significant funding gap?

ENVI

Question 1

How will the Clean Industrial Deal build on and complement the Green Deal? What key measures do you intend to put forward in the context of the Clean Industrial Deal, the Circular Economy Act and the Chemicals Industry Package, also in the context of the Draghi report on the EU Competitiveness? How will you ensure consistency and synergies among the initiatives? How will they contribute to the environmental goals, including the zero pollution ambition? How do you intend to accelerate the industrial decarbonisation while investing, ensuring the EU's global competitiveness and preserving high-quality jobs, and reducing unnecessary administrative burden? What measures will you take to ensure that EU legislation regarding the clean transition is tailored to SMEs? What measures will you put forward in the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act to support European lead markets for the development, production and diffusion of clean tech in industry, and which financial resources will you mobilise to reach this goal? What specific strategies do you plan to implement to accelerate permitting procedures for critical projects to allow for timely progress on climate objectives, while safeguarding high-level environmental protection? What measures will you put forward to strike a balance between reducing dependencies on critical raw materials and boosting European competitiveness, circularity and ensuring the respect of high environmental standards? How will you

ensure that the new Circular Economy Act will contain sufficient concrete incentives to sufficiently boost market demand for secondary materials and for the establishment of a single market for waste?

Question 2

How will you ensure that the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is implemented effectively, fully and in a timely manner, while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and double protection? What measures will you propose to close potential loopholes upstream and downstream and for the expansion of the scope of CBAM in accordance with the Regulation, while avoiding carbon leakage along the value chain and taking into account the situation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs)?

Question 3

What are your priorities for the upcoming Chemicals Industry Package? How will you achieve the transition to safe and circular green, less water- and energy-intensive chemicals while providing long-term predictability for investors towards sustainable innovations? When will you present a proposal for a revision of REACH that ensures simplification while guaranteeing enhanced protection of health and the environment and a competitive industry? What is your plan on PFAS to minimise human and environmental exposure to them while ensuring a clear and feasible framework for industry by taking into account essential uses?

IMCO

eCommerce

In her political guidelines for this new term and in her mission letter to you, the President of the Commission underlines that the Single Market is a key pillar of the EU and that a new momentum is needed to deepen it, especially in the services sector where many barriers still persist, to ensure EU prosperity. In the fields of free movement of services and goods, which actions, including legislative measures, are you planning to undertake and how would the new Single Market Strategy contribute to bring about this new momentum, further integrate the Single Market, reduce unjustified barriers, administrative burdens and reporting obligations, while empowering and protecting consumers, promote entrepreneurship, and make the EU globally competitive in the coming decades? How do you foresee to increase product safety and fair competition in the Single Market in relation to products originating from third countries, addressing also third-country e-commerce platforms flooding the EU with products that often do not comply with EU standards while avoiding customs?

Single Market Barriers

With regard to the mission letter of the Commission's President, what do you envisage on possible content and timing of the specific measures indicated thereto, in particular in relation to the Single Market Barriers Prevention Act, the European Competitiveness Fund, the SME passport, the Single Digital Gateway, the Circular Economy Act, and the evaluation of the EU Standardisation Regulation? How will you develop in concrete the new Single Market Strategy? How do you plan to engage with the IMCO Committee and its Working Groups, in the framework of its scrutiny activities, in order to keep the Committee updated in a transparent, regular and timely manner about the implementation of current legislation, the

upcoming initiatives, including those mentioned in the mission letter, and the results of the enforcement actions in the Single Market for services and goods by the Commission and the Member States?

Public Procurement

How do you plan to realise your assigned mission of revising the Public Procurement Directives in order to use the potential of public procurement for the benefit of EU single market, and EU citizens and businesses, among them of SMEs to enhance competitiveness, including EU digital competitiveness, and to ensure fair competition, security of supply for certain vital technologies, products and services? What technologies and sectors do you find strategic thus requiring an intervention through public procurement and what solutions should be applied, bearing in mind the need to maintain a level playing field and equality of opportunity for EU companies across the Single Market? When do you consider the revision of the public procurement framework will take place, and are you planning to revise it through EU regulations instead of EU directives?

ITRE

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the Clean Industrial Deal, the European Prosperity Plan, the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act, the European Competitiveness Fund and the Circular Economy Act? What financial resources do you think should be allocated to these initiatives? How will you finance in particular the European Competitiveness Fund without prejudice to existing commitments to other EU policies? What should be, in your view, the economic logic and the industrial funding needs to be addressed by the European Competitiveness Fund? How do you see the relationship of these initiatives with the Net Zero Industry Act (NZIA), the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), STEP, as well as the 2040 emission-reduction target? How do you intend to address the social dimension of these initiatives? How will you also address in the same context energy cost and efficiency, use of renewables and other sources of energy? What is your vision for the Competitiveness Coordination Tool and how should it work to enable you to fulfil the tasks set out in your mission letter?

2. What actions do you envisage for the effective implementation of the CRMA and the NZIA in order to strengthen European competitiveness? What should be the next steps to complete this legislation within and beyond the broader scope of European strategic autonomy? How do you intend in particular to strengthen the value chains related to the NZIA and promote resource efficiency in the context of the CRMA? How will you contribute to the creation of lead markets for clean tech? What other actions will you propose to unlock long-term investments and strengthen the competitiveness, resilience and autonomy of the EU industry, including defence production, while maintaining the European social model? What sectorial and horizontal measures do you envisage to support European industry? What will be your criteria to define

Europe's specific vulnerabilities in certain sectors and to guide your actions to protect European industry from external unfair competition? What concrete measures do you think should be included in the steel and metals action plan? What sectors and technologies do you think should be included in the new IPCEIs, and how this would support the EU industrial strategy and SMEs? How do you intend to revise public procurement rules in order to ensure security of supply and support the use of European products in certain strategic sectors and technologies to the benefit of all Member States? Which criteria will you use to identify those strategic sectors and technologies? How will you contribute to the action plan for the automotive sector? Do you have any specific plans for PFAS?

3. How do you plan to address regulatory issues affecting companies, especially SMEs, including when operating cross border? How do you plan to ensure that SMEs will benefit from the strategic autonomy roadmap? What legal consequences will have the introduction of a new category of small midcaps on existing and future EU legislation? What will be the criteria for defining small midcaps? Will it be a separate binding legal definition or will existing legal categories (e.g. EU SME Definition) be extended to include this new category? What are your concrete plans to make speed, coherence and simplification key political priorities in order to reduce administrative burden and simplify implementation, reporting and permitting? How will you concretely implement the 'new SME and competitiveness check'?

Invited Committees

BUDG

In her political guidelines, the President-elect calls for the establishment of an EU Competitiveness Fund that will invest in strategic technologies (from AI to space, clean tech and biotech) and in Important Projects of Common Interest (IPCEIs) and will also leverage and de-risk private investment in our common goals.

The scope of such a fund will encompass a wide variety of existing policy priorities.

Can you tell us about the rationale underpinning this approach and elaborate on your vision for implementing it and how it will drive the twin transitions, in particular detailing the policies and existing programmes that would fit in such a fund, the degree of harmonisation these programmes will be subjected to, the balance between repayable and non-repayable support the fund will provide and the safeguards put in place to ensure that Parliament is involved on equal footing with Council in the decision making process, programme implementation and the monitoring of the implementation of the fund?

EMPL

As Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, you will be in charge of the revision of the Public Procurement Directive. This Directive can play a pivotal role in the promotion of high labour standards. Social partners at EU level are very clear on the necessity to bring more protection to European workers through this Directive.

How will you ensure that the social aspects of the EU public procurement legislation are strengthened, notably with regard to social award criteria in public contracts, in view of: limiting subcontracting chains and regulating the role of labour intermediaries; ensuring the respect of workers' rights and the application of collective agreements; enhancing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and workers with support needs; ensuring that not-for-profit/social economy providers of social services are not excluded from public contracts?

INTA

In a climate of heightened global uncertainty and an increased need to consolidate the Union's economic security agenda and to strengthen our competitiveness, how will you ensure that economic security, trade, investment and industrial policies are all part of a cohesive approach that fosters the Union's open strategic autonomy and resilience? How will you design and implement the economic security agenda and over what time frame? Building on the earlier exchanges between Parliament and the Commission on the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/1441, will you give an assurance that when the first report on the implementation of the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) is presented by 13 July 2026, a legislative proposal to amend the FSR will also be presented? Given the significantly higher than expected case load related to notified bids in public procurement procedures, will you ensure a substantial increase in the number of staff responsible for the implementation of the FSR within the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs?

Raffaele Fitto Questions (Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms)

Lead: REGI Invited: AGRI, BUDG, ECON, EMPL, PECH, TRAN

REGI (Lead Committee)

1. Future of cohesion policy - key lessons learned - simplification

What is your vision for the future of cohesion policy post-2027 and which are, in your view, the key lessons that the European Commission and Member States should have learned from the previous programming periods in this respect? Do you consider the objectives of overcoming regional disparities and economic and social cohesion valid and how will you ensure that the principle of 'do no harm to cohesion' is reflected in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)? Will you continue to uphold the cohesion policy as an investment and solidarity mechanism for all regions, and how will you ensure the development of less developed regions and provide adequate response to challenges faced by urban areas? How will you protect the core purpose of cohesion policy and secure a robust budgetary envelope under the MFF proposal?

How, at the same time, will you increase its flexibility to manage emerging needs, enhance its transparency, accelerate the implementation processes and ensure its simplification? In particular, should cohesion policy funds be reformed on a performance-based model similar to the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)? In this context, how will you guarantee the continuity of cohesion Policy, preserving its initial objectives, and ensure that future management and funding of the policy respects the shared management model, the place-based approach, the multilevel governance and the partnership principles, and preserves the role of local and regional authorities? Will you explore creating an effective mechanism under the next financial programming period for direct access to cohesion funds by regional and local authorities, cities and municipalities in each Member State, based on their specific development needs?

2. Link to reforms, rule of law, European Semester, conditionality

The Ninth Cohesion Report highlights the need to explore ways to further strengthen the link between investments and reforms to maximize the impact of cohesion policy. However, there are concerns that the objectives of cohesion policy, as outlined in Articles 174 and 175 TFEU, may be compromised by the potential introduction of conditionalities. Consequently, do you support the introduction of a stronger link between cohesion policy funding and key national reforms? If so, what types of reforms should be linked to the access of funds? Are you considering linking the access to funds to the European Semester or macroeconomic conditionality in particular? Will you ensure that Member States or regions with limited administrative capacity are not disproportionately penalised? Do you intend to reinforce the link between cohesion policy and compliance with the rule of law, by enforcing stricter application of the horizontal enabling conditions, particularly the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights? Lastly, how will you ensure that national governments' reluctance to pursue certain reforms does not impede regions' access to funds?

3. Eastern regions, enlargement, ECBM

In the context of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, EU border regions, especially those Eastern and Northern regions on its external borders with Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, face the dual challenge of strengthening security while revitalising their economic and social development. Do you plan any initiatives or special support measures to help these border regions address their severe economic downturn? What types of assistance and policy

initiatives will you prioritise? In addition to the pressure on the cohesion policy budget from those Eastern and Northern regions, the planned enlargement towards Ukraine, Moldova, the Western Balkans and possibly Georgia will further affect the cohesion policy budget. How will you ensure that the cohesion policy budget is sufficient to meet the growing needs? Moreover, it is important to note that persistent administrative and legal cross-border obstacles exacerbate the economic downturn not only in regions affected by the Russian war, but across all EU regions. These obstacles fragment the Single Market, resulting in the loss of billions of euros and millions of jobs at EU level. In this urgent context—on the one hand, addressing the needs of border regions impacted by the war, and on the other, preparing for enlargement—will you prioritise the conclusion of inter-institutional negotiations on the long-stalled Regulation on a Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context?

4. Islands, depopulation, right to stay, outermost regions (Art. 349 TFEU), housing, territories with geographical and natural particularities (Art. 174 TFEU)

In accordance with Article 174 TFEU, the Union pays special attention to addressing the challenges of disadvantaged regions, particularly those suffering from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps. In the spirit of the effective 'right to stay', what concrete measures will you take to tackle depopulation, especially in rural areas and small towns, while ensuring equal access to essential public services? How will you improve the regional connectivity and housing conditions to enable people living in islands, outermost regions, peripheral and cross-border regions to remain in these areas? What specific measures will you advocate to reduce bureaucracy and improve the access to EU funding and the internal market for SMEs of these regions? Do you believe it is time for the Commission to develop a European strategy for islands (Islands Pact) and a POSEI (programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity) transport programme?

5. Natural disasters, emergencies

Europe has been experiencing an increase in the number and severity of weather-related disasters, such as extreme temperatures, storms, inland and coastal flooding, droughts and wildfires. How would you address both the immediate and long-term impacts of such disasters more effectively? In particular, how would you improve the budget allocation, the eligibility and the management of the current EU Solidarity Fund? What other specific measures, also in terms of prevention, would you suggest to tackle natural disasters within the future Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027, while preserving the main purpose of cohesion policy? With regard to water management, in terms of both floods and droughts, what actions would you propose to mitigate their impact on the most vulnerable regions? Moreover, would you propose updating the EU strategies to reduce the vulnerability of coastal and mountain regions to climate change?

Invited Committees

AGRI

As Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, how would you pursue the cross-Directorate-General objective of addressing the causes and challenges of maintaining and improving life quality in rural areas? How would you reduce the urban-rural gap, promote the development of infrastructures, support the digital transition, facilitate access to services and generally make rural areas more attractive for farmers as well as businesses? How do you view the Rural Pact and its further development? In terms of funding, how do you intend to ensure that EU funds and policies are complementary in supporting rural areas and that information is accessible to local stakeholders?

BUDG

What do you intend to put in place in practice to fulfil the mission you have been entrusted with “to align cohesion policy to wider EU priorities, be more focused, simpler and more impactful and help mobilise reforms and investment”? How will cohesion policy fit into the President-elect’s demand for a policy-based approach to the next EU long term budget? In particular if the implementation is to be based on “a plan for each country linking key reforms with investments”, how will you ensure that there is sufficient flexibility while maintaining a clear audit trail, clear European added-value with discernible cross-border dimension to spending involving regional and local authorities, real value for money and that the Parliament plays a role on equal footing with the Council in the implementation and the monitoring of the funds?

ECON

Implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility

Given the absorption rates of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), do you consider that the RRF has been sufficiently quick and targeted to stimulate the economy following the Covid-19 crisis? How will you as the responsible Commissioner ensure that the RRF funds are used most effectively? Will you proceed with a claw-back of funds transferred to Member States in cases where investments are unlikely to be finished by 2026? Do you see the RRF as a precedent to address crisis and significant funding gaps?

EMPL

Your mission letter insists “for all citizens to have an effective right to stay [...] by supporting what a community needs” notably by “tackl[ing] regional disparities”. Among other policies, this touches upon employment and social policies, including

social inclusion. What concrete proposals and measures do you foresee to address this challenge and to improve access to quality social and employment services, and how do you see the Recovery and Resilience Facility plans contributing to this objective, and more generally, to the effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights?

In particular, given the EU's commitment to promoting deinstitutionalisation and ensuring that persons with disabilities, children, and other groups in a vulnerable situation live with equal rights, how do you plan to ensure that future EU funding and cohesion policy does effectively support community-based services and affordable housing solutions? How do you intend to work on this with Commissioner-designate Jørgensen?

PECH

How would you make the fisheries sector more resilient, sustainable and competitive in the global market, contribute to generational renewal and bringing benefit to coastal communities and Outermost regions, while assuring the cohesion of these territories and within the objectives of the European Green Deal?

TRAN

According to the corresponding mission letter, President von der Leyen tasked the future Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms to "*guide the work on sustainable mobility and tourism to connect different parts of Europe and underpin a thriving Single Market*". In this regard, you are meant to support the work of the future Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. How do you intend to pursue this cooperation and what would be your strategy and priorities both for transport and tourism? As Executive Vice-President responsible for cohesion policy and regional development, you will also have an impact on the completion of the TEN-T network for which TRAN is responsible. How would you ensure that the implementation of the TEN-T network is adequately financed and underpinned by the EU cohesion policy? Also as responsible for the development of outermost regions, islands, rural areas and cities, what role do you see for transport, as a tool for social cohesion and connectivity, and how do you intend to approach tourism in these areas to promote a resilient, sustainable and competitive tourism sector?

Teresa Ribera Rodriguez (Executive Vice-President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition) Questions

Lead: ECON, ENVI, ITRE

Invited: AGRI, EMPL, IMCO, REGI, TRAN

ECON

State aid

1. You are tasked to develop a new State-aid framework as part of the Clean Industrial deal. How do you intend to find the right balance between supporting industrial policy, maintaining fair competition and a level playing field? Do you recognise risks of fragmentation of the single market emerging from the diverging fiscal space of Member States? What safeguards do you see to prevent market distortions and economies with less fiscal capacities?

Mergers

2. What changes might the 'new approach to competition policy' involve, and how can it be better aligned with industrial policy? Are you satisfied with the current state of play of the application of the Merger Regulation? Would you be in favour of Commission's possibilities to also look into mergers below the notification threshold? How will you protect our EU innovators from killer acquisitions or acquisitions of EU based undertakings by foreign-based state-owned enterprises supported and subsidised by their governments in ways that the EU single market rules prohibit for EU entities?

Draghi report

3. Will you take steps to develop a 'New Competition Tool', as proposed in the Draghi report, to address structural competition problems, paying particular attention to sensitive categories of consumers? Which other competition proposals in the Letta and Draghi Reports would you support being implemented? What should be the role of competition policy to address inflationary dynamics?

ENVI

Question 1

What concrete steps will you take to ensure the full and timely implementation of the environmental acquis and the Green Deal, in particular in relation to the Fit for 55 legislation? How will you implement this task "in the simplest, fairest way and in dialogue with all stakeholders" as stated in your mission letter, while ensuring competitiveness, also considering the specific situation of SMEs, and ensuring a just transition? Which remaining gaps and which regulatory inconsistencies or overlaps do you still see in the European Green Deal and related policies, and what concrete actions will you take to address these?

Question 2

Which specific actions will you propose to ensure a coherent approach towards a Clean, Just and Competitive transition, and how do you see the links between these three aspects of your portfolio? What specific new actions do you plan to propose as

an enabling framework to support the achievement of the climate targets, including as part of the Clean Industrial Deal and covering all sectors of the economy? How do you plan to create a more streamlined and supportive regulatory and investment environment to encourage climate-friendly investment and innovation, and the uptake of clean technologies, ensuring a just transition for all? What kind of measures will you propose to mobilise the necessary investments for this transition, including for SMEs, to support all involved stakeholders, in particular businesses, workers and households? What is your position on the targeted amendment of the regulation setting CO2 emissions performance standards for cars and vans?

Question 3

How will you ensure effective coordination with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, as well as the Commissioners working under your guidance, to fulfil the tasks mentioned in your mission letter? Which concrete initiatives will you propose in relation to the 2040 climate target, environment, clean circular economy, and just transition? How will you ensure coherence between the clean transition and achieving the climate and biodiversity targets on the one hand, and competition policy on the other?

ITRE

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What other measures will you propose to ensure clean, social, just and competitive transition, notably in the most affected sectors? What are your plans in particular for the Clean Industrial Deal? How do you plan to guide the work on the implementation of the existing legal framework to achieve the 2030 targets and prepare, once the 2040 emission-reduction target has been adopted, a new architecture to reach net-zero by 2050, ensuring stability and predictability for European companies and investors, reduction of energy prices and competitiveness? What enabling measures will you propose to help EU companies achieve the net-zero target? What measures do you envisage to close the annual private and public investment gap of around €800 billion identified in the Draghi report including through the European Competitiveness Fund? How do you intend to strengthen citizen participation in your work?

2. Do you believe that the current state aid rules sufficiently ensure fair competition across the Union? How do you aim to ensure that the new approach to competition policy and the new State aid framework will promote the roll-out of clean and renewable energy, energy efficiency, industrial investments and sufficient manufacturing capacity of clean tech, while also limiting external dependencies, strengthening EU competitiveness and protecting European industry from external unfair competition in line with WTO and internal market rules? What is your view on

the Commission's findings on unfair subsidisation of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) from China and the provisional countervailing duties imposed on imports of those vehicles? What measures will you propose to address the particular challenges faced by European SMEs and small midcaps? What measures will you propose to attract private investments and prevent offshoring of economic and industrial activity?

3. What actions do you envisage to bring down energy prices in the short, medium and long term and rid the EU of its dependency on fossil fuels? What will you do to speed up the phase out of gas imports from Russia? What you consider to be the main drivers behind energy price volatility in the EU and what concrete measures you think should be taken to ensure prices are competitive, market reactive and affordable? How will you ensure that businesses and households benefit from the lower production costs of renewable energy? What role should IPCEIs play with regard to energy production and interconnectivity and how additional funding can be unlocked for their implementation? How do you view the role of technological neutrality in the context of energy supply and energy prices? What is your view on nuclear energy and SMRs?

Invited Committees

AGRI

Agriculture and forestry will have a role to play in a clean, just and competitive transition. They are two of the few sectors that not only emit carbon, but can also actively help to bind carbon, provide renewable raw materials and mitigate climate change, while ensuring food security for our citizens. How do you intend to strengthen the agricultural and forestry sectors amid a just transition? How can incentives be created for agriculture and forestry to increase their contributions as carbon sinks and achieve their sustainable competitive transition? How would you intend to help farmers and foresters to adapt to the challenges of climate change?

How do you plan to strengthen the prospects and contribution of agriculture to enhancing both socio-economic growth and environmental improvement, including by boosting the potential of bioeconomy, circular economy, resilient food supply chains and innovative methods?

EMPL

Your portfolio covers the clean, just and competitive transition, which, according to your mission letter, must be 'for the benefit of people and their jobs'. However, your responsibilities barely mention the social aspects of the just transition. How do you plan to work with Executive Vice-President-designate Roxana Mînzatu? What concrete measures are you going to take to ensure that the most vulnerable households are protected and that the transition is beneficial for workers, that their rights are respected and promoted and no one is left behind? Will you deliver an initiative on anticipation and management of change in the world of work, in the context of the Just Transition?

What concrete measures are you going to take in the better regulation agenda to ensure the EU labour law acquis and to ensure improved employment rights and social standards?

In particular, in view of the national Social Climate Plans expected by June 2025, how will you ensure that the Social Climate Fund does not only provide short-term support to vulnerable households but also triggers long-term changes to lift people out of energy and transport poverty? With the Just Transition Fund ending in 2027, what specific measures do you plan to accompany companies and workers in the transformation towards climate neutrality? How do you intend to contribute to the Union of skills?

IMCO

Enforcement

There is wide consensus that the EU's credibility depends on the effective enforcement of its rules, including the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR). What are your enforcement priorities in this regard and how will you ensure the timely and effective enforcement that will result in benefits for EU consumers and businesses and contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market? Given that this work entails a high level of complexity, how will you ensure that you have adequate skilled resources and coordinated action within the European Commission?

REGI

Just Transition

Despite its modest budget, the Just Transition Fund (JTF) was a key achievement of the last legislature and an essential tool for territories facing socio-economic challenges tied to the climate-neutral transition. However, issues with resource allocation, administrative hurdles, and balancing environmental and social objectives limited its effectiveness. As a result, many intended beneficiaries, including thousands of workers from carbon-intensive industries, missed out on support. Currently, a major part of JTF allocations still need to be absorbed by 2026.

How do you plan to support local and regional authorities in accelerating absorption and preventing de-commitments, while ensuring the added value of projects? Are you considering creating a Just Transition Fund 2, or do you intend to incorporate its objectives into other cohesion policy funds, with the principle of just transition applied transversally? Will you allocate more resources to just transition? What measures will you take to ensure that the support reaches the most vulnerable regions and sectors? Do you plan to simplify the requirements for access of workers to support? Do you believe that state aid laws need to be revised to allow for simpler and faster access to support? Finally, do you plan to extend the Fund's support to regions, such as those with automotive industry or intensive farming, and increase the funding proportionately?

TRAN

Draft written question to Ms Teresa Ribera, Executive Vice-President-designate for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition

According to the corresponding mission letter, the future Executive Vice-President-designate for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition will be responsible for the legal

framework for the EU's decarbonisation targets and the implementation of the Fit for 55 legislation. At the same time, the TRAN Committee has led the EP's legislative work on the decarbonisation of transport (RefueLEU Aviation, FuelEU Maritime, Revision of the Directive on Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure). What is your assessment of the impact of the Green Deal legislation on the transport sector? What is your vision to prepare a new architecture on the decarbonisation of the transport sector beyond 2030 while ensuring a level playing field for European transport companies, the competitiveness of the European transport sector and high-quality and attractive jobs in Europe? In this respect, how do you envisage your cooperation with the future Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms and the future Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism?

Henna Virkkunen (Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy) Questions

Lead: IMCO, ITRE

Invited: AFET, LIBE

IMCO

Artificial Intelligence, EU Cloud and AI Development Act

1. What will be the main principles and objectives of the announced proposal for a new “EU Cloud and AI Development Act”, and how does the Commission plan to achieve these objectives? How will the Commission align the strategic objective of boosting AI innovation and competitiveness with the need to ensure the trustworthiness and safety of AI to the benefits of consumers and businesses? How do you intend to promote the harmonised application of EU digital norms and standards in the Single Market and internationally and ensure EU’s global leadership in digital governance?

Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act and negative impacts of online platforms

2. What will be your enforcement priorities for the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), and how will you ensure effective, transparent, and rapid enforcement mechanisms? How will the Commission address the call for simplification and reducing administrative burdens? Will the Commission be able to dedicate sufficient resources to enforcement? How do you plan to tackle harmful practices online such as dark patterns or addictive design, which impact individuals, in particular children and minors, and their mental health? Finally, what concrete actions will you take to fight cyberbullying?

E-commerce platforms

3. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von den Leyen, entrusted you with a task to lead the work to tackle challenges with e-commerce platforms, especially from third countries, to ensure consumers and business benefit from a level playing field based on effective customs, tax and safety and sustainability rules. How do you intend to achieve these objectives and in particular what have you identified as the main issues and what are the tools and measures to address them, especially when the main actors are established in third countries? How will this contribute to improving the functioning of the Single Market and the protection of EU consumers' rights? How do you plan to cooperate on this task with other Members of the College and with enforcement authorities in the Member States?

ITRE

Tech sovereignty, Security and Democracy (Virkkunen)

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the Digital Networks Act, the EU Cloud and AI Development Act, the single EU-wide Cloud policy and the

European Data Union Strategy? What concrete measures will you propose in order to ensure that Europe reaches its 2030 Digital Decade targets, including in relation to digital skills? What are your views on the European Cybersecurity Certification Scheme for Cloud Services (EUCCS) and the recommendations in the Draghi report related to cloud services?

2. How do you define EU tech sovereignty and competitiveness? How can the EU achieve it? In that regard, what targets and indicators will you set to ensure that substantial progress has been made by the end of your mandate? How will you reinforce the position of the EU tech sector in both hardware and software, using a holistic approach, and what immediate measures will you take to ensure tech sovereignty and promote the competitiveness of European platforms? What are your plans with respect to digital and frontier technologies, such as AI, supercomputing, quantum computing and technologies, semiconductors, space tech and the Internet of Things? What measures do you envisage to ensure a safe, trustworthy and human-centric use of digital technologies? How do you plan to ensure effective implementation of the Chips Act and strengthen EU's semiconductors supply chains? What are your plans for the expansion of the Chips Act, including support for strategic industry segments and adjacent industries, and for the long-term EU Quantum Chips plan? How will you enhance EU coordination and participation in international ICT standard-setting bodies and promote EU digital norms and standards internationally?

3. What are your plans regarding digital infrastructure and access to quality connectivity across geographical areas? How do you intend to implement the proposals set out in the White Paper on Europe's digital infrastructure needs? What is your view on the recommendations of the White Paper and of the Draghi report on network fees? What measures do you envisage to improve gigabit connectivity, expand the roll-out of 5G, ensure a complete shift from copper to fibre by 2030 and incentivise investments from the private sector into network development? How do you plan to address the energy related aspects of digital infrastructure? What measures do you consider necessary to reinforce cyber resilience and security in all fields across the EU? How will you enhance security and defence industrial competitiveness in the context of a European Defence Union?

Invited Committees

AFET

The EU is facing the most complex set of threats and a deteriorating security environment since the end of the Cold War, with threats emanating from outside as well as inside the Union. You have been tasked with working with the Commissioner for Defence and Space and the Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) in bringing the Defence Union to life and to drive our defence industrial consolidation, reduce fragmentation, duplication and inefficiencies. A key element in this will be harnessing new and innovative technologies to ensure we have the defence technological edge, as Executive Vice-President, how do you intend to support innovation and digital development in Defence industry, as well as its dual-use and civil-military potential as well as ensure that efforts to regulate dual-use technologies like AI do not fall behind the rapid pace of development in military applications, both within and beyond EU borders? In addition, how do you plan to engage with Member States, the VP/HR, international partners to establish governance frameworks for the responsible development and use of dual-use technologies including military application of AI that guarantees meaningful human control? How do you intend to enhance security of critical infrastructures in the EU?

LIBE

Your portfolio encompasses a broad range of policy areas for which the LIBE Committee is competent, from border management, asylum and migration, freedom, security and justice, and the rule of law, to artificial intelligence and digital policy.

On the one hand, therefore, you will be in charge of overseeing the Commission's work on external borders and the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, as well as strengthening the rule of law – including in areas such as judicial independence, anticorruption and media freedom – in cooperation with the Commissioners responsible. In each of these areas, how will you guide that work and what will be your priorities?

On the other hand, you will be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of all major digital policy legislation adopted in the past years to address data-driven technological advances, such as the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act, all having a significant impact on the fundamental rights to data protection and privacy. How will you ensure that these different laws co-exist harmoniously and are implemented and enforced while preserving the EU standards for fundamental rights compliance? And how can competent authorities responsible for enforcing digital laws, but also the GDPR and e-Privacy directive, collaborate effectively?

Jessica Roswall (Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy) Questions

LEAD: ENVI

Invited: AGRI, IMCO, ITRE

ENVI

Question 1

What concrete steps are you going to take in the context of the European Water Resilience Strategy to address water efficiency, scarcity, pollution and water related risk? How will you take into account individual Member States' specificities, including agricultural, and the critical relationship between water and healthy ecosystems, considering also available technologies? What measures do you intend to take to achieve and maintain high quality water standards, including through the enforcement of the existing legal framework?

Question 2

What concrete measures do you intend to present as part of the Circular Economy Act to create market demand for secondary raw materials and establish a single market for waste? Besides the necessary implementation of existing legislation, will this Act go beyond the revision of the current framework on waste and sustainable products? What is the expected effect on the environmental footprint of the Union, the use of resources and the competitiveness of the EU? Which specific sectoral actions -- such as for example on critical raw materials and textile -- are you going to take, also in view of third-country imports?

Question 3

How will you implement the zero-pollution action plan to ensure that all sectors are properly addressed where needed, and do you envisage any additional measures? When will you present a proposal for a revision of REACH that ensures simplification while guaranteeing enhanced protection of health and the environment and a competitive industry? What is your plan on PFAS to minimise human and environmental exposure to them while ensuring a clear and feasible framework for industry by taking into account essential uses?

Question 4

Do you commit to full and timely implementation and enforcement of the existing nature-related legislations, and to reach EU's international commitments? How will you ensure an adequate level of financing is available to implement those policies, including a possible dedicated Nature Restoration Fund in the next MFF? How do you foresee the development of a framework for the nature credits?

Question 5

How will the updated Bioeconomy Strategy unleash the potential of the European bioeconomy in a sustainable manner and in coherence with the objectives set in the

Green Deal? What tangible actions will you take to deploy a science-based strategy that significantly contributes to the EU economic competitiveness, while respecting environmental and natural resources?

Invited Committees

AGRI

Agriculture and forestry are the largest users of land in the EU and thus contribute significantly to achieving the EU's climate and biodiversity targets. Commissioner-designate, how do you intend to balance the objectives of protecting biodiversity and preserving nature on the one hand and maintaining agricultural production and ensuring food security and sustainable use of biomass on the other? How do you plan to strengthen agricultural water resilience so as to enhance agricultural production? What are your ideas for contributing to the Vision on Food and Agriculture? How will you ensure that the agriculture and forestry sectors are integrated in the bioeconomy strategy?

IMCO

Waste and Sustainable Products

The President of the European Commission asked you in the mission letter to lead, with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, on a Circular Economy Act in order to establish a single market for waste and enhance your efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. What is your vision and what are the specific actions, including legislative measures, that you will follow in the coming years to achieve these objectives?

ITRE

How do you plan to contribute to the Clean Industrial Deal? In that regard, what measures do you envisage for the Circular Economy Act, notably in relation to critical raw materials? How do you plan to take forward the zero-pollution ambition and what measures do you think should be included in the new chemicals industry package? In this context, do you have any specific plans for PFAS? What measures do you intend to put forward under the European Water Resilience Strategy in relation to the energy, industry and digital sectors? How do you aim to further develop the New European Bauhaus?

Dan Jørgensen (Commissioner for Energy and Housing) Questions

Lead: EMPL, ITRE

Invited: ECON, ENVI, IMCO, REGI

EMPL

1. Many people suffer from a lack of affordable housing. How will you ensure that the first ever European Affordable Housing Plan, announced by Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen, will provide enough affordable housing to respond to the housing needs of the low and middle income groups? What concrete actions do you foresee, in particular to ensure that the Plan will allow the necessary public and private investment to provide affordable, accessible housing and opportunities for all? How will you guarantee the “housing first” principle as it has proven to be effective on both economic and social terms to end homelessness? What is your approach with regard to private property in the context of any Union action in the area of housing? How are you going to ensure close cooperation with Executive Vice-President-designate Mînzatu in this context?

2. Your mission letter indicates that your work will help address energy poverty and ensure a social, just and competitive transition. What policies do you intend to implement to protect those most impacted by energy poverty, ensuring affordable renovation and access to green housing? How will the Action Plan for Affordable Energy Prices tackle energy poverty? What specific incentives do you foresee to foster the long-term development of green social and public housing, green buildings and the reduction of energy costs for both owners and tenants?

3. Your mission letter instructs you to support the Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition to work on reforming State Aid rules to enable housing support measures, notably social housing. What changes to the EU state aid rules and the social housing definition in the services of general economic interest (SGI) legislation do you envisage in order to ensure that housing is excluded from market rules and that sufficient social housing is provided? Will you, as Commissioner, endeavour to achieve explicit exemptions from the fiscal rules for state investment in housing?

ITRE

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? How do you plan to ensure the effective implementation of the European Green Deal and all energy-related legislation? How will you ensure effective implementation of the energy efficiency first principle in planning, policy and major investment decisions? What role do you see for energy efficiency in enhancing the competitiveness of EU industry? What are your views on the Energy Union Governance? How do you view the role of technological neutrality in the energy sector? What is your view on nuclear energy and SMRs? How do you plan to advance

on energy system integration? How do you intend to strengthen citizen participation in your work?

2. What are your plans for the review of the security of supply framework? What lessons can be learned from the war in Ukraine? What strategy will you propose to further diversify away from dominant or unreliable suppliers and routes of supply? What initiatives do you envisage to protect energy supply from physical and cyber threats? What steps will you follow to reduce reliance on external suppliers while enhancing clean energy and critical infrastructure within the EU, including the development of the hydrogen economy and sufficient hydrogen supply? What role do you see for the European Hydrogen Bank? How would you frame a Union strategy on flexibility, including demand side response and storage? How will you address the challenge of energy supply volatility associated with increasing renewable electricity generation? How do you assess the existing legal framework on European Grids and what measures would you propose for its improvement? What concrete actions will you propose to accelerate the upgrading of electricity grids and removing the existing bottlenecks within and between Member States, including at distribution level, offshore and very long distance transmission and to achieve the 15% interconnection capacity target? What is your view on EU funding for energy infrastructure projects and their role in the European Competitiveness Fund and the forthcoming MFF? What measures do you envisage for the Electrification Action Plan?

3. What will be the main elements of the Action Plan for Affordable Energy Prices? What specific measures will you put in place to reduce energy prices for households, companies and industries, especially energy-intensive industries? How do you intend to further address energy poverty? How do you plan to extend the use of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and Contracts for Difference (CfDs) to ensure competitive prices? What is your position on the current energy market bidding zones? What are your concrete plans for the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan and the European Strategy for Housing Construction, considering the EU and Member States competences in that area? What do you see as the main synergies between the European Affordable Housing Plan, the EED and the EPBD? What space do you see for increasing financing for energy efficiency and renovations under the next MFF? How do you intend to pursue the goal of delivering decarbonised and affordable heating and cooling? What role do you see for solar heating, geothermal and district heating? How will you ensure that EU measures tackle the issue of insulation of vast housing estates and rural areas? How will you contribute to further developing the New European Bauhaus?

Invited Committees

ECON

State aid rules

How do you envisage the revision of State aid rules, together with the Executive Vice President for a Clean Just and Competitive Transition to enable housing support measures for social housing? Would you consider the creation of an exempted category, which would include affordable housing for mid-market rental households as a Service of General Economic Interest (SGEI) and under which conditions?

ENVI

What is your vision for a decarbonised Energy Union? How do you plan to strengthen the synergies between and reconcile energy security with the emission reduction targets? How will you accelerate the deployment pace of renewable energies to meet the EU' renewable 2030 targets, including through the full implementation of REPowerEU and tackling the permitting delays in this regard? What role do you envisage for renewables in the Action Plan for Affordable Energy Prices? In the context of the just transition, how will you simplify the implementation of current EU legislation in the area of buildings and construction to reduce administrative burdens for both businesses and consumers and how can, especially low-income households, be supported in the renovation and decarbonisation of their houses, inter alia, via Social Climate Fund?

IMCO

Housing

As underlined in your mission letter, the quality and affordability of housing is a key issue for millions of people in Europe. How do you plan to develop the Strategy for Housing Construction, in particular with regard to the implementation of the internal market for constructions products and better digitalisation in the construction sector to support housing and improve the quality and sustainability of housing supply? Besides the enhancement of the housing supply, how would you tackle the systemic issues of short-term rentals while taking into account the recently agreed Short-Term Rental Regulation, the Services Directive and the subsidiarity of Member States, and ensure an efficient and accessible use of the current housing stock?

REGI

Housing

One of your responsibilities will be the development of a "European Strategy for Housing Construction". How do you intend to balance reducing construction costs with enhancing the environmental performance of buildings? What kind of initiatives would you suggest to increase the productivity of the construction sector? The scope of funding by the cohesion policy is severely limited to energy efficiency improvements in housing, promotion of inclusion of marginalised communities, housing infrastructure

for persons under or applying for “international protection”. Within the framework of the new "European Affordable Housing Plan" and besides doubling the cohesion policy funding, what additional measures would you propose to promote the construction of “affordable housing for all”? What are your views on the revision of the EU State aid rules for services of general economic interest (SGEI) applicable to social housing? Finally, what synergies do you plan to develop between the cohesion policy funds, EIB support, and other EU programs such as InvestEU or the Social Climate Fund to ensure long-term housing solutions that are not only affordable but also environmentally and energy sustainable?

Olivér Várhelyi (Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare) Questions

LEAD: AGRI, ENVI

Invited: ITRE, SANT

AGRI

1)

Animal welfare is increasingly considered a priority for citizens. As Commissioner-designate, how would you react to growing demand for higher animal welfare standards while addressing sustainability, economic considerations and farmer positions? How do you intend to modernise the existing regulations on animal welfare? Which new elements would you like to assess and address? Which legislative proposals on animal welfare are you planning to make? In addition, how do you intend to examine and address the varying levels of compliance and enforcement of the current legislation in EU Member States and ensure that new regulatory proposals as well as improved enforcement secure a level playing field and do not compromise the competitiveness of EU farmers?

2)

As Commissioner-designate, how would you ensure that the increasing risks from animal disease outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance are granted a more prominent role in EU policy? What type of actions would you propose to ensure the improvement of animal health and eradication of animal diseases across the EU, particularly in terms of disease prevention, surveillance and biosecurity? In addition, how do you envisage addressing the growing threats posed by cross-border diseases and coordination between EU Member States? How would you guarantee that the future Commission ensures adequate funding and resources to enhance research on the development of affordable vaccines to combat diseases such as African swine fever and on the prevention of the spread of diseases such as bluetongue?

3)

The availability of effective and economically viable alternatives is the main factor in reducing the use of chemical plant protection products. How would you improve biological control authorisation and implementation of integrated pest management? As Commissioner-designate, how would you spur the development of bio-pesticides, monitor their effectiveness and encourage their use? Do you think biological control agents should be subject to fast-track authorisation procedures? In a general way, do you think it is necessary to speed up the authorisation procedures for active substances used in the manufacture of plant protection products? How do you intend to counter the risk that Europe will run out of effective products to fight off plant diseases - especially since new pests are emerging in certain regions in the context of climate change? How would you ensure that the Union remains attractive for investment in this area? What are your views on the EU zonal authorisation procedure for plant protection products?

ENVI

Question 1

How will you work on strengthening the resilience of healthcare systems, ensuring access to and affordability of care and medical products in the EU and stimulating EU research and competitiveness in the pharmaceutical sector? Despite the efforts, the EU remains divided in terms of the access to healthcare and the availability of medicines, which affects both the quality of life of patients in the EU and their chance of curing diseases. How will you as Commissioner for health, including in cooperation with EU Member States, reduce these health inequalities, combat shortages of medicinal products, address shortage of healthcare professionals and ensure that all Europeans receive the best treatments regardless of where they live in the Union? Do you see a revision of the cross-border care Directive as a solution? What can you already say about the Critical Medicines Act in this context? How will the Act enhance the capability to respond to health crises, reduce the dependency from third countries for imports of critical medicines and ingredients and address critical needs in healthcare, while also improving access and affordability? How will you ensure that the EU fosters research and development of new medicines or treatments, in particular for rare diseases, and increase its competitiveness, innovation and strategic autonomy, while ensuring access to patients? How do you see the link to the European Biotech Act? How do you see the role of the EU4Health in this context, especially taking into account the recent budget cuts proposed?

Question 2

What are your concrete plans to fight against AMR at national, EU and international level, in line with the One Health approach, with regard to environmental, human and animal health? In particular, what additional measures do you envisage in addition to those already proposed in the revision of the pharmaceutical legislation, both in human and veterinary fields? How do you plan to address shortages and ensure access to antimicrobials and diagnostic tools, while ensuring prudent use and stewardship? Will you present an update of the list of antibiotics reserved for human use? Since research and innovation are a crucial component of the fight against AMR, how do you plan to incentivise both public and private research and innovation in this field? Do you envisage looking into untapped medical counter measures such as bacteriophages?

Question 3

What are your proposals to improve mandatory food information to consumers, in particular regarding nutrient content (for healthier choices, without oversimplification), sustainability aspects (CO2 footprint) and animal welfare labelling (AWL), while avoiding administrative burden and ensuring safe and affordable food? Will you commit to presenting the measure announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy in 2020 regarding the introduction of an EU-wide front of pack labelling scheme? Similarly, do you plan to present the delayed legislative proposal on sustainable food systems, which was also announced as part of the Farm to Fork Strategy? What is your vision on this initiative? Regarding pesticide use, what are your proposals to support the farmers to reduce the use and risks of chemical pesticides, and how will you accelerate the availability of alternatives, such as biocontrol products or low-risk substances? Lastly, what are your concrete plans to increase food safety controls on imported products?

Invited Committees

ITRE

1. What concrete measures do you envisage to further diversify supply chains and boost the competitiveness of the health sector? How do you plan to address the severe shortages of medicines and medical devices in the context of the Critical Medicines Act? What further actions will you propose to ensure the availability and competitiveness of medical devices? What measures do you think should be included in the new European Biotech Act and the action plan on cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers? How do you aim to complete the European Health Data Space?

SANT

How will you commit to work on preventive health as one of the key areas, ensuring a comprehensive approach to health promotion and disease prevention across the life course? In this regard, many proposals under the beating cancer plan were promised in the previous mandate but were not delivered by the previous Commission. Do you commit to delivering on the missing actions and goals under this plan including, inter alia, a review of the relevant legislation on tobacco (including to tackle novel products such as vapes), proposals for labelling and health warnings on alcohol beverage products? Concerning other non-communicable diseases, can you provide us with the main elements that you will put forward regarding a common approach in these areas? Will you continue to focus on boosting immunisation and vaccination as key components of this effort? In addition to the measures mentioned in your mission letter, can you elaborate on further actions you will take regarding prevention with respect to mental health and the implementation of the Mental health strategy? Do you commit to deliver the revision of the Medical Devices Regulation and how will you ensure affordability, availability, safety and the prevention of shortages?

Wopke Hoekstra (Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth)

Questions

LEAD: ECON, ENVI, ITRE

Invited: EMPL, FISC, TRAN

ECON

Corporate Taxation and Fighting Tax Fraud, Tax Evasion and Avoidance

1. How do you plan to support competitiveness in the EU through tax policies, to reduce the tax compliance costs and tax burden particularly for smaller companies, while continuing the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance? What strategy do you have in mind to overcome unanimity in Council for the adoption of common EU corporate taxation initiatives, such as DEBRA, HOT and BEFIT, and anti-avoidance proposals such as tackling abusive shell companies within the EU? Will you make a proposal to ensure that the digital assets and currencies do not become a vehicle for tax evasion or avoidance?

OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (IF) agreement on Pillar One and Pillar Two

2. The OECD Pillar II agreement on the 15% minimum effective tax rate includes carve-outs that might leave opportunities for aggressive tax planning. What will you do to address corporate profit shifting and harmful tax competition within the EU and vis-a-vis third countries, considering the carve-outs of the global tax agreement? Does the European Commission intend to put forward a proposal, in case of an absence of the ratification of the MLC of the Pillar I agreement by a critical mass of countries?

Environmental Taxation

3. Concerning your portfolios on climate and taxation, how will you leverage taxation to drive forward climate goals and which initiatives will you put in place to assess energy tax policies? Will you come up with a new ETD proposal taking on board Draghi's report suggestions? How do you plan to reconcile the 90% emission-reduction target by 2040 within the current Council negotiations on the revision of the ETD? Will you propose during this mandate measures to tax aviation and maritime more effectively?

ENVI

Question 1

As part of the EU's climate change diplomacy, what will you do to ensure collective efforts from all parties, especially major and emerging economies, to scale up actions towards the achievement of the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement? What are your priorities for COP29? What concrete measures will you propose to follow up on the agreement at the COP28 to transition away from fossil fuels in the energy sector? According to your mission letter, you will develop an EU framework to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. How do you intend to operationalise this framework to fulfil the requirement laid down in the 8th EAP, while still ensuring energy security and reduce dependencies?

Question 2

Which concrete measures will you be taking to ensure the efficient and timely implementation of the EU climate legislative framework for 2030 and the achievement of the targets set therein? What role do you see for the Clean Industrial Deal in this context? What is your position on the targeted amendment of the regulation setting CO₂ emissions performance standards for cars and vans that is mentioned in your mission letter? How will you ensure that the EU regulatory and financial instruments, including the Social Climate Fund and the Just Transition Fund, support a fair transition to a climate-neutral economy? Especially with regard to the EU ETS 2, what specific measures will you take to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected from energy price increases, including by monitoring the proper implementation of national Social Climate Plans and national ETS₂ revenues?

Question 3

What specific new actions do you plan to propose as an enabling framework to support the achievement of the new 2040 target and how will you design the post-2030 climate EU architecture in a simple, fair and cost-efficient way with the adequate financial resources? How will you ensure that all sectors of the economy will contribute in a fair and science-based manner? What is your position on the future evolution of the EU ETS? What would be your concrete plans for advancing carbon removals, both permanent and land-based, in addition to deep and sustained emission reductions? What is your position on setting Union targets on carbon removals, including a separate target for permanent carbon removals as part of the 2040 target? What concrete measures, legislative and/or others, and which new EU resources, as part of the new European Climate Adaptation Plan, would you like to propose to increase the resilience of EU society, including vulnerable groups, ecosystems and economy and better adapt to climate risks? How will you ensure that adaptation is systematically taken into account in each EU sectoral policy?

ITRE

Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth (Hoekstra)

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the Clean Industrial Deal? How do you define 'clean growth'? What role will circular economy play in your work? How do you plan to oversee and support the implementation of the existing legal framework to achieve the 2030 targets and what are your plans and measures envisaged to achieve the announced 2040 emission-reduction target? How will you ensure that those measures will work together with the EU industrial policy?

2. What concrete measures will you propose to promote industrial decarbonisation, notably for energy intensive industries and hard-to-abate sectors? Which sectors and areas should be prioritised and on the basis of what criteria? In that regard, what role do you see for the Emissions Trading Scheme and the Innovation Fund? What actions will you propose to ensure long-term investment in European net zero infrastructure? What concrete measures do you envisage in particular for the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act and how do you see its relationship with the Net Zero Industry Act, the Critical Raw Materials Act and STEP? How will you ensure in general that climate policy instruments continue to provide economic incentives for private decarbonisation investments, while strengthening the framework for a social and just transition? How do you envisage the future framework for CO₂ capture, transport and storage and how will you ensure sufficient incentives for industry along the entire CCUS value chain? What are your plans on the single market for CO₂, in particular for CO₂ stemming from hard-to-abate sectors, taking into account EU competitiveness? What is your position on the role of a technology-neutral approach in relation to the foreseen review of the regulation setting CO₂ emission performance standards for cars and vans as mentioned in your mission letter?

3. What actions do you envisage to boost EU demand for clean tech made in Europe and how will you support EU value chains for clean tech manufacturing including through supply-side measures? What level and mix of private and public investment do you consider necessary, and how do you assess the specific role of EU financial instruments? How will you reduce EU dependencies notably on China? What framework will you propose to further scale down and phase out the use of fossil fuel subsidies as part of the work to reduce Europe's dependencies? What are your plans on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)? What measures do you envisage for the competitiveness of the European automotive sector?

Invited Committees

EMPL

Your mission letter mentions that you “will further strengthen the framework for a social and just transition”. The current framework for just transition in the European Green Deal is a mix of guidance, monitoring and funding instruments. In the face of high energy and living costs and growing inequalities, the EU should establish a more ambitious and robust framework, including binding measures, and address the environmental and social dimensions in a complementary way from the outset.

As Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, what concrete legislative actions will you take to ensure a social and just transition for all? What measures will you propose as part of a strengthened just transition framework and how will you promote the availability, accessibility and affordability of sustainable products and services? How will you contribute to the creation of sustainable quality jobs, the application of collective agreements and the enforcement of information and consultation rights of workers? And how will you involve the social partners in that work?

FISC

Tax Framework for the EU's Financial Sector

Your mission letter states that “you will identify innovative solutions for a coherent tax framework for the EU’s financial sector”. What specific changes to EU tax-policy will you propose to i) achieve the latter ii) increase private investment and reduce tax avoidance and evasion by companies and individuals iii) simplify the tax system to ensure the removal of tax obstacles to cross-border investment and to increase equity in business financing, thereby accelerating the completion of the Capital Markets Union and iv) continue the reform of corporate taxation in the EU? How do you see the role of capital tax harmonisation in the context of the development of the Saving and Investments Union, as envisaged in the Letta report?

TRAN

President von der Leyen tasked the future Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth to support the implementation of the existing climate legal framework for 2030, including upcoming reviews as well as ensuring sufficient investments into European net-zero infrastructure. How do you intend to contribute to the proper and timely implementation of the transport related legislation while ensuring a level playing field for European transport companies, the competitiveness of the European transport sector and high-quality and attractive jobs in Europe? What would be your strategy and timeline to ensure sufficient investments, including into net-zero technologies, fuels, recharging and refuelling infrastructure to decarbonise the transport sector?

Andrius Kubilius (Commissioner for Defence and Space) Questions

LEAD: AFET, ITRE

Invited: SEDE, TRAN

AFET

1. You have been entrusted with a new role of helping to coordinate at European level the building of a true European Defence Union. How do you intend to achieve that ambitious goal during the timeframe of your mandate? How do you envisage the division of tasks and complementarity of roles with the Vice-President/High Representative, given the latter's leading role in CSDP, and with the Executive Vice-President-designate Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy? Without prejudice to the Commission's decision-making processes, what would be your concrete priorities in terms of legislative, budgetary and political initiatives, including joint ones and objectives/goals for the Defence and Space portfolio in the short, medium and long term for the duration of your mandate? What are the main challenges – and how would you overcome them – on the way of pursuing those priorities and objectives, and how do you intend to finance them?

2. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has brought full-scale war back to the European continent. As the EU's first Commissioner for Defence and Space with a lead-role in establishing a European Defence Union and a White Paper on the Future of European Defence, what will be your priorities to support Member States in regenerating European defence capabilities in the immediate, medium and long-term to ensure the security of EU citizens? In this respect, can you give some examples of initiatives the Commission could develop that will be coherent with the needs defined by the Vice-President/High Representative and Member States, and in line with the commitments of the Versailles declaration?

3. You have been tasked with presenting (in cooperation with the Vice-President/High Representative) the White Paper on the Future of European Defence already within the first 100 days of your mandate, and through this process, you have been instructed to contribute to a shared vision and ambition across Council, Parliament, the public and other stakeholders and to strengthen the EU-NATO partnership. How will you proactively and effectively engage with the European Parliament from the earliest stages in the processes of elaborating and developing both the White Paper on the Future of European Defence and other initiatives in your area of responsibility all the way to their operationalisation and implementation (including, in the run-up to the next Multiannual Financial Framework)? In relation to this, could you please provide details on how you intend to: maintain regular exchanges of views in Plenary and with relevant committees; ensure 'structured dialogue' and your ad hoc presence at short notice in case of significant events or major developments; ensure that the positions of Parliament are duly taken into account in proposals for legal acts and EU communications and strategies; ensure that Parliament receives relevant information and documents with relevance to your portfolio, including those shared with the Council, and that the relevant committees are immediately and fully informed, in writing and orally; and ensure that pertinent and relevant non-public information is provided to Parliament during in-camera meetings?

ITRE

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the single market for defence products and services, the European Defence Fund, the EU Space Law, the Space Data Economy Strategy, as well as the implementation of EDIRPA, ASAP, the European Defence Industrial Strategy and the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence?

2. What concrete measures do you envisage to enhance the capability of defence industry to efficiently and competitively produce sufficient quantities of relevant products and services? How do you plan to expand defence industrial capabilities across the EU in order to reduce undue external dependencies in particular for SMEs and small midcaps, without prejudice to the budget allocated to other EU policies? What measures do you envisage to provide better access for European industry to raw materials, key components and reduce restrictions on the use of certain technologies? What are your plans for making European defence-related products and services more attractive to purchase? How do you intend to ensure that EU support for the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDITB) goes in hand with integration of SMEs and midcaps into supply chains and stimulation of genuinely new partnerships between actors from different Member States? More generally, how will you enhance cooperation between Member States and what role do you foresee for the European Defence Agency? What is your vision for the shaping of cross-border cooperation and the potential "specialisation" in the defence industry? What role do you see for digital technologies in European defence? How would you put the EDIP budget and structures to maximum use? What would you consider to be appropriate financial resources for EDIP and related current instruments, and how do you intend to secure them? How will you ensure that EDIP can be of maximum benefit to the EU industry and what are your views on its eligibility criteria? What is your view on the EU's approach to directly fund the Ukrainian defence industry and do you envisage strengthening this approach? How do you envisage the future of EDIP after 2027?

3. How do you concretely plan to ensure EU's strategic autonomy in the space sector and promote EU's role as a global player? What measures will you take for the further development of a competitive European space industry? How will you ensure that EU domestic demand for space technologies is addressed by the EU space sector? How will you ensure the integration of SMEs and small midcaps into supply chains? How would you explain the divergent industrial developments between the EU, the US and other countries in the sector? What is your vision for the future EU Space Law? What measures should include and when will it be presented? How will you address the ongoing issue of access to space and what will be the content of the EU space

launcher policy, including alternative launch capabilities? How will you address the challenges related to sustainable use of space?

Invited Committees

SEDE

The Draghi Report, amongst others, has underlined the need for investment in European defence. As the first Commissioner for Defence and Space, you will have the task of ensuring that defence is reflected in the priorities of the current annual budgets and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that will be negotiated and adopted during the current legislature. How will you ensure that defence becomes a real priority in this process and in particular ensure that EDF, EDIP, and all successor proposals in EDIS, will be sufficiently funded in the short and long-term including what are your views on exploring other avenues for financing defence such as own resources, proposals dedicated to support leverage of private investments, for example reform of the statutes of the European Investment Bank, use of frozen Russian assets and Eurobonds?

TRAN

According to the corresponding mission letter, President von der Leyen tasked the future Transport Commissioner to further strengthen the dual-use transport infrastructure corridors across the Trans-European Network, as well as to work with Member States on strengthening military mobility. These priorities are also mentioned in the mission letter for the future Commissioner for Defence and Space. What actions do you intend to take, working in cooperation with the future Transport Commissioner, to meet these objectives, given the current geopolitical challenges that the EU faces? How would you support the dual use of transport infrastructure through research and development, including via joint undertakings and public-private partnerships?

Costas Kadis (Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans) Questions

Lead: PECH

Invited: ENVI

PECH

- 1) How will you strike a balance between the sustainable management of fisheries resources, the protection of the marine environment and the achievement of a safe, profitable and sustainable fishing sector able of ensuring generational renewal and creation of jobs?
- 2) Besides continuing the full implementation of the CFP, do you consider concrete reforms regarding the landing obligation, including alternatives, as well as introducing multiannual TACs, improving the implementation of an ecosystem based approach or incentivising research for new sustainable fishing techniques?
- 3) How do you intend to improve the equal opportunities for EU fishers and aquaculture producers, with particular attention to small-scale fishers, improve relations with third-countries and reconcile the EU's ambition of "leading by example" with the CFP's objective to ensure a level playing field among all EU and non-EU players, such as the United Kingdom and Norway, and the effective fight against IUU fishing practices?
- 4) How do you intend to coordinate all relevant policies within the European Oceans Pact and to involve coastal communities and the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the process of designing and implementing the Pact?
- 5) How will you strengthen the European sustainable aquaculture sector, including the algae production, and improve consumers' information through labelling on the origin of products, or of plant-based products sold as fish?

Invited Committees

ENVI

Question 1

How do you plan to ensure that protecting marine ecosystems and ocean biodiversity goes hand in hand with a sustainable, economically viable, and competitive European blue economy? What will you do to ensure that all marine protected areas are effectively managed in line with the nature-related legislation and EU's international commitments? What actions do you envisage to substantially reduce marine litter and tackle marine and freshwater pollution, and how will you promote these efforts internationally? How do you plan to enhance the EU's blue carbon potential and accelerate the restoration and protection of high carbon-sequestration ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes as part of your broader climate adaptation strategy? How will you make sure that the blue economy sectors, such as offshore renewable technologies, are coordinated through maritime spatial planning to avoid conflicts with marine conservation efforts, sustainable fisheries, and coastal community interests? Considering the current EU position on deep-sea mining, which advocates for a precautionary approach pending further scientific research, what are your intentions regarding this issue? How will you ensure that the EU continues to lead in setting global standards, securing consensus on the implementation of the BBNJ Treaty and other ocean governance frameworks, and promoting SDG 14 objectives?

Ekaterina Zaharieva (Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation)

Questions

LEAD: ITRE

Invited: CULT

ITRE

1. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments?
2. What do you envisage for the European Research Area, the European Research Council, the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the European Artificial Intelligence Research Council and how would they relate to the European Innovation Act?
3. What do you see as the main purpose of the EU framework programmes for research and innovation and the added value of EU funding? How will you address the persisting need for simplification of the programme? Will you support a substantial increase to the budget of Horizon Europe and of its successor programme? How will you protect in general the EU budget dedicated to R&I policies? How do you plan to increase SME participation in the programme and boost public-private partnerships?
4. What concrete measures do you consider necessary for the long-term strategy to boost the European Research Infrastructure, including technology infrastructures? How do you see the role of research and innovation ecosystems? How do you plan to tackle the innovation and research divide in the EU? What widening actions do you envisage in that regard? How will you address the current challenges in the STEM fields, including low participation of women? How do you plan to promote research and academic freedom? How will you contribute to further developing the New European Bauhaus?
5. What is your vision for an EU start-up and scale-up strategy and what measures will you propose to stimulate their development? What initiatives will you take to scale up innovation in the EU? How do you plan to strengthen the ties between research, innovation, industrial and cohesion policies? What concrete measures do you think should be included in the Advanced Materials Act?

Invited Committees

CULT

How do you see the interplay between the European Education Area, the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area? What, in your view, are the synergies between the funding programmes in these different fields and the EU support to the next generation of researchers, taking into account cooperation between academic, private and public sector entities and the progress of the European University Alliances initiative? Linked to the above, how do you intend to make the European Higher Education Area more accessible and inclusive for all, while also improving the collaboration and exchange with Universities globally?

Apostolos Tzitzikostas (Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism)
Questions

Lead: TRAN

Invited: ENVI

TRAN

1. President von der Leyen tasked the future Commissioner for sustainable transport and tourism in her mission letter to “*make European transport more competitive, more sustainable and more resistant to future shocks and to ensure transport is safe, accessible and affordable for all EU citizens*”. What would be your strategy and priorities, also in terms of concrete legislation, to accomplish this task and under what timetable? What are in your view the most pressing challenges and how do you intend to address them?

2. What actions will you take to ensure that the EU reaches its climate goals in transport, both in terms of implementing and/or adapting current and proposing new legislation, while ensuring a level playing field for European transport companies, the competitiveness of the European transport sector and high-quality and attractive jobs in Europe?

3. According to the Draghi report, improved infrastructure and services, as well as more effective railway and inland waterway management, can unlock further growth, help to tackle congestion and accommodate increasing demand. Road congestion is estimated to cost the EU around EUR 230 billion a year. Furthermore, there is currently a persistent shortage of qualified labour across all transport modes. What steps do you intend to take to turn modal shift and multimodality targets into a reality, for both passengers and freight in line with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and tackle the labour shortage in the transport sector? In this context, how will you ensure that more effective rail and inland waterway transport (the latter notably absent from the mission letter) remain a full part of this strategy? Also in terms of multimodality, what concrete legislative actions do you intend to take to make multimodal transport more effective, accessible and affordable for EU citizens? Under what timeline?

4. The completion of the TEN-T network is projected to bring an annual GDP increase of EUR 467 billion in 2050, but will require an estimated EUR 845 billion and so far the Commission and the Member States have not presented a comprehensive plan to secure the necessary financing. How would you ensure that the implementation of the TEN-T network is adequately financed, notably under the upcoming CEF Regulation and in the next MFF? How can the Commission incentivise and attract private investment to close the gap and how would you suggest to boost public-private partnerships?

5. How do you intend to promote a resilient, sustainable and competitive tourism sector, in line with the EU Agenda for Tourism 2030 and the 2023 Palma Declaration, while ensuring economic growth and better management of tourism flows in line with the needs of local communities? Ahead of the next MFF negotiations, would you commit to insist on the longstanding TRAN Committee call for a separate budgetary line for tourism?

Invited Committees

ENVI

Question 1

Emissions from the transport sector represent almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions; it is the only major sector of the economy where these have increased at EU level since 1990. Therefore, further efforts are essential to make sure that all parts of the sector contribute to decarbonisation and to have the right framework. The transformative changes necessary come with manifold challenges such as those related to a growing transport volume on the infrastructure, the increase of sustainable alternative fuels and the stimulation of battery manufacturing. Which improved enabling conditions, specific steps, timeframes and legal instruments will you bring forward so that sustainable transport policies contribute to economic growth, job security and competitiveness in Europe, while ensuring to reach the 2030 targets as part of the European Green Deal and for the Union to become climate-neutral? How will you ensure - in cooperation with the Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth - that the Union leads the way to increased international commitments to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime and aviation sectors? What concrete measures do you plan as part of the EU industrial action plan for the automotive sector? What will be the legal nature and timing of the announced proposal on clean corporate fleets?

Christophe Hansen (Commissioner for Agriculture and Food) Questions

LEAD: AGRI

Invited: ENVI, PECH

AGRI

1)

The farmers' protests in the spring were a clear expression of the enormous difficulties faced by farmers. They particularly highlighted the need for a fair income, low profitability of farming due to low producer prices and high input costs, unfair competition from imports from third countries and lack of reciprocity, and the regulatory burden and lack of incentives to meet high environmental standards in agriculture. As farmers are often the weakest link in the food supply chain and their income is structurally below the average of other sectors, what are your ideas for a "Vision on Agriculture and Food" as announced in your mission letter as Commissioner-designate to ensure a fair income for farmers, improve their position in the food supply chain, enhance transparency in price formation, as well as attract young farmers to the sector? How do you plan, in the short and long term, to further alleviate and streamline administrative burden and reporting obligations arising from various policies on farmers?

2)

Mr. Commissioner-designate, what are your views on the implications of enlargement with regard to the future CAP especially the future of direct payments? How do you intend to avoid or mitigate the possible adverse effects of the enlargement process on EU agricultural markets and producers? Do you currently see the need to further regulate the entry of Ukrainian products in order to avoid destabilising EU agricultural markets? Do you consider the protective measures in force since last June to be sufficient? More broadly, what are your views on the current renegotiation of the free trade agreement with Ukraine?

3)

Agriculture is more dependent than almost any other sector on external factors such as climate events, volatile markets or geopolitical circumstances over which it has little or no influence. A resilient agricultural sector and robust crisis management are therefore essential for future agricultural policy. As Commissioner-designate, what are your ideas for improving the resilience and crisis and risk management of the agricultural sector, including the crisis reserve, in light of the above-mentioned external challenges? In particular, how do you plan to deal with water-related challenges, including water availability that are increasingly becoming key issues in agricultural production?

4)

The agricultural sector has made major efforts in recent years and decades, including through targeted support under the CAP, to become more environmentally and climate friendly. Agriculture already makes an important contribution to implementing the EU's climate, biodiversity and environmental targets and it will continue to do so in the future, while taking into account the socio-economic reality, competitiveness and profitability of the agricultural and food sector. How do you intend to support farmers in this necessary process of change? Could this be done within the current CAP framework? Given the

need for increased investment to ensure the sustainability of agricultural sector, do you see the need for an increased CAP budget and how would you ensure sufficient funding? What other public and private instruments do you think are needed to support farmers in providing public services?

5)

What are your plans for developing the livestock sector while contributing to the climate action plan? How would you intend to boost innovation in this area? How would you ensure coherent and effective implementation of legislation aimed at reducing emissions affecting livestock sector, and how would you avoid multiple legal layers and additional administrative burden to farmers?

Invited Committees

ENVI

How will you deliver on the environmental and climate (GHG including methane) objectives, while ensuring the economic and social sustainability of EU farmers, as well as their role in securing EU food security? Can you provide details on the proposed benchmarking system for sustainable certification schemes to harmonise methodologies on farm sustainability assessments? What criteria will it be based on? How will it reduce the administrative burden on the sector? How do you envisage achieving the EU's 2030 target for organic farming? How do you plan to work together with the Commissioner on Health and Animal Welfare on the One Health approach, and on the legislative framework for sustainable food systems? On the latter point, do you plan to include this proposal in the Commission Work Programme for 2025? How will you ensure that this legislative framework addresses the entire range of stakeholders and takes an integrated approach to promoting sustainability across the value chain from agriculture, to reducing food waste, to animal welfare, and to healthier sustainable diets and high-quality food?

PECH

Question for the confirmation hearing of Mr. Christophe HANSEN, Commissioner-designate for Agriculture and Food:

When implementing your portfolio, how will you take into consideration the importance of the EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors, their contribution to EU food sovereignty and the protection of marine ecosystems, both in the short and long term?

Kaja Kallas (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission) Questions

Lead: AFET

Invited: DEVE, DROI, FEMM, INTA, SEDE

AFET

1. The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029 set out, inter alia, that the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) must be designed with the current global reality in mind and that EU needs to be more assertive in pursuing its strategic interests. Without prejudice to the Commission's decision-making processes, what would be your concrete priorities and objectives/goals in the short, medium and long term (for the duration of your mandate) on the way to a more strategic, assertive, united and human rights centred CFSP, guided by EU's values and principles? What are the main challenges (international, regional, bilateral, institutional, etc) that you see on the way of pursuing those priorities and objectives, and how do you intend to overcome them?

2. How do you intend to improve the coordination amongst the Commissioners, in particular with the Commissioners-designate for Mediterranean and for International partnerships, in terms of substantially increasing the combined influence of external policies and the external dimension of internal policies? How will you address the increasing lack of clarity in the external representation of the EU and the need to clearly define the competences of all the institutional actors involved in the EU's external action? How do you intend to improve the use of available instruments – or develop new instruments – to maximise the EU's international leverage and the policy impact of the common European external action? In particular, as regards:

- investing in partnerships around the world, including through the Global Gateway;
- the strategic use of the EU's external financing instruments, also in view of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (while ensuring a genuine role of the Parliament in the strategic steering of the instruments);
- a coherent, effective and strategic communication on external policies and actions in order to counterbalance false narratives and disinformation in third countries;
- ensure that EEAS available financial resources, staff expertise and recruitment policy, including the stricter qualification requirements for the most important positions, match the level of ambition;
- the assessment of the effectiveness of ongoing CSDP missions and operations and the establishment of new CSDP missions and operations;
- making the EU a stronger power in global affairs, and safe from malign external influence and threats;
- a coherent and enforced European sanction policy that not just thwarts Russia's ability to continue its aggression, but also combats circumvention and evasion, including how do you aim to increase information sharing capabilities within the EU institutions and Member States but also with key partner countries, how will you address non-alignment of a large number of countries, including candidate countries, and do you support the establishment of a centralised EU capacity for sanction enforcement and for allowing the Commission to contest a sanction

derogation authorised by a Member State under Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014?

3. In the mission letter addressed to you, you have been tasked to seek a trigger for the use of the clauses enshrined in the Treaties - in particular as referred to in Articles 31(2), 41(3), 45(2), 46(2)-(5) of the Treaty on the European Union - that allow for decisions in the CFSP to be taken by qualified majority voting. What obstacles do you foresee in executing this mandated task and how do you intend to build consensus to allow for the widest possible use of qualified majority voting on CFSP decisions, particularly in the context of Parliament's call for the Council to gradually switch to qualified majority voting for decisions in areas of the CFSP that do not have military or defence implications, bearing in mind the concerns of some Member States? Additionally, how do you plan to come to a common understanding on topics that are divisive among Member States?

4. The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029, aim at strengthening the Commission's relationship with the European Parliament. Building on the commitments given by your predecessors (and the best practices established with them), could you please provide details on how you intend to:

- proactively and effectively involve Parliament (as an integral player of "Team Europe") from the earliest stages in the processes of elaborating and developing your priorities and objectives;
- ensure that the positions of Parliament are duly taken into account in your proposals (including joint proposals) for Council legal acts on all topics relevant for the Committee on Foreign Affairs (including on restrictive measures and sanctions regimes), consultations on EU foreign policy priorities and positions (notably ahead of meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council) and new or updated EU communications and strategies, and ensure that Parliament and notably its Committee on Foreign Affairs is systematically and timely informed of such proposals, consultations and documents;
- ensure that within three months after the adoption of Parliament's resolutions also in the field of the CFSP/CSDP, a written follow-up is provided with an assessment of how Parliament's positions have been taken into account;
- ensure that Parliament's views are duly taken into consideration before and throughout the process of international negotiations, including that Parliament and notably its Committee on Foreign Affairs is immediately and fully informed at all stages of negotiations of international agreements (including non-binding agreements, arrangements, Memoranda of Understanding) as well as their implementation and review, and that no provisional application of agreements is requested before Parliament has given its consent; in that context, how to progress on a revision of the 2002 Inter-Institutional Agreement on access to sensitive information in the field of CFSP/CSDP (including on sanctions, the mandates for CSDP missions, their reports and country strategies sent by EUSRs to Political and Security Committee)?

5. What are the concrete measures that you intend to take in order to maintain and further improve the cooperation between you (as supported by the Commission/EEAS) and Parliament building on the current well established practice, including providing details on how you intend to:

- maintain regular exchanges of views both in the Plenary and with the Committee on Foreign Affairs (including 'structured dialogue' and to ensure your ad hoc presence in the Committee at a short notice in case of significant events or major developments); ensure your regular attendance of Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on CFSP/CSDP;
- improve in-person briefings to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, in a regular and timely manner both before and after Foreign Affairs Council meetings, including in its Defence Format, and provide pertinent and relevant non-public information (including via 'in camera' meetings only when duly justified) on any current international situations and political reporting from the EEAS;
- continue full engagement with the European Parliament's Special Committee;
- enhance joint consultation meetings on the CFSP in particular via advance written information from your services on all CFSP budgetary decisions;
- ensure the appearance of newly appointed Heads of Delegations and EU Special Representatives before the Committee on Foreign Affairs and that their appointment is conditional upon confirmation by the Parliament, as well as to ensure the appearances of Heads of CSDP missions and senior EEAS officials in the Committee as well as their meaningful contributions, in particular at in camera meetings, and to continue the organisation of the "EP-leg" of the "Annual Ambassadors' Conference"; make sure to maintain proper geographical and gender balance when appointing new Heads of Delegations and high ranking EEAS officials;
- better synchronise Commission/EEAS and Parliament's activities, for example through the systematic advance sharing of planned timelines for the release of official strategic documents, ministerial meetings and summits, proposals to open negotiations on international agreements, human rights dialogues and planning of democracy support activities;
- continue to facilitate the cooperation and synergies between Parliament and the EEAS, including EU Delegations, in the context of official visits of Members of the European Parliament to third countries;
- further develop the External Action Service into an effective European Diplomatic Service;
- enhance the existing good cooperation between EU and EP Elections Observations Missions and the ones covered by other international organisations;
- associate the European Parliament more closely to positions and decisions regarding the accession processes?

Invited Committees

DEVE

In light of your mission letter, we trust the HR/VP to act as an honest broker in developing a truly balanced foreign policy and champion the SDGs. In view of your overarching role, what approach will you take on the College work for a “revamped external action finance”, so that it will continue to reflect a balanced regional and thematic distribution as currently under NDICI-Global Europe? What concrete measures and initiatives will you take to “ensure a better link between internal and external EU policies” as indicated in your mission letter? How will you effectively operationalise Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in all legislative and political processes?

DROI

Which concrete measures do you intend to take to ensure that the advancement of human rights, democracy and the rule of law is a strategic objective of the Union’s action on the international scene, in conformity with article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union, in particular regarding implementation/respect of the human rights conditionality in international agreements, the EU financial assistance, and the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime? Do you commit to working for the protection of electoral integrity by updating the EU guidelines on electoral support and enhanced election observation? How do you see the partnership with the European Parliament in these areas?

FEMM

Will you continue making the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment a priority throughout all external action initiatives of the EU? What concrete plans do you have to follow-up on the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III) and do you commit to adopt, together with relevant Commissioners, a GAP IV? What steps will you take to implement and prioritise the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda, especially with regard to integrating a gender perspective and ensuring women's participation and leadership in all peace and security-related contexts? How will you tackle violations of women's rights in third countries, especially female genital mutilation and violations from other harmful practices, and will you continue supporting women human rights defenders, SRHR defenders and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders? How will you cooperate with the European Parliament and involve the FEMM committee with regard to this?

INTA

You have been tasked with shaping a ‘new foreign economic policy’, working with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy. Could you outline your initial ideas regarding the content of this policy and the envisaged timeline? What is the role of trade and investment in this policy? How do you intend to cooperate with the Commissioner in charge of trade and economic security on the design and

implementation of this new foreign economic policy, as well as on shaping the Union's external relations more generally, while respecting human rights and fundamental values? In your role as Vice-President, how will you ensure that the impact on our trade partners will be taken into consideration more systematically in the design and implementation of Union legislation? How, concretely, do you intend to engage with non-EU countries impacted by Union legislation, and how do you intend to cooperate with other Commissioners on this matter?

SEDE

The Strategic Compass was launched shortly after Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and during a period of deteriorating security in the EU's Neighbourhood and beyond. Do you consider the need to launch a review of the Strategic Compass, including a threat analysis and mapping-out of vulnerabilities and shortcomings of capabilities and resources of the Member States? The Mission Letters include a commitment that you and the Commissioner for Defence and Space would prepare a White Paper on the Future of European Defence, what relationship, if any, do you consider this should have to the frameworks provided by the Strategic Compass and NATO's Strategic Concept? How will you involve the European Parliament in all these strategic reflections and policy initiatives, in order to take into consideration Parliament's view and enhance democratic oversight of initiatives and decisions related to European defence?

Roxana Mînzatu (Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness) Questions

LEAD: CULT, EMPL

Invited: FEMM, LIBE

CULT

1. How do you envisage the future of EU education policy, beyond strengthening Europe's human capital to deliver effective and relevant learning that develops knowledge, skills, values and competences corresponding to a holistic vision of education and contributing to better prepared and resilient future generations? In the context of the ongoing European Green transition and clean industrial transformation, how will you actively develop strategies that tackle challenges related to access to education, basic skills, digital skills, STEM and STEAM education and European citizenship education?

2. What is your plan for the future of the European Education Area (EEA) due to be completed by 2025, in conjunction with the recognition and cross-border portability of qualifications, degrees and certification across all areas of education in formal, informal and non-formal settings? In particular, how do you intend to tackle urgent, EU wide issues such as the lack of teachers, their training and precarious professional situation?

3. In the EU we are faced with the reality of brain drain in the sector of higher education, how do you intend to actively tackle this issue and how do you intend to further develop the 'European University Alliances' and work on the "European Degree" to specifically address these challenges? Furthermore, how do you intend to apply lessons learnt from the current implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in preparing the next generation programme, and specifically, what is your strategy to keep the programme's core objectives and priorities considering potential future budgetary pressures?

EMPL

1. The Parliament is concerned about the fragmentation of social and employment policy and its inclusion in numerous portfolios of Commissioners-designate as well as the missing social and employment dimension in Executive Vice-President-designate Roxana Mînzatu's title. How does the Vice-President-designate intend to ensure that this fragmentation does not undermine the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social rights? How will you cooperate with the other Commissioners to achieve these objectives? Also, would you agree to change your title to "Executive Vice-President for quality jobs, social rights, skills and education" and take necessary measures to consolidate social and employment policies and ensure efficient structures and oversight?

2. Building on the La Hulpe declaration, which legislative initiatives do you commit to put forward in the new Action Plan on the EPSR, such as digitalisation at work, housing and collective bargaining, in order to achieve the 2030 targets? What concrete

measures and actions will you propose to tackle critical skills and labour shortages in European labour markets and to create good opportunities in all regions of Europe? How will you ensure that all workers, especially low-skilled workers, can benefit from the Union of Skills and can enjoy the right to training as well as equal access to upskilling and reskilling programmes, especially in light of the green and digital transitions?

What concrete measures and actions will you propose to facilitate labour mobility, ensuring a strong and empowered European Labour Authority (ELA), and further modernisation, simplification and digitalisation of social security coordination, as stated in your mission letter?

Moreover, what new and revised occupational exposure limit values on hazardous substances are you planning to propose under the EU OSH legislation, ensuring a level playing field for businesses?

3. Around 95 million people in the Union live at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including 19 million children. Even 11% of workers are exposed to this risk. Which concrete legislative initiatives will you propose in the context of the first ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, announced by Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen? What role will the European Semester and the European Child Guarantee play in this strategy to ensure progress towards the EPSR Action Plan goal of reduction of poverty? How will you ensure the next MFF does more to eradicate poverty and social exclusion? Beyond the Council recommendation, what concrete follow-up measures will you give to calls from the European Parliament to guarantee the adequacy, and increase the coverage and take-up of minimum income schemes?

Will you present a Directive on adequate minimum income in order to ensure the reintegration of people absent from the labour market while respecting the subsidiarity principle and the specificities of national social protection systems?

Invited Committees

FEMM

What initiatives do you plan to close the gender pay gap, career and pension gaps and tackle the horizontal segregation as well as promoting girls and women in STEM education and careers, and prevent discrimination for all, so that Europe can draw on all of its talent and potential? Also because of the gender gaps, the risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU is higher for women than for men. Women that have informal care responsibilities for dependent relatives risk not being able to join formal employment and are most at risk of poverty. How do you plan to improve working conditions, career development and upskilling for women in the context of the new framework for addressing long-term care workforce challenges? Regarding the first-ever Anti-Poverty Strategy planned for this Commission, how will you make sure that women in the most precarious and vulnerable situations, such as homeless women and single mothers, are reached by the new Strategy?

LIBE

Given the urgent need for an EU culture of preparedness facing emerging threats that may affect our security and the safety of our society, how will you plan to contribute to build up our EU capabilities, to improve threat detection and to operationalise a coordinated crisis response in a swift and effective manner?

Questions to Maroš Šefčovič
(Commissioner designate for Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency)

LEAD: AFCO, INTA

Invited: AFET, DEVE, IMCO

1. Framework agreement and Treaty changes under Article 48

The Framework agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission has been in force for more than 13 years and there is a need for certain provisions to be added or adjusted in view of developments that have taken place after the last revision.

Could you indicate which concrete commitments you are ready to take to implement fully the principle of equal treatment and the Commission's role of honest broker in line with Article 13(2) TEU, notably concerning trilogues, urgent procedures, budget and access to information and expert meetings? How do you intend to strengthen the political responsibility and accountability of the Commission to the European Parliament, specifically the individual responsibility of each Commissioner?

Can you commit that the use of Article 122 TFEU and recourse to Parliament's urgent procedure will be limited to what is strictly necessary and be properly justified explaining the reasons for the choice of the legal basis, the main objectives and elements of the proposal as well as the potential budgetary implications so that Parliament can exercise proper scrutiny? What steps will be taken to improve access to information for the European Parliament regarding expert meetings and budgetary decisions?

Can you commit to ensure that the Parliament and its relevant committees are immediately and fully informed, on an equal footing with the Council, on all aspects of international agreements, at all stages, from the earliest preparatory steps to implementation, especially through full and early access to negotiating texts and documents and that Parliament's position is duly taken into consideration when drafting the negotiating mandates? Moreover, whenever the Commission negotiates a 'non-binding' agreement, including Memoranda of Understanding or "clubs" with third countries, can you commit to provide Parliament with full and immediate information and that Parliament's views on them are duly taken into account?

Moreover, with its resolutions of 9 June 2022 and of 22 November 2023, the European Parliament voted to invoke Article 48 submitting proposals for amendments to the Treaty. What is your position on the need to update the framework of the Lisbon Treaty? In light of the Commission President's expressed support for targeted Treaty amendments, to what extent are you prepared to commit your support and what would you practically do to enable treaty change? In light of the Commission President's expressed support for targeted Treaty amendments, to what extent are you prepared to commit your support, specifically also to qualified majority voting in Council, including but not limited to foreign policy? Which Treaty provisions do you consider as absolutely necessary to modify in the current EU configuration, and which ones should be modified in view of enlargement? How would you assure that EU accession is a horizontal issue taking on board the possible EU reform process, rather than an issue often seen through the foreign policy angle?

2. Improve follow-up to Parliament's initiatives

How would you ensure that Parliament's right of initiative under Article 225 TFEU is strengthened, providing detailed information and giving substantial follow-up, and not only complying with formal deadlines for replies? Could you indicate which other concrete commitments you are ready to take to strengthen Parliament's right of initiative - in general terms or in specific policy areas - in particular as regards proposals to amend or revoke existing law and a new interinstitutional agreement between the three institutions devoted to procedures relating to Parliament's own composition, the election of its Members and their Statute, as well as Parliament's right of inquiry to avoid files being institutionally blocked? In particular, what are you ready to do to favour the negotiations within the Council on Parliament's proposal for the reform of the European Electoral Law of May 2022? How do you plan to engage with Member States to facilitate this process?

As national parliaments have developed a practice of reviewing the proportionality of EU legislative initiatives, along the subsidiarity review currently allowed under Protocol II of the Lisbon Treaty, would you consider a reform of the current system needed so as to allow national parliaments a more effective way of engaging with the (EU) legislative procedure?

3. EP right of inquiry

What tools do you consider indispensable for a meaningful right of inquiry for the Parliament?

Should the Council refuse relaunching the stalled negotiations and since there is not a specific order in providing consent by Council or Commission, can you commit to initiate a bilateral legislative negotiation with Parliament on a new Regulation on its inquiry powers, in accordance with the obligation enshrined in Article 226 TFEU? In parallel, will you engage with Member States to encourage their support for advancing the right of inquiry?

Moreover, in case the Council continues to refuse to enter into legislative negotiations with Parliament and Commission on the Right of Inquiry, and if Parliament decides to apply Article 265 TFEU, would you propose to the College of Commissioners to bring an action before the Court of Justice of the European Union because of the failure to act of Council?

INTA

1. The Union trade, investment and competitiveness strategy for the next five years

A strong trade and investment agenda is indispensable for stimulating economic growth and sustainable development, creating jobs and increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of our single market. Please elaborate on your trade and investment strategy:

➤ On the plurilateral and multilateral fronts, how will you build a coalition for the modernisation of the WTO, overcoming the challenges to its rule-making function and ensuring we have a fully functioning dispute settlement system? How do you plan for

the Union to lead preparations for a successful 14th Ministerial Conference? Will you initiate and advance negotiations for multilateral and, if necessary, plurilateral agreements on gaps in the WTO rule book, including state intervention in support of industrial sectors, the establishment of a multilateral investment court and the implementation of agreements already reached?

➤ On the bilateral front, which bilateral trade negotiations will you prioritise and according to what timelines? How will you ensure a level playing field with non-EU countries and address China's unfair trading practices? How will you address trade irritants with the US, and safeguard and strengthen the Trade and Technology Council to promote transatlantic leadership in trade and key technologies?

➤ How will you ensure that the common commercial policy (CCP) effectively remains an area of exclusive competence for the Union? Will you decisively tackle any form of circumvention or unilateral practices by Member States and how will you do this? How will you ensure that the ratification of trade and investment agreements containing only provisions falling within the EU's exclusive competence is determined solely at EU level? Will you commit to ensure that no provisional application of trade and investment agreements, including trade chapters of broader agreements, is requested before Parliament has given its consent on those agreements? Will you promote sectoral agreements as an option when comprehensive agreements are not feasible? How will you promote digital trade to the benefit of companies and consumers?

➤ How will you ensure that the CCP promotes fundamental values, international conventions, and global climate, environmental and labour standards and that it defends the interests of consumers and workers, including with regard to digital trade? How will you implement the new approach on trade and sustainable development in existing and future agreements, in particular with regard to the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, ILO Conventions and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

2. Economic security

Economic security aims to minimise risks while preserving the highest possible level of economic openness and competitiveness and should never be used as an instrument to restrict trade unduly. In this regard:

➤ How will you ensure that economic security, trade and investment are all part of an integrated approach? What steps will you take in designing and implementing the economic security agenda? How do you see the role of trade within the concept of a 'new foreign economic policy' and how will you ensure that trade is used as a geostrategic tool?

➤ How do you intend to use the toolkit of trade defence measures adopted during the ninth and previous legislative terms as part of a new economic security doctrine? Do you see any gaps in the existing toolkit? What will be your next steps with regard to export control and outbound investments?

➤ How will you reinforce the partnering pillar of the economic security strategy? What will Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships consist of? How will you ensure consistency and synergies with the Global Gateway? Will Parliament be in a position to provide consent following the conclusion of such agreements? How will you promote access to critical raw materials from non-EU countries in a mutually beneficial way and how will you ensure more scrutiny for Parliament?

- How will you support and cooperate with other Commissioners on the economic recovery of Ukraine and other partner countries affected by Russia's war of aggression, notably through an ambitious review of the EU-Ukraine DCFTA, macro-financial assistance, vigorous enforcement of the sanctions regime against Russia and the avoidance of any form of circumvention?

3. Implementation, enforcement and communication

A good policy that is poorly implemented, enforced and communicated can lead to pushback, both internally and externally, against the Union and its trade policy. To ensure the success of the CCP:

- How will you ensure that trade and economic security policies are front and centre in your role as Commissioner, also given your double portfolio? How will you break down the silos in which the CCP and other Union internal and external policies operate, as well as the silos of DG Trade and other parts of the Commission and the EEAS?
- How will you foster cooperation, ownership and uptake by companies and non-EU countries notably with respect to CBAM, EUDR, CSDDD, the Forced Labour Regulation, revised ETS as well as the regulation on packaging and packaging waste? How will you help ensure that all these new instruments are applied fully and consistently and that the trade aspects of our internal legislation are sufficiently taken into account when instruments are designed, implemented and revised? What measures will you take to render the Union's customs system more efficient, thus contributing to the effective implementation of some of the Union's recent trade-related instruments? How will you continue to ensure that any future Union measures are compatible with WTO rules?
- What concrete actions will you take to ensure that EU trade policy is better communicated and explained to stakeholders, the general public, Member States' institutions and non-EU countries, including with the support of the Commission's representations and EU delegations around the world?
- How will you strengthen the participation of SMEs in the global market? How do you plan to support companies, especially SMEs, in the implementation of newly adopted legislation with the objective of easing the regulatory burden, streamlining procedures and ensuring they reap the benefits of increased market access in trade agreements? Will you ensure that all major trade-related initiatives are accompanied by an impact assessment that also covers the external impact of potential Union measures?
- How do you intend to engage with and take into account the views of business representatives, trade unions and NGOs, including via Domestic Advisory Groups that have been set up to advise on the implementation of EU trade agreements?

Invited Committees

AFET

The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029 set out, inter alia, that the EU's new foreign and security policy must be designed with the current global reality in mind. Furthermore, your mission letter specifies that you will work on managing and deepening our partnerships around the world, particularly leading the work on relations with the UK, Switzerland and other partners in Western Europe. Without prejudice to the Commission's decision-making processes, what would be your concrete priorities and objectives/goals in the short, medium and long term for the duration of your mandate in regards to:

- strengthening relations with the United Kingdom on issues of shared interest, and mirroring the same level of commitments as those undertaken by President von der Leyen in Plenary on 27 April 2021 in relation to the parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of the EU-UK Agreements? In particular, in regards to preparing for the review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and fully associating the Parliament to the process, and finalizing the agreement between EU and the UK in respect of Gibraltar?
- advancing in the negotiations with Switzerland to secure a modernised relationship based on a package agreement that creates stability, trust, and a level playing field?
- ensuring that Parliament is immediately and fully informed of the activities of different bodies under an Agreement or future Agreements with partners in Western Europe within your area of responsibility, including briefing and debriefing before and after their meetings as well as sharing all documents pertaining to these joint bodies at the same time as the Commission shares them with the Council; that Parliament is involved as appropriate and necessary when important decisions are taken under an Agreement (amendment, termination, etc.), including taking into account its possible comments or explaining the reasons for not doing so; and that the European Parliament is sufficiently informed in advance of the Commission's intentions to propose new decisions linked to the implementation of an Agreement?

DEVE

The trade and development nexus means inter alia that trade is one of the most important tools to help partner countries on their path to sustainable development. How will you ensure that the EU's trade with developing countries contributes to this goal, against the backdrop of a strengthened focus on the EU's own economic interests and economic security, so as to achieve a win-win situation for both sides? In that context, the GSP+ instrument is meant to give developing countries a special trade incentive to pursue sustainable development and good governance, but it seems that the number of countries making use of that possibility is so far rather limited. What, if any, are the plans to make this incentive work better? Similarly, EPAs have enjoyed rather limited popularity among partner countries so far, for fear that they could put pressure on import-competing industries. EPAs are also criticised for being too narrow to foster sustainable development (not covering trade in services, investment, public

procurement, competition, digital trade, or climate change). How do you plan to ensure that EPAs are more comprehensive and that they become more attractive for partner countries?

IMCO

Customs Union

What would be your objectives to bring the Customs Union to the next level and ensure efficient and modern customs, in particular to tackle challenges as that of e-commerce platforms, as announced in the political guidelines of the President of the Commission and what further action would you envisage in this regard? Even though the customs reform would create a centralised Customs Data Hub with benefits for both customs authorities and businesses, how would the Commission aim to finalise the transition towards a fully digital customs environment and avoid further delays by Member States in the implementation of IT systems? In the meantime, do you intend to improve the cooperation between market surveillance authorities and to put forward targeted changes, such as additional financing to customs authorities, to address the challenges posed by e-commerce platforms established in third countries, including the circumvention of EU rules by parcelling of orders?

Dombrovskis (Commissioner for Economy and Productivity; Implementation and Simplification) Questions

LEAD: ECON, (JURI?)

Invited: AFCD, BUDG, EMPL, FISC, IMCO

ECON

Implementation of the reformed economic governance framework

1. In light of the entry into force of the revised economic governance framework, how will you ensure equal treatment of Member States in practice, while enforcing the economic governance rules of the Union fully, impartially and independently from any political influence? How do you intend to ensure sound and sustainable public finances, while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth through investments and reforms, especially considering the diverse economic contexts and elevated debt levels of individual Member States?

Investment and Competitiveness

2. As Next Generation EU comes to an end at the end of 2026, how will the new Commission tackle the huge demand for public investment, including for addressing the EU's productivity gap, without cutting budgetary resources in other important areas? How do you intend to increase the competitiveness and productivity of the EU's economy? How will the announced European Competitiveness Fund be of support?

European Semester

3. What is your stance on the focus and objectives of the European Semester, including on the coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of the economic performances of the Member States, the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the objectives of the EU Green Deal, and its democratic oversight? How will the Commission continue to integrate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into the European Semester, as announced in your mission letter, as well as the Social Convergence Framework? What would be the interaction of the announced Competitiveness Coordination Framework with the European Semester?

Invited Committees

AFCO

When do you intend to start new negotiations on the IIA on simplification and Better Law-making and which areas (or parts) of the IIA you envisage to revise? Which actions do you consider necessary to achieve the objectives of Better Regulation in the preparation of new initiatives, including delegated and implementing acts? Are you ready to support expanding the Parliament's initiative to amending and revoking existing legislation?

How do you intend to pursue the necessary dialogue with the Parliament in the process of annual and multiannual programming under Article 17(1) TEU and the provisions in the IIA on Better Law-making on multiannual programming with a view to drawing up joint conclusions of the three institutions which reflect a real tripartite contract for the legislature?

BUDG

The implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility is running behind schedule, leading to the risk of EU funds being lost.

What are your plans to accelerate the implementation of the Facility while ensuring quality of implementation and respect of the applicable legal framework, especially in light of the Court of Auditors' Special report 13/2024? What lessons do you draw from your past experience, what has worked, what needs to be improved in the design of this instrument in order to ensure added value, territorial balance and the respect of interinstitutional roles?

EMPL

How will you make sure that the implementation of the better regulation agenda helps to improve the employment situation across the EU, ensures the EU labour law acquis and that it does not result in lower employment rights and social standards nor prevents further legislative initiatives and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, including its headline targets? Which concrete steps will you take to strengthen the monitoring of upward social convergence in the EU?

FISC

Competitiveness & Tax-Mix

In the medium-to-longer term, population ageing and digitalisation will have substantial implications for tax systems. In its Annual Tax Report 2024, the Commission refers to a wide consensus on the need to re-balance the tax mix and to shift the tax burden away from labour. How do you plan to proceed and ensure that "our tax system plays

a crucial role in supporting Europe's decarbonisation and competitiveness to ensure social fairness" as mentioned in your mission letter? What steps would you propose to take to remove tax obstacles to cross-border investment and fiscal and regulatory barriers between Member States in order to simplify our tax system and increase competitiveness? Will you make proposals in the area of capital gains and wealth taxation in order to ensure social fairness? Given recent analyses by institutions like the IMF, what further taxation measures could be developed to ensure that carbon pricing does not disproportionately affect poorer communities, nor aggravate disparities between wealthy and less wealthy Member States?

IMCO

Competitiveness Check

How do you plan to achieve a comprehensive assessment of existing EU legislation to identify and address overlaps and how will you involve the stakeholders in the process? In the context of simplification, which legislative areas will be prioritised and what specific measures will you propose to reduce the administrative and reporting burdens on EU companies without compromising the EU standards on consumer protection? In your task to tackle fragmentation, how will you integrate a Single Market check in the new framework of the Competitiveness Coordination Tool, with the view to highlight the benefits of the EU actions, including legislation, for Single Market, and EU consumers?

Marta Kos (Commissioner for Enlargement) Questions

Lead: AFET

Invited: AFCO, DROI, LIBE

AFET

1. The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029 describe enlargement as “a moral, political and geostrategic imperative to further complete our Union”. Without prejudice to the Commission’s decision-making processes, what would be your concrete priorities and objectives/goals for the enlargement portfolio in the short, medium and long term (for the duration of your mandate), and how do you envisage the division of tasks and complementarity of roles with the Vice-President/High Representative regarding enlargement policy and the Eastern neighbourhood? What are the main challenges (international, regional, bilateral, institutional, etc) that you see on the way of pursuing those priorities and objectives, how do you intend to overcome them and sufficiently enhance the EU’s communication strategy in order to counterbalance false narratives and disinformation, notably about the EU?

2. Following the general guidance by the Commission President for strengthening the Commission’s relationship with the European Parliament, could you please provide details on how you intend to:

- proactively and effectively involve Parliament (as an integral player of “Team Europe”) from the earliest stages in the processes of elaborating and developing your priorities and objectives;
- maintain regular exchanges of views in Plenary and with the Committee on Foreign Affairs; ensure 'structured dialogue' and your ad-hoc presence in the Committee at short notice in case of significant events or major developments; ensure your attendance at Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on CFSP/CSDP when relevant;
- ensure that the positions of Parliament are duly taken into account in proposals for legal acts and new or updated EU communications and strategies, and ensure that Parliament and notably its Committee on Foreign Affairs is in a systematic and timely manner informed of and consulted on such proposals and documents (including the enlargement package) and better synchronisation of Commission and Parliament’s activities (for example through the systematic advance sharing of planned timelines for the release of official strategic documents, ministerial meetings and summits, proposals to open or close chapters in accession negotiations, proposals to open negotiations on international agreements, human rights dialogues, etc.);
- ensure that Parliament receives relevant information and documents on enlargement policy, including those shared with the Council, and that the Committee on Foreign Affairs is immediately and fully informed, in writing and orally, at all stages of accession negotiations and of negotiations of international agreements, and that Parliament’s views are duly taken into consideration before negotiations start and throughout the process;
- ensure that pertinent and relevant non-public information is provided to Parliament during in-camera meetings;
- maintain and ensure further cooperation, coordination and efficiency of democracy support activities between the Commission and Parliament?

3. The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029 underline that “accession to the EU will always be a merit-based process - and each candidate will be assessed on its own progress towards meeting the criteria”. How will you ensure robust and enhanced monitoring of the enlargement process based on reporting and assessment of the reforms and progress made by the candidate countries in all the negotiating chapters with a strategically applied targeted conditionality based on clear progress benchmarks, sanctioning regression on fundamental principles and values or persistent stagnation in reforms and rewarding reforms and fulfilment of benchmarks through clear negotiation timelines? As your mission letter states that you will work on the gradual integration of candidate countries, what concrete policy areas do you identify to be suitable for this purpose and what are in your view the main inter-institutional and policy-related reforms, which are necessary to make the accession of the enlargement countries a success? How do you plan to restore credibility of the EU enlargement process, particularly in the Western Balkans, and what specific measures will you take to ensure faster progress on long-awaited key reforms in this region?

4. The Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024–2029 underline that “the rule of law and fundamental values will continue to be the cornerstones of the EU’s enlargement policy”. Considering that accession processes can take place in a reversible manner, and that the merit-based approach can also lead to the freezing of the accession negotiations, which concrete steps would you take in the event of backsliding on fundamental values and principles of the EU, notably as regards democracy, human rights, the rule of law, including the independence of the judiciary, pluralism of the media, and the fight against corruption?

5. With regard to the external financing instruments, how will you improve the consistency, efficiency and transparency of pre-accession assistance to the candidate and potential candidate countries, applying strict conditionality in the implementation of the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans, the Ukraine Facility and other similar instruments, and ensuring a genuine role of the European Parliament in the strategic steering of the external financing instruments, including through the timely provision of written information on their implementation? Regarding the Commission proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, what is your position on the need to keep a dedicated instrument for pre-accession? How will you ensure that these investments positively strengthen the presence and image of the EU in the beneficiary countries, and what specific strategies will you implement to enhance the EU's visibility and impact through pre-accession assistance?

Invited Committees

AFCO

Building on European Parliament resolution of 29 February 2024 on deepening EU integration in view of future enlargement, do you concur that significant inter-

institutional reform of the EU is needed in light of this challenge? Which concrete measures do you intend to propose in order to undertake the institutional reforms necessary to ensure that an enlarged Union is able to function efficiently and has the adequate capacity to absorb new members and to promote their successful integration? How would you coordinate with the rest of Commissioners and Commission President to ensure that the revision and amendment of the Treaties ensure a smooth enlargement process?

Which reforms in your opinion can be pursued without Treaty change in the next five years?

Do you agree to move away from unanimity in order to have more effective decision-making procedures, and that qualified majority voting should be implemented in areas such as the intermediate steps of the enlargement procedure, the protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the MFF, sanctions and other relevant foreign policy decisions?

Would you support a stronger and more effective decision-making of the EU's enlargement policy, including oversight by the EP, in order to increase democratic legitimacy and accountability?

DROI

Do you intend to step up the support of the European Union to the actors of civil society and democratic forces which promote human rights, rule of law and fundamental values in the enlargement countries and other countries falling under your portfolio? Which concrete measures do you propose to put in place in this respect?

LIBE

Your mission statement foresees that a special emphasis will be put on rule of law and fundamental values in your action and that you will contribute to the annual Rule of Law report for accession countries. How do you plan to ensure that the accession countries follow up on the issues identified in the annual Rule of law report? Do you envisage including specific benchmarks in the relevant negotiation chapters? How do you plan to engage with the Parliament in this process and how you will cooperate with the other Commissioners with competences in this area?

Jozef Sikela (Commissioner for International Partnerships) Questions

LEAD: DEVE

Invited: AFET, FEMM, INTA, LIBE

DEVE

1. Development cooperation in relation to economic foreign policy and the Global Gateway strategy

The primary objective of European Union development cooperation according to the treaties (Art. 208 TFEU) is “the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty”. The political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029, presented by the Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and your mission letter, put forward also the concept of a new “economic foreign policy”.

Against this background, what are the EU’s development policy goals from your perspective, how will you pursue them in the geopolitical battle of offers and narratives and in particular how will you implement the Global Gateway strategy? In this context, how do you want to scale up the Global Gateway initiative and incentivise private sector investments, including from European companies, in developing regions, which are mutually beneficial? What mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that these investments align with local development needs, respect the primary objective of EU development cooperation policy and involve partner governments and civil society actors? How will you set up a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for projects funded under the Global Gateway initiative, and ensure transparency and parliamentary scrutiny over the strategic planning and implementation in line with the NDICI-Global Europe regulation and our Treaty obligations?

2. Delivering on the SDGs, addressing inequalities and policy coherence

The mission letter makes no reference to core human development policy areas, such as health, education, or food security. Which concrete measures will you take to strengthen the implementation of and reporting on the SDGs, including those regarding inclusive human development on the basis of commitments undertaken by the Commission, especially the minimum 10% for education from the International Partnerships budget, health, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the protection of children, while involving local partners, as well as to reinforce and broaden the use of the inequality marker? Will you operationalise Policy Coherence for Development throughout the legislative and political processes, including an ex-ante assessment and reporting on the impact of all Commission initiatives on our Global South partners, to ensure that European policies in areas such as trade, finance, security, agriculture, fisheries, climate, biodiversity, energy, raw materials and migration will create synergies, rather than undermine the EU’s role in promoting the achievement of the SDGs globally?

3. EU-Africa partnership and relations with other regions

What specific areas will you prioritise in the EU-Africa partnership, how do you expect to earn the trust of our African partners and will you update the EU-Africa strategy? How will you ensure a balanced approach to engaging with other geographic regions under your portfolio? What new EU measures or legislative initiatives, if any, would you propose to achieve those objectives? How do you intend to interact with the BRICS+ member countries, considering the consequences of the groups' expansion and integration for EU development policy?

4. Migration

How do you see the interlinkage between migration and the EU's development cooperation, particularly in the context of our obligations on Policy Coherence for Development? How will you address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and do you commit to ensuring that the relevant provisions and targets in the NDICI-Global Europe regulation as well as the EU's human rights obligations are fully respected? How do you foresee the cooperation and division of work on external aspects of migration and mobility with other Commissioners, in particular on migration-related agreements, and in ensuring the EP's scrutiny over such agreements? How will you enhance transparency about the use of NDICI-Global Europe funds in the area of migration, and engage with civil society organisations, diaspora groups and migrant communities in the design and implementation of migration related development programs?

5. Financing for development and needs of fragile countries

How do you intend to make sure that EU Official Development Assistance delivers more efficiently, including through localisation, and provides sufficient funding for Least Developed Countries and countries in fragile contexts, implementing the "differentiated approach" and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, while preventing any misuse of funds? In view of the development funding gap and increasing debt burdens faced by many developing countries, what initiatives will you take, at EU, Team Europe and multilateral level, on domestic resource mobilisation, illicit financial flows, as well as debt relief and debt restructuring management? How do you plan to engage private sector investments, including European companies and European Development Finance Institutions as well as Member States' funding agencies to scale up financing? What concrete approach in the proposal of the next long-term budget will you suggest for your portfolio and how will you contribute to the College work on a "revamped external action financing" in terms of resources and programmes to strengthen EU partnerships with developing countries?

Invited Committees

AFET

You have been tasked to develop the “brand” Global Gateway with “effective and visible tracking and reporting, including on the mobilisation of private funding”. How do you concretely intend to measure the impact and results of Global Gateway? How will you ensure that the private sector in the EU will join the efforts to a sufficient degree to generate the necessary financial leverage that is not possible with public funds alone, especially where political instability or weak governance create uncertainty? How do you plan to sufficiently enhance the communication, visibility and impact of the “brand” Global Gateway in order to counterbalance false narratives and disinformation? How do you intend to structure development cooperation in instable contexts, where the brand Global Gateway is not implementable and ensure a human rights approach in fostering, maintaining, and boosting relationships with international partners and ensure that the Global Gateway keeps its aim of being a values-based offer? How do you plan to address the challenges posed by other less regulated cooperation models, for example China’s Belt and Road Initiative?

FEMM

According to your mission letter, you will continue to ensure that the EU promotes the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5 on gender equality and that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls continue to be on top of EU international cooperation and development policies. Are there any new initiatives that you plan to take to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Women, Peace and Security agenda at EU level and how will you work to make the situation of women and girls in armed conflicts an EU priority? Will you commit to develop GAP IV? How will the Commission tackle the provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services as part of its humanitarian aid and development cooperation and especially in the case of pregnant women coming from conflict areas, some of whom survived violence and rape? Given global attacks against gender equality and LGTBQ+ rights, how are you planning to ensure that the EU allocates adequate and direct access to resources to local civil society organisations, LGTBQ+ and women’s rights defenders and their organisations?

INTA

With regard to trade relations with partner countries, including improved access to critical resources, what concrete measures will you take to ensure that trade aspects become more prominent in the design and implementation of the Global Gateway strategy? Specifically, how do you intend to reinforce links and overlaps between the investment facilitation agreements and the Global Gateway strategy and how will you ensure synergies with the new Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships to the mutual benefit of the Union and partner countries? How will you adapt the Global Gateway strategy to deal with the increasing geopolitical trade tensions and the stronger role of emerging economies (e.g. China, India), including on the African continent? How will you involve the International Trade Committee in the design and implementation of the strategy?

LIBE

According to your mission letter, you should work on building comprehensive and mutually beneficial partnerships with third countries with an integrated approach so that economic, humanitarian, development, peace and security policies all contribute to strengthening these partnerships. The aim is to address the root causes and key drivers of irregular migration and to fight the networks of smugglers in full respect of human rights. What measures will you undertake to ensure that, particularly in the area of migration, these partnerships function effectively? How will you ensure that Parliament can exercise its oversight throughout the process of building such partnerships, especially when some of their aspects could impact its legislative prerogatives?

Maria Luís Albuquerque (Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union) Questions

LEAD: ECON

Invited: IMCO, LIBE

ECON

Capital Markets Union (CMU)

1. What is your vision on how to develop the CMU/Savings and Investments Union? Which will be the concrete steps and the timeline you will take to develop it? To what extent will those measures take into account the specific recommendations made by the Letta, Noyer and Draghi reports?
2. How do you intend to further develop the Union's (post-trade) market infrastructure as a foundation for further market integration? Do you think that the recent review of EMIR will succeed in bringing the clearing business of derivatives denominated in euro to EU financial centres? Which steps will you take to design a simple and low-cost saving and investment product in the Union to ensure an appropriate level of protection for retail consumers and investors, and to increase capital markets participation? What initiatives will you take to improve financial literacy? Do you think that securitisation rules are to be amended now or when the CMU is fully realised and how could it affect the financial stability of the Union? Do you plan to bring forward a legislative reform to adjust the supervisory framework for capital markets, taking the SSM as an example?

Banking Union

3. How do you intend to prioritise the completion of the Banking Union? In line with the parameters from your mission letter, what will be in particular your way forward to set up an EDIS? How do you intend to address the issue of banking consolidation at Union level? Are you committed to the full implementation of the Basel III standards without further delay?
4. Shadow funding structures that currently fall outside the regulatory perimeter might pose issues, in particular as concerns macro-prudential aspects. What is your view on the link between non-bank financial institutions and the traditional banking system and potential initiatives, in this respect?

Sustainable Finance

5. What further steps are necessary to ensure that the Union remains a global leader in the area of sustainable finance, that capital is unlocked for investing in the digital and green transition, and that the sustainable finance framework is strengthened? How are you planning to work towards an international baseline for sustainable finance to increase interoperability and effectiveness of sustainable finance standards across jurisdictions? How do you intend to simplify, improve the usability, including the reduction of the administrative and reporting burden, and streamline the sustainable finance framework while delivering the required ambitious results? Do you consider that the current Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) helps retail investors to assess sustainability risks and make informed investment decisions and do you believe investment products marketed as sustainable should adhere to minimum sustainability criteria?

Invited Committees

IMCO

Retail Investors

In the mission letter addressed to you the President of the European Commission asked you to ensure that EU rules offer appropriate level of protection for consumers and retail investors, empowering them to take informed decisions and increase their participation in capital markets on fairer terms, in particular in light of the deployment of AI in the financial sector. What concrete measures, including legislative measures, will you take to achieve the above-mentioned objectives? To support this, you are requested to work on a financial literacy strategy. What is your plan and the action you intend to take to develop this strategy?

LIBE

Your mission will be to continue working on digital finance, as well as on the implementation of the new anti-money laundering package.

What steps do you envisage to take in order to assess the deployment of AI systems in the financial sector, including their compliance with the specific requirements for high-risk AI systems provided for in the AI Act (such as risk management systems or fundamental rights impact assessments)? Which priority steps do you intend to take in order to effectively implement the new AML single rulebook, in particular with regard to financial sector, but also non-financial sector as well as new powers, competences and tools provided to the Financial intelligence units in order to prevent, detect and combat money-laundering and terrorist financing?

**Hadja Lahbib (Commissioner for Preparedness and Crisis Management;
Equality) Questions**

Lead: DEVE, ENVI, FEMM, LIBE

Invited : EMPL, SANT

DEVE

1. Humanitarian Funding Gap

What specific actions will you take to reduce the increasing humanitarian funding gap, including through the EU's annual and multiannual budgets and, through strategic coordination with the Member States, to implement the Council Conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap, notably when it comes to proposing innovative funding models for humanitarian assistance and achieving a "more equitable responsibility among donors", including emerging and potential donors as well as like-minded partners? How do you concretely intend to "develop a more strategic approach to the humanitarian supply chains" and what does it imply concretely to "encourage joined-up approaches and cost-savings"? Taking into account the humanitarian principles, what steps will you take to ensure that the EU's humanitarian budget is protected from reallocations for political or economic purposes and will there be a framework for monitoring the effectiveness of humanitarian funding allocations and accountability for achieving the intended outcomes? What will you do to increase the percentage of humanitarian assistance going as directly as possible to local actors?

2. Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

How will you work to enhance the coordination, cooperation and coherence between the EU's development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions, including among all EU actors, and to engage with local communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders in developing strategies that address the humanitarian-development-peace nexus? Within a "Commission-wide integrated approach to fragility", will you, together with the Commissioner for International Partnerships and all relevant Commission services, develop policy guidance and concrete mechanisms, for ensuring that development efforts help to both address the root causes of fragility and build the resilience of communities, in order to achieve sustainable outcomes that cannot be attained through humanitarian action only, and how do you plan to measure the effectiveness of those efforts? In that respect, do you commit to boosting investments in anticipatory action and to working with the Commissioner for International Partnerships to develop a joint EU policy on climate resilience, with a particular focus on fragile and conflict-affected contexts?

Given the breadth of the portfolio that you have been assigned and the increasing number of humanitarian crises, how do you intend to ensure that sufficient attention is dedicated to the external dimension of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian diplomacy, and in particular to forgotten crises? What measures will you take to promote compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law?

3. Food insecurity and malnutrition

How will you strengthen the EU's emergency response mechanisms for addressing hunger and malnutrition, as well as the impact of climate change? More specifically, given the devastating impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on Ukrainian grain exports, how do you aim to further ensure those exports to developing countries, in order to prevent aggravating global food insecurity? Beyond immediate emergency responses, what long-term solutions do you propose to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition as part of broader development policies and in close cooperation with our international partners? In particular, how do you plan to work with the EEAS and the Member States to scale up the EU's efforts for preventing climate change and conflict-induced hunger and enhancing accountability in situations where starvation is used as a weapon of war?

ENVI

Question 1

How do you plan to ensure sufficient resources within current and upcoming MFF to improve crisis management and preparedness? How will you ensure equitable access to the necessary financial resources for regions and communities faced with frequent natural disasters like wildfires and droughts? Which concrete measures will you propose to strengthen crisis preparedness, specifically building on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and RescEU? What is the concrete timeline for these measures, including the revision of the UCPM? Do you foresee setting up of more permanent pools of resources to respond to different types of disasters, similar to the permanent rescue fleet for the forest fires? Can you elaborate on the nature of the European Civil Defence Mechanism and its interaction with the UCPM? How will you encourage cooperation among Member States in order to improve the preparedness for risks and security and health emergencies?

Question 2

Your mission letter sets out a number of ambitions to expand crisis management capacity. With specific reference to health preparedness, how do you foresee to overcome financing challenges with regard to recent budget cuts to other programmes such as the EU4Health Programme and Horizon Europe, and challenges posed by competing political priorities, which have already affected actions and projects to be undertaken by DG HERA? With this in mind, how do you intend to bolster health preparedness and how do you foresee future financing of such actions? Do you foresee an expanded capacity of HERA, if so - how? Can you elaborate on the development of the wider EU stockpiling strategy? How will you ensure that the foreseen preparedness and stockpiling strategies strike the balance between having sufficient reserves and not creating shortages in Member States and other countries, including the Global South?

Question 3

Which specific measures will you take to ensure that disaster prevention measures are integrated into other EU policy areas? Given the frequency of extreme weather

events due to climate change, what possibilities for synergies do you see between the UCPM and the future Climate Adaptation Plan? Which concrete measures do you envisage to work with Member States facing severe droughts? How will you ensure that climate risk preparedness and adaptation is also adequately embedded in EU policies related to agriculture and food?

FEMM

1. What are your key priority areas and concrete measures for the upcoming Roadmap for Women's Rights and the renewed EU Strategy on Gender Equality? How will they relate to other strategic documents? How will you ensure that women's rights and gender equality are prioritised and properly covered within your own portfolio and across the new Commission, how will you organise the work, ensure cooperation with the Justice Commissioner and DG JUST? How do you plan to maintain and integrate the intersectional approach in your work in the area of health and education and the supply of goods and services, will the strategy include a follow-up to the commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights and guidelines to be developed for comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality and relationship education?

2. The gender pay gap persists to this day and combined with other structural challenges to women's participation in employment contribute to an equally worrying gender pension gap. What concrete actions are you going to take to tackle the gender pay gap and to lower pay discrimination in particular in female dominated sectors such as care and what are your plans to address and remove the challenges, such as lack of work-life balance and sufficient support and legal framework for care responsibilities faced by women, such as mothers, that contribute to lower women participation in employment and in higher-paid sectors? How will you pay special attention to women in precarious situations or in conditions of vulnerability, such as homeless women, or to the access of women in rural areas or remote regions to essential services and infrastructure?

3. Gender-based violence is a scourge that affects all women in the EU at home, at work or in the streets. How do you intend to ensure the full implementation of the Directive on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and of the Istanbul Convention in all parts of the EU? Sexual violence and cyberbullying are mentioned in the Directive but more is needed. What measures will the upcoming Action Plan on Cyberbullying include to ensure that digital spaces are safe from online harassment, hate speech and online abuse? And will it tackle images used to degrade women and tarnish their reputation, including AI generated, through sharing and circulating content such as deepfakes or image-based sexual abuse? How can this be achieved including through prevention by tech companies? Will you take as a priority the production of guidelines for Member States on setting up awareness-raising campaigns on the role of consent in sexual relationships in all Member States as well as on sexuality education and do you plan to put forward any legislative proposals or initiatives on criminalisation of rape with a consent-based definition? Will you work on any new dedicated proposals tackling gender based violence, including the submission of a proposal for a Council decision to extend the current list of so-called 'EU crimes' and

identify gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) of the TFEU, as requested by the Parliament?

LIBE

1. Preparedness

One of the priorities of your portfolio will be Preparedness and Crisis Management. This comes against the backdrop of emerging threats and hybrid attacks, both with an internal and external dimension that put at risk not only the functioning of our critical infrastructures and basic public services but also the security and the well-being of our citizens as well as our economic stability and prosperity. In this regard, you will be in charge of overseeing the development and implementation of an EU Preparedness Union Strategy, aiming at a potential EU Preparedness Law in the future. Which steps will you take to develop this strategy? While respecting national competence, how will you ensure that different levels of administration, private sector and civil society are fully involved in this strategy? And how will you plan to bolster an EU Culture of Preparedness in our public debate?

2. Anti-discrimination and other equality legislation

How do you intend to address the gaps in existing EU anti-discrimination legislation and ensure effective enforcement of EU anti-racism and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as the strengthening of the rights of persons belonging to minorities? What are your plans to overcome the political blockage in the Council on the horizontal Anti-discrimination Directive and what are your intentions as regards the existing proposal, taking into account the EP position? How do you plan to unblock the proposal for extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime, and what additional measures will you take to combat these offenses? How will you monitor the implementation of the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence in line with the Istanbul Convention? Do you plan to review the scope of the Directive to include a consent-based definition of rape? Will you support extending the current list of 'EU crimes' as outlined in Article 83 TFEU to explicitly include "gender-based violence" and what other actions are you planning to combat such violence, including gender-based cyber violence? What is your strategy against cyberbullying and, related to online threats, how will you approach the protection of children and other vulnerable groups online, in particular when it comes to dark patterns, deceptive and addictive designs and AI-generated content?

How will you collaborate with the other Commissioners in this field, in particular with the Commissioner for Internal Affairs and the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law?

3. Equality strategies, disability and equality data

How will you collaborate with other EU Commissioners to ensure coherence and mainstreaming in other EU policies of various equality strategies, such as the LGBTIQ+ Strategy, the EU Gender Equality Strategy, the Strategy on Roma Equality and Inclusion Strategy, and the EU Anti-racism action plan and Anti-Racism Strategy? Do you envisage new legislative proposals when updating the equality and antidiscrimination strategies? How will you work to ensure that the EU remains a safe

and inclusive space for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity? Will you commit to the use of swift infringement procedures in cases of backsliding? What steps would you take to improve the collection of more and better equality data? Furthermore, what actions will you take to ensure the implementation of the UN CRPD within the Members States and within the EU institutions? Which steps will you take for the EU to join to the UN CRPD Optional Protocol?

Invited Committees

EMPL

As Commissioner-designate for Equality, how will you mainstream equality concerns across all relevant policy areas and ensure a cohesive and inclusive approach, for example between the various equality strategies in your area of responsibility and the new Anti-Poverty Strategy, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the new European Affordable Housing Plan? Regarding the new Gender Equality Strategy, what actions do you foresee to close the gender pay and pension gap? What legislative measures do you envisage in order to strengthen the position of women in the workplace, and in particular to tackle the many disadvantages faced by women through the 'motherhood penalty' as referred to by EIGE? How will the Strategy address work-life balance for parents and carers particularly as regards early childcare provision to facilitate women's return to the labour market?

Do you commit to update the current Strategy for the Rights of persons with disabilities with new flagship initiatives for 2025 - 2030 and what priority areas would you focus on for the coming years? How will you ensure the proper implementation of legislation like the European Disability Card and European Parking Card in order to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities? In line with the EU and Member States' obligations under the UNCRPD, what other EU actions do you foresee to improve the social and economic situation of persons with disabilities, in particular to address barriers to their freedom of movement and their ability to reside and work in different EU Member States?

SANT

One of your tasks is to develop a new strategy to support medical countermeasures against threats to public health. In this context, the lack of European strategic autonomy as well as the current overreliance on imports of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) plays a crucial role. It is essential to establish a robust mechanism that supports the production of APIs and affordable and accessible finished medicines for patients within Europe. This would not only prove essential were we to meet a pandemic anew, but be of critical importance for the area of development of prevention and treatment of diseases in Europe in general, both common and rare ones. Could you outline your strategy for enhancing preparedness for health challenges against this background, also considering global solidarity? Please address in your answer in particular the cooperation infrastructure inside and outside the Union, how to achieve a robust mechanism for the production, development and availability of critical medicines and ingredients, how to reduce EU dependence from foreign providers and ensure financing of public health policy including through the EU health programme?

Magnus Brunner (Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration) Questions

LEAD: LIBE

Invited: DEVE

LIBE

1. Migration and Asylum

The new Pact on Migration and Asylum introduces a legislative framework that establishes a comprehensive system in the areas of asylum and migration management, balancing between solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility in accordance with Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and protecting fundamental rights, while reinforcing mutual trust between Member States.

How will you monitor the timely progress of the administrative, operational, and legal steps required to be taken by Member States and EU agencies for the full entry into force of the Pact by summer 2026, and how will you address any delays in meeting the Common Implementation Plan benchmarks? What steps do you plan to take to ensure sufficient and timely EU funding for Member States and agencies for the smooth application of the Pact? Given that accurate data from Member States to EU agencies and the Commission is vital for identifying the preparedness and the actual needs of each Member State to be able to manage a situation of migratory pressure or crisis, what actions will you take to foster a culture of data sharing and mutual trust?

Working with Member States on a stronger coordination of rescue operations is also part of your mission letter. How do you see your role and that of the EU in this area?

According to your mission letter you should be developing a new common approach to the return of irregularly staying migrants based on modern rules; what legislative steps do you intend to take? What role do you consider mutually recognised return decisions to play in this context, and how will you strengthen readmission policies to ensure effective returns? How will you ensure that migration issues are an operational part of our comprehensive partnerships with third countries while fully respecting fundamental rights and how will you involve the Parliament, ensuring that it is able to exercise effective oversight and its budgetary prerogatives? What is your understanding of 'innovative operational solutions to counter irregular migration' that your mission letter requires you to steer reflection on? What steps do you plan in the fight against migrant smugglers and human traffickers?

A successful EU common approach on migration needs to be complemented by safe and viable legal pathways, including resettlement for refugees and their successful integration in communities and labour markets. What steps will you take to ensure that Member States participate fully and meaningfully in the EU Resettlement Framework?

As regards legal migration, your mission letter states that you will work on how to attract third-country nationals with the right skills to match local labour market needs in the EU; what steps will you take to support the co-legislators in their work on the establishment of an EU Talent Pool, the promotion of measures simplifying the recognition of foreign qualifications, and the finalisation of the negotiations on the

Long-Term Residents Directive? Which other steps, legislative or non-legislative, do you plan to take in this area?

2. External borders

With a view to securing stronger external borders and strengthening Frontex, Commission President von der Leyen intends to triple the number of European border and coast guards reaching a Standing Corps of 30,000. You would be responsible for overseeing this process and promoting integrated border management. How do you assess the impact of providing Frontex with those additional resources on enhancing the EU's ability to address current and emerging threats at its external borders? What changes to the mandate of Frontex, if any, do you consider necessary to accompany the planned growth of the agency, while maintaining its accountability to the Parliament?

What counter measures and steps are you planning to undertake, working closely with Member States and stakeholders to prepare and respond to hybrid attacks and the instrumentalisation of migrants at the EU's external borders?

How do you envisage to observe the use of technologies in compliance with primary law and the AI Act in the context of the European digital border management? What steps will you take to avoid further delays to the start of operation of the Entry/Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System and to the implementation of the overall reform of the EU information systems for borders, security and migration?

What measures should, in your view, be part of the announced visa policy strategy? In this context, what initiatives do you envisage in order to guarantee that visa-free travel into the EU is not abused, including by visa-free third countries operating investor citizenship schemes, and to preserve the social and economic benefits of visa-free travel? Are you ready to act against the risks of so-called "golden visa" programmes adopted by some Member States, as requested by the European Parliament?

3. Internal borders

The Schengen area is one of the most valued achievements of the Union. Yet several Member States have reintroduced and maintained border control at internal borders since 2015. How do you intend to ensure that the integrity of the Schengen area is restored and preserved? What steps do you envisage in order to reinforce sincere cooperation and mutual trust among the Member States and to ensure that all Member States fully respect the Schengen acquis? Will those measures include infringement proceedings against the Member States that do not respect the rules of the recently amended Schengen Borders Code? What steps will you propose that will lead to the lifting of controls at the internal land borders with Bulgaria and Romania?

4. Security

According to your mission letter, one of your most urgent tasks will be to design a new European Internal Security Strategy, which should include strengthening Europol's mandate and resources. What measures would you propose to effectively combat serious and organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime? What legislative initiatives would you consider in this area? How do you plan to make Europol into 'a truly

operational police agency', while ensuring that it does not overlap with national and other EU Agencies' competences, and that the Parliament has effective oversight? What role would you foresee for Eurojust in this context? Can we also expect legislative proposals to enable law enforcement and judicial authorities to cooperate better across borders in countering criminal networks? What do you plan to include in the new Counter-Terrorism Agenda and how do you plan to address radicalisation and violent extremism?

As the Commissioner in charge for a safer and more secure Europe, how do you view your role in ensuring the effective implementation and updating of the EU strategies aiming to combat antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred and to foster integration? How will you cooperate with the Commissioner for Equality in this field?

5. Access to data for law enforcement purposes

How do you propose to address the key challenge of ensuring effective access to personal data in order to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute criminal offences, while simultaneously complying with the principles of necessity and proportionality and upholding privacy and data protection rights? Which safeguards do you envisage in order to ensure full compliance with the European Court of Justice rulings on data retention and access to data for law enforcement purposes? Will you also address encryption when proposing rules on access?

How do you plan to unblock the Child Sexual Abuse online proposal to ensure that its main goal of protecting children is fulfilled and the concerns about safeguarding the right to privacy are addressed? Should there not be a Regulation on this file prior to the lapse of the second extension of the Interim Regulation, due on 3 April 2026, how will you propose to proceed to avoid the legislative gap?

Invited Committees

DEVE

In view of your work on external aspects of migration and mobility, and given that the NDICI-Global Europe regulation indicates that 10% of its funding be allocated to addressing migration and forced displacement, how will you concretely go about the assignment in your mission letter to “make migration issues an operational part of partnerships”, more specifically with developing countries, and how will you reflect the principle of Policy Coherence for Development in this work? Can you commit to ensuring comprehensive and early information to the Parliament to allow appropriate scrutiny of migration-related agreements with developing countries, including transparency about informal arrangements on migration such as Memoranda of Understanding? How do you foresee the cooperation and division of work on external aspects of migration with other Commissioners?

Piotr Serafin (Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration)
Questions

LEAD: BUDG, CONT

Invited: LIBE

BUDG

Expenditure and the EU budget post-2027

Beyond the requirement to reimburse the NextGenerationEU debt, the political guidelines of the President-elect list a number of new and existing priorities to be funded under the next MFF. In this context, what is your assessment of the amounts that will be required to deliver on current policies, finance new priorities and reimburse the NextGenerationEU debt?

This implies a profound overhaul of the EU budget towards a more focused, flexible, impactful and simpler long-term budget. What will the architecture of the MFF look like and what are the practical implications of the shift from a programme-based to a policy-based budget? Specifically, how will this affect the number and nature of spending programmes and how will you ensure that the reimbursement of NGEU debt does not reduce the funding for EU policies?

Revenue and financing of the EU budget post-2027

The President-elect's guidelines are silent on resources beyond the call for "strengthened and modernised revenues for the EU budget". In her mission letter, she goes a step further asking you to "explore all sources of financing".

How will you ensure sufficient and sustainable funding for our common priorities? How will you push the Council and Member States to take a decision on the current proposals for new own resources and what is the fall-back option, should that not happen? The estimation by the Commission of the revenue was that its 2023 amending proposal on Own Resources could generate EUR 36 billion per year as of 2028, do you confirm this estimation? Do you intend to put forward an amending and/or a new proposal? If so, what type of new own resources or new sources of revenue will it explore and what adjustments will this entail to the existing and proposed own resources? How will you ensure that the budget is balanced?

The prerogatives and role of the Parliament:

While Parliament acknowledges the need for simplicity and flexibility, speed and strategic focus in our spending and notes, in that regard, the President-elect's intention to propose "a policy-based budget, not a programme-based budget", its prerogatives must be upheld in line with the Treaties, the Framework Agreement and the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020.

In this context, how will you ensure full respect for the prerogatives, democratic scrutiny and the role of the Parliament:

- as a co-legislator, in particular by limiting the use of secondary legislation in laying down essential elements of EU spending programmes (such as policy objectives, eligibility criteria, etc), and the recourse to Article 122 TFEU and urgency procedures;
- as one arm of the budgetary authority, in the allocation of the annual budget to specific political priorities, for example by proposing a sufficiently granular nomenclature, for the budgetary authority to take informed decisions;
- in the scrutiny of the implementation of the EU budget and relevant legislation, including the rule of law conditionality mechanism, by providing regular, timely and detailed information on implementation, in order to enable democratic oversight;

throughout the MFF process, for example by proposing concrete measures and working arrangements to ensure interinstitutional cooperation, dialogue and regular and timely information to the Parliament from day one of your term in office and in compliance with the role of the Commission as honest broker?

CONT

RRF funds and future performance-based funding:

The delivery model of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) constitutes a significant change of EU financing in so far as the disbursement of funds is based on the fulfilment of targets and milestones and not linked to costs. Both ECA and the Parliament have pointed to serious shortcomings in the model when it comes to control and transparency. Without major improvements, this new delivery cannot serve as a blueprint for future EU spending.

What would be your plans to improve the monitoring of the RRF spending, especially in avoiding double-funding, ensuring transparency by reporting the final recipients of funds and ensuring respect of national and European legal requirements? How will you apply the lessons learnt from the design and implementation of the RRF to other performance-based facilities and what is your stance on the creation of future performance based facilities, especially in the next MFF? How would you ensure that the mechanisms for measuring performance focus on results rather than on outputs and avoid greenwashing? In the implementation of both direct management funds (as is the case for the RRF) and shared management ones, what concrete actions will you take to significantly reduce bureaucratic burden, including through an increase of digitalisation, and ensure that EU funds generate growth?

Anti-Fraud architecture:

With the creation of the EPPO, the EU Anti-Fraud architecture reached a further important milestone, but in the absence of any coordination of the many components involved, the results in protecting the EU budget appear to be suboptimal.

What measures do you intend to take to improve the protection of the EU's financial interests in a tangible and measurable way? In order to improve your accountability as Commissioner responsible for the anti-fraud architecture, which measures will you propose to ensure better coordination between all components of the anti-fraud landscape, including, OLAF, the EPPO, Europol and Eurojust? Might a merger e.g. of OLAF and the EPPO lead to better synergies and results and how can the recoveries from fraudulent and irregular expenditure be improved?

Rule of Law Conditionality mechanism:

The Regulation on the Rule of law Conditionality was a key achievement under the past legislative term since it made the disbursing EU funds to Member States conditional upon the respect of rule of law standards. Despite clear legal obligations for the Commission to keep the European Parliament informed, it was usually the media that were better informed than the Parliament.

What measures will you take to live up to your legal obligations to inform the European Parliament fully and without delay and to be available without restriction for a structured dialogue?

How will you ensure the full respect of the rule of law and Union values in the implementation of current and future EU funds? How will you avoid contradictions and ensure a coherent approach in the application of the existing tools, including the conditionality mechanism, the horizontal enabling conditions and the rule of law report to fulfil this objective? What working arrangements will you put in place to cooperate with the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law?

Invited Committees

LIBE

How will you plan to continue enforcing the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation, especially regarding inconsistencies in evaluating rule of law benchmarks under the Common Provisions Regulation, the RRF Regulation and the newly recast Financial Regulation? Are you prepared to commit to use these instruments fully, subject to the other conditions provided by these instruments being fulfilled, for instance in cases where the Commission itself identifies the breaches of Union values (such as in the Rule of Law Report or other reports) and where Member States do not comply with the Commission's recommendations or relevant EU Court of Justice and ECHR case law. What improvements will you propose for this legal framework ahead of the new Multiannual Financial Framework? How will you ensure that the de-freezing of funds is done only when the related Rule of Law milestones in the Member States RRFs are fulfilled? How will you ensure a coherent anti-fraud architecture and an effective cooperation between the different actors at EU level, including the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and OLAF? What actions will you take to combat fraud affecting the Union's financial interests through criminal law, particularly to strengthen the EPPO in terms of subject-matter competence and resources? How will you ensure effective cooperation between law enforcement, national, and EU prosecutors, especially regarding information sharing?

Michael McGrath (Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law)
Questions

LEAD: IMCO, LIBE

Invited: AFCD, BUDG, CONT, CULT, FEMM

IMCO

Consumer Protection

1. What are your envisaged aims and possible actions with regard to Next Consumer Agenda 2025-2030 and the New Action Plan on consumers in the Single Market? Within the framework of the Digital Fairness Act, how do you foresee to tackle harmful techniques and commercial practices related to dark patterns, marketing by social media influencers, the addictive design of digital products, online profiling especially when consumer vulnerabilities are exploited for commercial purposes, and better protect minors? In view of all these upcoming initiatives, how would you ensure consistency and the absence of overlaps with the existing legislation, such as the Digital Services Act, the General Product Safety Regulation, and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, and, in general, how do you envisage to modernise and enforce the product safety policies to ensure that the EU countries are a global setting-setter in terms of consumer protection and product safety, as requested in your mission letter? Could you inform us about the upcoming actions to preserve fairness and integrity of our political system and, within this context, confirm your engagement to work with IMCO, notably on the transparency of third country interest representation proposal? How would this proposal interact with the proposed European Democracy Shield?

2. Effective and efficient enforcement of EU consumer protection legislation is of paramount importance for consumer policy and should therefore be a priority for the coming years, as it is also highlighted in your mission letter. How would you ensure that there is proper enforcement of consumer protection legislation at cross-border and national levels and what are the measures that the European Commission is going to adopt to further strengthen the mechanisms of cooperation and the enforcement powers of national authorities, including regarding the role and tasks of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network? Do you plan to present a revision of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation within the first 100 days of the mandate? How do you plan to report back to the IMCO Committee on the results of these enforcement activities and on the envisaged actions to further enhance them?

3. Looking back at all the achievements and the legislation that was adopted during the previous parliamentary term to empower consumers in the digital and green transitions, it is crucial that the European Commission monitors the implementation of the relevant legislation to ensure a high level of consumer protection and a level playing field for businesses. On top of the Implementation Dialogues and the Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation, which are mentioned in your mission letter, what are the specific actions that you will take to effectively monitor the application of the current legislation on consumer protection? In this framework, how will you assist businesses, in particular micro-enterprises and SMEs, to comply with their obligations and what steps will you take to better inform consumers about their

rights and remedies? How do you intend to keep the IMCO Committee informed about the current and upcoming Commission activities and about the progress in this field?

LIBE

1. Fundamental rights, civil society, and data protection

As the Commissioner responsible for monitoring the application of the Charter of fundamental rights, how will you engage with Member States to ensure the promotion and respect of fundamental rights, including through the implementation of the relevant EU Court of Justice and ECHR case law? Do you envisage further measures to develop the link between potential breaches of the Charter and of the principles of democracy and the EU budget? Will you engage in annual reporting to the European Parliament on the application of the Charter? What actions do you envisage to enhance the protection of civic space, including through the Union values strand of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme and the new Civil Society Platform envisaged in your mission letter? What are your plans to ensure the efficiency and transparency of EU funding for the civil society? Considering the recent Court of Justice judgement in the EUlex Kosovo case, what is your strategy for completing the EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights?

How will you ensure that the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights is provided with the resources it needs to carry out all the tasks according to its mandate? Will you commit that FRA is systematically consulted in law-making and impact assessments in areas that address or impact fundamental rights?

Data protection is one of the fundamental rights in the EU legal order and the GDPR is the EU's most powerful tool to safeguard it. Generally, how do you view the enforcement of the GDPR, particularly in cross-border cases? How do you see the relationship between GDPR enforcement and the enforcement of other EU digital laws, such as the DSA, DMA, and the AI Act? Regarding artificial intelligence, how, in your view, should the relationship between safeguarding fundamental rights and fostering innovation look? Do you find the EU data protection legislation efficiently fulfilling its goal in today's time or do you see a need for reflection on that matter? Given the previous concerns of the Parliament regarding several of the adequacy decisions of the European Commission, and a number of relevant CJEU judgments, what are your plans with respect to the international flows of personal data? How do you plan to address these concerns, taking into account the importance of global data flows for EU companies? How do you see the role of the Commission in promoting international cooperation on the protection of personal data?

2. Rule of Law and media freedom

As Commissioner in charge of rule of law, what is your plan to strengthen the impact of the annual Rule of Law report and how do you plan to address the impact of rule of law on the functioning of the Single Market? How do you respond to the Parliament's call for an enlarged scope of the annual rule of law report to all the values mentioned in Article 2 TEU and for the establishment of an EU mechanism on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights governed by an interinstitutional agreement?

What would be your concrete actions to support the Parliament's call to continue Article 7 TEU hearings in the case of Hungary and are you considering proposing a reform of this procedure? Are you committed to making full use of the enforcement tools, in particular expedited infringement procedures, applications for interim measures before the CJEU and systematic follow-up actions regarding the non-implementation of the CJEU's judgments? How do you plan to strengthen the application of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation and the coherence with other relevant legislative acts? What would be your position as regards the fulfilment of rule of law related milestones in the various Member State RRP as a condition for disbursing funding and how will you ensure that the de-freezing of funds is done only when these conditions are fulfilled? How you would coordinate with the other Commissioners (e.g Budget) with responsibility for the application of these conditions and how do you intend to strengthen the rule of law dimension in the next MFF?

What are your plans to strengthen further the protection of independent media, journalists and human rights activists? What measures do you envisage to ensure the implementation of the EMFA, including on the protection of journalistic sources and confidential communication from intrusive surveillance? Will you present a legislative proposal to ensure that the use of intrusive surveillance tools by public and private actors is in conformity with democratic standards, principles of rule of law and the Charter, in line with EP recommendations? Which key proposals will the European Democracy Shield contain, including as regards safeguarding integrity of democratic processes and elections in the EU? Will you consider proposing legislation that expands the scope of SLAPP directive to include all SLAPP cases (including under criminal law)?

3. Criminal justice

What will be your core priorities in the area of criminal justice? How you will ensure the full implementation of the legislative instruments adopted in the previous term, including the e-evidence package and what will be your role in ensuring consistency of instruments of criminal substantive law? How will you ensure that criminal justice keeps up with the development of digital technologies, including AI, both when it comes to the use of new technologies for a more efficient criminal justice system, but also when there is a need to criminalise very serious breaches (e.g. of data protection rules) that occurred by using technology?

What measures can be taken in order to improve even further the judicial cooperation between Member States, with the support of Eurojust, and to make the criminal justice system more efficient in combatting crime? One of your missions will be to strengthen the European Arrest Warrant; would you do so by proposing a new legislative instrument or rather by focusing on a better application of the current legal framework?

What concrete steps are you planning to take to reinforce the EU anti-corruption approach and strengthen the coordination and synergies between the different EU bodies competent on anti-corruption and the Member States? Will you propose concrete legislation in this area? How do you intend to support EPPO, which is facing a number of practical challenges, notably staffing and budgetary constraints, which threaten its effectiveness? Will you commit to propose a revision of the EPPO Regulation, including the extension of its competences and, if so, to which crimes?

Invited Committees

AFCO

How do you envisage your role with regard to the Commission's draft proposal to amend Regulation 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations, which is currently on the table? How do you defend the Commission's choice for the recast format for the above proposal vis-a-vis Parliament's legislative prerogatives and which specific actions would you take as a matter of priority in order to assist the co-legislators to overcome the current deadlock in the negotiations, especially regarding the involvement of third country member parties? How can we use the recast to enable European Political Parties to facilitate the political integration of political parties from enlargement countries? What safeguards and guidelines do you believe should be in place to ensure the integrity and transparency of the process?

Beyond the involvement of the political parties, how will you strengthen the tools for citizens' participation in EU decision-making?

EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is a legal obligation under Article 6(2) of the Treaty of Lisbon, how would you ensure the accession process in the future? Are there any venues considered by the Commission to stimulate the implementation of ECHR judgements by the EU Member States?

Could you outline your vision to avoid frauds and improve funding transparency on interest representatives - especially with regards to foreign interference?

BUDG

In your mission letter, the President tasks you with building a closer link between the recommendations in the Rule of Law report and financial support under the EU budget. She also calls for the future long-term budget to have strong safeguards on the rule of law.

In this context, as your task will be to ensure that respect of the Rule of Law continues to be a must for EU funds, which concrete measures do you envisage to take to ensure that recommendations of the Rule of Law report with an impact on the EU budget are followed up in a stringent and timely manner and what working arrangements will you put in place to cooperate with the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Administration and will you share with the Parliament the ongoing assessments for enabling conditions for Cohesion policy?

CONT

In your mission letter, the President tasks you to develop an EU approach to anti-corruption and to work with the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration to ensure that EU funding can be dedicated to national measures fighting corruption.

Could you elaborate on how you will cooperate with the Budget Commissioner on the concrete measures you envisage to take and could you also explain why Member States would need more money from the EU to fight corruption? Would it not be preferable to better equip the EPPO and to support Member States in other ways?

How will you incorporate the protection of the Single Market into the Union's Rule of Law framework? Which changes will the Commission implement to expedite infringement procedures against Member States for failing to protect the Single Market?

CULT

1) Media freedom and pluralism are a vital part of democracy. However, it is important to recall that, given its legal basis, the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) aims above all to establish a well-functioning internal market for media services and that it is strongly linked to the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). Furthermore, it addresses the content of media service providers on very large online platforms and includes several provisions linked to the assessment of media market concentrations, the transparent and fair allocation of economic resources, editorial independence, the independent functioning of public service media and the protection of journalists. Therefore, how will you ensure that the implementation of the European Media Freedom Act stays closely connected with the AVMSD, the Digital Services Act and is tackled from a media policy perspective?

FEMM

In the new Commission, the equality portfolio was separated from the area of justice, democracy and fundamental rights. However, the relevance of equality to justice remains, especially in terms of legislative proposals made during the last Commission, for example related to violence against women and domestic violence, or victim's rights. How will you prioritize the equality files to ensure cohesion with the new Equality Commissioner, while continuing to monitor the transposition of these files and new developments in their respective policy areas? Do you commit to issuing a proposal to introduce gender-based violence in the list of EU crimes listed in Article 83(1) TFEU?

Glenn Micallef (Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport) Questions

LEAD: CULT

Invited: EMPL, LIBE

CULT

Youth

1) What is your vision for the future of the EU's youth policy, both in terms of strategic priorities and EU budgetary resources available? In particular, how will you ensure that the follow-up to the European Year of Youth, the implementation of the 'youth check' and the coordination of the annual Youth Policy Dialogues will effectively work in practice? Beyond that, how will you ensure that the specific demands and engagement of young people continue to be addressed throughout the next five years, both in terms of policy development and decision making processes? What other actions will you take to ensure that youth mainstreaming and youth participation in both democratic life and in a future strategy on Intergenerational Fairness become a reality?

2) Political disillusionment, polarisation, also the lack of perspectives and hope for the future among young people are some of the biggest challenges to democracy and to the EU project as such. How will you address the widespread political disillusionment, the culmination of which we have recently witnessed in the European elections? In this context, how do you plan to address the impact of social media on young people and on their general wellbeing, including excessive screen time, cyberbullying as well as the impact on their political understanding and engagement?

Culture

1) While addressing the specific implications of Artificial Intelligence, what is your vision for the safeguard and promotion of Europe's cultural and creative sectors and industries? What will an effective Culture Compass comprise to make sure culture and cultural heritage are continuously funded and are maintained at the very heart of European policy making? More concretely, with increasing pressure on the EU budget, how will you ensure that Creative Europe, as the only European programme dedicated exclusively to the cultural and creative sectors, will not be reduced in the current EU budget and will be reinforced in the next MFF?

2) How do you plan to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity, artistic freedom, to enhance cultural collaboration, public access to culture, to promote the role of culture as a means for inclusion, to ensure the prominence of European creative content online and to support the improvement of the professional and social situation of artists and other professionals in the cultural and creative sectors? Furthermore, how do you

intend to promote European works internationally and improve international cultural relations?

Sports

1) How will you strive to ensure the strengthening of the European Sport Model based on values, solidarity and inclusiveness and to promote sport as a tool to improve physical and mental wellbeing for all, across generations, while contributing to cohesive societies? Beyond that, how will you work together with the other Members of the College and DGs to create strong synergies between sport policy and education policy and to strengthen European sport diplomacy?

Invited Committees

EMPL

In your mission letter, you are tasked with preparing a Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness and to implement youth checks. However, an intergenerational approach needs to be holistic and focus on all generations. What actions and measures will you propose to ensure the social inclusion of all generations and their full participation in society and the economy? What legislative initiatives do you envisage with regard to youth and intergenerational fairness and how are you going to cooperate with Executive Vice-President-designate Mînzatu in this context?

LIBE

Your mission focuses on the implementation of the 2021 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child as well as on the adoption of initiatives ensuring that young people can help shape the future of the Union. Which specific steps will you take to strengthen children and youth participation in the decision-making process and, above all, to harmonise it throughout the Union? Are you considering a follow-up mechanism of participatory processes for children and young people, which would ensure that child and youth consultation processes are meaningful? Could you please elaborate more on the concept of 'youth check' and the structure of the 'Youth Policy Dialogues'? Which actors will be involved in them? Which areas/topics will you target? Your mission seems to lack references to initiatives on children in the digital era. Are you considering to take concrete initiatives on this issue?

For instance, what is your strategy for reducing cyberbullying, and do you believe that information campaigns, education, and media literacy are effective tools to tackle excessive screen time and negative effects of social media for young people? What would be the ideal outcomes of an EU inquiry into the broader impact of social media, and do you anticipate any differing results compared to previous studies? Additionally, which steps are you prepared to take to ensure the protection of child victims of cyberbullying in the context of the implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child?

