



Committee on Culture and Education
The Chairwoman

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CONFIDENTIAL

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Jerzy Buzek
President
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Dear President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee on Culture and Education (together with the Committee on Employment & Social Affairs as an "associated committee" and the Committee on Industry, Research & Energy as a "participating committee") held a public hearing on Thursday 14 January 2010 with Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner-designate for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth.

Prior to the hearing, the Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. My Committee noted that Mrs. Vassiliou answered those questions satisfactorily.

In the course of the hearing, Members of the Committee on Culture and Education asked questions on the full range of responsibilities of the Commissioner-designate and on the following subjects in particular:

- Education (teacher mobility and professional training; university-business cooperation and the knowledge triangle; the place of education and training in the EU-2020 strategy and social inclusion; education of the children of migrants; dissemination of best practice in European education systems; the fight against illiteracy; education and cultural development; the future of the Jean Monnet programme; the Bologna process; support for student mobility; the adequacy of the open method of coordination in this area).
- Youth (international mobility of young people and voluntary activity; youth in the EU-2020 strategy; young people's awareness of Europe).
- Multilingualism (future language policy in the EU institutions; language policy in the Member States).
- Culture and cultural aspects of media policy (European cultural identity; balance of free access to knowledge & internet vs. fair remuneration of authors & creators of content; cultural diplomacy and cultural and educational aspects of relations with non-Member States; the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity; digital inclusion; strengthening the link between EU cultural and audiovisual policies).
- Sport (the social dimension of sport; governance of sports organisations; guidelines to improve legal certainty in sport; the fight against drug-taking in sports).
- Budgetary aspects (increased funding for the multi-annual programmes for which the Commissioner-designate is responsible; ensuring value for money).

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Members of the Committee on Employment & Social Affairs asked the Commissioner-designate questions about:

- the adequacy of funding for vocational training within the current Lifelong Learning Programme;
- quality control mechanisms in vocational training;
- promoting closer association of vocational training with the needs of the labour market;
- the European Institute for Innovation & Technology;
- increasing synergies between EU vocational training actions and planned actions under the European Year of Volunteering 2011;
- vocational training for older workers;
- gender equality in vocational training and in the ambitions of young people;

The Employment and Social Affairs Committee noted the Commissioner-designate's approach to linking more closely, in the framework of the new EU 2020 Strategy, education, vocational training and mobility, namely for young people, in order to increase their employability and to facilitate social inclusion.

The Commissioner-designate stressed her belief that vocational training should be modernised to develop new skills, by incorporating new technologies in education and training schemes and through the setting up of a cooperation process similar to the Bologna process, which also needs to be evaluated.

She also underlined her commitment to connect schools and universities with the business world and to mobilise the resources of the Lifelong Learning Programme to help meet current needs and the future economy and to create the basis for a sustainable working life.

The EMPL committee assesses the replies of the Commissioner-designate to the relevant policy issues, as adequate proof of her aptitude to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to her.

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Members of the Committee on Industry, Research & Energy asked the Commissioner-designate questions about:

- the Bologna process;
- university-business dialogue and cooperation;
- digital technologies;
- governance of the European Institute for Innovation & Technology.

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The overall view of the Committee on Culture and Education - the responsible committee - is that Mrs.Vassiliou's answers to questions on the subjects listed above were constructive and

helpful. However, they were often general rather than specific in nature, and included few detailed commitments. The Commissioner-designate promised to press for more adequate funding through the next Multi-annual Financial Framework for Union programmes and activities in the areas for which she is responsible: she underlined that she would need and would be grateful for the full support of the Parliament in this. In the more immediate future, the Commissioner-designate confirmed her intention to ask the Commission to adopt a legislative proposal for a European Heritage Label; her support for the future framework on youth mobility; and her intention to publish a Green Paper on creative industries. Finally, in a number of her answers, she undertook to consult a wide range of stakeholders in the areas for which she would be responsible and to work closely with the European Parliament on legislative proposals and non-legislative initiatives.

On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by my committee coordinators and the representative of the Committee on Employment & Social Affairs, who met after the hearing under my chairmanship, I hereby offer this assessment:

- Personal qualifications: This is the second examination in two years of Mrs. Vassiliou's personal qualifications to serve as a Commissioner. On the basis of her record as a Commissioner since 2008, her written replies to the standard questionnaire sent to all Commissioners-designate, and her answers to the questions put by Members today, the Committee confirms the earlier judgement of the Parliament that she manifestly possesses the integrity and independence, professional aptitude and experience to serve as a Commissioner.
- European commitment: The Commissioner-designate has already served for almost two years as a member of the College of Commissioners. Her European commitment is not in doubt.
- Ability to communicate and initiative: The Commissioner-designate communicated effectively in the course of the parliamentary hearing.
- Commitments on cooperating with Parliament and its committees: In the answers that she gave in the course of her hearing, the Commissioner-designate emphasised her intention of working closely with the European Parliament.
- Candidate's aptitude as regards the specific policy area: The Commissioner-candidate displayed as sufficient a level of detailed knowledge of the policy areas for which she will be responsible as could reasonably be expected at this stage. The Committee is confident that she would be an effective Commissioner in these policy areas.

The overall conclusion of this hearing, reflecting the view of a large majority of the Members who attended it, is that the Commissioner-designate gave a convincing impression of her aptitude to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to her.

Yours faithfully,



Doris PACK