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Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments

COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

The Chairman

ACCES RESERVE

CONFIDENTIAL

300349 13.01.2010

Jerzy Buzek
President
European Parliament

IPOL-COM-ITRE-D(2010)1228
GO/sv

Brussels,

Dear Mr President,

On Wednesday, 13 January 2010, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy held a public hearing, in accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure, with Ms Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Research, Innovation and Science.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. The written answers provided by the nominee were considered satisfactory.

In her introductory statement Ms Geoghegan-Quinn stressed the importance of research and innovation for the transformation of Europe. In this respect she highlighted two strategic aims: to deliver a Single Market for innovation and to complete the European Research Area. The nominee clearly advocated a common vision and framework for research and innovation, addressing societal grand challenges and creating an innovation research culture.

Subsequently, Members addressed a series of oral questions to Ms Geoghegan-Quinn. They concerned, in particular, the reduction of red tape and administrative burden, the role of SMEs in research, the relationship between research and innovation, the social dimension of research, the implementation of the Framework Programme, intellectual property rights and patents, the principle of excellence, the number and mobility of (female) researchers, specific research topics (nuclear energy, climate change), the budget for research, environmental and social innovation, the 3% GDP target, the importance of human-centred innovation, coordination between research/innovation and cohesion instruments and the participation of Central and Eastern European countries in the ERA.

Responding to the questions, Ms Geoghegan-Quinn stressed the importance of innovation, being at the heart of European policy. The nominee indicated her strong commitment to

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deliver results, inter alia in the area of simplification, speeding up procedures, increasing the participation of SMEs in the Framework Programme, promoting science education and female researchers (setting targets, tackle barriers and start an awareness campaign) and the importance of maintaining the 3% target and the current EU research budget. The nominee saw innovation as a cross-cutting policy, indicating that she will chair a group of innovation commissioners that will articulate a broad innovation policy (from research to retail).

The candidate saw raising the percentage of participating SMEs as a crucial priority and intended to tackle it by focussing calls more closely towards the needs of SMEs, enlarging the scope of the Risk Sharing Facility and by setting up a task-force on extending the cooperation with the EIB/EIF. Furthermore, she showed clear commitment to tackle red tape and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, without compromising the sound financial management, and promised to come forwards in the very near future with a communication on simplification.

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which she reaffirmed that she is dedicated to work closely with Parliament. That she wants to deliver and that she will do it in a cooperative and coordinated way.

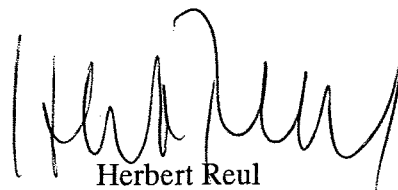
On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by my committee's coordinators, who met after the hearing under my chairmanship, the ITRE Committee hereby gives the following assessment:

The nominee's understanding of the issues and problems raised during the questions were highly appreciated. The clear manifestation of her political will to tackle important barriers in the area of research and innovation (e.g. red tape, participation of SMEs and small countries, gender balanced research policy, freedom of movement of researchers and IPR) was positively received. Equally appreciated was her dynamic appearance, her clear willingness to work closely with the ITRE Committee and her approach as a robust, but collegial politician. Some concerns were raised on the availability of appropriate instruments to implement her horizontal responsibility in the field of innovation.

The nominee was perceived as independent and displayed integrity with excellent communications skills. Ms Geoghegan-Quinn showed a positive attitude towards cooperating with Parliament and a strong European commitment. While being new to the field, she appeared to be knowledgeable and well prepared, while also willing to listen and discuss possible points of disagreements. Her balanced approach, open-mindedness and political experience assured members that she would be in good control of her area of competence.

In conclusion, Members considered that the Commissioner-designate gave a good and lively impression of her aptitude to be a member of the College of Commissioners and of her possession of the necessary personal and professional skills, as well as political determination, to carry out the specific tasks assigned to her.

Yours sincerely,



Herbert Reul