



Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs  
The Chairman

ACCES RESERVE

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Mr. Jerzy Buzek  
Chairman of the Conference of  
Committee Chairs

Dear Mr BUZEK,

In accordance with Rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs held a public hearing on Thursday 2 October with Ms Margarethe Vestager, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Competition policy.

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

Ms Vestager opened the hearing by making a statement in which she referred inter alia to the following:

- her commitment and political motivation to Europe;
- her values in enforcing competition law: neutrality, impartiality and rigour;
- her intention to build on the State aid modernisation agenda in order to increase transparency and openness for the use of scarce public resources;
- the complementarity between competition policy and other EU policies such as industrial policy: competition policy is needed, in the same way that research and development, investment and capital are needed;
- the need to directly take up EU competition concerns in EU trade negotiations and in the World Trade Organisation;
- the need to develop an efficient, secure and sustainable energy market and to bring down prices for consumers and industry;
- the need to make our European companies ready to compete in the digital economy at fair prices for consumers;
- to progress the Commission's objective to protect consumers' interests to ensure that citizens benefit from competitive prices and increased choice, when dealing with cartels and anti-trusts;

Members then asked questions on the following subjects in particular:

- Competition rules in public procurement;

- Mobilising competition policy tools in areas such as the digital single market, energy, transport and maritime, regional development, financial services, industrial policy, social dumping and the fight against tax evasion;
- Initiatives to ensure that SMEs can compete on a level playing field in the internal market. In particular, how competition policy's tools will be used to provide a fair treatment for SMEs;
- International Cooperation in the field of competition enforcement, notably with the US authorities in the context of the EU-US TTIP negotiation;
- Collective redress and protection of consumers;
- State Aid to the banking sector: what is the future for special crisis rules for bank rescue and restructuring?
- Undertake a study into the end beneficiaries of state aid to banks;
- Apply EU state aid guidelines vigorously before BRRD comes into full force.
- Other types of State Aid: indirect tax benefits and tax competition;
- The current anti-trust investigation against Google;
- How competition policy can help to redress imbalances at national level in the energy market and in the retail food sector;
- Role of competition policy for the protection of personal data;
- Role of EU competition policy in promoting the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of social services;

During the debate, Ms Vestager made specific commitments regarding her future Commission portfolio.

- to establish a close and fruitful relationship at all levels with the Parliament;
- to work in a spirit of openness and transparency with the EP committees;
- to enforce the EU competition rules in a firm and fair way;
- to determinately fight cartels, the most damaging form of violation of competition rules;
- to investigate companies in a monopoly position or holding a dominant position from abusing their market power in whichever sector or country;
- to continue the current anti-trust activity against Google;
- to ensure the follow up of the State aid modernisation;
- to keep an eye on the financial sector in order to monitor state aid provision, in particular following the forthcoming ECB stress test exercise;
- to cooperate closely with other authorities in third countries and international organisations to use the necessary tools to investigate any suspected illegal use of tax benefits related to State aid and to explore how competition policy can support other policies such as the EU tax policy;
- to work in close cooperation with her fellow Commissioners to ensure fair and open competition, contribute to the growth and jobs agenda, and explore the opportunity of an energy union;
- to be transparent in all her meetings with external stakeholders;
- to shape EU Competition policy with full respect of the Treaties;

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which she reaffirmed the importance of the strong partnership between the Parliament and Commission to achieve common objectives.

On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by my committee's coordinators, who met after the hearing under my chairmanship, I hereby confirm the candidate was assessed as very good in all the following categories:

- Personal qualifications including integrity and independence, professional aptitude and experience;
- European commitment;
- Ability to communicate and initiative;
- Commitments on cooperating with Parliament and its committees;
- Aptitude as regards the specific policy area.

The S&D group stressed the need to ensure a uniform treatment of all candidates as regards the request for written clarifications, so as to avoid double standards being applied.

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

This represents the opinion of all the Members who attended the hearing.

Yours sincerely,

Roberto Gualtieri

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, positioned below the printed name.