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COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
- THE CHAIRMAN -

ACCES RESERVE

Re.: D(2010)2715

20.JAN2010 200198

Mr Jerzy BUZEK
President of the European Parliament
PHS 11B014
BRUSSELS

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs in association with the Committee on Budgetary Control held a public hearing on Monday 18 January 2010 with Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be in charge of Inter-institutional Relations and Administration.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. The Committee on Constitutional Affairs had listed additionally its five priorities to which the Commissioner-designate was invited to react when replying to the questionnaire. Mr Maroš Šefčovič answered those questions and dealt with the priorities outlined by the Committee in a manner which was assessed as rather vague and not fully satisfactory, hence the added importance of the hearing itself.

During the course of the hearing the Commissioner designate responded to oral questions asked by the Members of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, three questions from the Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control and one question respectively from the Members of the Committees on Budget, on Legal Affairs and on Petitions.

On the basis of the reaction of the Committee to Mr Maroš Šefčovič's written and oral statements and overall performance and on the results of the subsequent Coordinators' evaluation meeting, we are able to provide you with the following assessment of the candidate:

Beyond any doubt, Mr Šefčovič proved his thorough knowledge and good practical experience of the functioning of the EU institutional set-up and administration. The Commissioner designate was well prepared for the hearing, although sometimes he might have had more courage in pronouncing his personal views on the issues in question. Just as in the answers to the written questions, Mr Šefčovič quite often avoided clear answers to certain issues, the future seat of the European Parliament being a good case in point.

Throughout the hearing Mr Šefčovič proved that he was committed to strengthening the European integration. The Commissioner designate expressed his personal support for the reforms and new democratic mechanisms introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, especially those designed to make the European Union more transparent and to bring it closer to the Citizens. The candidate is devoted to secure an effective and Citizens friendly introduction of measures aimed at facilitating the Citizens' Initiative (Art. 11(4)TUE), cooperation with national parliaments, as well as improving efficiency of functioning of the lobbyists' register.

The Committee, however, would like to note that a need to clarify who in the future College will be responsible for the issue of new electoral procedure for the European Parliament became evident after the discussion during the hearing.

The Committee in particular appreciated the candidate's good understanding of all the issues concerning EU staff regulations and human resources and his ideas regarding the improvement of the geographical and gender balance in the future employment strategy.

The candidate addressed the issue of his alleged statements concerning the situation of the Roma minority in Slovakia, stating that it was not his intention to discriminate against anyone and that his professional track record proves him to be a man of integrity.

To the disappointment of the Committee, despite the declaration of his general will to improve the nature of inter-institutional relations, Mr Šefčovič avoided clear political commitments concerning the issues such as the future cooperation with the Parliament i.e. with regard to the parliamentary legislative initiative (Art 225 TFEU). Unfortunately, the candidate also put into doubt some aspects of parliamentary scrutiny over the future European External Action Service, in particular a need to organise hearings for candidates for heads of the EU delegations.

Overall, in spite of certain reservations, Members generally felt that his performance and abilities make Mr Šefčovič a suitable candidate for the position of the Vice-president of the Commission in charge of Inter-institutional Relations and Administration.

The elements contained in the present letter represent the consensual opinion of all the Members who attended the hearing.

On behalf of the Committee I therefore propose that there should be an acceptance of the candidate for the post for which he has been proposed, both as Member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the particular duties he has been assigned.

Yours sincerely

Carlo Casini