

COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

HEARING OF ILIANA IVANOVA

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth)

TUESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

BRUSSELS

1-002-0000

IN THE CHAIR**CRISTIAN-SILVIU BUȘOI***Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy***SABINE VERHEYEN***Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education**(The hearing opened at 9.32)*

1-002-0000

Cristian-Silviu Bușoi, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. First of all I would like to welcome Ms Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, to this joint hearing of the ITRE and CULT committees. I would like also to welcome the members of the ITRE and CULT committees taking part in the hearing and everyone present in the room today, as well as people watching us live on webstream on the European Parliament's website.

The hearing is organised jointly with the Committee on Culture and Education, as the portfolio of Ms Ivanova covers policy areas covered by both ITRE and CULT. Therefore I wish to particularly welcome Ms Sabine Verheyen, Chair of the CULT Committee, with whom I will chair the hearing.

Let me recall that the ITRE Committee is responsible for the Union's research and innovation policy. Therefore this hearing is highly important as those policy areas are crucial for the further development of the Union and require a strong political leadership in the European Commission. We had excellent cooperation with the former Commissioner, Ms Mariya Gabriel, now having a very important role in the Bulgarian Government as deputy prime minister and minister for foreign affairs. We are looking forward to have a very good cooperation with the new Commissioner, if you, colleagues, will approve this nomination, as we still have a lot to do by the end of this term.

Before the start of the hearing, and of course before kindly asking Ms Verheyen to have the introductory remarks, I would like to make some procedural remarks. In line with the guidelines for the approval of the Commission, Parliament evaluates the Commissioners-designate on the basis of their general competence, European commitment and personal independence. It also assesses the knowledge of their prospective portfolio and their communication skills.

Before the hearing, Ms Ivanova has replied in writing to a questionnaire. The written answers have been distributed to Members in all languages. The Committee on Legal Affairs has raised no objection to the holding of the hearing.

Today's hearing will be structured as follows: Ms Ivanova will be invited to make an opening statement of no longer than 15 minutes. She will also have five minutes at the end for a closing statement. After the introduction, there will 25 questions from MEPs. The debate will be held in accordance with slots of five minutes each, with one minute for the question and two minutes for the answer. Follow-up questions may be asked – usually they are – by the same Member and should be related to the first question. So not a new question. They should be no longer than one minute for the question and one minute for the reply.

The first round of seven questions will be asked by the political groups' coordinators or representatives. The second round of 18 questions is based on the overall distribution of questions among the political groups, including also a representative from the non-attached Members.

Interpretation is provided in all 23 languages.

In order to ensure the smooth running of the meeting, both myself and Chair Verheyen will be very strict with the speaking time and will not allow speakers to exceed their allocated time.

Now I would like to kindly invite Ms Verheyen for her opening statement.

1-004-0000

Sabine Verheyen, *Vorsitzende des CULT-Ausschusses*. – Vielen Dank, Herr Buşoi für Ihre einleitenden Bemerkungen und die Darlegung des Ablaufs der heutigen Anhörung. Im Namen des Ausschusses für Kultur und Bildung möchte ich auch die designierte Kommissarin, Frau Ivanova, recht herzlich hier in unserer Runde begrüßen.

Wie Sie wissen, ist unser Ausschuss für Kultur, Bildung, Jugend und Sport zuständig, Bereiche, die für das Ressort, mit dem Sie betraut wurden, von nicht minderer Bedeutung sind als jene Bereiche, in denen der ITRE-Ausschuss seine Verantwortungsbereiche hat. Vor uns liegen viele Herausforderungen, die wir gemeinsam hoffentlich zu Möglichkeiten werden lassen.

Vier hiervon möchte ich explizit erwähnen. Erstens: Wir schaffen einen europäischen Bildungsraum, der diesem Namen auch vollinhaltlich gerecht wird. Besonders interessiert mich dahin gehend, wie die designierte Kommissarin in der verbleibenden Zeit ihres Mandats die wechselseitige Anerkennung von Bildungsabschlüssen und Qualifikationen konkret voranbringen möchte, vor allem in den Bereichen Hochschul-, Schul- wie aber auch der beruflichen Bildung.

Wie bauen wir die erfolgreichen Bildungs- und Kulturprogramme der EU, einschließlich des Flaggschiffsprogramms Erasmus+, weiter ambitioniert aus, vor allem auch angesichts schwieriger politischer und nicht zuletzt budgetärer Rahmenbedingungen?

Wir stehen vor den Haushaltsberatungen, und auch die Überprüfung des Mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens steht an. Auch hier wird ein ganzes Stück Arbeit gefordert sein, um diesen Bereich weiter stark zu halten.

Und nicht zuletzt: Wie gehen wir auf die Jugend in Europa zu und erfüllen ihre Erwartungen in den Bereichen, die den jungen Menschen wichtig sind? Ich denke hier besonders an die Schwerpunkte, die aus dem Europäischen Jahr der Jugend als *legacy* hervorgegangen sind. Wie setzen wir diese Bedürfnisse und Themenschwerpunkte in den nächsten Jahren um?

Ich freue mich darauf, im Laufe der nächsten drei Stunden mehr über Ihre Ansichten zu den eben angesprochenen Politikbereichen zu hören, und möchte mich zugleich für die schriftlichen Antworten auf jene Fragen, die wir Ihnen bereits im Vorfeld gestellt haben, bedanken. Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass die Anhörung die wesentlichen Fragen der beteiligten Ausschüsse beantworten wird, und wir freuen uns sehr auf die Diskussion mit Ihnen.

Zu diesem Zweck darf ich Ihnen, sehr geehrte Frau Ivanova, nunmehr zunächst das Wort für Ihr Eröffnungsstatement übergeben. Sie haben hierfür 15 Minuten zur Verfügung.

1-005-0000

Пiана Ivanova, *кандидат за член на Европейската комисия*. – Уважаема г-жо председател на Комисията по култура и образование, уважаеми г-н председател на Комисията по промишленост,

изследвания и енергетика, уважаеми заместник председатели, уважаеми координатори, уважаеми колеги, дами и господа! За мен е истинска чест да съм днес пред вас.

Европейският парламент е в основата на моята ангажираност към европейската идея от годините ми като евродепутат, започвайки през 2009 г. до цялостната ми последващата работа и като член на Европейската сметна палата. Това бяха определящи моменти за мен като политик и професионалист, и съм дълбоко благодарна за всичките години на отлично сътрудничество, взаимно доверие, уважение и диалог, които имах с вас по много различни и важни аспекти на европейските политики.

Today, I am humbled to stand before you as candidate for member of the European Commission responsible for innovation, research, culture, education and youth. To meet this challenge, I will build on the leadership, experience and expertise that I gained in all my previous functions.

Europe has seen many crises and our response to the most recent and unprecedented challenges needed to be – and was – quick, decisive and efficient. All of us, in our different roles, contributed with utmost commitment, and here I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mariya Gabriel, for her tireless efforts and achievements that brought so many benefits not only to European citizens but also more recently to Ukrainians.

There are still many aspects, though, that require us to continue the efforts and hard work. If I earn your trust, I will mobilise all available resources under my portfolio to ensure that we deliver on our ambitions and wider objectives.

And to earn this trust, I owe you honest and clear answers to all your questions and concerns.

I would like to start by sharing with you my vision for the remaining year of the mandate – where I could bring solutions and set direction for the future.

Three points are central for me:

- the key role of research and innovation (R&I) for the EU's growth model;
- the best ways to foster education and skills (as developing people's potential is the best investment in our future);
- the cohesive role of culture for our society, the empowerment of young people, and the uniting role of sport to make us stronger and bring us together.

I see research and innovation as a vital pre-condition for our sustainable future. I am convinced that our ability to tackle the challenges of tomorrow depends on the research and innovation of today.

But where are we in the global picture?

Europe is a scientific powerhouse. It has the best researchers and innovators in the world. It brings forth Nobel prize-winners and leaders in patenting and highest-standard publications. We support deep-tech innovators that turn into million- and billion-euro companies.

However, our R&I landscape still remains fragmented, investments have remained below the 3 %-of-GDP target and well below that of some of our main global competitors.

The objectives of Horizon Europe are clearly defined in the regulation. If I am appointed, I will do my utmost to help achieve them.

And I will do so first through supporting a stable and sufficient budget.

Besides the funding allocated in the long-term EU budget, there are a number of other ways to attract additional public and private financial resources, to use significant leverage, including from partnerships, and to exploit synergies.

I will also focus efforts on innovative ways to develop advanced technologies. The strategic technologies for Europe platform, for instance, is one new tool, which I will fully support to put us back in the lead in the race for leadership on new technologies that will define the green, digital future.

I am convinced that Horizon Europe should more strongly benefit SMEs, which are and have always been the backbone of our economies.

The geographic distribution of beneficiaries also matters, because we need to combine all means and opportunities for excellence and access to excellence across the entire Union to achieve the most inclusive results.

Speeding up and delivering on the European Research Area, implementing the New European Innovation Agenda and strengthening the scientific advisory role of the Joint Research Centre will be equally important priorities for me in the remaining time of the mandate. The evaluations of the previous Horizon 2020 programme and the current Horizon Europe will be a crucial moment in the coming year. I see them as opportunities to learn lessons about strengths and weaknesses and to take action accordingly.

There are a number of key priorities that, if appointed, I will want to pursue:

Erstens: Vereinfachung ist immer angebracht. Mit einfacheren Verfahren können wir mehr Nutzer erreichen und die Fehlerquote verringern.

Zweitens werde ich mich auf das bahnbrechende, innovative Potenzial der EU konzentrieren. Der Europäische Investitionsrat ist das Instrument, um die vergleichsweise schwache Stellung der EU im Bereich Wagniskapital anzugehen und risikoreichen, innovativen EU-Unternehmen die Finanzierung zu ermöglichen, die sie brauchen, um global erfolgreich zu sein.

Die Kritik, die es am EIC gegeben hat – an der Anfangsphase und an den Entscheidungsmechanismen –, nehme ich zur Kenntnis. Seitdem hat es Korrekturen gegeben. Im Falle meiner Ernennung werde ich deren Effektivität im Blick behalten. Ebenso möchte ich einen speziellen Dialog mit dem Europäischen Parlament zu diesem Thema eröffnen.

Drittens: Es ist höchste Zeit, dass wir Horizont Europa auch als ein Werkzeug für EU-Vorsprung auf der globalen Ebene nutzen. Kooperation wird dabei immer ausschlaggebend sein. Wir müssen die internationale Dimension von Horizont Europa stärken und die Assoziierung von Drittländern vorantreiben, während wir gleichzeitig Reziprozität sicherstellen, so wie es die Strategie für wirtschaftliche Sicherheit vorsieht.

Toutefois, rien de tout cela ne saurait se réaliser sans le plus grand atout que nous ayons: j'ai nommé les citoyens européens. Investir dans la diversité des talents, dans les compétences et dans l'éducation est dès lors absolument essentiel pour libérer notre plein potentiel.

À ce titre, je salue non seulement l'ouverture renforcée des programmes européens aux pays partenaires, mais aussi les actions ciblées en faveur de l'inclusion et de l'égalité des genres dans notre société. Je soutiendrai les efforts pour la diversité des bénéficiaires et la visibilité des parcours féminins au travers des différentes actions, qu'il s'agisse de prix spéciaux, de formations dédiées ou d'initiatives de nature à inspirer plus de femmes à participer à nos programmes.

I believe that education is at the core of our European way of life and also the most fundamental prerequisite for a successful growth model in the EU.

It is a key element of my mission letter, and I would like to assure you that, if appointed, the completion of the European Education Area will be an absolute priority for me.

While I am happy to celebrate past achievements, I will focus my efforts on addressing current concerns, such as deteriorating basic skills and challenges for the teaching profession.

If appointed, as Madam Chair Verheyen has just asked me, I will continue working on building the university alliances, encourage the efforts for mutual recognition of exams and diplomas, and the joint European degree.

The Digital Education Action Plan has proven to be a key enabler for learning opportunities across the EU, and I will support the Member States in ensuring the effective digital transformation of education systems.

The Erasmus+ programme is perhaps the most emblematic and successful tool that inspires enthusiasm about the European integration idea. Needless to say, if I am appointed, I will utilise the upcoming evaluations to learn lessons and reflect them in the direction for the future.

At the heart of the European way of life is also our immensely rich and diverse culture. I will support its important economic and inclusive potential, and you can count on me to work with fellow Commissioners, national authorities and local actors to build bridges between arts and culture and other policies.

As an example, the New European Bauhaus initiative brings together partner organisations and researchers to take forward projects and translate the European Green Deal into tangible improvements of our daily life on the ground.

Our ability to involve next generations in the European project is the guarantee for our democracy. The European Solidarity Corps is, for me, one of the best examples of our commitment in that regard.

The European Year of Youth, with its 13 000+ events, has put youth very high on the political agenda. I will engage actively with the national coordinators and the youth stakeholders' group to build further on the legacy of the European Year of Youth. I am aware of the European Parliament's interest in the idea of a 'youth test', and I am ready to explore, together with you, what it could realistically include in practice.

Together with culture and youth engagement, sport is another important asset for the cohesion of our society. The European Sport Model is a powerful tool to promote our values. Global sporting events taking place in Europe will be opportunities that, if appointed, I will use to promote the visibility for the EU in sport.

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, I do realise the weight of responsibility that comes with delivering so much in a rather limited period of time. However, if I earn your trust, my ambition is to work in very close cooperation with all of you in the European Parliament, with the Member States and the other stakeholders, as well as our international partners.

I will promise you only what I truly believe I can deliver. If appointed, I commit to be the guardian of efficient investment within this fascinating portfolio and to use its full potential to deliver benefits to the EU citizens.

With this in mind, it is with humility that I ask for your trust and endorsement, and I now look forward to your questions.

Thank you very much for the attention.

1-010-0000

Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Excellent. Thank you so much, Ms Ivanova. We go now to the first round of interventions, from the coordinators and representatives of the political groups. Once again, five minutes in total – so one minute, and two minutes for the reply, and then the follow-up for one minute and one minute. I will start with the EPP and I invite Mr Christian Ehler, the coordinator for ITRE.

1-011-0000

Christian Ehler (PPE). – Thank you, Chair. Dear Ms Ivanova, on behalf of the EPP Group, I would like to welcome you to the European Parliament. We are looking forward to having this thorough exchange with you.

I would like to focus on Horizon Europe. Horizon is the biggest public research programme in the world. Its successful implementation is more important than ever, and as Commissioner we would like to count on you to ensure this.

So as my first question, I would like to ask you what you would describe as the main purpose of Horizon Europe? There have been a lot of questions on whether it is an investment programme or a research programme. So what is the core?

Second question, based on your experience in the Court – and you have been referring to that – where do you see chances for simplification of the programme?

Thirdly, in your written answer you refer to Horizon's built-in flexibility to respond to new priorities, but we have seen in the past that often came at the expense of existing priorities. So how are you going to protect the Horizon budget in the future from being used for new priorities?

1-012-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much for this question. Indeed, for me, research and innovation is probably the most powerful tool to deliver a better future for Europe. And the main goal that I see for our Horizon Europe programme is to tackle these global challenges and boost the European competitiveness based on research and innovation that is focusing on excellence, inclusivity and sustainability.

On simplification, it's a subject dear to my heart and I've worked a lot on it. I think there are plenty of ways to further simplify, and I'm glad the Commission followed some of the recommendations of the Court of Auditors, including the use of lump sums, which I think can be further developed because right now we use them in Pillar II, but they could be expanded also to pillars I and III. And I've always said that, for me, simplified cost options are probably one of the best ways to reduce red tape and also reduce the error rate.

But to focus mostly on the budget, which for me is the crucial point in your question, I hear also the concerns that the community has, that the research community has – what will happen with the budget of Horizon? There are so much uncertainties and all budgets are stretched. Who can predict what will happen? I think it will be very difficult. At least I will not engage to tell you what the future would be, but I would engage and commit to strongly defend preserving the Horizon Europe budget to serve the objectives of the programme. I know there have been some flexibilities used, but so far no transfer of funds have happened and I commit to dedicate my efforts to preserve that.

1-013-0000

Christian Ehler (PPE). – I think that is very encouraging and I don't want to urge you to promises you might not be able to hold, but I think we are looking forward now to a difficult round of discussions with the Council. And I expect there's a little bit that this is not the source for every new project in Europe, and I think that is also within the Commission the question whether we shift permanently for new priorities existing money for priorities which had been decided before.

So perhaps I would like to ask you to have a close eye on that, that political ambitions are fine, but they can't be permanently used or financed by existing priorities.

1-014-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Absolutely, I agree with you, but as I said I think so far the transfers have been entirely dedicated to cover objectives of Horizon Europe. Let's acknowledge that we've had severe crises. We had the COVID pandemic. So these transfers that we are speaking about were helping save lives of the European citizens.

So I don't think it is wasted money, but I agree with you that we should be very careful, especially with the higher challenges with the green and digital transition that are coming, with the expectations to deliver, to really make the maximum of using every euro spent. And here I would look a little bit further: let's not focus only on the budget because whatever it is, I don't think it will be ever enough to fill the 100 billion yearly persistent gap that we have for the past 20 years in funding research and innovation. We should look for other opportunities to attract additional funding to use synergies and so on.

1-015-0000

Dan Nica (S&D). – Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you so much, Commissioner-designate, for your introductory remarks. Speaking about the European Court of Auditors, I am pretty sure that you are aware about the special report on the widening, and the title says 'funds not used to full potential', speaking about Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe.

As the rapporteur for Horizon Europe, my question is about the widening with the projects for widening money to be allocated for the widening countries. What will be your main priorities if you are accepted today by Parliament? In order to increase the accession of the widening countries to the European projects under Horizon Europe, how do you plan to increase the administrative capacity? And what is your plan to cooperate with the other Commissioners on the synergies between Horizon Europe and other European funds?

1-016-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. You can rest assured that this will be high in my agenda if I'm appointed, because I know this has been a persistent problem for many years. And of course we have to acknowledge that a lot has been done. If we look at the statistics of the success rate for Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, we see that there is clear improvement. And this is what the report also acknowledges, from 13.2%, if I

am not mistaken, in Horizon 2020, the success rate has improved to over 20%, only we are in the middle of the implementation of Horizon Europe.

So we have some successes, but I think a lot more needs to be done. Of course we have the existing measures such as teaming, twinning, ERA Chairs and others, and they have been used with a good purpose. But how we can expand on them? I see potential, for instance, in using more the hop-on facility, which has proven to be successful, but what we have observed when we audited that is that it has not been sufficiently used. So we could perhaps expand it to use it also with the partnerships. We could build on, as you said, a little bit more effort on using the seal of excellence. And here we could exploit the synergies.

But along with all these measures, I want to acknowledge also another important moment in this widening process, which is also the role of the Member States themselves. We have to realise that this cannot be a one-sided action of only providing incentives and then of course using all these opportunities, but also it has to be covered by matching efforts from the Member States themselves. They have to implement the structural reforms, they have to do the necessary investments. And together, combined with the measures, this could start giving some good results.

I would focus on building on synergies and expanding mechanisms such as the hop-on facility.

1-017-0000

Dan Nica (S&D). – My question is, how do you plan to increase the transparency of the activities other than your responsibilities, especially of the DG RTD? Because for the time being, there are a lot of complaints about the transparency, the access to the information, the access, where to find the different calls for proposals and all this type of information.

And another one, if you'll be accepted today dear Commissioner-designate, can you make available to the Parliament what is the top 20 recipients in terms of, let's say, number and volume for each pillar under the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe? That will be a very good exercise also for the Commission because we can put aside some rumours which they will say that there are regular recipients for these funds. That will be a very strong signal for the widening countries that these monies are not dedicated only for particular recipients, they are available for everybody based on their expertise and their excellence.

1-018-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – How to increase transparency? I think this is a constant process and a constant effort that we have to do not only for Horizon but for all our programmes. I am committed to dedicate my efforts to do so.

We have a very good Horizon results platform that provides all the information that you want to look for based on region, Member State, type of project. Anyone can go and look into this platform and see where the money is spent.

But, of course, I am open to explore other opportunities that would enhance this process. Who are the top 20 recipients? I cannot quote them to you by heart. I don't know them, but I promise that I will come back to you if you are interested. I think it would be good to know, indeed, if there is a concentration, as you allude, in certain regions or Member States. I will come back to you on that.

1-019-0000

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Thank you so much, Chair. On behalf of the Renew Group, it is a really great privilege to welcome you, Commissioner-designate, here at the European Parliament. I'm looking forward to having a really fruitful exchange.

My question will relate a little bit more not just to your possible role as a Commissioner for Research and Development and Youth, but also as a member of the College of Commissioners on a broader perspective.

You mentioned in your written answers that built-in agility and flexibility to respond to unexpected events and emerging priorities in Horizon Europe. This is really a good thing. This is what we need. Sometimes we miss the same agility and flexibility in other programmes and therefore we see that Horizon has very often been the source of unexpected and new priorities during the MFF in broader ways than was intended when the programme was approved.

When it comes to preparing for the mid-term revisions, right now, and the future of Horizon, but also of other programmes, how do you see this agility and flexibility potentially being built in more broadly?

1-020-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this question. I understand it is about how we can expand on this flexibility, which if I could link with the previous questions that were asked about why do we use so much flexibility, well we have to find a balance. I think it's good to be flexible, but we have to ensure that we have, first of all, sufficient budget to fund our priorities. So this, again, I will reiterate, will be my top priority.

But then you're right, we have to look how we can help in emergency situations, in situations where this flexibility that is applicable for Horizon and cohesion, for instance, I know it's very often used and sometimes abused. We have to be able to make the balance, and I will quote again here the word synergy, which is again also quite often used, but I think we can change a lot by being able to pull out the resources that are there and exist, but due to not sufficient flow of information, not sufficient interoperability between the databases, let's say, of the cohesion programmes and Horizon, we cannot exploit the full potential of those synergies.

But I think we have some good examples already with the cohesion policy and they are built into the programme. What we could probably explore further is the new synergies that could exist between Horizon and the RRF, for example, because I'm pleased to see that some Member States already use RRF money, Recovery and Resilience Facility money, to contribute, for instance, to partnerships or to sponsor projects that have received seals of excellence. So I think these are good examples that we can use and build upon to find that balance that I was talking about.

1-021-0000

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Picking up on this, well, in your initial remarks you rightly reminded that there are quite a few Member States which are quite far away from the 3% that have been intended a long time ago for research and development. What are in your opinion the best ways to incentivise the Member States to contribute more to this field from RRF, from Structural Funds and from their national budgets?

1-022-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this question. I think we have to use both ways: incentivise, but also use the other way, perhaps through the European Semester, to push a little bit for the reforms where they need to happen. Also use the RRF again where we could build on that leverage and synergies to make these reforms happen.

But personally I'm much more in favour of the approach that you mentioned. Let's work in a positive, constructive way. Let's engage in dialogue. And I think at the end of the day we cannot force the Member States to put the 3%. They have to understand that this investment that is done now is actually helping them to become much, much more successful and to achieve much higher

economic growth in the future. And if we don't do it now, well, I'm afraid that the losses will be quite huge, not only for the particular Member State but for the EU as a whole.

1-023-0000

Diana Riba i Giner (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente, señora comisaria propuesta, también le queremos dar la bienvenida desde el Grupo Verts-ALE. Sabemos de su interés por integrar una perspectiva de género en todas las áreas políticas de su cartera. Por eso voy a hacer mi pregunta en este sentido.

Sabemos que, lastimosamente, nos queda un largo camino que recorrer en cuanto a las mujeres en el ámbito deportivo. Lo que vimos en la final de fútbol femenino —ese beso sin consentimiento a la jugadora Jennifer Hermoso, así como el tratamiento mediático posterior— son los síntomas de un sistema estructuralmente machista. Y esto se refleja también en la brecha de género, en la participación, en la falta de representación en lugares de decisión, en la insuficiente visibilidad del deporte femenino o, como en ese caso, directamente en situaciones de acoso y violencia sexual.

La pregunta sería: ¿cuáles son las medidas legislativas que pondrá sobre la mesa la Comisión para que en la Unión Europea ninguna mujer en el mundo del deporte tenga que sufrir este tipo de comportamientos? Y ¿cómo piensa usted, como comisaria, avanzar en la promoción del deporte como un espacio seguro para las mujeres?

1-024-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for raising this important question. And I would here say that gender equality I would look at not only from the perspective of how it is implemented in sport, but all throughout the portfolio. And in fact it is a priority for the Commission as such.

If we compare, for instance, the measures we have in Horizon, well, there it's a little bit structured in a different way. We have the mandatory gender equality plans that are a requirement when an institution or organisation submits the project, we have the 50% target and we have a good way to measure that.

In sports, it's a little bit different. We know we have a limited competence here because it's mainly a Member State prerogative and we respect the autonomy of sport institutions, but we have other tools that we can use, for instance the high-level group on gender equality in sport. This is a tool that we could use with the idea of issuing recommendations that are aimed at safety in sport, that are aiming to fight against harassment in sport and of course build on more role models. These recommendations I acknowledge are not mandatory and we cannot force the Member States to use them. But I think using also tools or incentives such as the Be Inclusive Awards, – which now have a new award category, the Be Equal award – these can be some good examples how we can foster the use of role models, encourage participation of women in sports and build on that. So I will encourage all such ideas and initiatives.

1-025-0000

Diana Riba i Giner (Verts/ALE). – Señora Ivanova, muchas gracias también por la respuesta. Sabemos que tenemos que ser un modelo —las instituciones europeas—, pero también tenemos que garantizar tanto la seguridad como los derechos humanos y, por lo tanto, tendríamos que buscar en qué medida podemos también legislar para tener estos espacios seguros para las mujeres y, como bien ha dicho, no solo en el mundo del deporte, pues también encontramos casos y situaciones no estructurales en el mundo de la cultura, que tanto tenemos que impulsar también en esta cartera.

Por lo tanto, hemos de buscar también en estos espacios, como hemos hecho en Directivas como la Directiva sobre las mujeres en los consejos de administración, cómo podemos incidir en las

carteras culturales y de deporte, ya que todas las mujeres, siendo niñas o adultas, pasamos por estos espacios, por estos sistemas de deporte y cultura que son tan necesarios por nuestra sociedad.

1-026-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – I'm not sure if I heard a question, but I would like to expand on what you said, because I fully agree with you that this has to be looked as a horizontal line across the whole portfolio.

I got inspired by what you said, that indeed we have a number of tools in Horizon that, let me quote a few, stimulate also women innovators and women's participation in business. We have plenty of awards. I even cannot remember the whole list. But I know that we have a lot of good incentives which, if used properly, can help to stimulate more women's participation. Initiatives such as Girls Go Circular can help, even from a very early age, young girls to learn the so necessary skills needed for circularity and then help them, of course, to be better prepared for the future challenges.

So I can assure you that I will look horizontally throughout the portfolio and ensure that this line is maintained and kept.

1-027-0000

Beata Szydło (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Szanowna Pani Ivanowa, witamy również w imieniu grupy ECR. Chciałam bardzo wyrazić swoje zadowolenie i mam nadzieję, będziemy mieli szansę dobrze z Panią współpracować.

Chciałam zapytać o wsparcie dla krajów osiągających gorsze wyniki w programie ramowym *Horyzont Europa*. Wiadomo, że to wsparcie jest przeznaczane w ramach działań wideningowych, i chociaż w obecnej perspektywie finansowej poprzez wprowadzenie komponentu *Szersze uczestnictwo i wzmocnienie europejskiej przestrzeni badawczej* przeznaczono dodatkowe wsparcie dla tych krajów, to nie zawsze znajduje to odzwierciedlenie w tym, że rzeczywiście są one w stanie je wykorzystać w szerszym zakresie.

Chciałam zapytać, jaka jest propozycja i jak Pani widzi możliwość, ażeby właśnie te kraje, które w tej chwili mają gorsze wykorzystanie środków, a jest to ważne szczególnie właśnie teraz przy przygotowywaniu nowych funduszy, jest możliwe?

1-028-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Madam Prime Minister, for asking this question, because it allows me to expand a little bit more on it. Since I'm limited within the two minutes, I wanted to say more to answer to the previous one, but now you give me this opportunity.

What I would like to focus on is, as I said, to expand further on possibilities. For instance, hop-on – the good successful example – to be transferred to other pillars of the programme.

But what is also important is to ensure equal access to information. This is a point that I refer to in my written answers, but I think this is very important. To ensure that the flow of information is running simultaneously, timely and is reaching all the regions in the same time so that the potential beneficiaries have equal access to it.

For me, this will be very important and I will follow that closely. If need be, I will implement targeted information campaigns, especially for the regions that are harder to reach and expand this possibility.

Also on the centres of excellence. Here, I think what is important, and this was also a part of the court report, is to ensure their sustainability. Not only to have a centre of excellence that is fine, we establish it, it operates for some time but then it closes. I think what we have to ensure is that it is sustainable and here the inclusion and involvement of the universities and bringing in the university alliance idea can also help towards reaching this sustainability.

But, again, I have to say that all alone, by these measures of help, the process will not be sufficient if there are no efforts from the side of the widening countries themselves.

1-029-0000

Beata Szydło (ECR). – Dziękuję bardzo. Podzielam również tę opinię, że tu musi być większe zaangażowanie ze strony tych państw, ale niewątpliwie Komisja Europejska powinna również tutaj w jakiś sposób, tak jak Pani tutaj między innymi przedstawiła swoją propozycję, wspierać i zachęcać te państwa.

Ja chciałam jeszcze zapytać bardzo krótko na koniec o Szwajcarię, ponieważ w swoich odpowiedziach pisemnych wspomniała Pani o tym, że negocjacje ze Szwajcarią będą dla Pani priorytetem, i chciałabym usłyszeć więcej szczegółów na ten temat. Myślę, że to jest ważne również dla całej UE, żeby jednak ta współpraca ze Szwajcarią mogła być kontynuowana.

1-030-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Absolutely, I agree with you, and not only with Switzerland but with all the partner countries that are in our to-do list for the coming year and more. For me, it is very important that we promote international cooperation, build on this openness to find the mutual benefits with our like-minded partners, but also keep in mind to protect our interests. But on the Association Agreements, I see clear added value of not only attracting additional funding, but trying to find common solutions for the challenges that we face.

With Switzerland, for the moment, the Horizon agreement is part of the bigger framework agreement that has to be negotiated. For the moment, there is no movement on it. But I will cooperate very closely with Executive Vice-President Šefčovič and, as soon as the conditions are met that we can start on our side, on research and innovation, the preparations for the negotiation mandate, I will do that immediately. And I will keep you fully informed about how this process is evolving.

1-031-0000

Paolo Borchia (ID). – Yes, thank you Ms Ivanova, welcome back to the European Parliament. Well, I'm aware that in a few months it's unlikely to reach long-term objectives. And given the short time available, I would like to ask you straight away how you plan to work strategically towards subjects that are particularly important to me, the small and medium-sized enterprises. What do you think are now the most challenging barriers for SMEs to overcome in order to make the funding opportunities and programmes available for competitiveness?

1-032-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – There are many challenges for the SMEs, and I'm afraid that two minutes will not be enough to cover them. But let me focus on one thing that does not cost that much, but can be a good tool to help them. And it is simplification. And I have just shared a few ideas about what could be done. But I think there are many more ways how we can reduce red tape for them and actually make the access of the programme much, much easier.

The lump sums are one idea. Currently they are mostly used in Pillar II, but we could expand this to Pillar I and to Pillar III, but do that very carefully, building on the good practices and watching how it evolves.

Then some reporting and accounting ideas that I bring with my background here, but I think they're worth exploring. For instance, the option unit costs for personnel cost to fix a daily rate for the entire duration of the project. That could simplify and help them a lot throughout the process.

Then, of course, streamlining the IT systems, disseminating these good practices and information, all these could be measures that would help the small and medium enterprises. Of course, here, just to mention the possibilities that we have within the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the regional innovation valleys that provide the opportunities to bring stakeholders together to exchange ideas, build synergies, and also help them to get more and better access to European and international markets.

If I'm appointed, I would also explore another idea, that we could possibly do without much additional investment, to do targeted information campaigns for the SMEs and building on those existing networks to help them.

1-033-0000

Paolo Borchia (ID). – Many European SMEs in different countries, from different sectors, are experiencing and suffering from mismatching and a lack of competences. Do you think it would be feasible to implement your portfolio management in a few months, maybe preparing a specific task for the next European Commission activity, on this subject for sure?

1-034-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – I'm not sure. There was a cut in the connection. I'm not sure if I heard the question, if you could repeat.

1-035-0000

Paolo Borchia (ID). – It was a question on mismatching and lack of competences that many European SMEs are suffering. I would like to know if you intend, even if you have a few months at your disposal, to start the job in this direction in order to prepare for the next European Commission.

1-036-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this clarification. Lack of competences and ensuring the necessary skills is a key thing, not only for the SMEs, but I would say for research and innovation and overall for our possibilities to boost economic growth. And they start from the very early school age. But building on these particular skills that the SMEs need, I think we have very good initiatives also within the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, such as the Deep Tech Talent Initiative, where it aims to shape this talent and necessary skill that the SMEs could use.

But what is also important is to be able to provide these matching opportunities, how they actually find the talent. And this is again a challenge, I would say, but we could explore it further with more targeted campaigns and raising awareness.

1-037-0000

Marc Botenga (The Left). – Welcome, Commissioner-designate, as you know, for our Group, it's very important, if we speak about research and development funds and innovation funds, that we get public return on public investment.

Now, too often, EU research funds come with very little or too little strings attached, allowing actors to privatise the results, with the taxpayer ending up paying two times, three times: first research and development, then buying the product.

In certain cases, like the Innovative Medicines Initiative, we have even 'succeeded' to privatise the research agenda, with private actors and industry exclusively setting priorities and objectives.

So, my question would be: how do you view more stringent conditions, accessibility conditions being attached to these funds?

1-038-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – This is a very important question that you raise. And again, coming from my background, I can assure you that I will watch very closely to that, because at the end of the day, it is important that every euro that we invest delivers added value and clear benefits for the European citizens, not only just as statistics of number of calls opened and participants in this or that programme.

And for me, the return on investment, I would say the return on innovation is quite high in Horizon. This return I measure in creation of jobs, in increased revenue, in increased assets, and only from the preliminary figures that we have, if I am not mistaken, those beneficiaries that use Horizon funding have increased their assets and revenues by 30% and they have increased the jobs that are being created by 20%. So the return, it is jobs created and increase the revenues and assets.

But how to make that more stringent? Of course I will explore all possible ways to do that, but bearing in mind that we have to keep also a balance in our programmes so that we don't overburden with rules and complexity – we just spoke about simplification – and we somehow strike the right balance between this simplification and control.

And I can assure you that whatever is within my power I will do to guarantee that each euro spent is delivering these results.

1-039-0000

Marc Botenga (The Left). – Thank you very much for the answer and your focus on what we would define as the indirect return on investment.

The question was also about the direct return on investment, where you have a number of tools. You can have march-in rights, you can have clawback clauses or you can have, as the COVID report from the European Parliament voted in plenary just before summer suggested, a potential network or a European public health infrastructure, research and development infrastructure in networking, to take back really control, which is a more radical option if we want, over our research agenda, over our innovation agenda, while of course respecting the academic freedom of the researchers active in those in those centres.

So I would like to have your thoughts on that suggestion voted by plenary just before summer.

1-040-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Well on academic freedom, just to pick up the last word that you said, I think it is a very important subject, and I know that Parliament is very attached to that.

Of course, we have a number of measures here that we could use to help in this direction, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, for instance, INSPIRE Europe, INSPIRE+, that help to guarantee the academic freedom of researchers.

And all these tools, I think, are important to bring to this quantitative aspect that you are talking about. I think the current estimates in figure of the potential return on Horizon Europe for the moment is estimated to be 4 or 5 times for each euro invested. So I think we have a pretty good track record, but I will explore all other possible opportunities to increase it.

1-041-0000

Tomasz Frankowski (PPE). – Chciałbym podziękować Pani za dzisiejszą prezentację priorytetów Pani pracy w obszarze kultury, edukacji, młodzieży i sportu oraz również za udzielone odpowiedzi pisemne.

Moje pierwsze pytanie dotyczy kultury, a dokładniej programu Kreatywna Europa. Parlament Europejski bardzo się niepokoi stanowiskiem Rady w sprawie dalszego zmniejszenia budżetu programu Kreatywna Europa na rok 2024. Państwa członkowskie zamierzają zmniejszyć finansowanie kultury o kolejne 40 mln euro. Jest to tym bardziej niepokojące, że poprzednie cięcia w budżecie roku 2023 przyniosły już poważne szkody naszemu europejskiemu ekosystemowi kulturalnemu, który dopiero powoli wychodzi i rozkwita po konsekwencjach pandemii. Wiem, że odpowiedzialny za budżet jest komisarz Hahn, ale chcielibyśmy usłyszeć Pani stanowisko w tej sprawie oraz deklarację, że będzie Pani starała się walczyć o budżet dla programu Kreatywna Europa, który w porównaniu z innymi programami ma bardzo symboliczny budżet.

1-042-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. Indeed I'm also, as you, a little bit disappointed by these cuts because I don't see the justification for that. And I think Creative Europe has delivered so much that it is probably, if I have to quote again some figures, one of the best cases where I really cannot see the logic why we should not fund more. It consumes from the MFF expenditure only 0.15%. This is what is the expenditure from the MFF for culture and creative sector industries. In the same time it contributes 4.4% to the European GDP.

So to me these numbers speak for themselves, and it is really not for me easy to understand why are these proposed cuts. But I would like to assure you that I will promote keeping the budget and I would rely very much on our cooperation with the European Parliament to help sustain this. But let me remind you also that to be fair, in this statement there were quite good new opportunities introduced with the new KIC for culture and creative-sector industries, with the new cluster in Horizon Europe, that help to fund those priorities that we have.

But nevertheless, I think it is important to keep the focus and not allow, in any case, in these stretched possibilities that the artists and the cultural creative sector industry professionals have, especially after the consequences of the pandemic. We know that more than 100 000 professionals had to change their jobs due to these consequences. So we need to fund them and to help.

1-043-0000

Tomasz Frankowski (PPE). – Drugie pytanie dotyczy z kolei sportu i aktywności fizycznej. Już za dwa tygodnie będziemy mieli Europejski Tydzień Sportu, który jest bardzo ważnym wydarzeniem w Unii Europejskiej promującym aktywność fizyczną i sport. Jednak statystyki nieaktywności fizycznej w Europie, szczególnie wśród młodzieży, są bardzo niepokojące. Komisarz Gabriel zainicjowała ważną kampanię HealthyLifestyle4All. Ta inicjatywa została przewidziana na dwa lata i wkrótce dobiega końca. Chciałbym zadać pytanie, czy planuje Pani kontynuować tę kampanię oraz ją dalej rozszerzać, albo jakie inne działania Pani planuje, żeby aktywność fizyczna i sportowa Europejczyków wzrastała?

1-044-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Certainly, having just spoken about the budget, if I had the means and possibilities I would like to broaden, but we have to be very realistic. What are the current possibilities? But I fully acknowledge, welcome and support the role that sport can have and this new dimension of sport, if I could call it that: putting it at the centre of health, of mental

health, obesity problems, how it can actually help, especially the younger generations, to cope with those issues.

And the HealthyLifestyle4All initiative is, for me, a very good example that we could build upon to sustain that. And the European Week of Sport – I would also use opportunities such as this to promote those values as initiatives. It is upcoming in a few days' time. I will fully support such initiatives.

1-045-0000

Petra Kammerevert (S&D). – Herzlichen Dank, Frau Ivanova, für die Vorstellung Ihres durchaus ambitionierten Programms für die relativ kurze Zeit. Meine Frage hat zwei Aspekte, die sich auf die Verbesserung des Zugangs insbesondere zu Erasmus+ und Kreatives Europa beziehen.

Wir haben ja sehr bewusst seinerzeit die Möglichkeit geschaffen, auch Synergien mit anderen Programmen heben zu können, insbesondere mit den Strukturfonds, aber auch mit InvestEU, Digitales Europa. Wie wollen Sie die verbleibende Zeit nutzen, um diese Synergien besser sichtbar zu machen und besser zu heben? Denn wir wissen, dass die Mitgliedstaaten diese Möglichkeiten nur sehr sporadisch und, ja, auch sehr unsystematisch nutzen.

Wir haben zusätzlich den Eindruck, dass zunehmend insbesondere Ehrenamtliche nicht mehr die Möglichkeiten der Programme, insbesondere Erasmus, nutzen, weil die Hürden zu hoch sind, insbesondere was die Abrechnungs- und Antragsformalitäten angeht. Wir haben ganz gute Erfahrungen mit Mikrofinanzierungen während Corona gemacht. Können Sie sich vorstellen, dass wir solche Mikrofinanzierungssysteme – insbesondere im Bereich der Ehrenamtlichen – auch zukünftig besser oder wieder nutzen können, um hier vor allem den Ehrenamtlichen die Möglichkeit zu geben, wieder an den Programmen teilzunehmen?

1-046-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. Indeed, the word synergy comes again, but I really like it and I would like to use all the good examples that we can have. Having just spoken about Horizon and the synergies within, why not use that also within this other part of the portfolio?

Actually, I see already some good examples for that, for instance, between Erasmus and ESF, we have these possibilities. With the seal of excellence, Erasmus projects that cannot be funded through the programme can be additionally helped by funding from the European Social Fund.

For the cultural and creative sectors and InvestEU, there is there also a good possibility for synergies with this guarantee facility that is provided by InvestEU, and that helps. Especially as they are small and medium enterprises and this is what they need in order to be able to apply for funding and to look for opportunities to create more synergies with their partners in the local or regional or international market.

I think we have a very good tool called CultureEU. It is not a portal, but it is an information tool that keeps a very good pool of information about all the possibilities that we have for synergies, not only with the just-mentioned ESF and InvestEU, but with many other programmes such as LIFE and other European programmes that can help Erasmus and Creative Europe to build on these synergies.

On the micro funding, I think it's a very good idea that only seven Member States, if I am not mistaken, have used, but we can build on it. It was successfully used in the European Year of Youth and I am really aiming to welcome and encourage it.

1-047-0000

Petra Kammerevert (S&D). – Ich habe noch eine Nachfrage. Die bezieht sich auf Ihre schriftlichen Antworten. Sie haben ja da sehr ausführlich und sehr ambitioniert auch noch mal auf die Hochschulbildung abgehoben, insbesondere was die europäischen Universitäten angeht. Was aber überhaupt nicht als Begriff vorkommt, ist der Bereich der beruflichen Ausbildung. Nun weiß ich, dass Sie dafür nur bedingt zuständig sind, aber es ist ein Teil von Bildung, und uns war besonders wichtig, den auch gerade in Erasmus zu stärken, was die Möglichkeiten auch für Menschen in beruflichen Ausbildungssystemen angeht.

Welche Vorstellungen haben Sie – vielleicht auch in Zusammenarbeit mit dem zuständigen Kommissar –, gerade auch den Bereich der beruflichen Bildung zu stärken, gerade im Europäischen Jahr der Kompetenzen, in dem wir ja gerade sind? Wir wissen, dass wir Fachkräftemangel eigentlich auch nur mit beruflicher Bildung tatsächlich werden vernünftig bekämpfen können. Deshalb wäre ich da sehr an Ihren Ideen interessiert.

1-048-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this very important question. The fact that it was not written does not mean that I do not attach very great importance to it. I think it is an additional aspect that, of course, does not fall directly in the remit of this portfolio, as you rightly mentioned. But here I would work closely with Commissioner Schmidt to bring the synergy between the measures that we have under our remit within the portfolio and his responsibilities.

I think it will be particularly important in the context of the European Year of Skills because these upskilling, reskilling possibilities that do exist within the other actions in Erasmus need to be complemented with vocational education and training. And I can assure you that this is something that I will pay close attention to.

1-049-0000

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señora presidenta, gracias, señora Ivanova, por estar entre nosotros.

Tal y como usted ha dicho, en nuestra cultura europea la cuestión de la diversidad y el multilingüismo es clave, tal y como dijeron los ciudadanos, además, en la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa, en la que nos recordaban, en su propuesta 48, la necesidad de promover este multilingüismo.

Sin embargo, lenguas minoritarias en Europa o en el Estado español, como el euskera, el catalán o el gallego, no aparecen en las iniciativas más importantes para los jóvenes, como son Juventud en Movimiento, la Agenda Digital para Europa, la Agenda de nuevas cualificaciones y empleos, o las plataformas multilingües de intercambios, como Europass, o los programas de intercambio de jóvenes, como Erasmus, o incluso en los programas sobre voluntariado. Esto depende exclusivamente de la Comisión. ¿Estaría usted dispuesta a incluir estos idiomas en estas plataformas que he mencionado, tratando de mejorar y reflejar la propuesta que los ciudadanos dejaron patente?

Y, por otra parte, efectivamente, esto incide en la calidad de nuestra educación.

1-050-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. Minority languages are a very important element of our cultural richness and diversity, and of course they are supported with a number of measures both in Erasmus+ and in Creative Europe.

Just to name a few, we have in Erasmus+ funding for language courses, training of teachers, development of bilingual teaching courses. But at the same time, I will mention again the word synergy here. We have possibilities within Creative Europe to enhance this cultural aspect for language preservation, translation, how to preserve those languages. And I think these are important tools.

Whether, if you're asking me, we can use the minority languages in the Erasmus or Creative Europe application process, well, in terms of feasibility and realistically, we have more than 60 regional or minority languages. And if we do it for two or three, I think we have to do it for all. So from a practical standpoint I think it will be a little bit difficult to ensure that given we just spoke about how budgets are stretched and how we need every euro to really make sure it delivers for tangible results and on the objectives. So with all my respect, I think we have a good number of tools to promote this diversity and richness of our languages, but to implement them in the platforms of the programmes I think will be a little bit difficult.

1-051-0000

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señora Ivanova, mi pregunta sería: ¿por qué en estas plataformas sí existe, por ejemplo, la posibilidad de hacer las traducciones al turco? No es un idioma oficial en la Unión Europea y, sin embargo, el euskera, el catalán y el gallego sí son lenguas oficiales dentro de un Estado de la Unión.

Yo le hablaba de programas que afectan a jóvenes en intercambios y que son plataformas que dependen exclusivamente de la Comisión Europea. Y la pregunta es esta: ¿por qué en otros idiomas que no son europeos sí tienen los jóvenes la posibilidad de tener interpretación, y no así en lenguas oficiales?

Creo que deberíamos hacer un esfuerzo respondiendo a lo que en la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa nos dijeron los ciudadanos, sobre todo si queremos promover una educación de calidad.

1-052-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, it was a demand and also from the European Year of Youth. I think this was an important plea of the young people for more mobility, but also ensuring that there is this possibility to build on the languages and on the diversity of our languages.

And I will quote again the number that I have in mind, which is that we have more than 60 regional or minority languages. I cannot promise you now to include that but what I can promise you is that I will encourage all tools that we have under Erasmus and Creative Europe to promote the cultural diversity, to promote the development and the preservation of those languages. As it should be, because it is enshrined in the basic Charter of Fundamental Rights that these are important values that we adhere to.

1-053-0000

Maria da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Thank you, Chair. Welcome, Ms Ivanova. I want to mention the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, which is an essential instrument of Horizon Europe and the only one that has the triangle of knowledge with education, research and innovation.

In the recommendation for 2021 to 2027, we have agreed – and it's in the regulation – a new knowledge and innovation community on water and oceans. That for us is very important, and we think it's very important for Europe. So we want to hear from you your plans in this area and to hear from you your commitment to make sure that we push this initiative.

A question also on the joint undertakings and the private-public partnerships between industry and public sector. You have fantastic partnerships in 11 areas and they cover from aviation to energy, global health, health in general, with fantastic results that are not very well known. So what are your plans for better visibility and also to place the results of these partnerships at the centre of other policy initiatives in the European Commission?

1-054-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for these questions. First, on the water knowledge and innovation community, indeed, the role of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology is crucial for bringing this triangle of knowledge with the already nine existing KICs. It covers many important areas, but water is one subject that I strongly welcome to be added. Water scarcity will be, I think no one can deny, a serious problem, not now, but in the future, and we have to address it.

Now the procedure is very clear: we have rules that are established by the co-legislators, and this KIC right now is undergoing the ex-ante assessment, which is done by a panel of independent experts. In terms of concrete timeline, this assessment has to be finalised more or less towards the end of this year, and then in the beginning of next year I will make sure we speed up to the extent possible what the Commission can do to finalise this assessment, and then eventually, depending on the outcome – of course I cannot pre-empt what it would be, but as soon as we have it – to start the promotion of the new knowledge and innovation community.

On the joint undertakings and partnerships, this is also a very important point, because I agree with you, many of those great achievements sometimes may seem a little bit not sufficiently communicated. So what I will focus is to really boost a little bit the communication campaign about them, use not only social media but also platforms as, for instance, the biennial forum on the clinical trial partnerships that that happens every two years. Opportunities like that we could use to promote great achievements in the field of medicine.

1-055-0000

Maria da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Thank you very much. For all this you need researchers, and we have a problem in Europe with the precarity and conditions for young researchers.

So what I want to ask you is, you have very good documents prepared by the European Commission, but in concrete what can be done to improve and to retain talents in Europe?

Second, we have fantastic results in science but how can this be used for policymaking? You have the science advice mechanism and you have the European Group of Ethics under your responsibility. How can these be used in order to promote that science and science evidence is present in policymaking in Europe?

1-056-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for these questions. First, on the researchers – and the younger researchers, I would say particularly – we have the Council recommendation on research careers and the aim to set some minimum standards of implementation. Also, we have to make sure we have the proper monitoring tool with the Research and Innovation Careers Observatory to monitor how these standards are kept.

But here I would really welcome and support very strongly the initiative of my predecessor on young researchers, pooling consortia together to help young researchers, especially at the beginning of their careers, with fair remuneration and career opportunities. This is an idea I would really like to follow up and build upon.

And on the science and advisory mechanism and the ethics body, I think their role is undeniable. I'm really looking forward to the study on artificial intelligence, and I would like to strengthen their role because they help us to have this science-based approach when we are proposing our legislation and I appreciate that very much.

1-057-0000

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome, Madam Commissioner-designate. My question will be on Horizon Europe and the Green Deal. R&I is key in helping us to develop the knowledge, technologies, innovative solutions and understanding of climate change, its effects and how to overcome them.

The Horizon Europe Regulation states that at least 35% of the spending should contribute to climate objectives to contribute to the achievement of an overall target of 30% of the Union budget for climate objectives. But, beyond this, the entire programme must aid the transition towards a socially just and climate-neutral economy. R&I activities must provide directionality for the future, breaking the lock-ins in technologies and solutions that must come to an end, and anticipating likely negative impacts to the environment of the next technologies, if successfully scaled.

So my question is: as a Commissioner, what will you do for Horizon Europe to break the lock-ins and better anticipate the likely pervasive effects of future technologies to ensure that each euro spent is aligned with our climate and environmental objectives?

1-058-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this important question and I consider it very seriously and I will watch very closely how we are delivering on the 35 % target.

I think we are on a good track, at least from the latest data that I have. We have the ex-ante estimations that tell us how we are evolving with each year's work programme and the achievement of this target. For the moment, I think we are somewhere around 34 %, but I'm committed to delivering on 35 % absolutely within the time of the mandate, if I'm appointed, of course.

I think we are on good track also on the 10 % biodiversity target for the first time. It will be embedded in the new strategic Horizon plan and I think that is also a good sign of the commitment that we have there.

Now what can we do to ensure that these goals are kept and implemented and followed through? I think we have a number of possibilities within the Horizon programme. 67 % of the partnerships are committed to delivering on the Green Deal objectives, and with the partnerships being also the tool that is attracting additional private funding, I think the potential here is really good.

Four out of the five missions are also aiming at actions related to greening and climate change. We have also the knowledge and innovation community on climate. And I will make sure that all these commitments are kept and that we deliver on the 35 % target, for which I will make sure that we have the proper methodology also to follow through because I know this is also important for you, how we measure it. And I will make sure we have sufficient transparency and good methodology for how to track the achievement of those objectives.

1-059-0000

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Yes, thank you for your answer and for picking up on the methodology related to climate spending. You know that in a Special Report from September 2020, which you surely know very well, the Court of Auditors pointed out the inaccuracy of the tracking of climate

spending in Horizon 2020, so that green spending in the previous years in reality wasn't as green as it as it looked.

So my question is: what concrete measures would you initiate to better track the spending of Horizon Europe in a more transparent way and to make it accessible to the public? And I'm thinking about the 35% target of climate spending, but also I'm thinking of other types of spending.

1-060-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, indeed, thank you very much. You're referring to a report that was recently issued and it covers the overall attainment of spending on the Horizon targets. And I know that the results are not, let's say, overly promising, but I think my colleagues from the Court here will have the say and more to comment.

But what I can assure you is that we have a sound methodology, at least based on what I've seen. We have a methodology that can estimate from 0 to 100 %, in the middle 40 % for significant contribution, 100% for main contribution and 0 % for zero contribution to achieving the climate objectives.

I will look into that methodology to see if it can be improved. But I think for the moment we have a good basis where we could rely upon tracking those expenditures.

1-061-0000

Lina Gálvez Muñoz (S&D). – Thank you very much and thank you for presenting here your priorities, and especially for continuing the commitment of your predecessor, Mariya Gabriel, on gender equality. We really appreciate it.

My first question is on the budget, and especially on inflation. How does the Commission envisage mitigating the effect of price increases on innovation – especially the effect on innovative SMEs, some of whom are really dropping their commitment to Horizon Europe and looking to other funds. That is important for us.

The second question is on geographical balance. We have proposed as the European Parliament a pilot project for the Commission that has been marked as an aid to the development by the JRC of a Partnership for Regional Innovation. I believe it is key for the European Union to have an open, strategic autonomy, not leaving anyone behind, not any territory behind, to further develop and extend industrial policy based on innovation. So my question is how can synergic instruments such as this Partnership for Regional Innovation be effectively mainstreamed into both Horizon Europe and FP10 programming?

1-062-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much. I really appreciate the question because I think it is much bigger than what you outline – this project between the Joint Research Centre and the Committee of the Regions, these partnerships for regional innovation, what they do. I think they're an excellent example of how we address one of the biggest problems that we have probably in the European research and innovation landscape, which is fragmentation and the regional divide.

We have been talking and thinking of ideas and initiatives, how we can address it, and there are plenty. But I think this is a really creative and good way. And I thank the European Parliament for pushing the Commission to consolidate this project, especially to bring on the ground for the local, smaller ones, less innovative communities, opportunities and possibilities, how to bring synergies together to tackle the global challenges.

What could be done next to bring them together, to see for solutions, how to tackle the green and digital transitions, and look also for sectors that are most vulnerable perhaps and most affected by these transitions, such as the automotive sector? So I think this is an excellent example of how we can be creative in using synergies for the local communities on the ground, to bring synergies to tackle the global problems.

On your question on inflation and SMEs, I think just ensuring sufficient funding and appropriate conditions in which they can function should be a primary prerequisite for them to be able to operate and then deliver.

In Erasmus, if I have to compare, we have a concrete proposal, the Commission has a concrete proposal how to tackle inflation with the EURI instrument. In Horizon, we don't have such an instrument, but I think we have plenty of other opportunities to try to help the SMEs face inflation.

1-063-0000

Lina Gálvez Muñoz (S&D). – On geographical balance, really, how would we work on the capabilities of these less-developed regions really to make sure to access these funds and synergies? And how do you plan to link also with the new European Bauhaus?

On global research agenda, how really to work now that we are having those droughts and this lack of water, especially on the Mediterranean basis and on the PRIMA agreement?

1-064-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – On the previous questions I think I mentioned already on the access to funds and creating the appropriate conditions to help the SMEs to deliver better results, but on PRIMA I would like to touch because also for me it is a quite important subject and I'm really happy that we decided to continue for three more years this very important partnership that fosters cooperation in the Mediterranean region on water and sustainable agriculture. The decision has been taken to keep the current portfolio of subjects as is, and if there are opportunities for future opening for the whole framework of partnerships, of course we can think of other possibilities. But for the moment I think we're on the right track. I fully support it and I think it will bring tremendous added value for the development of this region.

1-065-0000

Chiara Gemma (ECR). – Grazie presidente e benvenuta Commissaria designata Ivanova. Vorrei portare la sua attenzione nuovamente su Europa Creativa che, oltre ad essere oggetto di tagli, è gravata da pesanti vincoli burocratici. I giovani senza esperienza e senza connessioni con i partner giusti non riescono purtroppo a farsi strada, anche se hanno talento e buone idee. Negli ultimi anni si è parlato molto di misure per affrontare questo problema, ma di fatto non si sono visti alcuni risultati. Come intende allora Lei lavorare per rimuovere le barriere amministrative che impediscono ai giovani di realizzare le proprie idee attraverso Europa Creativa?

E poi una seconda domanda: Lei ha affermato come l'istruzione e l'educazione svolgano un ruolo cruciale nello sviluppo delle competenze, orientando gli studenti sin dall'infanzia nel loro cammino di crescita. Bene, come ha intenzione di collaborare con i colleghi Commissari per creare una DG trasversale per promuovere un processo di vera collaborazione interdisciplinare, soprattutto in questo Anno europeo delle competenze?

1-066-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question on simplification; as I said, it is a subject dear to my heart. I think in Erasmus, in Creative Europe particularly, I think we can explore the possibility we have with the mid-term review to take stock of the situation. Where are we now? What is done right and what is done wrong? And we can

build on these experiences to see what ways we could use to simplify and to streamline the programme.

Another tool I see is more communication effort. We try to reach, especially through the agency, more regions, especially more young people, to promote the opportunities that exist.

Also build on initiatives that are successful, such as Culture Moves Europe. I think this is a very good example of a simple programme that has a simple framework: easy to access, easy to report, easy to implement. I would build on such examples and focus effort in all directions in order to make this programme more accessible. It's been widely recognised for the past 30 years by the culture and creative sector professionals that this is really a best tool to help bridge the fragmentation and develop the sector.

Currently, we face big oversubscription, which is, in a way, a sign of the success of the programme, but also a sign of insufficient funding. I will do whatever I can to help respond to those needs.

1-067-0000

Chiara Gemma (ECR). – Mi auguro davvero che ci sia questa Sua attenzione peculiare in riferimento a questo programma e che questa ricognizione possa sortire effetti positivi. Però, ritornando sulla seconda domanda che Le avevo posto, vorrei sottolineare come un approccio trasversale interdisciplinare sia fondamentale per includere in un processo di crescita e valorizzazione tutti i talenti, ma anche le persone con disabilità a cui tengo in particolar modo. Le chiedo se intende muoversi e in che termini rispetto a questo tema.

1-068-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this question. It is also a subject dear to me because I think we clearly see improvement in the inclusivity of our programmes of Erasmus, Creative Europe and Horizon compared to their predecessor programmes.

But what is most important is probably how to reach to those most vulnerable groups. And here I see a little challenge in tracking how to assess whether we have reached them and also better communication campaigns and work with the national contact points. Because here at central level, the Commission can do only that much. But working with the national contact points and ensuring we have the diversity strategies embedded in the decision-making I think is important. And I see that it is existing, but I will work on promoting such measures.

1-069-0000

Christine Anderson (ID). – Vielen Dank, dass Sie heute da sind. Sie haben in Ihrer Eingangsrede sehr richtig darauf hingewiesen, dass Europa sich eben durch seine vielfältige und reiche Kultur auszeichnet, welche sich in allererster Linie durch die einzelnen nationalen und kulturellen Identitäten der Völker in den Mitgliedstaaten speist. Jetzt ist in diesem Hause immer wieder die Rede von der europäischen Identität. Da hätte ich gerne von Ihnen gewusst: Können Sie mir in groben Zügen erklären, was diese europäische Identität ist, welchen Stellenwert oder welchen Rang sie im Verhältnis zu den nationalen kulturellen Identitäten der Völker einnimmt? Was werden Sie konkret unternehmen, um die nationalen und kulturellen Identitäten in den Mitgliedstaaten zu stärken?

1-070-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. Well, for me, the European identity is united in our diversity, and supporting and acknowledging all different national cultures and ideas that are to support them I think is really important, and I will focus efforts on supporting that diversity. This is a basic European value, the European identity, and a

clear sign of our European way of life. I think throughout the whole Erasmus+ measures, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps, we can explore all the good initiatives that we have to promote the European identity.

1-071-0000

Christine Anderson (ID). – Da stimme ich Ihnen so weit erst mal zu. Die nationalen und kulturellen Identitäten kann man natürlich nur dann respektieren und auch achten, wenn man das Grundprinzip einer jeden Demokratie, nämlich die Volksherrschaft, achtet und respektiert. In diesem Zusammenhang hätte ich gern von Ihnen gewusst: Was ist Ihre persönliche Haltung zu dem Ansinnen, das Einstimmigkeitsprinzip im Ministerrat zugunsten qualifizierter Mehrheitsbeschlüsse immer weiter zurückzudrängen bzw. ganz aufzugeben? Welchen Konflikt sehen Sie, und was sind Ihre Ansätze, um diesen Konflikt zu beseitigen?

1-072-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – I think respecting the principle of unanimity and subsidiarity are principles that are enshrined in the way we operate, and with the competences that we have in the remit of the culture, in the remit of sports and education, clearly there are limited competences. So I think in no way I would try to go beyond what is my Treaty mandate if I am appointed and I will fully respect the competences of the Member States where they do exist in these parts of the portfolio. But at the same time, that doesn't mean that I will not engage in structured dialogues with them, cooperate, collaborate, share good practices and ideas to try to reach our common goals.

1-073-0000

Milan Zver (PPE). – Hvala za besedo, spoštovana gospa predsedujoča. Lepo pozdravljeni, gospa Ivanova. Čestitam vam za odlične odgovore. Dokazujete, da boste brez težav zmogli to odgovorno nalogo, ki vas čaka.

Kot prvo bi rad izpostavil težave z IT orodji pri Erasmusu+, ki trajajo že od začetka tega programa. Sprašujem, ali se lahko zavezete, da se boste aktivno soočili s tem problemom že takoj na začetku.

Naslednje vprašanje se navezuje na proračun programa Erasmus+. Je zelo otežen zaradi trenutne situacije in potrebuje dodatna sredstva, tako kratkoročno pa tudi dolgoročno. Se boste zavzeli tudi za to, za povečanje proračuna?

In še zadnje vprašanje. Na enem izmed srečanj, sestankov z deležniki so mi pokazali pogodbo za manjši projekt v višini nekaj sto evrov, ampak ta projekt je bil pripravljen na več kot devetdesetih straneh. Si lahko zamislite, kako pomembna je tudi poenostavitev programa Erasmus+. Se boste zavezali, da boste delali tudi na tem, na poenostavitvah, da bodo bolj prijazne za uporabnike?

1-074-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. I'm aware of the issue related to the IT systems for Erasmus+ and I know there have been complaints by a number of beneficiaries, especially on the beneficiary module. But let's also acknowledge the fact that it was a quite difficult start of the programmes with the pandemic and the late start of the programmes.

So there were some challenges that I acknowledge existed, but I can assure you that an action plan has been put in place and the problems have been addressed and it will be a top priority for me to ensure actually a smooth implementation and functioning of the IT platforms, because here there is a reputational risk if we are not able to provide this access. So I will make sure, if appointed, to follow closely on the matter, on this action plan, and ensure that there is proper access for all beneficiaries.

On the budget, as I mentioned previously, on the short-term part we have a solid proposal with the EURI instrument, which is to address the effects of inflation on the RRF and the so-called EURI line to cover for the eventual rise of costs so that the other programmes that are in subheading 2b, Erasmus and Creative Europe, are not affected by the higher inflation prices.

In the long run, whether I would ensure a higher budget, I would focus efforts to ensure a stable budget, whether it would be higher I cannot guarantee, given the stretched and uncertain circumstances that we are operating in. But I will defend a strong budget. Let's remind ourselves it was doubled already and we have to be realistic.

1-075-0000

Susana Solís Pérez (Renew). – Thank you, Madam Chair, thank you very much, dear Commissioner-designate, for this fruitful exchange of views. We are now approaching the end of this mandate. However, there is a lot of work left to do. Now we have the responsibility of making this final year count. So let's make sure we use the time we have left to fulfil all the promises we made to citizens four years ago, especially now that the European elections are coming in May.

In this line, I have the following questions. The war in Ukraine has been, together with COVID-19, the defining crisis of this mandate. Considering your broad portfolio, I would like to know what programmes and initiatives the Commissioner intends on implementing in terms of research and innovation in Ukraine.

1-076-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for raising this important question. There is a big list of initiatives that we do implement to help Ukraine. But I think it is important to deliver fast, to deliver now and to think of building upon them because this is, now, when the help is most needed.

Just to name a few: the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship scheme that helps displaced Ukrainian researchers; the possibilities that we have within the European Institute of Innovation and Technology; the Jumpstarter programme; the Higher Education Institutions initiative; the new call that, if appointed, I will be happy to promote for 20 million from the European Innovation Council action to help innovative Ukrainian deep tech startups; the Girls Go Circular initiative, also another excellent example.

We have to mention here also the efforts that are needed to help build and rebuild the destroyed infrastructure in Ukraine, which is the energy, the roads, the housing. And here I see also a role for the Joint Research Centre, with the expertise they have and with the state-of-the-art research infrastructure they could provide to help Ukrainian researchers to implement these projects.

Last but not least, perhaps the most important, if appointed, I will ensure the smooth establishment of a Horizon Europe office in Kyiv and also a European Innovation EIT hub because innovation is also an important part to support Ukrainian recovery.

1-077-0000

Susana Solís Pérez (Renew). – Thank you, Commissioner-designate, for your answer. As a follow-up question, beyond research and innovation, I would like to know what programmes the Commissioner-designate plans on implementing in the cultural and creative sector. Because it has been discussed here several times, and those are fundamental pillars for our societies, especially for Spain, where I come from. And I would like to know some specific initiatives on this area.

1-078-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you for building with this follow-up question upon the same subject, because I wanted to say more on the educational and cultural part of the portfolio but the two minutes were limiting me.

So let me remind us here, the agreement that was signed already in June this year with the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine for mutual cooperation and mutual recognition of academic qualifications. I think this will be of great help, especially for students to be able to integrate in the educational systems when they come to Europe and eventually they go back.

An additional EUR 100 million was provided thanks to the built in flexibility of Erasmus+, so flexibility is not necessarily always bad because I think here we have an excellent example of how this money was earmarked to help Ukrainian students.

Culture Moves Europe, expert group on safeguarding the Ukrainian cultural heritage, all these are initiatives that I would like to follow on and build upon.

1-079-0000

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Madam Commissioner-designate. As we all know, Horizon Europe is crucial for the European Union's prosperity and also sustainable development. The COVID pandemic has provided further proof that research and innovation are crucial tools for providing, surviving and also for prospering.

It has also highlighted the importance of technology and scientific research and innovation as a means for addressing crisis and also for ensuring anticipation and preparedness. Scientific advice became key and provided a more robust evidence base for policymaking and also for reassuring citizens' concerns.

As you have rightly highlighted in your answers that, despite the progress being made and reducing the research and innovative divides, efforts are still needed to maximise the effects of the widening measures that have been implemented so far. Therefore, I would like to ask and hear more about what measures you are going to take to ensure that the ability of all Member States is achieved from benefiting fully from the Horizon Europe programme, taking into account the different contexts of each and every Member State. In particular, how can you ensure that smaller Member States, like my country, Malta, will be able to create better linkages between academia, businesses and government, in line with regional or national smart specialisation strategies and increase the attractiveness for researchers of their entities in widening countries?

1-080-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much for raising again the question of widening because, as I said, for me it will be very high on the agenda and, of course, I would like to build on the existing measures to ensure that this support that we are providing is sustainable and ensures sufficient measures to help reduce the regional divide.

For small countries like Malta, we have advanced research infrastructure from Pillar I that offers possibilities for smaller Member States in widening to gain access to the whole EU research community. So this could be an innovative way to build upon the existing measures. I don't want to repeat them again, but I think it is important to underline the sustainability of the measures as such, building the centres of excellence with the involvement of the universities, and ensuring that when they are created they stay and they remain and they deliver the expected results.

On additional help, on possibilities, I also mentioned – and again I will say – that synergies here have great potential because those projects that cannot be funded with the limited resources that

we have in Horizon can be expanded through the Seal of Excellence, for instance, and look for other sources of funding. So all these are possibilities to explore.

Of course, I will not go into detail now on the other mechanisms that we have in Pillar III, with the Regional Innovation Valleys and the Partnership on Innovative SMEs, that again are building those bridges between academia and business to help achieve those objectives.

1-081-0000

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Thanks, Madam Commissioner-designate, for your answer. I have a follow-up question regarding the budget of the European Research Area. It is ultimate to safeguard Europe's position as a world leader in science, research and innovation and therefore it requires – as a number of colleagues have already mentioned – additional funding. How would you intend to increase the budget of the European Research Area and how will you ensure that it will benefit also young researchers from all across Europe?

1-082-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much again. We're coming back to the budget and how it can be increased, and as I said in my introductory remarks, I'm very careful what I promise you and I will promise you only what I can deliver. What I promised in the beginning is that I will focus and support very strongly on ensuring and preserving the existing budget of Horizon Europe so that it delivers on the objectives of the programme.

For the Research Area we have 20 actions. It is a really important and really fundamental cornerstone of the European research and innovation landscape. But how will I ensure increased budget and provide more, especially only for it? I would say if there is more money, it has to be for the entire Horizon programme. And of course the Research Area, being such an important element of it, will benefit from that. But I'm realistic.

1-083-0000

Andrea Bocskor (NI). – Elnök Asszony! Örülök, hogy Mariya Gabriel után ismét egy rátermett jelöltet javasolt Bulgária erre a posztra. Remélem, hogy jó lesz az együttműködésünk, és nagyon sok sikert kívánok a további munkájához.

Nyilván Ön is hallott a magyar diákok, tanárok és kutatók számára diszkriminatív eljárásról, amit az Európai Tanács rendeletére hivatkozva az Európai Bizottság hozott a modellváltó egyetemek Erasmus+ és Horizont Európa programból való kizárása kapcsán. Ezek a programok olyan zászlóshajó programok, amelyekben az elmúlt 30 évben több százezer magyar diák, kutató, tanár vett részt, és soha nem volt gond az elszámolásokkal vagy a támogatások felhasználásával.

Ez a diszkriminatív döntés viszont most az egyetemek kétharmadát érinti, és mintegy 180 ezer hallgatót rekeszthet ki 2024-től a programokból, ami óriási versenyhátrányt jelent, és nagyon nagy presztízaveszteséget a kiemelkedő egyetemek számára.

Ön, mint biztosjelölt, hogy gondolja, hogyan lehetne orvosolni ezt a problémát?

1-084-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for this question. Indeed it is regrettable for me to see possibilities that are cut for young people and for students to participate in our programmes. But rules are rules and we have to follow them.

I'm aware of this discussion that is between the Commission and the Hungarian authorities on ensuring the legal commitments and the appropriate measures to be taken by the Hungarian authorities to respond to the questions that the Commission has asked and the action that needs

to be taken. I'm aware also of the problems, the deadlock and the no progress in these negotiations, and it would be a real pity if we cannot ensure that access.

What I can promise you – of course, without pre-empting and promising 100% that I will solve the matter if you confirm me – is to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. And I will engage into dialogue, if need be to provide more clarifications, more guidance, more information that is needed from the Hungarian authorities so that progress could be achieved. But I cannot promise to complete action that needs to be taken by the Hungarian state. And for that I think we have to keep the dialogue and try to find a solution because autumn is coming, the new season is coming, and when the calls are open it would be really regrettable to see these opportunities reduced for young people who should not become hostages of a situation like this.

1-085-0000

Andrea Bocskor (NI). – Köszönöm szépen ezt a választ, és természetesen mi is ezt szeretnénk volna kérni, hogy Biztos asszony legyen része a megoldásnak, hiszen az idő nagyon szűkös. Közelednek azért a határidők, és én úgy tudom, hogy a magyar kormány számos kérését és feltételét teljesítette az Európai Bizottságnak, mégis pozitív döntés. Tehát én úgy gondolom, hogy nagyon is szükség lesz Önre, hogy felgyorsuljanak az események. És nagyon szeretném, illetve azt remélem, hogy Ön biztosjelöltként esetleg tud valami biztató határidőt mondani, hogy mikorra rendeződhet ez a kérdés.

1-086-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I agree with you that we are running out of time, and as I said, I will engage fully if I'm appointed into opening, if necessary, a dialogue to clarify, to provide additional guidance or information. But I cannot give you a date to say when the Hungarian authorities will implement what is requested from the Commission in order to find a solution for the problem.

But again, I would like to underline that dialogue will be crucial here. We should continue exploring all possibilities for maintaining it and looking for a solution. I know it is not easy, especially for the young students – especially for those that have made their plans and are looking forward to benefit from these tremendous opportunities – to become victims of an unresolved situation, but I will engage into a dialogue to try to find a solution.

1-087-0000

Ева Майдел (PPE). – Г-н Председател, уважаема г-жо Иванова, много се радвам да Ви посрещна отново в Европейския парламент и поздравления за уверено и компетентно представяне до момента.

Както чухте от някои от нашите колеги, темата за малките и средни предприятия, които работят в сферата на иновациите и изследванията, е много важна. Тя е и много важна за нас, от Европейската народна партия, и с колегите бихме искали да разберем малко повече. Да ни кажете какво възнамерявате, по-специално когато става въпрос за прилагането на сложното и детайлно законодателство в сферата на технологиите? Какво възнамерявате да направите, за да подкрепите малките и средни предприятия? И също така дали планирате да улесните достъпа за тези компании до новосъздадени възможности за финансиране и управленски структури, които в момента съществуват в сферата на технологиите и иновациите, в регламентите, като например тези за изкуствения интелект и микрочиповете?

1-088-0000

Iliana Ivanova, кандидат за член на Европейската комисия. – Благодаря Ви за този въпрос. Бих добавила, че напълно съм съгласна с Вас и бих добавила, че малките и средни предприятия имат решаваща роля не само за дълбоко технологичната трансформация, но и като цяло за икономическия растеж в Европа. Тяхната роля е ключова и ще направя всичко, което е в рамките

на моите компетенции, ако бъде назначена, за да осигурия подкрепа за тях, особено за тези, които са високорискови и неподходящи за банково финансиране.

Европейският съвет за иновации беше създаден именно с тази цел: да адресира този дефицит на европейския пазар за високорисково финансиране и да помогне точно на тези, които в началната фаза изпитват най-големи затруднения и срещат най-големи проблеми с това да гарантират кандидатстването за кредити пред банките. И Европейският съвет за иновации покрива целия този иновационен процес. Най-важното за мен е да осигурим ефективно изпълнение на целите на този съвет.

Освен това ще промотираме всички други мерки, които имаме по третия стълб, чрез мерките за регионалните инвестиционни долини. Вече говорихме за тях. Те дават възможности за екосистеми от услуги, съвети и финансиране, и събират различни участници, образователни институции, изследователски институции и стартапи, за да търсят заедно решение и достъп до пазари. По отношение на регулаторната рамка тук бих споменала възможностите, които имаме чрез амбулаторните лаборатории, живите лаборатории и изследователските платформи. Те създават една среда, която е доста благоприятна, особено благоприятна за иновативните стартапи и компании. И разбира се, партньорството за иновативни малки и средни предприятия, също по третия стълб, подпомага за тази цел.

Смятам, че всички тези мерки адресират проблемите, за които говорите, и ще направя така, че те да бъдат изпълнявани максимално ефективно и ефикасно.

1-089-0000

Ева Майдел (PPE). – Г-н Председател, благодаря г-жо Иванова. Вторият ми въпрос е така нареченият „въпрос за един милион евро“, поне така го наричаме тук, в Комисията по индустрия, защото към Европейския съюз се гледа като на световна сила в законодателството. Но имаме още много път, за да станем и притегателен център за частни инвестиции. И затова бих искала да Ви попитам: какво смятате, че Европейският съюз трябва да направи в сектора на научноизследователската и развойна дейност, за да помогне за създаването на повече технологични компании и за повече технологични еднорози?

И в тази посока планирате ли да работите с други генерални дирекции за създаването на инициативи, които могат да допринесат за увеличаването на тези частни инвестиции в наука и технологични иновации? И също така каква роля виждате за принципа на иновациите, за да се гарантира, че европейското законодателство засилва и укрепва иновациите, а не им пречи?

1-090-0000

Piana Ivanova, кандидат за член на Европейската комисия. – Разбира се, ще направя всичко, което е по силите ми и в рамките на компетенциите, за да осигурия това допълнително частно финансиране, за което говорите, включително и със сътрудничеството на други генерални дирекции.

Отново бих цитирала тук ролята на Европейския съвет за иновации, благодарение на който днес имаме 13 компании с пазарна стойност над един милиард евро, така наречените еднорози. И това е благодарение на финансирането от Европейския съвет за иновации. Тук говорим за всяко едно инвестирано евро, което привлича три допълнителни евро в инвестиционния процес. И ето това е добър пример, който можем да използваме.

Също така виждам голям потенциал и в партньорствата по втория стълб на програмата „Хоризонт“ и ако бъде назначена, смятам да предложи още 10 такива нови партньорства в оставащата част от конкурса.

1-091-0000

Niyazi Kizilyürek (The Left). – Madam Commissioner-designate, regrettably, we have observed a troubling increase in xenophobia and racism across the European Union. Recent racism-fuelled attacks in my country, Cyprus, show us the growing alarming trend. This highlights the pressing need for collective efforts to combat racism and xenophobia and foster a more inclusive society. Recognising that education and culture can be powerful tools in this fight, I would like to ask you how would you address the problems of racism and xenophobia through educational and cultural policies? What specific actions and strategies would you propose to counter racism and the increasing nationalism in our societies? How can we ensure that our educational systems actively promote inclusivity and encourage a mindset open to multiculturalism?

1-092-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for raising this important question. I think I'm truly happy to see that Erasmus now is much greener and more inclusive than its predecessor programme, and this is all thanks to the efforts, of course, of my predecessor, the services, but also thanks to you, the Members of the European Parliament.

So we have improved a number of ways for the measures and the calls to be more flexible, more targeted to the vulnerable groups – through different ways: reduced time of stay, shorter stays, more flexible ways of applying. I think these are important measures, but inclusion is at the heart of the European values and programmes and I will certainly encourage and promote all measures that are aimed at tackling racism and xenophobia.

I think in what concerns the integration of Turkish Cypriot students, we have a very good programme, the aid for Turkish Cypriot students, which is under responsibility of Commissioner Ferreira, of course. But more than 2 000 students have benefited from these scholarships that help to address exactly the problems that you mentioned.

Of course I should say that Erasmus is open to all minorities and Turkish Cypriot students that are part of institutions that are enrolled in the programme, and I think these are measures that we certainly should explore and build upon.

1-093-0000

Romeo Franz (Verts/ALE). – Erasmus+ muss endlich Vielfalt leben. Wir brauchen unbedingt eine umfassende Datenlage über Menschen mit geringen Chancen. Meine Frage ist: Wie wollen Sie die Datenerhebung gewährleisten? *Small-scale partnerships* haben eine starke Wirkkraft, es fehlen allerdings ausreichende Inklusionsforderungen in diesem Bereich. Wie möchten Sie eine bessere Beteiligung umsetzen? Erasmus reicht nicht aus, um Studierende ohne finanzielle Mittel zu unterstützen. Was sind hier Ihre Lösungsansätze?

1-094-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question. I have the same observations also based on my previous work in the Court and indeed data and statistics are most difficult to find and attract less disadvantaged groups, and I hear this is a challenge that we need to address. In the same time, when I say that I realise that the more indicators and complexity we add to the programmes, the more difficult it is to answer to the other question that we were discussing about simplification. So I think a balance has to be found somehow to address what you are saying, but in the same time not bringing further complexity.

But I think in terms of concrete measures that could be done, as I was referring earlier, work with national contact points on the ground because they know best where these disadvantaged groups are and how to reach them on targeted information campaigns that should reach the targeted groups that are most vulnerable and most hard to reach. I think these are measures that we could use and build upon. And of course we have to bear in mind all the sensitivity issues around

declaring, for instance, minorities in the beginning of the process. We are able to track that information normally ex-post, not ex-ante. So we have to bear in mind all the sensitivities when we want to track these less-advantaged and more difficult to reach groups.

1-095-0000

Romeo Franz (Verts/ALE). – Um Vielfalt im Erasmus+-Programm umzusetzen, müssen alle marginalisierten Gruppen einbezogen werden. *Romani people* gehören zu den am stärksten marginalisierten Gruppen. Eine Priorisierung muss durch die Guidelines gewährleistet werden. Wie werden Sie diese umsetzen? Auch in Ihrem Heimatland, gerade im Stadtteil Fakulteta in Sofia oder in Kjustendil, brauchen wir ein Konzept, um einen gleichberechtigten Zugang zur Bildung – gerade für die *Romani people* in Bildung und Arbeitsmarkt – zu bekommen.

1-096-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – I very much agree with you. It all starts with education, because educated minority populations are able to integrate much easier and much faster and bring benefits to the society. So I think this should be a primary target measure, if I have to put them in order, to find ways how to ensure equal access for them into the education system.

Then, further on, when we start speaking about measures in Erasmus+ and exchanges, I will refer back to what I said, that these sensitivities will probably make it more difficult for us to track them. But the work with the local authorities and the outreach strategies that we are able to design and implement should be crucial in that respect. Work on the ground at local level with specific targeted support at a horizontal level I think should be the approach.

1-097-0000

Marcos Ros Sempere (S&D). – Señor presidente, gracias, señora Ivanova, por este intercambio de palabras esta mañana.

Han pasado tres años desde el lanzamiento de la Nueva Bauhaus Europea y la semilla ha dado sus frutos. El proyecto se ha consolidado y cada vez tiene más fuerza en nuestra sociedad, con multitud de colectivos profesionales y Gobiernos nacionales, regionales y locales implicados.

Antes del verano recibimos una buena noticia: la Comisión Europea anunció la intención de desarrollar una misión Horizonte Europa sobre la Nueva Bauhaus Europea. Precisamente, una de las peticiones principales que, hace justo un año, realizaba el informe aprobado en este Parlamento. Esta misión llegará en un momento ideal para aportar un empuje extra a la investigación y a la innovación en el entorno construido. Un impulso necesario.

La investigación es la base imprescindible para dirigir mejor los fondos públicos destinados a mejorar nuestros barrios, nuestros edificios, hacerlos más sostenibles, asequibles y accesibles.

Mi pregunta es: ¿cuáles serán los objetivos principales de la misión Horizonte Europa sobre la Nueva Bauhaus Europea? Y, sobre todo, ¿cuál va a ser el mecanismo para financiar esta nueva misión?

1-098-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for raising this question, which is obviously a top priority and one of the signature flagship initiatives of this Commission. The new European Bauhaus is the soul of the Green Deal. And I think the idea of evolving this initiative further in the mission is excellent, and I will fully support that.

As you said, the seeds have grown. I know that there may have been some criticisms on the missions in general, that they're taking a little bit slow start and what are they delivering, but we

see already on the ground some concrete results. They are aimed at bringing together different actors to build on synergies, to attract additional funding, to create new ideas for research and innovation. And the idea of the new European Bauhaus mission exactly fits into that framework to maximise the momentum that the new European Bauhaus has already gained, to streamline further the procedures and to attract funding.

We already have eight – If I'm not mistaken – different budget sources that contribute to the new European Bauhaus, and I know the Parliament has been very keen on establishing how to streamline and ensure stable funding for the initiative. I think through the mission we can prove that, we can promote that, and then build on these synergies for sustainability, beautiful environments in the neighbourhoods, engaging the citizens and delivering concrete results on the ground that actually show in reality what the Green Deal is about. And I fully support the rollout of this new mission.

1-099-0000

Marcos Ros Sempere (S&D). – Señora Ivanova, gracias por su respuesta.

Y quería también en esta segunda pregunta abordar otro tema de sus competencias en el que hemos trabajado: el Espacio Europeo de Educación. Desde el inicio se planteó alcanzarlo en 2025. Esta fecha debe ser inamovible. Lo ha expresado así el Parlamento.

Creo que la Comisión está desarrollando iniciativas muy positivas para su implementación, pero a veces se echa en falta un mayor esfuerzo en el centro del proyecto: crear un verdadero espacio educativo único, sin barreras, con reconocimiento automático de cualificaciones. Y teniendo presente la fecha de 2025, ¿cuáles son las acciones concretas que tienen previstas para conseguir este reconocimiento automático de títulos para el Espacio Europeo de Educación?

Además, este Espacio supone una oportunidad única para luchar contra un problema que castiga cada vez más a nuestros estudiantes: el acoso y el ciberacoso en las aulas. Hace unos meses pregunté a la Comisión sobre cómo actuar ante este problema. Necesitamos recopilar datos y diseñar soluciones. Y ahora pregunto: ¿qué piensan ustedes sobre crear, en coordinación con el Espacio Europeo de Educación, una estrategia para luchar contra el acoso y el ciberacoso en las aulas?

1-100-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question on the European education area because, as I mentioned in my introductory remarks, this will be an absolute priority for me.

We have to deliver and be realistic as to where we are. I will not hide from you where the challenges are. Of course, I am happy to celebrate the achievements and we have made good progress on many of the indicators. We have 40 actions to deliver on in this education area, but in the areas of under-achievement of basic skills and addressing teacher shortages, I think we have to say very clearly and openly that we need to take clear and urgent action to address them.

What could be done? There are a lot of possibilities, such as a concrete proposal for a recommendation on learning mobility, which will be proposed in a wider talent package later. On the recognition of diplomas – I don't have enough time, but I think this is a very, very important subject and the Chair also mentioned it in the beginning – we still have challenges to solve. It is based on the trust, on the trust between the institutions to acknowledge the differences and different educational systems.

I will focus my efforts, as I said, on these two things: basic skills and teacher shortages.

1-101-0000

Асим Адемов (PPE). – Уважаема г-жо Иванова, поздравявам Ви за куража, смелостта и отговорността да поемете този важен сектор в края на мандата на Европейската комисия. И във връзка с Вашите отговори на писмено зададените към Вас въпроси, на мен ми направиха впечатление два акцента, на които се обръща внимание с особена загриженост, и искам да задам моите въпроси.

Един от проблемите, на които акцентирате със загриженост, е липсата на напредък при усвояването на основните умения, придобивани в училище. Друг проблем, на който също така акцентирате, е нивото на преждевременно напускащите училище деца. В този смисъл искам да Ви попитам две неща. Първо, защо според Вас е толкова важен напредъкът в тези области? И второ, след като съвсем основателно визирате тези проблеми, как виждате разрешаването им с оглед на ограниченото време, с което разполагате в този мандат на Европейската комисия?

1-102-0000

Piiana Ivanova, кандидат за член на Европейската комисия. – Благодаря Ви и аз за въпроса. Наистина времето е ограничено, но действията трябва да са бързи, ефективни и целенасочени. Основните умения като четене, писане, математически умения, логическо мислене за мен са ключови предпоставки за грамотността, която нашите деца трябва да имат, за да могат впоследствие да бъдат успешни в училище и да се реализират на трудовите пазари. Това, което ме притеснява, са последните данни от статистиката, които ни показват, че над 20% от учениците изостават и не са достатъчно грамотни.

Тези показатели и причините за това са комплексни и аз няма да ги изброявам всички сега, но това, което е важно, е да ги адресираме заедно с държавите членки, с образователните институции и с родителите, ако щете, защото иначе няма да постигнем съществен напредък. Две конкретни препоръки има Комисията в рамките на своите компетенции. И нека пак да напомня, че тук имаме ограничени компетенции. Препоръката за ключови компетенции за учене през целия живот и препоръката за пътищата към успех в училище. Това, което бих направила, ако бъда назначена, е да се ангажирам изцяло за изпълнението на тези препоръки чрез обмен на добри практики и чрез използване на мерки от „Еразмус+“. Менторството също е една конкретна идея, която можем да използваме.

И тук да кажа за ролята на учителите. Много важно е да насърчим атрактивността на учителската професия. Имаме мерки по „Еразмус+“ за учителските академии, наградата за иновативни учители. Това са няколко акцента, върху които бих насочила усилия, за да подобрим основните умения на учениците.

1-103-0000

Асим Адемов (PPE). – И понеже аз съм един от последните, които Ви задават въпроси, искам така да Ви благодаря за аргументираните отговори, чрез които показахте една солидна подготовка, солидни знания и много висока степен на компетентност. И тъй като се познаваме отдавна, аз съм убеден, че Вие ще бъдете един успешен еврокомисар. Пожелавам Ви успех. Нямам допълнителни въпроси.

1-104-0000

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señor presidente, señora Ivanova, la educación, evidentemente —la educación, además, de calidad—, junto con la cooperación académica y científica, es fundamental para lograr nuestra autonomía estratégica y sobre todo para mantener nuestro liderazgo frente a otros agentes globales. Y esto nos va a permitir también lograr una doble transición digital y ecológica. Y, en este sentido, el Grupo Renew está a favor de las alianzas de las universidades europeas porque considera que es un elemento clave para nuestra soberanía

européa. Usted ha hecho una mención al impulso de esta iniciativa, pero nos gustaría que concretara su visión para el futuro de esta iniciativa tan ambiciosa.

Y unido a esto, quisiera decirle también que necesitamos el reconocimiento mutuo y sin fisuras de los títulos, porque el reconocimiento de las cualificaciones y períodos de aprendizaje en el extranjero no está armonizado a nivel europeo, no solamente para la enseñanza superior, también para la secundaria, y este es un problema fundamental más en las zonas transfronterizas. ¿Cuál es su visión?

1-105-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much for this question on the university alliances, because this is a critical cornerstone in delivering the objectives of the European education area and reaping all these synergies of cooperation amongst the higher education institutions.

We know now that we have achieved the target of 50 university alliances, but the aim is to have 10 more to bring it to a critical mass of 60 alliances that would allow this potential of joining forces and cooperation between the universities to tackle those global challenges that you are referring to.

A big aspect of this free movement of knowledge and cooperation that we were talking about earlier is the mutual recognition of diplomas. And I will come back to my concern that besides this Council recommendation from 2018 that we have issued to encourage the mutual recognition, some progress was achieved, but there is still a lot more work to be done. And here I would focus efforts on the European quality-assurance framework, whatever we can do to help Member States to engage, to see what are the reasons why they are not doing it. I think a big factor for that is the lack of trust. As I was mentioning earlier, we have different education systems in the different regions, in the different Member States. In some Member States we have even more complicated levels of administration. And in order to foster that trust I think what we can do is engage better and more with the Member States in a dialogue and looking for ways and synergies to improve that.

1-106-0000

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señora Ivanova, gracias por la respuesta. En relación con la calidad y con el reconocimiento de los títulos, usted ha mencionado que el papel de los profesores es decisivo en la educación y que hay que darles un mayor soporte.

En un contexto en el que hay un euroescepticismo cada vez más grande, ¿cómo vería usted el papel de los profesores en la educación? ¿Cree que el papel de formadores y profesores a la hora de potenciar este sentimiento europeo es fundamental? O, incluso, ¿piensa que los sistemas escolares a nivel europeo, además de reforzar el proyecto Erasmus+, deberían fomentar también la asignatura europea en todas las instituciones?

Y esto retoma de nuevo una petición que surgió también de la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa para potenciar esa dimensión europea de la educación.

1-107-0000

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I absolutely agree about the European dimension in education, and we have the Jean Monnet actions here that we could put in use to foster that.

For the teachers, I think what is essential is that we express enough will and action to recognise the importance of their profession. You mentioned Erasmus+ and the opportunities that are there. I'm happy to see that as regards the teachers' academies, the initial target of 25 was surpassed by 2 to 27. So right now we have 27 teachers' academies.

But more is to come. If I'm appointed, there will be a call – I think I can announce it now in the fall – for 15 more teachers' academies. I think these are opportunities that will incentivise the mobility, the learning experience and the cooperation that will motivate our teachers.

1-108-0000

Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Thank you so much dear colleagues, dear Commissioner-designate. With that the second round of questions is concluded and I will kindly invite now the Commissioner-designate to take the floor for a closing statement.

1-109-0000

Iliana Ivanova, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Ladies and gentlemen, honourable Members of the European Parliament, allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude for the rich and meaningful exchange we had during this hearing.

Your thoughtful questions and engagement underscore the importance of the role we collectively play in shaping the future of our great Union. My sincere thanks go to each of you for your time, your insights, your dedication to ensuring that the portfolio of innovation, research, education, culture and youth remains a driving force in our shared European journey.

Your questions have highlighted the challenges lying ahead, as well as the aspirations. I highly appreciate the opportunity to address them. Your inquiries are testimony not only to your commitment to the interests and well-being of our citizens, but also of your passion for the advancement of our Union.

As a former Member of the European Parliament, I would like to assure you that my enthusiasm to work closely with each of you is unwavering. Our task is of paramount importance, and I am fully aware that it can only be achieved through our collective efforts.

As I prepare to step into this new role, more than ever I am convinced that unity in diversity is our greatest strength. Therefore I'm eager to collaborate, to listen and build bridges between Parliament, the Member States, the stakeholders and the citizens.

The discussions we have had today are a testament to the democratic values that guide us, to the shared vision that propels us and to the collective determination that defines us as Europeans.

With your guidance and support, I am confident that we can steer our Union toward a future that reflects the aspirations of our citizens and the values that bind us. Once again, I extend my gratitude for your time, your questions, and your commitment to our shared goals.

Last but not least, allow me to thank sincerely our interpreters for bearing with us during all these hours. It has been for me a pleasure and an honour.

1-110-0000

Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Thank you so much. I would like to thank all Members who took part in the hearing for your questions, and to thank and congratulate the Commissioner-designate, Ms Ivanova, for her replies.

The ITRE and CULT committees worked very closely and successfully together to organise this hearing. Therefore I would like to warmly thank Ms Verheyen for co-chairing the hearing and kindly ask her to take the floor for the final remarks.

1-111-0000

Sabine Verheyen, *Vorsitzende des CULT-Ausschusses*. – Vielen Dank. Ich möchte mich sehr gerne auch bei Herrn Buşoi bedanken und auch anschließend seinen Worten und den Mitgliedern der hier versammelten Ausschüsse für ihre Fragen, aber auch Frau Ivanova für Ihre Antworten danken.

Ich denke, es war ein – wie erwartet – interessanter Diskussionsprozess, den wir hatten, mit vielfältig geschichteten Fragen, kompetenten Antworten. Ich möchte an dieser Stelle auch dem CULT- und dem ITRE-Sekretariat für die reibungslose Organisation der Anhörung und die sehr gute Kooperation danken.

Wir werden, wie Sie wissen, als unsere nächste Aufgabe haben, das heute Gehörte zu bewerten. Diese Bewertung findet in unmittelbarem Anschluss an diese Sitzung um 12.45 Uhr hier in diesem Raum statt in Form einer gemeinsamen ITRE-CULT-Koordinatorensitzung. Ich bitte deshalb alle ITRE- und CULT-Koordinatoren, hier im Saal zu bleiben. Alle anderen darf ich bitten, den Saal zügig zu verlassen.

Mir bleibt abschließend nur noch, der designierten Kommissarin für ihr Kommen zu danken und Ihnen allen einen angenehmen Nachmittag zu wünschen. Herzlichen Dank nochmals an alle, die die heutige Sitzung ermöglicht haben.

(Die Anhörung wird um 12.08 Uhr geschlossen.)