

**ANSWERS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE**

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**Climate Action and Energy**

**1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence**

**What aspects of your personal qualifications and experience are particularly relevant for becoming Commissioner and promoting the European general interest, particularly in the area you would be responsible for? What motivates you? How will you contribute to putting forward the strategic agenda of the Commission?**

**What guarantees of independence are you able to give the European Parliament, and how would you make sure that any past, current or future activities you carry out could not cast doubt on the performance of your duties within the Commission?**

For my entire political life I have been closely involved in the construction of the European Union. I was for thirteen years a Member of the European Parliament in the Committees of Budgets, on Agriculture and on Fisheries, including having the honour of chairing the latter two. During these years I have been fully committed in the daily functioning of the European Parliament, searching for agreements and consensus within a political group and with other political groups, always working for further integration of the EU.

I have experienced from within, and it has been a great privilege for me, to participate in the strengthening of the role of the European Parliament in the institutional framework of the EU, and its continuous endeavour to increasing the level of democratisation and transparency of the European Union by strengthening its responsibilities in successive reforms of the Treaties.

Subsequently, four years as Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have provided me with a detailed knowledge of the dynamic between the two arms of the legislative authority and of the necessity of finding agreements and consensus in areas of common European interest.

Furthermore, holding the Presidency of the Mixed Committee Congress-Senate at the Spanish Parliament for four years and attending the meetings of the COSAC have helped me be conscious of the need to involve National Parliaments in the process of the European Union integration and of the importance of guaranteeing respect of the subsidiarity principle.

Finally, my position as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, has shown me not only the need for reinforced cooperation between the European Parliament and the Council in the legislative process but also the essential role of the European Commission in giving impulse and facilitating agreements.

I have a wide range of both legislative and executive experience that I will take advantage of while carrying out my role as Commissioner, acting objectively and impartially in the common European interest.

In the area where I will be responsible, my experience as former Spanish Minister of Environment will be particularly helpful, especially in relation to the work done to ensure the compliance with the compromises of the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012) and compliance mechanisms for the new emission reduction targets set within the European Package of Energy and Climate Change and in the second period of the compromise of the Kyoto Protocol. My commitment in this regard has been solid.

My participation in the Climate Change Summits in Doha and Warsaw, supporting the European Commission, has given me a very good knowledge of the mechanisms of international negotiations in the context of the United Nations that will surely be useful in the negotiations at the Paris Summit in 2015.

I will be very honoured if the Parliament decides to confirm my candidature to contribute to achieve the European Union objectives in this area in these crucial years. The EU has been an unprecedented success in the turbulent history of our continent. It has provided peace, respect for human rights, freedom and economic prosperity. Nevertheless now we are experiencing a crisis, we must regain trust from European citizens some of whom have become disillusioned with the European project. This will require a huge effort from the European Parliament, the Council and particularly the Commission to focus our policies on the main challenges our societies are facing and to strengthen democratic legitimacy.

As President-elect Juncker stated in his speech of the 15th of July, proposing a bigger and more ambitious Union in key areas and establishing ten priority action fields, I believe that only a strong and united European Union can meet the expectations of citizens and respond to the concerns transmitted in the European elections, and we must do more to ensure that citizens take part in the development of the community initiatives. Building an internal energy market which ensures safety, sustainability and competitiveness, achieving our ambitious goals in the fight against climate change, assuming a leadership role next year in Paris, are all huge challenges and their resolution will successfully contribute to the strengthening of the European Union.

I will act as a member of a College, in all areas of the Commission's activity, under the absolute respect of the political guidelines as laid down by the President of the Commission.

As current member of the European Parliament I have completed my declaration of economic interests referred to in the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. Furthermore, I fully subscribe to the provisions of Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which clearly states that members of the Commission shall abstain from any action incompatible with their duties and that during his mandate they cannot engage any other occupation, whether gainful or not.

I will strictly obey the Code of Conduct for Commissioners both during my mandate as after its expiry. I have proceeded to declare all my assets and financial interests and those of my wife as well as her professional activities.

I will never act on issues of my portfolio in which I could have personal, familial or financial interests that could compromise my independence. If I am faced with a situation of this nature I will proceed immediately to inform the President of the Commission.

During my mandates as a Minister of the Spanish Government over six years I never took decisions on issues where I could have directly or indirectly any interest, and when I estimated that my independence could be dubious I refrained from intervening in accordance with the relevant procedures of the Spanish legal system.

## **2. Management of the portfolio and cooperation with the European Parliament**

**How would you assess your role as a Member of the College of Commissioners? In what respect would you consider yourself responsible and accountable to the Parliament for your actions and for those of your departments?**

**What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of enhanced transparency, increased cooperation and effective follow-up to Parliament's positions and requests for legislative initiatives? In relation to planned initiatives or ongoing procedures, are you ready to provide Parliament with information and documents on an equal footing with the Council?**

Through my political career, as MP and MEP, as well as being part of a national government, I know that working in a collaborative manner is a key element for success. This is why I believe that the College of Commissioners needs to act as a strong team and in full cooperation across portfolios if we want to produce integrated, well-grounded and well explained initiatives that lead to clear results.

I will work to ensure such cooperation within the College, ensuring effective implementation and follow-up on the ground of policies related to my portfolio and in a collaborative way of working. I am firmly committed to closely cooperate with the Vice-President for Energy Union and my fellow Commissioners in our common

undertaking for building an Energy Union with a forward looking climate change policy. I will also give utmost consideration to coordinate with my fellow Commissioner the actions and initiatives I undertake in the fields of climate action and energy with a view to ensuring a coherent, sound and effective approach. I am also determined to put the focus on the priority areas President-elect Juncker has requested me to do and to contribute to the work of the Commission in other policy areas, making sure that the right synergies can be built up to reinforce the collective action of the Commission.

As an important part of this responsibility, I will seek the involvement of the European Parliament and its specialised committees in the policy making as to allow Parliament to exercise its democratic oversight effectively. I am fully committed to ensure a constructive political dialogue with the Parliament based on openness, transparency, mutual trust, regular reporting and exchange of information. Under the coordination of the Vice-President for Energy Union, I firmly intend to make myself available to represent the Commission before the European Parliament, other EU institutions and internationally, taking full political responsibility for my actions in this domain and those of the Services under my authority, without prejudice to the principle of collegiality. I will endeavour to communicate my actions across the EU and in particular towards the European Parliament.

The European Parliament plays a key role in driving forward ambitious climate and energy policies for our Union. Parliament is not only a co-legislator, but also as elected representative acts as crucial and direct link between the citizens and EU institutions. As an elected MEP for almost 13 years, I fully understand the very important role that the EP has to play in this regard. I share its constant endeavour to deepen the democratic legitimacy of the EU. That is why I commit to strengthen the cooperation with the European Parliament and the relevant specialized committees, in particular ENVI and ITRE. I believe that co-operation between institutions is essential for the well-functioning of the EU and for the efficiency, legitimacy and good governance of the EU decision-making progress. It will therefore be my priority to ensure a permanent, transparent, open and structured dialogue in the policy making and the legislative procedure, with Parliament and with MEPs at both political and technical levels. This will be reflected in the following three commitments:

First, I will actively and personally work for your support. I will make sure to reach out to Members and be available to exchange with them on key issues. I will also make it a point to hold regular discussions with the relevant committees, in particular ENVI and ITRE. I count on these Committees to drive forward ambitious, forward-looking policies which meet the important challenges ahead of us. In line with President-elect Juncker's guidelines, I will personally take part in important dialogue negotiations.

Second, I will make sure that the Directorates-General for Climate Action and for Energy are sensitive to the Parliament's views and continuously available to provide information to Members and hold exchanges of views. This will be true not only in the framework of the legislative procedure, but also when services reflect on policy development – for example, in the upcoming discussions on the concept of a sustainable Energy Union, or in so far as the international climate negotiations are concerned.

Third, I will make sure that the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission is scrupulously respected in my areas of responsibility, especially in relation to provisions regarding transparency and the flow of information between the two Institutions. This pertains particularly to delegated and implementing acts and international negotiations. I will make sure that Parliament and Council are treated equally, in line with the provisions of the Framework Agreement, and that appropriate follow-up is given to the positions of Parliament and its request for legislative initiative. I will be at disposal of the European Parliament and its Committees regularly, which I consider is a must for a Commissioner who is a member of the College, accountable to the directly elected Members of the European Parliament.

#### **Questions from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety:**

### **3. Commissioner's priorities**

**What are the main priorities you intend to pursue in the field of climate action and energy? What timetable do you envisage for achieving those priorities? What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward, and according to what timetable?**

My mission has been clearly stated by the President-elect of the European Commission. Under the coordination of the Vice-President for Energy Union, and if I am confirmed as Commissioner, I will contribute to building a European Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy.

An immediate priority will be to address security of supply issues, given the current geopolitical events. We need to pool and diversify our resources, link infrastructure and reflect how best to combine our negotiating power. Member States should be able to switch swiftly to other supply channels to ensure that gas stocks are full and to be able to reverse energy flows when necessary. I plan to implement short to medium term measures from the EU Energy Security Strategy, including the review of the Gas Security of Supply Regulation and the assessment of options for common purchasing of gas.

One of my main priorities across the climate and energy portfolios will also be to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 climate and energy framework that Heads of State are expected to agree upon in the European Council in October and to the achievement of a successful outcome of the international climate negotiations. The key targets in the 2030 climate and energy framework on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, higher share of renewables in the energy mix, and improved energy efficiency will drive progress towards a low-carbon economy to ensure competitive and affordable energy for all consumers; to create new opportunities for growth and jobs; and to provide security of energy supplies and reduced import dependence for the EU as a whole. I will steer the implementation of key energy infrastructure projects and the effective and efficient use of EU funding to support investments in energy networks, renewables, energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies, such as carbon capture and storage.

I believe that we need to move fast to address the numerous challenges ahead in line with the President-elect mission letter for the Commissioner-Designate for Climate Action and Energy. Without pre-empting the legislative work of the future Commission, I can already provide some indications on possible legislative initiatives which, under the coordination of Vice-President for Energy Union, I intend to propose at the beginning of my mandate.

Several new legislative proposals, stemming from the 2030 climate and energy framework, will be presented in the course of the mandate:

With regards to Climate Action, I plan to work on several domains. In the ETS, my first priority is to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the existing legislative proposal for a Market Stability Reserve in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). The market stability reserve will improve the stability of the carbon market and its resilience against shocks. As a second step, in order to bring about the required emissions reduction, the annual factor, by which the cap on the maximum permitted emissions is reduced, will have to be increased. The allocation of free allowances has been a successful policy to prevent carbon leakage. As long as there are no comparable efforts undertaken in other major economies, similar policies as in the current system (including an improved system of free allocation of allowances with a better focus) will also be needed after 2020 in order to ensure the competitiveness of Europe's energy-intensive industries. These two aspects are the core of the ETS Directive for 2030.

I also plan to prepare a legislative proposal for the distribution of 2030 greenhouse gas emissions targets in the non-ETS sectors to balance cost effectiveness and fair distribution of efforts between Member States in line with the guidance given by the European Council, the review of the Renewable Energy Directive, ensuring enhanced cooperation and the development of bigger markets for renewables and the legislative framework for energy efficiency, including energy performance of buildings and further governance-related aspects of the 2030 Framework.

Further work towards improvement of the energy efficiency of road vehicles through enhanced standards will reduce emissions from transport. A gradual transformation of the entire transport system towards a better integration between modes, greater exploitation of the non-road alternatives, improved management of traffic flows through intelligent transport systems, and extensive innovation and deployment of new propulsion and navigation technologies and alternative fuels will also enhance energy efficiency. Under the coordination of the Vice-President for Energy Union, I will work closely with the Commissioner for Transport and Space in all these initiatives.

All transport modes, including aviation and maritime, need to contribute to the efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The existing Commission proposal for monitoring emissions from large ships that use EU ports is a

first step to address greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime sector. This proposal will be discussed with Parliament and Council under this mandate.

The EU should also step up its efforts on research and innovation policy to support the transition to a low-carbon economy. To this end I intend to work closely with the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.

Finally, our climate change objectives can only be met if it becomes a cross-cutting theme for the full range of EU policies. Climate is relevant to almost every aspect of the Commission's work, and I want to work with all my colleagues in the Commission – as well as with the European Parliament and others – to ensure that climate action is taken into utmost account in all other Commission policies and adapting EU policies to the realities of climate change.

With regards to other initiatives in energy policy, the immediate priority of addressing security of supplies issues requires a well interconnected and integrated internal market for energy consisting of a regulatory regime common to all Member States and connecting infrastructures. The free flow of gas and electricity within the boundaries of the Energy Union is indispensable to keep prices in check, ensure secure supplies and allow for a sustainable operation of the energy sector. A fully integrated and competitive energy market could keep prices in check, trigger investments and thereby contribute significantly to job-creation and growth in the Union. Energy efficiency has a fundamental role to play in this context, both for jobs and growth in industry and affordable prices for consumers. We will have to identify and select infrastructure projects on which to focus, assess the need to add to the current legal framework and monitor very closely the implementation of existing legislation.

Another major priority is to better exploit the untapped sources of economic growth and job creation in the energy and climate sectors. As stressed by President-elect Juncker, the EU should become a world leader in renewables and pursue ambitious objectives in energy efficiency with a target of 30% by 2030. This is not only a matter of security of supply and responsible climate policy. It is, at the same time, an industrial policy imperative if we still want European businesses and households to have affordable energy reliably at their disposal and fully exploit the potential of green growth. This is why the Vice-President for Energy Union and I will contribute, together with the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, to the jobs, growth and investment package to be presented within the first three months of our mandate.

This will also require working closely with the Member States to bring about the conditions necessary for investment decisions and ensure that the EU can be a catalyst for public and private investment

In order to transform these priorities into actions, working together with the Vice-President for the Energy Union and the Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, I will also make sure that the Jobs, Growth and Investment Package to be presented by the Commission takes fully into account the Climate Action and Energy priorities in terms of strengthening Europe's competitiveness and stimulating investment. I will do this in full engagement with the rest of the College and in open and transparent dialogue with the European Parliament from the very beginning of the Commission's mandate, making sure that the Member States are fully involved and that funds programmed for energy investments in networks, renewables, energy efficiency and energy infrastructure are quickly and efficiently used in order to leverage private investment. This package should also serve as a signal to reiterate our commitment to step up our efforts on research and innovation policy to support the transition to a low-carbon economy. This task will be carried out in the very first months of the mandate of the Commission.

#### **4. Quality and transparency of legislative proposals**

**How will you personally ensure the good quality of legislative proposals, full transparency of lobbying activities (directed at you and your services), and consistent and balanced consultation of all stakeholders taking also into account the need to carry out thorough impact assessments?**

I believe that the quality of any piece of legislation depends to a great extent on the political choices that we need to make which will require a permanent, transparent, open and structured dialogue with the European Parliament, especially at committee level. The European Parliament is in this regard a fundamental pillar to ensure the positive impact we need to seek for any piece of legislation. The European Parliament gives democratic legitimacy to the action of the EU as a whole, which is especially relevant in the areas of climate action and energy. I intend to build on the political partnership between the Commission and the European Parliament, proposed by the President-elect in his political guidelines, with the relevant committees of the European Parliament from the very beginning of the mandate of the Commission.

I will ensure that the development of a resilient energy union with a forward looking climate action policy is at the top of our political agenda, as it is one indispensable tool for the creation of sustainable growth and jobs in the EU. I will make sure that before I propose any new initiative the potential economic, social and environmental consequences will be thoroughly evaluated. In this regard, I will discuss with my colleagues in the College and work very closely with the Vice-President for the Energy Union and with the Vice-President on Better Regulation, Inter-institutional relations, Rule of Law and Charter of Fundamental Rights. At the same time, I will make sure that policy making will continue to rely strongly on high quality impact assessment to ensure the effectiveness of European action in my field of competence, making sure that the Directorates General for which I am responsible will prepare them in order to contribute to the principle of better regulation. Policy proposals in my domain will be based on thorough and far-reaching public consultations of all stakeholders and full evaluations will be regularly carried out to support policy development. Close up-stream co-operation with other Commission services in other areas of competence, also at service level, will remain a key ingredient to that. My intention is also to reinforce evaluations of existing legislation to check their performance and identify opportunities to refocus their scope, reduce regulatory burdens and simplify existing laws.

Finally, in relation to transparency, I will work intensively with the rest of the college and under the leadership of the President of the Commission to achieve an Inter-institutional Agreement on a mandatory lobby register covering the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. I will continue the path of broader efforts of the Commission to further transparency for the general public and the importance of the consultation in the policy making process. All relevant contacts with stakeholders and lobbyists in the context of the legislative procedure having a connection to my activity as a commissioner for Climate Action and Energy will be made public. The same will apply to my services.

## **5. Coordination and cooperation**

### **As Commissioner responsible for Climate Action and Energy, how will you ensure coordination with the Vice-Presidents in whose teams your policy area falls and with the other Commissioners in your teams and how will you ensure enhanced cooperation with relevant parliamentary Committees?**

The incoming Commission is committed to strengthening the collegiality and cohesion within the college, and to make full use of the potential for synergies between associated policy areas. I will do my utmost to contribute to this important change.

Climate action and energy policies touch upon the entire society. Therefore these policies must be prepared and proposed in partnership with other Commissioners and Vice-Presidents. Close cooperation will therefore be needed on a permanent basis. I will be a leading force on matters relating to climate and energy, closely cooperate with other Commissioners in the Energy Union Project Team, and will actively contribute to other files. I will work to make sure that a forward looking climate action and energy policy are the pillars for the development of a resilient Energy policy, and the creation of sustainable growth and jobs. I will make sure that these priorities are permanently at the top of our political agenda. To me, the new Commission organisation foreseeing a special steering and coordinating role to the Vice-Presidents for priority projects represents an opportunity and reinforces the importance of the Climate Action and Energy portfolio, as it should ensure that these policy areas are mainstreamed in all relevant policies of the Commission.

The President-elect of the Commission has given me a strong mandate to bring forward EU climate and energy policies. My mandate refers notably to the completion of the internal energy market, the implementation of the 2030 Framework for climate and energy (including for renewables and energy efficiency), strengthening energy security and the European Emission Trading System (ETS), and to ensure that the EU plays a leading role in international climate policy, starting with the 2015 international climate conference in Paris. I will take full responsibility for upcoming initiatives in these areas, while fully cooperating and coordinating with Vice-Presidents responsible for Energy Union and Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness and as part of project teams steered by the Vice-Presidents. I will also work with Vice-President Mogherini and the European External Action Service so that the EU keeps climate action on top of the agenda of our relations with key partners – both bilaterally and in all relevant fora.

I count on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committees, as well as other relevant Committees, to remain key partners in driving forward ambitious EU climate and energy policies. I reiterate my commitments to enhanced cooperation with and accountability to the Parliament.

## 6. Scrutiny and international negotiations

**What steps will you take to facilitate scrutiny by the relevant parliamentary Committees of legislative and non-legislative procedures (including preparation of delegated and implementing acts) and monitoring (follow-up) of their implementation? How do you intend to ensure that the relevant parliamentary Committees are kept appropriately informed in relation to any international agreements in your policy area, bearing in mind the experience gained in connection with the TTIP negotiations? How do you intend to ensure a coherent EU position in the upcoming international climate summits?**

Please refer to my reply to question 2 above concerning my general commitments on transparency towards and accountability to Parliament, in particular the relevant Committees.

Concerning the preparation of delegated acts, I would very much welcome the attendance of the Parliament's experts in expert groups preparing delegated acts. Such participation, upon request from the Parliament, is already provided for in the Framework Agreement between our two institutions. I am ready to facilitate that this also works in practice. For a constructive and effective partnership between our two institutions, I think we should build further on the good practice established in areas such as energy efficiency and ensure the needed transparency. Let me also underline that we will continue to have extensive public consultations, e.g. in the eco-design area, before coming forward with proposals. This is also an opportunity for an exchange of views with the Parliament.

With regard to implementation of already adopted EU legislation, I will ensure that the Commission keeps the reporting obligations contained in the relevant legislation, which tend to be extensive. Where necessary, I will also ensure that the Commission responds to requests for information beyond these obligations, and report to Members in the context of our regular dialogue. I would like to reassure you that I will take the implementation and enforcement of EU *acquis* as seriously as the further development of our policies.

In international negotiations, the EU is most effective when it speaks with one voice. This holds true both for the climate and for the energy fields. It will be therefore my absolute priority to ensure coherent external positions, both between the EU and its Member States, and across climate and energy fields in view of the very significant synergies.

In the energy field, there are to date some examples of international agreements with the EU as a party, but I would like to see more of those in the future. This is a key element if the EU is to speak with one voice to secure our energy supplies and promote a sustainable transition of our energy systems. When negotiating such agreements, I will of course fully comply with the relevant Treaty provisions, as well as with the Framework Agreement. This will mean that whenever appropriate, we will ask the Council of the EU for negotiation mandates, and ensure that the Parliament is duly informed of proceedings.

In international climate negotiations, it is by acting as a Union that the EU secured the breakthrough decision in Durban to conclude a new global agreement applicable to all in 2015. The EU and its Member States have acquired plenty of experience negotiating "mixed" agreements, including on climate change and other multilateral environmental agreements, and coordination within EU is operational and transparent. I believe it is essential to bring everyone on board beforehand to ensure each Member State feels ownership of the 2015 Agreement before it is adopted and signed. Only this way, we can ensure that all of us will ratify this agreement duly (enabling entry into force well before 2020) and effectively implement what we committed ourselves to do.

The EU speaking with one voice on climate also means a strong, supportive majority in Parliament. The ratification and implementation of a binding new global climate agreement will require the Parliament's consent. As negotiator on the EU's behalf, I will keep the Parliament very closely informed of the progress of the negotiations. Before and after the Lima and Paris meetings, I will be happy to discuss with full Parliament the preparations and outcomes. I will also continue the tradition of welcoming a Parliament delegation to important negotiations, where I will provide daily progress updates.

Finally, in the nuclear field, the Euratom Community is party to all major international Conventions concluded under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has entered into several nuclear cooperation agreements with third countries. In accordance with a practice agreed with the European Parliament, we will continue to keep the relevant parliamentary committees informed of all international agreements negotiated on the basis of the Euratom Treaty.