



Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs  
The Chairwoman

ACCES RESERVE

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

Mr Jerzy Buzek  
President of the European Parliament

Dear President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs held a public hearing on Monday 11 January 2010 with Mr Olli REHN, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Economic and Monetary Affairs.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. My committee noted that Mr REHN answered those questions and dealt with the priorities outlined satisfactorily.

Mr REHN opened the hearing by making a statement in which he referred inter alia to the following:

- the need to reinforce economic policy coordination through establishing a new Strategy for Growth and Jobs until 2020
- the need for stronger economic surveillance framework, in particular for the euro area
- in the context of untenable public debt his intention to ensure the consolidation of public finances through coordinated exit strategies within the framework of the Stability and Growth Pact, taking in particular account of the demographic evolution
- his ambition to work for a coherent European external representation in the area of Economic and Monetary Affairs
- the need to facilitate private and public financing for innovation
- the importance of social market economy.

Members then asked questions on the following subjects in particular:

- the future role of the Stability and Growth Pact, fiscal policy "exit strategies" and sustainability of public finances, in particular the possible use of sanctions and the strengthening of the preventive part
- the future objectives and tools of the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs until 2020 (EU2020), taking into account social market principles
- how to reconcile the objectives of more growth and employment, sustainability of public finances and combating climate change
- improving economic governance and co-ordination inside the euro area

- how to address internal and external imbalances
- how to deal with countries in distress inside and outside the euro area
- future policy as regards euro area enlargement and support to countries outside the euro area
- the role of new financial instruments as a complement to the EU budget, such as Eurobonds
- the European financial supervisory architecture
- how to improve the reliability of national statistics in the EU
- tax evasion, fraud and fiscal cooperation
- tax competition and fair taxes.

During the debate, Mr REHN made the following specific commitments regarding his future Commission portfolio:

- to take into account Parliament's views as a major element in the decision-making process, ensuring regular contacts and dialogue as well as provision of full, timely and clear information
- to reinforce the partnership between the EP and the Commission to drive the common European interest
- to work for enhanced economic policy coordination in the EU and in the euro area based on Article 136 of the Treaty
- to strengthen the framework for monitoring Member States progress under the forthcoming EU2020 Strategy, including a role for the EP
- to act as a member of the ESRB for stronger supervision framework in Europe
- to contribute to a policy for services of general interest in the near future
- to strengthen European participation and representation in international financial institutions and fora
- to make a proposal for new financial instruments, including the role of EIB, in the longer term to finance potential growth
- to consider eurobonds as regards financing certain EU projects, possibly together with the EIB

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which he reaffirmed the importance of the strong partnership between Parliament and Commission to achieve common objectives. In order to facilitate the work of the European Parliament, he reaffirmed his commitment to provide full, timely and clear information to the Parliament, including issues the EP has not specifically asked for.

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, I hereby give the following assessment:

As a former Commissioner Mr REHN has the experience and personal qualifications needed. He has also shown, in particular through his past work, a commitment to European goals and willingness to co-operate with the Parliament. However, ECON members expressed their wish that at future meetings Mr REHN would be more forthcoming with his views on matters that are pertinent to his portfolio while paying due regard to the sensitivities and constraints outlined in the Treaty. Members considered that he must be prepared to show ambition and to be ready to discuss in more detail:

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economic policy coordination, including how to address internal imbalances, a leading role of a well-balanced future EU2020 strategy and the implementation of the exit strategies from the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, taking into account social and employment aspects.

In order to regain and increase credibility of European policy actions and balanced dialogue between the EU institutions, ECON members stress in particular the importance of a much more dynamic and ambitious Commission, working collectively in the college.

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

This represents the opinion of a majority of the Members who attended the hearing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Bowles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Sharon Bowles

Encl.

Olli Rehn

1 The ECON Committee appreciates your willingness, expressed in your written response, to work in close cooperation with the Parliament at all levels. We would like to underline the importance of informing and sending legislative, pre-legislative and non-legislative documents to the Parliament at an early stage in order to give time for an effective decision making procedure. This should extend not just to those things that we might ask for, but also to some of those things you know about that we do not. **We would very much appreciate your commitment on this point.**

2. Macroeconomic policy, recovery plans and the EU2020 Strategy will be very important in this mandate. During the financial crisis the three Commissioners responsible for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Financial Markets and Competition have had to work closely together, and it is presumed this cooperation will need to continue. ECON has responsibility for all of these policy areas and wishes to participate in this vital joining up of policy. **So we would appreciate your commitment to assist in the inclusion of the Committee in this inter-portfolio area.**

3. Following on from the previous question, this committee has already discussed the fact that there is not a sharp division between macroeconomic matters and financial regulation. **Therefore we do want to know that you have the overall macroeconomic impact of financial regulation in your sights.**

