



COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

300449 THE CHAIRMAN 14.01.2010

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CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Jerzy BUZEK
President
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Brussels, 14 January 2010

Subject: Hearing of Mr Kallas - 14.01.2010

Dear President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Transport and Tourism held a public hearing on 14 January 2010 with Mr Kallas, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Transport.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. My Committee noted that Mr Kallas answered those questions and dealt with the priorities outlined satisfactorily, even if some points would have benefitted from more specific commitments.

In his opening statement Mr Kallas referred to:

- the importance of creating a single European transport area, for the benefit of European citizens and businesses, which implied removing obstacles to free movement;
- open markets' need for rules protecting safety and security, passenger rights and social standards;
- the key priority of de-carbonising transport; this required internalisation of all external costs via appropriate pricing mechanisms;
- the need to accelerate the introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems;
- the desirability of international regulatory solutions that would promote Europe's competitive position;
- the importance of increased, better-targeted investment in infrastructure and Trans-European Networks, including by means of new funding instruments such as a European Infrastructure Investments Fund.

PE 432.443/CPG

Members then asked questions highlighting the following subjects:

- combating climate change by encouraging the use of biofuels, inland waterways, short sea shipping and railways;
- road pricing and the Eurovignette proposal;
- rail liberalisation and the need to simplify booking of cross-border tickets;
- enhanced passenger rights across all modes of transport, particularly for citizens with disabilities;
- promoting road safety, including by European limits on speed and alcohol levels;
- the adequacy of the TEN-T budget and the scope for promoting public-private partnerships;
- increasing the degree of integration into the European transport area of the Baltic States, the Danube and the Black Sea region;
- the Transport Commissioner's responsibilities with regard to state aid, Galileo and maritime policy;
- airport security including the use of body scanners;
- the second stage of the EU-US air agreement.

During the debate, Mr Kallas made specific commitments regarding his future Commission portfolio. He would:

- give priority to the Single European Sky as a contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- do his utmost to ensure the internalisation of external costs for all transport modes;
- support Parliament's objective of increasing investment in railways, in particular for inter-operability;
- promote the integration of systems for booking rail tickets;
- return to the issue of cross-border enforcement of motoring offences in the coming months, taking advantage of changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty;
- put forward a methodology for defining core transport projects as part of preparation for the next Financial Perspective;
- propose a common code for passenger rights;
- be an important voice in Commission discussions on state aid guidelines;
- support common EU rules on body scanners.

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which he added that, if confirmed, he would make an enthusiastic contribution, drawing on his background as an economist, and seeking specific results with measurable objectives. He would inform and seek advice from Parliament's responsible Committee and consult all stakeholders as he recognised that the multitude of interests required a balanced approach. He believed that, acting together, Commission and Parliament could achieve a lot in the coming five years.

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

- Mr Kallas displayed a high level of European commitment, excellent communication skills and a welcome degree of candour;
- whilst freely acknowledging that there were aspects of transport policy on which he was not yet fully briefed, he responded to many detailed questions, giving the Committee good reason for us to expect that he will develop his understanding of issues such as inland waterways and short-sea shipping and hopefully gain a real feel for transport;
- some Members would have appreciated more detailed commitments about Mr Kallas' readiness to work with Parliament and to defend difficult dossiers in front of Council. Nevertheless, the Committee took note of his experience of working with Parliament regarding budgetary control;
- Members of the Committee are unhappy at the removal from the responsibility of the Transport Commissioner of state aids and believe that transport specific aspects of this policy should urgently be taken into account by the Commission at an Institutional level.

The general outcome of this hearing is that the Commissioner-designate gave a favourable 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 large majority of the Members who attended the hearing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Simpson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian SIMPSON