

MONDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2014

STRASBOURG

THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY
THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD
SAFETY

HEARING OF MAROŠ ŠEF ŮVI
VICE-PRESIDENT AND COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
(Energy Union)

1-002

IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK,
Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

(The hearing opened at 19.05)

1-003

Chair. > Dear Colleagues, the plenary session is just finishing, so let us start immediately because it is now 19.03.

I would like to welcome the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate Mr Maroš Šef ovi to what will – we hope – be our last hearing for this year. It is being held before two committees, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). We have got used, over the last three weeks, to our joint committee meetings, so we should perhaps meet at such joint committee meetings in the future too, and not only during the hearings, because it is very useful to all of us. Welcome to all our colleagues from the Environment Committee and the Industry Committee. Welcome also to EU public opinion, because this is an open hearing, open to public opinion, to NGOs and to representatives of industry in the European Union. Let me say at the very beginning that the debate will be streamed live on Parliament's Internet site, so welcome to all those watching our public hearing on the Internet.

Mr Šef ovi has already had a hearing as Commissioner-designate for Transport and Space before the Committee on Transport, with the Industry Committee as an associated committee. Both committees concluded that Mr Šef ovi was qualified to be a member of the college, so Question No 1 was answered positively. Let me therefore add that we must focus today on the new portfolio of Mr Šef ovi, which is Vice-President and Commissioner-designate for Energy Union. That is the most important thing in this hearing.

The Industry Committee is responsible for EU energy policy and specifically the internal energy market, security of energy supply, energy efficiency and energy saving, development of new and renewable forms of energy, promotion of interconnections of energy networks, and the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the energy infrastructure sector. All the points I have mentioned will be very high on the agenda for the forthcoming legislative term and Members of the Industry Committee are very keen to find out how Mr Šef ovi intends to tackle the numerous challenges.

You all will have received documents in advance – namely the mission letter for the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate for Energy Union, his curriculum vitae, his declaration of financial interests and his written answers to our questions in the form of a questionnaire. The Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) only met today at 18.00, one hour ago. The letter from the Legal Affairs Committee has just arrived in the last couple of minutes and we will circulate it. It will certainly be on the table before tomorrow morning, because of the evaluation meeting with our coordinators. So, everything is available and I will now give the floor to the Co-chair for the hearing, Mr La Via.

1-004

Giovanni La Via (PPE). – Grazie collega Buzek. Anch'io vorrei dare il benvenuto al Commissario e Vicepresidente designato per l'Unione energetica, Maroš Šef ovi, che ha ricoperto vari ruoli durante la sua carriera diplomatica nell'ambito del Ministero degli Affari esteri slovacco e, in particolare, nel 2004 è stato rappresentante permanente della Slovacchia presso l'Unione europea. Successivamente, è diventato brevemente Commissario europeo all'istruzione, formazione, cultura e gioventù, prima di assumere nel 2010 il ruolo di Vicepresidente responsabile per le relazioni interistituzionali e l'amministrazione nella Commissione Barroso II. Alle ultime elezioni europee del maggio 2014, è

stato eletto deputato al Parlamento europeo con il sostegno più elevato degli elettori tra i candidati slovacchi.

Il portafoglio del Vicepresidente per l'Unione energetica ha rilevanza centrale per la commissione per l'ambiente che ho l'onore di presiedere, in particolare poiché egli sarà incaricato di guidare e coordinare il lavoro di diversi Commissari, tra i quali il Commissario per l'azione climatica e l'energia e il Commissario per l'ambiente, gli affari marittimi e la pesca.

La commissione per l'ambiente lavora da lungo tempo per una politica climatica efficace e ambiziosa e per lo sviluppo di un'economia a basse emissioni di carbonio, nel contesto di una crescita verde sostenibile. Il Vicepresidente per l'Unione energetica ha precisamente il compito di coordinare la realizzazione di un'Unione energetica resiliente con una politica sul cambiamento climatico lungimirante. Una priorità cruciale sarà quindi quella di assicurare, attraverso una leadership efficace, una posizione forte e unita dell'Unione europea in occasione dei negoziati internazionali sul cambiamento climatico, in vista del summit di Parigi nel 2015 che dovrebbe sfociare in un accordo globale sul clima.

Il Vicepresidente sarà anche responsabile per lo sviluppo di una strategia di crescita verde e per fare dell'Europa il leader mondiale nelle energie rinnovabili all'interno di un quadro efficace per le politiche e l'energia e del clima nell'orizzonte 2030.

Dovrei infine sottolineare come prioritaria per la politica climatica europea la necessità di riformare il mercato del carbonio nell'Unione europea e, in particolare, il sistema di scambio delle quote di emissione, sul quale sono certo che i colleghi si soffermeranno nel corso dell'audizione.

Restituisco la parola al collega Buzek per spiegare la struttura dell'audizione.

1-005

Chair. > The structure of our hearing is the same as it was six days ago, but let me remind everyone that the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate will be invited to make a 13-minute speech at the beginning and then a five-minute speech as a closing statement. After that introduction, there will be time for 41 questions from MEPs. The EFDD Group will not be giving questions. The debate will be held in accordance with the ping-pong principle, with slots of three minutes each: one minute for the question and two minutes for the answer, without follow-up questions. The first round of questions will be asked by representatives of the political groups and the rest on the basis of Rule 162(4).

All colleagues and the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate are invited to respect the speaking time. There is 10-second tolerance for the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate, and a five-second tolerance for all the Members. After this tolerance time, the microphone will be turned off. A symbol will be displayed 10 seconds before the end of each speaking slot. Interpretation will be provided into 22 languages. Please do not speak too quickly. We need proper interpretation into 22 languages – all the interpretation languages – from your mother tongue. You can, of course, use your mother tongue. I now give the floor to the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate for his opening statement.

1-006

Maroš Šef ovi , *vice-président et commissaire désigné*. > Monsieur le Président, honorables parlementaires, Mesdames, Messieurs, en 2010, Jerzy Buzek et Jacques Delors ont déclaré, je cite: "Il faut un changement radical dans la manière dont nous produisons et consommons l'énergie. Nous sommes convaincus que l'Europe a besoin d'une politique énergétique commune plus forte". Dans ses orientations politiques, le Président élu Jean-Claude Juncker s'est fondé sur cette vision pour appeler de ses vœux une "Union plus résiliente sur le plan de l'énergie, dotée d'une politique visionnaire en matière de changement climatique".

Dans la lettre de mission qu'il m'a adressée, il m'a chargé – sous réserve, bien sûr, que je sois confirmé par votre institution – d'orienter et de coordonner des initiatives clés destinées à accomplir concrètement cette vision. Je suis très fier et très honoré que cette priorité m'ait été confiée. Les politiques de l'énergie et du changement climatique se sont clairement déplacées ces dernières années en haut de l'agenda politique européen.

Aujourd'hui, l'Europe doit relever deux défis énergétiques immédiats: assurer sa sécurité énergétique dans le contexte de crise entre la Russie et l'Ukraine et lutter contre le changement climatique, avec les négociations à venir lors du prochain sommet de Paris.

1-007

Vážení členovia Európskeho Parlamentu, tak ako som už spomenul na nedávnom hearingu, 25 rokov po páde železnej opony a 10 rokov od zjednocujúceho rozšírenia Európskej únie sa stále stretávame s negatívnymi dôsledkami tohto vyše polstoročia trvajúceho umelého rozdelenia Európy, ktoré sa prejavujú chýbajúcimi strategickými prepojeniami v dopravnej a energetickej infraštruktúre.

A ak sme do budovania donedávna posudzovali najmä z ekonomického hľadiska, udalosti posledných rokov urobili z tejto otázky jednu z najdôležitejších strategicko-politických a bezpečnostných priorít Európskej Únie. Chcem vás ubezpečiť, že presne týmto spôsobom túto otázku vnímam aj ja a preto k nej budem pristupovať s maximálnou zodpovednosťou.

Vážení páni predsedovia, vážení poslanci, spolu s Vami som kandidoval a bol zvolený do Európskeho parlamentu. Občania mi na predvolebných stretnutiach kládli na srdce, aby sme sa v Európskej únii venovali hlavne otázkam, ktoré ich najviac trápia, aby sa nemuseli báť o prácu, aby mohli žiť v zdravom životnom prostredí a pozerať sa do budúcnosti s optimizmom a presvedčením, že najhoršiu krízu sme prekonali a poučili sa z nej. Takmer v každom z mojich rozhovorov s občanmi sa prejavila téma cien energií, ochrany životného prostredia, a dopravnej infraštruktúry.

1-008

I will never forget the winter of 2009, when Slovakia literally plunged into darkness. For over two weeks the economy was at a standstill, factories closed and energy was provided only for households and hospitals. You know very well that Slovakia was not the only country in such a situation. I am convinced that, without European solidarity and almost immediate European assistance, the consequences would have been horrible. Therefore it is our solemn duty to make sure that our citizens do not face such a situation again.

It is important that we learn from the crisis. As the recent gas stress test shows, we are much better prepared than at any time before. This includes being able to help Ukraine through reverse flows from Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. Rightly so, because we see that Russia is increasingly using gas supply as an instrument of pressure and as a political weapon against Ukraine and other countries who want to help her. This is totally unacceptable and, if I get your support, I will address the issue of energy security with the utmost attention and with the general European interest in mind.

The stress test also shows that the negative impact of a gas disruption can be mitigated if countries work together, instead of adopting purely national approaches. The time for a European Energy Union has clearly come. To those who are sceptical about this strategic decision, I would say: 70 years ago a united Europe was just a dream; crossing the border from Slovakia to Austria was unthinkable just 25 years ago. A common currency or a banking union were also considered totally unrealistic. But as Nelson Mandela said, 'it always seems impossible until it is done'.

So how should we do this? What should a new European Energy Union look like? I would like to build, together with you and the Member States, a new European Energy Union based on five pillars.

The first pillar should be based on security, solidarity and trust. The EU is a major energy market with half a billion consumers. The EU imports 53% of its energy at a cost of EUR 400 billion a year. We

are the biggest energy customer in the world. Do we behave like that? Do we pull our international weight accordingly? Are we able to push for fairer prices and more balanced market conditions?

Definitely not. Our inability to speak with one voice clearly limits our influence. It is time for a more assertive European Energy diplomacy, where our energy interests feature permanently among our top foreign and trade policy priorities. Better energy policy coordination is necessary to resist undue pressure from third countries and to avoid market distortions due to agreements with third countries not respecting EU rules. I am in favour of a European debate leading to a consensus, in order to give a mandate to the European Commission to negotiate international agreements on behalf of the EU with third countries.

Building up the energy union also means close cooperation with our neighbours, with a view to better integrating the respective markets. Let me emphasise the importance of the energy community in this respect. But we must also explore the common purchasing of gas. Of course we have to respect the competition and WTO rules. But I believe we should try it and I want to see Europe using the EUR 400 billion argument more vehemently. Real coordination also means that no Member State should modify its energy system without the prior consultation of its partners and without analysing the potential consequences for their systems.

A further important element is the diversification of supply, both as regards routes and energy suppliers. We should work intensely on the Southern Corridor to get Caspian gas to Europe. We must further develop our partnership with Norway and promote the Mediterranean gas hub project, including developing energy cooperation with Algeria. Moreover, the development of LNG terminals opens new import possibilities.

My second pillar should be based on a competitive and completed internal market. A completed internal market will represent the backbone of the new European Energy Union. This means increasing cross-border flows, more regional cooperation and a better connected infrastructure. EU legislation needs to be improved, reinforced and fully applied. We need to maintain the competitiveness of EU industry and secure affordable energy prices for households, especially the most vulnerable ones.

We need to have adequate energy infrastructure with good interconnections, in particular to integrate renewables into the grid and to unlock energy islands. Structural Funds, the Connecting Europe Facility, joint investments and the future Juncker Investment Package can contribute to the financing of these energy infrastructure projects.

My third pillar should be based on moderation of demand. To keep our energy bills in check and improve our energy security, we need to moderate our energy demand. Energy efficiency has to be perceived more as a 'first energy source'. The cleanest megawatt is the one saved. Energy efficiency should be significantly enhanced beyond 2020. Improving energy efficiency will not only increase energy security, but also enhance the competitiveness of European industry. I fully support the President-elect's commitment to energy efficiency and agree that our priority areas should be buildings, transport and products.

My fourth pillar should be based on the decarbonisation of the EU energy mix. I want to continue the successful reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We need to be ambitious with our targets for 2030 and I am fully committed to making the EU the world's number one in renewable energies. Already by 2012 the EU had installed about 44% of the world's renewable electricity. We also have global leadership in renewables technologies. This is also about showcasing our industry and creating more than 4 million green jobs. Member States will, of course, keep the right to decide on their energy mix, but, at the international level I believe that all efforts should be undertaken to reach a meaningful

international climate change agreement at the end of 2015 in Paris. The EU has long been the driving force in the UN climate negotiations and this should definitely remain so.

My last pillar is based on research and innovation. Further investment in research and innovation is crucial, in particular because the European Union needs to step up its efforts to bring new, high performance, low-cost, low-carbon energy technologies to the market. New technologies and solutions are vital to achieving the EU 2030 objectives in energy, climate, economic and social policy, and beyond.

So these are the five building blocks on which I believe we will be able to create a resilient energy union, coupled with a forward-looking climate change policy. We cannot, in my opinion, have one without the other. I am convinced that an integrated approach will enable the Union to harvest both the environmental and economic benefits and tap into the job potential for green growth.

Two weeks ago, I had my hearing on transport and space. Today, I will do my best to win your support for the new portfolio attributed to me last Wednesday. I will not pretend that I became an energy expert overnight. But I did my best to prepare as much as I could for this hearing and if I get your support, I will do my utmost to make sure that I learn the rest and that we will build a European energy union together. A lot can be done in five years and I believe that all of us owe it to our citizens to make sure that the vision of a European energy union becomes a reality.

(Applause)

1-009

Chair. > We will now move to the first round of questions and answers on behalf of the political groups.

1-010

Krišj nis Kari š (PPE). – Mr Šef ovi , we all understand what it must mean to learn a completely new portfolio in five days, and everyone in this room understands the situation you are in, but I would like to ask you about security of supply. As you know, and as you have said, we are highly dependent on energy imports – more than EUR 1 billion per day – and the gas sector, as you know, is extremely challenging because, unlike oil, it is difficult to transfer and you need pipelines and LNG terminals. Also, in the gas sector, we have a very strong and growing dependency on Russian gas supplies. You mentioned yourself that it is difficult in the Ukraine as the gas supply is being used as a weapon there. I have two questions. Firstly, would you as a Commissioner support the South Stream gas pipeline project, which would in fact increase the EU's energy dependence on Russia? Secondly, how do you propose to decrease our energy dependency on Russia and increase our overall security of supply?

1-011

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > Thank you very much, Mr Kari š, for both your questions, which are absolutely crucial, I believe, to our common work for the next five years. I will go straight to your question on South Stream. South Stream is suspended and there is a good reason for that, because we simply cannot accept such a big project being carried out in the European Union by a company which does not want to respect the European rules.

So, it is very clear that in this particular respect we must have two primary questions which must be clarified. First, unequivocal commitment to the European rules. And second – which is I think so well described in the European energy security strategy – how would this help our energy security in Europe? How would this diversify our sources of energy? And, to be quite honest, I do not see that this project actually fulfils that criterion.

Therefore I believe that in the future we could very clearly lend our political and financial support to Southern Corridor, because that is a project which is very important, which is actually helping us to

diversify the sources of energy. It helps us to get Caspian gas into the European Union and to have the possibility not only of tapping into the Azerbaijani sources of gas but possibly, with good cooperation and good work, of opening negotiations also with another very important source, represented in this case by Turkmenistan. So my clear preference is to diversify energy sources and to do our utmost to get the Southern Corridor project well under way and to put our financial and political support firmly behind this project.

1-012

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D). – I have a slight cold, Commissioner-designate, so I am speaking softly.

I would like to ask you about the energy union as a whole. As you know, there are already different interpretations. There is the minimum, only involving becoming less dependent on the supply of energy from Russia and other countries, but it would not be enough for our group if that were all. But you have already said that you have five very specific pillars, and I think they cover most of what we would consider to be the energy union.

So I want to focus on two main questions. If you look at these five pillars, what would be your key priorities and what would be the concrete measures you would take forward in the coming year?

1-013

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > I think that of course, for some of these priorities, we can plan and we can work on them together; and some, I believe, will simply happen. I will of course be studying very carefully the outcome of the negotiations tomorrow between Vice-President Oettinger and the Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. Hopefully we will be able to find an agreement and prevent another drama concerning gas supplies for winter in Ukraine and, of course, in Eastern European countries. I am still worried that this could be the immediate priority which we will have to deal with.

If, putting this aside, we take a look from a strategic perspective, the best approach would be to advance on all the pillars together because we will have a lot of things coming at the same time. I hope that on Thursday we will get ambitious decisions by the European Council. Tomorrow I will represent the Commission in a General Affairs Council; I shall be pressing very much for a good, ambitious outcome to the European Council meeting because tomorrow the General Affairs Council will be preparing the European leaders' meeting on Thursday.

Immediately thereafter, of course, you have to work on legislative planning: how to put this package into a legislative framework. Then, by spring next year, we have to prepare our negotiating position for Paris, which should also be very important. We have also made much progress in selecting the Connecting Europe Facilities projects, which are well under way, and we have to continue with the public procurement and selection procedure for the top projects.

We have also to act much more forcefully on internal market issues. You are well aware that we agreed some time ago that by 2014 we would have a completed energy market in the European Union. You also know that, unfortunately, that is not going to happen by the end of this year. We have to really progress rather quickly and to proceed in this case by infringements.

1-014

Julie Girling (ECR). – Welcome, Mr Šef ovi . In Mr Juncker's new structure, the Vice-President is pivotal in drawing together the work of individual Commissioners and ensuring a cohesive policy approach, but so far Vice-Presidents-designate have been very reluctant to give any concrete idea of how this will work. I would like to ask you about one simple example.

Parliament is working on the National Emission Ceilings Directive. This represents a real change to improve air quality and reduce deaths, which is high on the agenda of European citizens and indeed globally, as the coverage of yesterday's Beijing Marathon attests. We have two parallel legislative tracks in motion here – one on greenhouse gas emissions, dealt with as part of our climate change strategy, one on other emissions such as particulates and NOx dealt with as part of the Air Quality Package. There is no synergy between them, the targets do not complement each other and the milestone dates do not coincide. Member States are required to meet a myriad of scatter-gun targets. This is not better regulation. What do you intend to do about it?

1-015

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I think that you described the situation very well and that this was one of the reasons why the President-elect decided to change the structure, because this new structure will definitely push us and force us to break with the silo mentality and to cooperate much more closely from the outset – not only the Commissioners but the services. I think that it will be very important for the Vice-President and the Commissioners to set positive examples to show that we are willing, we know and we want to work together.

If you look at the new organigramme of the Commission, this is the position I will have if you approve me this evening and these are the Commissioners I would coordinate. I would just point out that the colour is green! Of course it would be very important to work very closely with all the services that are responsible for environmental legislation, so I can promise you that from my point of view the role of the Vice-President is the role of a coordinator, to make sure that services are cooperating together from the outset. So we would avoid the situation where one service pushes for one set of targets and another service pushes for another set of targets. Very often they want to have their own reporting schemes and then of course, when it comes to the concluding stage, when it comes to the college table, before that you have inter-service consultations where the cabinets are trying somehow to make these two legislation proposals as compatible as possible. But this is not always successful.

Therefore we now want to reverse the logic. We want to cooperate together from the outset to make sure that we are actually progressing together and also to make sure that unnecessary reporting, unnecessary bureaucracy and excessive reporting obligations are things of the past.

1-016

Fredrick Federley (ALDE). – Commissioner-designate, if you want to know, I bought new chairs for my office so you will be more comfortable the next time you come and visit my office. You actually answered in your strong statement my first question, on how you would like to work to make sure that Europe becomes the leading force in renewables. I will try to paraphrase it: there is an ongoing debate in this House on geopolitics, on climate change and on economic growth. One of the main difficulties in this House is actually to get to a level where we can say that economic growth is not held back by combating climate change. So I would like you, Commissioner-designate, to elaborate a little bit on this. Do you see combating climate change as a threat to economic growth in Europe?

1-017

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I clearly do not think so because I believe that both competitive industry and competitive green policies must reinforce each other, as I was just describing in my introductory statement. I know that in your committees you are the experts who have been dealing with environmental, climate and energy issues for years, so we know how much we pay for imports and you know what kind of instability we have been facing, I would say every autumn over the last few years, because we are so dependent on energy sources outside EU territory.

So renewables are actually giving us the energy which is our own, because the wind is ours. Solar power is in Europe. Our companies are the best in the world as regards those technologies. They are

so good that they are increasingly successful on foreign markets, too, even in countries such as China, where they also realise that running a marathon with a mask on your face, because you cannot breathe, is probably not the best thing to do and experience, and that it is probably not making the best of the situation when you have to shut down the whole of industry so that spectators can actually see athletes competing on the Olympic track.

Therefore I think that what we need is to make very sure that we are progressing and providing a very clear framework and legal certainty for businesses, for industry, to promote green technologies and to do it in a way which does not harm industry, but actually provides affordable, accessible and renewable energy. I believe this is also key to the future competitiveness of the European Union.

1-018

(GUE/NGL). – , μ μ
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1-019

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > If I could just underline one point that was also included in my remarks, though I was under the pressure of the time limit: I made a clear reference to the Mediterranean gas hub. I think that Cyprus is very fortunate that the special new field was discovered there, that Aphrodite would have a potential of 140 to 160 billion cubic metres of gas which could be explored there – which is, I would say, a rather significant reserve. I believe that with further exploration maybe even further reserves could be developed.

I also know about the difficult situations of countries like Cyprus and Malta who have been struggling already for some time to overcome the position they are in, the position of energy islands. You know that European solidarity here is also reflected very clearly in the list of projects of common interest, which are there to help these energy islands to unlock these resources.

Therefore, I believe that the Cypriot Government and the European Commission will work together very closely to help to continue the research into the Aphrodite field and also to work on the project which would make sure that Cyprus is linked to the European energy grid, and that Cyprus and the European Union can clearly benefit from these new discoveries and explore them to the benefit of European energy ‘smaller-dependence’ – because ‘independence’ would be too strong a word even with a new discovery off Cyprus.

1-020

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – Mr Šef ovi , I would like to ask you about the international climate negotiations because during all the hearings the answer to one very simple specific question remained very unclear: who is going to negotiate on behalf of the European Commission in the international climate negotiations? Just one name would do, because in your written answers you already say it is important to speak with one voice, so it would be helpful to know who that is going to be. That is the first question, but secondly, as regards content, you stated that you want a meaningful international

outcome. What do we mean by ‘meaningful’? You said that Paris starts next year; but it starts this week in Europe, with what Europe is going to decide. We all know they are discussing minus 40%, but we know this is the lower end of getting to a 50% chance of reaching a two-degree target. If banking is allowed, it will be even lower if we take allowances from this term to the future. What are you going to do to increase the ambition level and also make sure that banking is not allowed so that minus 40 really is minus 40?

1-021

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > If that question goes to Paris, then I can assure you that I will go to Paris. But the road to Paris is rather long and it starts – as you said – this Thursday in Brussels. Then it continues in Lima and then of course there will be a lot of international venues and conferences where the meetings and negotiation will take place.

So in this case I think what we have to do is to show a very solid team spirit, that we as a whole Commission are working together. Because I think not only the Commissioner for Climate Change and not only the Vice-President for Energy Union but all these colleagues with whom we will be working have something to contribute, because it must really be a common effort across the board with all policies feeding into the successful outcome of the Paris negotiations.

So I would say that we always have to have one goal in mind. What would be the most efficient and the best representation in this negotiation? Is it the Commissioner for Climate Change or is a higher political level required and the Vice-President for the Energy Union should go? So this would be my approach to this issue because I think that the top priority would be to have a successful outcome and to have an international legally binding agreement in Paris. I think we owe it to the planet, we owe it to our citizens and we have to make sure that the industry is on a level playing field with its international partners.

I believe that the outcome and the level of ambition will also be spelt out very clearly on Thursday by the adoption of the framework for 2030, but then I can also assure you that the Commission, when it prepares its negotiating position for Paris, will be very ambitious in this regard as well.

1-022

Chair. > That is the end of our first round of questions on behalf of the political groups. We will now start the next round of questions.

1-023

Peter Liese (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender! Herr designierter Vizepräsident, Sie haben das Thema Energieeffizienz erwähnt. Jean-Claude Juncker und Miguel Arias Cañete waren in der Frage sehr präzise: „mindestens 30 % verbindlich bis 2030“. Ich würde das von Ihnen gerne auch nochmal so präzise hören. Und die Frage, wie Sie die beiden dabei unterstützen können, das *Commitment* umzusetzen.

Die Frage der Mittel ist uns sehr wichtig. Es gibt die Ökodesign-Richtlinie, und wenngleich ich glaube, dass sie im Kern vernünftig ist, gibt es auch Kritik. Ich frage Sie zum Beispiel ganz konkret: Was halten Sie von der Regulierung von Duschköpfen? Die ist hier umstritten. Dazu müssen Sie sich irgendwann äußern.

Herr Arias Cañete hat auch gesagt, er möchte die Richtlinie über Energieeffizienz nach 2020 fortschreiben. Da ist das Parlament natürlich sehr dafür, weil wir dann in der Mitentscheidung sind. Aber wie wollen Sie die überflüssige Bürokratie aus dieser Richtlinie rausbekommen und mehr auf Anreize setzen, damit wir die Menschen bei diesem Thema positiv unterstützen?

1-024

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > Of course like President Juncker and my colleague Miguel Arias Cañete I am also committed to this 30% binding target when it comes to

energy efficiency, and I will do my best already tomorrow in Luxembourg. I can tell you that when I was preparing for today's hearing, but also for tomorrow's negotiations with the Europe Ministers, I knew this was an issue which would be extremely difficult to negotiate because there is quite strong opposition from the Member States. But I will do my best and use my powers of persuasion and my negotiation skills tomorrow to explain how important this target is for the future of Europe's green policies.

When it comes to ecodesign, here I think I would need – and the whole Commission would need – your help in better communicating how ecodesign is important. Very often, unfortunately, the Ecodesign Directive has been ridiculed in the press, it is portrayed as an over-reaching bureaucratic instrument where the Commission wants to regulate everything from small appliances to big appliances; and yet we are forgetting to say that, thanks to Ecodesign, by 2020 Europe is going to save an amount which corresponds to the energy consumption of Italy for one year. It is that important.

Therefore I think we need simply to communicate better. When it comes to a proposal like the one on vacuum cleaners we have first to explain to the public why we are suggesting it and what would be the benefits, and avoid the bureaucracy you have been referring to – and I am in total agreement with you that we should diminish it as much as possible. We should focus only on those appliances where it matters and can bring real energy savings.

1-025

Matthias Groote (S&D). – Als wir die Portfolios für die neue Kommission bekommen und dort das Thema Energieunion entdeckt haben und dass Klima mit Energie zusammengelegt wird, gab es hier bei den Kolleginnen und Kollegen viele Bedenken, dass in den nächsten fünf Jahren das Thema Klimapolitik, aber auch das Thema Umweltpolitik hintangestellt wird, ja schlimmstenfalls sogar unter die Räder kommt.

Was gedenken Sie als Vizepräsident für den Bereich wirklich zu tun, um den Kritikern – und die Stimmen sind nicht leiser geworden – entgegenzuhalten, dass es nicht so kommen wird?

Zum Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien haben Sie gerade schon konkrete Dinge gesagt. Aber was halten Sie – in kurzer Antwort – dem gegenüber und auch der Öffentlichkeit gegenüber – denn es wird diskutiert, wir kriegen zig Zuschriften zu dem Thema. Das würde mich brennend interessieren.

1-026

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > First, I do not think that there is a chance that this very important policy would be overlooked because I would simply not be allowed to do that. I know how keen you are on these policies and I can assure you that it is also very clearly set out in the mission letters to all the Commissioners, in the mission letter to me, to the Environment Commissioner, to the Commissioner with responsibility for climate change, and we can simply see how important this policy is for the future.

We will see a lot of very important developments over the next few years. Renewables are now the number three source for energy generation. What we also see is that more and more renewable energy sources are becoming mature when they can also make it on their own. But very often the wider use of energy sources is limited because, unfortunately, we still do not have a grid smart enough to allow renewable energy to be used. Unfortunately, we still have too many bottlenecks in the European Union which prevent us from trading in electricity as freely as we would like to.

I also believe that we will see more research and development results in this domain, which will increase the efficiency of energy sources even more. So this clearly would be one of the priorities of the European Commission because if we are talking about indigenous sources, if we are talking about energy independence in Europe and if we are talking about our international obligations, which we

entered into as a developed part of the world, relating to 2015, renewable energy is clearly the key way to achieve them.

1-027

Ian Duncan (ECR). – Vice-President and Commissioner-designate, I would like to touch upon energy infrastructure, if I may. Do you anticipate the need for a new treaty, or any form of treaty amendment to provide a level playing field or common conditions to deliver a sound energy infrastructure? And, as a Scottish MEP, I can tell you that Scotland is very energy rich but connected poorly. There is plenty of wave energy and wind energy but that is of little value if you cannot actually connect that into the grid.

So I would like to touch upon the North Sea Grid and ask the question: how much funding do you anticipate being earmarked for that grid and when do you anticipate that project moving forward? I would like to invite you to come and outline your proposals to the people of Scotland, who I believe would enjoy hearing that very much indeed.

1-028

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > Honestly, I think that we can actually do a lot under the current Treaties. We know that the process of Treaty change is rather complex. I still remember very well how the Barroso II Commission's entrance into office was delayed because we had problems with the ratification and we know how complex this process is. So, I would say that at first we have to exhaust all the possibilities, all the political and legal space which is provided by the current Treaties and I think that we can really accomplish a lot.

When it comes to the infrastructure project and the interconnectors, there I think we have several possibilities for financing. The first one, of course, is the Connecting Europe Facility which is funded from the European budget with a volume of around EUR 6 billion. It is not a big sum. Therefore, I think what we need to do is use the modern innovating financing approach. And, I think this would be one of the keys which we need to use to build the EUR 300 billion new package for investment announced by President-elect Juncker, because it is there, I believe, that we can accomplish much more.

The good thing is that we have a master plan of how to do it, which is the annex of our energy security strategy – the list of projects of common interest – which clearly defines the projects that we want to do as soon as possible, immediately and in the medium term. But, I believe that, if we start with building up that investment package well, we would actually create patterns, together with the European Investment Bank, which could also be used beyond this package for energy infrastructure investment in the future.

1-029

Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE). – Mr Šef ovi , although you mentioned energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of our energy supply in your five pillars, I noticed that in your answers you focused a lot on fossil fuels, securing gas supply, etc. But do you agree with me that in making Europeans' energy less costly, less dirty and less dependent, we should focus a lot on renewables, and also that in Eastern Europe, in the long term, focusing much more on renewables is the best strategy. Now the European Council is having its internal fights this week to come up with a final deal. We know that there is an east-west division within the Council. Are you going to convince the eastern partners in our EU that a very ambitious climate and energy policy is in their own interest?

1-030

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > I will definitely do my best tomorrow in the General Affairs Council in Luxembourg. What is most important for Thursday is to have a very clear common European agreement on this matter. I will make sure that Europe is moving in one direction, speaks with one voice and has a very clear framework for what we want to achieve, not only between now and the Paris meeting, but up to 2030 and up to 2050.

Looking at the targets which have been set for a 2030 framework, we have been working in the Commission with very solid impact assessments, based on our commitment we undertook that by 2050 the developed world should decrease carbon emissions by 80 to 90%. That was the starting point from which we went to the figures which we proposed to you and to the Member States. It is also increasingly clear to the Central and Eastern European Member States that it is very important also to focus on renewables. Progress is there. The worry which they have is that they have different starting points, different financing possibilities and differences in quality of grids in those countries to actually accommodate renewables.

Therefore I regard it as very important to have two elements in the package which will be discussed on Thursday. The first is effort sharing and, secondly, there is also what I would call an investment fund, set aside with unused allowances from ETS, which would actually help those countries in Central and Eastern Europe to modernise their old power stations and to renovate their energy base in a way that is much more environment-friendly and much cleaner than what there is right now.

1-031

Kateřina Konečná (GUE/NGL). – Vážený pane místopředsedo, pane designovaný komisař, ve své písemné odpovědi se zmíníte o tom, že uděláte vše pro to, aby všechny členské země a Evropský parlament měly informace o mezinárodních jednáních o klimatu a aby tak byla pozice EU jednotná a silná.

To je jistě pozitivní a jsem za to ráda. Ráda bych však znala ještě váš plán na mezinárodní jednání o klimatu, aby EU nezůstala ve své snaze snížit produkci CO₂ osamocená a aby se k ambiciózním plánům připojili i ostatní velcí znečišťovatelé, jako jsou Spojené státy americké, Čína, Indie a další země.

Jak zabráníte tomu, aby země, které se nebudou účastnit boje s klimatickými změnami, tuto skutečnost nemohly zneužívat jako svou konkurenční výhodu s dopadem na ztrátu pracovních míst v EU, například s ohledem na vyjednávání o TTIP, kterou vyjednáváme evidentně se zemí, která naše klimatické cíle nesdílí.

1-032

Maroš Šefčovič, podpredseda Komisie a designovaný komisár. > Ďakujem ve mi pekne za túto otázku, aj za možnosť odpovedať vám v mojom rodnom jazyku, lebo viem, že mi si určite porozumieme a tlmočníci pomôžu ostatným v sále, aby takisto rozumeli vašej otázke a mojej odpovedi. Pokiaľ ide o túto otázku, môžem vám s úľavou ako za Komisiu, tak aj za seba osobne, že v príprave na tieto rokovania budeme maximálne transparentní, že budeme informovať váš výbor, Európsky parlament o negociačných pozíciách, o priebehu rokovaní, lebo vieme, ako dôležitá je táto otázka pre Európsky parlament. Musím povedať, že po poslednom zasadnutí Valného zhromaždenia OSN som oveľa optimistickejší ohľadom výsledku, ktorý by sme mohli spoločne dosiahnuť v Paríži. Myslím si, že taká demonštrácia politickej vôle z úrovne najvyšších predstaviteľov kúrových krajín, akú sme videli v New Yorku, sme už dávno nezažili a viem aj ako generálny tajomník OSN Ban Ki-Moon chce využiť vlastne toto momentum na to, aby sme na ňom pracovali, aby sme dosiahli dobrý výsledok. Videli sme niečo ko pozitívnych rozhodnutí v Spojených štátoch amerických ohľadom novej legislatívy, ktorá sa týka elektrární, videli sme niečo ko pozitívnych gest v Brazílii a vieme, že Čína dokonca testuje emission trade scheme podľa vzoru, ktorý používame v Európe, takže myslím si, že je potrebné vlastne teraz využiť toto momentum dosiahnuť ambicióznú dohodu vo štvrtok na úrovni Európskej rady, pripraví ve mi solídnu negociačnú pozíciu na jar tohto roku a využije naozaj ten priestor na to, aby sme vlastne v týchto negociáciách maximálne zvýšili šancu na úspech a zabezpečili, aby sa všetky kúrové krajiny tejto dohody zúčastnili a túto záväznú dohodu aj v Paríži podporili.

1-033

Yannick Jadot (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous nous avez dit – et c'est la lettre de mission du président Juncker – que vous vouliez que l'Europe soit numéro un mondial en matière d'énergies renouvelables.

Avec un objectif de 27 % d'énergies renouvelables dans le paquet 2030 tel que proposé par la Commission sortante – et il se dit régulièrement que dans l'ancien Collège, le Collège sortant, vous avez souvent voté pour des objectifs très peu ambitieux en matière de transition énergétique –, l'Europe réduira quasiment de moitié son ambition en matière d'installation de capacités de production énergétique renouvelable. Nous allons faire moins d'efforts sur la décennie 2020-2030 que nous n'en avons fait sur la décennie 2010-2020.

Pensez-vous sérieusement que ces 27 % non contraignants, qui sont une moyenne européenne sans déclinaison nationale, nous amèneront à faire de l'Europe le numéro un mondial des énergies renouvelables?

1-034

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > Thank you for that question; it is very legitimate so maybe I will explain what was the logic behind that proposal when the Commission was proposing it.

The first starting point was how we can fulfil our commitments towards the 2050 decarbonisation goal, which we undertook as a developed part of the world. And how we can do that in the most cost-effective manner was the second starting point for this analysis. We really used a very precise methodology in determining how we can get there. The result was the basic parameters which we presented to you and to the Member States: 40% less in greenhouse emissions, 30% effort in energy efficiency and at least 27% in renewable sources of energy.

This is what would be most cost-effective. If we had modelled it in such a way that we had steeper and faster effort, we have already seen that the cost would be much higher, so this was the economic analysis which underpins these goals which we in the end proposed to you and to the Member States.

I can tell you that already right now that I am very convinced that we will exceed the 27% target, because from the discussions we had with the Member States there are several countries which would like to go over that 27% target. I believe also that, in this respect, in the end Europe will over-achieve this target and in the end it would be to the benefit of our environmental and climate change efforts, especially in linking it to our 2050 decarbonisation goals.

1-035

Jean-Luc Schaffhauser (NI). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous avez mis l'accent sur les économies d'énergie, sur les énergies nouvelles, vous nous avez parlé des 300 milliards que le Commissaire Juncker avait avancés. Il est promis à de nombreux commissaires, sans que nous sachions vraiment si ces 300 milliards existent et d'où ils viennent.

J'ai donc une proposition à vous faire. Avec Philippe Maystadt, et Emmanuel Macron également, nous avons travaillé à un projet qui associait le Portugal, l'Espagne, l'Italie et la France dans le domaine des économies d'énergie et des énergies nouvelles estimé entre 300 et 500 milliards. Nous proposons un financement original, dénommé assouplissement quantitatif, pour l'économie réelle. Autrement dit, nous proposons qu'en contrepartie de la création monétaire, nous mettions sur pied des projets réels et que la création monétaire ne serve pas uniquement aux banques. Soutiendrez-vous ce projet?

1-036

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > Of course this touches on a much larger question of the Stability and Growth Pact and the flexibility of the Stability and Growth Pact. This is of course the issue which is very much under discussion – as is also the question of how to

make sure that we are credible on the Stability and Growth Pact and, at the same time, how we are encouraging investment, as you said, into the real economy.

In this respect I very much appreciate your remark on the European Investment Bank, because you know that, as the Barroso I Commission, we introduced the so-called project bonds. I think that today we can say that the results were not very impressive. We ought to take another look at how to make things work much better, because otherwise we will not be able to create this EUR 300 billion investment package. I would like to see, to be quite honest, a much more engaged and assertive European Investment Bank.

I think that the Ministers of Finance, who are not only the Ministers of Finance but also Governors of the European Investment Bank, should be very assertive about what we expect from the European Investment Bank, how we can combine the expertise and the financial power with European funds, with structural funds and with private and public project investment, so that we can actually bring the money which is available on the financial markets, in insurance companies and in savings banks into investment in the real economy because this, I believe, would make a real change.

1-037

Antonio Tajani (PPE). – Vicepresidente Šef ovi , noi sappiamo bene che lei si è battuto sempre per una politica industriale che tenesse conto dei problemi legati al costo dell'energia e della lotta al cambiamento climatico. Un tema cruciale è proprio il legame tra il pacchetto clima Europa 2020 e la competitività industriale.

A febbraio di quest'anno il Parlamento ha chiesto alla Commissione, tramite una risoluzione, che gli obiettivi della politica climatica ed energetica per il 2030 debbano essere tecnicamente ed economicamente realizzabili per le industrie dell'Unione e ha indicato che le imprese che ottengono i risultati migliori non dovrebbero sostenere costi ulteriori, diretti o indiretti, derivanti dalle politiche climatiche e che le disposizioni sul *carbon leakage* dovrebbero prevedere l'assegnazione di quote di emissioni gratuite.

Lei intende sostenere questa posizione, favorendo politiche concrete per tutelare i settori a rischio di *carbon leakage*? Pensa, ad esempio, di adottare un meccanismo per compensare le imprese dai costi indiretti dell'ITS? Le chiedo anche se intende proporre, per garantire il *level playing field*, iniziative per far pagare i produttori stranieri, cinesi e non solo, che esportano in Europa tramite una tassa sul carbone, oppure imporre loro di partecipare al mercato delle quote.

1-038

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > First I would like to thank Mr Tajani for his relentless efforts to keep European industry competitive and for reintroducing the targets for industrial output to reach 20% by 2020. Europe needs competitive industry and therefore the industrial policy of the European Union is a very crucial one.

Regarding the discussion on the future of the industry, on energy among many other things there are just two principal issues to address. The first one is the energy cost and the cost of electricity. Here I think that we really have a problem because, if you look at the wholesale cost of electricity, the prices are more or less the same as in the United States, but where retail is concerned – the level for which electricity is sold to our businesses – it is much higher, maybe two or three times higher and I have to say that it is very much the same with gas.

So the problem is not the cost of producing energy, but the transmission costs, the taxation on top of it and how much we are actually limiting competition with the energy cost because of the lack of interconnectors and the lack of cooperation among the transmission operators, system regulators, and so on and so forth.

The second point which Mr Tajani mentioned is also very relevant, and I think it is actually one of the keys to success this Thursday. This is the prevention of carbon leakage. I think that in this respect it is quite clear that the carbon leakage mechanism will have to stay in our policy toolbox, not only now but also for the post-2020 period, because otherwise our industry will move to the territories where they do not respect environmental legislation and pollute much more than in our countries, and on top of this we would lose our competitiveness and jobs in Europe.

1-039

Edouard Martin (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur Šef ovi , votre portefeuille s'intitule "Union de l'énergie". Comme vous le savez, et cela s'est vu lors de l'audition de M^{me} Bratušek, les interrogations sont nombreuses quant au contenu de cette union. Au-delà du slogan, quel est le contenu et surtout quels sont les instruments qui nous sortiront du statu quo dans ce domaine crucial pour l'avenir de l'Europe?

Je voudrais savoir en particulier comment vous entendez réconcilier la souveraineté nationale sur le bouquet énergétique inscrite dans les traités et la nécessaire convergence des politiques énergétiques qu'implique l'idée de communauté ou d'union. Vous contenterez-vous de pousser la mise en œuvre du 3^e paquet ou envisagerez-vous d'autres voies que la seule intégration par le marché?

Et enfin, allez-vous vous inspirer de ce qui se passe dans les politiques budgétaires des États membres avec une sorte de semestre européen de l'énergie?

1-040

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > I am sure that we will be working on the final layout of the energy union together. What we need here is a very deep discussion with you, and with our Member States, so what I would like to suggest to you is that I would work very hard on the policy concept for the energy union and I will come very soon to your committee, where I will present it in greater detail.

I can assure you that I do not think that the status quo is acceptable. We simply have to move beyond the situation we are in. As I said, a lot has to be done as regards security, how we can better develop the solidarity mechanism. We probably have to have another look at the gas security directive; and we need to work much more on something that goes a little beyond the third package, and beyond the current arrangements we have in place, because we need to work a bit better on the hardware and software for energy infrastructure in Europe, hardware meaning having good gas storage facilities, good interconnectors and well-functioning smart grids in Europe.

But software is also very important because we very often see – because our transmission operators do not cooperate well, because we very often have totally different national rules, and because we have different methodologies – that actually trade in energy is extremely limited because of these differences in approach. We have to take the initiative and make sure that transmission system operators and regulators are really independent and motivated to work together, because only in that way can we reap all the benefits of the single market in energy.

1-041

Evžen Tošenovský (ECR). – Vážený pane místopředsedo, pane designovaný komisaři, já také využiji češtiny, která patří do Vašeho velkého jazykového portfolia. Já jsem byl účastníkem Vašeho slyšení, pane místopředsedo, na dopravu a tam jste to skvěle zvládl a já vím, že zůstanete i nadále v čele kosmickým systémů, které jste měl ve svém portfoliu, protože si myslím, že i pro energetické systémy je to z hlediska přenosu dat a bezpečnostních systémů velmi významné do budoucna.

Můj dotaz se vztahuje k tomu, co je obsaženo v Lisabonské smlouvě. Tedy to, že jednotlivé členské země rozhodují o svém mixu ve své zemi. A můj dotaz je, jakou máte představu o tom, jak sladit zájmy různých členských států tak, aby nedocházelo například k nucování nebo ovlivňování jinými

lenskými štáty, napríklad v prípade Komisie, pretože každý členský štát má jiné geografické položení, jinou technickú históriu, a to chodí, pretože tak je, je podľa mého názoru mnoho.

1-042

Maroš Šefčovič, *podpredseda Komisie a dezignovaný komisár*. > Ve mi pekne ďakujem aj za vašu otázku a, samozrejme, pokiaľ ide aj o politiky dopravy a transportu, tak aj vzhľadom na túto novú pozíciu a novú zodpovednosť, ktorá je spojená s postom podpredsedu Európskej komisie pre energetickú úniu, tak je tam veľa tesné prepojenie aj s tým, akým spôsobom sa budú koordinovať politiky v oblasti dopravy a v oblasti vesmírnej agendy, takže dúfam, že sa od tejto politiky a tejto problematiky úplne nevzdržujem, ale práve budem môcť veľa mi dobre zakomponovať do celej tej spolupráce, ktorú si bude vyžadovať práca Európskej únie aj v týchto veľa dôležitých oblastiach. Pokiaľ ide o druhú časť Vašej otázky, tak máte pravdu v tom, že členské štáty veľa mi jednoznačne netrvajú na tom, aby sa Lisabonská zmluva, pokiaľ ide o suverenitu energetického mixu, dodržiavala do posledného písmenka. Je to ich právo, je to v zmluve, my ako Európska komisia musíme túto zmluvu rešpektovať. Zároveň nám to však ale umožní, aby sme sa k energetike správali ako k európskej téme, to znamená, aby sme prekonali ten syndróm, ktoré niektoré členské krajiny majú, že pokiaľ ide o energetickú politiku, ide o výlučnú záležitosť členských krajín, to už dávno nie je pravda. Od momentu, kedy sme vytvorili jednotný trh, od momentu, kedy sme prijali tri energetické balíky, je evidentné, že spolupráca v oblasti energetiky je európskou prioritou a myslím si, že to prepojenie medzi národnou suverenitou a európskymi cieľmi je možno dosahovať práve tými rámcovými dohodami, o ktorú sa určite pokúsime vo štvrtok, ktoré majú samozrejme potom vplyv na vypracovanie jednotlivých národných politík v oblasti energetiky.

1-043

Morten Helveg Petersen (ALDE). – I am back here at four o'clock, Commissioner-designate, four o'clock from your perspective. This is not only web-streamed; it is also a 360° hearing for you. I was happy to hear you say that economic growth and combating climate change should not be considered contradictory. I was also happy to hear in your statement how you will address energy security, as well as combating climate change, and I do urge you to have high ambitions on renewables because that seems to me the absolute key in achieving this. Now, in your statement it seemed to me you said that energy efficiency should be considered the first energy source. So my question to you is: how will you convince Member States that this is actually the case, since that does not seem to be the general perception right now? Please elaborate on that point.

1-044

Maroš Šefčovič, *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I think that the argument is actually very simple. Can we afford to spend 46% of our energy bill on heating and cooling our buildings? Is that not a little too expensive when we are spending almost EUR 400 billion a year on energy imports. How much can we save? What enormous potential we have in this area if we really increase the efficiency of our buildings.

When I was studying these policies and asking my colleagues in the Commission and experts why it is so difficult to convince the Member States and why we did not progress better on this matter – because the choice seems to be very obvious, we are just spending half our energy cost on heating and cooling buildings – one of the responses which I think probably points in the right direction was that maybe until now we have been going through too much regulation, so that increasing the efficiency of the building was considered an obligation, and there was more or less, I would say, a very restrictive regulatory approach to this matter. Maybe we should think more about incentives, because very often it is the poor people who cannot afford triple glazing in their houses who have difficulty changing the system in their houses or apartments for a more efficient one.

Therefore I think if we could consider the schemes and learn from each other in Europe – because we have good schemes in our Member States – how to motivate households, how to motivate municipalities and local authorities to actually work better on the energy efficiency of buildings, this

1-048

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > Of course, this is not easy to answer, it is such a complex issue and I am sure that it will be one of the main challenges for the Commission, for the Member States and for the Union as a whole in the next first five years. The first part of my answer would be that we really should complete the single market in energy, because, as I said, if we look at the wholesale prices for energy they are very much comparable to what we see in the United States.

Sometimes we are even in a situation where we have an excess of electricity on our market. But the problem is that because of the bottlenecks, because of this lack of cooperation between TSOs, and different rules which are valid in our Member States and which are developed by national regulation, we simply cannot reap the benefit of the single market which would push the electricity prices lower. The fact is, as you rightly pointed out, when it comes to public intervention in the energy field, we are looking at pretty big figures: between EUR 120 and 140 billion a year. This is a rather hefty sum we are using for subsidising energy, and still people are complaining that the energy prices in Europe are very high.

Therefore, I think that from one point of view we have to make sure that all these restrictions on the single energy market are removed and that we can really reap the benefits of the single energy market. Secondly, I think we have to have a very honest debate about the structure of prices in Europe and to make sure that they really reflect the energy cost, and to be very precise about further add-ons which are making the energy prices very often too excessive.

1-049

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – Tisztelt Sefcovic úr! Ön elismerésre méltó szakmai pályafutással rendelkezik a külügyek területén. Már a képzése is min ségi intézményben történt, a moszkvai Nemzetközi Kapcsolatok Intézetében, ahol az én Kovács Béla képvisel társam is végzett. További pályafutása során magas pozíciókat töltött be, és vannak általános vezető tapasztalatai. Megkérdezem: Ön elvállalná egy óceánjáró hajó kapitányságát? Talán nem, de azt elvállalja, hogy az európai energiaunió biztosa legyen, alelnökként pedig felügyelje a teljes energiapolitikát. Ön tehetséges ember, Ön föl tud készülni az itt elhangzó ismétlődő kérdésekre, de nem gondolja, hogy ez a nagyon bonyolult terület valami szakmai életet követelt volna? Nem gondolja, hogy talán több mint bátorság ez a vállalása?

1-050

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I fully recognise that expertise in this area is absolutely crucial, and I think that the expertise is very much present in the European Commission and in our Member States. What I think we need in this very important area, and in such a portfolio as the energy union, is a political steer, leadership, the diplomatic skills to make sure that our Member States are ready to go in this direction and are ready to abandon some long-held sovereignty worries concerning setting up the European energy union.

You also need a very solid foreign policy background for negotiations with such formidable partners and opponents, such as Russia in particular, in this very complicated instance. You also need to have vast foreign policy experience for negotiations with our other partners and in connection with climate change policies. Do you believe that there would be a greater diplomatic and political gain next year than the Paris summit on climate change? That would be the foreign policy event. Therefore I think that in this particular case it would be not only up to me and the Climate Commissioner, but also Federica Mogherini as our High Representative for Foreign Policy and all of us, to make sure that we actually place energy diplomacy much higher on the foreign policy agenda.

So, to be quite honest in answering your question, I believe that we can actually marry my background, my foreign policy experience and my European credentials with the expertise I believe I will acquire very soon. I believe I will be powerfully supported by our services in the Commission and also through the expertise of Member States.

1-051

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. GIOVANNI LA VIA

1-052

Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE). – Vielen Dank, Herr Vorsitzender! Sie haben jetzt ja schon sehr viel auch zu dem Bereich der erneuerbaren Energien gesagt. Aber vielleicht machen wir das ja einmal an einem konkreten Fall fest.

Die Kommission, der Sie angehören und auch wieder angehören wollen, hat ja vor kurzem die staatlichen Garantien für das Atomkraftwerk Hinkley Point in Großbritannien genehmigt und somit auch einen Präzedenzfall geschaffen. Das wissen Sie auch. Die Verträge der Europäischen Union sehen aber ganz klar vor, dass der Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien ganz oben stehen muss. Ihre Entscheidung in der Kommission oder des Kollegiums der Kommission widerspricht dem ganz klar. Es ist schon auch ganz klar, dass hier wieder de facto eine Renaissance der Kernenergie ins Haus steht. Deswegen würde mich wirklich interessieren, von Ihnen zu hören, wie Sie diese massive Wettbewerbsverzerrung erklären, die durch diese Entscheidung gegenüber erneuerbaren Energieträgern hier natürlich zustande kommt.

Persönlich würde mich auch interessieren, wie Sie sich bei dieser Abstimmung verhalten haben, also ob Sie für die staatlichen Garantien gestimmt haben oder dagegen. Wie verträgt sich ...

(Der Vorsitzende entzieht der Rednerin das Wort.)

1-053

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > This question clearly deserves clarification. The Hinkley Point decision was not about preferences as to the sources of energy; it was a very clear state aid case – one that was steered in the Commission by DG Competition.

The British authorities made a very convincing case for this state aid application and they provided very clear evidence that there would be a seven percent energy shortfall if the Hinkley power station was not built; that there is market failure, meaning that they cannot cover that energy shortfall or obtain normal financial market financing for this project without state aid. I can tell you that it was not just a give-and-take process; it was a rather difficult and complicated negotiation with the British authorities, in which the Commission was very much insisting on the best terms for British consumers.

I believe that the final outcome – with the costs for the project split half and half (17 billion from the state and 17 billion from private investors) – is a much better arrangement for consumers in the end, by comparison with the starting point for our negotiations when the British authorities approached the European Commission for a ruling on this state aid case.

1-054

Gilles Pargneaux (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Vice-président désigné, tout d'abord je voudrais saluer votre énergie et votre volontarisme. Vous avez, depuis tout à l'heure, dans votre propos liminaire notamment, indiqué: "le temps de l'Union de l'énergie est arrivé", "il est grand temps qu'une politique énergétique européenne soit mise en place".

Nous voyons bien que les cinq piliers que vous avez développés nous agréent. Il s'agit là d'une espérance, et en même temps, nous le savons ici, si ces objectifs recueillent souvent une adhésion générale, c'est sur la manière de les réaliser que les avis diffèrent souvent.

J'ai une question à vous poser: êtes-vous pour une Union de l'énergie qui se rapproche de celle proposée par le nouveau président du Conseil européen Donald Tusk, ou s'agit-il de mettre en place une centrale d'achat commune de gaz, telle que proposée par Jacques Delors, mais aussi le Président Buzek, s'inspirant de la CECA?

1-055

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I hope I understood the question correctly. The truth is that there have been several starting points which have led to the discussion we are having today. I think the energy union was just, I would say, a concept in the minds of convinced Europeans not so long ago. I quoted from the statement by Jerzy Buzek and Jacques Delors. There have been other policy thinkers who have proposed that we need to take this leap and go in this direction. One of the recent proposals also came from the future President of the European Council, Mr Donald Tusk.

What I think in the end will happen is that I will present to you my policy concept based on these five pillars. We will see whether it is five or four, or whether it will be modified, but I would like to have a discussion with you on how we can reach a consensus on this structure, on the policies, on the action plan, on the road map which would underpin this concept, so we can see how we are progressing, and how we can assess our achievements, on a regular basis.

As regards common purchasing, I have to tell you that, when you come up with these proposals, what you usually hear, especially from your experts, is that it is very difficult; we have very complex competition rules; we have very complex WTO rules; there must be concerns as to whether we are going into some kind of cartel-type of arrangement; but I think we just simply have to have wider vision on this. We should overcome these initial worries because I believe we should be exchanging the argument on how much we spend on energy and how big a customer we are for much better treatment, a much better price and much more solid and respectful treatment of supplies to the European Union.

1-056

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – Goedenavond, meneer Šef ovi . Ik zit helemaal achteraan. Ik zal even zwaaien, dan ziet u mij.

Ik kom nog even terug op het belang van energie-efficiëntie, want ik hoorde u daarstraks zeggen dat u voorstander bent van een 'bindende doelstelling' voor energie-efficiëntie. Bindende doelstelling, ik juich dat van harte toe, maar ik ben wel ontgoocheld als ik in de voorlopige conclusies van de Europese top later deze week lees dat de staats- en regeringsleiders alleen een indicatieve doelstelling vooropstellen. Dat zou, vind ik, een gemiste kans zijn. Denkt u dat een indicatieve doelstelling voor de beoogde resultaten kan zorgen? Bijkomend vraagje: vindt u dat de ondersteuning van de energie-intensieve industrie bespreekbaar moet blijven om hun concurrentiekracht te beschermen? En hoe staat u tegenover het idee om die ondersteuning te linken aan prioritaire investeringen in energie-efficiëntie?

1-057

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I can see that you have studied the draft European Council conclusions very thoroughly. It is true that the draft European Council conclusions indicate that, regarding energy efficiency, we will be talking about the targets. As I told you, tomorrow in the General Affairs Council I will push for the binding character of these targets, but in the end the European Council decides by consensus and it is very difficult to predict what the final outcome will be.

But I will also tell you something more than that. Based on the experience that the European Union has with the introduction of the targets, and with the introduction of the policies in this green growth area, what is sometimes even more important than the targets are the concrete measures. These are the concrete policies and the stimulus schemes. I believe all of these are in our hands, in the hands of the European institutions: how we simply work with the results of the European Council conclusions and how we translate them into concrete measures and policies later on.

I think that it will be a permanent priority for the Commission to make sure that we use the argument of enormous cost when it comes to the lack of efforts in energy efficiency, the argument of the losses we are having because of that, and of the unnecessary cost our citizens have to pay when their energy bill is simply too high because their building is not efficient enough.

1-058

Nils Torvalds (ALDE). – Vice-President and Commissioner-designate, in your written answer you said something about tackling the impact of food versus fuel production. Coming from the same city as HC Slovan Bratislava, you should probably know that tackling does not decide an ice hockey match. So we see that the Commission is tackling things but you have no clear goals. My very easy question to you is: are you going to be the ugly-looking back, tackling some co-Commissioners at the same time, or are you going to put in some clear goals?

1-059

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > I believe your question relates to biofuels. It is one of the issues which I believe will very soon be on the trilogue table, if I receive your approval, because as regards the ILUC directive – indirect land use change – I think we are now at the second-reading stage. I hope that it will be able to overcome the different approaches by the European Parliament and by the Member States so as to find a good compromise, which is needed for this area.

You know very well when speaking about the tackling, we just have to be very honest about the fact that the first biofuel generation which pushed aside the food and feed crops and created the conditions to be replaced by crops for fuels did not bring the results we had been expecting from a fuel quality and efficiency point of view. In addition, it has very negative unintended social consequences, and so I hope we will be able to find a solution to this problem and use our R&D budget so that we can motivate researchers to work much more intensely on the second generation of biofuels. I believe it will be very much needed for the future.

But I can also tell you that I believe in the next five years we will see, especially in the transport area, much wider use made of alternative fuels, electricity, CNG and LNG, which I believe will help us much more in tackling CO₂ than using biofuels.

1-060

Isu Juaristi Abaunz (GUE/NGL). – Señor Šef ovi , me gustaría abordar la cuestión nuclear, que apenas se ha mencionado.

Quiero hablarle de la central nuclear de Garoña, la más antigua del Estado español y situada a pocos kilómetros de zonas muy pobladas, como Vitoria-Gasteiz o Bilbao, en el País Vasco, o Burgos.

Quizás sepa que dos plantas del mismo modelo fueron cerradas recientemente en Bélgica por obsoletas y peligrosas. Aunque Garoña está cerrada desde junio, la compañía propietaria quiere forzar su reapertura y, al parecer, el Gobierno español la apoyaría.

Entiendo que es posible que no conozca este caso concreto y que entramos en un ámbito de competencia de los Estados, pero entiendo también que la seguridad sí sería competencia suya. Así que me gustaría saber si va a abordar al menos la cuestión de este tipo de centrales nucleares obsoletas y cómo.

1-061

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > You are absolutely right that the safety and security of nuclear power plants is an issue of utmost importance and that for this we clearly need to work very closely with the Spanish Government. As you know, under the Commission, we have 180 nuclear inspectors who are making sure that the nuclear power plants in the European Union are safe, well operated and up to the highest safety standards. It was also very important to have the stress test executed after the Fukushima tragedy we saw recently.

I believe that all the expertise we have in the Commission and all the stress test results and verification of the safety of these installations will be properly done and I can assure you that if there were any doubts from the Commission's side that this nuclear power plant is not up to the highest level of security and safety, the Commission would clearly make its views public and we will deal with the Spanish Government in a very open and robust manner to make sure that all steps taken in this direction respect the highest level of security and safety for nuclear power plants.

1-062

Peter Eriksson (Verts/ALE). – Good evening, Mr Šef ovi – over here, Sweden calling! I very much agree with you that we should have an energy union and it is very important to take steps to get there. But an energy union must also be based on solidarity, I think, and we have very different situations to start with in this process. For example, in my country we invested in water power stations almost a century ago and we have quite a lot of opportunities to get renewables. We also invested quite a lot in energy efficiency in the industry. But in other countries, like Poland, they have invested very much in coal and I would like to ask you: what is your helping hand to Poland to get the ...?

(The Chair cut off the speaker)

1-063

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > You are absolutely right, solidarity – and trust, I have to say – is one of the key elements of the future European energy union. Solidarity is very much demonstrated in situations where you are under enormous stress, when you have difficult problems such as we had in 2009, where you have seen that, thanks to reverse flows and gas storage cooperation and the good solidarity of the Member States, you can actually help the countries to get the light and the heat back on. That was really the issue in several Member States in 2009.

I think that Sweden can clearly be complimented for being the role model as regards modern energy structure and renewables. It has special geographical conditions which also allow that. It is great that Sweden has been so skilful in using these to the benefit of clean energy and renewables.

Regarding coal, I think that we have to be very honest that, to this day, coal is still the biggest source of energy in Europe. More than 27% of energy is generated by coal. Behind that comes nuclear energy and third, around 24%, are the renewables. This is not only in Poland, where you are right that more than 80% of energy is powered by coal, it is also in Germany where you have almost 44% generated by coal.

What can we do, you were asking me? I believe that we can use the support for new carbon capture and storage technologies, and also the investment fund, which I believe will be created, in helping Poland to renew the power stations so that they are much, much cleaner than they are right now.

1-064

Henna Virkkunen (PPE). – You have already said several times that the European energy infrastructure needs to be modernised and extended to allow energy to flow freely within the EU and to eliminate energy islands. As we know, we still have many energy islands in the EU, including in northern Europe where I come from. Now I would like to hear: what do you see as the most urgent projects, say the top five projects in the European energy sector in the coming years, and how will you make sure that those projects progress?

1-065

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > If you look at the energy island situation, we clearly have a problem in the north. We have problems with Finland and with the Baltic States where we see that the electricity grid is still very much connected, shall we say, to their past. Of course we also have a problem in southern Europe, on the Iberian islands and also with Malta and Cyprus.

So if you ask me which are the top projects for the future, I think that the best answer would be to have a look at the list of the projects which are annexed to the European Energy Security Strategy. There you would find the project, which would get my full support, to make interconnectors between Finland, the Baltic States and the rest of the European countries for electricity. I believe that this week we will see the opening of the LNG terminal in Klaipeda which I think is a very important part of this effort to overcome the isolated position of Nordic – speaking about Finland – and the Baltic States in this respect.

So I would say: electric connectors linking Finland and the Baltic States to the electricity energy grid, and also LNG terminals in the area you come from, because I believe that this would help to overcome isolation and would help Finland and the Baltic States to be gradually, incrementally and more efficiently connected to the rest of the European energy grid.

1-066

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Saúdo o senhor vice-presidente indigitado. O senhor tem uma missão muito importante. Essa missão é colocar a União Europeia na liderança global das energias renováveis e do crescimento verde e, ao mesmo tempo, reforçar a segurança energética e a competitividade.

Queria colocar-lhe três perguntas. A primeira sobre o pacote Energia Clima. Está conformado com a meta de 27% nas renováveis? Não acha que 30% dava muito mais credibilidade à afirmação de Jean-Claude Juncker de a Europa querer liderar nas renováveis? A segunda questão é sobre interconexões. Uma Europa com crescimento verde implica boas interligações. Como é que vai opor-se aos interesses que têm impedido isso, nomeadamente que têm impedido a ligação da Península Ibérica a França, que é tão importante. Finalmente, alguns governos têm cortado em vez de aumentar os incentivos às energias renováveis. Vai opor-se a essas práticas? Como pensa fazer isso? Muito obrigado.

1-067

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > Let me start from the end of your question, because I think the first part I have already answered. It is true that particularly Portugal and Spain are in a rather difficult situation because they are quite well behind the target of electricity interconnection between the Member States. We would like to see 10% and I know when it comes to Spain and Portugal and in France it is between 2 and 4%, so it is really very low and the situation is really intolerable.

I believe that we will find the right answers to this question already this Thursday. I believe this situation will be properly addressed as a problem which must be solved, where financing must be provided and both Portugal and Spain can be properly connected to the European grid. As I said, the Commission is always ready to play the role of honest broker, not only for this but for all other problems where we see that on a regional level it is very difficult to find a consensus. We are ready to do that. I am personally prepared to engage in such talks if necessary, because I believe that this situation should be overcome.

The second problem you raised is also another important one, because we have the situation in Spain, Portugal, and the Czech Republic where schemes were adopted for the financial support of renewables and then the policy was reversed. Portugal, to my mind, is a better example because there was negotiation between the government and the renewables representatives and I think that a mutually acceptable solution was found. A more complicated situation is in another country, where I am afraid we might end up in very complicated legal battles about retroactivity and investment and there I would prefer negotiation to court recriminations.

1-068

Jadwiga Wi niewska (ECR). – Chciałabym zapyta , jakie jest Pana stanowisko, je li chodzi o zale no mi dzy pakietem klimatycznym a konkurencyjno ci europejskiej gospodarki. Kraj, z którego Pan pochodzi, jest jednym z najbardziej uzale nionych od dostaw gazu z Rosji w całej Unii

Europejskiej – Słowacja importuje z Rosji niemal 100% gazu, którego zużywa. Mój kraj, Polska, znajduje się w niewiele lepszej sytuacji, importując z Rosji ok. 2/3 gazu, ale Polska ma jeszcze pokaźne zasoby węgla i energetyka oparta w związku z tym na węglu. Czy uważa Pan, że obecny konflikt rosyjsko-ukraiński jest momentem, w którym należy dokonać przeglądu polityki energetyczno-klimatycznej Unii tak, aby nie dyskryminowała rodzimych surowców energetycznych, zwłaszcza węgla i gazu z łupków? Co zamierza Pan zrobić, aby chronić krajowych producentów węgla, którzy narażeni są na konkurencję ze strony taniego...

1-069

Maroš Šefčovič, *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I really do not see the climate agenda and EU 2030 package as being in contradiction with our goals for the competitiveness of the European economy. I really believe that they have to go hand in hand and we have to work in a framework where these goals are mutually reinforced. Because, when it comes to renewables, as I said, these are kind of our indigenous sources: the wind is ours; solar energy is ours; we can lock it into our grid and we are not dependent on foreign sources of energy where such a principal player is Russia, with which, particularly now, we are in a very, very difficult situation.

So, I believe that we have to work on both policies; at the same time I can believe that we can achieve very good results. As I said, the decision on the energy mix is the sovereign decision of each Member State, but at the same time I think each Member State also has to respect the common goals to which the Member States agreed. Therefore, it is important to work together to have one common European line on green policies and a green strategy for the future.

I think that the EU 2030 package will be good for Poland because there are two very important policy elements which are part of that package. First, creation of the NER 400 Fund which will be supporting the research and development of new carbon capture and storage technologies, and then another investment fund which would help Poland renew its power generation and its coal plants, to also make sure that Poland has more ambitious targets in the green growth agenda.

1-070

Angelika Mlinar (ALDE). – Commissioner-designate, as a follow-up to your answer right now, we know that it is up to the Member States to decide on their respective energy mix. My question to you is: how do you plan to get Member States to coordinate their energy policies? I am interested in your general approach and with a special regard to the possibilities of diversifying the EU's energy supply.

1-071

Maroš Šefčovič, *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I believe that diversification and better coordination will be absolutely key to creating the European Energy Union. Without better coordination and without wider diversification of the resources, I do not think we can really create the European Energy Union.

Regarding coordination, I think we have already good experience with the Gas Coordination Group, which I think is working quite well, and I believe that mutual confidence is gradually being built, more transparency is being introduced into the meetings of this group, and I think we just have to continue with that. Member States should be much more honest with each other on what they negotiate, on what the conditions are, to make sure that we have one common line regarding contact with third parties to make sure that our partners cannot use 'divide and rule' policies against the European Member States. Therefore, we need to use this type of framework such as gas coordination groups, also for other fields of energy.

How can we diversify? I think, when it comes to gas, the first key element is to learn a little bit from the failure of Nabucco and, to be quite honest, to be much more on the ball, to be much more political, present in all the countries through which you would like to see that Southern Corridor pipeline being

built, to be in much more intense contact with the consortium which is building this pipeline, and to make sure that there is adequate political and adequate financial support for this pipeline.

Then, of course, we have also to work on LNG terminals and on a new relationship with Algeria and also countries like the United States, Brazil and the Gulf countries from which we also can get the energy if we prepare for it appropriately with the infrastructure needed.

1-072

Alojz Peterle (PPE). – Hvala lepa, gospod predsedujo i. Spoštovani gospod Šef ovi , jaz sem vesel, da govorite o energiji s konceptualno energijo. Omenili ste ase deljene Evrope in jasno ste se izrazili proti temu, da bi energijo uporabljali kot politično orožje.

Moji kolegi so se že dotaknili nekaterih vidikov, povezanih z Rusijo, mene pa zanima bolj konkretno, kako nameravate glede energije zastaviti celovit strateški odnos z Rusijo, da v tej hiši ne bo treba ve sprejemati resolucij o zunanjepolitičnih in varnostnih vidikih evropske energetske oskrbe. Hvala.

1-073

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > You know that for many years Russia had the status of a strategic partner of the European Union. The situation in Russia is clearly very strategic, but I think the partners are behaving differently and therefore I think that we have to be very clear and very transparent and open in our relationship with Russia. We have to very clearly state our positions. When it comes to the operation of Russian companies on European soils, they have to respect European rules. I think that is absolutely unequivocal and very clear.

I think we must make sure that, when it comes to the area of energy supply and energy debates, we have to make much better use of Europe's pooled power. As I said, we are the big customer. Russian exports towards Europe represent 52% of budget income for the Russian Federation; they represent 70% of Russian exports, so it is not only that they are exporting energy to us; they need to export this energy to us. I think that we just simply have to work better with this relationship and make sure that we are also able to communicate very clearly with one voice as happened this year: President Putin sent letters to 18 Heads of State and Government but he got one answer from the President of the Commission, which very clearly stated the position, and it happened several times. I think this is the way to continue in the future.

I got a little bit carried away and I ran over time. Sorry.

1-074

Seb Dance (S&D). – Thank you for your responses so far. I was very encouraged to hear that you will be a willing participant in the Paris process and obviously, following your written responses, very encouraged as well that you will keep the Parliament updated. It looks as if, in keeping the delegation updated, you very much intend to play a full role there.

As you know, we want the European Union to continue to be a world leader in climate policy. What will you do to reinvigorate the debate to ensure that the EU does lead globally on climate? How will you ensure that the EU leads the debate to subscribe to clear commitments and continues to play that role in the UN negotiations?

1-075

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > I think that when it comes to the Paris negotiations and Paris Summit I am sure, as it was at the previous Summit, that there will be a rather solid presence from the European Parliament. I know that this would be an event under close scrutiny by the Members of the European Parliament and I think that, also thanks to the Framework Agreement between the European Commission and the European Parliament which are negotiated now, we have a very good framework upon which we can do it and there is a very good mechanism as to how we keep the Members of the European Parliament informed about ongoing negotiations. I can

assure you that I know how important it is, and I will make sure that you are properly informed and briefed on the process and progress towards the Paris Summit.

When it comes to reinvigorating support for renewables and green policies, I think what is very important these days is to show the Member States, to show our businesses and our citizens that it is not only about protecting the environment and saving the planet. There is a very solid business case in the matter as well. It gives us much better independence. It helps us to diversify other energy sources. It creates jobs. Look how successful the green domain was in preserving and creating jobs over the last few years. It was one of the few areas where jobs were not lost but created. It is quite clear that we in Europe have developed very good expertise and very good technologies which are accepted not only in Europe but also worldwide. I am sure that seeing the situation in such countries as China it is quite clear that European technologies will be in demand. This is an additional argument why we need to work hard on renewable policies and green technologies.

1-076

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, we shall not have the chance to work on TEN-T, but I hope that we shall have the chance to work on TEN-E. As you know for sure, the Treaty provides, in the case of difficulties in energy supply, the possibility for the Commission to propose measures to solve the crisis. In such a situation, for example this winter, will you use this possibility, and which are the most important measures that you will propose?

1-077

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > I am very much looking forward to working with you a bit on TEN-T or TEN-E, because I believe that cooperation will be very useful and fruitful. When it comes to this winter, at first I believe that Vice-President Oettinger will have success tomorrow. I spoke with him on the phone just before coming to this hearing. He told me that the negotiations are particularly difficult but he is still optimistic that after two days meetings and the continuation tomorrow in Brussels they will be able to find a common framework in which we find the solutions for this winter and for the next year.

I think it is of crucial importance for Ukraine, Russia and also for Europe and I believe that the good solution to this problem would clearly calm down a lot of anxiety which is there, especially on the energy market. The good news is that the results of the stress test are quite encouraging. Europe as a whole will do quite well. It would manage six months of complete cut-off from Russian gas and we would miss five or six billions of cubic metres of the gas which is 1% or 2% of our gas consumption, but we also have to be very honest and say that for at least six Member States the situation would be rather difficult because of the current situation and their dependence on Russian gas. Of course, if this would be the situation and if we get into such an emergency, I can assure you that the European Commission will use all its instruments and all its powers to make sure that we would not have a position of 2009 and we would not again face the situation where the citizens' households and businesses in European countries are plunged into darkness because of a lack of energy.

1-078

Miroslav Poche (S&D). – Vážený pane místop edsedo, pane designovaný komisa i, energetická politika v sou asné dob prochází zlomovým obdobím, ve kterém bude ur ena její budoucí podoba, a už se jedná o energetickou unii nebo o nové cíle pro období 2020–2030. Bude se také rozhodovat o úloze jaderné energie, proto bych se zeptal na dv otázky.

Jaké záv ry u íníte ze zát žových zkoušek jaderných elektráren, z tzv. crashtest , a jak Komise výsledky t chto zkoušek využije? Rád bych se zeptal na Váš osobní postoj k budoucnosti jaderné energetiky v Evrop , p edevším její zakomponování jako sou ásti p echodu k nízkouhlíkovému hospodá ství.

Na záver bych rád vedel, zda byste byl ochoten komentovať, jakým spôsobom by mala sehrávať úlohu v rámci energetickej únie nemecká *Energiewende*, nemecká energetická politika, ktorá je pre zemstrednú a východnú Európu veľmi kľúčová.

1-079

Maroš Šefčovič, *podpredseda Komisie a dežigovaný komisár*. > Ďakujem veľmi pekne aj za túto otázku. V prvom rade si myslím, že stres testy pre jadrové zariadenia, pre jadrové elektrárne v Európe boli mimoriadne dôležité z hľadiska zabezpečenia obyvateľov Európskej únie, že jadrové zariadenia v Európskej únii rešpektujú najvyššie bezpečnostné štandardy. Myslím si, že boli veľmi užitočné z toho hľadiska, že došlo k takej výmene najlepších skúseností, najlepších tých biznis praktík, aby sa naozaj tie najnovšie výdobytky, ktoré máme v tejto oblasti z hľadiska posilovania bezpečnosti jadrových zariadení mohli plne uplatniť vo všetkých krajinách Európskej únie, ktoré chcú používať jadrovú energiu. Momentálne ich je 16, 14 členských krajín, iže polovica z nich naďalej chce pokračovať v jadrovej energetike, a preto bolo veľmi dôležité, aby sa v týchto krajinách pripravili také opatrenia a také plány, ktoré rešpektujú tieto vysoké požiadavky na kvalitu jadrovej bezpečnosti. Keď sa pozrieme na scenáre, ako sa dostať k bezuhlíkovej ekonomike v roku 2050, náš záväzok zníži emisie CO₂ o 80 až 90 % v roku 2050, tri z piatich scenárov, ktoré k tomuto cieľu môžu prispieť, rátajú s jadrovou energiou ako s nízkouhlíkovým zdrojom energie a vzhľadom na to, že jadrová energia je druhým najdôležitejším zdrojom produkcie energie, myslím si, že jadrová energia zostane v energetickom mixe Európskej únie a z hľadiska Komisie je potrebné zabezpečiť maximálne vysoké štandardy bezpečnosti pre prevádzku týchto zariadení.

1-080

Markus Pieper (PPE). – Vielen Dank, Herr Vorsitzender! Herr Šefčovič, wenn Sie von Energieeffizienz sprechen, meinen Sie Energieeinsparung. Was machen Sie mit Mitgliedsländern, die vor einer großen Wachstumsaussicht stehen könnten?

Zweite Frage: Sie haben gesagt, die erneuerbaren Energien gehören uns. Wir haben Länder, die bereits über 30 % Anteil haben. Müssen wir denn jetzt bei den erneuerbaren Energien auch einsparen? Oder nehmen Sie die von den Einsparzwängen aus?

Dritte Frage: Das macht mir ein bisschen Sorgen: Sie haben gesagt, das mit den indikativen Zielen müsste man vielleicht nicht so wichtig nehmen, wichtig sei die europäische Kompetenz in der Gesetzgebung, also verbindliche Maßnahmen, verbindliche Gesetze. Wollen Sie allen Ernstes von der griechischen Ägäis bis zum Baltikum eine verbindliche Gebäuderichtlinie vorschreiben? Wollen Sie die Ökodesign-Richtlinie mit den Duschköpfen tatsächlich über ganz Europa verbindlich machen? Ich mache mir da große Sorgen. Ich kann jedenfalls in Österreich, in Deutschland, in Skandinavien nicht positiv kommunizieren, dass wir uns neue Duschköpfe kaufen müssen, wo wir gar keine Wasserprobleme haben. Das erklären Sie mir doch mal, wie Sie das mit einer positiven Kommunikationsstrategie gemeint haben in solchen Ländern, wo das gar nichts bringt.

1-081

Maroš Šefčovič, *Vice-President and Commissioner designate*. > I think you very well reflected the dilemma you have there around energy efficiency, where in this committee there is clear pressure for high ambitions, very high targets and binding goals, but of course when it comes to the concrete implementation of the policies which you deliver to the target, it is not that simple. Of course we can speak about the energy efficiency of buildings but the second very important part of how to contribute to energy efficiency is actually the Ecodesign Directive.

As I said, if we look at how much we already saved thanks to ecodesign, how much energy we saved, it is very impressive. Unfortunately we do not often talk about the fact that, thanks to the savings we achieved through the Ecodesign Directive, by 2020 we will be saving the amount of energy which is consumed by Italy in one year. It is enormous!

It is also achieved sometimes by measures which have not been very popular and which have been ridiculed by the press. I take your point that we have to learn from this. We did the technical studies on shower heads, coffee machines and hairdryers and I can tell you there is no intention to proceed with abiding rules for these, because we just simply evaluated and assessed that in this particular case the energy savings would not be important enough to have binding rules for all these elements. But if it comes to boilers, for example, that is a different case. I think that we just have to have a look at how we can use ecodesign to the best possibility to achieve good results and then I will come over here and I will ask you for your support, to help us to communicate why we are actually suggesting this, why we are proposing it, because it will actually save energy and help our households to lower their energy bills.

1-082

Miriam Dalli (S&D). – Huwa ar li huwa fl-interess tal-Unjoni Ewropea li jkollha politika tal-enerġija u klima li tassigura u tiddiversifika s-supply tal-enerġija, tippromwovi g' anijiet so joekonomi i u sostenibilità usa', tiddiversifika sorsi ta' enerġija u tg' aqqad flimkien l-Istat Membri kollha inklu i dawk i olati mis-sistema tal-enerġija Ewropea, ioè l-energy islands li inti rreferejt g' alihom g' al aktar minn darba. Imma ffukajt b'mod partikolari fuq in-na a ta' fuq tal-Ewropa, forsi nixtieqek tiffoka naqa iktar ukoll fuq in-na a t'isfel tal-Ewropa. X'inhi l-vi joni tieg' ek biex tinkora ixxi investment Ewropew fil- enerazzjoni tal-enerġija u l-infrastruttura b' alma huma grids, interconnection, transmission lines u anke fa' ilitajiet ta' storage. Tista' telabora kif din il-vi joni se tkun immani jata fuq livell ta' Unjoni Ewropea mill-perspettiva però tal-Energy Union u kif ukoll se tippromwovi sforz Ewropew favur connections infrastrutturali allli l-Istati Membri kollha jkunu mag' qudin man-netwerks Ewropej tal-gass u l-elettriku u allura jkunu evitati l-enerġija

1-083

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner-designate. > Thank you for bringing that perspective to our debate, because if I am not mistaken you are from Malta. It is true that until now, probably because of the composition of the question, we focused more on the north and energy islands in Finland and the Baltic States, but very clearly we also have a very similar situation in the south of Europe and in the Mediterranean.

I think we clearly have to address this issue because there is an issue, but there are also a lot of opportunities. If we look at the geography, if we look at how we need to diversify our energy sources, I think the project I referred to in my introductory remarks – the creation of a Mediterranean gas hub – is a very valid one. I think we have to create a very solid trading place for gas in that part of the world, because Algeria is our third most important gas supplier. We have just discussed the new discovery of gas sources in the Aphrodite field in Cyprus. I think this would be a very important part of our strategy to diversify energy sources.

When it comes to Malta, I know about the particular situation of your country and therefore I am very glad that one of the priority projects on the list of projects of common interest is actually a floating energy terminal for Malta, which would help also to ensure that there is a much better link between Malta and Sicily and which would guarantee that Malta overcomes a situation of being energy-isolated from the rest of the European grid. I believe this would help to get Malta integrated into the energy grid of the European Union.

1-084

Elisabetta Gardini (PPE). – Signor Commissario designato, abbiamo sentito molte cose sulla politica energetica e certo siamo in un momento di gravi preoccupazioni. Io però volevo riportarla al discorso della Conferenza di Parigi nel 2015. Io seguo da Copenaghen tutte le COP e devo dire che ogni volta abbiamo alzato la speranza e poi ogni volta siamo tornati a casa portando poco. Se ultimamente avevo cominciato a sperare nuovamente che fosse la volta buona, devo dire che ho sentito alcune voci, dall'altra parte dell'oceano, che un po' mi preoccupano, e che fanno pensare che forse ci troveremo ancora una volta con l'impossibilità di firmare un accordo globale vincolante. Quello su cui lei si è

soffermato penso sia l'aspetto più concreto e più facile – le tecnologie, le rinnovabili, l'innovazione, ecc. – ma quando si va all'accordo globale...

(Il presidente ritira la parola all'oratore)

1-085

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I absolutely share your frustration so far with the process of climate change negotiations, starting with the Kyoto Protocol, and having negotiations in Copenhagen and in Warsaw, our hopes always being somehow enhanced by the belief that finally, after all the very clear evidence we have on our planet, that climate change is happening and that the leaders would finally get it and decide to work on this issue.

I think that we are now in a situation where we have only 0.8° increase of the global temperature, so we are still well below a worrisome 2% which would lead to catastrophic changes in the world. But we can already see how weather patterns have changed. We have never seen so many natural disasters caused by weather. We see how the situation in many countries is being changed because of completely different weather patterns from what they had there before. We see it in Africa, we see it in Asia and we also see it in Europe.

So I think that right now we are in a situation where we already have this critical mass of evidence that these negative developments are really here, that they are climate-change related, they are weather related, there is a very clear high economic cost to this and we also have the measures, the technologies and possibilities to tackle climate change. So I see that now we can also rely a little upon positive developments in the United States and in Brazil. China is testing our approach to protecting the environment and I am sure that Europe will ensure proper leadership in these talks so that this time we will come back home from Paris as happy as we can be with an ambitious globally-binding agreement.

1-086

Jeppe Kofod (S&D). – I think you have given a lot of very good answers tonight on how to build a green energy union. But still in your mission statement it says that the European Union should be the world number one in renewable energy.

It is quite a lofty goal if you look at it. If you look at the global investment in clean energy, it has fallen over the past two years even in Germany and Italy, and in other places it has fallen by a significant percentage. I really want to know what you think. How do you ensure in concrete terms that Europe could become the number one in the world in renewable energy? What does it mean? What kind of building blocks and how do we compare ourselves to the rest of the world in that matter? What would you see in 2030 when you measure this goal against reality? Is 27% in renewable energy in 2030 really an ambitious goal? What do you think? I really want to hear your thoughts on that.

1-087

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > I believe that Europe is a world leader in renewables. If we look at the fact that 44% of the new renewable installations in the world are being created in Europe, I think it is a very significant factor. If you look at the quality of our technology, I think nobody here disputes that we are number one in the world, and I am very pleased to see that now the business side of the quality of our green technologies is being more and more demonstrated by the fact of how many people are employed by this industry, how we are able to export this technology and how successful we are in this international competition when it comes to the export of these technologies.

I also believe that, in the course of the next five years, we will see what I would call a critical bridging of the situation, when critical mass will be achieved and the cost of production for energy units, for

renewables, will drop fast. We can see it already right now and I think it will just continue. This is because we are perfecting technologies; we are learning how to get renewables into our grid. I believe that we would work very hard on the bottleneck so I think we can actually profit much more for the renewable energies, not only on national but also on the international level. This I think will make a very, very solid argumentation as to why we need to be ambitious on our renewables and this would also lead to what I believe will be the target of 27%, which would be exceeded because the business case experience and technologies will bring a much better result than 27% in 2030.

1-088

Werner Langen (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender! Herr Šef ovi , Sie haben die Frage der Kollegin Köstinger nicht beantwortet, wie Sie bei der Entscheidung Almunia zu den britischen Kernkraftwerken abgestimmt haben. Haben Sie dafür oder dagegen gestimmt?

Zweitens: Es geht auch nicht um die Frage der Verantwortbarkeit der Kernenergie, sondern um eine ungeheure Wettbewerbsverzerrung, die auf mindestens 35 Milliarden Euro beziffert wird, weil 30 Jahre lang sieben Cents Mindestpreis weit über dem Marktpreis garantiert wurden. Ich halte das für unverantwortlich. Auf der anderen Seite sagt die Kommission: Biotreibstoffe der ersten Generation dürfen nur bis 2020 gefördert werden. Die iLUC-Richtlinie liegt auf dem Tisch. Was machen Sie, wenn Frankreich mit der Erneuerung die gleichen Ansprüche wie Großbritannien stellt? Dann ist Ihre gesamte Agenda erneuerbarer Energien für die Katz. Das werden Sie nicht durchsetzen.

Deshalb die Bitte und die Frage: Wie wollen Sie eine konsistente Energiepolitik, Energieunion durchsetzen, wenn in einem solchen Fall schon ein so gravierender Fehler gemacht wurde? Nach der Wahl von Juncker, nicht vorher!

1-089

Maroš Šef ovi , Vice-President and Commissioner designate. > Thank you for the very strong statement and when it comes again to the Hinkley Point case, I explained at length that this was not about energy preferences, it was a studied case which was economically analysed by the Chief Economist in DG Competition and by the respective services. There was clear proof that here we are talking about market failure and therefore the state aid for this particular project was warranted. If you ask me concretely if I voted for this measure, yes, I voted for this measure, because I found it to be fully compatible with the state aid rules. If we did not respect the Treaty and the rules for state aid in this matter, the Commission would not be following the rules and respecting the Treaties and the rules for state aid.

When it comes to biofuels, one of the reasons why we suggested not to continue with the biofuels target after 2020 was simply because we are disappointed with the first generation of biofuels. We simply had unintended consequences by pushing and putting aside crop and feed production from the fields and instead producing crops for fuels, and on top of that not always fuels which brought the characteristics, the CO₂ reductions, that we expected. Therefore, I think that our proposals on ILUC and our push to have good conclusions on this matter between the European Parliament and the Council are crucial so that we can focus on support for better second-generation biofuels.

1-090

Jo Leinen (S&D). – Herr Šef ovi , wir sind in der Übergangsphase von dem alten Energiesystem mit unflexiblen Großkraftwerken hin zu dem neuen Energiesystem mit der Vielfalt der erneuerbaren Energien. In dieser Umbruchphase gibt es natürlich Friktionen. Wir entdecken in einigen Ländern, dass die Betreiber von fossilen Kraftwerken gerne einen Kapazitätsmarkt hätten, das heißt, Subventionen für den Betrieb ihrer Kraftwerke.

Erstens: Wie würden Sie verhindern, dass wir 28 Kapazitätsmärkte haben mit einem Subventionswettlauf?

Zweitens, zur Energieeffizienz. Ich begrüße sehr, dass Sie die Öko-Design-Richtlinie verteidigt haben. Da gibt es unheimlich viel Populismus, der überhaupt nicht gerechtfertigt ist. Es gibt also die Studie, dass ein Drittel der Energieeinsparung durch die Öko-Design-Richtlinie kommt. Hier haben Berater der Kommission noch 17 weitere Produktgruppen vorgeschlagen. Würde das bei Ihnen grünes Licht bekommen, weitere Produkte zu regulieren?

1-091

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate*. > You are absolutely right that we are now in a very complex transitional phase. We see that we have an influx of energy from renewables with high intermittence, so that if we have a lot of sun, if we have a lot of wind, suddenly we have too much energy in our grids which are getting overloaded and that can create big problems in our grid in the case of Germany and neighbouring countries like the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. I think all this has to be tackled by better coordination and cooperation of transmission system operators, by the introduction of smart grids which could actually take care of that intermittence and these fluctuations in our energy network. I believe that this is also the key to higher integration and higher inclusion of energy from renewable sources in our grids. Therefore, I think we have to work on so-called capacity mechanisms, when we would have power stations ready to compensate the tension in the grid when we have this fluctuation, to rebalance it.

When it comes to the Ecodesign Directive, I think that we should continue but that we should continue intelligently. That means that we have to base our proposals on very firm technical analysis and really act in areas where we can make sure that the results would be positive, where there would be clear added value and it would be worth doing it.

The last element, I would say, is ecodesign. What we need is much stronger public consultation with our citizens; much better information about why we are doing this, that it is not because of bureaucracy but to save energy and lower the energy bills of common citizens in Europe.

1-092

Nuno Melo (PPE). – Boa noite, senhor comissário nomeado. A questão que lhe coloco é a seguinte. Existem inúmeras ameaças à segurança energética neste momento, desde a instabilidade política à manipulação de abastecimentos, desastres naturais, ataques terroristas. A própria Comissão Europeia reconheceu que a produção de energia na União diminuiu cerca de 1/5 entre 1995 e 2012 e, hoje, mais de 50% das necessidades energéticas da União Europeia são cobertas por fornecimentos externos, o que representou, já em 2012, uma fatura de cerca de mil milhões de euros, todos os dias.

O que eu lhe pergunto é, para começar, qual a estratégia europeia de segurança energética prevista mas, particularmente, quais os planos de emergência e quais os mecanismos de salvaguarda considerados. E já agora, terminando, sobre as redes transeuropeias de gás. Sabendo-se que as ligações através da Península Ibérica podem reduzir em 50% a dependência da Rússia, se entende ou não que esse investimento é justificado e se impõe. Muito obrigado.

1-093

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner designate*. > On the first question concerning energy security, here as I said I am very much encouraged by the recent stress test, because there is clear proof that we learned from the last crisis and that we are in a much stronger position and situation than we were five years ago. But still I think we can and we have to improve the situation, so I would say that one thing we have to take a very close look at is what kind of national contingency plans are in place, if they are really compatible with each other and how we can improve them.

What can we do to improve our gas storage capacity? There is also some space for improvement. Then, of course, what should be the crucial points in elements of cross-border connections on reverse flows and all the elements which would make this interconnected energy system work in a way that whatever situation occurs, there is always a possibility to help the country which is in trouble? So,

energy contingency plan, energy emergency plans in place, high European quality which would be monitored and checked by the European Commission.

Concerning the financing for the projects of common interest, for the bottleneck areas, I have to say that – I remember it very well – the initial Commission proposal for the Connecting Europe Facility was much more ambitious. Now we have ended up with EUR 6 billion, and I agree with you that is totally insufficient. The energy needs and infrastructure needs are much higher, and therefore we need to use all the possibilities and to tap private sector and private financial markets to help finance the needs, which are clearly there. I know about the needs, particularly on the Iberian Peninsula, both on electricity and gas interconnections.

1-094

Chair. > After that last answer I would like to thank colleagues for the questions this evening and I want also to thank our Vice-President and Commissioner-designate for his answers this evening. I will now invite the Vice-President and Commissioner-designate to make his final statement for no more than five minutes, and then we will close this meeting.

1-095

Maroš Šef ovi , *Vice-President and Commissioner-designate.* > I fully realise that it is getting very late, but first I would like to thank you all for your questions because I think it was clear confirmation that, when it comes to expertise, there are a lot of high-calibre experts both on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and also in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. I think it was quite clear that it is not only expertise, but also dedication to Europe and dedication to the real concerns of European citizens which have been displayed here in this debate, but especially in the work of both committees in the previous – and already in this new – legislature.

I know that you have been working in this area already for many years and that you have been bringing your expertise to the success of European efforts in this particular area, which for sure will be absolutely crucial for the next five years. Today we have talked a lot about the future and I can share with you in these last few minutes how I see the criteria upon which the European citizens will judge all of us – the Commission and the Parliament – in five years.

There will be very simple questions. Have we managed to fight climate change? Have we managed to provide Europe with affordable, clean and accessible energy? Have we managed to give our citizens security, solidarity and trust in the area of energy? Did we manage to restart growth? Did we help to create new jobs? Have we prepared Europe for the fierce competition in this new globalised world? The last criterion – even more important – is did we do it in our European way, meaning environmentally-friendly with sustainable policies in place and with high social standards maintained?

I know there will be no easy answers to these very difficult questions and we will have a very strong answer from the jury, because every citizen will be the best judge of how we manage to achieve these very ambitious goals. As I said, and as we discussed today, the challenges are enormous but I also believe that Europe is in a very good position with all the right ingredients to make all the necessary changes happen. I believe that with you and with our joint effort we can really make this difference.

I worked with many of you in my current mandate because, as you know, I was responsible for relations with the European Parliament. I worked mostly with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and with the Committee on Legal Affairs. We have been working very closely with the Chair in the Conference of Committee Chairs, and before that with him when he was President of the European Parliament.

I am a strong believer in close cooperation between our two Community institutions. I am a big supporter of structural dialogue, meaning having a very close working relationship between the committee and the Commissioner in the planning of the work, in executing the work, in evaluating the

results of our common work. If I get your approval I will do my best to continue this tradition and to close with both your committees in the best possible way, in the most efficient manner. I will be ready to come here any time you feel you need to debate and discuss an issue with me, and to work at an official and personal level with all of you. I believe only jointly can we progress and achieve the ambitious goals we have set ourselves over the next five years. Thank you very much for all your questions. Thank you for the very good atmosphere of this hearing. I very much appreciate it and if I get your support I will definitely look forward to working closely with all of you.

(Applause)

1-096

Jerzy Buzek (PPE), *Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy*. – Thank you, Vice-President and Commissioner-designate, for your answers, for your end statement, and also for these five days of hard work to prepare for our hearing. Thank you from all our colleagues sitting here. You have been very patient and you are also very passionate about the energy union, it is quite obvious. For the Industry Committee coordinators, the evaluation meeting will take place tomorrow at 9.30 before our joint meeting with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. I will hand over to Gianni La Via, the Co-chair of our meeting.

1-097

Giovanni La Via, (PPE), *Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*. – The Environment Committee coordinators will start early. We have our meeting at 9.00 tomorrow morning and later we will meet with the coordinators of the Industry Committee for the final evaluation.

1-098

(The hearing closed at 21.50)