

THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2014

BRUSSELS

THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY  
CONTROL

THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS

HEARING OF KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Budget and Human Resources)



4-002

## PRÉSIDENCE DE M. JEAN ARTHUIS

*Président de la Commission BUDG*

*(La séance est ouverte à 13 h 30)*

4-003

**Le Président.** – J'ouvre la séance, placée sous une triple présidence, puisque y sont associées, outre la commission des budgets, la commission du contrôle budgétaire et la commission des affaires juridiques. Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à Madame Kristalina Georgieva, vice-présidente désignée.

Je voudrais vous rappeler que, conformément aux lignes directrices pour l'approbation de la Commission (annexe XVI du règlement), le Parlement évalue les commissaires désignés sur la base de leurs compétences générales, de leur engagement européen et de leur indépendance personnelle. Le Parlement évalue aussi la connaissance de leur portefeuille potentiel et leur capacité de communication. Je voudrais rappeler que préalablement à l'audition, la vice-présidente désignée a répondu par écrit à un questionnaire préparatoire, les réponses écrites ont été distribuées aux députés dans toutes les langues.

Notre débat va se structurer ainsi. La Vice-Présidente désignée est invitée à faire une déclaration orale d'introduction, qui ne devra pas excéder 15 minutes, et elle disposera de cinq minutes à la fin de l'audition pour sa déclaration finale. Après son propos introductif s'ouvrira une session de 45 questions de la part des députés, suivies d'une réponse immédiate de la Vice-Présidente désignée par créneau de trois minutes chacun, une minute pour la question et deux minutes pour la réponse. Le premier tour de questions sera posé par un représentant de chaque groupe politique. Le deuxième tour de questions sera structuré en trois blocs, chacun sous la responsabilité de la présidente ou du président responsable, dans l'ordre suivant: d'abord la commission des budgets, ensuite la commission du contrôle budgétaire et enfin la commission des affaires juridiques.

J'attire aussi l'attention sur le fait que le débat sera interprété dans 22 langues, tous les orateurs peuvent donc utiliser leur propre langue. Les orateurs sont par contre priés de tenir compte de la nécessité d'une interprétation de leurs interventions et donc de ne pas parler trop vite. Enfin, je voudrais attirer votre attention sur le fait que le débat sera retransmis en direct

par webstreaming sur le site internet du Parlement et que l'enregistrement vidéo de l'audition restera à disposition sur le même site.

Avant de donner la parole aux présidents de la commission du contrôle budgétaire et de la commission des affaires juridiques, je voudrais, Madame la Vice-Présidente désignée, vous dire combien nous sommes attentifs à la préparation du budget 2015 qui est lourdement affecté par le montant accumulé des impayés, des *outstanding payments*, et que nous sommes à la recherche d'une réponse structurelle pour régler cette question afin d'éviter que l'Union européenne ne fasse naître une dette sournoise. Naturellement, nous serons intéressés par la révision du cadre pluriannuel qui est programmée pour 2016 mais qui nous occupera beaucoup en 2015.

Nous sommes aussi très attentifs à la mise en œuvre de cette enveloppe de 300 milliards telle qu'annoncée par le Président Jean-Claude Juncker, quel en sera l'impact budgétaire dès 2015 pour mettre en application ce dispositif tant attendu. Nous serons attentifs également à votre conception de ce que pourraient être les ressources propres qui permettraient au Parlement européen de voter l'impôt.

Enfin, pourrez-vous peut-être nous préciser votre vision de ce que pourra devenir le contrôle parlementaire de la zone euro et du mécanisme européen de stabilité financière. Ayant dit cela, je donne la parole à Mme Ingeborg Gräßle, présidente de la commission du contrôle budgétaire.

4-004

**Ingeborg Gräßle, Vorsitzende des Haushaltskontrollausschusses.** – Ich möchte Frau Kommissarin Georgieva herzlich willkommen heißen, auch im Namen der Mitglieder des Haushaltskontrollausschusses. Wir haben einen neuen Zuschnitt des Kommissariats als ein Superkommissariat mit Neuerungen, die auch auf alte Erfahrungen zurückgreifen. Eine ähnliche Konstruktion – alles in einer Hand – hatten wir bereits vor 2004.

Wir sehen in dem Aufgabenzuschnitt vor allem einen Chance, Haushalt und Haushaltskontrolle und Betrugsbekämpfung, also eine Politik aus einem Guss zu machen. Dieses Portfolio hat mehr als 5 000 Beamte als Mitarbeiter direkt zugeordnet, ein Siebtel der Kommission, und damit wären Sie, Frau Vizepräsidentin, auch die einzige Vizepräsidentin mit direktem Zugriff auf den Apparat.

Der Haushaltskontrollausschuss ist an guten und besseren Ergebnissen interessiert. Wir sehen in der Gesamtkonstruktion eine Chance, die Arbeitsgebiete der Haushaltskontrolle und der Betrugsbekämpfung zu stärken.

Wir freuen uns auf den Austausch mit Ihnen. 14 der 45 Fragen der Kolleginnen und Kollegen betreffen die Aufgabengebiete unseres Ausschusses, und wir wenden dabei auch das Ping-Pong-Verfahren an mit je 3-minütigen Slots. Zuerst machen wir eine Runde mit allen Fraktionen, danach folgen die Vertreter der Fraktionen selbst.

Wir hoffen, dass wir mit Ihnen gut zusammenarbeiten können, im Interesse der Steuerzahlerinnen und Steuerzahler in Europa.

4-005

**Pavel Svoboda**, *Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs*. – Ms Georgieva, let me welcome you to this hearing on behalf of the Committee of Legal Affairs. The committee I chair will address to you only a limited number of questions this afternoon, and that is as it should be.

More than ever, the budget of the European Union and its correct implementation are at the heart of our concerns. However, as a budgetary authority, Parliament is convinced that it is of paramount importance for the successful implementation and monitoring of the different policies and programmes – and thus in the interest of citizens, businesses and the Member States – to ensure that the institutions, agencies and bodies of the European Union can rely on men and women who are highly qualified, independent, efficient and motivated. Mr Juncker has given you a portfolio including human resources. You will therefore be directly responsible for recruitment, working conditions, careers and mobility in the Commission and also, indirectly, for many issues of great importance for the staff in all the EU institutions, agencies and bodies. You will be ultimately responsible for the good performance of the human factor.

Parliament is conscious of the importance of this task and that is why the Committee on Legal Affairs will participate in your evaluation on an equal footing with the Committees on Budgets and on Budgetary Control. Ms Georgieva, we are looking forward to listening to your opening statement.

4-006

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. > Honourable committee Chairs, honourable Members of Parliament, it is a privilege to return to this chamber for a second

time as Commissioner-designate. I remember my first hearing as if it was yesterday. It gave a start to a very fruitful cooperation with the European Parliament based on trust and mutual respect and, if I am confirmed, I would be very much looking forward to continuing in the same spirit of cooperation with Parliament, but especially with the three committees present here.

This time I am standing for the position of Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources. I do so fully aware of how vital it is to deploy our financial resources and the talent of our people to the fullest so we can deliver on the promises we make to our European people.

I think that at the heart of my job, if I am confirmed, would be to align resources with priorities and deliver the best possible results from our work, and that means working for a genuine performance culture and strong accountability to the citizens, who pay for the work we do and who are to benefit from its outcome. It will demand from me – but also from my colleagues, as we heard from the Chairs – to answer clearly and convincingly three questions.

What are we achieving with every euro spent to help our people and our economies?

Are our controls strong enough to prevent the funds that our citizens give us from abuse, from fraud? and,

Are we doing everything we can to secure the conditions for our staff to excel and to have high morale because of a job well done?

I believe that, especially in these conditions of hardship for so many of our citizens, we are destined to use our budget wisely to deal with the damage caused by a protracted crisis on our competitiveness, on our job markets, on our standard of living, on the confidence our people have in the European project.

I also believe that the EU budget has the power to help our recovery and competitiveness and to re-establish our people's trust in Europe as a force for good. We have a sound base: we have the recently approved MMF – EUR 1 000 billion for the next seven years – to invest, to deliver jobs and growth and a better quality of life.

These are not abstract numbers. The EU budget has direct impact on the lives of our people: it means work for some 600 000 who are employed in projects funded by the cohesion policy, and for hundreds of thousands more in businesses supplying the equipment or the materials for this work; it means a better chance for employment for four million students who would

benefit from Erasmus+; and in my current area of responsibility it means the difference between life and death for victims of natural disasters and conflicts.

But this impact would only materialise if the money pledged is delivered, if the money pledged is put to work. And this means overcoming the shortage in payment credits you have discussed on numerous occasions, most recently when the Committee on Budgets voted on the draft budget for 2015. It is a task that preoccupies the current Commission – you probably have seen the letter that President Barroso sent to Heads of State and Governments and to the President of the European Parliament asking for support to address this problem. It is on the top of the duties that the President-elect has presented me with.

So if I am confirmed, on my first day in office I will take the baton from the current Commissioner, Commissioner Dominik, and I will strive to successfully complete the budget negotiations for the 2014 amending budgets, for the budget for 2015, so we can start to melt down the snowball of unpaid bills. I am in my heart of hearts convinced that not doing so is a self-inflicted injury: it postpones important programmes that should generate a growth in jobs; it makes it more expensive because we have to pay interest – a very unwise use of our taxpayers' sacrifice – and it damages our credibility and our reputation.

But it is a problem that can be solved, by simply applying the flexibility that you in the European Parliament fought so hard for and that was finally agreed by all.

We are not asking for more payment credits than what we have in the MFF now. What we are asking is simply to provide more today to cope with unusual and unforeseen circumstances. On top of the budget cuts, what we face are unexpected higher quantity of bills from the cohesion policy; we have the impact of acceleration, frontloading of some programmes – very important programmes – and the new state-building contract for Ukraine.

But let me turn from the immediate priorities; they are very important, but we also need to look further in the future.

In my view in the budget area, the key challenges in my mandate would be: first, the mid-term review of the MFF in 2016. It will be our opportunity to orient the EU budget further towards jobs, growth and competitiveness and, should it be necessary, to respond to new challenges that are facing our Union. It would also be the moment to examine the duration of

the next MFF. How to align it with the political cycles of the institution? Certainly there would be a conversation on what all that means in terms of looking at the specific needs of the eurozone. The new Commission would take up on the promise of the outgoing Commission, which I am a member of, to table a proposal for the revision of the MFF.

Second, we have the important task of addressing the issue of own resources in the high-level working group under the chairmanship of Professor Monti, to which, if confirmed, I will be very happy to contribute. It is tasked to provide the general reflection and historical perspective of the own-resource system as such, and also to explore new avenues for the future. The outcome of this work can fit into discussions during the mid-term review, but most importantly in the work of the third, and perhaps most important, task: the preparation of the next MFF, which is due to start in earnest by 1 January 2018.

Ahead of making proposals for the next MFF, I will, of course, intensively consult with Parliament and all other relevant stakeholders.

I know we will be on much stronger footing in these consultations if in the meantime we build the evidence that we are using our budget better, and we are shifting our spending culture from a focus on inputs to outcomes, to results. We will have to demonstrate that the EU budget generates not just value for money but high value for money. This requires further advancements in performance budgeting, and it also requires that we leverage our money much more than in the past.

For example, by shifting grants – we currently provide part of them to innovative financial instruments. Take the pilot project bond: its multiplier is up to 40 times the investment the EU makes, 40 times. These innovative financial instruments will have a very important role to play in the EUR 300 billion investment package that was announced by the President-elect in his political guidelines.

We can also invest our budget more in projects with multiple objectives and multiple benefits. For example, the new cohesion policy will increase investment in energy efficiency measures. These are investments that boost local businesses, building insulation – you do not import it from China, it is locally done. It helps to create jobs, help us to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fight climate change, but also helps to reduce our energy dependency.



A very important part of our action for better spending, for high value for money, is the fight against misuse of funds. A key point of time to take stock of progress is the budget discharge – the moment to assess how EU spending complies with the rules and achieves the intended objectives. Our new programmes are set up to help us perform better, with fewer errors and more efficient controls. Yet we still have a long way to go, and further improvements on compliance and respect of rules remains our goal, especially when it comes down to working with Member States, working with international organisations. More can and must be done to simplify rules to improve reporting, and simplify rules not for the sake of making life easy for people but for the sake of these rules being better understood and better complied with. We can also do more to have a risk-based system where we target our attention where the risks are highest.

I engage to work in close cooperation with Parliament, with Member States, national parliaments, the European Court of Auditors, the national audit authorities and with our international partners in this area. I will support a strong independent and well-respected OLAF to be the guardian that protects the financial interest of the Union.

Fraud and abuse of EU funds not only steals from the European taxpayers, it damages the European project as such and it cannot – will not – be tolerated. For this purpose I also would be very interested to advance the establishment of a European public prosecutor's office so as to better tackle criminal fraud damaging the EU budget and stealing precious public resources.

Last but not least, let me focus on our staff, because none of what I am talking about would be possible without the excellence of the people in the Commission and in the other EU institutions.

We live in times of growing global competition, including for talent. We have to constantly improve if we are to aspire to have a world-class civil service, and this is why I take to heart the duty that I am given by the President-elect to develop a corporate talent management policy.

First, we have to continue to build the attractiveness of an EU career, and to capture the diversity of our people and the experience in the EU. We need to bring in, to retain, to develop and to promote excellent men and women, especially since we face a bulk retirement of very experienced staff in the next years.

I strongly believe in fair treatment of staff and in equality on all counts, and I take to heart also the task I am given to achieve 40% of female senior and middle managers in the Commission by the end of our mandate.

Second, we must foster agility and mobility in our staff, use the structure of the new Commission that allows us to move people more easily, to have more internal redeployments.

Third, we have to implement our cost-saving measures without compromise on quality. That means no stone left unturned as we look for these savings. For all of this the Commission must be a strong and effective team. Money and people: they matter tremendously for making life in Europe better and our future brighter. But what matters the most are the values that make us who we are, that help us overcome divisions and leave no country, no community in Europe, behind; that lead us to protect our environment, to care for the vulnerable people at home and abroad. It is because of these values I am proud of our Union and I am very honoured to stand for office to serve it.

4-007

**Le Président.** – Merci Madame. Les questions vont être posées à raison de deux séquences distinctes. La première va permettre à chaque groupe de s'exprimer par la voix d'un orateur, puis dans une seconde séquence, nous poserons des questions d'abord relatives au budget, ensuite des questions relatives au contrôle budgétaire et enfin des questions relatives aux affaires juridiques. Le premier intervenant sur la première séquence est José Manuel Fernandes.

4-008

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE).** – Em primeiro lugar, queria dar os parabéns à Sra. Comissária indigitada pela declaração oral que aqui nos trouxe, que demonstra competência, que demonstra uma forte experiência e também um profundo conhecimento dos dossiês orçamentais e das nossas preocupações.

Avanço desde já para a pergunta. Referiu a questão e o problema grave dos pagamentos. Mas como é que pensa atuar? Que compromisso é que assume com este Parlamento para, em primeiro lugar, estabilizar o problema, mas depois resolvê-lo? Eu recorro que ficaram por pagar, em 2013, mais de 23 mil milhões de euros; que, no fim deste ano, teremos dezenas de milhares de euros por pagar. E estamos a falar de compromissos autorizados pelo Conselho e pelas Instituições, que têm de ser cumpridos, sob pena de perdermos credibilidade e confiança, que bem necessitamos dela.

4-009

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Thank you, Mr Fernandes, for a very critical question at this juncture which is a matter of concern to all of us at all times. My view on this is threefold: firstly, we must deal with the bills that have accumulated, otherwise they will turn into an avalanche. That means that the proposed amendments to the 2014 budget and the proposal we make for using the contingency margin – proposals for this year and for next year – are absolutely critical for us in order to stabilise the situation and actually, hopefully, make it slightly better.

But, of course, we are not going to stop there. Here comes my second point: we have to be very careful about managing how we structure projects and programmes so we can implement them successfully. We have already started at the Commission across the board. It was first done in my area, because we felt the pain first in connection with humanitarian aid, and we need to be very careful about how we structure delivery, so we avoid a crash at some point.

But, thirdly, and this is where the mid-term review is so important, we have to look into the future and say, given the challenges we face, how we approach delivery of the European budget. What the outcome would be, nobody can predict. But at least that would be the moment in time to do what you are suggesting: to take a medium-term look at the impact of these very tight payment levels.

4-010

**Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D).** – Comisaria propuesta Georgieva, usted, en su intervención, ha hablado del marco financiero y ha hablado de *mid-term review*. Usted sabe que en esta Cámara las palabras son muy importantes y este Parlamento ha luchado mucho para que sea una *post-electoral revision*. Creo que eso es uno de los temas que nos va a ocupar en este mandato. Me gustaría saber si usted está pensando ya en empezar a trabajar en esa *post-electoral revision*, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta la propuesta del señor Juncker de ese plan de inversión de trescientos mil millones de euros. Nos preocupa que usted no forma parte de ese grupo que va a coordinar la puesta en marcha de ese plan de inversión.

Nos gustaría saber si van a tener alguna incidencia en el presupuesto europeo esos trescientos mil millones de euros propuestos por el señor Juncker, cómo quiere usted gestionar la parte que debería corresponder al trabajo de esta Comisión de Presupuestos y qué instrumentos cree usted que se tienen que desarrollar para que ese plan sea efectivo.

4-011

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Let me take the two parts of your question one by one. On the first part, as a Member of this Commission I support the commitment we have taken. It was very important, as you know very well, in the negotiations

for the Parliament, to have the confidence that we are not going to set a seven-year budget and never look back. If we are to put hands on heart in this room, in a very dynamic world how on earth can we predict in seven years' duration the details of a budget that we currently have?

Change is happening constantly and adjustment to change means that it is prudent to take stock at mid-term and review the implementation of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). What are the conditions of our economies? We do not know but we hope it will be better. How well are we implementing? What are the needs, and what are the priorities at that point of time? Let us see where this will take us, but I am absolutely committed that we would take this task very, very seriously.

On the second part of your question you would have a chance to, people say, 'grill' – I would not use this word, but let us say 'grill' – my colleague, the Vice-President-designate in charge of jobs, growth and competitiveness. He would tell you more about the 300 billion package. From my side, of course, I would participate. We have already met with him and we have discussed the broad parameters of collaboration. My job would be to make sure that as much as possible we will lean forward with European budget to contribute to generating more investments.

I mentioned in my opening statements leveraging. We have tripled the so-called innovative financial instruments. How can we use them to generate more investments? We have a very, very good project on SMEs. What it does is to create equity for SMEs so they can move in, and the leveraging impact there is 1 to 5 – 1 euro, five times generated investment at the moment. We may be able to do more. To assess this experience – say this is good, this is not so good – and move forward would be a big priority for me and for the other Commissioners.

4-012

**Bernd Kölmel (ECR).** – Verehrte designierte Kommissarin! Ich möchte die beiden vorgenannten Fragen noch einmal kurz aufgreifen und einen Bogen schlagen. Meine Vorrednerin hat gesagt, sie sei besorgt, dass Sie dieses von Herrn Juncker genannte 300 Milliarden Euro-Investitionsprogramm eventuell nicht angehen werden und nicht schnell umsetzen. Ich bin eher besorgt, dass es schnell umgesetzt wird, und vielleicht in einer Art und Weise, dass kein Mehrwert geschaffen wird, der den Bürgern der EU nachhaltig zur Verfügung steht. Und das vor dem Hintergrund, dass wir jetzt schon Zahlungsverpflichtungen eingegangen sind, die – die Zahl wurde genannt – 222 Milliarden Euro betragen bei einem Budget im Zahlungshaushalt von 143 Milliarden Euro. Da befürchte ich, dass die EU auch Rechtsprobleme bekommen kann. Die EU darf keine Schulden machen.

Ich würde gerne von Ihnen hören: Wie wollen Sie diesen Spagat hinbekommen und das in Ausgleich bringen?

4-013

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I think what unites pretty much everybody in this room is our care for the good use of our taxpayers' money.

When we think of the use of the MFF, it is with a somewhat smaller envelope this time. You know that there is a 3.4% cut on the commitment side and a little bit more – 2.7%, I think – on the payment side. This is slightly smaller than in the past, and yet at a time when demands on this budget are higher. Furthermore, absorption of funds is improving in many of our Member States.

So how we make use of this money will depend very much on our collaboration with the Member States. You know that 80% of this money is implemented by Member States, and the control system is in place. More importantly, how we constantly align priorities with the funding – that comes from the European Union. This is not an easy task, but certainly a task that I am determined we will pursue.

Secondly, on the EUR 300 billion, why are we talking about it? Why? Because what we are facing in Europe today is that there is plenty of money in the financial system, in the banks, but it is doing absolutely nothing for businesses and for jobs. We have to wake this energy up. We have to help our businesses – especially the SMEs – to be able to work, and work harder and work more. So the EUR 300 billion would of course also be for public investment programmes, but only programmes that unleash the capacity of economists to work more for our people. Take the digital market – I am over time – I will come back to this – there are huge opportunities still not tapped. We must tap them.

4-014

**Gérard Deprez (ALDE).** – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Commissaire – puisqu'à ma connaissance vous êtes toujours commissaire –, je vous souhaite la bienvenue au nom de mon groupe, au sein duquel – je tiens à le souligner – vous jouissez d'une réputation flatteuse pour la manière dont vous avez exercé vos fonctions durant la législature actuelle.

Cela dit, je ne suis pas totalement satisfait de vos réponses en matière de paiements. Pardonnez-nous, nous sommes un peu monomaniaques! J'ai lu votre lettre de mission du président, selon laquelle votre tâche première est de dresser un plan pour les priorités en

matière de paiements. Mais qui dit priorités dit que d'autres choses ne sont pas prioritaires et ne vont donc pas être payées.

Si je considère d'autre part ce que vous avez dit, le budget rectificatif 2014 et le budget 2015 que vous avez déposé, le commissaire Dominik nous a affirmé que cela suffirait pour éviter l'aggravation de la dégradation, ce qui veut dire que la dégradation reste permanente. Vous allez attendre soit la mi-législature, soit 2019 pour changer les choses.

Mais, Madame la Commissaire, nous n'en aurons pas le temps! Il y a urgence à dresser un plan stratégique – vous pouvez compter sur le Parlement européen pour ce faire – pour essayer de résorber le déficit de paiement le plus tôt possible. D'où ma question: êtes-vous prête à essayer, avec le Parlement européen, de dresser un plan stratégique de résorption du déficit?

4-015

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. > Not in my sleep, no. This is how it was translated. This is what I have in mind, this is what I would stress, and this is what I would do.

First things first. In the next few months we must apply flexibility to be able to stabilise payments and provide scope for what is absolutely crucial – an ability to use our budget more productively without delays, without postponements. This is where the promise that the President-elect made, with regard to the 300 billion, comes into play. We have three months. This is what we have committed to – to come to you, to come to the Council and to say how we intend to create an environment for investment, given the constraints under which we operate, at European level, with the EU budget. Would that take us to a point in time when we are discussing bigger strategic issues? Of course. I flagged up one such issue: the question of own resources – a very critical strategic question to address.

Of course we need to say that now we have a way of distributing our budget that is pretty fixed, with 28 countries. Across the areas of the budget, we have agreed on what has to be done. The room for manoeuvre is somewhat limited. But let us think positively. We have more money for competitiveness – much more than before. We have more money for horizontal problems. To prevent running into trouble this time, I will come back to you on this question repeatedly, time and again, because it is crucial for us in an interactive manner to move Europe forward.

4-016

**Liadh Ní Riada (GUE/NGL).** – Our people are still suffering under the harsh budgets of austerity. In Ireland we are experiencing an unsustainable situation with our coastal communities, for instance, who rely on fishing. They are now bordering extinction. From Castletownbere to Dunmore East, entire generations of traditional fishing communities cannot put food on their tables. We see more cuts to this vital sector being proposed for 2015. You come from Bulgaria and are well aware of the role the European Funds can play to ease these situations.

We also have a huge problem with emigration. For instance 200 people in Ireland emigrate our shores daily. The same is replicated in so many other countries. These are young, well-educated people that are leaving our shores.

What guarantees can you give us that you will manage to persuade the Member States to duly and timely invest in those programmes that do in fact have an impact on improving people's lives?

Also, what concrete proposals do you have to tackle the issue of the dramatic, growing disparity between EU Member States? Do you consider proposing and implementing instruments such as the crisis derogation criteria?

4-017

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Thank you for bringing up two things that are very serious.

One is the fact that, for the first time in our post-war history, we can see in some of our communities, in some of our countries, poverty going up and not down. Of course it must be a preoccupation to arrest and reverse this trend. That is why, in the EU budget, a lot of attention is given to funds that are channelled in this direction: to create jobs, to provide opportunities, and also to address social problems – the Social Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

The second point that I think is extremely serious concerns demographics. We are an ageing continent and, on top of that, many young, competent, smart people are today seeking opportunities and employment abroad. We were talking with one of the MEPs here about his son being in California now and wondering whether there would be a job for him to come back to in Europe. I believe that if Europe does not focus, front and centre, on improving our

competitiveness, especially in the new frontier industries, we will find it very hard to fight social exclusion, to fight poverty, and to deliver to our citizens.

In order to lift up those who are falling behind, we have to have those in front going even faster. This is one of the areas of emphasis you will see in the EUR 300 billion. We will talk about money but we will also talk about policies and about removing obstacles to growth. Of course, as somebody from a country that is still somewhat behind, I can say that it will not be like this forever. I am very keen to see in the budget the items that help to address the whole set of cohesion problems.

I have run out of time. I will come back to you on the last part of the question.

4-018

**Monika Vana (Verts/ALE).** – Frau designierte Kommissarin! Sie haben die Auswirkungen des EU-Haushalts auf das direkte Leben unserer Bürgerinnen und Bürger angesprochen und auch die Wichtigkeit der Gleichstellungspolitik. Von Seiten der Fraktion der Grünen kann ich Ihnen da nur zustimmen. Meine Frage betrifft daher auch die Gender-Dimension der Haushaltspolitik. Es gibt eine Studie der Europäischen Kommission aus dem Jahr 2012 über den Mehrjährigen Finanzrahmen unter Gleichstellungsaspekten, die zu dem alarmierenden Schluss kommt, dass, obwohl es zahlreiche Bekenntnisse zum *gender budgeting* sowohl seitens der Kommission als auch des Europäischen Parlaments gibt, hier keineswegs sichergestellt ist, dass Gleichstellungsaspekte in alle Phasen des Budgeterstellungprozesses auf allen Ebenen und in alle Maßnahmen einfließen.

Wie werden Sie sicherstellen bzw. welche konkreten Schritte werden Sie setzen, um das *gender budgeting*, also die Analyse der Budgetwirkungen auf Männer und Frauen, weiterzuentwickeln und bereits für den Budgeterstellungprozess 2016 zu implementieren?

4-019

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Of course, no society can succeed without tapping into the talent of all its people – both men and women. In this sense, gender mainstreaming in the budget is not about feminism; it is about productivity; it is about getting the best outcomes from investments. Yes, I am very happy to be a Commissioner for humanitarian aid; it is an incredible honour.

In my current job, we have made a very serious effort on gender mainstreaming, putting gender markers in all our activities. It is not easy – we have to train people – but, of course, it is possible. In my future job, if I am confirmed, we already have some programmes where this is done. In entrepreneurship there is quite a lot already ongoing. The issue for us is to do



more in programmes that are not so easy. Thinking of how we can introduce gender markers in more difficult programmes is critical, but the area in which we would succeed or not is in our work with Member States. I am going back to the point that 80% of our funding goes to shared management.

There is a very good saying: you can take a horse to water, but you cannot make the horse drink. So we can have all the markers, but if there is no buy-in, then it is not going to happen. For me, it is very important to carry out this task in our budget; it sends the right signal, of course. But also think of how we create this common understanding that it is not about individuals; more often than not women say that gender mainstreaming is important. It is about the performance of our economies and the quality of life of our people.

4-020

**Marco Zanni (EFDD).** – Grazie Presidente, signora Georgieva io vorrei porle tre domande che secondo noi corrispondono a tre sfide che dovrà affrontare durante il suo mandato.

La prima: ritorno sul problema dei pagamenti. Lei ci ha detto le azioni che intenderà portare avanti per provare a smaltire l'arretrato e a stabilizzare il problema. Noi vorremmo sapere invece le soluzioni strutturali a cui state pensando per evitare che il problema si ripresenti in futuro e che succeda, come è successo in passato, che anno dopo anno i pagamenti, le fatture impagate aumentino. Forse non è necessario riconsiderare alcuni impegni futuri per ridurre questo *gap* che si sta creando tra impegni e pagamenti? Questa è la prima domanda.

La seconda domanda: un'altra sfida sarà a nostro avviso la riduzione drastica delle spese amministrative di gestione dell'Unione europea. Ci sono spese amministrative che non sono accettabili, soprattutto in un momento di crisi e di disoccupazione dilagante come quello che stiamo vivendo, parlo ad esempio dei compensi dei funzionari e di tutto il personale che gravita intorno alle istituzioni europee, che spesso vanno oltre la decenza, parlo degli sprechi e delle spese senza freno di agenzie e istituzioni.

E, da ultimo, la sua posizione, come intende agire con il Consiglio per mettere fine a questa buffonata della tripla sede che ci costa sprechi ogni anno per milioni di euro?

4-021

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > On the question of payments and how this relates to commitments, let me first make a general point that commitments are there for a reason. Commitments are not there to be played with because we do not have enough

payments. Normally, in budgeting, you do not budget your commitments on the basis of your payments, you budget your payments on the basis of your commitments. We have the MF and actually I would think that after such a difficult negotiation, we must focus on how to implement it – how to implement it for the best for our people.

Secondly, on future payments, we have started the much more serious, across-the-board work on managing, planning and implementation of projects so we can be much better equipped to manage also the arrival – and therefore the payment – of bills. This is work which, to my mind, is absolutely crucial if we are to manage, in the future, within the tight constraints of the payments. I could talk a lot about this. I am doing this in my current DG, and I can tell you it does produce a positive impact.

On administration, I feel that I came from a very good institution, from the World Bank. It is an international, very qualified bank. I am also very impressed by the quality of people in the Commission, but I agree that we have space to work better, to reduce the variables across different DGs and to make our teams more flexible in how they are organised. The new structure of the Commission would take us in this direction. I believe the result would be that we would be able to achieve savings by managing our teams better.

On your third question, I am so very happy I have run out of time!

4-022

**Le Président.** – La parole est à M. Eleytherios Synadinos. Je ne l'ai pas vu dans l'assistance. Est-ce que quelqu'un de son groupe, des non-inscrits, veut s'exprimer à sa place? Non? Eh bien ainsi prend fin la séquence réservée aux questions posées par les groupes politiques. Nous allons passer maintenant aux questions relatives à la commission des budgets. Premier intervenant: Alain Lamassoure.

4-023

**Alain Lamassoure (PPE).** – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Commissaire désignée, comme nous l'avons vu, depuis le début de la réunion, le budget de l'Union est en réalité en cessation de paiement et la vérité est que la nouvelle Commission risque de ne pas avoir les moyens de financer ses priorités puisque les seuls crédits disponibles sont consacrés à payer le passé.

Nous connaissons l'origine de cette fatalité: c'est le changement insidieux qui est intervenu dans le mode de financement du budget. Contrairement au traité, le budget n'est plus financé par des ressources indépendantes mais par des contributions des budgets nationaux.

Le Parlement européen a fait de la réforme de ce système un point clé de l'accord qu'il a donné finalement sur le cadre budgétaire pluriannuel. Un groupe à haut niveau, présidé par le professeur Mario Monti, travaille à faire des propositions et vous avez dit que vous y participerez – ce dont je me réjouis.

Comment concevez-vous votre rôle de commissaire en charge au sein, d'abord, de ce groupe à haut niveau et, ensuite, au moment de la révision à mi-parcours du cadre budgétaire pluriannuel?

4-024

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Thank you very much, Mr Lamassoure, and thank you for what you did as the Chair of this committee to help the humanitarian community face the very same problem – the problem of tight payment credits.

I am very hopeful that we would put a lot of energy in our minds in the work of the High Level Group and come up with credible proposals to be considered, because what we have seen over time is just not healthy. In the structure of our revenues, of our budget, the share of genuine own resources has shrunk and the share of GNI contributions has increased. At a time of tight budgets at home, inevitably this leads to very tense negotiations, and what it does is put friends of cohesion against friends of agriculture, net payers against net recipients. Parliament and the Council face tensions not healthy for a Europe of unity. So it is not just the mechanics of where the money comes from, it is the impact, I think, this budgeting has on the way we function.

So I would be very hopeful that we would come up with proposals that are politically viable, that can lead us at least to change direction. We all know the Commission's proposal on that. I do not think we should limit ourselves only to the Commission's view. I think the group should look across. My role would be very active participation. First Vice-President Timmermans would be also part of the group, and I hope the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness would join the group as well. So we would do our best to be part of the process, and the outcome would be, of course, politically determined.

4-025

**Isabelle Thomas (S&D).** – La priorité pour les Socialistes et Démocrates, c'est le plan de 300 milliards pour la croissance et l'emploi. Des propositions ont été mises sur la table au Conseil du 25 septembre dernier, notamment la possibilité d'utiliser une partie du mécanisme européen de stabilité pour procéder à des investissements durables et stimuler la croissance. On parle de 20 à 40 milliards qui pourraient être confiés au Fonds européen d'investissement

de la BEI. Que pensez-vous de cette proposition et, dans le cas de sa mise en œuvre, comment assurer le contrôle démocratique de l'utilisation de ces fonds?

Vous avez évoqué tout à l'heure les *projects bonds*, j'en profite pour saluer le travail de notre ancien collègue Göran Färm. Il s'agit là aussi d'encourager les investisseurs privés à financer de gros projets d'infrastructures, mais il y a des difficultés. Comment s'assurer que l'Union européenne et donc ses contribuables ne soient pas les seuls à supporter les risques de ces investissements en cas d'échec alors que les investisseurs seraient les seuls bénéficiaires en cas de réussite? Je crains, à entendre vos réponses notamment sur la révision du cadre financier pluriannuel, que vos pistes consistent à réduire les dispositifs comme les fonds structurels au profit de mécanismes financiers qui transformeraient l'Union en simple banque d'investissement.

4-026

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. > We should not jump too much into a discussion on the EUR 300 billion because, as I said, there is a lead Vice-President and one of the principles to make this new structure work is for us to be respectful of each other's mandates. You will be able to talk to him, and we will come in three months, as promised, with the details of how we think about the EUR 300 billion. We are a team, we should do it together and then come to you.

Secondly, on innovative instruments and controls over these instruments: I am totally with you that it would be a very dumb use of taxpayers' money to take risk away and leave benefits in private hands. This is not a very good use of money, but this is not what we are proposing to do and this is not what we would do. What we are proposing to do with the leveraging impact is to look at critical constraints and remove these constraints so investments can flow – and of course to do so with the appropriate control systems for these types of investments. I worked for the World Bank for seventeen years, and I can tell you that the mechanisms of control can actually be as strong for these kind of investments as they are for grants, or even stronger. We have a lot to do to work with organisations that have the skills to manage public money responsibly with that kind of flexibility, as it is proposed.

I believe that the question of control systems for new innovative financial instruments is, in terms of significance, very, very high. I feel privileged that I would have a chance to be, if I am confirmed, in charge of it, because I do have some personal understanding of what can be done. I also have a very strong commitment to guaranteeing that we are not going to open up Pandora's box and let our tax money go to waste. We would be making a big mistake if we did not venture in the direction of leveraging our money better, because it is so vital for us to inject more creativity, more innovation and more growth potential into our countries.

4-027

**Bernd Kölmel (ECR).** – Frau Kommissarin! Sie haben in Ihren schriftlichen Antworten, die Sie auf unsere Fragen gegeben haben – die übrigens aus meiner Sicht ausgezeichnet sind –, auch thematisiert, dass die Institutionen der EU inzwischen ein Glaubwürdigkeitsproblem haben. Die Organisationen der EU genießen nicht gerade ein besonders hohes Ansehen bei den Bürgern der EU. Wie könnte man das verbessern?

Ein Schritt dazu könnte sein, dass wir mehr Transparenz brauchen. Die Bürger müssen wieder verstehen, wofür die Institutionen der EU da sind und warum sie so viel Geld kosten.

Vor diesem Hintergrund eine ganz konkrete Frage: 1990 gab es drei Agenturen der EU, seit 2004 hat sich die Zahl verdoppelt. Inzwischen liegen wir bei rund 40 Agenturen. Da stellt sich mir die Frage: Sind die alle erforderlich?

Einige davon haben ihren Sitz in Brüssel. Sind sie in dieser Größe erforderlich? Würden Sie sich dafür einsetzen, dass man den Wert dieser Agenturen einer Evaluation unterzieht?

4-028

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I can tell you that on this issue of transparency I completely see eye to eye with you, for two reasons: the first one is that transparency is the best way we can protect our money from abuse. The best way even in a very corrupt environment: when there is transparency there are results. In my former life I worked in places like Indonesia or Tatarstan in Russia and just by putting transparently in front of people what is being spent, they – the people, the communities – provided the control system. So results can be achieved.

And I believe that we in the EU are very transparent. But we also have to be user-friendly transparent. Very often you want to learn something about our work and you search and search and search and you are of the impression that the information does not exist. It is there, somewhere. This is a part of my job, how we can turn transparency into the best friend of our control systems: that would be straight there.

On the question of agencies: every agency is created for a reason, to address a specific, concrete problem. Some of these agencies protect our health; some of these agencies are there to create a better research innovation environment. I must admit that I need to learn more about this universe of agencies before I come to you and say: yes, we can do a review and

maybe make some recommendations. As a generic answer: when one strives for efficiencies, when one really, really does it, there are no secret codes.

4-029

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE).** – Arvoisa komissaari, edellisellä kaudella hoiditte tehtävänne asiantuntevasti ja hyvin. Nyt tuleva postinne on aika erilainen.

Kysyisin, miksi katsotte, että juuri Te olette nyt sopiva budjettikomissaari? Mitkä ovat ne ansiot ja seikat, jotka tekevät Teistä tämän postin parhaan haltijan?

4-030

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I would have thought that Mr Juncker is in the best position to answer this question, but let me give you my take as to why I was selected. It is a huge responsibility and I would admit that my first reaction when I became aware of this offer was for my hair to stand on end. It is good that I have short hair, so that was not so terrible. But, on a more serious note, I then thought it through and I concluded that Mr Juncker is selecting me for a good reason – actually two good reasons.

One is because I have worked in my professional life with very big responsibilities for funding. In my very last job at the World Bank I was Vice-President and Corporate Secretary with oversight of the whole World Bank group. We are talking about the whole set of World Bank institutions. I have done my job as somebody responsible for money and somebody responsible for people, with a good record. I am proud of my record.

The second reason is because I believe that I have also proved that I am independent and that I take orders from no one but the interests of the European people. I think that is a very important prerequisite for this job. I also work very hard, so I think that would help.

4-031

**Liadh Ní Riada (GUE/NGL).** – When we get into budgets, we talk about billions and billions of euro and that is probably a billion miles away from those who suffer from poverty. We are seeing the return of soup kitchens and food banks. One in five children in Ireland are living in poverty. You and I know that the resources allocated as palliative instruments, under the Youth Guarantee schemes, for example, are not enough to tackle the need for real investment in sustainable and productive infrastructure in the countries concerned.

More than improving the effectiveness and enhancing the so-called added value of the EU budget through the tripling of the so-called innovative financial instruments in the EU funds,

we need concrete, sustainable solutions. What created the financial crisis was the use of speculative instruments and what we need is a socially progressive Europe.

Given our history, do you really think that speculative instruments are the way to go?

4-032

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Given our present, and given our prospects for the future, I think we would serve our people best if we create more opportunities for them at home here in Europe. That will require unleashing the potential of our entrepreneurs, especially young entrepreneurs. At the moment we do not see a sufficient boost of investments in Europe, we do not see sufficient growth in Europe, and we have a responsibility also to play our part in this regard.

Let us also remember that the innovative financial instruments are still a fairly small part of the EU budget. We are talking about EUR 9 billion. I said we tripled, but we tripled from a very low base. I would say – also in response to the previous question – that I am very anxious that we be very prudent in assessing experience with each and every one of them before we move forward. We have the courage, if something gives us any concern, to cancel it and not to extend it any further. That’s what pilots are for – to see how they work. If they work, we do more. One of the biggest worries I have is that sometimes we are too enthusiastic to move before we have made a very prudent assessment of these pilots. I promise you this is not going to be the case. I would not let that happen.

But of course, on the same side, we have to do more for people that are most seriously impacted. The Youth Guarantee is a very good scheme. We now have EUR 6 billion. I hope to be the Commissioner who sees this expand and be extended.

4-033

**Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE).** – Commissioner-designate, let me first of all congratulate the Bulgarian people who, unlike from many other Member States, chose to nominate an independent person who is only affiliated to a political group and who has real knowledge about real life, including environmental problems. That is why, even before the hearing, my Green colleagues and I are supportive towards your appointment.

We are convinced that global warming is an issue that has to be urgently tackled and that having at least 20% of MFF as climate-related is far from sufficient. But, Vice-President-designate, how are you going to bring to bear your environmental background in the next Commission, in order to make the EU budget a stronger contributor to fighting the environmental crisis? What are your concrete proposals for greening the EU budget and to make it more sustainable, including the CAP policies, and to strengthen mainstreaming of the environment in the EU budget to increase the climate-related part of it? Strong policy is not one written only as intentioned, but one which lies firmly within current budgetary means.

4-034

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Thank you very much for highlighting the multiple objectives we can achieve with the budget. One of those objectives, in all that we do, is to fight climate change. I am convinced, professionally but also from my experience as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid over the last five years, that climate change is for real. It is already happening, and the fight against climate change is probably the most important fight we have to take up.

The Commission has made a commitment to use 20% of resources. This year, as you probably know, we are at 12.5%. Obviously, my objective is to see that we achieve the 20%, and I would be very happy if we exceed that. I think this is going to happen, though, within the CAP, progress is a little slow on this. They are starting to implement projects that would not be relevant until 2016. At the same time, and this is very encouraging, within the CAP there is already some movement towards greening, towards looking at ways to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

When I was preparing for the hearing, I read a volume of documents that big; and there were really fabulous pieces of information. 138 000 organic farmers benefit from the CAP, so they help with healthier food but also with raising awareness in rural communities. In terms of how we approach it, of course we will monitor very closely what is happening within the budget, internally and externally, how we use our development money, but also what we do in our own buildings: how day in, day out we are part of this fight against the danger of climate change.



4-035

**Jonathan Arnott (EFDD).** – You told us that you were happy to run out of time when my colleague asked you about ending the travelling circus and having just a single seat for Parliament. Can you understand that for many taxpayers in the United Kingdom, just like in Italy, the idea of moving Parliament backwards and forwards every month from Brussels to Strasbourg, at a cost of hundreds of millions a year, is symbolic of the lack of value for money in the EU budget. I want to believe that you mean your pledge when you say that you will seek high value for money from the EU budget. Will you support a single seat to save taxpayers' money? Will you support pre-set failure criteria for all EU-funded projects so that we know whether they are a success or a failure? And will you support cuts to the bloated number of European Union staff at a time when the EU's army of bureaucrats is bigger than the British Army?

4-036

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I am getting worried about the size of the British army.

*(Applause)*

On your first question – I say this very respectfully – you know that the question you are asking me is a matter of treaty change. Some of my colleagues in the humanitarian community sometimes say that I am Wonder Woman. Let me tell you that I am not.

A treaty change is a treaty change. If this is desired by those who have signed the treaty, that would be a matter for them. In terms of how we screen our activities for cost-effectiveness, this is what performance budgeting is all about. We are moving into performance budgeting with the new MFF. I think it would be very important for the Parliament to continue to keep us on our toes as we do so.

It is not easy, because with performance budgeting, we have to define not how much money we spend on what, but the result of this spending. The big problem we always face is that this often pushes us to measure what is easy to measure, rather than what is most important. Performance focus may then lead to unintended negative consequences. So we have to take it prudently and carefully forward but there is no excuse whatsoever in the demand that you framed in your question – and that I am sure would come from many others – that we do so. I am very sincerely committed to working towards this objective.

4-037

**Esteban González Pons (PPE).** – Señora comisaria propuesta, los ciudadanos europeos se cuestionan cada vez más la relevancia del proyecto europeo. Crecen el euroescepticismo y también nuestra capacidad para afrontar la crisis económica y otras circunstancias, como, por ejemplo, los efectos del veto ruso sobre nuestros agricultores y nuestros pescadores. El objetivo de los presupuestos es un objetivo político, pero el presupuesto europeo tiene cada vez menos ambición y, de hecho, los líderes europeos año tras año parecen considerar que el presupuesto es excesivo, cuando ni siquiera alcanza el 1 % de la riqueza de la Unión Europea.

Por eso, le pregunto: ¿se siente usted capaz de convencer a los miembros del Consejo de que un pequeño aumento del presupuesto, marginal para sus tesoros, tendría efectos muy positivos para la Unión? O, dicho en otros términos, ¿comparte usted que con menos recursos es imposible hacer más Europa?

4-038

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > It is regrettable that, in the end of the negotiations for the MFF, the decision was for a smaller MFF than the Commission proposed. But we now have the MFF we have. I think it is more important than anything to focus on implementing what we have and then demonstrating the value of what we do. That takes me to your very important point – everybody who loves Europe must be worried about it – that so many people are losing faith in Europe. That is not without a reason. We can talk about the reasons and who is to be blamed and who is to take responsibility, but I will talk only about the responsibility of the Commission in that respect.

It is for us to be much more out there, telling the story of what we do. I was visiting one of the MEPs a couple of days ago and I asked: do you know that in my capital, the city where I was born, we have a metro because of the European Union, and that makes it possible for people to go work; more businesses flourish; there is the chance for more prosperity, and it is because of the European Union. But we are not telling these stories enough – and why? It just kills me.

In my current job, when I started, my staff – excellent people, by the way – almost revolted on me because I would insist on visibility for what we Europeans do to help others. And they would say: no, we should not be doing that; it is not about this; it is about doing the right thing. But it is about this as well, because unless people know what we do, why would they support us? That is where I would take my job on the road as well.

4-039

**Derek Vaughan (S&D).** – Commissioner-designate, we usually focus on spending EU funds and on trying to ensure that funds are spent properly, without error or fraud. But as you say in your written replies to us, we should also focus more on better delivery. That is why in future we should monitor whether EU funds are helping us to meet targets and whether they are

having an economic impact by securing jobs and growth. This will be important for traditional EU funds, and also important for the 300 billion investment initiative which is proposed by the Commission President.

My first question is how will you as Commissioner ensure that we both control EU funds and also monitor the effectiveness of funds in terms of meeting EU goals and delivering jobs and growth?

My second quick question is on the backlog of payments. I think there is wide recognition now that there is an issue with payments, but what is stopping the solution is the Council – a political decision in the Council. It is not about finances, it is about a political decision in the Council. So my second question to you is how will you persuade the Council to take a different position on payments to help us solve the problem?

4-040

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > It is true that there is always a bit of tension in the area of this balance between better spending and results and control systems to guarantee this better spending. I believe that controls are a necessity, otherwise why would our taxpayers trust us with anything? The best way to provide controls is to build smart systems where there is an incentive to identify errors and correct them early, where people are well trained and they know what they are doing – in other words, we have to concentrate much more on the supporting environment, and of course at the same time we have to have very strong control systems in place, because any time something really bad happens with our budget, this pushes us years back in terms of earning the trust of our people. Absolutely not acceptable. Zero tolerance for fraud is not just a slogan, it is a necessity. If there was a smaller number than zero, I would have used it, because it is a necessity.

But to me, to bring the cost of controls down, the best way to do it is each and every one of us to embrace a culture of results and accountability rather than to have these people who are the controllers and these people who are the project designers. We all have to share this common objective, and it is possible to be done.

On the Council, I believe in walking your talk. I believe that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In other words, I want to put in front of the Council somebody who is credible. I do what I say, and that is how I hope to approach them.

4-041

**Bernd Kölmel (ECR).** – Frau Kommissarin! Wir haben jetzt sehr viel über Ausgaben geredet. Ich würde Sie gerne auch etwas zu den Einnahmen fragen. Wir haben im Moment ein System, das ursprünglich auf doch namhaften originären eigenen Einnahmen der EU und

Beiträgen der Mitgliedstaaten basierte. Durch den Abbau von Zollschranken werden natürlich die eigenen Einnahmen immer weniger. Dementsprechend müssen die Beiträge der Mitgliedstaaten steigen.

Jetzt ist es so, dass wir Bruttozahler und Nettozahler haben. Die Bruttozahler zahlen etwas ein und erhalten alles wieder zurück, die Nettozahler erhalten nicht alles zurück.

Meine Frage ist: Macht es denn Sinn, dass ein Land hohe Beiträge bezahlt und einen Teil wieder zurückerhält? Kann man da nicht das System umstellen, dass gar nicht mehr so viel an die EU gezahlt wird, um damit Verwaltungsaufwand zu sparen?

4-042

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. > Thank you. That would have been wonderful. Anything that could simplify our budget would be wonderful, because it has indeed become too complex on the revenue side and on the expenditure management side.

On the revenue side, I would go back to my point on own-resources. I do see the way we now raise revenues for Europe to be contributing to these tensions you talked about. But as long as we are where we are, I think that we have some work to do to more clearly define the value of the European budget for our citizens – including those in the net-payer countries. It is not very well known how much they benefit from the EU budget, because we are not really good at measuring how much goes back to companies from net-payer countries when they implement a project in, say, the cohesion policy area.

We have to find a way to build more bridges across different categories of countries and not divide them. Of course, the simplest bridge would have been that we just take out this whole contagious issue. You know that it costs four days of work of Europeans to get the European budget. I would have been best if we could get four days of work, we frame the budget, then we implement it and – as you said – it would have reduced a lot of this pressure. I am a pragmatic person. I will focus on operating within the environment we currently have and, of course, in the own group of resources give my thoughts around what may be a different environment.

4-043

**Michael Theurer** (ALDE). – Sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin! Wir haben in unserem Haushalt die Situation, dass zum einen 80 % des EU-Haushalts in der geteilten Zuständigkeit sind, also von den Mitgliedstaaten verwaltet werden. Hier gibt es immer wieder Diskussionen über die Qualität dieser Verwaltung, auch über die Verbindlichkeit, die politische Verbindlichkeit. Sind Sie bereit, Maßnahmen zu ergreifen, wie z. B. die *national*

*management declarations*, die dazu führen, dass die Mitgliedstaaten stärker in eine bessere Haushaltsführung einsteigen?

Außerdem haben wir nach wie vor eine klassische Haushaltsführung der Kameralistik. Wir haben im Parlament den Übergang in ein *performance based budgeting*, einen ergebnisorientierten Haushalt, diskutiert. Welche Maßnahmen planen Sie als Kommissarin in diesem Bereich, um hier voranzukommen? Halten Sie es auch für möglich, Vorschläge zu unterbreiten, die das System der *déclaration d'assurance* reformieren?

4-044

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Yes, I am very much in favour of national declarations. It is regrettable that only four of our Member States have decided to adopt them, and these are not the Member States where we have the highest problems in terms of implementation of EU-funded projects or programmes.

How to go about it? The Commission has actually laid down a proposal on this. Now the question for us is how to convince Member States that this may be a good idea, and also how to overcome some of the legal difficulties facing some of our Member States in actually doing it, because federal states are one category, and we have to think through how we can deal with federal states. But that is the productive way to engage more, to have greater ownership, and to bring in the national parliaments so that they are involved in the oversight of EU funds. That is a very good avenue to pursue.

I am not really confident that we have come to the best possible way of working with Member States. We are still at the point where the Commission and Member States in many cases do not work as one team for one objective, and the Commission staff are perceived as being the watchdog. I go back to a point I made earlier: it is all about mind-set. If we have a mind-set focused on results, then things move better.

On results, I aim for them, but I also am very cautious. Do first what is easier to do, learn and progress.

4-045

**Liadh Ní Riada (GUE/NGL).** – We are aware of the work that you carried out as Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, so really we seem to be drifting away from commitments to peace and sustainable development policies and towards sectarian militarised pursuits. This is what happened in Iraq and Libya and what is now happening in Mali, Syria and Palestine. We need to increase aid from the EU to these people and to UNRRA, which is now actually at a lower level than it was in 2013.

Most European Member States are facing a demographic challenge and supporting Frontex while people are left to die on the shores of Lampedusa – reinforcing Frontex while aid for development, international cooperation, immigration and asylum-seeker programmes are kept at miserable levels. This is certainly a world that I do not want my children, or yours, to live in.

So what concrete proposals do you have to ensure that the EU commits itself to the real process of peacebuilding?

4-046

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. > That is certainly a question that will be very difficult to answer in two minutes, but let me try, because I actually care very deeply about it.

First, on Frontex and development aid: my conviction, and I would pursue this with my colleagues if I am confirmed, is that it would be wrong to approach the immigration challenge only by focusing on the end where people are coming to Europe. We have to have a twin-pronged approach to this. First, in the countries where people come from. Why are they so desperate to risk their lives in broken boats to come to Europe? Because conditions in their countries are horrible. Investment in peace, security and development is crucial to uproot this problem where it begins.

Second, the networks of people-smugglers: we have to have international cooperation, very strong cooperation in this area, and only then comes how we tackle the problem of when people are arriving here and what we do about them. I certainly hope that we would have it in our hearts to do more for these people.

I believe that conflict prevention and conflict resolution has to become an obsession politically in terms of development funds, because the world I live in still as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid is a very dangerous world where fragility has increased enormously because of two factors – because of extremism and because of climate change. What is happening in this fragile world is not only tragedies of innocent people growing up – and we now have a footprint of suffering that is worse than during the Second World War, so for the first time in modern history – but also, this footprint of suffering generates very serious and direct threats to us.

4-047

**Jonathan Arnott (EFDD).** – You tell us the story of your city in Bulgaria with the metro system because of EU funding. You have given that as an example of why the public should be more pro-European-Union. The reason I think people are losing faith in Europe is precisely because of that – because they understand that it is their money, taxpayers’ money, which has been sent to Brussels and then Brussels claims the credit for it. In my view the one-size-fits-all mentality, the idea that Brussels can centralise power, take responsibility from national governments and then expect citizens to be grateful for it, is part of the problem.

My question to you is this: is there even one concrete area of spending, one example of something where you think control should pass back from Brussels to the Member States, to be spent locally by the local people?

4-048

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > The metro in Bulgaria has a station called 'Europe', not 'European Commission', because people know there that it is the citizens of Europe who made it possible for us.

But on the question of where power should be, I am a very firm believer that power should be at the lowest possible level where it can be exercised successfully. I agree that there are some areas where there is no room even for the national government. It is, for example, the local fire brigade that saves people when there is a fire.

But there are some areas where the collective is much stronger. When we talk about research, obviously when we network our universities and our researchers, we are better equipped to compete in a world of giants because we are competing against countries like the United States, China and India. Certainly, even the United Kingdom on its own would find itself a bit less comfortable with this, but together we are very strong.

We should now have a First Vice-President for Better Regulation. You will see us coming to you, saying that here is something that we have been doing but it does not make sense for it to be done in this way. We will be coming to say that. We are already doing it. We have a REFIT programme. This is a programme to take and get rid of things that are either old or no longer necessary or indeed where the principle of subsidiarity means that they are done better at national level.

I am also Commissioner for Civil Protection. There was some talk about building civil protection capability in Europe. I said 'no'. Our civil protection capability is the network of civil protection capacities of our Member States. Our role is to interconnect it and make more effective deployment possible.

4-049

**Siegfried Mure an (PPE).** – Thank you for what you have said so far concerning the outstanding payments via the strategy that you have outlined, which seems very reasonable to me.

My question to you is linked to your mission letter. President-elect Juncker said that you would come up with a plan for privatising the payments during the first weeks in office. The question is if you can already give us some details on what criteria you will apply, which priority areas, which bills the Commission might be able to treat as a priority.



My second question is linked to the MFF review. Basically the MFF regulation states that the national allocations for cohesion policy should also be reviewed in 2016, which might, of course, lead to certain bottlenecks in terms of investments in some beneficiary Member States. What is your view there, especially against the background that, of course, EU funds should lead to growth and jobs in those Member States?

4-050

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > To answer your first question, I have already stressed that we are working in all the so-called spending DGs on measures to better plan and implement payments.

In the DG I am responsible for, ECON, we were the first to see this problem because in our case, crises have increased; you do not pay, people die, so we had to be very firm on addressing the issue, raising additional payment credits but also managing the credits we have, and what we are doing are three things:

Firstly, we have prioritised life-saving activities and we looked, activity by activity, at what can be postponed; what would not suffer from being postponement.

Secondly, we have structured our partners into two categories: those who could bear a slower payment schedule and those who cannot, and what we ended up with was that with the UN agencies we reduced advance payments from 80% to 40%. They can handle it, they have a big mass of funding; but for the small NGOs we retained the 80%, to prevent them from having to borrow, to prevent what I said about burdening our taxpayers with interest payments. Why would we do that?

The third thing we have done is to look at the implementation of these projects in the context of our partners – because we work with, say, the United States very closely and with Member States – where we can work together and the result, for example, was that in South Sudan the US has taken a bit more now. At the time we had a tight payment. We do more today. That is the philosophy we would be applying.

4-051

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D).** – Ms Georgieva, youth unemployment increased from 16% to 24% between 2007 and 2013. We are speaking as well about 50% in Spain and Greece. Mr Juncker said that we are risking a whole generation of young people settling for good in a 29th Member State of unemployed and excluded people. What is your assessment of the

situation regarding the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Scheme? As you know, the Youth Employment Initiative will run out of funds in 2015. What are your views on the proposal to increase EU budget funding regarding the youth employment initiative as of the 2016 budget? Finally, Socialists and Democrats and some international organisations asked for EUR 21 billion over the whole period 2014-2020. What are your views on that figure?

4-052

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > The Youth Employment Initiative is already producing tangible results. I was looking at some of the accelerated engagements with some of our Member States. I have not seen exactly what it does for Greece, but I was very impressed that in France and in Spain together we are talking about 750 000 young people who would have a better chance because of it. Of course, we would follow implementation and we would see how it is doing, and if it is doing well I am very much in favour of extending it. This is where the mid-term review and the process we are taking forward is so crucial, because we are likely to have some margin on the commitment side that can be used for new initiatives and it might be possible that we then do more for the young people of Europe.

I will repeat myself, but it is true that when we see our young people packing their bags and leaving, making other countries more productive and more competitive, this is a very sad story. We have to do everything we can to stop it, to prevent it from happening. On making it up to 21 billion, let us see. I need to come back to you on this, because I do not have a clear take on what room we have and what the opportunity costs of doing it would be. This is where this whole point of the President-elect demanding that we are very clear as a team – not individual Commissioners, but as a team – to prioritise better is such an important point, so we will come as a team on that point.

4-053

**Jan Marian Olbrycht (PPE).** – Commissioner-designate, first of all, let me express how glad I am that it is you again, here, after five years, because you are one of the Commissioners who were very well received by the Parliament, so we have a good experience with you and I hope that your next five years are as efficient as your last five years. So this is the longest period working in the European Commission with the European Parliament.

I have a very political question and a very fragile one. You wrote in your answers what you think about the revision of the MFF. We will have the debate in the Parliament, in fact, about what it really means, to make the revision and possible changes at the end of 2016 at the latest. This is a very difficult question to discuss amongst ourselves, because we will have differences among us and that is why it is a little provocative to you; but the question is: what do you think today, before taking up the post? When should we start? When is the best moment to do it?

4-054

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > For the Commission, if everything goes as initially planned, the moment we start is 1 November and not a day later – and I know that 1 November happens to be a Saturday, but nonetheless – because we absolutely have no time to waste to think about how we are to approach this revision. You know it is not admired by everybody as an objective. There are some who are concerned that it may not be even politically feasible to do this. It will only be feasible if we work very hard on the credibility of what we have put forward.

From what I understand, among those Member States that are more concerned about doing anything of this nature, the predominant view is that it would be all about justifying more spending and not necessarily doing it in a very prudent manner. The only comfort we can give them is the evidence of performance. This is what I stressed in my opening comments; that the Commission as a whole has to demonstrate that we are to be trusted to put forward proposals that reflect the best interests of the European people, are well thought through and are not the result of some kind of backroom wheeling and dealing. You know it, I know it; it will be difficult, but if we think about the competitiveness of Europe, we have to be able to provide resources that accelerate this trend. If we come up with EUR 300 billion in a convincing manner and implement it we will be on a much better footing later on.

4-055

(S&D). –

4-056

**Georgi Pirinski (S&D).** – I am sure you are aware that the overwhelming challenge before the Union is the increasing inequalities and disparities. What will you do so that cohesion policy actually tackles this overwhelming challenge and make countries understand that this is in everyone's benefit? Will you help skills being raised in the countries that are most deficient in them? And will you work with the European Chamber of Accountants so that they take a broader than simply a strictly accountant's view of spending?

4-057

K

4-058

**Mary Honeyball (S&D).** – Commissioner-designate, as you have already indicated, our policies and programmes have to deliver to all our citizens and need to reach those who have traditionally been excluded from being active in the economy. What can be done at all levels, from the Commission through to national and regional authorities, to ensure that we have the best personnel possible managing EU funds, with those ends in mind? People who are able to maximise the inclusion of women and others and deliver genuine added value and sustainable benefit for every euro spent on our programmes.

The recent Staff Regulation revision covering EU staff had numerous aims, including of course improving performance. How will you oversee the continuing implementation of that regulation so that inclusion goals become part of the performance expectations, especially in a situation where we face financial constraints and staff cuts?

We now have great potential with the EUR 300 billion growth initiative. How will you ensure that we have the right quality and number of staff to make sure that women and minorities benefit from the boost it can offer in terms of long-term positive results?

4-059

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > The new Staff Regulation does emphasise ways in which we can make our own staff more diverse. We are going to face a fairly serious problem of replenishing staff because of historical reasons. The original Member States have contributed most to staff who today are reaching retirement age and will leave in bulk.

But this is also an opportunity on the staff side to make an effort for recruitment that makes us more inclusive and more diverse on our own staff. That takes me to this being a prerequisite for doing the same when we work with Member States because, if we have that mindset and we ourselves are diverse and inclusive, this would be reflected in the work we do in Member States.

We have to look into how our programmes and projects can contribute. Of course, one way to do this is by targeting excluded groups, and we do some of this, as you know. But a much more effective way is by including these groups in mainstream programmes as much as possible. I talked about gender mainstreaming in the programmes of the European Union and the fact that we have a strategy and a plan in place in this regard, but it is not just about women. For anybody who feels excluded this is bad for them, but it is also our loss because we are missing out on a talent, and the practice of having markers, of having some reporting and of taking stock, but also engaging through seminars that we will pursue.

4-060

**Le Président.** – Ainsi s'achève la série de questions émanant de la commission des budgets. Je passe la présidence à Mme la présidente de la commission du contrôle budgétaire.

4-061

**VORSITZ: INGEBORG GRÄSSLE**

4-063

**Petri Sarvamaa (PPE).** – Commissioner-designate, our role in the Committee on Budgetary Control is to make sure that taxpayers' money is well protected. We have to be able to tell the citizens that our money has been used appropriately in all Member States.

Now we all know that the estimated error rate has increased every year since 2009, but we also know that on many occasions the Member States' authorities did actually have the needed information from the beginning, and still they asked for reimbursement; for example, in 56% of the regional policy transactions affected by error. Now as far as I can see, we have to do some naming and shaming, but not call it that. Because there is no shame in taking care of the taxpayers' money. Quite the opposite.

So, my question to you, Commissioner, is this: are you ready to locate the problems where they are, as well as deal with them, so that we finally get rid of this disease?

4-064

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > On numerous occasions today I have stressed that I believe this is absolutely crucial, our accountability to the taxpayer; not only doing it, but also being able to present it in a clear and convincing manner.

The error rate – actually I am told that this year we might expect that finally this trend has changed, in other words that there is a decline. Let us see how it would come. The error rate has been persistently above 2% in the programmes that are under shared management. In programmes under Commission management, the error rate has stayed at or under. I am proud that in my current job it is under 2%.

So clearly the attention has to focus on shared management and has to focus, of course, on the countries where we have more to do. When the error rate is high that does not necessarily show that the country is doing a very poor job. Sometimes it shows that the country is actually more honest; that there is more effort and more reporting on the error rate, and in this sense I agree with you that disclosure of who is where is absolutely necessary. We already do it, but like you, we said we should not name and shame. Like you, I think that name and

shame could potentially turn into hide and seek; it might create a bit of incentive for the authorities to report even less, especially at the lower level.

So my approach would be to put information out, as you said. Make sure that it is very visible and the red light is flashing, and then work as hard as possible to create more knowledge, more conditions and more understanding of that problem at the level of Member States.

4-065

**Clare Moody (S&D).** – We appreciate your answers on the payment crisis and determination to stick to the Commission’s proposals. But recent years have brought stalemate between Parliament and the Commission, on one side, and the Council on the other.

Since the 2011 budget, the agreements reached on conciliation cannot be seen as balanced deals reflecting the ambitions and concerns of both arms of the budget authority. More often it has been a ‘take it or leave it’ deal pushed for by some Member States; and this year, to the dismay of some in the Council, the Commission asked for more money to mitigate the payment problem through draft amending budgets, thus reinforcing the deepening mistrust between the Council, Commission and Parliament.

The Council’s position is often unclear, with discrepancies between positions taken by heads of state and the positions of those involved in conciliation. We need structural change to avoid this annual battle. What specifically are you ready to propose to secure a more streamlined and efficient budget procedure than the long and complex one we have now?

4-066

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > That is a question that I hope to return to after I experience some of the negotiations myself. I hope to have some thoughts and maybe collectively we can bring a more rational budgeting process for Europe. To be honest, at the moment my concentration is to get in. We have a deadline of 17 November to complete the negotiations – to get in the negotiations and come out with a deal. We will walk into the negotiation with different proposals, with different numbers. These numbers are very important, but in the end the most important number is the one we walk out with. Having said that, we have an immediate, very urgent problem to resolve. That being said, I agree that we need to find a way to create conditions for a more rational, more pragmatic budgeting.

My impression of the budget, coming from a small-spending DG, is that it is a highly complicated exercise and not necessarily what we would have done if we were to follow best budget management processes. So why we are where we are – we all know the history behind it – how to get out of it? Here is the issue. We need everybody to agree – we need the Council

to agree, Parliament to agree, the Commission to agree. I think the Commission is the easiest, because we are highly motivated to find a pathway to a better process. I think that if we come up with a common objective and say, wait a minute, let us apply some common sense to it, and maybe with a couple of willing ... I am out of time but I never give up. I will finish with this.

4-067

**Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR).** – The ECR Group has great respect for the fact that the money we spend here is the European taxpayers' money. Therefore it is also very important for us that you as Commissioner guarantee us that you will be a true budget hawk when it comes to wasteful spending – a Commissioner who will slam down clearly on the many areas where, for instance, the Court of Auditors year after year has proven wasteful spending, a lack of added value, rather than just carrying out across-the-board savings on the budget.

For us it is a huge difference in calling, for instance, for funds for much needed cross-border infrastructure projects or this kind of wasteful spending by the Court of Auditors. Therefore we would like your take on how you would like to cut the EU budget. Would you do it across the board, or would you do it in the areas where the money is not well used?

4-068

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I might have lost some part of the question. If the question is how I would propose to cut the EU budget, my answer is that the budget is a product of very intense negotiations and it is what it is. My job is to make sure we implement it. And we implement it as well as we can.

Of course as we implement we have to be always mindful and watchful for priorities that have been identified, in case they do not deliver, and then have the ability to make appropriate reallocations. It is not an easy task to do, for reasons that are related to the previous question, because of the complexity of our budgeting process in which commitments are made in great detail on many parameters making flexibility in budgeting – which is a rule in sound budget management – so much more difficult.

I can promise you that I will work very closely with the Court of Auditors on two things. One is on following-up the Court of Auditors' reports and recommendations. I very much welcome that the Court of Auditors itself is increasingly interested in performance audits and I would work with them on that, but we still have the main, the bread and butter job they do on error rates.



I recognise the fact that error rates are just that: errors that are happening. Luckily, of the 4.8% error rate last year, only 0.2% is fraud. But I will say I take back my 'only' because 0.2% is 0.2% too much. Still, what we need to recognise is that we have a measurement that sometimes is interpreted not in the intended manner and yet this is the measurement we are measured against. We have to strive to improve. I am sure I will come back to this.

4-069

**Kaja Kallas (ALDE).** – Commissioner-designate, in your written reply you stressed that you want to explain the European budget's added value to our citizens to a greater extent. You also say that you intend to make better use of digital technologies to improve the transparency of European spending. My question is: what will be the concrete actions you will take in your first year in office to achieve this goal? And the second question is: what measures will you take to further improve access to information for beneficiaries of EU funds?

4-070

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > In my first year in office I will start from the DGs that report directly to me and see what more we can do to improve the information systems and the transparency of what we provide to the public. There is a lot that can be done to connect databases that exist and a lot that can be done to simplify the information that is put out.

I talked a little about complexity. Technology can help us, but technology is not going to resolve a conceptual problem. Because these are technically very qualified people, they tend to provide information in the language that technically qualified people understand and we need interpretation, not linguistically, but from a technical language to an understandable language. We need to look at the costs of making all these improvements.

Obviously we cannot just venture and do it without any thinking, but I do intend to look into ways in which access to information for the public is constantly improved; not improved in one shot, but so that it becomes a process of continuous improvement, that we use the information we have more effectively to get it to the public so that the public can hold us accountable. There were a couple of things in my preparation for the hearing which I tried to find on the Internet and I gave up. Obviously this is not acceptable. So in my first year in office I will concentrate on my team – what we do – and then of course next year continue to work with others.

4-071

**Rina Ronja Kari (GUE/NGL).** – Fru formand! Velkommen! I det forløbne år har vi hørt om rigtig mange virksomheder, der får EU-tilskud, altså penge i hånden til at flytte arbejdspladser fra et EU-land til et andet. Det er naturligvis totalt uacceptabelt! Det er jo

klart, at skatteborgerne ikke skal betale for at flytte arbejdspladser rundt på den måde, og det har Deres forgænger faktisk også bekræftet.

Problemet opstår, når det skal undersøges, om der er sket et misbrug. Da er det blevet en praksis, at man accepterer at få en skriftlig erklæring fra den virksomhed, der har fået det økonomiske tilskud, og at man altså ikke undersøger problemet selv. Derfor vil jeg gerne spørge Dem: "Hvilke helt konkrete tiltag vil De træffe for at sikre, at vi ikke giver EU-penge til at flytte arbejdspladser mellem et EU-land og et andet EU-land? Og vil De arbejde for, at der indføres sanktioner, altså f.eks. en blacklistning af virksomheder, som modtager tilskuddet og misbruger tilskuddet?"

4-072

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I am not familiar with the exact problem you have described. I will have to study it to be able to answer more credibly.

But, on a more general level, whenever anyone gets money from the EU and then misuses it, this has to be corrected. To make it very simple: if you get money and do not use it for the intended purpose, you have to pay it back. These corrections are a very powerful signal not to do it again.

But unfortunately, as regards the specifics of the question you asked, I just do not know enough to be able to answer it. I will make sure that my team and I follow it up directly with you.

4-073

**Bart Staes (Verts/ALE).** – Mevrouw de commissaris, laat mij eerst en vooral mijn waardering uitspreken voor het werk dat u de voorbije vijf jaar heeft verricht. Ik denk dat iedereen u zeer erkentelijk daarvoor is en we zijn er allemaal zeker van dat u de komende vijf jaar ook uw volledige toewijding aan uw nieuwe job zult geven. In uw schriftelijke verklaring zegt u dat u staat voor een OLAF, een antifraudedienst, die streng en efficiënt moet zijn en gerespecteerd moet worden. Ook wij zijn hier voorstander van, maar we stellen een aantal problemen vast.

Eerst en vooral stellen we vast dat de resultaten die OLAF bereikt, niet altijd op de juiste manier kunnen worden geverifieerd of gekwantificeerd en dat er discussie bestaat over de manier waarop OLAF zelf een aantal cijfers opkrikt. Tevens stellen we vast dat 29% van het OLAF-personeel eigenlijk op zoek is naar ander werk en zich dus niet thuis voelt in die dienst. We constateren ook dat er een groot conflict is tussen het toezichthoudend comité en OLAF, en dat de huidige directeur eigenlijk niet toelaat dat er op een gedegen manier

gecontroleerd wordt. Hoe gaat u de komende jaren proberen dit soort problemen tegen te gaan?

4-074

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I think of OLAF as a very valuable institution, not only for the protection of the EU's financial interests, which is its main objective, but also because from a policy standpoint it plays and can play an even bigger role vis-à-vis our Member States. As you know, my mandate vis-à-vis OLAF is very clearly defined. On the policy side I have responsibility and on the investigation side I have none, actually. If I am to be very straight on that, I do believe that OLAF's independence is paramount and thus I would be the last person to do anything that in any way can even create an impression that I might be stepping out of line as regards my responsibility.

What I see that I can do in my position as responsible for policies is to engage very closely with OLAF and see whether we are prioritising well. Is there something that OLAF is doing on the policy front that can be even more useful – anti-fraud, anti-corruption strategies in Member States, what can we do there? Secondly, as Vice-President for staff, if I am confirmed, I am as concerned about the results of the survey in OLAF as I am for some other areas of our directorate-generals. I would be keenly interested to follow up on this survey. Measures are being taken there and in other places. I would be very prudent in making sure that staff are able to do the important job given to them. They are in one of the most stressful parts of the Commission and we have an obligation to create a healthy environment for them.

4-075

**Marco Valli (EFDD).** – Grazie Presidente. In preparazione a quest'audizione ho letto le risposte che ha fornito al questionario al Parlamento europeo e sono contento di leggere che intraprenderà una lotta serrata contro la frode e la corruzione. Credo proprio che un pilastro fondamentale di qualsiasi istituzione politica che gestisce delle risorse finanziarie sia quello di assicurarsi che siano spese bene e in modo trasparente.

Purtroppo, soprattutto in Italia, attorno agli stanziamenti pubblici nazionali ed europei da decenni esiste un interesse da parte delle mafie, interesse comprovato da decine di indagini e arresti da parte delle procure che rimarcano un problema strutturale inaccettabile e da risolvere internamente. Il problema affligge in primo luogo il contribuente italiano onesto, costretto a subire una delle tassazioni più alte del mondo per pagare il costo di questa corruzione diffusa accumulata negli anni, ma soprattutto quello europeo in un momento dove le uniche risorse disponibili allo sviluppo arrivano proprio da finanziamenti dell'Unione.

Per questo le chiedo se intende ascoltare questo mio appello e prendere in questa sede un impegno per intraprendere qualche azione speciale di controllo in tutti quei paesi in cui esiste un comprovato abuso di fondi europei associato al fenomeno della mafia?

4-076

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Yes, categorically. We look very closely at the use of funds. We have control systems that more and more often pick up problems before they become very serious. To go back to OLAF: last year, as a result of investigations, OLAF recovered EUR 170 million. That is a very significant amount for the European budget, but it also shows how seriously we take this issue of recovering funds. Admittedly, not all of this involves fraud and corruption. Some of it is just misuse – somebody getting money and not using it for the intended purpose, but a good purpose nevertheless.

My main focus would be to look at what we do with countries and how countries themselves improve because, with regard to Italy, everybody in this room has probably seen dozens of movies about the Mafia doing bad things, but they also have seen your prosecutors in Italy fighting the Mafia, even risking their lives. They do that; they must be supported; and we in the EU have an obligation to stand by them.

For a change, I will stop with some time to spare – to pay you back for when I took more time.

4-077

**Louis Aliot (NI).** – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, vous avez évoqué tout à l'heure les résultats obtenus, qu'il fallait mettre en regard des euros engagés par notre institution. Cependant, vous constatez dans le même temps que les citoyens de nos États perdent la foi, non pas dans l'Europe – car nous sommes tous des Européens –, mais dans ce système européen. Je crois que, dans cette perte de confiance, la responsabilité de la Commission européenne est totalement engagée.

Vous avez donné l'exemple sympathique de l'endroit où vous vivez et du métro financé par l'Europe, mais permettez-moi de vous parler de l'endroit d'où je viens et où la politique européenne fait des dégâts, notamment par le biais de la directive "détachement" qui permet, à l'intérieur de l'Union, des distorsions de concurrence qui mettent des travailleurs au chômage et des entreprises sur la paille. L'Union pose donc aujourd'hui des problèmes plus qu'elle n'en résout et elle fait le bonheur des uns mais aussi le malheur de beaucoup d'autres. Or, je ne vois pas au sein de l'institution que vous représentez un examen de conscience sur le fonctionnement de celle-ci.

Mais je voudrais surtout vous interroger sur la fraude, la corruption et l'évasion fiscale. Concernant le problème du scandale, par exemple, avec la Catalogne, où un dirigeant espagnol a bénéficié des largesses de l'Europe et les a placées dans un paradis fiscal, Andorre, que compte faire la Commission?

4-078

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Obviously, we always have to strive to improve – improve the policies we support, improve the way we use taxpayers' money – no question about it! I am well aware that there are those in Europe who think that some of Europe's policies, especially the free movement of workers, are creating problems locally. But we also have to look at the benefits the free movement of workers has provided for Member States; and the benefits are very, very, very significant.

Beyond that, beyond the specific problem of free movement of workers, we Europeans have to look out at the world and recognise that, from a competitiveness standpoint, we are obliged to work together and build an economy that is big enough and strong enough, and a market that is strong enough, so we can continue to compete. We are still the largest economy in the world, accounting for over 20% of gross national product, but our share is shrinking. Our people are not going to have great lives unless we reverse this trend. It is not going to happen if small countries go it alone. In my heart of hearts I believe that for Europe to be together is a quality-of-life issue for our people. I am not familiar with the case you raised. I am sorry that I cannot answer today, but I will come back to you and try to respond to your questions.

4-079

**Tamás Deutsch (PPE).** – The last discharge report asked for binding commitments from the Commission to resolve the reservations of the annual activity reports, especially in the area of agricultural and structural funds. I read your replies to our written questions, but I am still wondering how response times to irregularities could be shortened even more.

We expect the Commissioner to have zero tolerance for irregularities and fraud. Therefore my question to you, dear Commissioner-designate, is this: what will you do to concentrate on the real problems where they occur following a risk-based approach so that the response time to irregularities can be further shortened and at the same time the bureaucracy of controls can be reduced?

Would you, after this, be committed to freezing payments in repeated cases of persistent irregularities and fraud?

4-080

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > I would once again say: zero tolerance to fraud. Zero, zero, zero. And again I would repeat it. If there was a smaller number than zero I would go for this smaller number. I think it is so poisonous to tolerate it, and I do not think anybody in this room would disagree with this.

Maybe I will take your two points on risk-based and simplification and then on freezing of funds specifically.

We are moving towards a risk-based control system more and more. We are looking very carefully where the risks are repetitive, where they are bigger, what are the origins of these risks and what needs to be done.

We have the help of the Court of Auditors and of our own internal audit when they carry it out, especially at the specificity of the spending DGs at that level. But we also are very mindful that we have to simplify: some people understand the rules, some people comply with the rules. And to be honest, what I see more and more is that the problem is not the Commission; the problem is more in the Member States, where they are kind of gold-plating the rules for implementation of EU projects. And that has been in some cases the number one reason for more errors. And that is something that we should address.

On freezing – categorically yes, especially if it is repetitive, and especially when it could have been seen but was not, or it was seen and it was not acted upon. And that we do and we will continue to do.

4-081

**Daniele Viotti (S&D).** – Signora Commissaria buongiorno, nel questionario nell'introduzione che ha fatto questa mattina, nelle risposte che ha dato nella prima parte lei ha definito una priorità assoluta l'affrontare la crisi dei pagamenti e affrontare l'approvazione del DAV 3 del 2014 e la posizione di bilancio del 2015.

La mia domanda è: questa Commissione garantisce a noi e al Parlamento europeo che si atterrà alla proposta fatta dalla Commissione nella fase di conciliazione che stiamo per affrontare?

La seconda domanda che intendo farle è questa: gli Stati membri sottovalutano sempre più la capacità del bilancio dell'Unione europea di essere strumento di *governance* e riducono

continuamente i volumi destinati alla crescita, il Parlamento europeo ha più volte proposto che la Commissione tenga conto pienamente di questa tendenza nella votazione dei piani di bilancio degli Stati nel semestre europeo, lei che proposte ha per sostenere questa richiesta del Parlamento europeo?

Infine, come intende lavorare con i membri del suo collegio, in particolare il vicepresidente Dombrovskis e il Commissario Moscovici, su questi temi?

4-082

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > May I first clarify something? When you said local governments, did you mean national governments or local governments? I was not sure. National? OK.

Let me start with a very obvious thing. We have asked for the national declarations for assurance; we have promoted them; and we think they are a good way of engaging national parliaments. In terms of the case to be made for the programmes we design and implement, we are reaching out to parliaments. Actually, when we talk about interinstitutional relations, it is also interinstitutional relations not only involving European institutions, but also involving the institutions in our Member States.

If anything, I believe you will see this Commission to be much more out there. It is going to be a massive task to engage more directly because, here in Brussels we can have our fights and we can agree, but, in the end, what matters is what happens in our Member States. People are there in our Member States. For my track record, Mr Pirinski was a Member of the Bulgarian Parliament. I can say I was in our parliament in Bulgaria on numerous occasions. I think this engagement with the national parliaments is absolutely crucial, including going down to local authorities when we have projects at local level.

Regarding the negotiations, your question is very fair. Would you stick to your guns? You go into the negotiations; you have a proposal. Will you stick to it? Of course, I will stick to my proposal. The Commission has come up with this proposal not by looking at the ceiling and dropping some numbers from it. It is based on a very careful assessment and I believe we have a very serious problem and a serious set of risks. We have to overcome them.

4-083

**Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE).** – Commissioner, I would also like to stress that I am really looking forward to working with you, in the years to come, in the area of the budget and budgetary control, especially since you indicated that you want to shift the focus from inputs to results. That is very badly needed.

We have seen very many critical reports from the Court of Auditors with very strong recommendations on effectiveness that have almost always been ignored by both the Member States and, unfortunately, quite often by the Commission as well. One example: a five-billion-euro programme on the food processing industry. There was a very critical report that it had no added value. It should have been stopped right away.

So my first question is: can you be more specific about what you are going to do within the Commission. The second question is: how are you going to put pressure on the Member States to focus much more on effectiveness, since that is the biggest problem?

4-084

**Kristalina Georgieva**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you also for your offer for us to work together, I very much look forward to it. We have a major culture change in front of us and let us not blame too much the people who have to go through this culture change, because if you look at the history of the Commission, it has been primarily preoccupied with legislative harmonisation and the result is that we have hired excellent lawyers, primarily, and yet what we need now are people with financial and economic mind-sets.

We are recruiting, we have been recruiting them, but, when you think of a lawyer, the mind-set is more to do with process, for a good reason, whereas a results culture is about outcomes and not so much about the process. So we also have to use our staffing in the future to bring the kind of talent that would help us to – and again, do not get me wrong, I am all for lawyers because we need rule of law, we need orderly life, that is clear – what we are doing is looking for ways in which we can accelerate this kind of culture change and the best way to do it is when we as the Commission, as a team, are consistent on that. You are asking me, how we are going to do it? I have not had time for my own thoughts to answer that, but, in this particular case working with a group of spending Commissioners in creating a framework that would allow us to measure progress in this area on a very regular basis.

4-085

**Ingeborg Gräßle**, *Vorsitzende des Haushaltskontrollausschusses*. > Frau Kommissarin, für die EVP werde ich auch eine Frage stellen. Ich möchte zurückkommen auf die Frage der Funktionsprobleme des Amtes für Betrugsbekämpfung. In den letzten beiden Jahren hat der OLAF-Überwachungsausschuss eine gewisse Anzahl von Problemen und Unregelmäßigkeiten aufgedeckt, etwa illegale Untersuchungsmaßnahmen oder Machtmissbrauch von OLAF-Beamten. Diese können übrigens noch ein strafrechtliches Nachspiel haben. Diese Arbeitsergebnisse sind ja auch der Grund, warum dem Überwachungsausschuss jetzt das Leben so schwer gemacht wird.



Der jetzige Kommissar für Betrugsbekämpfung hat sich für all das nicht wirklich interessiert. Ihre Ausführungen zu diesem Thema waren ziemlich vage. Darf ich fragen, ob Sie in seine Fußstapfen treten und einfach weiter zuschauen, oder ob Sie wirklich etwas unternehmen? Was unternehmen Sie in den ersten sechs Monaten?

4-086

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > During my preparations for this hearing I have had, not only from questions but also in meetings, a sense that there is some tension between OLAF and the Supervisory Committee. Tension is not a very bad thing when you have people who argue and as a result some changes are made in a positive manner.

I am not in a position today to judge what it is, and I am also very much bound by the limitations of my role, because the Supervisory Committee and OLAF work on the investigative side, where I have no role. So I look at the things I have a role in, for example staffing. The Supervisory Committee has received more people to support them, so there is something positive that has happened.

I am aware that there is a question on where the budget and the staffing lie. This is a question that goes more into my alley. If any changes are made it has to be through a change to the regulations. Is it worth going for this change? I cannot judge at this moment. But what I can say is that I will continue to very carefully assess what falls within my area of responsibility and I will make these judgments extremely carefully because, if I do not protect the independence of OLAF, then we are in a very bad place; but within my authority and my responsibilities I will do all I can to make sure that OLAF has the standing, the reputation and the capacity to do its job, which is so important for all of us.

4-087

**Inés Ayala Sender (S&D).** – Bienvenida, señora Georgieva. Antes ha expresado usted muy gráficamente el penoso espectáculo intergubernamental y nocturno que da el Consejo cada siete años para adoptar un presupuesto que resulta cada vez menos comunitario, menos generoso, más controlado a gasto pasado y más laxo en el desarrollo y protección de los recursos propios comunitarios favorables al interés de los europeos, más allá de los egoísmos nacionales.

Por eso, en estos próximos cinco años, queremos conseguir recursos propios verdaderamente comunitarios y suficientes para las ambiciones de los quinientos millones de ciudadanos que intentan superar la peor de las crisis socioeconómicas después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. En este sentido, vemos con inquietud en sus palabras y en las del señor Juncker cómo el peso de los instrumentos financieros va creciendo en el presupuesto como una especie de milagro multiplicador de los panes y de los peces, y tememos una especie de «bancarización» o

«financiarización» del presupuesto europeo. Perdóneme la broma, pero, viniendo usted del Banco Mundial, ¿no querrá usted convertirnos en un banco? Este Parlamento, como usted sabe, tiene un presupuesto real para una economía real. ¿Cómo piensa garantizarlo?

Por otra parte, apreciamos mucho su ambición para el Grupo de alto nivel de recursos propios. La apoyamos y esperamos que cuente con este Parlamento para avanzar en los nuevos recursos, el IVA europeo o la tasa de transacciones financieras. Pero, mientras tanto, ¿qué medidas aplicará para evitar la pérdida que señala el tribunal de control de los recursos en las aduanas y también en el mal cómputo del PIB nacional?

4-088

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > On the first point, concerning own resources, it is very unfortunate. I am repeating myself, but I felt so sad when the negotiations on the MFF concluded where they concluded. My view is that we could have used the European budget in a more counter-cyclical manner rather than in a pro-cyclical manner. Our Member States had their difficulties – we have to recognise that – and the decision is what the decision is. We now have to concentrate on implementing what we have to the best of our ability.

I am certainly not at all interested in turning the European Commission into a bank, since we have the European Investment Bank. But I would like to see the European Commission using its financial resources in a more prolific and more creative way because we all accept the fact that money is not enough vis-à-vis the aspirations, the demands, that there are. If we can do more with the money we have, we must.

When you look at the objectives for different projects, if we think more creatively, we can actually do more, whether grants or innovative instruments are involved, just because we have looked at ways in which money can touch on more of the priorities and objectives we have. We should not shy away from that.

As regards own resources, my very strongly held view is that we need to look at ways to reform the sources of funding. It is, in the end, political; and we have to bring people in, which sometimes in our case in Europe is like herding cats. But we will herd them.

4-089

**Claudia Schmidt (PPE).** – Die Kommission verabschiedete im Jahr 2011 ein Personalreformpaket. Berechnungen ergaben, dass man bis 2020 eine Milliarde Euro einsparen kann und danach eine Milliarde Euro jährlich. Das Ziel ist, die Höhe der Verwaltungskosten bis 2020 einzufrieren. Die Gesamtausgaben für Verwaltungskosten

betragen 5,8 % des gesamten EU-Haushalts, davon entfallen 40 % auf die Kommission. Um die vereinbarten Einsparungen zu erreichen, soll das Personal der Kommission bis 2020 um 5 % reduziert werden.

Wie werden Sie dieses Ziel verwirklichen? Welche konkreten Maßnahmen werden Sie ergreifen? Wie sieht Ihr Zeitplan aus? Woran wird man den Erfolg Ihrer Maßnahmen messen können? Werden Sie in regelmäßigen Abständen darüber berichten?

4-090

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > A very big part of our credibility involves doing what we have committed to. If you want a foot to stand on, we have to do it. For us in the Commission the 5% cut is something we will do. We will not only do it; but even now what we are aiming for is to redistribute positions so that we can support areas that have high priority at the expense of those that do not. DG ECFIN, for understandable reasons, has been given a 30% increase in staff despite the overall staff cuts. So to answer your question on staffing: we have to work as one team, look at priorities and then allocate resources. If we make cuts on a pro rata basis, we may actually undermine the quality of our work. That cannot be our approach.

Secondly, we need foresight. What is it we have to do further down the road for which we need skills? If we only respond to pressure today, as we have in the past, we might actually undermine our capacity to deliver in the future. I have been tasked with preparing a corporate talent management strategy. I have been looking not just into the cuts, but also at priorities, resources and processes. Which processes may be unnecessary or may not be carried out in the most efficient way? Then, on that basis, we shall carry out what we have committed to, but with a view to doing more with the people we have, and of course doing it better with the people we have.

4-091

**IN THE CHAIR: PAVEL SVOBODA**

*Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs*

4-092

**Chair.** – The last question was a nice bridging question because the questions asked by the Committee on Legal Affairs will mainly concentrate on human resources.

4-093

**(PPE).** –

4-094

„job fairs“

10

„Staff Regulations“

4-095

**Jens Geier (S&D).** – Jetzt bin ich kein Mitglied des JURI-Ausschusses, sondern nochmal Haushälter, aber meine Fraktion fand es wichtig, dass wir am Ende die Debatte noch einmal zuspitzen. Frau Kommissarin, ich bin eigentlich fest davon überzeugt, dass Sie als zuständige Kommissarin einen hervorragenden Job machen werden. Deswegen komme ich nicht umhin,

zu sagen, dass mir an drei wichtigen Stellen Ihre Ausführungen dann doch noch ein bisschen dürftig sind.

Wir haben zwei Mal nach der Herkunft der 300 Milliarden Euro gefragt, die Juncker als Investitionsprogramm zugesagt hat und die ja immerhin schon in vier Wochen bereitgestellt werden sollen. Da sprachen Sie von Hebelwirkung – wir aber möchten gerne wissen, wie hoch Sie die Chancen einschätzen, für dieses Programm wirklich frisches Geld zu mobilisieren.

Bei der Frage der Eigenmittel sprachen Sie darüber, dass Sie sehen wollen, was möglich ist – wir hätten gerne eine Idee von Ihnen gehört, in welche Richtung die Debatte führen soll.

Und bei der Zahlungskrise schließlich sagen Sie, wir sollen uns auf das konzentrieren, was wir haben – wir würden hingegen gerne hören, wie die Kommission in Zukunft ihre Rechnungen bezahlen möchte.

Machen Sie mich glücklich, seien Sie konkret!

4-096

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > On the first question I will not make you happy, because on the 300 billion, it would not be very responsible for me to pronounce what it should be before we have a chance to discuss it in the new College, because there are others that are involved and actually there is somebody who is in the lead on that. Respecting this collegiality, I would prefer not to say more than that I see a role for the European budget, of course, in the package.

On the leverage: we have to look into the use of money in a more coherent, focused and strategic manner. That is to say that we need to look at the so-called innovative financial instruments and then map them out against the priorities that are now outlined. In other words, what do they do to create jobs? How much? Where? Is it in the right place? Are they the right jobs? What do they do to enhance our competitiveness? And I think that at the moment we are still looking at these instruments more from the input perspective and not so much from the outcome perspective.

That is not an easy job, but it is a job that needs to be done, and then we can say, collectively, with these EUR 9 billion, what is it that we are generating, where it is and how it is going to

make a dent on the problem of unemployment and in terms of contribution to growth? Not the work that is already done, but the work that is in progress. And we will have a chance and – well, I am not going to make you happy, because, obviously – my conclusion is that two minutes is too short a time to make anyone in this room happy, but you will have me for five years.

4-097

**Andrzej Duda (ECR).** – Szanowna Pani Komisarz! Powiem tak, moje pytanie idzie w zasadzie w tym samym kierunku, w którym przed momentem poszło pytanie Pana Posła Emila Radeva z Bułgarii, wi c mo na powiedzie , e cho nie podajemy nazw konkretnych krajów, to jednak widać , któr cz Europy ta sprawa boli. I brzmi ono następuj co: Komisja Europejska czerpie korzyści z możliwości wyselekcjonowania osób najbardziej utalentowanych, ale pochodzących z całej Unii Europejskiej, gromadząc ich rozmaicie do wiadzenia w swoim składzie personalnym. I chciałem w związku z tym zapytać , Pani Komisarz, bo tu już jasno padło, e niestety nie tylko w Komisji, ale również w innych instytucjach europejskich występuje istotna nierównowaga w zatrudnieniu, jeżeli chodzi o reprezentację poszczególnych krajów naszej Wspólnoty. Czy Pani Komisarz ma jakie konkretne pomysły na ulepszenie tych statystyk rekrutacyjnych odnośnie do krajów niedoreprezentowanych dzisiaj ? I czy Pani Komisarz zamierza podjąć jakieś kroki, zwłaszcza zawarte w nowym Regulaminie pracowniczym urzędników, które miałyby na celu doprowadzenie do równowagi rekrutacyjnej?

4-098

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > Indeed the Staff Regulation does provide for improvement in this direction, as you said, without compromising on the principle of recruitment on merit and this is something we should cherish. It is absolutely essential to have the best of staff. We are now, with the new Staff Regulations, able to undertake targeted actions to reduce undue imbalances.

Poland is one country which is not proportionately as well represented as the talent of the Polish people would allow. This is because not enough Polish people apply for the institutions. How can we correct that? Obviously by going more into universities in Poland, making sure that careers in the European institutions are closer to applicants and this is what the new regulation allows us to do, not only for Poland. There are a set of countries – and there will be more in the coming years as people retire – where we will be more proactive, to be able to tap into the diverse talent of our Europeans. I will watch this very carefully, because it is a matter of genuine fairness and also because everybody can – and must – make a contribution.

Luckily we have a very good recruitment office with very creative people who are coming up with ideas of how we can do better in this area and I trust that we will do better and see these statistics improve; but protecting merit-based recruitment for the sake of the high quality of the performance of the Institutions.

4-099

**Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE).** – Arvoisa komissaari, tiedättekö, että Lissabonin sopimukseen sisältyy yksi ainoa uusi oikeusperusta, jota vielä ei ole käytetty, ja se on 298 artikla sopimuksessa Euroopan unionin toiminnasta? Sen tavoitteena on lisätä avoimuutta ja hyvää hallintoa.

Euroopan parlamentti on viimeksi 15. tammikuuta 2013 pyytänyt, että komissio antaisi tällaisen yleisen hallintomenettelylain, joka sitoisi kaikkia Euroopan unionin toimielimiä, elimiä ja virastoja kaikissa niiden suhteissa kansalaisiin. Tämä on varmasti hyvin tärkeää, koska mitä enemmän Euroopan unionilla on valtaa, sitä paremmin kansalaisten tulisi tuntea oikeutensa suhteessa unionin hallintoon.

Nyt haluaisin kysyä Teiltä, että aiotteko Te yhdessä varapuheenjohtaja Timmermansin kanssa ottaa tämän asian esiin? Minusta aika on nyt tullut, ja sivumennen sanoen nyt on puhuttu paljon intressiristiriidoista – myös komissaarien intressiristiriidoista – ja ehkäpä me voisimme

ratkaista tätä kysymystä nykyistä tyylikkäämmin sellaisen uuden hallintomenettelylain kautta, koska nyt on epäselvyyksiä siitä, että mikä oikeasti luo intressiristiriidat.

4-100

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > It was also in my written questions, and I have already been in touch with First Vice-President nominate, Mr Timmermans, on that. Both of us feel that this has to be taken very seriously. We need to look into the response the Commission should provide to that. Parliament has made its case, and it is now for us to review it very carefully, based on assessing what are the alternatives, what else can be done to implement Article 298, and then looking at this legislative proposal. I would say what I would expect him to also say, that once we get into our job, we are open to looking into this and be sure that we will come back to Parliament with a very serious answer to this proposal.

What we would take into account as we prepare the answer is to map out what are the regulations currently in place, what are the gaps, how these gaps are best filled, how bringing all this regulatory environment that has been developed at different points in time with different speed, how all that can be integrated in the best possible manner.

On the other hand, what we would look into is: this a legislation that affects only us (in other words the Institutions of the European Union), or does it have any implications for the Member States? If so, what? And then, if it is the case, how do we see the reaction of Member States?

Just to finish on that, my conviction is that, on everything we do today, of course we need to look at – is it necessary, how much it would cost, what are the benefits? – but also how we bring everybody on board so we do not create yet another fighting arena without thinking in advance how to resolve it, how to bring it to a productive end.

4-101

**Therese Comodini Cachia (PPE).** – Commissioner-designate, the new Staff Regulations under Article 27 state that, in order to facilitate recruitment on the broadest possible geographical basis, the Institutions shall strive to support multilingual and multicultural education for the children of their staff. However, European Schools are now overcrowded in both Brussels and Luxembourg; they encounter serious problems to get secondary teachers from certain Member States, and, like the rest of this heading, find themselves under severe budgetary constraints. I would like to ask you: what do you plan to do to address these problems of space, teaching and also of funding?

4-102



**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > What would I do? Beg? Convince people?

But, on a very serious note, I see the financial problems very clearly. What we have is a situation in which many other institutions are benefiting from the European Schools but they are saying: 'We are part of the European budget, so you have to pay'. Yet you go to Frankfurt, and who there is the biggest beneficiary of European Schools? So how do we get other institutions to be more engaged, to be more willing to contribute? How do we get Member States to be more engaged, more willing to contribute?

People are very concentrated on this question – we have a strategy, we have an engagement, we have actions being taken, and I will plug into this at my level and try to move this resolution on the finances of the schools forward. The same applies to Brussels. We have an offer of a school. Well, it is a great offer, except that the school is 50 km away. It is not going to be very useful in resolving the overcrowding in Brussels.

But why – aside from the fact that we are committed to the diversity of our staff and, of course, of their families – do I think this is very important? I am very strongly in favour of acting on this, because it is part of the attractiveness of working in the EU.

We want people to come in the EU. More often than not, their salaries are compensating for their needs. It is other things that make the EU attractive. It is not the money, because the private sector may be offering more or in their country they may be happier. What is attractive is the whole package, and part of this package – a very big part – is education for the children, especially since we are on the market to attract younger people, and that means younger families with children. So I will come back to you when we have some progress to report.

4-103

**Chair.** > Thank you very much, Ms Georgieva. This brings us to the end of the questions. I will now pass the chair and the floor to the Chair of the Committee on Budgets.

4-104

#### **PRÉSIDENCE DE M. JEAN ARTHUIS**

4-105

**Le Président.** – Merci chers collègues, Présidents des commissions du contrôle budgétaire et des affaires juridiques, merci à chacun d'entre vous qui avez posé des questions dont les réponses ont éclairé nos trois commissions et le Parlement européen.

Merci à vous, Madame la Vice-présidente désignée. Nous avons eu souvent l'impression que vous manquez de temps pour nous dire le message que vous nous destiniez. Vous disposez maintenant de cinq minutes pour compléter votre propos.

Madame la Vice-présidente, encore une fois merci pour la clarté de vos réponses et merci pour la conclusion que vous allez maintenant nous donner.

4-106

**Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner-designate.** > With the permission of the Chair – before I make my closing remarks – could I say thank you to the interpreters, who as always are doing a wonderful job and clearly have enormous stamina!

*(Applause)*

I will try to be very brief because I think I will not do justice to the matter in hand if I answer some questions in more detail, but leave out others that could have been answered better.

I am genuinely looking forward to the five years ahead of us, and you will have me as your partner on a very regular basis.

So I would like to finish with just two messages to the honourable Members of Parliament.

The first is a message of thanks – not only because you have given me your time, and you have engaged in what I think has been a very constructive discussion which has provided guidance, but also because in our interaction today with many of you, also before this hearing, I felt that what unites us is this genuine belief that we can do better for the European people.

And that brings me to my second point. I think of myself as a servant of our people; and I know I would perform my service best if I kept my ears, my mind and my heart open and listen to you, to the Council and to our people because even if sometimes we agree to disagree – and this will happen – it must be on the basis of listening to each other, of working together, of finding a way to enhance what we do because certainly none of us – not me for

sure, not the Council, not the Commission as a whole, and not even Parliament on its own – can provide the very best of service to our people. But together we can do it; and we will.

*(Applause)*

4-107

**Le Président.** – Il appartient maintenant aux trois présidents de nos commissions de prononcer quelques remarques de conclusion. Mais avant cela, je voudrais indiquer aux coordinateurs de chacune des commissions que la réunion d'évaluation conjointe des commissions des budgets, du contrôle budgétaire et des affaires juridiques aura lieu ce soir, de 18 heures à 19 h 30, dans la salle ASP 1G3.

Madame la Vice-présidente désignée, encore une fois merci pour les réponses que vous avez apportées à nos questions. Merci pour vos réponses écrites d'abord, mais aussi pour les réponses aux 44 questions qui ont été posées aujourd'hui. Comme vous, nous avons l'ambition de faire mieux pour les citoyens européens et nous savons que le budget est modeste. Il représente 1 % du produit intérieur brut. Et c'est parce qu'il est modeste que nous devons le traiter avec une infinie délicatesse.

Nous sommes en début de législature et nous mesurons le poids du passé, l'héritage: 222 milliards de "reste à liquider" au 31 décembre 2013 et 23 à 24 milliards d'impayés au 31 décembre 2013. Donc, nous souhaitons trouver rapidement une réponse structurelle pour liquider ces impayés et éviter que l'Europe donne une image critiquable en laissant s'accumuler ainsi une dette. Les engagements ont été pris, nous devons aujourd'hui passer aux actes et liquider ces engagements.

Merci pour les propos que vous avez tenus. Nous savons bien que sur certains points, il serait prématuré d'obtenir des réponses, mais nous sommes impatients, avec vous, d'engager la révision du cadre financier pluriannuel, car c'est une révision postélectorale. Le cadre a été fixé avant les élections. Il importe qu'aujourd'hui nous puissions lui donner les inflexions nécessaires pour répondre au mieux à l'attente de tous les Européens. Une attente de compétitivité, bien sûr, une attente de croissance et une attente de plein emploi et de mieux-être.

Voilà ce que je souhaitais dire au nom de la commission des budgets. Naturellement, il sera beaucoup question des 300 milliards dans les semaines qui viennent et s'il doit y avoir une expression budgétaire dès 2015, il importera que très rapidement, Madame, vous puissiez faire connaître votre avis et vos souhaits à ce sujet.

4-108

**Ingeborg Gräßle**, *Vorsitzende des Haushaltskontrollausschusses*. – Ich möchte mit Ihrem eigenen Schlusswort schließen: „*We can do better.*“ Frau Kommissarin, wir werden Sie beim Wort nehmen und Ihnen dabei helfen. Wir haben heute vorgetragen, wo wir der Ansicht sind, dass auch die Kommission besser arbeiten könnte. Deswegen seien Sie versichert: Wir sehen in Ihnen vor allem eine Partnerin für Reformen.

Das ist eine Reformkommission. Diese Kommission hat Silos aufgebrochen, hat Strukturen aufgebrochen, zum ersten Mal seit über 10 Jahren. Wir hoffen und wünschen, dass es weitergeht, und freuen uns auf die Zusammenarbeit mit Ihnen.

4-109

**Pavel Svoboda**, *Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs*. – On behalf of the Committee on Legal Affairs, Ms Georgieva, may I thank you for your replies. I am sure that we have sufficient information and elements to proceed to the evaluation.

4-110

*(La séance est levée à 16 h 40)*