

Committee on Development
The Chair

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Antonio Tajani
Chair
Conference of Committee Chairs
European Parliament

D 312803 02.10.2019

[EXPO-COM-DEVE D (2019)34726]

Subject: DEVE hearing of Commissioner-designate for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen

Dear Mr Tajani,

The Committee on Development, in accordance with Rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, held a public hearing on Tuesday 1 October 2019 with Jutta Urpilainen, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for International Partnerships.

On 27 September 2019 the DEVE Committee, pursuant to Rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure and Article 2 of Annex VII thereto, received a letter from the JURI Committee regarding the scrutiny of the declaration of financial interests of Ms Urpilainen.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. The DEVE committee noted that Ms Urpilainen answered those questions satisfactorily.

The course of the hearing

Ms Urpilainen opened the hearing by making a statement in which she referred to the following:

- The ambition to eradicate poverty through international cooperation and development support in a strategic and effective manner;
- The responsibility to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which requires a holistic approach;
- The conviction that educating and empowering women and young girls is the precondition to creating truly inclusive and prosperous societies;
- The focus on SDGs, fighting inequality and poverty eradication through appropriate funding and the facilitation of an agreement on the post-2020 Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument;

- The necessity to go beyond traditional methods of aid delivery and the commitment to also use EU assistance to leverage more domestic revenue and greater private sector capital;
- The focus on multilateralism and cooperation through the building of strong international partnerships in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific;
- The need for a new narrative in Africa and work towards a European comprehensive Strategy for the continent;
- The priority to conclude negotiations on the post-Cotonou agreement and the commitment to ensure the appropriate parliamentary dimension of this future partnership;
- The intention to work closely with other Commissioners whose policy areas affect EU external action in the spirit of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and with Member States to advance further on joint analysis, joint programming and joint implementation, as well as the intention to work on achieving the 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) target of Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- The confirmation that civil society organisations must be at the heart of the EU's development policy and the importance of involving them as much as possible in policy-making and the design and implementation of programmes.

The introductory statement of Ms Urpilainen was followed by a first round of 7 questions from representatives of each political group and a second round of 18 questions by Members, including also a representative from the non-attached Members.

During the course of the hearing, Members asked questions on the following subjects in particular:

- Development and migration, including related conditionality;
- SDGs;
- Policy Coherence for Development and inter-institutional cooperation;
- The 0.7% (GNI) target of ODA;
- Various financing instruments for EU external action, including development cooperation under the next Multiannual Financial Framework;
- Financing for development;
- Human rights and good governance conditionality;
- Role of civil society organisations and their access to funding;
- Development - humanitarian nexus;
- Environment and climate change, including environmental crimes and the possibility of sanctions;
- Pollution;
- The oceans;
- Education;
- Gender and equality;
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Security;
- Aid transparency;
- Effectiveness and efficiency of EU aid;
- Visibility of EU development assistance and related communication;
- Trade liberalisation;

- Corporate social responsibility, including multilateral action such as the ongoing negotiations for a possible UN legally-binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights;
- Private sector cooperation;
- Partnership with Africa;
- Future of ACP-EU relations and Parliament's role in Post-Cotonou framework;
- Development cooperation with Palestine;
- Sustainable agriculture;
- The Sahel;
- Brexit;
- Measuring development.

In her introductory remarks and replies, Ms Urpilainen made specific commitments regarding her future action as Commissioner.

- A development cooperation policy that is centred on people, not on interests or governments;
- Improvement of the rule of law and human rights through development cooperation;
- Working with the other EU Institutions towards the same objective and cementing the EU as world leader in international cooperation and development.
- Fighting inequality, supporting least developed countries (LDCs), also by sparing no effort in increasing resources to LDCs, and promoting sustainable development;
- Allocating 20% to target human development in the financing instrument for EU external action of the next MFF;
- Prioritising gender equality, mainstreaming it in all EU policies and programmes and seeking to increase funding for this field;
- Ensuring an "appropriate" parliamentary dimension of the future ACP-EU partnership;
- Using EU assistance to leverage more domestic revenue and greater private sector capital;
- The preparation of a Gender Action Plan III and the promotion of further issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Parliamentary involvement in the scrutiny of EU Trust Funds;
- Intensified action on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Improvement of transparency in all EU development cooperation and the use of related funds;
- Improvement of PCD in all EU actions.

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which she reaffirmed her commitment to work closely with Parliament to make the EU an important global actor, and also the fact that a sustainable future is only possible if European institutions collaborate and join forces.

She added that the reformulation and renaming of the portfolio brings an opportunity to build genuine partnership as equal partners with the objective of eradicating poverty, fighting inequality and fully implementing the SDGs. In her opinion, the "International Partnerships" title reflects our valuable tradition in development cooperation and the EU's opportunities to have an impact in the world as an equal partner. She reiterated the need for greater resources, for better dialogue with partners and for the full involvement of NGOs and the private sector.

On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by the DEVE Committee Coordinators, who met in camera after the hearing under my chairmanship, I hereby give the following assessment:

The Commissioner-designate for International Partnerships has shown commitment to a number of issues which are key to the Development Committee, and to the European Union's own development policy: eradicating poverty, fighting inequality, supporting least developed countries and promoting sustainable development.

The Development Committee took note with great interest that in the matter of the future of ACP-EU relations, the Commissioner-designate committed to ensuring an "appropriate" parliamentary dimension of the future agreement. In this regard, Parliament reiterates its repeated position for the continuation of a reinforced and legally autonomous joint EU-ACP parliamentary assembly at the ACP level, with genuine consultative power.

The Development Committee welcomes the Commissioner-designate's intention to make gender equality and women's empowerment a priority for EU development cooperation.

The Development Committee further welcomes the Commissioner-designate's view that civil society organisations must be at the heart of the EU's work on international cooperation and development. It looks forward to working together on ways to combat shrinking civil society space and to strengthen their capacity to be vibrant participants in our work on the eradication of poverty, the promotion of the SDGs, human rights and good governance.

The Development Committee has also reiterated its view that the European Union should actively participate in the ongoing UN negotiations on a possible legally binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights. The Development Committee, by a majority, also reiterated Parliament's request to the Commission to put forward a legislative proposal on mandatory due diligence in the supply chain.

In the hearing, the missing components in the Commissioner-designate's mission letter with regard to the relation between development and migration policies could not be clarified in all details.

The Committee would like to add the following issues on which no commitments have been made, but where decisive action is needed from the future Commissioner in charge of development cooperation and more broadly, from the Commission as a whole:

- Ensuring a much stronger and adequate role for Parliament in the strategic steering and scrutiny of the new instrument for EU external action, including - more concretely - active and substantial participation in the pre-programming and programming of the 2021 onwards development cooperation funds.
- Working with the College of Commissioners towards a swift setting-up of a comprehensive framework of SDG implementation, which should include a timeline and detailed roadmap, adequate resources, concrete measures, appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools, and a mid-term review.
- Ensuring close monitoring of, and reporting on effectiveness and results of EU development cooperation.
- Guaranteeing the full respect of human rights and humanitarian law in the development policies related to migration.

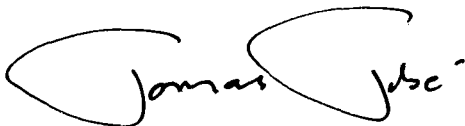
The Development Committee is of the opinion that during the course of her hearing, the Commissioner-designate has shown commitment to the European project as a whole, and to development cooperation in particular. She has testified of her ability to communicate priorities clearly, and her professional qualifications make her a suitable candidate for development cooperation.

The general outcome of this hearing is that the Commissioner-designate gave a convincing impression of her aptitude to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to her.

In accordance with Rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure and Article 4 of Annex VII thereto, the DEVE coordinators unanimously decided to approve that the Commissioner-designate for International Partnerships, is qualified both to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned.

Thank you for your follow-up on the hearing of the Commissioner-designate for International Partnerships.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomas Tobé', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Tomas Tobé