

Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Chair

ACCES RESERVE

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Jerzy BUZEK
Chair
Conference of Committee Chairs

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Dear Mr Buzek,

The Committee on Foreign Affairs held a public hearing on Tuesday 30 September 2014, in accordance with Rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure, with Johannes Hahn, Commissioner-designate who will be responsible for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure.

The Committee's Coordinators appreciated the fact that Mr Hahn was open to debate with Members, and acknowledged his pragmatic approach in providing answers. His experience as Commissioner will certainly be useful in addressing strategic issues, and will serve him in his relations with the Parliament and with my committee in particular. We look forward to contributing actively to the reflection and overall evaluation that Mr Hahn will launch on the Neighbourhood policy. His formal undertaking on the necessity to maintain the attention of the EU and its support to enlargement countries and development processes in both the Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods was, in that context, positively remarked upon by Members, bearing in mind the European perspective dimension for our Eastern neighbours.

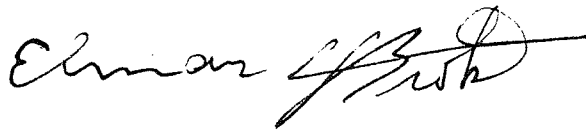
On the specific issue of enlargement, the Members of the committee reiterated the importance of respecting the Copenhagen criteria, as well as the need to keep candidate and potential candidate countries on track, promoting the benefits of enlargement both in these countries and amongst EU Member States, and ensuring the necessary transformation capacity and the continuation of reforms. Concerns were expressed that the title of the portfolio of the Commissioner-designate could represent a wrong political signal to enlargement countries, considering also the fact that the prospect of enlarging the EU within the next five years was ruled out. We would therefore propose the President of the Commission to rename the portfolio of Mr Hahn into "Commissioner for Neighbourhood policy and Enlargement".

.../...

Certain Members would like to engage more with the Commissioner during the exercise of his term on topics such as the scope of the review of neighbourhood policy, the framework of cooperation with the High Representative / Vice-President, or, more specifically, on the role of civil society and the Rule of Law in neighbouring countries, notably in Ukraine, or the security component of the policies in his portfolio.

The general outcome of this hearing is therefore that the Commissioner-designate gave a positive impression as regards his aptitude to be a member of the College and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to him.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elmar Brok', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elmar Brok