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COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

CONFIDENTIAL

19. JAN 2010

The Chairman

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ACCES RESERVE

Jerzy Buzek

President

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Dear Mr. President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy held a public hearing on Monday 18 January 2010 with Mr. Antonio Tajani, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for industry.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. My committee noted that Mr. Tajani answered those questions in a satisfactory way.

In view of the current economic and financial crisis, Mr. Tajani opened up his address to Members by presenting the need for a new approach to Industrial policy in line with the EU 2020 strategy. He reaffirmed the social market economy model as the reference point in European policy seeking to equally provide for the various players involved from employers to entrepreneurs to employees, from the elderly to the young, from men to women. Mr. Tajani further stressed the need for support to the entire range of European enterprises in spite of their size, sphere of operation or mode of organisation. The focus on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) continuously featured in his address emphasizing the importance of avoiding the financial crisis turning into a social crisis for that sector. On a further note, the Commissioner-designate warned against the loss of valuable European investments and delocalisation of enterprises to 3rd countries providing less stringent environmental conditions for operation. Climate change was mentioned and its intrinsic link to industrial policy was brought forth by Mr. Tajani who stressed the importance for Europe in achieving a global leadership in the sphere of eco-efficiency, eco-design and technologies, innovative production processes, products and services.

The Commissioner-designate was subsequently asked a series of questions covering a number of key fields. A great focus was placed on European SMEs - with issues such as access to finance, implementation of the Small Business Act (SBA) and application of an SME test to all newly

PE 432.451/CPG

proposed European legislation. Often recurring questions dealt with the global competitiveness of European industry as challenged by advancing 3rd countries and growing constraints to operation within the EU. The effects of the crisis on industry preoccupied a number of Members concerned about growing unemployment, industrial restructuring and the divergent development of sectors across the EU - the textiles industry being of particular concern. The implementation of REACH, the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the prospect of an introduction of an emissions tax were further topics frequently addressed. Certain specific aspects such as the possibility for EU-level compensation for workers exposed to dangerous working environment were also discussed. The transparent dealing with registered-only lobbyists within the Commission as well as the efficient coordination of EU policy measures among Commissioners in the overlapping-across-services spheres of industry, research and innovation, environment and internal market also featured high as points of concern.

During the debate, Mr. Tajani made specific commitments on several important points within his portfolio such as:

- to present by Autumn 2010 a broad communication providing a strategic long-term framework for a new industrial policy with a focus on:
 - o support for innovation (better access to funding, technology transfer, development of key enabling technologies and markets);
 - o support for SMEs (facilitating access to finance through closer collaboration with the European Investment Bank with a view to provide 30 billion Euros in credit to SMEs by end of 2011; implementation of the SBA; strict application of the SME tests; further development of clusters for innovative SMEs);
- to present by Summer 2010 the European Innovation Act and incorporate ideas by Members;
- to help increase the efficiency of public administrations in support for enterprises (swift adoption of the Late Payments Directive; reduction of bureaucratic obstacles to greater public procurement for SMEs);
- to encourage the position of women as entrepreneurs and the involvement of young workers in the tourism sector;
- to boost consumer confidence through strengthening the CE mark and the European standardisation system;
- to revise the Transparency Directive, the Tractors Directive (in 6 months), to update the Annexes of the Toys Safety Directive;
- to review REACH (2012) and Galileo (2014) and propose changes if necessary;
- to provide translation of REACH documentation in all official Community languages to ease the understanding and compliance of enterprises with current legislation and to strengthened national and EU-level support in that sphere;
- to assess the use and application of nano materials and technologies;

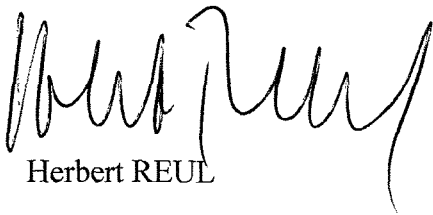
Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which he reaffirmed the need for a new and forward-looking industrial strategy to focus on boosting competitiveness and innovation of European industry, greening the economy, creating new jobs through small companies, adhering to the principles of a social market economy where the interests of all players are taken account of.

On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by my committee's coordinators, who met after the hearing under my chairmanship, the ITRE Committee hereby gives the following assessment:

Overall, the nominee's understanding of the issues and problems raised was appreciated. However, certain political groups expressed reservations on the perceived lack of depth in explaining how general political commitments will be transformed into actual policy instruments notably on greening the economy and cutting red tape. On another note, the Members liked Mr. Tajani's strong political pledge to address the needs of SMEs and defend his portfolio in conflicting with other Commissioners spheres. His cooperative disposition to listen to, consult and work closely with the European Parliament was welcomed by Members of this Committee who also received an open invitation and encouragement to come up with ideas and proposals that could further improve and benefit the policy areas under his responsibility. Finally, Mr. Tajani was perceived to have well supported his candidature by the professional competence and aptitude that he demonstrated during the hearing as a skilled communicator and a dedicated European politician.

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

Yours sincerely,



Herbert REUL