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Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety  
The Chairman

18 JAN 2010 200139

IPOL-COM-ENVI D(2010)1468

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Jerzy BUZEK  
President of the  
European Parliament

Dear President,

In accordance with Parliament's Rules of Procedure, in particular Rule 106 on the Election of the Commission and Annex XVII on Guidelines for the approval of the Commission, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety held on Friday 15 January 2010 a public hearing with Commissioner-designate Connie Hedegaard. Subject to the positive conclusion of the nomination procedure, Ms Hedegaard will be responsible for Climate Action.

Prior to the hearing, a written questionnaire with general and specific questions was submitted. The Commissioner-designate replied to those questions in writing in advance of the hearing.

In her introductory statement, Ms Hedegaard highlighted her main priorities, namely the implementation of the EU climate and energy package, the resulting secondary legislation, the mainstreaming of climate policy in EU policy-making and the creation of an international carbon market. She also reflected on the outcome of the Climate Conference in Copenhagen.

She then replied to 35 questions raised by the MEPs. The hearing was concluded by a final statement by the Commissioner-designate.

The verbatim record of proceedings is attached to this letter. *[If available on time.]*

PE 432.450/CPG

### *Policy-related issues*

During the debate the Commissioner-designate answered a wide range of questions which sought to elicit her opening statement and the replies to the written questionnaire. Additional questions were raised in relation to the role and influence of the new office of the Commissioner for Climate Action, the need to increase resources for climate and energy related research, her objective to link the EU Emission Trading System to the future US 'cap and trade' system by 2015, the competitiveness of the European economy, carbon leakage, the use of coal and clean coal, her position on nuclear energy, and the need for establishing binding energy efficiency targets.

In general, Members were satisfied with the answers given by the Commissioner-designate. Members were pleased with her statement on the need to mainstream climate policy in EU policy-making, in particular in the areas of agriculture and transport. Members welcomed her statement that external costs in the area of transport should be internalised as well as her approach to use positive incentives to make agricultural policy greener and more innovative. Members also appreciated her commitment to come forward with proposals on the maritime sector if this sector is not included in an international agreement by 2011, and to proceed with the review of EU legislation on the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars.

Members strongly agreed with her statement on a the need for a new green economy, with Europe as the leading region in the world with regard to climate friendly and energy efficient technologies, thereby creating many new green jobs. In this context Members regretted that she was not willing to promise a binding energy efficiency target, as frequently asked for by the European Parliament. Members welcomed her willingness to commission an impact assessment on emission performance standards for power plants.

Members agreed with the main lesson Ms Hedegaard drew from the Climate Conference in Copenhagen, namely that the European Union should speak with one voice, although she did not give further details on how to reach this objective. Members would have wished the Commissioner-designate to have demonstrated more open acceptance that the Conference outcome failed to meet the European Union's objectives and demonstrated the need for parallel negotiations to be initiated urgently with the world's major emitting nations.

### *Horizontal issues*

Several speakers addressed the decision to appoint a separate Commissioner for Climate Action against the background of the potential influence the new Commissioner may exert in the College. Sharing the vision of Ms Hedegaard that climate change is one of the key challenges for the 21st century, Members emphasised that the new Commissioner should be provided with sufficient technical staff and adequate financial means. Political backing, in particular by the President of the European Commission, will be crucial for the new Climate Action Commissioner to play her role to the full.

The Commissioner-designate promised to establish a constructive and open working relationship with the European Parliament. The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety will have the opportunity to put these commitments to the test in future legislative procedures as well as the implementation.

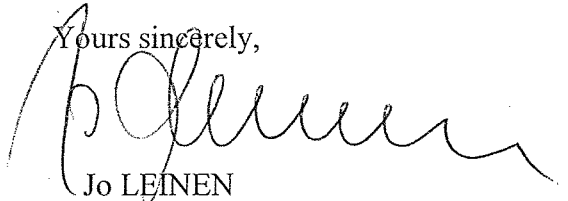
***Overall assessment***

On basis of the reactions of the Members present at the hearing and the results of the evaluation meeting which took place right after the hearing, I am happy to provide you with the following assessment of the Commissioner-designate:

Throughout the hearing, Ms Hedegaard made a very determined and positive impression and demonstrated a strong and ambitious approach, showing a good grasp of the main relevant issues. She has the particular asset of being part of a global network of key players in the climate change negotiations. Her communication skills are coupled with a genuine engagement for her portfolio.

In conclusion, I am glad to inform you that the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety can express its full support for the nomination of Ms Hedegaard and looks forward to a fruitful cooperation in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Leinen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jo LEINEN

Annex: Verbatim record of proceedings