

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS

ASSOCIATED COMMITTEES:

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

## **HEARING OF MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ**

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight)

MONDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

BRUSSELS



1-002-0000

**IN THE CHAIR****LUCY NETHSINGHA***Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs***ANTONIO TAJANI***Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs**(The hearing opened at 14.35)*

**Lucy Nethsingha, Chair JURI.** – I would like to welcome members of the JURI and AFCO committees attending this hearing, along with the members of the ITRE and PETI committees who are associated with this hearing, and a very warm welcome to Maroš Šefčovič, Vice President-designate of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.

The AFCO Chair will be chairing the hearing with the chair of the JURI committee. In line with the guidelines for the approval of the committee, Annex 7 to the Rules of Procedure, the purpose of this hearing is to evaluate the general competence, European commitment and personal independence of the Vice President-designate, along with his knowledge of the prospective portfolio and his communication skills.

I'd like to inform you that the debate will be livestreamed on the Parliament's Internet site and also that it will be possible to access a video recording of the hearing on the same site. You will recall that after examining the declaration of financial interests of the Vice President-designate, the Committee on Legal Affairs has raised no objection to the holding of this hearing and I would like to inform the Vice President-designate that he will be invited to make an opening oral statement of no longer than 15 minutes.

The 25 questions will be divided into five-minute slots and will be put during the hearing. One follow-up question will be asked immediately within the allocated time and the five-minute slots will be composed as follows: one-minute question by the Member, a two-minute answer from the Vice President-designate, with the possibility of an immediate follow-up question from the same Member of one minute and a one-minute answer by the Vice President-designate.

1-004-0000

**Antonio Tajani, presidente AFCO.** – Buon pomeriggio a tutti. Ricordo ai membri delle commissioni AFCO e JURI che a tutti è stato consegnato il curriculum vitae del vicepresidente Šefčovič e anche che sono state consegnate le risposte alle domande scritte che sono state a lui poste. Vi ricordo, e ricordo anche al vicepresidente Šefčovič, che non è per la prima volta di fronte al Parlamento, essendo per la terza volta indicato come commissario, che la durata dell'audizione è di tre ore, vale a dire da ora fino alle 17.30.

Sono molto soddisfatto, come presidente della commissione AFCO ma anche come ex Presidente del Parlamento, che il portafoglio del vicepresidente Šefčovič includa il seguito che la Commissione intende dare alle richieste di iniziativa legislativa avanzate dal Parlamento. È un impegno, signor vicepresidente, che formalmente Le chiedo. Quando eravamo entrambi commissari nella Commissione Barroso, Lei era già responsabile dei rapporti con il Parlamento, facendo bene. Le chiediamo veramente di impegnarsi, non soltanto dal punto di vista formale, affinché questo Parlamento abbia la pienezza dei poteri, cioè sia un Parlamento che abbia il potere di iniziativa legislativa, certamente trasformando in azioni concrete l'impegno preso dalla Presidente von der Leyen, ma preso anche da Lei, che per noi

rappresenta veramente una priorità. Se vogliamo ridurre la distanza tra cittadini e istituzioni europee, il Parlamento non può essere un Parlamento dimezzato.

Naturalmente Lei sa bene che siamo anche fortemente impegnati per l'attività che dovrebbe portare il Parlamento ad avere il potere d'inchiesta: è una battaglia non facile, che però per il Parlamento europeo rappresenta un'altra priorità. Sono sicuro che, come ha fatto in passato, quando rivestiva l'incarico di responsabile delle relazioni interistituzionali, Lei si impegnerà affinché ci sia una centralità vera del Parlamento: significa rafforzare la democrazia in Europa, significa ridurre la distanza che, ahimè, c'è ancora tra istituzioni e cittadini.

Anche attraverso le positive relazioni tra Commissione e Parlamento si potrà veramente dare un altro segnale di attenzione e di funzionamento. Troppe volte le istituzioni si fermano a causa di un impatto burocratico eccessivo. Io credo che si debba invece fare di tutto perché gli organismi politici, il Parlamento e la Commissione, possano rapidamente lavorare. Dipenderà molto dal Suo lavoro e da come la Commissione europea collaborerà con il Parlamento.

Voglio altresì dire al vicepresidente Šefčovič, ma anche a tutti i colleghi, che contrariamente a quello che facevo quando ero Presidente, cioè ero molto flessibile per quanto riguarda il tempo di parola, in questa occasione non lo potrò essere. Come vi ha ricordato la presidente Nethsingha: domanda di un minuto, risposta di due minuti; è possibile, da parte dello stesso deputato, riporre la domanda per avere chiarimenti, non su un altro tema, quindi rapida risposta da parte del commissario Šefčovič.

Il *face-to-face* comincerà subito dopo l'intervento iniziale del vicepresidente Šefčovič, al quale do immediatamente la parola per quindici minuti.

1-005-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Dear Chair Nethsingha, Dear Chair Tajani, honourable Chairs, honourable Members of the European Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a great honour for me to appear before you today as a Commissioner-designate. It is also a privilege to open these upcoming days of debate and scrutiny, displaying European democracy at its best.

There is also an emotional element to it. In a few weeks, we will celebrate thirty years of freedom in my country, Slovakia, following the Velvet Revolution. I recall very well looking through the infamous Iron Curtain, through the barbed wire, across the Danube, not knowing if I ever would be able to cross the river and visit our Austrian neighbours, or even, as it is a chance today, to work for a united Europe.

This experience has contributed to my firm conviction that we must build our destiny as a democratic Union, and to my strong respect for our common institutions and values. It is even more apparent today, as the world is changing at an unprecedented pace. Humanity's ecological footprint has led to the global climate emergency. The global race for technological leadership is set to transform our economic models, as well as societies. The multilateral, rules-based order that Europe stands for is under pressure. And the age of disinformation, combined with persisting inequalities, puts a strain on our democracy.

We face a crucial question: How can the European Union ensure that we do not end up a middle power, caught between the United States and China?

Honourable Members, to address these challenges, I am convinced that we need more, not less, Europe, and a stronger European Parliament. Article 10 of the Treaty on the European Union says that our functioning shall be founded on representative democracy, and this is ever

more important. Therefore, I am truly honoured that the President-elect wants to entrust me with both Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.

The European Commission and the European Parliament are natural partners. We have built solid foundations over the years. However, it will be my priority to take our cooperation a step further into a special partnership based on trust amongst ourselves, as well as with our citizens. In particular, I will propose that our partnership extend beyond the legislative domain. It should apply more fully throughout the whole political cycle: evidence-gathering and foresight to jointly shape the direction of Europe; a shared priority and agenda-setting; a new right of initiative, which I know is very important for you; and a better implementation, including through cutting red tape.

We simply cannot continue acting in crisis management mode, with a predominantly intergovernmental approach. A stronger Parliament means a stronger and more legitimate Europe. A stronger Parliament also means moving into a shared culture of anticipation and action – to be resilient in the long-run.

So let me now turn to concrete measures: how to build this special relationship.

First, I foresee close-knit cooperation between our institutions in the agenda-setting stage. As you know, I should support the President-elect by developing the Commission Work Programme. This will be a matter of priority, as our first work programme must be agreed already in December. From day one, I will therefore work with my colleagues in the Commission as well as reach out to you, to political groups, and to the Conference of Committee Chairs in the Parliament. On this basis, we should also adopt a Joint Declaration on legislative priorities between our three institutions.

I will also propose to adopt the first ever Multiannual Programme as foreseen in the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law Making. This programme needs also to be a co-creation exercise with collective ownership and accountability. It also needs to be grounded in the foresight work at interinstitutional level.

Second, a Right of Initiative for the European Parliament that would mark the start of a new institutional era. As announced by the President-elect, when the Parliament, acting by a majority of its Members, requests a legislative proposal, the Commission will respond with a legislative act, in full respect of the proportionality, subsidiarity and better law-making principles.

To deliver swiftly, I will propose that our institutions engage in the earliest phases of conception of parliamentary resolutions and work hand in hand at every stage in designing them. I want to put in place an early warning mechanism to ensure constant dialogue between the Commission and Parliament.

Once a parliamentary resolution is adopted, I will ensure that the College of Commissioners holds a political discussion on the subject and such a process should facilitate understanding on substance and, at the same time, foster trust between our two institutions and a sense of working together towards a common goal.

It is in this House where the heart of European democracy beats. I will therefore work with the Vice-President in charge to ensure Parliament plays an active role in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Third, I will encourage to revive discussions on pending institutional files, in particular on the Right of Inquiry.

I have full understanding for the Parliament's attempts to review the Regulation. As the discussion has been stalled over institutional and legal concerns, I stand ready to engage in trilateral discussions.

Regarding international negotiations, I will work with the relevant Commissioners to ensure that the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations.

Fourth, petitions: as input from citizens to detect and, where appropriate, to act upon breaches of EU law, I will work closely with the Committee on Petitions throughout the year and of course, attend its presentation of the annual report. Moreover, should we see a significant number of petitions on one topic, I will encourage the presence of the Commissioners responsible to discuss what can be done to remedy the concerns expressed.

And finally, I want to work with you on Better Regulation and its effective and transparent implementation. Our objective should be to adopt and implement a future-proof legislation that can stand the test of time, which does not create unnecessary burden, and delivers results at minimum cost. To this end, I want to advance the Better Regulation agenda further.

I will propose that the REFIT platform is rebranded to a Fit for the Future Platform. I am convinced that our legislation should be for instance, fit for e-government and digital use. Regularly, I will report to Parliament on the platform's findings. I also believe that we should better involve those on the receiving end of the regulation, and to go more for active subsidiarity in order to do away with the common impression that 'everything is decided in Brussels'.

We will strengthen the means by which local and regional authorities can inform us of the burden experienced when applying EU legislation as well as of opportunities to alleviate it.

An input from you, honourable Members, will be equally valuable because you interact on the ground, in your constituencies.

I will surely involve in this work the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. I also aim to engage more actively with the Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add an unnecessary administrative burden. We all know it under the name 'gold-plating'. The EU institutions should be warned when a Member State introduces measures going beyond EU legislation requirements, and I will involve the Commission Representations in this, and I will make sure that the Members of the European Parliament are properly informed as well.

In the first two years of the mandate, I plan to visit all national parliaments to better value their important work in relation to active subsidiarity and proportionality, and I will discuss with them our Multiannual Programming.

I will apply the 'one in/one out' principle, as announced by the President-elect, meaning that every legislative proposal with a new burden for the users should be offset by an equivalent reduction elsewhere. This is particularly key for small and medium enterprises, and I will make sure that this new principle is applied in all areas. However – and I would like to underline this – I say a clear 'no' to a mechanical approach and to endangering our high standards, especially social and environmental.

Actually, we should always weigh benefits as well. The European Parliament has done an excellent work with its study on the cost of non-Europe – quantifying an economic gain of EUR 2.2 trillion over 10 years if, for instance, we implement fully our single market, notably in services, digital, energy, and if we address corporate tax avoidance. Therefore, via a citizens' summary, I want us to communicate better the evidence-based benefits for citizens, businesses and society as such.

Our success on the interinstitutional front is a prerequisite for embedding foresight into policy-making. Linking the two domains can be a true game-changer. This is not something abstract and I can give you a vibrant example: the European Battery Alliance. Even if at the 12th hour, we had anticipated the upcoming tectonic shift towards e-mobility. With industry leading, we started to act strategically – to build a strong value chain and start producing the greenest batteries here, in Europe, and as a result, we are catching up with our Asian competitors and the sustainable future for our automotive industry seems secured.

I am honoured that the President-elect has entrusted me with continuing to lead our efforts in this area. I am also ready to discuss other strategic sectors where Europe can make a real difference, provided that we all work together. To this end, if confirmed by you, I will propose that we strive for world-class anticipatory governance, building foresight capacity inside the Commission to serve our policy goals, and my intention is to mobilise the resources of the Joint Research Centre as a crucial enabler.

We need to set up an EU Network of Strategic Foresight, bringing together the best of EU institutions and the Member States. As the saying goes, you are entitled to your own opinion, but not to your own facts. So faced with a tsunami of information, I also want to safeguard the quality of evidence and to reinforce its transparency. In practice, I will explore with the other institutions the setting up of a Common Evidence Register – open to the public – where we will share the evidence used in our legislative proposals.

As you know, the President-elect's mission letter gives me mandate to prepare a yearly Foresight Report on the most relevant emerging trends. This Report will inform the State of the Union speech and our programming exercises. Based on it, I will champion strategic debates in the European Parliament as well as at the European Council. I want us to agree on transformative megatrends that we need to approach strategically and develop our long-term vision for Europe, with a direct impact on Multiannual Programming as well.

With this in mind, I will work closely with the Vice-President for the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, j'ai eu le privilège de travailler avec vos commissions parlementaires au cours des deux dernières législatures.

D'abord et, surtout, avec la commission des affaires constitutionnelles et la commission des affaires juridiques, puis avec celle de l'industrie, de la recherche et de l'énergie pour mettre en place l'union de l'énergie.

Dans mon premier mandat, nous avons conclu l'accord-cadre entre nos deux institutions. Nous avons aussi travaillé main dans la main pour obtenir du Conseil une modernisation du statut des fonctionnaires et autres agents. Et j'ai été heureux d'avoir pu contribuer ainsi modestement à nos objectifs communs.

Ma volonté est de travailler sans relâche au renforcement de notre partenariat, animé comme je le suis par mes convictions et les valeurs démocratiques héritées de la Révolution de velours.

Je vous remercie de votre attention et je suis prêt pour vos questions.

1-007-0000

**Axel Voss (PPE).** – You are very welcome here in the European Parliament, Mr Šefčovič. I have the honour to open this round of questions.

To help alleviate the regulatory burden for people and for business, you will develop a new instrument to deliver on the ‘One In, One Out’ principle. In concrete terms, how do you plan to work at EU level and together with Member States when transposing EU legislation to implement such a principle and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens? When can we expect this new instrument to be in place?

1-008-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – First, I think that we have to be really very serious and very focused here, because I think all of us have come across unhappy citizens and small businesses telling us that they are strong supporters of a common Europe, but they are a bit afraid to use our instruments or apply for grants because they simply see the administrative burden as too heavy. Therefore, I very much appreciate that the new President-elect wants to put such emphasis on making sure we don’t renew unnecessary administrative burdens.

But as I say, for me it’s also quite clear that in no way should we apply this principle mechanically, and in no way should we risk our high standards in the areas of social affairs and the environment.

So how would I like to do this? First, I am going to rebrand the REFIT Programme so it is fit for the future, which I would also discuss widely with you because I think that the traditional assessment of how the legislation works also needs an upgrade. Is it digital enough? Is it compatible with e-government? Does it have a ‘think small first’ approach? Is the burden in the legislation a problem of the EU legislation or is it in the transposition, or – as is very often the case – in the last annex at the end of the legislation that we need to change things?

I would like to take a more comprehensive approach, where we would make sure that, even where we adopt the new legislation we need, we would always think what we can do and how we can focus our minds and introduce this discipline across our institutions that would always bear in mind the necessity to also reduce administrative burdens elsewhere.

1-009-0000

**Antonio Tajani, Chair AFCO.** – (To Mr Voss) Are you satisfied?

(Off-mike: ‘Yes’)

1-010-0000

**Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D).** – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Vice-Presidente e Comissário designado, muito bem-vindo a esta casa. Conhecemo-lo bem porque exerce funções como comissário já desde 2009 e já teve responsabilidades em matéria das relações interinstitucionais. Portanto, tudo razões de otimismo para o nosso relacionamento.

Para um funcionamento mais democrático da União, precisamos de um Parlamento Europeu com um papel reforçado. O que lhe pergunto é: como é que vê a participação deste Parlamento na futura Conferência para o Futuro da Europa? Falou numa participação ativa. O que eu lhe pergunto é se este Parlamento terá um papel liderante ou será apenas um convidado de honra.

Em segundo lugar, como é que podemos melhorar a implementação dos acordos interinstitucionais existentes, em particular, na matéria da governação económica e da execução do semestre europeu?

1-011-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – I also would like express my appreciation for the question from my colleague, the honourable Member Pereira.

Firstly, I would like to underline how important it is that these two Communitarian institutions, the European Parliament and the Commission, not only deliver on this special partnership, but also work even more strategically on our common future. The European Parliament is be the right place to discuss the future of Europe, even beyond our legislature. I am absolutely convinced that what we decide in the next five years will really shape the position of Europe for years to come.

If I have to be a little bit overdramatic, I can say that we are going to decide the fate of Europe in this century. So, therefore, what we adopt here will have dramatic implications on Europe's place in the world. Therefore, this Commission has to be geopolitical, and we have to have these strategic debates on the future, on all key mega-trends here in the European Parliament.

Coming closer to our daily routine, as regards the Conference on the Future of Europe, we clearly have to work on it together. The President-elect was very clear that she is absolutely ready to work in close cooperation with the European Parliament, and she is ready to accept that the European Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament will lead this conference.

I think what she was also underlying was the fact that we also need to get this conference a little bit outside of Brussels, that we need to talk to our citizens. We need to talk to them outside the capitals and, specifically, in the regions so that we really know their concerns. As regards inter-institutional relations, if you give me another chance in subsequent questions, I will come to that in a second.

1-012-0000

**Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D)**. – Eu penso que ainda há tempo disponível e eu insistiria ... daria realmente oportunidade ao Sr. Comissário designado para se referir à questão da implementação dos acordos interinstitucionais que, aliás, conhece bem porque negociou o Acordo-Quadro de 2010 e de facto são um instrumento de aprofundamento da relação entre a Comissão Europeia e o Parlamento.

1-013-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much. You are absolutely right. I still remember the very dynamic negotiations we had in 2009, and I am glad that the Framework Agreement has withstood the test of time. However, I remember that already at that time we had been trying to do our utmost to make sure that the Council would also be part of this Framework Agreement, because the primary purpose of this Framework Agreement was that we had been 'Lisbonising' our common relationship.

Therefore, if I get your approval, what I will do would be to approach the Council again. Here we have a Framework Agreement, let us look at it to see what is valid, what needs to be updated, and how can we get the Council to cooperate closer with us, also on the basis of this Agreement. We managed to do that in the Better Law-Making Agreement, and I therefore believe that we should be able to achieve it in the Framework Agreement as well.

1-014-0000

**Karen Melchior (Renew).** – I liked the Commissioner-delegate’s initial statement about having future-proof legislation based on evidence and using the Joint Research Centre as a crucial enabler.

The Commission’s approach towards better regulation, however, has been criticised for not taking into account the Commission’s own impact assessments or expert evidence, and for the cherry-picking of evidence by not publishing reports contrary to a political line of the Commission. This includes evidence produced on behalf of the Commission.

In a concrete case, the former Commission withheld expert analysis by the Joint Research Centre and refused to take into account statements from academics. How will you, as a Commissioner, make sure that all expert evidence and impact assessments are published in the evidence register that you mentioned and are included in the proposals?

1-015-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much, Madam, for the question and also I very much appreciated the experience with how the EU legislation is implemented and can be modernised which have been so generously provided to the Commission by the Danish business associations. I think that when we are talking about future-proof legislation, what is absolutely key today is that it will be digitally up to the demand of the time, that we would try to avoid, for example, reference to the fax – because I was very surprised when the young people have been asking me what kind of machine is fax? And we still have it in some of our legislation, so it has to be compatible with e-government. It has to be digitally up to date, and if it’s not, we simply have to upgrade it.

If it comes to the impact assessment and evidence-based legislation, I think here we have to really open a new chapter. I have to admit that I personally was surprised at how big is the wealth of information that we already have in our institutions, be it the Joint Research Centre, but also several units in DG RTD, or your work in the European Parliament where your units and your experts are ready and prepared to put together such excellent reports on the cost of non-Europe, about which very often we don’t speak long enough. I honestly think that it would be a pity if we just hid that information or just kept it for ourselves. So my idea would be to really set up an interinstitutional evidence-based register where we would put all that good work by our scientists, by our experts, which was done. It would be of course under your control, it would be interinstitutional, and I believe that all these studies and evidence-based reports would help us to make better, more future-oriented legislation.

1-016-0000

**Karen Melchior (Renew).** – Thank you very much for your reply. I’m very much looking forward to having a more open and transparent register of evidence and also happy to hear that we will have legislation or regulation that would be more future proof in terms of digitalisation and digital means of communication.

There is also the question of the involvement of citizens in – as a foundation of – better regulation, and their influence on this regulation is key to our democracy.

However, in a recent case as well, citizens had directly voiced their concerns for specific issues of Commission proposals and felt that their points of view were disregarded and even that the Commission itself described this opposition as being a mob, in blogs, and indicated that they were bots.

How do you see that the new future-proof and evidence-based process will better include citizens’ voices?

1-017-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – I think these are very relevant questions and I think that we will have to go deeper into assessment, what we can do, even better with your committee, and also with all approaches and relationships between the Commission, JURI and PETI committees as well.

I understand that very often the citizens are somehow discouraged to participate in the public consultations. Because if you look at our ‘have your say’ website, it’s very well done, but there are quite a few consultations which might be quite confusing for the citizens. I think that, if you want to have more participation and better quality from our citizens, what we need to do is to make much more publicity about these consultations and not only speak about it from Brussels, but talk through professional associations, use our Commission’s or Parliamentary representations in our capitals and have more targeted discussions where the citizens would know that we want to know the answer.

And what is even more important, they need a response from us. So they need to see that somebody is reading their suggestion, is evaluating it and is really appreciating that they send it to us.

1-018-0000

**Daniel Freund (Verts/ALE).** – Herr Šefčovič! Vielen Dank, dass Sie heute unsere Fragen beantworten. Ich habe in den *mission letters* Ihrer Kollegen mal nachgezählt, und ich finde da 97 Vorschläge für neue Gesetzesvorhaben. Und Sie sollen jetzt also mit diesem *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip für einen Bürokratieabbau sorgen. Ich würde Sie gerne fragen, ob Sie schon eine Liste haben, welche 97 alten Gesetze Sie jetzt für diese Vorschläge von Frau von der Leyen gerne streichen. Heißt das, wenn wir in den ersten 100 Tagen das angekündigte große Klimapaket bekommen, dass wir uns jetzt Sorgen machen müssen, dass das Roaming wieder eingeführt wird?

Ich würde sagen, wenn Sie das mit dem Bürokratieabbau ernst meinen, dann geht es doch nicht darum, die Zahl der Gesetze zu verändern, sondern das, was die Bürgerinnen und Bürger und auch die Unternehmen draußen stört, ist doch, dass man zum Beispiel für ein kleines Erasmus-Stipendium immer längere Formulare ausfüllen muss. Sollten wir uns dann, statt jetzt zu verlangen, Gesetze zu streichen, nicht lieber auf die Erfahrungen der Nutzerinnen und Nutzer konzentrieren und dafür sorgen, dass Formulare gekürzt werden anstatt Sozialstandards oder Umweltstandards?

1-019-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for your question and also for your very strong statement, with which I agree.

I really would like to reassure not only the honourable Members of this House, but also the public, that they shouldn’t worry about all the high standards we built for getting rid of roaming, or all the social environmental standards – we are doing our utmost to constantly improve.

What the President-elect wanted to achieve with this ‘One In, One Out’ approach was, I would say, a new discipline in how we look at administrative burdens. So, if we are bringing something in, we should really just measure how much more burdensome this would be for, let’s say, small and medium-sized enterprises, for businesses and for the citizens, and look where on our books we have legislation which is already outdated or which still uses a fax or where we want them to fill in paper forms – and to see if you cannot do it better, faster, more up-to-date and in a way which would be much more user-friendly than it is right now.

You're absolutely right. We have a very ambitious agenda for the first 100 days. We want to deliver on the Green Deal. We want to deliver on a minimum wage. We want to deliver on pay transparency and we also want to bring in new rules on how to develop artificial intelligence in Europe.

But, at the same time, I also want to assure you that we will approach all the tackling of the administrative burdens with the utmost care, with sensitivity, and as a top priority and that in no way are we going to drop our standards.

As you know, we have also to adopt the decisions on all the pending files on the Commission table. To be quite honest, I haven't had a chance to go through it yet. It's more than 100 files. We will have to sit down with it as a college and have a look and see if we need it all or if some amendments could be made. In any case, you will be properly briefed and informed on this.

1-020-0000

**Daniel Freund (Verts/ALE).** – Ich würde gerne noch mal nachfragen. Sie haben jetzt immer wieder von evidenzbasierter Politik und Fakten gesprochen. Wenn ich das richtig verstehe, dann soll also die Politik der Kommission auf wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen stehen. Nun haben wir 26 000 Wissenschaftler in Europa, die sagen, dass die aktuelle Klimapolitik dem Klimanotstand in Europa überhaupt nicht gerecht wird. Wie wollen Sie denn dafür sorgen, dass wir die 1 033 Rechtsakte, die die Europäische Union allein seit 1999 beschlossen hat, in den nächsten fünf Jahren daraufhin überprüfen, ob sie noch mit den Pariser Klimazielen in Einklang sind, und dass alle neuen Rechtsakte, die jetzt kommen, das eben auch sind? Um das noch mal in die Sprache der Kommission zu übersetzen: Müssen wir nicht die Art, wie wir Folgenabschätzungen durchführen, radikal verändern, wenn wir die Klimaziele einhalten wollen und eben nicht am Ende der Wahlperiode das 1,5-Grad-Ziel schon reißen?

1-021-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for your question. The discussion which is currently taking place in the European Parliament is also very well reflected in the reflections on how to improve the impact assessments in the Commission. It is quite clear that we would need to enlarge it and take the scientific evidence even more into account. If what we do to tackle climate change is enough, if the social impacts are properly measured, if the new legislation is really in a position to withstand the pressure of the time and this constant change.

We will have to bring in many new elements in to modernise the impact assessments and, therefore, we would like to combine it as much as possible with foresight, which would give us the possibility to look at how we would like to see Europe in 10 or 20 years. Then, of course – and this is very important for all of us in the European Parliament – we have to be very honest and transparent, and to publish all the evidence and all impact assessments in this joint register.

1-022-0000

**Jérôme Rivière (ID).** – C'est en tant que député du groupe Identité et démocratie que je vous pose la première question. Je précise cette appartenance parce que depuis près de trois mois, notre groupe a été particulièrement maltraité dans le cadre de la collégialité du Parlement européen, alors qu'au nom de la défense des droits des minorités nous appliquons ici la loi d'Hondt. Ce principe a été systématiquement refusé pour nos candidats, nous empêchant de participer aux instances du Parlement européen.

Comme commissaire chargé des relations interinstitutionnelles, quelles mesures prendrez-vous pour que la Commission entende et écoute la voix de ceux qui ont voté pour nos élus, comme c'est le principe en démocratie? D'autant que dans de nombreux pays, ce sont nos parlementaires qui sont arrivés en tête.

Deuxième question relative à votre mission de prospective stratégique: les progrès de la science viennent remettre en question certains fondements de notre société. Je pense par exemple au débat qui a eu lieu cette semaine en France à propos de la PMA sans père. Quelle méthode, quel type de consultation respectueuse des peuples envisagez-vous pour évaluer si une technologie ou une pratique permettra d'engager nos sociétés sur des chemins qui assurent, si ce n'est garantissent, leur intérêt individuel et collectif?

1-023-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for your question. As you know, the role of the Commission is to be the guardian of the Treaties and also to be a close partner of the European Parliament. I can reassure you that we are ready to work very closely with the European Parliament and with all the good suggestions, the good advice, which would serve the European general interest, and would have this strong pro-European vocation. So this is the basis – I'm sure – on which we would look for the ways in which we can cooperate with all groups in the European Parliament.

When it comes to the quality of the public consultations, I think that we would need to develop also new methods. I was talking about the public consultations and the different levels of response we get when we've been discussing something which is very close to citizens' hearts like summer time. We had 4.6 million people writing to us saying that they would like to get rid of that system. On other consultations we get less enthusiasm and fewer responses, and I think that's because people are simply not that well informed that we are proposing and preparing something like this. Therefore, we will need to take out public consultations much more to our countries, to our regions, talk to professional associations, to make sure that we will have a better response in the future.

And when it comes to the future technologies, I think the first test will be with us very shortly, and this would be artificial intelligence – how are we going to make sure that it would respect our European values; how we would make sure that the GDPR top level protection of privacy of personal data will be translated also to the new digital technologies; how to make sure that machines will be there for us and not us there for the machines.

1-024-0000

**Jérôme Rivière (ID).** – J'aurais l'esprit d'escalier sur le respect des parlements.

Quelle est votre position vis-à-vis d'une procédure dite de carton rouge qui permettrait de respecter le principe de subsidiarité, c'est-à-dire d'obtenir que, si une majorité de parlements nationaux refuse une proposition émanant de la Commission ou du Parlement européen, nous puissions avoir ce veto qui viendrait s'opposer, nous interdisant d'aller plus loin, pour respecter effectivement la souveraineté nationale et ces parlements nationaux?

1-025-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Here again, I would be very practical, because I talk very often to the national parliaments and I know how important the yellow and orange cards are for them in the discussions on green cards. Red cards are also very pertinent and present in our debates.

What I am explaining to our colleagues – and I am ready to work on it even more in the political sense – is that once we in the Commission see that the proposal we might table would face the opposition of more than 50% of the national parliaments, we are not even going to put it on the table. We are very realistic: if you have opposition from more than half of the national parliaments, you will not get this approved.

At the same time, we also have good examples for the green card. When we received letters from many national parliaments saying that we should do better with food waste, we acted

and we introduced this particular element into our circular economy proposals. Many national parliaments have been quite pleased at how quickly we reacted in that matter. Let us therefore use our political tools to make sure that we work more closely with the national parliaments.

1-026-0000

**Ангел Джамбазки (ЕСР).** – Г-н Председател, г-н Комисар, позволете ми да Ви поздравя за досегашната Ви работа и да Ви пожелаая успехи занапред.

Аз ще развия мисълта на предишния колега. Вие ще отговаряте за отношенията с националните парламенти и ще бъдете отговорен за осигуряването и спазването на принципите на пропорционалност и субсидиарност, както и за укрепването на връзките между хората и институциите, които ги обслужват.

Убеден съм, че сте запознат с окончателния доклад на работната група за субсидиарност и пропорционалност и вероятно сте запознат и с редицата конкретни препоръки за засилване на ролята на националните парламенти в това отношение. Какво конкретно възнамерявате да направите, развивайки тезата за червения и за жълтия картон по тази тема и какво конкретно смятате да направите за въвеждането на принципа, предложен от Вас „Един вътре, един навън“, който е обявен в писмо за Ваша мисия? Предложението за нов правен акт да бъде придружено с предложение за оттегляне на акт, който вече е в сила. Това правило ще се отнася ли до оценката на броя на регулаторните административни задължения, наложени от законодателството на Европейския съюз?

Предвижда ли Комисията по-силна роля за заинтересованите страни – например предприемачи, потребителски организации и държавите членки, в този процес?

1-027-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – As regards the conclusions of that advisory board, I read them very carefully, and one particular idea clearly deserves to be developed. This is the concept of active subsidiarity. We should look for ways in which we can consult, or bring into our European debates, the national parliaments, regional authorities, or – if they exist – regional parliaments, earlier on. This is so that they can feel that they are part of this European endeavour, and so that they can, at that time, voice their concern about administrative burden or the problems with applicability in the specific countries or region.

That would really help a lot in making sure that our legislation is really future-proof, much more widely accepted and – even more importantly – properly transposed. Many problems we have with bureaucracy are faced when we go through the gold-plating, or when national or regional parliaments are heading to the transposed European legislation, and some national regional elements then make the execution or implementation of the European law extremely complicated.

I very much appreciate the work that was done on these matters by the Committee of the Regions. Through the development of RegHub, which is actually the network of regional authorities, they aim to make sure that they will inform us on time of where the problems are and of how they could be remedied. It is something that we have to work on, and we should clearly develop it in the future. Regarding the wider consultations, consulting social partners and professional associations is always very helpful, because you learn a lot and you make sure that what we are working on is properly understood and well implemented.

1-028-0000

**Antonio Tajani, Chair AFCCO.** – (To Mr Dzhambazki) Are you satisfied with the answer?

(Off-mike: 'Yes')

1-029-0000

**Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL).** – Herr Šefčovič! Noch einmal zu den Stichworten Initiativrecht und Zukunft der EU. Räumen Sie – ganz konkret – im Hinblick auf die Ausgestaltung der Konferenz über die Zukunft der EU dem Europäischen Parlament auch das Initiativrecht für das Bestimmen der Rahmenbedingungen, die Entwicklung der Instrumente und die Zielbestimmung ein? Wie werden Sie gewährleisten, dass auch die europäischen Bürgerinnen und Bürger aktiv einbezogen werden und an dieser Konferenz teilnehmen können und ein Mitspracherecht haben beim Agendasetting der Prioritäten der Europäischen Union?

1-030-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much, Mr Scholz, these are very relevant questions because if you want to succeed with the Conference on the future of Europe, we clearly have to bring it closer to our citizens, and as I was referring to a few minutes earlier, not only have this debate here in Brussels or Strasbourg or in our capitals, but really to go out to the regions and talk directly with our citizens.

I have quite a lot of experience with Citizens' Dialogue and I was just looking through some figures in preparation for today's hearing. I was quite impressed. Since we started with the Citizens' Dialogue we managed to talk personally, all Commissioners, to 200 000 citizens, so it works. We know how to reach them, but also the lessons learned from that experience was that we needed to bring to the discussions the topics which are relevant for our people. It might be a specific regional question or it might be linked to a concrete industry which is very important in that region, or it might be a question which is important for youth, which is looking at what to study, to make sure that they make a good contribution to society and they will be well prepared for this ever more dynamic labour market. I also learned that if you want to have a good debate, it helps if you have on the podium together with you somebody who is very respected locally.

Some of you, colleagues, Members of the European Parliament, have been in the Citizens' Dialogue with me. It was always excellent and very helpful. Other times it was a mayor, a local minister and I think that what we have to do is to prepare and model these discussions with the citizens which would be really wide, which would go across Europe, where we would like to address as many citizens as possible with the topics in which they are interested and of course your advice and your experience with your constituencies would be very, very valuable.

1-031-0000

**Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL).** – Noch einmal nachgehakt: Das heißt: Wer ist der Motor dieser Entwicklung? Sind wir, das Europäische Parlament, aus Ihrer Sicht berechtigt, genau die Initiative dafür zu ergreifen, dass wir den Raum bestimmen – gemeinsam mit der Kommission und hoffentlich auch gemeinsam mit dem Rat? Und wie weit ist dann das vorgeschlagene *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip nicht ein Widerspruch dazu, und sollten wir dann nicht eher das Nachhaltigkeitsprinzip *think sustainable first* einführen?

1-032-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – On the first question, you know that if it comes to the Commission we always like to have a right of initiative. But of course here we are talking about the interaction with our citizens where you are concerned as the directly elected representatives of our citizens. So I'm sure that, also in this case, this would be the co-creation exercise.

I am sure my colleague, the Vice-President responsible for preparing the Conference on the Future of Europe, will consult the European Parliament very intensely. I would be very happy to be a part of that exercise and to bring my part of the expertise, which we are building right now, to discuss long-term planning, foresight and the new emerging trends.

So I'm sure that this will be a co-creation exercise where we will find a model which will bring the right topics to the discussion and which would increase the interest of our citizens to debate and discuss Europe.

When it comes to your second question, of course, sustainability must be part of every impact assessment and of every move we make in the field of legislation.

1-033-0000

**Vladimír Bilčík (PPE).** – Dear Vice-President-designate, dear colleagues, as Members of this Parliament, we represent the voice of Europe's citizens and therefore, in addition to issues of competence, we must also question the personal and political readiness of future potential Commissioners.

In particular, let me raise two questions on the relationship between words and deeds in the Vice-President-designate's past actions. And for the sake of clarity, do let me continue this exchange directly in the Slovak language.

Vážený pán podpredseda, vo vašom poverovacom liste sa píše, citujem: „Rodovo vyvážené kolégium splňa nároky na väčšiu reprezentatívnosť a lepšie využíva potenciál nás všetkých. Je to dobrý začiatok, ale stále je veľmi veľa toho, čo musíme urobiť.“ Vy ste sa v minulosti opakovane prihlásili k tomu, že je potrebné vykonať všetko v našich silách, aby sme zabránili rôznym formám diskriminácie. Rovnako ste sa zaviazali bojovať proti rodovo podmienenému násiliu. Ako v tomto svetle teda hodnotíte vaše vlastné stanovisko z marca tohto roku, keď ste jednoznačne privítali rozhodnutie vlády na Slovensku zastaviť ratifikáciu dohovoru Rady Európy o predchádzaní násilia na ženách?

1-035-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Mr Chair, if you will allow, I will answer my compatriot in our mother tongue so that our people in Slovakia can better understand this exchange on this Slovak item raised by the honourable Member.

Musím povedať, že táto otázka, ktorú ste položili, sa ma veľmi osobne dotýka, a to hlavne v dvoch polohách. V prvej polohe ako otca dvoch dcér: určite ste ma aj vy počuli spomínať, ako neprijateľné je pre mňa, aby sa moje dve dcéry mali na tomto svete horšie než môj syn len preto, že sa narodili ako dievčatá. A tieto moje slová som potvrdzoval aj svojim celoživotným úsilím, ktoré sa prejavilo veľmi konkrétne aj v čase, keď som pracoval ako komisár zodpovedný za ľudské zdroje, kde som mal absolútny záujem o to, aby sme ako európska administratíva ukazovali ten najlepší príklad. Či už ide o to, ako predĺžiť materskú, rodičovskú dovolenku, či išlo o to, aby sme napriek veľmi silnej finančnej kríze urobili maximum preto, aby sme v týchto časoch mohli otvoriť dve nové škôlky či dve európske školy, či aj o to, aby sme zrovnoprávnili, ako poskytujeme príspevky pre domácnosť, napríklad aj párom rovnakého pohlavia. Mohol by som týchto príkladov spomenúť viac vrátane toho, že si myslím, že som bol prvý, kto stanovil veľmi ambiciózne ciele, ako zabezpečiť dostatočné zastúpenie žien na riadiacich funkciách v Európskej komisii. A pokiaľ ide o násilie na ženách, tu vám môžem povedať veľmi jednoznačne, že stopercentne stojím za prezidentkou Komisie pani Ursulou von der Leyenovou, a urobím všetko preto, aby som ju podporoval v tom úsilí, aby sa takéto násilie kategorizovalo ako európske zločiny, ktoré sa zapisujú do európskeho registra takýchto zločinov.

1-037-0000

**Vladimír Bilčík (PPE).** – Ešte jedna dôležitá otázka, pán podpredseda, k nezrovnalostiam k vašim deklarovanejším záväzkom, ktoré ste tu povedali aj dnes, a k minulým činom. Váš poverovací list zdôrazňuje potrebu čo možno najvyššej úrovne transparentnosti a etiky. Áno, dodržiavanie týchto princípov je rozhodujúcou súčasťou práce komisára s portfóliom, ktoré sa opiera o tvorbu politik založenú na dôkazoch a otvorenú komunikáciu. So znepokojením som preto zaznamenal vaše rozhodnutie prehliadnúť legitímny záujem seriózných spravodajských

kanálov tým, že ste im počas svojej politickej práce na Slovensku tento rok neposkytli rozhovory. Chcem vás požiadať: viete sa tu a teraz jasne zaviazat', že budete v rámci objektívnych časových možností komunikovať s novinármi tak, aby ste dali rovnaký priestor všetkým relevantným a nezávislým médiám?

1-038-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *dezinovaný komisár*. – Pán kolega, pred pár minútami som vo svojom otváracom vystúpení jasne pripomenul, ako dôležité sú pre mňa všetky záväzky a všetky hodnoty, ktoré nám priniesla nežná revolúcia. Môžem povedať, že celý život sa nimi riadim, a nenájdete jedno nezávislé médium, či už na Slovensku, tu v Európe alebo vo svete, s ktorým by som jedným alebo iným spôsobom aktívne nekomunikoval. Ak naozaj takúto informáciu nemáte, tak sa veľmi rád s vami podelím o monitoring mojich tlačových aktivít. A ešte by som k tejto odpovedi doplnil nielen to, že komunikujem so všetkými žurnalistami, ktorí o to majú záujem, ale vždy, pri každom jednom mojom vystúpení a v akomkoľvek období, som presadzoval jednoznačne proeurópske pozície, lebo mi záleží na tom, aby sme ako Slovensko boli silnou proeurópskou krajinou v silnej zjednotenej Európe, no a tak budem, samozrejme, pracovať aj v budúcnosti.

1-039-0000

**Tiemo Wölken (S&D)**. – Sehr geehrter Herr Šefčovič, zunächst lassen Sie mich vielleicht ganz kurz damit starten, dass ich Ihnen dafür danken möchte, dass Sie das Initiativrecht des Europäischen Parlaments stärken wollen. Seien Sie versichert, dass wir sehr genau darauf achten, dass das auch umgesetzt wird.

Und dann noch eine Bemerkung zum *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip. Ich glaube, wir merken hier im Raum, dass das auf breite Ablehnung stößt, und das ist auch richtig so. Politik ist nicht pure Mathematik, und schon gar nicht ist die Europäische Union ein Nachtclub, wo man sozusagen einen Gast rauslässt und dann erst wieder jemanden neu reinlässt. Auf dieses Spiel sollten wir uns nicht einlassen.

Wenn wir uns das *better law-making agreement* anschauen, ist dort immer ein ganz starker Fokus auf Transparenz gelegt. Es geht um Transparenz für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger. Das wird in der Präambel auch noch mal deutlich gemacht. Wenn Sie jetzt Frau von der Leyen doch nicht überzeugen können, dass wir das *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip doch nicht so brauchen, wie wollen Sie sicherstellen, dass das Parlament und die Bürgerinnen und Bürger transparent einbezogen sind und wirklich sehen, welche Gesetze da gelöscht werden, damit ein neues kommen kann?

1-040-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much for this question because you're absolutely right. It's very relevant not only for you, but for the wider public. And once again, I would like to reiterate my commitment that we will be approaching the cutting of red tape with all the vigour, but with all the care, at the same time.

And I can reassure you that if we would come up with any proposals – how we can simplify, how we can reduce the administrative burden – that we would, of course, consult you. You are a co-legislator. We cannot do it on our own. You have to be our partner in this respect. And I believe, as I already noticed in my preparatory meetings with many of you, that you have a lot of excellent ideas as to how we can do it – because you have the experience on the ground.

And I think that to introduce this discipline, that we would look at any new legislation through this second pair of eyes as to how we can not only adopt something, which Europe needs, but also open the avenue for reflection on what else we could do so that people would not have a

feeling that, even though the legislation is important, it kind of makes it too difficult for that particular sector.

And what I'm particularly looking at is how we can make the legislation more user friendly. How can we make it more digital?

And maybe we can also learn a little bit from the IT sector where the developer of applications in our smartphones are simply testing the application, listening to the feedback from users, and if they see that something is not working properly, they're trying to correct it.

I think it's time that we do the same. If we see that we adopted something which is cumbersome, which is difficult and for which we have a lot of complaints, let's not pretend that this was the best thing in the world we have done. But let's be humble and say yes, maybe we didn't get it right in the first place, let's correct it, let's be much more, I would say faster, in making sure that our legislation is up-to-date, modern and not cumbersome.

1-041-0000

**Antonio Tajani**, *Chair AFCCO*. – I see that response is okay.

1-042-0000

**Pascal Durand (Renew)**. – M. Šefčovič, vous avez tout à l'heure évoqué le registre qui pouvait permettre d'avoir un peu plus d'informations sur la question des études d'impact, etc. La démocratie est maintenant confrontée à une nouvelle difficulté: nous rentrons dans un monde d'expertise de plus en plus pointue. Nous avons eu un certain nombre de scandales autour des émissions des véhicules, autour du Dieselgate, autour du glyphosate, des évaluations, etc. Dans votre portefeuille prospectif – je ne vous demande pas de régler tout immédiatement, c'est impossible –, comment imaginez-vous faire en sorte que l'expertise, la comitologie, les actes délégués, tout ce qui délègue la démocratie à un certain nombre d'experts, ne soient plus soumis aux difficultés avec la représentation des intérêts privés, voire des intérêts étatiques? Donc, comment allez-vous remettre l'Union européenne et son indépendance au cœur de cette question?

1-043-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – I would also like to express my appreciation of how you put all my future tasks in that very vivid perspective. We know how much is ahead of us, and I'm 100% sure that this will be our common effort and our common work.

As you know, a lot has been done since the Lisbon Treaty was adopted and, let's be honest, we are still struggling as to how to make sure we properly use delegated implementing acts and how to evolve the parliament to its satisfaction that we would have a full right of scrutiny. When it comes to the expert groups – and especially delegated acts – I think there we have managed to fix things. Now the experts of the European Parliament have full access to the expert groups preparing the delegated acts, and I know what difficult negotiations we had on that 10 years ago.

The same goes if we are talking about preparatory expert groups for implementing acts, where the experts of the European Parliament are invited as well. Of course, when it comes to the comitology, there the regulation is in place and there even the Commission is under the control of the Member States.

So what I think would help transparency a lot is to make sure that when we are, for example, talking about who should be these experts, then we should proceed very rigorously with the declaration of interest. We would check their background to see if there is no conflict of interest. If they are representing associations they must be registered in the Transparency Register and, of course, the result of their work must be publicly displayed in the form of

minutes. You must be properly informed when such meetings are going to take place so we could have full information.

We are trying to put together the register on expert groups and the register on comitology. I know the IT experts are working flat out on how to achieve this, and I hope that next year together we can launch it and you will see if that new tool works to your satisfaction.

1-044-0000

**Pascal Durand (Renew).** – Je suis, évidemment, tout à fait intéressé par les réponses que vous venez d'apporter.

Question complémentaire: sur la question des émissions des véhicules, nous avons vu le président Juncker regretter de ne pas avoir soutenu l'idée –que nous avons portée à l'époque – d'une agence européenne indépendante, et déclarer qu'effectivement, nous devrions aller vers plus d'agences européennes.

Pensez-vous effectivement que, sur un grand nombre de sujets, nous devrions financer une expertise totalement indépendante à travers de nouvelles agences européennes?

1-045-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, commissaire désigné.** – Excusez-moi, j'ai quelques problèmes avec la traduction. Pourriez-vous répéter la première partie de votre question s'il vous plaît?

1-046-0000

**Pascal Durand (Renew).** – Lorsque nous avons parlé des problèmes d'émissions de CO2 des véhicules, au départ, il n'y avait pas d'agences indépendantes et elles n'avaient pas été soutenues par la Commission. À la fin, le président Juncker a dit: finalement, je le regrette, nous aurions dû soutenir le fait qu'une agence indépendante européenne soit en charge de cette question-là.

Alors, est-ce que cela va revenir à l'ordre du jour? Et pas uniquement pour les émissions des véhicules.

1-047-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much. It was really one of the very difficult files, which I, together with my fellow Commissioners, had on the table – because you're absolutely right, Dieselgate was a little bit as a result of this very cosy relationship between the car manufacturers and the testing authorities in the Member States.

And we have seen too what kind of dramatic proportions it has led to and how difficult it is to correct those mistakes, and how we are now doing everything possible to catch up with new trends like electro mobility.

So, in this case I'm sure that if we would have had an independent agency for emissions or for road transport, it would be much better. The question is how the new Commission will approach it and how we will put into practice the new standards, which we will develop together.

1-048-0000

**Markus Pieper (PPE).** – Herr Šefčovič! Die Europäische Union ist ja erfreulicherweise Impulsgeber für das Pariser Übereinkommen – der wichtigste Impulsgeber –, und wir sind auch auf einem erfreulichen Pfad, um diese Pariser Ziele zu erreichen. Wir schleppen allerdings viel bürokratischen Ballast mit uns. Deshalb die erste ganz klare Frage zum *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip: Wird die Europäische Kommission eine Selbstverpflichtung eingehen, dieses *One-in-one-out*-Prinzip durchzuführen? Ja oder nein, mehr müssen Sie gar nicht sagen.

Meine zweite Frage betrifft die Folgenabschätzung. Stimmt das, was zurzeit diskutiert wird, dass die Europäische Kommission in den nächsten 100 Tagen die Folgenabschätzung zu einem Großteil aussetzen möchte, um möglichst viel Gesetzgebung auf den Weg zu bringen? Stimmt dies, was zurzeit diskutiert wird, oder werden Sie darauf bestehen, solide Folgenabschätzung für Bürger und Unternehmen auch weiterhin durchzuführen, ohne dass da irgendwelche Defizite sind?

Die dritte Frage: Folgenabschätzungen sind gut und schön, aber es sind immer Folgenabschätzungen der Kommission. Sie haben natürlich ein eigenes Interesse, dass die Folgen Ihres Tuns gut sind. Wir haben ein *Regulatory Scrutiny Board*, was eine unabhängige Folgenabschätzung in Teilen ermöglicht. Wie stehen Sie zu der Idee, dieses *Scrutiny Board* aufzuwerten zu einem echten unabhängigen Normenkontrollrat, wie es etwa in Großbritannien und in Deutschland der Fall ist?

1-049-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – If we have one in/one out, what I want to say is that we are going to focus like a laser beam on the administrative burdens. Every new administrative burden should be offset by the removing of the administrative burdens in outdated legislation. This is how we are going to do it, and I believe that this is the best way to approach it, because I think if it were approached in a mechanical way we could cause a lot of harm and damage.

When it comes to the impact assessment, we clearly need to improve the quality and transparency even further. I know there is now a discussion going on in the European Parliament on how we should enlarge the principles and factors which should be properly assessed when the impact assessment is being done, and we are going to follow those recommendations and make the impact assessment even more comprehensive and more future-oriented.

When it comes to the independence of the regulatory scrutiny board, I'm sure that you are informed that in the last period we have had three external experts who are working in this regulatory scrutiny board, and as a Commissioner who was working on the Energy Union I can tell you that these are pretty tough people. So if they see that something is not working, that something is really burdensome, that something is not really being properly assessed, they will not hesitate to block the whole process and make sure that this really corresponds to the highest demands on the quality of legislation. What I want to do is to support them on that, to improve the quality, to give them more resources to do their work even better, and also to use the potential of the Joint Research Centre on some of the issues where we would need more scientific evidence, where we would need more information gathering, so that we can be really sure that the work we do is properly based on science. Sorry, my time is up!

1-050-0000

**Markus Pieper (PPE)**. – Wir brauchen nicht drei unabhängige Experten, wir brauchen dreihundert, um das, was die Kommission an Folgenabschätzungen vorlegt, unabhängig zu bewerten. Es tut mir leid. Sind Sie dafür, da auch personell aufzustocken?

Letzte Frage: Sind Sie auch endlich für einen verbindlichen SME-Test, also einen Test für mittelständische Firmen, was Bürokratieaufwand betrifft, dass wir auch da endlich mal auch aus Sicht der Kommission einen Schritt vorankommen?

1-051-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – I got the point. I mean there are two very quick answers.

Let's look at how we can link our Regulatory Scrutiny Board with the independent bodies in other Member States and to compare notes – because what we want in the end is legislation

which is good, which is not cumbersome and which is for the benefit of European citizens and businesses and, when it comes to the SME test, this was something which was very much in the heart of the President-elect. In our subsequent discussions, she put it as a very, very high priority that SMEs are the backbone of the European economy. We should treat them well and we should also bear in mind how our legislation is sometimes too complicated and too complex for small and medium-sized enterprises.

So yes, we are going to do it. We are going to use a special SME filter and any ideas how we can do it together better, I would very much welcome. I'm ready to work with you on this to make sure that our SME sector is satisfied with the new changes we are going to introduce.

1-052-0000

**Ibán García Del Blanco (S&D).** – You mentioned Artificial Intelligence and how the development of AI will most likely be linked to the REFIT better law-making agenda. Here, business argues intensely in favour of less regulation in order to allow for and boost the development of AI technology, as the main EU instruments governing Artificial Intelligence today are the General Data Protection Regulation and the ePrivacy Directive, the latter being currently updated.

It should be underlined that any initiatives from the Commission in this area have to fully respect and guarantee fundamental rights, such as the protection of privacy and personal data or non-discrimination. Due consideration should also be taken of the need to guarantee the respect of other ethical and human aspects and create trust in these new technologies. How will you ensure that initiatives in favour of facilitating Artificial Intelligence within various sectors do not undermine existing regulation or protection of fundamental rights but rather uses their protections and competitive advantage?

1-053-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much Mr García Del Blanco for this very foresightful question, I would say.

And I'm sure that artificial intelligence would be a topic which we would have to discuss in great depth and from all aspects because currently we are really at the beginning.

So what is artificial intelligence? This is either an algorithm or a machine, which is able independently to observe the environment, adopt autonomous decisions, communicate with each other, and then act.

And of course you can have this type of machine in all spheres of life – prescribing medicine, doing medical work, being responsible for autonomous driving – and this is really touching the hearts and souls of our citizens.

Who is liable for their action? Who is responsible if something is going wrong? Who is going to be in possession of our private data? How would our rights be guaranteed?

And here I think we have to insist 100% on our European approach to data, to our European approach to IT.

I heard that these big Internet companies in the United States thrive because they are in possession of very precise data of 70% of the population.

I'm not sure that Americans all know it.

And we know that in Europe, we are much more sensitive when it comes to the privacy of data. We acknowledge that data is this new fuel for the economy of the 21st century but at the same time, we have to make absolutely sure that our data is well protected, that our

fundamental rights are respected, and that we know who is liable, who is responsible, and that humans must be always in control.

So this would be one of the questions for the upcoming Commission – how we set the parameters that we would remain global leaders in this very important segment and at the same time we do it in our European way.

1-054-0000

**Ibán García Del Blanco (S&D).** – Actually you answered by raising a bunch of interesting questions to my questions, no? But in order to do this, how do you, concretely speaking, intend to consult Parliament in reshaping the platform that you announced to make it fit for the future?

1-055-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much also for this question. When I was preparing for our hearing I was of course discussing with our experts how the REFIT reform works, and everybody agreed that it's a very good tool. It's a very important platform and it helps in many respects, but they also felt that maybe we need to rebrand it, we have to bring something new; and we have to look also a little bit more into the future, to connect it with foresight and to make sure that we are looking again at how we can retrofit legislation, how to make it not only less burdensome but also more future-oriented and better prepared for what today's super-dynamic world is bringing to us.

I think the first thing we would have to do is to look at how to select the people, the experts, who would work on that Fit for the Future Platform, and I would suggest that once we have these new proposals on the table, how I would like to do it is to come to both your committees and we could discuss it. It would be very interesting to hear your advice and to build also political support for this new platform, because this is something that we have to – in a positive sense – sell well here, but also in our Member States so that the people respect the suggestions.

1-056-0000

**Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE).** – Je vais revenir à la charge sur l'*evidence policy making*, d'abord pour dire que la protection du climat, de l'environnement, de notre santé, que l'égalité sociale et de genre, que la défense des droits humains doivent guider nos lois et orienter aussi la nature des études réalisées: il s'agit de défendre l'intérêt général.

On a parlé de Dieselgate, j'aimerais aussi revenir à la charge sur la décision de la Cour européenne de justice concernant la non-divulgence des études sur le glyphosate. Vous avez indiqué que ces études seraient disponibles sur un site internet. Pouvez-vous vous engager à nous dire si les études qui seront réalisées seront publiques dans l'ensemble des institutions de l'Union, seront accessibles pour révision et par les pairs et par les citoyennes et les citoyens?

1-057-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for being so precise, explicit and also so concrete. When it comes to the glyphosate case, that's really one of the issues which even our Treaties couldn't foresee at that time. We have procedures in place where you put the proposal on the table and then you have the comitology discussion when you cannot get qualified majority either for authorisation or against authorisation. And you have also the discussion in Parliament, which is very much against these proposals, and also public opinion in our Member States is very diverse. So that's partially the political problem. It's also the problem of the evaluation of the scientific evidence which was provided by our agencies and it's also the issue with which we would have to deal in the future.

I agree with you that what would be most important in this case is to be as transparent as possible and to show the public and you, as the directly elected representatives of the European people, what kind of scientific basis there was for that proposal.

So if I succeed, I hope with your help, in creating this joint register for evidence which should be interinstitutional, I would insist that all the evidence we used for our impact assessment, for the preparation of our proposals, should be included in this register so everybody could have a look at it, it could be properly debated and everybody would know where the Commission got the scientific evidence it's using for legislative work.

1-058-0000

**Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE).** – Je veux poursuivre sur cette question de la transparence en vous parlant du Conseil.

L'opacité du Conseil, son incapacité à répondre aux interrogations démocratiques des citoyennes et des citoyens, alimentent la crise de confiance qui tue l'Europe à petit feu, et il est urgent d'agir pour permettre la transparence de ces institutions.

Aujourd'hui, la confidentialité que le Conseil impose à ses documents, à ses discussions et à ses votes prive, de fait, les citoyens de savoir ce que les gouvernements qui les représentent ont dit en leur nom et ce qu'ils ont voté. Il faut en finir avec cette culture du secret.

En tant que commissaire, agirez-vous pour réformer les règles qui lient nos trois institutions afin que le Conseil garantisse un niveau de transparence au moins égal à celui du Parlement?

Et si le Conseil persiste à ne pas poursuivre les recommandations de la Médiatrice européenne et que le Parlement en venait à saisir la justice européenne, agirez-vous pour que la Commission se joigne au Parlement dans cette démarche?

1-059-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, commissaire désigné.** – Merci beaucoup pour votre question. Je crois que c'est vraiment pertinent. On a discuté de cela à plusieurs occasions.

On a aussi déjà développé une jurisprudence dans ce cas. Je crois aussi, à ce sujet, que la décision de la Cour de justice européenne dans l'arrêt De Capitani est très importante. Je crois que cette décision nous a aidé à être beaucoup plus transparent si on parle par exemple des documents à quatre colonnes, qui sont si importants pour la transparence et aussi pour la préparation des trilogues.

Et vous savez, dans le cas où il y a intérêt de demander à la Commission de présenter les documents pour les trilogues, nous sommes obligés de présenter ces documents, et nous les présenterons toujours.

Concernant la position du Conseil, je veux appeler celui-ci à discuter de ce sujet avec le Médiateur européen. Et je suis très encouragé par la présidence finlandaise, qui a déjà expérimenté et essayé d'être beaucoup plus transparente et d'ouvrir les documents du Conseil au public. Et j'espère que les présidences suivantes vont continuer dans ce sens. Merci Madame.

1-060-0000

**Joachim Kuhs (ID).** – Herr Vorsitzender, sehr geehrter Herr Šefčovič! Als ich hier in Brüssel das erste Mal in einem Ausschuss saß – das war vor wenigen Monaten –, erlebte ich ein etwas schockierendes Geschehen. Man sprach vom Rat als unserem Feind. Das heißt, das Parlament sieht den Rat als seinen Feind, nicht als seinen Gegner, und das hat mich doch sehr überrascht. Ich habe dann in den nächsten Sitzungen gemerkt, dass das Verhältnis des Parlaments zum Rat regelrecht zerrüttet scheint. Das sieht man auch daran, dass schon zum neunten Mal dem Rat für die Ausführung seines Haushalts keine Entlastung erteilt worden ist. Was werden Sie unternehmen, welche Maßnahmen werden Sie treffen, um das Verhältnis zwischen dem Parlament und dem Rat zu verbessern?

1-061-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much Mr Kuhs for your question.

Of course, for the sake of European citizens and for the sake of a bright European future, it's our duty to collaborate as well as possible among all the institutions. I'm sure that you know that I will represent the European Commission here in the European Parliament and I'm sure that I will be a frequent guest in the committees who are auditioning me today, but also in the Conference of Committee Chairs or on any other occasion where you would feel that it's suitable that the representative of the European Commission is there and is discussing with you the topics which will be on the agenda.

I will equally represent the Commission in the General Affairs Council, which prepares the European summits, which deals with horizontal issues like the Multiannual Financial Framework, like enlargement, like cohesion policy and many other topics, which are of great importance to you.

So, we as the Commission, are always trying to find the way how to make sure that the cooperation between all three institutions, especially among the co-legislators, European Parliament and the Council, is as good as possible.

And this is how we also approach the trilogues, where we invest enormous energy to make sure that the positions before the final negotiations are as close as possible, so we have a reasonable chance for success.

So the official reply I should give to you – according to our experts from the Secretary-General – is that I should be equidistant from both institutions. But I do not like that word. I would like to be equally close to the European Parliament and to the Council because I believe that it helps to translate sometimes the grievances of the European Parliament towards the European Council and again explain the Council's position to the European Parliament so we can find the solution, as we did with several interinstitutional agreements, which we managed to sign when I was in this position for the first time.

1-062-0000

**Antonio Tajani**, *Chair AFCCO*. – (To Mr Kuhs) Are you ok with the answer?

*(Off-mike: 'Yes')*

1-063-0000

**Ангел Джамбазки (ЕКР)**. – Г-н Шевчович, когато говорим за оценките за въздействие в междуинституционалните отношения и връзки, не мога да не Ви задам един въпрос, който никой от колегите не повдигна, и това е въпросът за двойните стандарти. Въпрос, който засяга най-вече държавите от Централна и Източна Европа. Давам конкретен пример: един много спорен документ – мина и във времето, когато Вие бяхте комисар – това е пакетът „Мобилност“.

Всички в този парламент говорят за зелена енергия – има голямо представителство на Зелените. Но в този пакет се предвижда стотици хиляди празни камиони да изминават стотици хиляди километри и да горят във въздуха хиляди тонове гориво. Празни. Това беше направено, за да могат да бъдат фирмите от Централна и Източна Европа не особено конкурентни.

Какво конкретно можете да направите Вие и какво би било Вашето отношение? Тук има очевиден двоен стандарт. От една страна се говори за екология, от друга страна се гласува за това хиляди тонове гориво да се горят напразно във въздуха. Как ще решим

този въпрос на двойния стандарт, който засяга държави като Полша, Чехия, Унгария, Румъния и България?

1-064-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – I have to say that to the regret of the current Transport Commissioner, Madame Bulc, and myself, this is one file which remains pending.

I think it's because we didn't manage to find an overwhelming consensus, which would really gather the majority of our Member States, and the Members of the European Parliament, around the best possible solution. What we have been discussing there was: how many days our truck drivers would have for international transport; how many days they can use for the cabotage; what are the rules for their daily rest, weekly rest, monthly rest and so on and so forth.

In the end we got tied down in great details, which made the final solution extremely complicated, and I think that we missed a little bit the initial idea, when we proposed this proposal, to get rid of the often very false 'letterbox companies' which have really very often been putting truck drivers into enslaved conditions, that we've been omitting situations where very often not very reputable companies have been taking unfair advantage of truck drivers on one or another side, and very often playing them off against each other.

So I think that what we need to do would be to get a fresh start, to have a look at what we can do better for the future. How can we use modern logistics? Because I think that what should be in our interest and, looking at climate change, how we can make sure that our truck business is much more efficient? How we can better combine it with the railways and what we can do better that would really be more efficient when spending and using diesel in our trucks, especially when they have no cargoes.

1-065-0000

**Ангел Джамбазки (ЕСР)**. – И още един кратък пример за двоен стандарт ще Ви дам. Отново е транспортно-екологичен. Голяма германска фирма автомобилен концерн планира да пренесе своето производство в държава извън Европейския съюз – в Турция. В рамките на Европейския съюз ние сме подписали споразумение за нивото на държавната помощ. Представители на този концерн признават, че биха отишли в Турция, защото могат да заобиколят правилата за държавната помощ, които и Турция е подписала. В Турция не се спазват и правилата за чистотата на въздуха при производството. Изобщо не отварям тема за човешките права и за политиката. Говоря само за екология и за европейски правила. Как ще реагира Комисията, защото тази голяма германска фирма – тя не е само частна – в нея участва и министър-председателят на Долна Саксония. Това е публично дружество.

1-066-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – I do not have detailed information on these specific companies, but I believe I can respond in a structural way. The problem of state aid provided by third countries to businesses that operate in Europe is a little bit similar to what is happening where we are importing goods from third countries with much higher carbon footprints than we are producing in Europe.

We need to be much more forceful and assertive in our trade relations with third countries. We have to stop the practice whereby we would push, and rightly so, our companies to manufacture and produce cleanly; then through public procurement we would push, let's say, public authorities to import dirty products. We need to introduce the border adjustment tax import duty on cars, which would put our companies in Europe on a level playing field with their competitors in third countries where they do not respect the need to fight the climate emergency.

1-067-0000

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – Herr Šefčovič! Ich frage im Auftrag des Petitionsausschusses. Der Petitionsausschuss erhält eine große Anzahl von Petitionen zu Umweltfragen wie Abfallentsorgung, Umweltverschmutzung und umweltgefährdenden Projekten. Ich möchte besonders auf den letzten Punkt eingehen. Und zwar geht es darum, wie die Kommission damit umgeht. Befinden sich die Projekte noch in der Planungsphase, dann sagt die Kommission in der Regel: Wir gehen fest davon aus, dass die Mitgliedstaaten alle europäischen Gesetze beachten. Ist die Planungsphase vorbei, dann ist das Projekt schnell gebaut. Sie glauben ja gar nicht, wie schnell man einen Vergnügungspark in Naturschutzgebieten errichten kann, wenn man will, oder wie schnell Windmühlen dann dastehen. Und Vertragsverletzungsverfahren erweisen sich oft als unbrauchbar.

Meine Frage an Sie: Mit welchen Instrumenten könnte die Europäische Kommission in solchen Fällen früher eingreifen, und zwar nicht erst dann, wenn die Projekte gebaut sind? Das heißt, könnten Vertragsverletzungsverfahren auch bereits in der Planungsphase stattfinden?

1-068-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – First a couple of structural points. I would very much like to establish a high-quality relationship with your committee because I'm fully aware of how frustrating it is for you and for the petitioners if they do not get their answer on time or if they get an answer which is purely bureaucratic and not satisfactory at all. So we have to work on it together, and I think the best approach would be that when we have petitions where we know that they do not belong to our competences then we should be very honest and up-front and tell them: this is not up to us, this is for somebody else.

But in the areas where we do have competence, I think there we have to be more forceful. I promise you that when we have, as in this case, questions clustered around environmental permits or environmental studies, or very often there are a number of questions concerning airlines and how they're behaving toward their customers, then let's have a structured debate on these issues in your committees, let's prepare the Commissioner and their services properly, so you get the answer and we get the answer to the citizen and we start to deal with the issue.

When it comes to environmental studies, in Europe every year we have – and I'm not exaggerating – tens of thousands of environmental assessments done at the national, regional and city levels. Therefore, I think we would need to find an appropriate way of dealing with the pertinent ones. I understand that it's not much use to enter into discussions with the Member States where, let's say, the building is already completed or the construction is already done. But we need to focus on those where we know that there is something going wrong, that we should intervene and we should work together. Let's think about it, how we can do it and manage it with our resources.

1-069-0000

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – Gestatten Sie eine Nachfrage. Der Petitionsausschuss stützt sich auf die Antwort der Europäischen Kommission, und die muss spätestens drei Monate nach dem Tag, an dem das Ermittlungersuchen eingereicht worden ist, eingehen. Würden Sie mithelfen zu garantieren, dass wir diese drei Monate auch wirklich einhalten? Denn oft kommt die Antwort der Kommission verspätet beim Petitionsausschuss an. Können wir heute den großen Deal machen: Wir halten die Frist ein, und Sie garantieren uns das heute? Das wäre ein schöner Anfang.

1-070-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Let's make a deal that I'll do my best to get you the answer in three months if you would help me to clear out all the questions for which you and I know that we are not responsible for – because they're not in our competences.

If you can sift through that and you will just send us really the petitions for which the Commission can do something, and is responsible for, I'll do my utmost that they will get a good answer in three months and you will have the Commissioners ready to be in your committee. But I think we both would have to be honest with our citizens that if they are coming to us with petitions with which there is nothing we could do, that we tell them immediately, so that we would not frustrate them by having the petitions on the table for a long time and then we tell them, 'sorry, we looked at it, it's not up to us to take the decision – you have to go back to the national level'.

So if you can have this type of a deal I am very much ready to work with you and am very much looking forward to it.

1-071-0000

**Liesje Schreinemacher (Renew).** – I would like to ask you about the Battery Alliance, which is mentioned in your mission letter. How will you ensure that the EU will be in the forefront of the development and production of the technologies of the future? We see the establishment of a Battery Alliance where you will coordinate the Commission's work. However, we do not know what will be the technologies of the future so how will we form the alliances needed to make sure that the EU will be creating the innovative technologies and also produce them rather than importing them?

Our industries do not have five years to wait for the next alliance following the Battery Alliance, especially not our innovative SMEs which are the backbone and often the most innovative European industries. So how will you use the strategic foresight to keep the EU in the forefront of technology development?

1-072-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – First, a couple of words about Battery Alliance and then how we can link it with other strategic areas. In the Battery Alliance, the most difficult part was to actually launch it, because we had to convince the leaders of the industry that diesel technology is a technology of the past and the future technology will be based on batteries and hydrogen, and we also had to demonstrate to them that the battery it is not the commodity, that it's actually a strategic part of future cars. The battery and software would represent 80% of the value of the car and Asian manufacturers do not want to export batteries to Europe. They want to export electric cars. So if you do not want to end up with some of the today high-end, very famous European trademarks, being electric and that we would then get the answer, if you want to buy them, you have to buy a made-in-China car, then we had to act very forcefully and make sure that we would catch up with our industry. What was then very important was that we have to use this window of opportunity which is open for another two or three years to demonstrate that we can actually massively produce batteries and that they will be better than the Asian ones. That they will be sustainable, greener, with modern software and that we would at the same time invest in the next generation of batteries, so when the solid-state battery technology comes, we will be the best at it and I believe that the work of industry policy makers, our regulatory power of the Commission, but also the financial support which we've been able to provide to these future innovative companies, can be replicated also in other strategic areas and for that I would like to use these foresight responsibilities to come to you and tell you in which other strategic sectors we should do the same and establish such a industrial pact, so that we can really keep up pace with our major global competitors.

1-073-0000

**Liesje Schreinemacher (Renew).** – During the campaign prior to the elections, something that I heard very often from voters was: Brussels seems so far away, they are making regulations that we don't need and we spoke about the one-in one-out principle and how we will work towards the alleviation of over-regulation. We have the SME test, which is a good

development, but I was wondering, are you planning on visiting SMEs yourself in order to see what they need and how they are affected by European legislation?

1-074-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Of course I will, and throughout my Presidency in Brussels I very much valued social dialogue and learned how helpful it was when we were introducing this new approach to the core regions and how important it was when discussing the difficult questions linked with transport. You may be surprised, but the social partners would like to see me already in the next couple of days, and they also always have with them representatives of SMEs. But I understand the message from all of you today, that if we are going to look at the administrative burden, then we have to be very intelligent, smart about it. We have to use modern tools – e-government, digital means – and especially look at how we can help to alleviate the burden for SMEs. So any advice I can get from you, from them, let's have a look at it and I would like to approach all Member States and associations, to see if they could be very concrete. What is the concrete piece of legislation which is making your life difficult? Let's work on it. Give me two or three examples and let's work on it together so people have concrete results and we would learn how to do it in a way that SMEs actually appreciate.

1-075-0000

**Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI)**. –Signor Commissario designato, ci fa molto piacere averla qui con noi per questo confronto.

L'azione delle istituzioni e le politiche dell'Unione europea, a nostro avviso, devono basarsi sulla democrazia partecipativa, garantendo dunque il rispetto dei principi di piena trasparenza, condivisione e corretta e tempestiva informazione dei cittadini. Ho ascoltato con grande interesse le Sue affermazioni quanto al rispetto della sentenza De Capitani e agli impegni intrapresi, quindi, rispetto alla giurisprudenza della Corte.

Tuttavia vorrei allargare il discorso anche partendo da una Sua affermazione contenuta nelle risposte scritte, in cui parla del Suo impegno a finalizzare i negoziati interistituzionali sul registro unico per la trasparenza. Gli accordi interistituzionali possono essere vincolanti solo per le istituzioni e non per i soggetti terzi. Vorrei quindi sapere, dal Suo punto di vista, come intende finalizzare i negoziati, vista appunto la resistenza del Consiglio, se ha intenzione di presentare una proposta legislativa che potrebbe, quindi, direttamente migliorare la trasparenza e facilitare il processo di scrutinio democratico e, se sì, con che tempistica.

1-076-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – When it comes to the Transparency Register, I remember how we started with the renovation of the system which we had at that time – I think it was almost eight or nine years ago, how we had to adjust the Transparency Register to the different kind of businesses, associations, NGOs, think-tanks and how we very much wanted to actually cover all spheres of life and all those who want to be part of the European policy debate and European legislative discussions. I think that we succeeded in this, and today the Transparency Register is really a reference point if we compare any other country in the EU, in the OECD or the United States.

There is, of course, one issue where we would need to continue our discussion – and again, I think it's a pending file from the current legislative period. How can we make the Transparency Register used even more, for the European Parliament or for the Council? I know that these are very sensitive issues where we have to find a proper balance, also for you, because you are directly elected representatives of the people and you have your rights, your prerogatives.

So how can we really make sure the Transparency Register would play its role, knowing that also the Members of the European Parliament take it very seriously when meeting people for discussion.

The same applies to the Council. I think that if we achieve all three institutions having the same approach to the Transparency Register, we will do a great service to European citizens and we will really set a shining example to all democracies on this planet as to how we transparently are dealing with the representatives of business interests or any other interests which they come to advocate when meeting with us.

I'm ready to work with you very closely. I'm sorry, but I got so carried away on the Transparency Register that I didn't have time to answer the De Capitani question. If the President allows, in the follow-up I will elaborate on that. Excuse me.

1-077-0000

**Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI).** – La ringrazio per il Suo impegno in tal senso. Volevo appunto capire se effettivamente avrà l'intenzione o no di presentare una proposta legislativa, quindi un *regulation*, per andare ad affrontare il tema. Volevo poi allargare il discorso per quanto riguarda un possibile impegno a favore di una soluzione costruttiva per far avanzare i negoziati anche su altri dossier molto importanti, ad esempio il diritto d'inchiesta del Parlamento. Anche in questo caso, sappiamo che il Consiglio non è stato assolutamente favorevole finora e vorrei capire come pensa di comportarsi e come orienterà l'azione della Commissione in caso di controversie tra Parlamento e Consiglio, che si ripropongono anche in questo mandato. In particolare, per quanto riguarda lo stallo sul diritto d'inchiesta, se come Parlamento dovessimo decidere di portare la questione dinanzi alla Corte di giustizia, quale sarebbe la Sua posizione? Come vedrebbe questa proposta? Sarebbe pronto, eventualmente, anche a sostenerla?

1-078-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Concluding on your first question, when it comes to the transparency register I think what we need to do is complete this effort. That means finding how the European Parliament and the Council can be part of this effort and I am ready to engage fully, to discuss it with you and look for the best possible solution.

When it comes to the right of inquiry, it's a pity that this has been blocked since 2012, and it is long overdue because you have the full right to change the really outdated regulation on this matter, and I fully understand that you want to have all the powers necessary so that you can follow the inquiry as the European Parliament. My suggestion would be as follows: I would organise the meeting with the current and future presidencies. I am also ready to invite the coordinators of your committees to such a discussion and let's have a look. Can we move it forward or are the differences really so unbridgeable that we would be losing another seven years since the proposal was tabled? Or can we look for some kind of constructive compromise which would give you the right of inquiry as you rightly demand, and at the same time whether we could take care of the different legal constraints which are presented mostly by the legal services of the Council.

1-079-0000

**Giuliano Pisapia (S&D).** – Signor commissario designato, grazie per le risposte scritte e per le risposte che ha dato finora.

Mi sembra che sia emerso chiaramente che una delle priorità di questa legislatura sia quella di trovare i modi per utilizzare al meglio il potenziale offerto dai trattati per migliorare e rendere più celere il processo decisionale. La Presidente eletta sostiene, come ha anche detto nel corso di una assemblea plenaria a Strasburgo, che dobbiamo procedere verso l'abolizione dell'unanimità per le politiche in materia di clima, energia, affari sociali e fiscalità.

Io Le chiedo: allo stato attuale, prima di poter cambiare e concretamente raggiungere quella parità di colegislazione che adesso non c'è, condivide la necessità di passare dalle procedure legislative speciali a quelle ordinarie, dal voto all'unanimità al voto a maggioranza qualificata? In quali settori sosterrebbe l'attivazione delle clausole passerella, sia la clausola generale che quelle settoriali?

1-080-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much Mr Pisapia for this question.

I think that this would really be a question for this Commission, because if we want to be a geopolitical Commission, we also have to have the ability as the European Union to act much faster.

And we have seen how very often it is difficult, especially in the area of foreign policy, where very often for different reasons, one or two Member States can really paralyse the whole action at European Union level.

And I know that here of course in many areas, maybe such a gradual build-up to move from unanimity to Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), would help to speed up the decision-making process and would help to show that the European Union is very agile and can adopt decisions much, much faster.

Even the idea, which was raised by my colleague Josep Borrell, of the constructive abstention, could be a solution for many of the areas where we need fast decision making.

Of course, the priorities of the Commission, as you have also seen from this first 100-days plan, are very much linked with social affairs – the minimum wage, transparency of pay, of course the Green Deal and artificial intelligence.

I think that in these areas as well as completing the European and Monetary Union would also benefit greatly if in these areas we would move gradually from unanimity to QMV.

As you know, I was responsible for energy union and again I would say it would be much easier if in energy taxation we would have the possibility to vote on some of the areas through QMV. I know that for the Member States the setting of the rate is probably untouchable and they would like to keep that possibility, but discussing what kind of taxes we are going to raise together through more flexible decision-making I think should only be welcome.

1-081-0000

**Giuliano Pisapia (S&D).** – La ringrazio per la Sua risposta, che mi convince, anche perché il rischio di queste audizioni è quello di generalizzare tutto e non essere concreti. Lei è stato concreto, la concretezza dell'agire è fondamentale in Europa e nel mondo intero, ma spesso non c'è a livello delle persone che hanno ruoli determinanti per il futuro del nostro pianeta, in particolare per il futuro dell'Europa. Io posso solo ringraziarLa per quello che ha fatto in questi anni per l'Europa, per quello che sta facendo ancora come componente dell'attuale Commissione, e da parte mia confido anche che faremo insieme questa legislatura.

1-082-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Allow me to thank Mr Pisapia for his kind words. I also appreciate the support I have received from the European Parliament for everything we did under the Energy Union – especially in tackling climate change. I can tell you that having the chance, the honour and the privilege to sign, on behalf of the European Union, the Paris Agreement at the United Nations in New York was one of the proudest moments of my career. I know how thankful I am not only to the European Parliament, but also to my colleagues in the Commission. Thank you very much for your kind words.

1-083-0000

**József Szájer (PPE).** – Tisztelt Šefčovič Úr! Az Unióban az egyik legjelentősebb vita ma az Unió és a tagok között a megosztott hatáskörök mentén zajlik. A tagországok úgy érzik, hogy az Unió suttymóban és lopakodva elvonja hatásköreiket, az uniós intézmények pedig gyakran idegesek, hogy megfelelő hatáskör hiányában nem tudnak eléggé hatékonyan cselekedni. Én óvatosan figyeltem az imént az Ön válaszát, amit a másik kollégámnak adott. Azt mondta, hogy ha nagyon sokan ellenzik, akkor úgyszincs esély, hogy ebből jogszabály legyen. Ugyanakkor mégiscsak a Bizottsággal van a probléma, hiszen abban a szűk három esetben, amelyben eddig sárga lapos eljárást kezdeményeztek, a Bizottság mindösszesen kétszer azt elutasította. Ezt sokan úgy értékelték, mint a Bizottság arroganciáját. Mik azok az eszközök, amelynek segítségével garantálhatja, hogy – mivel nagyon nehéz összehozni több parlament együttes fellépését ezekben az ügyekben – a jövőben a Bizottság alaposabban meg fogja vizsgálni és jobban figyelembe fogja venni az egyes parlamentek észrevételeit? És nem az a helyzet, hogy háromból tulajdonképpen csak kettő esetben nem jár sikerrel.

1-084-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – I think that the best reply or best approach on how to handle the situation is a more forthcoming attitude and a more political approach. When it comes to the yellow card procedure, I think that currently the national parliaments are suffering when using this procedure from several angles. The first one is that very often they complain that eight weeks is too short a period of time. Therefore, hopefully, with your tacit agreement, we, for the first time, are not going to count the end of the year holidays into this delay and we will be, at the same time, much more proactive in preparing what I would call aggregate answers. So, there will not be, I would say, bureaucratic answers to each parliament but when we see they have the same problem, they are coming to us with the same issue, let's have a little bit of a political approach and prepare an answer which is really responding to the issue the national parliaments put on the table.

I hope that this would address some of the issues and then I think what is very important is to invite more often representatives of the national parliaments over here to Brussels, so they can meet the European colleagues. They can talk to the Commission and also it's very important that we would travel as often as we can to the national parliaments to discuss the issues of their concern.

I hope that we can benefit more from the report which was done by the Special Task Force convened by President Juncker, and I think that the concept of active subsidiarity, where we would coordinate with the national parliaments more upstream would also help to alleviate the feeling that we are not taking them seriously enough.

1-085-0000

**József Szájer (PPE).** – Örülök a válaszának, ugyanakkor azt kell, hogy mondjam, hogy itt jelentős kisebbségvédelemre van szükség, hiszen például Ön is Közép-Európából jön, mint jómagam. Nagyon sok esetben a különböző jogszabályok hatása az egyes országokban másképpen érvényesül. Bolgár kollégánk már említette a Mobility Package-t, de a kiküldetési irányelvénél hasonló a helyzet. Ezek voltak azok az esetek, amelyekben a parlamentek már kezdeményeztek ilyen jellegű eljárásokat, és azt gondolom, hogy éppen azért, mert egyes országokban másképpen jelenik meg a hatás, ezért igen nagy szükség van arra, hogy a kisebbségeknek a szempontjai is belekerüljenek. És mivel a Bizottság a jogkezdeményező szerv, ennek következtében fontos, hogy a Bizottság, amikor kezdeményezi a jogszabályokat, ezekre odafigyeljen, akkor is, ha adott esetben nincsen narancssárga vagy sárga eljárás.

1-086-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – This I can answer very telegraphically: I very much value how the President-elect was very clear in addressing publicly, but also in private

conversations we had, the issue of tension in terms of the – let's call it – east-west, north-south divide.

I also think that the composition of the Commission reflects how serious she is about making sure that we would be doing everything possible for Europe to be and to feel united again. Therefore, I agree with you that it is very difficult in a European Union to push something through if you have staunch opposition from a considerable number – even though it might be a minority – of the Member States.

Therefore, I think that what we have to do here, especially in such sensitive questions, is to meet, negotiate, discuss, rediscuss and look for the solutions which are good for all of us, because in that case we end up with a solution which is lasting, is supported and really enhances European unity.

1-087-0000

**Manon Aubry (GUE/NGL).** – Je voulais revenir sur un sujet qui n'a pas encore été abordé dans cette audition et qui pourtant est la grosse actualité du jour: je voulais parler de l'examen par notre Parlement et notre commission des affaires juridiques des conflits d'intérêts des futurs commissaires européens. Vous savez certainement que notre commission a conclu à un conflit d'intérêts pour deux commissaires européens, qui ne sont donc pas en mesure d'exercer leurs fonctions. Vous avez parlé d'un Parlement fort dans votre intervention et je vous en remercie. Ce que je retiens de cette procédure, c'est qu'elle a été houleuse, chaotique - je crois qu'aucun des collègues présents dans la salle ne me contredira - et elle a été marquée par des difficultés manifestes, un champ d'informations limité, aucun moyen d'investigation pour vérifier les informations, un temps très limité d'étude et, à la fin, une procédure qui, à mon sens, demeure relativement politique et qui, au final, endommage encore la confiance des citoyens et des députés envers la Commission européenne.

Donc ma première question est simple: en tant que vice-président pour les relations institutionnelles et la prospective, que proposez-vous afin de restaurer la confiance du Parlement en l'indépendance de la Commission? Êtes-vous prêt à soutenir la mise en place d'une autorité indépendante?

Ma deuxième question sera très courte: êtes-vous prêt à soutenir la mise en place d'une autorité indépendante de contrôle qui sera dotée de moyens et de temps et sera à même de contrôler les candidats commissaires avant leur prise de fonction?

1-088-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Of course as you will understand it is very difficult for me to comment on the situation, a situation so fresh and which is also linked to two of my colleagues, Commissioners-designate, and therefore I understand that this is still a matter for the European Parliament JURI committee, with the President of Parliament, and then of course with the President-elect. I agree with you that this is a new situation, and it's quite clear that the JURI committee took its right to clear our declaration of interest with great interest, in great detail, and did it very thoroughly.

I think that the second part of your question is very pertinent because I remember when we have been discussing the modernisation of the Staff Regulations and we were introducing for the first time the Code of conduct of Commissioners, one of the demand of Parliament upon which we agreed very quickly, was that we need the Ethics Committee which would look into matters of conflict of interest before, during and also in the duties the Commissioners would like to take on at the end of their active duty for the European Commission. I think in the future, as the President-elect also suggested, we would need this independent ethics authority.

What I would suggest though, based on previous experience, is that it should be a body which would draw from the expertise of people who know well our different institutions which would have proper administrative support, that we do not have to wait a very long time for the rulings, and of course should be composed of people with impeccable backgrounds and without any doubt they will do their job independently.

1-089-0000

**Manon Aubry (GUE/NGL).** – Merci pour votre réponse. Des moyens de l'indépendance, c'est précisément ce que l'on recherche, donc je vous remercie pour votre réponse. Ma deuxième question ira dans le sens des questions posées précédemment sur la transparence des décisions au Conseil européen. Vous avez l'occasion d'y répondre, mais c'est quand même un fait majeur que nous ayons des États qui prônent des idées progressistes devant les caméras et qui défendent dans d'autres positions au sein du Conseil. Je voulais vous alerter, au-delà de la question du Conseil sur la nécessité de la transparence dans toutes les institutions européennes, je pense notamment au code de conduite, un des groupes les plus obscurs des institutions européennes et qui pourtant statue sur des enjeux majeurs comme les questions fiscales, donc je vous invite, au-delà de ma question à revoir la question de la transparence sur l'ensemble des institutions européennes.

1-090-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for that invitation. I think it's very obvious from today's discussion that this is an issue which is very much in the heart of most of the Members who intervened in this hearing. I can promise you that I will take it up with the Council and will also suggest how we can proceed.

I think that the Finnish Presidency has been very forthcoming in many of the aspects of how to enhance transparency. I know that it's still not something with which you are satisfied, and I know that it's already beyond the limit of some of the Member States, so I very much appreciate this courageous attitude of the Finnish Presidency. What I would suggest is to debate these issues with the next Presidency so we can start the debate and look for the solutions which would help us to find satisfactory solutions to how to bring more transparency also to the Council.

1-091-0000

**Robert Hajšel (S&D).** – Vážení pán podpredseda, v novom tíme ste dostali, v podstate, novú úlohu: identifikovať dlhodobé trendy vo výskume, ako aj technológiách, ktoré významne ovplyvnia nielen naše ekonomiky, ale aj našu spoločnosť. Ide najmä o prípad elektromobility, kde sa Európa chce stať nielen konkurencieschopnou, ale aj naozaj vedúcou mocnosťou v dekarbonizácii celej dopravy ako takej. Vy ste v podstate už teraz lídrom v európskej batériovej aliancii, ale čo podľa vás Európe chýba, aby sa stala svetovým lídrom, a to nielen v batériovom priemysle, ale aj v elektromobilite ako takej? Čo musíme urobiť, aby sa elektromobily naozaj stali reáliou v Európe a ako môže Európska komisia vytvárať podmienky, aby sa vysoko výkonné batérie nestali iba súčasťou našich áut, ale aby sme ich sami v Európe nielen dizajnovali, ale aj vyrábali? Čo nám teda konkrétne ostáva urobiť, aby sme dohnali Čínu a Spojené štáty, ktoré sú v tomto asi pred nami, a aby sme teda konkrétne využili ten dvoj- až trojročný *window of opportunity*, ako ste povedali?

1-092-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, dezinovaný komisár.** – Ďakujem, pán poslanec, za túto veľmi aktuálnu otázku. Myslím si, čo nám chýbalo v Európe pred tými dvoma-troma rokmi, bolo uvedomenie si, že skutočne elektromobilita je trend budúcnosti a bez toho, aby sme túto technológiu zvládli, tak ohrozujeme významný automobilový priemysel v Európe a s ním takisto státisíce pracovných príležitostí a vysoké percentá európskeho HDP. Dnes sme v situácii, že sa nám podarilo vytvoriť priemyselnú alianciu, kde máme spoločne pracujúcich viac ako 200 firiem, ktoré pokrývajú všetky štádiá, ktoré sú potrebné pre úspech v tejto oblasti, či už ide o udržateľné získavanie nerastných surovín, či ide o moderný softvér, ktorý umožní to, aby

tieto autá neboli elektrinou len poháňané, ale aby v čase veľkej spotreby elektriny mohli napríklad tú skladovanú energiu predávať späť do sietí. Takisto chceme, aby tie batérie, ktoré sa budú v Európe vyrábať, boli najzelenšie a najčistejšie na svete, to znamená, aby sa dali ľahko recyklovať, respektíve ľahko znova používať pre priemysel alebo pre domácnosti. Toto pred nami stojí. Čo nám teraz chýba, je to, aby sme tieto ciele – aby sa najzelenšie, najkvalitnejšie batérie a najčistejšie autá vyrábali práve tu v Európe – regulátorne zakodifikovali, aby sme to začlenili do noriem a aby sme stanovili veľmi jasné pravidlá, že ak budú elektrické autá jazdiť v Európe, tak iba s týmito vysokými štandardmi, ktoré budú podporovať tieto najzelenšie batérie, ktoré sa budú vyrábať v Európe. A potom, samozrejme, sú to investície, ale vidíme, že len za posledné dva roky viac ako 100 miliárd eur bolo nainvestovaných do tejto oblasti, a preto o túto oblasť už nemám takú obavu, ako som mal pred pár rokmi.

1-093-0000

**Robert Hajšel (S&D).** – Ja by som chcel ešte nadviazať ďalej. Samozrejme, tento prechod môže byť aj – aspoň v istom období – bolestivý, a preto by som sa chcel spýtať, ako chcete aj v Európskej komisii anticipovať a identifikovať rôzne obavy ľudí, ktorí môžu prísť o prácu kvôli tomuto prechodu či už na nové technológie alebo na nové zdroje energie, či už v automobilovom priemysle alebo napríklad ľudia, ktorí stratia prácu v uhľových baniach. Čo chcete robiť preto, aby tento prechod bol sociálne čo najmenej bolestivý – lebo aj v našej skupine S&D nám na tom naozaj záleží? Ako chcete presadzovať tieto zmeny a aké konkrétne opatrenia v tejto oblasti, aby sa naozaj tieto sociálne dopady čo najviac eliminovali?

1-094-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, *dezinovaný komisár.*** – Ďakujem veľmi pekne aj za doplňujúcu otázku, a to z toho dôvodu, že práve ten spoločný úspech, ktorý sme dosiahli ako Európsky parlament a Komisia v tom, že sme presadili, aby sme sa napríklad na uhľové regióny pozerali novým pohľadom, a že vďaka vám sa podarilo zabezpečiť, že v budúcej finančnej perspektíve bude fond pre spravodlivú tranzíciu. *Just transition fund* považujem za veľký úspech, lebo pred doma-troma rokmi to bolo nemysliteľné. A myslím si, že tak ako batérová aliancia na stanovenie takého vzoru, modelu, ako sa postaviť k ostatným strategickým odvetviám, kde musíme byť ako Európa veľmi silní, takisto aj to, čo robíme pre baníkov v uhľových regiónoch, ako ich pripravujeme na novú ekonomickú budúcnosť, ako im už dnes vysvetľujeme, že je potrebné vybudovať nové ekonomické závody a nové priemysly v týchto regiónoch, toto isté by sme mali robiť aj v tých ostatných odvetviach, ktoré postupne zaostávajú a kde je evidentné, že budeme musieť prísť s novými zručnosťami a s novými znalosťami pre ľudí, ktorí budú v týchto odvetviach pracovať.

1-095-0000

**Nico Semsrott (Verts/ALE).** – Mr Vice-President-designate, as an expert in foresight, you already know what I'm going to say! Since nothing can surprise you, you must have a relaxing life. I envy you: I don't even know what I will have for dinner. What will I have? The suspense is killing me.

With your foresight, could you please tell us what you will have accomplished by 2024 regarding the unhealthy relationship between the Citizens' Committee – which is the Committee on Petitions – and the Commission? It seems like you have been ghosting us. Will you have started 'couples therapy'?

Secondly, how will you have managed to grant Parliament the right to initiate legislation; and thirdly, regarding your job, how will you have made sure that all Commissioners are clear of conflicts of interests, including any Presidents who may have close relationships with consultancies?

1-096-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, *Commissioner-designate.*** – When I got the portfolio for Foresight, it's true that some of my colleagues have been asking me if I can now tell them what would be the

next the lotto numbers, and I can tell you that I do not have that power and that Foresight really is not about a crystal ball. It's about making sure that we would use the best scientific advice in looking at where Europe could be, should be, or want to be, be it in 2030 or 2040, or how to get to what is so important for this House – to climate neutrality by 2050. And then I think that science can give us very good advice. Will we get there if we continue with the current policies? Probably not. Will we get there if we improve our efforts little bit? Probably not either. So what do we have to do that, actually, that preferred scenario would become a reality and how we would evolve from that goal all the necessary steps in the economic sphere, in legislation, in the regulatory area, so actually, we can not only dream, but build a better future for all of us. That's foresight and therefore, I think we need to discuss here in the European Parliament, how we are going to not only present the future, but work on it and which means and through which megatrends we want to get there. That, I believe, should be our common goal.

Where we will be with PETI and the Commission, I don't think we would need couple's therapy because usually when you have problems in a couple, the problem is communication and I can assure you that I will talk to the PETI Committee as often as you would like me to be there, and I would encourage my colleagues from the Commission to do the same, and to answer citizens' proper questions.

On the right of initiative, I think I already elaborated and I think that the JURI Committee proved today that if it comes to a conflict of interest you're pretty tough and you do not hesitate to use your power, so I'm not afraid of that at all.

1-097-0000

**Nico Semsrott (Verts/ALE).** – Your mission letter says that you're responsible for the dialogue between the people and the Commission, but what you intend to do is a monologue. If you want people to care about what Europe is doing, you have to give them a say in what Europe is doing.

To borrow from the consultancy speak that shapes your world view, there is a huge wealth of human capital to be unleashed and there are Europeans who know more than you, who care more than you, who are more creative than you and who would do your work for less money. Looking back into your crystal ball, what exactly did you do to give them power?

1-098-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner designate.** – I think that together we did a lot. If I have to look at my performance over the last 10 years, I think that I was probably one of the most frequent interlocutors with our citizens in the citizens dialogue. I probably visited more European parliaments and the regional councils than other Commissioners, not because I'm that good, but because I was here longer and it was part of my job.

Now the good thing is that our President-elect wants all of us to do the same. She wants us to visit all Member States within the first half of the mandate. And of course we are not going only to talk to the ministers or the parliaments, we want to talk to the people and I would appreciate any concrete suggestions you might have on how we can improve it.

We are consulting the people through the 'Have your say' platform. I know that it is not ideal. We are trying to interact with them through social media. I was testing different ways how we use the Facebook platform to talk to young people, and I was myself surprised that one discussion like that brought us 30 000 young viewers. So let's be creative, and I'm sure that young people will be able to tell us how to do it better, and we are ready to listen and learn.

1-099-0000

**Charles Goerens (Renew).** – Madame la présidente, je voudrais poser la question suivante à Monsieur le commissaire. Je fais référence de nouveau aux compétences partagées, car il s'agit là d'une politique où l'Union européenne ne détient pas la compétence exclusive, mais où les États membres ont aussi leur mot à dire.

Dans de nombreux cas, nous souhaiterions que l'Union européenne soit extrêmement performante, le traité l'invitant à l'être, notamment par l'impératif de coordination qui est inscrit dans le traité de Lisbonne. Alors, je prends l'exemple de l'aide publique au développement. Voilà une promesse formulée depuis un demi-siècle, sans cesse renouvelée dans les conférences internationales. Les États membres s'accordent dans le cadre du Conseil sur un objectif de 0,7 % du produit intérieur brut destinée à cette aide. Mais cette promesse n'est jamais tenue, sauf par quatre États membres. D'évidence, il y a un problème.

Vous satisferez-vous de multiplier les constats d'impuissance ou allez-vous intervenir dans le sens d'une plus grande responsabilité à assumer par les États membres?

1-100-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – Thank you very much for this question and also for the very concrete example you brought into our discussion.

You are right that very often the ambitions presented in the room and at the press conferences from the side of the Member States are much higher than the final outcome and the concrete result. That's political reality and, therefore, we need to do much more in our mutual cooperation – the constructive pressure from the European Parliament.

But also, what I see, especially among the Member States, the increased peer pressure on delivering on the stated commitments. And also I think that from the side of the Commission, we should do more to help the Member States to achieve the stated goal.

Very often, when we talk about the problems in implementing EU law – sometimes it is just mismanagement, maladministration – it is just a lack of administrative capacity or – let's say – not a proper understanding of what needs to be done.

So let's look at what is the real reason, what is the problem and how can we help the Member States to be properly equipped to deliver on the commitments they made. And then on a concrete example of the development aid I think this would be one of the crucial questions for this Commission and I know that my colleague, Ms Urpilainen, who will be responsible for development aid, will definitely work very closely with you and would look how can we overcome the gap – which is still there – between commitments of the Member State and results in terms of development aid.

How we can use the lessons learned from the Juncker investment fund and transform the external fund into something which should be of strategic importance, and which can bring more than EUR 40 billion for the good projects in Africa, which I believe this continent needs and Europe is able to provide.

1-101-0000

**Charles Goerens (Renew).** – J'aimerais quand même insister sur le fait que nous avons tout essayé. L'appel au bon sens, l'appel à tenir les promesses ne mènent strictement à rien. Alors je voudrais quand même donner à réfléchir que, dans un autre domaine, cela fonctionne.

L'Union européenne a trouvé, dans le cadre d'un traité, le moyen de faire venir le ministre responsable pour le budget national devant la commission compétente du Parlement européen pour rendre compte de ce qu'il a fait ou, surtout, de ce qu'il n'a pas fait.

Et je crois que les politiques se valent, par ailleurs, et que nous devrions pouvoir nous entendre sur un mécanisme similaire pour faire venir les ministres du développement devant la commission du développement de ce Parlement, afin qu'ils rendent compte de ce qu'ils n'ont pas fait.

Je crois que le mal est dans le système, parce que le système actuel ne produit plus de résultats.

1-102-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much for that suggestion and for that idea. I think it would be very useful to have more intense contacts between the ministers who are responsible for development aid and also the European Parliament, because I believe that they would understand each other and this would increase not only the peer pressure but also democratic pressure on those countries which took on the commitment and didn't deliver on it.

It would also create the possibility for the Commission to work with the Member States to also use other means for delivering the proper financial support to developing countries, other than just the budgetary means coming from the Member States. This means leveraging, using the European Investment Bank, part of which should be transformed into the climate bank, for those projects which would really help developing countries to develop much faster and much better to the benefit of their citizens.

1-103-0000

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**. – So Commissioner-designate, Vice-President, let me welcome you warmly and let me keep the scrutiny and the hard issues right up to the very last question.

After reading your written answers and hearing your answers here today, one would be led to believe that you will be the Vice-President for interinstitutional relations rather than for the foresight portfolio. I truly hope you'll become a bit more ambitious, otherwise I think you will end up as a hypothetical Vice-President for interinstitutional relations and... the status quo, instead of foresight.

So let's be more ambitious. You have already said that the framework agreement that we both negotiated in 2010 should include the Council. But what concrete steps do you intend to take? And, on substance, what do you think should be changed? The Council is steadily becoming an upper parliamentarian chamber. Should Parliament not have more access to the preparatory meetings of the Council? Should it not have further access to documents?

1-104-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Mr Rangel, not only for this question, which I think will clearly increase the ambition of my performance for the future, but also for the enormous help, advice and assistance I was getting from you during these very difficult negotiations we had on the framework agreement.

I remember very well how both of us had been appealing to the Council to join us in the framework agreement, and we know that it would be much better to have this more balanced approach in the way how we had been Lisbonising our daily lives, operations, work of the Parliament, of the Commission and of the Council. At that time it was not possible, mostly because of different legal concerns on the side of the Council. But since then a lot has happened. I'm very pleased that you managed to have the trilateral agreement on better law-making. I'm also very glad that each year we managed to get the joint declaration about the strategic steps for the next annual period, upon which we have to focus, and I think that the system, despite the fact that it is relatively new, is working quite better.

So my suggestion to you and to the Council will be ‘let’s look how the framework agreement was applied’. Let’s clearly conclude that by practice, we have proved that in no way is it infringing upon the Lisbon Treaty, because I’m sure otherwise it would be tested in the Court. It is a question of how to make it useful for all of us and convince the Council that once we will be having such a clear cut relationship between us, that we will definitely benefit from more efficiency, from a better relationship.

So I’m ready to take the challenge and to talk to the Presidencies, and I can really make it one of the points for the first time – after I hopefully get your approval – I have a chance to appear at the General Affairs Council, because we need closer cooperation, especially when we are now talking about the annual and multiannual programming and strategic debates we which we want to have together.

1-105-0000

**Paulo Rangel (PPE).** – Another question relating to your responsibility for our, Parliament-Commission relations. It is sometimes noticeable that Members of the Commission – not only but especially when they speak on behalf of another Commissioner’s portfolio – present their opening statement with a prepared speech but also, at the end of the debate, they have a closing statement that appears to have been drafted before the debate started.

In view of the Commission’s accountability to Parliament, of the Commission’s public image, and of the contributions to the debate by Members of the European Parliament, do you think that this is appropriate? And if it is not, how do you think the situation can be remedied?

1-106-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner designate.** – I have to admit that you are right and it’s true especially when we are taking the file from our colleague at the last minute. It’s true we get opening remarks and then also we get the suggested closing remarks. And of course it very much depends on how much time the Commissioner has to master the file, which is new for him or her.

I think that there is also another element, that what you look for is that we show respect to the Members of Parliament, that we listen to you, and when you have made a suggestion then we take note and we elaborate and react to your concrete suggestion in the debate in our closing remarks. Because what you want us to do is to bring some of the suggestions you made in the debate back to the institutions and work with them.

So this is something that clearly we as Commissioners have to improve. If I may make one suggestion, it would help us a lot if we could know a little bit more in advance which one of us is going to Plenary, that would be a great help. And I know that this is in your hands and if you can do that I can assure you that everybody would very much appreciate it.

1-107-0000

**Lucy Nethsingha, Chair JURI.** – Thank you very much for your question and for all of the questions, which I think have been excellent. I will now hand over to Vice-President-designate Šefčovič for a five-minute closing speech.

1-108-0000

**Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate.** – I will try to learn from the last intervention by Mr Rangel and I will really react only to the interventions made in this debate.

First and foremost, I would like to say that this discussion confirmed how important the relationship between the European Parliament and the Commission is, and many of the suggestions you made today – not only in our debate but also in our preparatory meetings – are for me a very important source of inspiration for future work.

I am very encouraged by your attitude to bring new methods, new technologies and new approaches to how we legislate, how we cooperate and how we deliver concrete results to our citizens. I think that we have to do our utmost, because I am absolutely sure that the next few years will really decide the destiny of Europe for many decades to come.

The decisions we'll take in the next five years will clearly mark Europe's place, not only in the world of 2030 but for the rest of this century, and I believe that we all want Europe to be cleaner, greener, perform better, be closer to its citizens and to play this very important role in global affairs.

When you travel outside Europe, what you hear are not only compliments about how the European countries work together, but also a plea. 'Please, Europeans, be even more influential than you are now, because the world of today needs Europe.' This is because we respect human rights, because we respect nature, because we respect international law, because we are trying to be as responsible as possible towards developing countries, because we are ready to share and because we are ready to contribute. And thanks to these qualities, Europe is the best place to live on this earth.

So I believe that our joint mission is not only to be strategic, but also to be very concrete, responsive, agile and active towards our cities. And I believe that if I get your vote, then it will give me the chance – and it would be my pleasure – to work on all of these issues and areas with you so that we can deliver this very ambitious agenda to our citizens.

Thank you very much for all of your excellent questions. I would also like to thank our two committee chairs for their very gentle but strict chairing.

1-109-0000

**Lucy Nethsingha**, *Chair JURI*. – On behalf of the JURI committee, I would like to thank you very much, Vice-President-designate, for some really thorough answers to our questions. You've listened very carefully to what people have to say. There is clearly a huge number of topics of interest that have been raised today. I think the one in/one out policy is clearly something that there's going to be a great deal of interest in, along with the Foresight portfolio and how that can be used to really ensure that we have true evidence-based policy-making, which I think is something that is going to be enormously important to make sure that we can use technology effectively and ethically in the future. I'd like to thank you very much indeed for your very thorough answers to our questions and for attending here to talk to us today. I will now hand over to Chair Tajani.

1-110-0000

**Antonio Tajani**, *presidente AFÇO*. – Mi associao anch'io al ringraziamento della presidente della commissione JURI per la Sua disponibilità, e anche per aver dimostrato grande interesse nei confronti del Parlamento: lo ha dimostrato in passato, so quanto ha fatto quando eravamo insieme commissari europei, so quanto ha fatto anche nella scorsa legislatura per tenere in alta considerazione il Parlamento europeo.

Purtroppo non tutti i commissari in passato hanno sempre avuto lo stesso atteggiamento. A volte c'è stato da parte di qualche commissario un atteggiamento sprezzante nei confronti del Parlamento, come se fosse quasi un sacrificio venirsi a confrontare con il Parlamento europeo. Lei ha risposto in maniera puntuale a tutte le nostre domande, ha preso l'impegno di venire in tutte le commissioni a confrontarsi ogniqualvolta sarà invitato.

Però Lei non è un commissario come tutti gli altri, Lei è un vicepresidente della Commissione: Le chiediamo di svolgere naturalmente nel modo migliore il Suo lavoro di interlocutore diretto del Parlamento, ma di fare in modo, anche come vicepresidente della

Commissione, di spiegare a tutti i commissari, soprattutto ai nuovi commissari, quanto sia importante la collaborazione tra istituzioni. Il nostro dovere è quello di controllare il vostro lavoro, proprio per dare risposte migliori ai cittadini. Le chiedo, proprio perché La conosco da tanti anni, di svolgere il ruolo di vicepresidente presso i Suoi colleghi affinché anche loro possano avere la sensibilità che Lei ha dimostrato durante questa audizione. Il rapporto con il Parlamento è fondamentale.

Spesso è importante anche difendere il Parlamento nel braccio di ferro che abbiamo con il Consiglio. Troppo spesso il Consiglio tutela interessi nazionali e non riesce a farsi carico di una responsabilità europea. Noi siamo politicamente deboli nell'era della globalizzazione se non siamo uniti. È ovvio che ci sono diverse sensibilità nazionali, però la Commissione e il Parlamento, che rappresentano veramente le istituzioni più comunitarie, hanno il dovere di farlo capire anche al Consiglio – pensiamo al blocco della riforma di Dublino, che la Commissione voleva, che il Parlamento voleva e che gli Stati membri hanno bloccato.

Questa azione comune deve portarci a permettere di avere un'Europa più competitiva, più capace di proteggere gli interessi dei cittadini. Per questo contiamo sul Suo lavoro e sono sicuro che, come ha dimostrato in passato, lo farà anche nel corso dei prossimi cinque anni. Grazie per aver risposto alle nostre domande.

Annuncio che ci sarà una riunione congiunta dei coordinatori per la valutazione dell'audizione: non basta l'applauso, serve una valutazione più approfondita. Alle 18.30 ci riuniremo a porte chiuse con i coordinatori delle commissioni JURI e AFCO, poi le commissioni, che hanno anche loro la possibilità di partecipare al dibattito, le commissioni associate si riuniranno con i loro coordinatori a parte e poi insieme formuleremo la lettera sul giudizio sul commissario vicepresidente Šefčovič.

Grazie a tutti quanti voi e buon lavoro al commissario Šefčovič, vicepresidente della futura Commissione europea.

*(La seduta è tolta alle 17.18)*