

MONDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2014

STRASBOURG

THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

HEARING OF VIOLETA BULC

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Transport)

1-002

IN THE CHAIR: MICHAEL CRAMER
Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

(The hearing opened at 19.00)

1-004

Der Vorsitzende. > Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, meine Damen und Herren! Ich begrüße Sie herzlich, vor allen Dingen die designierte Kommissarin für Verkehr, Frau Violetta Bulc, und wünsche ihr viel Glück für unsere heutige Anhörung.

Ich möchte darauf hinweisen, dass wir am 30. September bereits eine sehr erfolgreiche Anhörung mit dem designierten Kommissar Šef ovi hatten. Alle Fraktionen waren danach mit seiner Nominierung einverstanden. Trotzdem gab es in den Wochen nach der Anhörung Gerüchte in der Presse, dass der ungarische Kommissarsanwärter Navracsecs das Verkehrsportfolio bekommen sollte. Ich habe daraufhin, unterstützt von allen Fraktionen, Herrn Juncker angeschrieben und darum gebeten, dass Herr Šef ovi Verkehrskommissar bleiben soll. Ich habe auch Präsident Schulz über dieses Schreiben informiert. Unserem Wunsch wurde nicht gefolgt, und bis heute habe ich keine Antwort von Herrn Juncker erhalten. Deshalb sitzen wir heute wieder hier, um Frau Bulc anzuhören. Das ist auch eine schwierige Situation für die designierte Kommissarin, da sie nur wenige Tage Zeit hatte, sich auf diese Anhörung vorzubereiten.

Wie Sie bereits wissen, ist der Zweck der Anhörung, uns in die Lage zu versetzen, die designierten Kommissionsmitglieder aufgrund ihrer allgemeinen Befähigung, ihres Einsatzes für Europa und ihrer persönlichen Unabhängigkeit zu bewerten. Darüber hinaus sollen auch ihre Kenntnisse im künftigen Geschäftsbereich und ihre Kommunikationsfähigkeiten bewertet werden.

Die designierte Kommissarin hat bereits auf unseren schriftlichen Fragenkatalog geantwortet. Die Antworten wurden heute Nachmittag an die Mitglieder verteilt. Auch das ist ein Ergebnis der knappen Zeiten, die wir alle haben. Unsere Anhörung wird wieder nach dem Ping Pong-Prinzip ablaufen. Das heißt, auf die Fragen werden direkt die Antworten der designierten Kommissarin folgen.

Wir haben zwei Frage- und Antwortrunden vorgesehen. Die erste Runde für die Koordinatoren wird in jeweils 6-Minuten-Slots unterteilt. In der zweiten Runde für alle anderen Abgeordneten beträgt die Zeit für jeden Slot nur 3 Minuten. Wer eine kurze Frage unter einer halben Minute stellt, hat auch die Chance, direkt auf die Antwort der Kommissarin noch eine weitere Frage zu stellen, um Klarheit zu bekommen.

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass die Zeit sehr kurz bemessen ist. Wir werden Sie wie beim letzten Mal stoppen, und die Zeit wird auf dem Monitor im Sitzungsraum angezeigt. Ich werde die Rednerinnen und Redner unterbrechen, sollten sie ihre Redezeit nicht einhalten. Das gilt auch für die designierte Kommissarin. Bitte bedenken Sie: Je kürzer die Frage formuliert ist, umso mehr Zeit hat die designierte Kommissarin für eine entsprechend umfassende Antwort.

Zum Schluss möchte ich noch darauf hinweisen, dass die Verdolmetschung in 23 Sprachen zur Verfügung steht. Die gesamte Anhörung wird live auf der Parlamentswebsite übertragen und später auch als Video zur Verfügung stehen. Auf Twitter können Sie live mitdiskutieren unter dem Hashtag EPHearings2014.

1-005

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Chairman, honourable Members, it is a great privilege to speak to you today. Today's dynamic society has more and more demands for connectivity, mobility

and global awareness. That makes transport an essential backbone to our economy and to our lives. Transport drives growth and creates jobs.

While preparing for this hearing today, I could not help noticing that transport is somehow taken for granted – I would even say underestimated – in Europe today. It tends to be seen as a problem, rather than a solution and a creator of growth. I will do my best to change that kind of attitude by working with you, the European Parliament, to give transport the importance it deserves. You are already aware of that importance, I know, since you voted to triple the infrastructure funding for the current budget period. I am fully aware of the obligations that such a commitment places on us, and I hope you will recognise me as a passionate advocate of this vital sector.

To start with, transport needs to be friendly to the environment, it needs to be competitive and it also needs to be inclusive – because let us not forget that transport is ultimately about people: the travelling public, workers, you and me.

As President-elect Juncker has made clear, the work of his new Commission will evolve around the need to create jobs and growth and to maintain social fairness. We must keep these elements in mind at all times. We need to integrate them into every aspect of transport policy. Everything we do has to create value – economic, social and environmental.

My previous work has provided me with extensive experience and a sense of the importance of networks. When I was developing strategies with clients and municipalities, logistics were always an essential element. Smooth supply chains embedded in a wider, efficient network are the key to our modern life. However, anyone involved with innovation – as I have been myself – will know that innovation works best when there is high-quality infrastructure to support it. In the case of transport, the infrastructure should be properly integrated and made technically compatible, regardless of the mode of transport – road, rail, air or water – that people use. There are also many opportunities here for innovative business models.

I will continue to support optimal connectivity across Europe, in an integrated conceptual system. This is why it is so crucial to turn the Trans-European Transport Network into a reality. Building the missing links and removing the bottlenecks are essential in this process. I promise that we will advance on this, and I also promise that, if I am appointed, I will lead the way in finding the best solutions for an integrated and prosperous European transport system.

With my professional background as an engineer and an entrepreneur, I see that we can do more to enable transport to benefit from new technologies – ICT in particular – while respecting Europe's traditionally high social and environmental standards. If used properly, ICT can be an excellent instrument leading to sustainable success. Relevant projects include e-Call, the River Information System and the European Railways Transport Management System, to name but a few.

Transport networks are, and will remain, a key element of Europe's single market: the heart of the supply chain, providing free flows of goods and people. Smooth high-quality interconnections and modern and functioning infrastructure are vital to growth. They are part of the solution to Europe's economic recovery.

Should I be confirmed by Parliament as a Commissioner, I will use my experience, determination and commitment to make sure that transport brings jobs and growth and also that it contributes to the EU green agenda.

Let me turn now to the principles that will underpin my priorities for the next five years. I will start by returning to the importance of co-modality and interoperability, because I hope you agree that the

future of transport is to be connected – on every level. To achieve this, we will need to look at ways of promoting integrated journey planners and ticketing services. The tracking of goods, real carbon measurement, data availability and protection, and the acceptance of such measures, also need to be tackled. We will need what I would call a ‘technology push’, funded by public and private investment, involving as many parts of the transport sector as possible.

If I am confirmed in post, I will invite all the stakeholders – cities, large companies, SMEs, new start-ups, public transport providers and Member States – to innovate in transport. Cities and urban areas are a good innovation test bed. In my own city, Ljubljana – which now has five hybrid buses and 20 buses running on methane, thanks to the EU’s Civitas project – the city authorities are now planning cleaner, safer and more reliable public transport services.

The Smart Cities initiative, in particular, has a great role to play in this regard, and I will make it a flagship project over the next five years. Its momentum has to be sustained in order to make the most of all the opportunities in the transport, energy and ICT sectors to improve Europe’s urban environment. But I would also like to emphasise that ‘smart cities’ are not only about technologies but also about social innovation. Therefore, the close cooperation of many stakeholders will be needed in order to recognise opportunities and set the right course.

For the future, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) will play a major role: they have great potential in terms of safety, with smart vehicles and infrastructure. They also have significant environmental advantages: by helping to avoid unnecessary journeys and empty vehicles they can make transport more efficient by keeping emissions to a minimum.

Furthermore, as President-elect Juncker has said, if Europe is to have affordable energy available in the years to come, it is important that we strengthen the share of renewables and alternative fuels in our energy usage. Transport has an important role to play in realising that ambition, since Europe is still over-dependent on oil as a power source.

Transport also has its part to play in making sure that Europe meets its wider commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions. I will therefore work to contribute to the EU project coordinated and steered by Vice-President Šef ovi .

Alternative fuels are firmly at the heart of EU transport policy. The challenge now is to get things up and running. That means making sure enough appropriate infrastructure gets built so that we can create the conditions for these fuels to power transport into the future. And let us not forget the important role that technology is also going to play in furthering the realisation of these goals.

One thing we have learned from the past is that failing to invest in transport infrastructure is a mistake that has long-term consequences. We cannot assume that transport services will always be there for us, or be safe, if we do not maintain them. In the EU, these public investments have been falling since the late 1970s. Maintenance budgets and infrastructure quality across the EU have diminished. We have to act, and I am committed to doing so.

I will also do everything in my power to promote integration across different transport sectors, based on the principle of general infrastructure costs being funded by those who use them. This will generate revenue and help to ‘green’ the transport system.

Without investment, we risk losing our global competitive edge. By using innovative financing instruments to target investments in key infrastructure, we can help to create jobs and to boost growth and competitiveness at a time when Europe needs them most. The EUR 300 billion investment plan proposed by President-elect Juncker will address this financing need, create immediate jobs and

establish the conditions for respecting the environment. Of course, we should make the best use of instruments already available within the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), and we should find ways to complement national and regional funding from the European structural and investment funds.

If I had to sum up my future agenda for you in one word, it would be 'people'. We need to be aware of social issues and of transport's impact on the labour force, the workplace, workers' health and safety, and their life-work balance.

For those working in the transport sector, social conditions need to be fair. The transport sector is – on the whole and particularly in land transport – an ageing one. It also has relatively low numbers of female workers. Clearly, with high unemployment in the rest of the EU economy, we want to avoid future critical skills shortages. So it is important to make transport an attractive profession, especially for younger people. I will study what kind of Europe-wide action could be taken to improve training and career prospects and to ensure quality jobs in transport.

We also need fairness, to guarantee equal conditions, and let me state clearly that I am strongly opposed to social dumping. The fairness of social conditions, as well as fairness in the internal market, is essential.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words about the single market. It is what the European Union is about. It is Europe's greatest achievement for business. It is the engine to drive growth and jobs and to help stimulate gradual economic recovery. It is vital, however, to remove the remaining technical and administrative barriers to make sure that transport services can operate across the whole of Europe without national boundaries.

That is why I intend to work actively with you and with the Council to achieve the rapid adoption of the Single European Sky and the Fourth Railway Package.

Chairman, honourable Members, you may see in me an open-minded Commissioner-to-be who is devoted to solving problems in a collaborative and innovative way. All that we do, we do for ourselves – the people – to improve our lives. I can only hope that this resonates with you.

Thank you for your attention. I am now ready to answer your questions.

(Applause)

1-006

Wim van de Camp (PPE). – Voorzitter, wij hebben op dinsdagavond 30 september een goede hoorzitting gehad met de kandidaat-commissaris Šef ovi . Wij hebben op 1 oktober, de woensdagochtend daarna, als transportcommissie unaniem besloten dat wij met de heer Šef ovi verder willen. Ik denk dat ik namens de hele commissie spreek als ik zeg dat het vertrouwen van de commissie in de heer Šef ovi groot is en blijft.

Door allerlei politieke ontwikkelingen, waarop ik nu maar niet zal ingaan, is de heer Šef ovi geroepen tot hoger orde. En wederom levert de transportcommissie een belangrijke bijdrage aan de toekomst van de Commissie Juncker. Het optreden van de Sloveense regering verdient niet altijd de schoonheidsprijs, in dit dossier, maar mevrouw Bulc, dat ga ik u niet verwijten. Wij zijn hier vanavond bijeen om naar uw politieke kwaliteiten te kijken en voor zover mogelijk naar uw kennis van de transportportefeuille zoals u die de afgelopen vijf dagen hebt opgedaan.

Namens de EVP-Fractie heet ik u dan ook van harte welkom in dit Huis. Ik heb tien collega's die u fair en diepgaand zullen gaan ondervragen over de diverse dossiers. U kent reeds mijn spreekwoord: zonder transport staat alles stil, ook de economie van de Europese Unie. Ik heb vier vragen voor u.

Allereerst: het witboek met de titel Stappenplan voor een interne Europese vervoersruimte. Wat gaat u daarmee doen? Gaat u dat versneld aanpassen? Neemt u het over? Wat is uw opvatting hierover?

Tweede vraag: de financiering van de TEN-T-projecten in relatie tot de financieringsfaciliteit voor Europese verbindingen. Ik zie nu reeds dat de Raad dit dossier probeert leeg te eten. Hoe gaat u dat voorkomen, zodat het geld van de TEN-T-projecten behouden blijft en wij eventueel, met de 300 miljard van de heer Juncker, méér geld krijgen?

Derde vraag: hoe wordt de samenwerking met de andere commissarissen? We zijn bang dat transport op de laatste plaats komt te staan en dat moet u echt verhinderen.

Laatste vraag: wat gaat u doen aan stedelijke mobiliteit? Als ik het goed begrepen heb, wordt u ook verantwoordelijk voor het stedelijk gebeuren binnen de Europese Unie. Graag uw opvatting daarover.

Tot slot: de gehandicapte medemens. Iedereen wil vervoer, ook de gehandicapte medemens. Wat zijn daarvoor uw plannen?

1-007

Violeta Bulc, *Commissioner-designate*. > I will try to address all four questions in this short period of time.

First of all, the White Paper. I believe that White Papers are very necessary because they show the vision. Whoever collaborates and whoever wants to participate in any kind of sector, including of course the transport sector, needs directions to know how to best contribute to common goals. In my opinion, the current White Paper that I was able to read sets the right directions for the future. It is not going to be on my high priority list to make any changes to it. However, we know that every day things are changing, are evolving, and I would look very closely at this Paper. With my team, I will constantly evaluate this and when necessary we will propose some updates based on the assessment that we are going to carry out. Definitely this has a very important role in how the future of transport is going to be formulated. What I really believe in is constant collaboration and constant communication with those that want to share the visions of the future.

Let me then move on to the TEN-T project. The TEN-T project, from my point of view, is one of the most important directions that the EU has taken, for a very simple reason. Europe needs a seamless transport network. It is trying to manifest the best out of the European Union and that is the single market. So TEN-T is actually helping us to achieve smart growth, smart sustainability and smart inclusion because it is bringing Europe together, and that is what is so important about it.

I am very excited, first of all, about the network itself that has been laid as a strategy, and, on the other hand, that we also have a good mechanism for how to fund it. In that Paper, in that agreement, besides the funding mechanism we also have priorities – priorities on how we are going to go about this TEN-T project. What I am basically trying to do is follow that.

Let me briefly also address the third and fourth questions. Urban mobility is very important but it is at the level of the states. What we could do at the Commission is try to coordinate and encourage them. With the first measurements that we help them to shape, we can compare how successful they are, and with best practice cases we can do even more.

As far as cooperation is concerned, this is who I am: I am going to talk to you a lot; I am going to talk to my friends the Commissioners and I am sure that we are always going to find the best solution possible.

1-008

Ismail Ertug (S&D). – Herr Vorsitzender! Herzlich Willkommen, sehr geehrte Frau Bulc! Unter uns, Sie haben etwas erwähnt, was mir zugegebenermaßen gut gefallen hat, nämlich Sie haben ganz klar erwähnt, dass mit Ihnen ein *social dumping* nicht möglich sein wird. Wir hatten in den letzten fünf Jahren durchaus die Situation, dass die Europäische Kommission aus unserer Sicht sehr einseitig in Richtung Liberalisierung gegangen ist. Deswegen geht meine Frage in diese Richtung.

Erstens: Welche ganz konkreten Ziele oder Maßnahmen wollen Sie einleiten, um die sozialen Rechte und Sicherheitsstandards im europäischen Verkehrssektor zu verbessern? Sind Sie letztendlich bereit, möglicherweise auch eine Tariftreue in die europäische Gesetzgebung einzuziehen?

Die zweite Frage geht in Richtung Finanzierung. Die europäische Infrastrukturfinanzierung wurde diverse Male auch von Ihnen erwähnt, und wir haben mit den transeuropäischen Netzen und der *Connecting Europe facility* einen Weg begangen, wie wir dieses Netz kreieren können. Jetzt gibt es aber in diversen Ländern diverse sogenannte Maut-Debatten, vor allem auch in meinem Heimatland, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Haben Sie konkrete Ziele, eine europäische Infrastrukturfinanzierung in Bezug auf ein einheitliches Mautsystem einzuführen?

1-009

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all, let me try to answer the question you raised around social rights. I believe that, as I said in my letter, it is an incredible advantage and achievement of Europe that we have the social rights we have. Too often I hear that social rights are actually an obstruction. I believe that it has great potential that we turn social rights into an advantage. But we have to think how to integrate them into the business model, how to integrate them into our concepts better than we have done so far. So I hope we can together progress on this element.

On the other hand, even the agenda of the EU – growth, inclusion and sustainability – which is all about people and social conditions in which we live, so I will try to really support, to the best of my abilities, these very important EU directions and also bring them to the level of social lives. But let me be a bit more concrete. Europe has a lot of legislation regarding social rights, and we do not really know any more which country is implementing which: how far did we get? So what would I do as my first step? I could see that, just by studying the material in the last couple of days, I would first like to know: who has implemented what? Then we can take measures and steps, if necessary, for those countries that have not implemented things that have already been agreed by the Parliament.

The other element that is important here is that social legislation also needs to be part of the – I call this buzz word, which they say: refit. So we need to see if they all still make sense, or can we actually make them even clearer? Can we communicate what we wanted to achieve with them clearer and bring them closer to those that are tackled by them?

The most important thing for me is that I can see all in sectors – in the air, in roads, in railways, in ports – everywhere there is a tendency and a real openness to constantly have a dialogue with social groups, and I intend to continue on that. I believe that we are not enemies; I believe that once we sit together – and that is what my experiences are very strongly based on – once you put people with good will together at the same table, we are always going to find solutions, and that is going to be my attitude. Even in the cases that seem to be very tough and almost unsolvable, I always believe that good people can solve things in a good way. So that will be the very strong attitude that I am going to bring to the table whenever discussing very difficult issues.

Another thing which surprised me – especially as it is part of social rights – is also this discrepancy between incredible growth, that specially we see in the maritime business, and on the other hand so many young people unemployed. That just does not make sense. So I know that part of the social agenda has to be also the promotion of all the possible opportunities for the youth. And we also have

seen for females that they enter this business because on the one hand we have incredible growth, and on the other hand we have unemployment. But I will take a close look at this: why it happens and, with my fellow Commissioners who are directly in charge of certain areas that are at the edge of this problem, I hope together we can find a good solution.

I see that I have one more thing that I need to answer, and that is about tolls. I am very much for that. Europe sets a strong direction. It says 'polluter pays' and it says also that the user pays and, of course, on a country level, every country has a right to find the proper ways of how it is going to finance its infrastructure. However – and you are referring to the German case; I have not seen any paper on that, but it is just rumours in the hallway – what my thought on that is that we have to stick to the basic European values. So there should not be any discriminatory offers or discriminatory proposals.

1-010

Roberts Zīle (ECR). – Priekšsēdētāja kungs! Vispirms grib tu sveikt Jūs, *Bulc* kundze, šaj komitej un vīlu Jums veiksmi šodien! Bet es grib tu sveikt arī iepriekšējo Komisijas prezidentu *Juncker* kungu par šo unikālo un negrozāmo valsts prezidentu un Komisijas struktūru, kur pat politisku sarežģījumu rezultātā nav nekā mainījis. Un varbūt, kā mums, Transporta komitejai, ir jāmaina savs nosaukums, un tādā veidā jāsauc par transporta un politisko ugunsdzēsēju komandu vai komiteju, šādi palīdzot Eiropas Komisijas prezidentam palielināt sieviešu patsvaru viceprezidentu vidū.

1-011

What would your reaction be if, let us say, at the end of 2016 it is clear that some of the Connecting Europe Facility corridor projects affecting the Cohesion Fund countries have made no progress at all?

How would you react, so as not to lose resources and not to fail again with investment in transport infrastructure, in the way that you mentioned in your opening words?

1-012

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I will try to refer to the concept that also has been introduced before and which is called, I believe, 'use it or lose it'. I think that is an important concept. I will tell you why. I was a minister in my country and Vice-President of Slovenia, and that was my area. I had to cover it, and I could see the real challenges – especially on the Member State level – we are facing. For some reason, the important critical projects that are on a critical path just are not implemented. So how can we hope for a better Europe if we do not get the vital projects finished? That is why I find this concept 'use it or lose it' a good one: because it stimulates. It stimulates those that already have taken the responsibility to complete the project: it is a very good motivation. But that does not mean that the countries will lose the money. The money that is not well used by those that have not performed the projects well goes back to the pool, and from that pool the same countries use that money again. So it is not lost for the countries, but just brings a bit of discipline.

No one is pushing the countries to set the dates. They have to set them themselves. We have to set them ourselves. I will tell you also an interesting thing. As soon as I took over the Cohesion Fund as my job in Slovenia, I realised that people do not even understand that this is their money. The Slovenian Cohesion Fund is Slovenian money that through the rules of the EU we get the right to use. It is a lot of motivation that we also can come to the table, that we can explain and make people accountable for the decision, especially on a Member State level.

I will definitely engage a lot of my energy into communication and explanation about the responsibility we have on a Member State level in order to fulfil and finish properly the commitments we gave at the European level.

1-013

Roberts Zīle (ECR). – Thank you for your answer. We had long discussions on this subject here in the committee, and the Commission prepared the Connecting Europe Facility concept as an instrument whereby money from the Cohesion Fund could also be used, according to Cohesion Fund rules, to

create large-scale corridor projects involving many Member States. That is why we are still discussing situations of this kind.

If you are not ready to prepare a three-Member-State corridor project, you will lose this Cohesion Fund money for transport entirely. Other countries which are more cooperative will be able to use the money for other projects, and in that case there will be no progress on corridor projects. That was my worry, and thank you for your honest answer.

1-014

Gesine Meissner (ALDE). – Frau Bulc, herzlich willkommen auch von unserer Fraktion der Liberalen. Sie haben schon gesagt, dass Ihnen wichtig ist, einen einheitlichen europäischen Transportmarkt mit zu kreieren. Das ist vollkommen das, was wir auch in diesem Ausschuss möchten. In der letzten Periode gab es wirklich ein Projekt, bei dem wir alle – egal welcher Fraktion wir angehören – sehr einig waren. Das waren die TEN-T-Guidelines und das Geld dafür aus der *Connecting Europe facility*. Das ist etwas, was uns sehr am Herzen liegt. Mir persönlich, weil ich aus einem Küstenland komme, ist es auch wichtig, dass jetzt erstmals wirklich alle wichtigen Häfen einbezogen sind und alle Binnenwasserstraßen und Kanäle. Das hatten wir vorher so nicht. Direkt darauf beziehen sich meine drei Fragen.

Die erste betrifft die Häfen. Was kann man Ihrer Ansicht nach tun, um auch in Zukunft die Häfen und die Schifffahrt noch nachhaltiger und umweltfreundlicher zu machen? Vieles wurde ja schon überlegt. Wie kann man das voranbringen?

Zweitens: Bei den Binnenwasserstraßen gibt es ja sicherlich noch viel mehr Kapazität, als wir im Moment nutzen können. Wie sehen Sie dort die technischen Schwierigkeiten, die wir vielleicht haben können? Was meinen Sie, was dort gemacht werden müsste, um auch Binnenwasserstraßen stärker als umweltfreundliches Mittel nutzen zu können?

Drittens: Sie haben selber gesagt oder geschrieben: „*I'm a solution-driven person.*“ Wenn Sie das Gefühl haben, wir brauchen einen europäischen Verkehrsraum: Wie ist es denn, wenn sich aber vor Ort Widerstände regen, bei den Regierungen oder auch bei Menschen, die dort wohnen, wo etwas verbessert werden muss, um die Infrastruktur europäischer zu haben? Sie haben gesagt, das müssen die Mitgliedstaaten selbst machen. Aber ich denke mal, wenn die Kommission nicht mit unserer Hilfe ein bisschen Druck ausübt, dann kann man unter Umständen lange warten, bis wir weiter kommen. Was gedenken Sie zu tun, um wirklich dafür zu sorgen, dass das umgesetzt wird, was man unterschrieben hat?

1-015

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I believe I have three major questions. The first one is ports related to the green agenda. The second one is inland water paths. First of all, regarding the ports: of course, as you pointed out, ports are an important part of the TEN-T overall project, and having the maritime business, actually the shipping business, the most prosperous in Europe, I mean we have seen an incredible growth in there, so that of course the question you posed makes it even more interesting and even more challenging. I believe that there has been a lot done already in this area. First of all, technology helped us a lot, and it is helping us all the time: not only on the level of ships and all the technological improvements – I was really fascinated by the story that now there are some ports that actually reward the ships that have ecological engines with lower taxes, lower port fees. I think that is the really good direction to go.

The other one is that I have heard that now there are these electrical plugs that the ships can use in order to not use fuel to park the ships (pardon my expressions), but they can use electricity. I think that is an incredible achievement in the sense of bringing the pollution down in ports. But I also think that we need to understand that whatever is related to the maritime and green agenda is actually a matter of international agreements – right? So we need to bring this very firmly also to the attention of

international organisations and talk to them and get a sort of global agreement, international agreement on how we can approach that. If I remember correctly, there were some initiatives already for the first step: that we agree on measurements. How are we actually going to measure? Because if we do not measure, it is hard to say if somebody is following or not following some agreements. I think that this is an important first step. At the same time, I would continue encouraging these green solutions that are already in place, communicating and encouraging other ports to use them.

I better go to another question, otherwise I will not be able to answer at all. The other one which I think is a very important one is also this inland water lanes. I think there is huge potential here. We have not all, but some, Member States that are very rich in these waterway paths, and we need to support them in order to bring them on board on a quality level and also on an efficiency level, like other transport means. But we have a big challenge here, because this sector is very fragmented. Mostly is it a family-run business, it is small enterprises that are running it, so they need help. I think that this NAIADES 2 Agreement plays a very important role in it – I might have said this wrong. It is very important that it helps on an operational level, because these fragmented small companies would never come with an integrated solution by themselves. I think that Europe played here a very important role regarding traffic management, also some incentives, improvements into the technological solutions.

1-016

Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL). – You want to prevent social dumping, for example in air, maritime and road transport. How will you take this issue to the Commission working list? Because, if you want to really change things, you need to do that.

Secondly, transport policy is a policy for Europe's future. Europe needs growth and I think digitalisation is a huge possibility also for transport mobility and logistic solutions. How patient will you be in taking transport to the place where it should be in the Commission and in Europe, to be a sector which can make Europe's transport a world leader, to create an advanced customer-orientated, interoperable and sustainable transport system, even the world's smartest transport system, with less money but more thinking and achieving more results?

1-017

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all social dumping: we see social dumping in different forms happening in all parts of the transport sector, but the reasons for it are different. So first of all, I think we need to recognise that. Secondly, let me repeat again so that there will be no doubt: I am really against social dumping but I would like to point out that the social dumping which is happening in the trucking industry or services is very different to that in airspace services but it has similar effects. As far as I understand, dumping always appears at the edge of an economy. It is a distortion so it is not something that we can just say is going to go away if we put more and more sanctions in place. I would rather seek some innovative solutions on how we actually can organise ourselves so that social dumping will not be an issue anymore.

I do not have a straight answer right now but, if I sit together with my colleagues the other Commissioners and look at this issue from another perspective and say 'OK, why is this happening and how can we actually remove the reasons which are causing social dumping?', I hope that we are going to find good solutions there.

The other question you were asking is: how I am going to make transport the core of the European recovery? Well, most of the work has been done so, if I am lucky, I am just going to put a medal on it! But what I am saying is that the foundations have been set, so we have good investment money that we can now use in order to start the projected TEN-T layout – especially all the main corridors. But, as the colleague who already challenged me earlier a little bit said, yes, I think there will be a combination, especially on a local level where we are going to join together cohesion funding and special funds which are available for this backbone.

However, I think that we will have to seriously sit down at the table and think about additional investments. I think Europe needs also innovative financial instruments which are going to be used in order to support this ambitious plan. I do not have a straight answer but I am sure that, if the team is approved on Wednesday, this will be very high on our agenda and we are going to sit down and see how this EUR 300 billion investment idea can best be manifested on a local and on a backbone level.

But, as I still have time, I do want to put another subject on the table. I think that technology is here to serve us. If we just consider the last hundred years: what incredible developments there have been. So I am pretty sure, especially in the green agenda, that if we motivate all the players in an effective way we are going to be surprised how technology can serve us in that respect. When I think about that I also think about similar opportunities which come from managing the network in a unified way.

The other day I saw a picture: I cannot imagine how the train drivers cope when they have about five management systems in front of them. No wonder there is a serious problem. We have had some accidents that I hope we are going to avoid in the future by using ICT and improving the management system on the railways. So all this, little by little, will bring together a good solution. I am sure that, if we really stick with the agendas and the commitments which have been approved by the Parliament, we can really move forward and, step-by-step, constantly create new opportunities for ourselves.

1-018

Karima Delli (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Commissaire désignée, mes chers collègues, moi aussi je regrette que nous n'ayons pas eu de réponse de M. Juncker. Je le dit haut et fort: le transport ne sera pas la variable d'ajustement de la future Commission européenne. Les transports sont un sujet trop sérieux pour mériter juste un jeu de chaises musicales, c'est la vie au quotidien des citoyens. Vous n'êtes pas responsable, Madame Bulc, et donc je vous souhaite la bienvenue dans cette commission.

Ma première question est très rapide: nous sommes en train de négocier le paquet climat, la COP 21 se fera demain, en 2015, à Paris. Les transports sont responsables d'un tiers des gaz à effet de serre. Le sommet climat est un enjeu déterminant, malheureusement les transports ne rentrent pas de plain-pied dans les politiques climatiques. Comment allez-vous gérer l'urgence environnementale, sociale et sanitaire. Comment allez-vous mettre en place une véritable feuille de route sur le sommet climat de 2015?

Deuxième question: le Conseil européen soutenu par la Commission a déclaré le projet Lyon-Turin éligible aux subventions de l'Union européenne jusqu'à 40 % des dépenses. Ce projet, qui est inutile, représente plus de 26 milliards d'euros. Comment la Commission peut-elle envisager de financer de tels projets, comme ce fameux tunnel d'exploitation Lyon-Turin dans le cadre du mécanisme européen d'interconnexion ou RTE-T, sans connaître les coûts réels, leur équilibre budgétaire, leur viabilité économique, mais surtout leur impact environnemental?

1-019

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > The challenge of meeting the green agenda is huge. Europe leads the world in this respect: I think we take it very seriously but we can never be satisfied. I love nature, I live with nature, I respect nature, and I know that we have to develop even greater respect for it.

I also know that Europe has done things in the last couple of years which are extremely challenging, and I hope we will search constantly for further improvements in that direction.

Let me point out a couple of things which I think are very important and which are already included in the agenda and in our transport strategy. I am positive that they are going to come together, and that we will be surprised by how much transport will start contributing to realising our green ambitions. First of all, I see how much improvement we have made in technology in all sectors. I have mentioned

a couple of examples of that already. Secondly, people's behaviour is changing, and I think we can do more there because consumer pressure is the best pressure. It is hard to motivate companies just for the sake of it because they are driven by other motivations. But if consumers are willing to pay for it, and if we charge the polluters for polluting, I think we can start to join things up.

I do believe that Paris Climate Summit is a great motivation. Even though I am probably not going to be there, I plan, if I am a member of the team, to sit down with the Commissioners who are going to go and who have even greater responsibility for the green agenda. I will cooperate fully in preparing very good material to represent the EU on this issue.

I have referred to the behaviour of people and technology, but you also mentioned a big project which is a frequent topic of discussion. It is a very important part of the European backbone and, yes, it is huge. The argument is about whether we can afford projects like that. If we begin to have doubts about these corridors, we will never get the backbone working. I prefer to think that we will be able to sit at the table together and see if we can make progress on this issue.

Once we have the railway backbone in place, we can start moving cargo from the roads to the railways. That is the biggest motivation for building the railway backbone, besides, of course, satisfying the needs of passengers.

All these big projects create jobs and opportunities for SMEs in the areas concerned. Let us see if we can encourage that, and see that these big projects are not intruders, or offenders against nature, but that local communities will cooperate with us. Let us ensure that such projects benefit not only the backbone but also the local communities.

1-020

Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (PPE). – Frau Bulc, jedes Jahr ereignen sich auf den Straßen der Europäischen Union etwa 250 000 Unfälle. Das EU-Programm für die Straßenverkehrssicherheit 2011 bis 2020, für das ich verantwortlich war, enthält umfassende Vorschläge in Bezug auf die Halbierung der Anzahl der Schwerstverletzten und der Unfalltoten in Europa. Ich würde nun gern wissen, welche ganz konkreten Maßnahmen Sie als nächstes in Angriff nehmen werden, um das große Ziel *Vision Zero* Realität werden zu lassen.

1-021

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Every death that happens on our roads or any other transport path is a sad story and it has to be taken very seriously. I like the very ambitious goal that the EU set for itself – zero deaths on European roads. I know that it is probably impossible to reach it, but we have to try our best to get as close to that figure as possible. I believe that there are many different measurements being carried out but it depends a lot on Member States helping us to actually achieve the best result as possible out of this.

One thing that we are doing, of course, is improving on one side the vehicles themselves and educating and training people who are involved in traffic or actually in any means of transport. I think education plays a vital role, not only for youth but all for generations – we all need education and we all need to be reminded all the time.

The other one is technology, better traffic information, better exchange of information between the neighbouring countries in a case of pursuit or violation of laws or things like that. So there are many additional things that could be done at a country level, which means that they improve the signalling, improve also the traffic signs. All that works in favour of bringing the toll down.

But I have to say that we have achieved an incredible result in the last couple of years. I have heard that now the figures are a bit on the same level, which is probably also due to the economic situation – but this is, of course, my speculation, which I do not want to elaborate on further. However, I believe

we just need to analyse and see which instruments have really worked for us in the last couple of years – even improve them – and work very closely with people that are involved in traffic management. Hopefully that will be a favourable result.

1-022

Isabella De Monte (S&D). – Anche da parte mia qualche domanda in merito alla sicurezza, perché io ritengo che nel programma di Junker, nella lettera di propositi, il tema della sicurezza sia solo vagamente accennato. Quindi anch'io vorrei chiederle un po' in generale, a parte il discorso della sicurezza stradale, come intende affrontare il tema della sicurezza e, in particolare, per quanto riguarda i centri urbani e le zone edificate.

1-023

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I think in Europe, safety is the ultimate goal and also a very, very important issue that is being taken very seriously. In order to improve safety we even created three agencies. I believe that roads is the only segment within transport that does not have an agency, which are actually taking care even more that all legislation and agreements are well implemented. They also take care of the certifications, and I believe that there is even a higher opportunity there to increase the importance of agencies. Since we already have them as an instrument, we can actually give them even more opportunities that they can be our extension in making sure that the safety measurements are taken seriously.

We also have noticed that some aspects on a country level, some legislations are not taken really the way they should. In the worst case, if they are not, I think the EU has to make sure that those that are already agreed get well implemented as well. So either through agencies, and in a worst case we will have to maybe take some countries also to the court to make sure that the safety elements are well implemented.

The other thing is also, of course, on safety as a concept. We need to constantly seek good traffic management and good control over the infrastructure. We have seen several successful cases in transport, especially the one that we now try to implement also on the railways, and it is part of the already-agreed agenda that we install the overall railway traffic management system that I believe is going to largely contribute to safety, for example in the railway section.

So in each of the segments have a little bit different issues, but the priority is that we have good traffic management systems available, that we really have very clear legislation that we can use and agencies help us to implement on a local level. Also, besides that, we need to work as much as possible on bringing awareness: how important it is that we respect everything that is related to safety on the passenger side and, of course, on the management side and on the ownership side.

1-024

Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE). – În cazul în care totul merge bine, prima întâlnire cu mini trii transporturilor, ai dumneavoastră, în noua calitate, cu mini trii transporturilor din statele membre va fi la Roma, la începutul lunii noiembrie, iar subiectul acestei întâlniri va fi cerul unic european. Sunt state membre care au rezerve privind acest proiect și care doresc să păstreze monopolul controlului de trafic. Care este poziția dumneavoastră privind implementarea acestui important proiect european? Aș mai vrea, dacă aveți timp, să îmi spuneți care va fi poziția dumneavoastră, în cazul în care un stat membru, prin Master Planul de transport, va propune modificarea coridoarelor europene sau a proiectelor din cadrul CORE.

1-025

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I believe that the Single European Sky is a great project. It is great from a business point of view but it also good in terms of meeting the green agenda. On the one hand, it optimises traffic, it optimises routes and – as you mentioned and if you will allow me to answer the last question first – we need to simplify these routes as much as possible. I understand that there are challenges in some countries because there are protected areas, but I hope we can continue

an open and constructive dialogue and help to get the routes as straight as possible in Europe because that saves fuel and it makes traffic management much easier.

In relation to SES II and the other regulations that are in place for the Single European Sky, I believe that the slot management concept known as FABs (functional airspace blocks) is also a very interesting one because it optimises the way that routes are managed. It contributes first of all to better management and also, directly, to lower CO₂ emissions.

Yes, I will definitely be defending more options and seeking better solutions in this area. I believe that the project is good and that it has to be supported, but we need to bring on board as many players as possible and, in addition, hopefully, to work well at Member State level too, to unify the management of traffic on a single platform.

1-026

Claudia Tapardel (S&D). – În cadrul scrisorii de intenție, este prevăzut faptul că sunteți responsabilă de dezvoltarea orașelor inteligente. A adar, întrebările mele se leagă de planurile dumneavoastră în acest domeniu. Urbanizarea în creștere și insuficiența serviciilor publice de transport au avut ca rezultat îngreunarea traficului, poluarea atmosferică și fonică, ceea ce reprezintă, în mod evident, o amenințare majoră la adresa sănătății și a siguranței orașelor Uniunii Europene. De aceea, cred că toată lumea consideră că promovarea unei mobilități urbane sustenabile este mai importantă decât oricând. Așadar, întrebarea mea este următoarea: intenționați să revizuiți, în următoarele șase luni, Carta albă a transporturilor și, mai ales, să dezvoltați o nouă politică europeană a mobilității urbane sustenabile?

În legătură cu această întrebare, mecanismul pentru interconectarea Europei a oferit pentru prima dată posibilitatea de a finanța nodurile urbane. În mod evident, întrebarea mea, se referă la planurile pe care le aveți dumneavoastră în vederea implementării acestei noi posibilități de finanțare.

Vă mulțumesc și vă doresc mult succes.

1-027

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Smart cities, as I said, are going to be a fascinating aspect for me, if I am part of the team in the future. The reason why I like the concept is because it brings different areas, different Commissioners and different challenges under the same umbrella.

People are moving into cities more and more. Cities are becoming bigger and they are becoming more congested and they need better answers. They need better planning and they need better solutions: ways to keep down all the pollution to which you referred.

On the other hand, urban planning is a matter for the Member States. So the EU does not get involved directly unless we see that Member States have invited us to do so, on the basis of best-practice initiatives. As I mentioned in my opening speech, I like the Civitas project because it helps Member States to collect together different measurements, and we are now really learning how to measure, how to evaluate and how to take more effective action.

About noise and about air pollution, I would say that, here again, technologies can work for us, and the 'smart city' will bring to the table not only the transport people, the energy people and the ICT people but also, I hope, socially aware people, to start searching for new urban solutions. Congestion is not just a problem of traffic; it is also a problem of habit; it is a problem of scheduling; it is a problem of urban planning. Where are the factories? Where are the offices? How are they positioned? Because if all the people are always going in one direction – and I saw that this morning on the way to the airport when three lanes were completely empty and we were all jammed in one lane – there is something wrong with the planning. It just does not make sense. So we will have to bring all this into consideration when we think about cities.

1-028

Deirdre Clune (PPE). – In your opening statement, you referred to the term ‘optimal connectivity across Europe’ and your ambitions to work in that area. I would like to ask you about regional and local airports. As you know, they provide a vital link to the outlying rural and isolated areas in Europe, they drive investment and tourism, and they are a lifeline to local communities. They are valuable pieces of infrastructure and we need to ensure that we protect them. I would like to know if you would look at maybe relaxing state aid rules, or indeed what plans would you have, or could you outline your priorities to save and protect our regional airports and answer the problems of these remote areas, such as the outermost regions and our islands?

1-029

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > You will see why I have a passionate interest in this question. I completely agree with you that these airports are vital to the development of local areas, especially in many cases, remote ones. I am very much in favour of that. I love to fly. I would never have had an incredible cultural experience if I had not taken a flight to the island of Barra in the Western Hebrides. This is the most exciting airport that you can imagine because it operates only when there is a low tide. When it is high tide there is no airport.

It is such a vital element to the culture of the Western Hebrides in Scotland. Yes, we have to support that but, on the other hand, we also need to take into account that the financial construction has to be put together in a way that supports itself. Otherwise we can just continue with subsidies, and in the end the whole EU is going to be in trouble.

It is also hard for me to talk about that aid because it is not part of my portfolio, but I would like to say that I am willing to talk to the people who are in charge and see what they have to say about it. I will try to search for new business models that are closely tied to the enterprise models and hopefully we will be able to keep these important airports for the local communities alive.

We have a similar example in Slovenia, in Portorož, where this little airport is so important for bringing tourists from all over Europe to our tourist town. I would love to see better solutions in that area and, if I am able to, I would love to contribute my thoughts and experiences in any business model for that segment.

1-030

Peter van Dalen (ECR). – Mevrouw, ik heb twee concrete vragen. Eén: binnenvaart en infrastructuur. U noemde het onderwerp net al even. Om een goede verbinding tot stand te brengen tussen de West-Europese en de Oost-Europese binnenvaart moet één groot knelpunt worden weggenomen, aan de Donau in Zuid-Duitsland tussen Straubing en Vilshofen. Wat gaat u doen, mevrouw, om dit knelpunt weg te nemen zodat die vaarweg goed bevaarbaar wordt?

Twee: u sprak over innovatie en nieuwe technologie. Welnu, voorzitter, er is in het wegvervoer een innovatie en een belangrijke nieuwe technologie, genaamd de "ecocombi". Zij die het niet willen begrijpen spreken nog steeds over *gigaliner*, maar dat vergeef ik ze. Wat gaat u doen, mevrouw, om de *gigaliner* niet meer te noemen en alleen nog maar te spreken over "ecocombi" en die "ecocombi" in Europa te bevorderen?

1-031

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > So, first of all about the River Danube. The River Danube could be a very important part – it is actually a part – of TEN-T plans, and I hope that there is going to be a good agreement on deepening the waterways of the Danube and that the Danube can then be connected to the overall transport network of Europe.

Of course, we have an additional challenge here. On the one hand it is an environmental challenge, so we need to find really good solutions in order not to endanger the habitat too much, especially biodiversity and ecological challenges. On the other hand, we also have a challenge that there are not

only EU countries that are involved in this. We are talking about the EU and I believe two or three other countries which are outside the EU that are also part of the Danube project. So additional bilateral or trilateral discussions will be needed in order to reach an agreement, especially regarding the funding, because this part is already in the plan for the TEN-T backbone, but we need to talk with other countries which are not part of the EU on how they plan to come on board and participate.

Because I have only thirty seconds, let me elaborate also on your second question. I have heard that this is a very interesting challenge for the EU. I believe that for some Member States this has been a normal way of behaviour. Right now I have not had enough time to really formulate an opinion but I would say that I would stay neutral. Countries that reach bilateral agreements, it is up to them, but I do not think that is a direction that Europe would like to go in.

1-032

Lucy Anderson (S&D). – Could you say a bit more about what you are prepared to do to ensure that all passengers, including passengers with reduced mobility and disabilities, actually have access to transport networks? At the beginning you said that you were very people-focused, but what does that actually mean? Will passengers get proper and detailed information on routes and other relevant issues? We know it is about issues such as high-quality interchanges. The connecting Europe networks are all very well, but that is nine corridors. What about the hundreds and thousands of stations and networks where the interchanges are terrible, where there are no escalators, where people have to drag luggage up and down steps?

What are you going to do to make this focus a reality and ensure that, particularly where EU funds are involved, disability is actually taken seriously? In answer to Mr van de Camp, you actually said very little about really doing something for those with disabilities; please could you say a bit more?

1-033

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > If you want to be and stay socially oriented – to stay nice to passengers – this is an important issue. I believe that there are directives already in place but I am sure that we can do more. Even at home, I can tell you that 10 or maybe 15 years ago nobody would think to build bus stations, trams or buses with special entrances. Today they are there, and every time we build a new bus station I can see that this consideration has been borne in mind. Little by little, Europe is actually raising awareness everywhere. The importance of providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities is being recognised.

Can we do it overnight? Probably not. But, with constant pressure and especially by checking that directives which have already been accepted are being followed up, I think we can succeed. We need to carry out inspections and see whether the legislation that is in place is well respected.

You also mentioned passenger information rights. I believe that, with the proposed new management systems – for, of course, today we have such fragmented networks that it is hard to provide passengers with a single reliable source of information – we can actually make progress here. We are going to have better information to give to passengers, not only about tickets but also about conditions and about possible routes, so that will improve that kind of relationship and, of course, information for disabled people, about where it is convenient for them to travel, etc., will also be included.

1-034

Itaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señora comisaria propuesta, el cuarto paquete ferroviario es fruto del incumplimiento del tercero. ¿Aplicaría usted una nueva gobernanza para el transporte superando la resistencia de los Estados miembros en sus monopolios históricos?

En el Parlamento hay un acuerdo sobre los seis informes y el Consejo no fija posición en la parte política, lo que perjudica a las compañías que reclaman seguridad jurídica y reducir gastos

burocráticos. Si esta situación se enquista, ¿sería partidaria de aprobar y aplicar la Directiva de interoperabilidad ERA y la de seguridad sin el avance de la parte política?

En tercer lugar, ¿va a realizar estudios para medir el impacto que la aprobación del cuarto paquete tendría sobre el empleo y las inversiones? ¿Y se ha planteado medir lo que implica no aprobarlo tanto para estos aspectos como para la innovación y la intermodalidad del ferrocarril?

¿Cómo va a impulsar la empresa común *Shift to Rail*, básica para la innovación en el sector que ha mencionado usted?

Y por último, ¿qué piensa sobre la separación de gestores de infraestructuras y operadores de servicios?

1-035

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Thank you very much for this important question. I wish I had five minutes to answer, but what I can say is that I would try to do my best that we take this as one package. I think it is very important that we bring together a technical and also, as you call it, political – I would call it more an economical – package. So technical brings first of all – which everybody, I am sure, will love – the refit, which means lots and lots of different legislation and papers and rules to follow. It is going to be quite simplified, and it is going to be easier to follow and easier to manifest as well, and know when you are right and when you have not fulfilled your obligations.

I am not going to talk too much about technical, because there is, I believe, no dispute over the technical. But the business one: why do I find that one very important? We have to unbundle the local loops. We have to sever this independent management operation layer. Also, if Member States cannot immediately do everything, we need to push at least that we can have clear accounting information. So we need to be able to see how costs are allocated to be able to define the cost of the service, otherwise it is hard to manage.

I was director of an SME for a long time; director of a carrier business of Telecom Slovenia and helped many boards of directors to establish their businesses. But if you do not know what your basic costs are, what the costs are of the service that you are trying to serve, it is hard to make any kind of management decision. So that is why I believe that this economical package is really, really important, and I would try to do my best. I can see that the Parliament has already voted confidently in the first hearing. So let us work together to get it passed and let us not divide it, because we are going to suffer. We want to bring more clearance and liberalisation to this market.

1-036

Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE). – Señora comisaria propuesta, le voy a plantear dos preguntas de absoluta actualidad.

La primera versa sobre los problemas que ha suscitado la aparición de plataformas para la contratación de servicios regulares de transporte de viajeros en las ciudades y entre ciudades basada en medios electrónicos.

Usted sabe que el sector del transporte público de viajeros y del taxi está sometido a una serie de requisitos: licencias, permisos, autorizaciones, contratación de pólizas para garantizar daños a terceros y pasajeros, y declaración de impuestos. Cualquier actividad empresarial con ánimo de lucro que no cumpla con unos mínimos requisitos de calidad y seguridad supone competencia desleal y *dumping* social.

Señora comisaria propuesta, ¿qué medidas tiene previsto adoptar de manera urgente en relación con este asunto? ¿Promoverá una acción concertada en toda la Unión Europea, incluso en forma de

legislación, en apoyo de los Estados miembros para impedir la competencia desleal y el *dumping* social en este sector?

La segunda pregunta es sobre el ébola. La epidemia de ébola está suscitando problemas en todos los países y nuestra pregunta es muy sencilla. En la reunión de alto nivel sobre la epidemia de ébola, la Unión Europea ha decidido tomar medidas de seguridad en el transporte aéreo. Con independencia de la subsidiariedad y de las competencias de los Estados, ¿cómo cree que la Unión Europea podría establecer un sistema coordinado de control aeroportuario del ébola para, fundamentalmente, luchar contra él?

1-037

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Thank you very much for both your questions. On the first of them, on taxes, by all means I support what you were suggesting. We need to introduce clear organisation on this level as well.

A couple of days before I came to Brussels I was taking a taxi home, and we have just introduced new requirements that taxi drivers have to have a unified number displayed very clearly and have to pay monthly operation fees. At the beginning the taxi drivers were really complaining. Then I asked this guy, 'Do you like the system?' and he said, 'Yes, my only complaint is that at first I had to pay EUR 200 for the licence and now the licence is EUR 50 so that is not fair.' But everything else, he said, was fair.

So my answer is that this is obviously an issue for the Member States because it is a local issue. Of course, we can help to support and promote what they do, and if we find elements that are common to Europe as a whole, we can maybe do something on a European level too. By all means, we need to support all the measures necessary to tackle unfair competition.

With regard to Ebola, I do not think it is good to close facilities down. That prevents more proactive action to deal with it, but yes, we need European opinion on that issue.

1-038

Inés Ayala Sender (S&D). – Señora comisaria propuesta, en primer lugar la felicito porque tiene usted un buen fondo por su manejo del deporte; y menos mal, porque esto es realmente una maratón, así que la saludo en esa capacidad que tiene usted para prepararse y para contestarnos. Yo le voy a hacer un par de preguntas en relación con las infraestructuras.

Yo he sido ponente para la *Connecting Europe Facility*; tiene usted ahí un presupuesto de unos treinta mil millones de euros para gastar en siete años, y aunque parezca poco para todas las necesidades del transporte sostenible y cohesivo europeo, el reto va a ser gastarlo y gastarlo bien.

Usted en sus respuestas propone, sobre todo, instrumentos financieros, pero los dos obstáculos reales van a ser, en primer lugar, que se trata sobre todo de cofinanciación, y resulta que los Estados miembros —el mío, por ejemplo, pero la mayoría— tienen un problema con la deuda pública. Es decir, que no tienen ni siquiera para cofinanciar. Necesitamos una regla de flexibilidad y yo querría saber si usted estaría dispuesta, con el señor Katainen y el señor Moscovici, a ayudarnos para que las inversiones en infraestructuras no pesen de manera imposible en la deuda pública.

En segundo lugar, el otro obstáculo es la falta de voluntad política bilateral. Yo soy española y nosotros queremos pasar el Pirineo, pero Francia no quiere que pasemos el Pirineo, y por mucho que Bruselas quiera—y hemos conseguido un Reglamento estupendo—, pues no hay manera de pasar. ¿Qué haría usted en este caso?

Y por último, quiero decirle —se ha dicho ya— que esperamos un paquete social. Usted habla de un Libro Blanco; los Libros Blancos son largos, complejos, no acaban de ver la luz y son siempre buenos

principios, pero necesitamos acción. No encontramos ya marinos ni capitanes, los ferroviarios y los camioneros envejecen y los pilotos de aviación sufren el *dumping* social. Necesitamos un paquete social que usted pueda negociar con los sindicatos. ¿Estaría usted dispuesta?

1-040

Georges Bach (PPE). – Vielen Dank, Frau designierte Kommissarin! Nicht alle Punkte, die Sie angesprochen haben, haben mich beeindruckt. Aber zwei Punkte möchte ich hervorheben.

Erstens: Die Menschen in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen, und auch diese Dialogbereitschaft, die Sie in Ihren Erwähnungen hervorgehoben haben. Meine erste Frage: Die zwei Fragen behandeln eigentlich die Passagierrechte genau wie bei Kollegin Andersson. Werden Sie bei einer Überarbeitung der Passagierrechte den Menschen, den Passagier wieder in den Mittelpunkt stellen? Das war bisher nicht immer so.

Zweitens: Derzeit hängt eine ganze Reihe von Gesetzgebungen sprichwörtlich in der Luft. Der Grund ist eigentlich bekannt: Die Meinungsverschiedenheiten bezüglich Gibraltar. Der daraus resultierende Mangel an juristischer Klarheit führt dazu, dass der Europäische Gerichtshof unsere Arbeit machen muss. Das ist sehr bedauerlich.

Was werden Sie und Ihre Kommission tun, um diesen völligen Stillstand, diese Blockade wieder zu lösen, damit die Gesetzgebungskompetenz wieder der Kommission, dem Parlament und dem Rat zugeführt wird, diesen Institutionen, wo sie hingehören.

1-041

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > The first question: on passengers' rights. I think that another huge achievement of Europe is that we really prepared such a good and solid package of passengers' rights. However, what we have seen at this moment is that some of the airlines rather cancel the flights that they do not need to actually follow some recommendations or even some rules that were implied. So we would like to avoid that.

Do I have an answer right now? No, I do not. I have to be honest. I do not know exactly how all these procedures are taking place. But I would like to assure you that passengers' rights are very high on my agenda. I am a passenger, and I know how I feel. I have seen some incredible changes that have been made in the past, and I only hope that, through constant open dialogue with all the stakeholders, we will continue in that direction and extend our commitments to passengers not only in Europe but also internationally and have a greater influence in that aspect as well.

Let me try at least to answer also the second question. The Gibraltar issue was brought to my attention. My opinion on that is that it is a political question and it should not hold up all the other initiatives that are meant for Europe. So I would ask for isolation of this project and then pursue it when the political situation is resolved.

1-042

Curzio Maltese (GUE/NGL). – Signora Commissario, sono stato da poco a Genova, una città che vive la tragedia dell'alluvione, ed è davvero difficile spiegare ai cittadini di quella città che l'Europa continua a spendere miliardi in grandi opere inutili, quando non si riescono a trovare pochi milioni per evitare tragedie come queste, in una città che oggi ha un sistema di governo delle acque meno efficiente di quello che aveva nel XV secolo, anche a causa dei tagli.

Allora le domando, intanto, se non intenda rivedere le decisioni del 2013 e stralciare alcune di queste grandi opere inutili, che rischiano di peggiorare la stabilità idrogeologica in alcune regioni europee, che è già molto compromessa, come testimoniano le alluvioni in Italia e quelle prima in Gran Bretagna, in Germania e nella Repubblica ceca.

In particolare, vorrei sapere se non intende far analizzare, prima di lanciare i bandi di concorso, alcune di queste grandi opere, come per esempio la Torino-Lione, che oggi è la più costosa delle grandi opere – si calcola 150 milioni di euro per ogni chilometro – e sottoporre a nuovi studi questo progetto.

1-043

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Floods are extremely unfortunate events and I can tell you my country has been badly affected by them as well. But we see that this is not just the problem of the country where the floods appear; it is actually a challenge of the entire water system because somewhere the water just wants its way through because it has been piling up throughout the entire route.

So I think this is a serious challenge. I believe that in TEN-T, and specially in the CEF, we already have priorities and some of the projects have been addressed already in order to avoid floods in the future. I am sure that there we can do more, so I will be welcoming further discussion on that, but right now it is hard for me to commit to anything but what has been agreed and approved by the Parliament. All of this is life, and we cannot just stick with something that has already been approved years ago. When life is challenging us we have to address the challenges that appear in front of us. I welcome the discussion on these issues but I hope that, if we can carry through whatever has been approved so far, we will eventually solve these issues as well.

1-044

Davor Škrlec (Verts/ALE). –

Poštovana gospo o Bulc, politika javnog zdravlja i politika transporta iznimno su isprepletene, iako na prvi pogled izme u njih ne postoji jasna poveznica. Buka od prometa snažno utje e na kvalitetu života i zdravlje gra ana. Narušava ravnotežu u prirodi zbog trajnog napuštanja staništa životinjskih vrsta iz podru ja koja su izložena stalnoj i intenzivnoj buci od prometa. Slabo korištenje obnovljivih izvora energije u sektoru transporta ukazuje na zanemarivanje utjecaja transporta na klimatske promjene koje, osim utjecaja na zdravlje i život ljudi, sve više uzrokuju velike ekonomske štete.

Kardiovaskularne bolesti, rak i astma dokazano su povezane s motoriziranim prijevozom.

Prema istraživanjima, samo u Austriji, Švicarskoj i Francuskoj gotovo 40 000 smrtnih slu ajeva direktno je povezano s one iš enjem zraka iz transporta.

Sve spomenuto ini mali dio znanstveno dokazanog utjecaja transportne politike na zdravlje gra ana. Gospo o Bulc, možete li nam re i koje e konkretne mjere poduzeti Komisija kako bi integrirala javno zdravlje u transportnu politiku? Hvala Vam na odgovoru.

1-045

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > We have all been aware of this challenge. Modern society has brought a lot of additional problems along with modernisation and opportunities for a better quality of life. All of that you have mentioned already in your question, so I am not going to repeat it but, yes, what we do is never enough. Whenever it is about people, we never do enough until there are bad consequences.

First of all, however, we understand what is going on. For example, in the case of railways, I know that noise is a major form of pollution and I have learned that there are new types of brakes available now which try to bring this noise pollution down somewhat. I know it is not enough but it is a first step, and I also believe that technology will help us more in this respect. In particular, if we are going to go in for different types of fuel or different types of engine, that is going to improve people's lives too. But the people who live alongside these lines are, I think, casualties of modern society.

How can we help them? It is a good question. We would need to work with them, of course, in a social dialogue to find the best solutions for them. One important aspect is urban planning. How we plan together is, again, something that constitutes a cross-Commission challenge – urban planning

plus transport planning. We should work hand in hand to try, in so far as possible, to avoid the types of situation you have been describing.

1-046

Georg Mayer (NI). – Frau Bulc, herzlich willkommen, von mir als Österreicher und als Nachbar, hier bei uns in diesem Ausschuss. Ich bin sogar ziemlich direkter Nachbar von Ihnen, ich komme nämlich aus Graz. Und Graz und Laibach sind ja nicht besonders weit entfernt. In diese Richtung wird auch meine Frage gehen. Ich habe nur eine Frage.

Mit hat bis jetzt sehr gut bei Ihnen gefallen, dass Sie uns nicht vorgeben, etwas zu wissen, was Sie *de facto* nicht wissen. Das habe ich bei Fachministern sehr oft erlebt, dass sie vorgeben, etwas zu wissen und es nicht wissen. Das kann dann oft ins Gefährliche übergehen. Die Frage geht bei mir um den baltisch-adriatischen Korridor. Sie werden selbst wahrscheinlich damit schon Erfahrungen gemacht haben, denn Österreich ist ja seit der Osterweiterung Transitland Nummer eins. Das heißt, wir haben erhebliche Verkehrsbelastungen und die Bedeutung dieser baltisch-adriatischen Achse ist damit gestiegen. Jedoch werden zwei Projekte in Österreich, der Semering-Basistunnel und der Koralmtunnel, weder finanziell angemessen noch vorrangig unterstützt. Diese Projekte dienen aber ausschließlich der Verwirklichung des baltisch-adriatischen Korridors, da sie für rein österreichische Belange nicht notwendig wären. Jetzt möchte ich Sie dazu fragen: Wie sehen Sie das? Wie werden Sie das prioritär behandeln?

1-047

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Regarding all the rules and priorities of the routes, I believe they have been set and approved by CEF: everything that is part of TEN-T. What I am going to do first is follow that and I am going to fully support it, of course.

I know that there are some challenges on following those planned routes and I know that Slovenia has been challenged – I am not going to use another word – for not fulfilling the Package 1 and Package 2 and Package 3. We have some challenges to implement those already agreed in previous packages. I hope there is not going to be Package 5. I will try to make sure that we stick with Package 4 for a while.

What am I going to do? At this point all I can say is that I am going to try to follow as much as possible the CEF priorities that were already decided on. I will try to do everything possible to ensure that the countries that are in the major corridors fulfil the previous packages, that they stick with what they promised in previous packages. What that means for the Baltic and Balkan corridors we have yet to see. We will see how successful we are going to be. Hopefully, in cooperation with you, we are going to be able to push a little bit harder to ensure that the commitments already made in the past are actually respected.

1-048

Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Madame Bulc, d'après la dernière proposition budgétaire du Conseil, les agences européennes doivent baisser leurs effectifs de 5 % dans le cadre de l'effort global des institutions pour diminuer leurs dépenses.

Dans le contexte du quatrième paquet ferroviaire, l'Agence ferroviaire européenne doit acquérir de nouvelles compétences. Elle ne sera pas en mesure de remplir une mission élargie avec des moyens amoindris et un nombre restreint d'agents. Maroš Šef ovi , lors de l'audition du 30 septembre dernier, s'est engagé à renforcer le personnel de l'Agence ferroviaire européenne, notamment par le biais d'experts nationaux.

Comptez-vous vous en tenir à cet engagement? Cela se traduira-t-il par une augmentation du budget de l'Agence ferroviaire européenne ou par une redistribution de ses moyens financiers?

1-049

Violeta Bulc, *Commissioner-designate*. > First of all, Mr Šef ovi is going to be my boss – coordinator – so I had better follow up on what he promised. On the other hand, yes, I am aware of the challenges that the agencies are facing. I think that there are actually two sides to this question. As I see it – and hopefully that we are going to come together to what you ask – one side is referring to how to fund the agencies. I believe that it has already been agreed – and some good examples we have already – to marketise some of the services that the agencies provide. I would encourage agencies to continue searching for services that they can sell directly, and they can co-fund their existence. I believe that this could be a very good model for the future. But that does not answer the question of when agencies get more work to do. So what else? I believe that overall, in all administrations in Europe – especially as in the case of Slovenia – we will have to cut administrative costs. I mean they are simply too high for an advanced economy to actually absorb. On the other hand, if there is more work and if the work is legitimate and we need it in order to fulfil the European agenda, I will fight for those workers; I will fight for the money, for that additional money to be assigned to agencies that have to do some jobs that we ask them to do.

1-050

Claudia Schmidt (PPE). – Ein einheitlicher Wirtschafts- und Währungsraum benötigt einen einheitlichen Verkehrsraum. Sie haben sich in Ihrer Einführung eindeutig zu diesem Leitgedanken bekannt. Ich bin wohl nicht die einzige hier, die das ausdrücklich begrüßt. Dennoch brauchen wir mehr als Worte und mehr als versuchte oder gelungene Kommunikation. Zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt gibt es 23 verschiedene Maut-Systeme in der Union. Mit der Debatte rund um die deutschen Maut-Pläne wird eine Schublade geöffnet, die wir eigentlich schließen sollten: die Belastung von EU-Bürgern ohne erkennbaren Mehrwert. Abgesehen davon, dass damit diverse Budgetlöcher einfach und ohne Reformen gestopft werden können, gibt es für diesen Zweck unzählige Steuern auf alle Arten des Landtransportes.

Würden diese Mittel tatsächlich in die Infrastruktur investiert, dann hätten wir keine Probleme bei der Instandhaltung unserer Infrastruktur, und der Ausbau der transeuropäischen Netze würde wesentlich zügiger vorangehen. Sie haben mehrfach Ihre Erfahrungen als Verkehrsteilnehmerin betont. Nun jedoch meine Fragen zur Verkehrspolitik.

Wie wollen Sie die 23 verschiedenen europäischen Maut-Systeme vereinheitlichen? Wie stehen Sie generell zur Einführung eines einheitlichen europäischen Maut-Systems, dessen Erträge zweckgebunden für den Ausbau der Infrastruktur und prioritär für den beschleunigten Ausbau der Transeuropäischen Netze verwendet werden?

1-051

Violeta Bulc, *Commissioner-designate*. > Again, I will try to be quick. First of all, what we have agreed already – and I firmly stand by that – is that we can apply the rule of ‘user pays’ and ‘polluter pays’. What does that mean for the toll systems? Toll systems are a Member State issue, so we cannot prescribe the price, right? But what we could do, we could demand that these be cost-based. So I would stick by that. Cost-based pricing, I think it is a very good pricing system. But we cannot really compare the prices there are in different countries. So here, this is a first step. My vision would be: (1) long-term vision. If we really had this unified system that everything is unbundled, that we can have clear accounting statements, that we can really see the prices that external prices get included, that would be great. But this is a nice, long-term, vision. I would like to walk towards that, because that would really make transport a competitive good element in the competitiveness of Europe. But I do not think it is foreseeable right now. Right now, what I would fight for is this really cost-based pricing and for every country to really move away from any kind of discriminatory elements.

1-052

Roberts Zile (ECR). – A few years ago, when we discussed here in the European Parliament the TEN-T and also the Connecting Europe facility, we received the head of the Russian railway undertaking, Mr Yakunin, with the exhibition ‘Bridging Eurasia: working together with EU TEN-T’.

Among the projects, there was a project for the extension of the wide-gauge line of 1 520 mm from the Ukraine border to Slovakia, Bratislava and then on to Vienna, Austria. So far, some railway undertakings in the Member States have already put up resources to do studies on this. What is your opinion about European Union funding for this extension of the 1 520 mm gauge to the EU Member States?

1-053

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I can feel that this is an agitated topic. I will be very pragmatic and you might not like my answer, but I cannot give you a better one right now. The priorities are set in the CEF schedule and I really want to stick with that. However, if the European backbone wants to be successful it has to be integrated internationally so we will have to find new ways on how to finance and how to cooperate – by bilateral agreements, meaning Europe and other countries – and really to integrate our network in this global network of railways, roads and any other means.

I was very enthusiastic at breakfast two days ago when I read an article about the railway between China and Europe and how profitable it is becoming. These are for me very exciting new projects, because it is 25% more expensive than travelling by ship but it takes only one month compared to two months by sea so it is very attractive for high-value products. So railways here are starting to compete with other means of moving goods on a global scale and we need to reconsider that. We need to look for good solutions in finding ways of cofinancing it, but I do not think that the EU should just take over finances by itself.

1-054

Jens Nilsson (S&D). – Herr talman! Här är jag. Jag ska återkomma till en fråga som vi delvis har varit inne på, men jag tycker att svaren kanske kan vara ännu tydligare.

När det gäller vägtransporter behövs ju tydligare regler om hur företag i branschen kan konkurrera på basis av kvalitet, inte låga löner, låga sociala kostnader och dålig arbetsmiljö.

Erkännandet och kunskapen om de existerande reglerna om sociala rättigheter, både lagar och kollektivavtal, är fortfarande otillräckliga; till exempel regler om kör- och vilotider.

Hur kommer du att se till att gällande regler implementeras i medlemsstaterna? Hur kommer du att bekämpa den sociala dumping som förekommer eller, mer specifikt, vilka initiativ kommer du att ta för att komma tillrätta med den illegala trafik som idag förekommer, där företag går förbi och går runt kabotageregler, kombiregler och annat som vi har bestämt, och som skapar en osund konkurrens i många medlemsländer?

1-055

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > These are very serious challenges, I admit. Let me try to answer the three of them that I noted.

First of all, regarding competition, the European Commission will always fight for fair competition. As I said, there are always going to be attempts to evaluate those rules. So what can we do? On a Member State level they can do a lot in the way of exchanging information, in the way of cooperation, and this is a very vital element that we would like to encourage and also promote even more.

Then you mentioned also dumping. It goes very much along the same way. How can we prevent it if somebody has registered these mailbox companies across the border? It is hard, but we are bringing a higher consciousness into place, just communicating and exchanging information and constantly discovering all these companies, we think we can make a first good step forward to solving this issue.

The cabotage issue is directly related also to the green agenda, to what we are trying to bring into this unified transport space in Europe. I would always fight for that and to find ways for trucks to always travel full. It does not make any sense to me that trucks are moving around empty. It is an agreement, again, that we will have to strike together. Right now I believe that they are entitled to three rounds before they return back to their own country. That will have to be revised to see if it still makes sense: is that still effective, is that still good for what we want to achieve as regards a competitive edge and also on a green agenda?

So there are many little challenges that add up to a big challenge, and I hope we will be addressing them constantly, because they are not going to go away.

1-056

Andor Deli (PPE). – Tisztelt Bulc asszony! Bevezet jében kihangsúlyozta, hogy milyen fontosak a TEN-T folyosók az Ön számára. A Rajna–Duna folyosó talán a legfontosabb kapcsolatot jelenti az európai országok között nyugat-kelet vonalon. Létezik továbbá egy Duna stratégiája is az EU-nak, amely a mobilitást és az intermodalitást fejlesztené a belvízi vonalakon, ugyanakkor ezek a belvízi útvonalak nem állnak meg az EU külső határain, átfolyanak rajtuk, így a tagjelölt és társult szomszédos országokon is, mint például Szerbián, Bosznia-Hercegovinán, Moldován vagy akár Ukrajnán. Hogyan látja biztosítottnak azt, hogy a nem EU-tag, de Duna menti országokban is legyen pénz az olyan projektekre, amelyek igazából az összeurópai belvízi útvonalfejlesztést segítik. És még egy kérdés, figyelemmel a szlovéniai háttérre: mi a véleménye más regionális jellegű belvízi folyosók fejlesztéséről az EU-nak épp abban a részében, ahonnan Ön is származik, például a Száva vagy a Dráva folyók esetében.

1-057

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > As far as importance is concerned, of course, these corridors are, as you pointed out, very important, and inner water lanes are just part of the bigger network. So we need to look at them in connection with the railways and with the roads, because they complement each other. So I am very much inclined to look from the systematic point of view, that we see how they interlink.

Yes, you pointed out especially the River Danube, which has many countries related to this river. As I mentioned before already, and what I would really do, is to invite all of the participants in this path together and see how we can co-finance it. I do not think that the EU can just take over and finance everything. The EU already has, in the CEF programme and in the Cohesion Fund programme, already some funds available so that the Member States can improve their inland waterways.

So we need to bring to the table also countries that you mentioned, which is Serbia and then Moldova, and other countries all the way to the Black Sea. I am sure that, either with some combination of foreign investments, or a combination of other innovative financial instruments, we can reach a good agreement. But I fully agree with you that we need to do this together, and it is an important element in the overall transport network of Europe.

1-058

Dominique Riquet (ALDE). – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Commissaire désignée, vous savez que la directive sur les travailleurs détachés est une directive importante puisqu'elle participe à l'esprit de la libre circulation des travailleurs, mais qu'elle a eu beaucoup d'effets secondaires négatifs.

Le transport est un domaine très particulier, car les travailleurs des transports embarqués sont, par définition, non pas détachés, mais déplacés. Et là, nous avons été confrontés à des problèmes très particuliers.

Ma première question: envisagez-vous d'essayer d'obtenir une révision spécifique, pour les transports, de la directive sur les travailleurs détachés, car les récentes modifications qui ont été faites n'ont pas résolu nos problèmes?

Ma deuxième question: pour préciser une réponse que vous avez presque donnée tout à l'heure, désirez-vous libéraliser totalement le cabotage routier?

Ma troisième question: que pensez-vous de la création d'une agence européenne du transport routier ou d'une section routière qui pourrait être intégrée à une autre agence de transport?

1-059

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all, yes, I would support your idea that you already suggested in the question and I would support analysis. I would love to learn what are the facts concerning these displaced workers and what we can do in the future to improve these conditions. As far the liberalisation of road cabotage is concerned, I think we already have an agreement in place. What I had in mind was to see if it is still appropriate. We constantly need to re-evaluate our legislation and the rules that we impose. If we see that there is a benefit in changing it, then I would be in support of that idea.

As far as the road agency is concerned, it is an interesting question because the more we talk about challenges – and not only challenges but opportunities in road transport – the more often we ask ourselves: ‘Oh, this is the only section that does not have an agency, do we need it? Shall we establish a fourth agency and have it for roads as well?’ It is a very appealing thought, of course, but related to costs I would be a little bit reserved about just jumping on a good idea that seems to be very obvious. However, I like the idea that you came up with, which means sharing an agency that already exists also for road issues. I will be happy to follow up on that one.

1-060

Massimiliano Salini (PPE). – Buongiorno, complimenti e in bocca al lupo, come si dice in Italia.

La mia domanda si articola su due questioni molto puntuali e brevi: il sistema europeo di gestione del traffico ferroviario e l'Agenzia ferroviaria europea. Per quanto riguarda il primo tema, questo sistema nasce con lo scopo di unificare il sistema europeo, di implementare l'aspetto unitario. Sono noti – ne hanno parlato in diverse domande – gli effetti positivi dell'intera operabilità. A questo punto abbiamo una questione di tipo tecnico: le specifiche tecniche devono essere stabilizzate, fissate e implementate. Quindi, la prima domanda riguarda il contributo che lei potrà dare affinché vi siano questa stabilizzazione e questo sviluppo.

Per quanto riguarda invece l'Agenzia ferroviaria europea, in modo molto secco le chiedo se lei ritiene di poter contribuire alla possibilità che le emissioni delle autorizzazioni, sia sui binari che sulle apparecchiature di bordo, siano affidate all'Agenzia.

Visto che ho ancora due secondi, le rivolgo un'ultima domanda patriottica sull'Italia. Il sistema di navigazione interno riguarda anche il futuro dell'Italia, in particolare il fiume più importante d'Italia che è il Po, e quindi riceverà richieste a questo riguardo. Le chiedo di aiutarci a superare i blocchi ideologici, che fino ad ora hanno impedito che anche in Italia il sistema di navigazione interna possa contribuire allo sviluppo del paese.

1-061

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all, thank you very much for all these questions; I will see how far I can get with the answers. First of all, the Railway Agency: I think the Railway Agency has played an incredible role already. In the way in which we are going, when we are really pushing for this unified railway system, it is going to be even more because we would need to have more specifications for the equipment and not only for the cross-connectivity issue. I would like to

address a little bit this link between the local railways systems and the backbone but I probably will not have time. But the Agency has a role to play there as well.

The Agency is also helping to come up with specifications which help seamless traffic information, which I think is really important for safety. The core defenders of safety are agencies, so that is what they do. They emphasise everything that needs to be done in order to ensure that safety comes first. Of course, we will try to see which elements are part of the safety issue and they will be immediately passed on to the agencies.

1-062

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D). – Let me start with the Russian embargo. There is talk about compensation for farmers, industries: not a single word about compensation for transport companies. Millions of tonnes of freight lost means a few times more lost millions in terms of money.

Ms Bulc, for many years European industry has been dreaming about having a European Minister of Transport. Would you be ready to be such a European Minister of Transport? It means, first of all, how would you defend and protect the interests of European transport industry companies in this global world? And, second, there is also a dream about stabilisation of the legal and fiscal environment for transport companies. This is my question, and I do not know what would be a final recommendation. It would be nice to hear what you have to say.

1-063

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all, what happened because of the Russian embargo is very tragic. This is something that is hard to predict in planning, but it happened and I do believe that it is not part of this Commission's remit that I am going to be in charge of, but definitely we need to talk about it. We cannot just ignore it. It is a fact that a lot of damage has been done, and it needs to be somehow addressed. But the other matter which you also opened up, which is very important, is how we are going to bring European transport into a global market and how we are going to defend the European interests. One thing is: Europe needs to stay open. If it wants to be a player in the global environment, we need to be open. But we need to fight, and I will fight. I will fight for fairness. I will fight for reciprocity relationships. So it is not that are just going to keep giving but not receiving anything, so here you have a very good defender of European rights as well. I see many areas where this will be very much needed. It is in the airplane business, because we see all these international ports that are at the edge of the European Union pushing hard, and we need to respond. We will need to respond somehow; we cannot just say 'No, no, no'. So there is a very important issue waiting for us, and we can see that in all other aspects of transport as well. But yes, I will fight for Europeans.

1-064

Marie-Christine Arnautu (NI). – Monsieur le Président, Madame le Commissaire, vous vous êtes engagée à poursuivre les politiques de libéralisation un peu tous azimuts en matière de transports et, alors que commencent les négociations interinstitutionnelles sur le quatrième paquet ferroviaire, vous affirmez que vous œuvrerez pour toujours plus de concurrence dans les transports ferroviaires de passagers, au motif que le manque de compétition conduirait à des prix élevés et une baisse de qualité.

Madame le Commissaire, je suis une représentante française et je n'ai pas à rougir, par exemple, de la qualité du réseau ferré français. Notre service public a été précurseur, notamment pour les lignes à grande vitesse, et est parmi les plus sûrs au monde.

Dans vos futures orientations, comptez-vous entendre et écouter la voix de millions de citoyens d'Europe et notamment de Français, qui ont, en mai dernier, exprimé clairement leur rejet de l'ultralibéralisme et de la technocratie trop souvent à leurs yeux incarnés par cette Union européenne?

Comptez-vous aussi, Madame, tirer les enseignements du passé qui démontrent que la libéralisation du rail se traduit souvent par une baisse de la qualité de service et de la sécurité des passagers?

1-065

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First of all, the fourth package is not all about liberalisation. How I see it, it is a lot about safety, interoperability, transparency, and when we talk about this business side of the section, as I said before, countries will not have a unified approach to that, and I am aware of that. But we need to establish some sort of common ground where I would fight for one very important first step, and that is a transparent accounting booking that we see how the costs are allocated. It is very important that we do not get this mixture of cross-funding from one service subsidising another service, because we will see there are still some vertical integrations present in Europe, and the first thing that we could do and we should do is that we make sure that we see that they are not subsidising each other. So that has nothing to do really with liberalisation per se, it just has to do with transparency, that we get more cost-oriented, especially because we are talking also about EU funding. We are talking about EU investments, and we need to make sure that we know what we are investing in. Also, the other matter is this independence of the management operational layer, which is very important as well and has nothing to do with liberalisation, but it has to do with the transparency, safety and better service that will follow afterwards for passengers and for the railway systems itself.

1-066

Jill Evans (Verts/ALE). – Several times tonight you have mentioned the need for very substantial investment in transport and that is for economic, for safety, for tourism, for climate reasons, and others. And, of course, this will mainly be through the TEN-T network and the Connecting Europe Facility, which is the focus of all transport policy. But there is also a need for investment in areas with specific regional characteristics, and you have touched on this a little as well – I mean coastal, mountainous and island regions. I represent Wales, which is a very good example of this, where we really need to improve the transport links. And because these are often ecologically-sensitive areas, it can be more expensive to upgrade transport. So how would you ensure that these areas are not forgotten?

1-067

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > This is a very important question and you have been addressing these regional needs as well. We know that we have these three funds, among which one is very important for infrastructure, which is the Cohesion Fund. At least I know that in my country that is one of the primary sources of investment and I know that in the next perspective over a billion euros is going to be available for infrastructure projects. Of course, there are those that are also environmentally cautious and we have some other restrictions that you already have imposed on those investment projects.

The other we already talked about: these new innovative mechanisms that will have to be in place in order to satisfy regional needs, and it is going to be up to Member States to also search for those. Either they are going to invite foreign investments – for example in Slovenia there has been a big discussion about that – or, as mentioned before, what I read in the *Financial Times*, some European railway operators are already inviting pension funds into the perspective and get finances from them.

I cannot be more innovative than that at this point but, yes of course, we will have to constantly search for these innovative mechanisms and hopefully exchange best practices as well. So something that works in one region could then be used later in other regions as well. But we certainly need a lot of good ideas in this area.

1-068

Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL). – Señora comisaria propuesta, le voy a preguntar lo mismo que le pregunté al señor Šef ovi ; espero que usted me responda con más concreción, ya que él no me respondió con mucha claridad.

La Estrategia Europa 2020 trata de crear las condiciones para un crecimiento inteligente, sostenible e integrador. Sin embargo, vemos cómo la política de transporte está tendiendo cada vez más a la

concentración excesiva e ineficiente de los recursos, anteponiendo los intereses de inversores y constructores a los del conjunto de la ciudadanía.

Tenemos muchos ejemplos de esto, como la proliferación de aeropuertos sin aviones, las autopistas de peaje que deben ser rescatadas por las administraciones públicas, trenes de alta velocidad que son inasequibles para la mayoría de la población e incompatibles con el transporte de mercancías, o la posible retirada de la autopista del mar Gijón-Nantes, que es viable, ecológica y muy necesaria para una amplia región europea.

La pregunta es: ¿cómo va a asegurar usted que las políticas de transporte van a ser diseñadas y hechas para la gente, escuchando sus necesidades, considerando así los efectos vitales que el transporte tiene para el bienestar y para la participación social, y no atendiendo a intereses privados de los inversores?

1-069

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I share your concerns, but I have to trust that the agendas that have been in place and confirmed by the Parliament are right, and I will make sure that they are implemented – I mean, of course, everything that has been planned in the CEF programme. But I hear you, and I understand that there are some additional challenges, especially regarding people, as you said. I have been convinced in preparation for this hearing that all these investments in infrastructure that have this bigger agenda for bringing the seamless approach to European traffic will not only bring benefits to businesses, as you say, but passengers will also benefit largely from it. On the other hand, we will also – in every step, everything that we do – keep the green agenda in mind. It might not appear that way, but when I started to look at all the projects that in the last ten years have been implemented on a technical side, organisational side, in a business modelling side, they tend to go in the green direction as well. Have they all been really good in that? No, because there are people at the back. So I am sure that we have the chance to improve that. But overall I think we are going in the right direction. I think we are achieving goals that nobody else in the world is achieving and, hopefully, that is going to be on my agenda as well, I want to export that. I want to export these concepts, because only if we export them are we going actually be able to fully live them, because Europe cannot be an isolated island in this. Europe has to pass all these commitments further.

1-070

Matthijs van Miltenburg (ALDE). – I have a question on an issue I will raise in Dutch about rest times – perhaps relevant to us at this time of the day, but it is actually about rest times in the road transport sector.

1-071

Om eerlijke concurrentie te waarborgen is het in de transportsector noodzakelijk dat de uitvoering en de handhaving van de Europese regelgeving niet te ver uiteenlopen in de diverse Europese lidstaten. In de afgelopen maanden is gebleken dat het daar nog al eens aan schort. Een duidelijk voorbeeld hiervan betreft de rij- en rusttijden voor chauffeurs in het wegvervoer. Frankrijk bijvoorbeeld beschouwt de rust in de cabine van de vrachtwagen niet langer als officiële rusttijd en dreigt chauffeurs bij overtreding met boetes oplopend tot 30 000 euro en een gevangenisstraf van maximaal één jaar. Dit terwijl in de omliggende landen van Frankrijk rust in de cabines gewoon is toegestaan.

Mijn vraag aan u is: welke actie gaat u als commissaris ondernemen om de uitvoering en handhaving van de regelgeving ten aanzien van rij- en rusttijden door de lidstaten beter onderling af te stemmen?

1-072

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I have been informed about this challenge. All I can tell you right now is that I really do not know how that came about, so I will first have to obtain better information on how France and Belgium came to impose such rules. I would need that information first, and I cannot reply directly. I know that this exists. I would need to understand why the situation happened.

What I would be inclined to suggest is that we need to agree on the basic common rules and what they are going to be in future. Let us see what the needs actually are and what we can provide, and then I will act upon it. All I can say is that I am aware of the challenge but I do not know enough in order to give you a solution to it. I am really sorry for that.

1-073

Roberts Z le (ECR). – I really have sympathy with your opinion about the reciprocity principle, which has to be used in the cases, as we said, of countries where transport policy has discriminations. What is your opinion on the long-lasting issue of Trans-Siberian overflight payments? Nowadays, when we have a Ukraine situation and Russia even has a – well, the Premier mentions that perhaps they will close all Trans-Siberian overflight payments. Do you think it is the right time to change legislation – European Union regulation or directive or whatever – to give the rights to the Commission to react in reciprocity principles in case Russia does not stop to take payments for overflight payments and to subsidise Aeroflot? Are you ready to get those rights?

1-074

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I agree that trans-Siberian flight charges are illegal. The charges – not the flights themselves but the charges.

I would also be very cautious, in the already tense political situation that we are in right now with Russia, to bring this as a firm matter to the table. What I am going to promise is this: whenever I meet colleagues from Russia this will not disappear from the table.

If I understand correctly, Russia has already promised to drop this when they enter the WTO. I know that it has been an ongoing challenge of many of my colleagues to remove that from the table.

Can I promise that for sure I am going to do it? I do not know, but I will try. I will try to do my best and hopefully other colleagues will put something in my hands that I can trade this with, because it is a very challenging issue and it is hard to push Russia to do something that they do not want to do. I have yet to learn how to do it and with what kind of tools. But, yes, I will put all the efforts that I can into addressing this issue. Hopefully, if you elect me, under my management we might even be able to solve it.

1-075

(S&D). – , μ . Bulc μ ; μ ; μ ;

1-076

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > As we have mentioned already, the fourth package is a very important one and, as I said, I do not want a fifth one. So let us fight for the fourth one, that it really takes place.

It is very important on the technical part. Especially it will make a great change under the refit umbrella, which means all the thousands of different legislations and rules are going to be much more simplified and unified. I see an incredible contribution to this seamless transport network in Europe with this.

On a business package, in the long run, we are walking a path now. It is not going to be overnight, but we have a very clear vision and goal. We want to have a seamless European transport network that will really be cost effective and will not be a burden but a good companion for all European businesses to achieve a competitive edge.

This is my vision. That is how I would like to operate. All these elements that are already included in the business and in the technical sections are little steps towards that. Tomorrow, yes, it is not going to be the fourth package, hopefully, but it is going to be more and more other elements that will really contribute to this seamless transport network in Europe.

The other thing that is very important is this interoperability intermodality, and that is going to bring not only better implementation of a green commitment, but also it is going to improve passengers' lives vividly, dramatically. On the other hand it will also improve dramatically the business conditions. I am sorry, now I am getting a bit tired and my English is breaking. I apologise for that.

So that is how I see it. In a visionary sense, this is a great direction. We need to stick with it. I hope that with the help of Parliament – you, colleagues – we will be successful in our relationship with the Council as well and that we can get this fourth package going. I think it is going to make a tremendous difference in European transport.

1-077

El bieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE). – Witam Pani serdecznie i chciałabym zapytać, jak ocenia Pani obecną sytuację na rynku przewozów kabotażowych Unii Europejskiej? Co zamierza Pani zrobić, aby rozwijać ten sektor, wykorzystać jego potencjał oraz poprawić jego wydajność, ale tak efektywnie egzekwować i monitorować wprowadzone niedawno przepisy w tym obszarze? Chciałabym również zapytać, czy uważa Pani, że Komisja powinna wskazać środki wsparcia dla przewoźników drogowych, którzy utracili dochody w związku z wprowadzeniem embarga na import niektórych produktów z krajów Unii Europejskiej do Rosji?

1-078

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I believe that cabotage is a good approach, first of all to optimise the traffic capacity that we have – not the traffic but the transport capacities that we have – and on the other hand it adds a little contribution to the green agenda of Europe.

Yes, I am in favour of it. As I said before, I worked in logistics quite a bit – not directly, but the clients that I worked for also had logistics services or they depended on logistics services. I know that our biggest motivation was never to make any route empty. We were bringing different businesses and joint efforts with other businesses so that we could fill the trucks. I think we should be motivated by that too: setting the conditions that that can happen. What is the next step? We need to talk. We need to talk to those that are using it, because they know what the next good step could be. We do not need to establish legislation for the sake of legislation. It needs to serve the needs of those that are going to be using it. That is my attitude towards introducing or supporting new services that are evolving, or new concepts that are evolving, because this is really a concept.

I hope we are going to move more also in transport, constantly looking for new opportunities: not only improving what we already have, but challenging the new conditions, the new needs, the new potentials and constantly coming up with the new solutions that will support this need for unified transport area, at the same time keeping the competitiveness on the high edge and also, of course, never forget about the core element, which is safety on the roads. But this does not have anything directly to do with cabotage. This would be my answer on this segment.

1-079

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – In the hearing until now you have clearly explained that you love all modes of transport – I figured that out. But there is, of course, one big problem if we look at pricing on the different modes of transport – that, for example, aviation has been excluded from any pricing mechanism until now, which makes it a very unfair competitor with other modes of transport, thinking of long-distance rail traffic, etc. So my clear question would be: what are you going to do to address this lack of competition, which is, until now, very clearly benefiting aviation and, on top of that, just

to check whether we can be sure on your commitment that aviation will at least be part of the ETS after 2016, when international negotiations have probably not delivered a global mechanism?

1-080

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I do not think that this condition is only true for European airlines. What I would be inclined to do is to bring this into an international arena and discuss it within international organisations. Every situation that we find ourselves in is a result of some sort of historical move, so the fact that aviation is in the position it is in is a consequence of years and years of development of this sector. I cannot promise you that I am going to bring them into the ETS in 2016; that would be too much to promise.

Certainly these two issues are important. Aviation has to evolve as well, and I will open up this podium to the discussion. I am counting on your help as well. These are the issues that I will need to address together with the Parliament. We cannot do it ourselves. We can propose; we can do analysis; we can propose different solutions; but in cooperation with you hopefully we will find new ways forward. No, I cannot promise you by 2016 and, yes, I am aware of this discrepancy. In many aspects, actually, different forms of transport are not on an equal basis.

1-081

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – I do have twenty-five seconds. I do want to make clear that it is the law that, if there is no global deal in 2016, aviation will fall under the ETS. That is what Europe decided.

1-082

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I will try to make sure that the law is respected.

1-083

Curzio Maltese (GUE/NGL). – In attesa che venga adottato e approvato il quarto pacchetto ferroviario, con le nuove norme di sicurezza, volevo chiedere alla signora Commissario se non ritenga opportuno intervenire su alcune urgenze. Una di queste è incaricare l'Agenzia ferroviaria europea per la sicurezza di agire per ridurre da subito la velocità dei treni con merci pericolose quando attraversano centri abitati. Lo dico perché in Italia c'è stata la tragedia dei 34 morti di Viareggio ed è un incidente che, purtroppo, potrebbe accadere ovunque nell'Unione.

La seconda emergenza riguarda le trasmissioni terra-treno via GSM, perché sono bande di frequenza occupate spesso da operatori privati delle telecomunicazioni e possono causare interferenze pericolose, come è avvenuto in Belgio nel febbraio 2013. La Svizzera, che non è nell'Unione europea, ha risolto questo conflitto a favore della sicurezza dei cittadini. Volevo sapere se la Commissione intende farlo.

1-084

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > First let me try to answer your first question: if I would go ahead? I would not support such an action. I would rather ask you as a Parliament that we push this package forward as soon as possible because it has many really good benefits. Just jumping ahead piece by piece we could tear the whole concept apart. So I would rather use all the energy that we have in order to get the full package approved.

I was also informed about the challenges that happened. Some of the accidents happened just because of that: the disconnectivity, well-managed and less-well-managed networks, these points of connection. I am hoping that with this similar traffic management system we actually will improve that so these situations never happen again. As I said before, I saw the picture. It is unbelievable, actually horrible, when you have four or five different management systems in front of you and you have to react and operate all of them. That is unacceptable for modern society, especially when the ICT sector has advanced so much.

Instead of looking for partial solutions, I would really invite us all to try to be systemic, to try to address issues and challenges in a systemic way and to try and put comprehensive solutions in place so in the long term we prevent any other additional accidents from happening.

1-085

Pavel Teli ka (ALDE). – First of all I should refer to what was said at the very beginning. A warm welcome (I quote) has been extended to you by high appraisal of Maros Šef ovi , who is a good friend of mine, and I think that for anyone hearing him this must be very encouraging. But I can say that, even if the President once again decides to reshuffle the portfolios, I would have a number of positive things to refer to should we have another Commissioner at the hearing. You are concrete, you are not avoiding any questions, and I know someone that also had five days for preparation for a hearing; I know it is not easy and I do appreciate the way that you have conducted it – even though you have not pleased me with all the answers. One example where I would share the view of my colleague Z le: you have not gone, in my opinion, far enough in terms of the principle ‘use it or lose it’. You have referred to the fact that you would not like to see Member States losing funds, so to have reshuffle and reallocation in a framework Member State. I would like you to rethink this and tell me whether you could imagine that you would be sharper and you would go in order to be effective in terms of imposing the effectiveness of the Member States really as far as reallocating funds between Member States.

The other point concerns your vision: the internalisation of external costs. You spoke of a vision, while now you would like to have a look at a mechanism that would be cost-based. Do you really think that will be sufficient? We have spoken about Germany; two days ago the French Minister for the Environment spoke about taxation for foreign trucks. Do we not really need a European solution in this respect? Could you not go a little bit further than this?

1-086

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > We will have to talk off the record on that, but let me at least try to address as quickly as possible the first one.

‘Use it or lose it’: I really believe that this is a good concept. Speaking from my own experiences, this is how I could even achieve much better results as a minister in my country on a local level, because I need instruments like that.

On the other hand, you said: can I be more enforcing of that? I think this is very clear. It is very clear mechanism which says: you planned your project; if you have not fulfilled the obligations, you lose the money. The money goes into a pool, right? All these countries that are eligible, for example, for the Cohesion Fund, those that are successful can pitch with another project, and that money can be used for a new project. So let us trust those that can deliver and punish those that cannot.

1-087

István Ujhelyi (S&D). – Én az S&D frakció utolsó megszólalója vagyok, így aztán sokkal könnyebb helyzetem van, mint Ertug barátomnak, aki koordinátorként az els kérdez volt, hiszen én már véleményt is tudok alkotni és nem csak kérdést fölteni. Úgy vagyok ezzel, mint – ha esetleg szokta nézni – az X-Faktor nev tehetségkutató versennyel, amelyben amikor el ször találkozik az énekesekkel, el fordul, hogy a zs ri 20 másodperc után leinti a kedves jelentkez t, mert rögtön látja rajta, hogy tud énekelni. Szerintem nem Ön és nem mi állítottuk el azt a helyzetet, amelyben 4 nap alatt kellett felkészüljön egy olyan területr l, amelyet én alelnökként 4 hónapja tanulok, és tudom, hogy van még mit tapasztaljak, ezért csak gratulálni szeretnék, és azt már látom el re, hogy énekelni fog tudni, és így a bizottság tagjainak kedvenc dalait is meg fogja tanulni hamarosan.

Egy kérdésem ugyanakkor magyarként van, közép-kelet-európai szomszédos országból. Én vasútközlekedés-párti vagyok mind közlekedésszervezés, mind pedig környezetvédelem szempontjából. A közép-kelet-európai és a balkáni országok elképeszt módon le vannak maradva a

vasúti struktúrában, ezért kérdezem, hogy tud-e abban majd kell er vel lépni, hogy ezek a kormányok a Bizottsággal és az Európai Parlamenttel közösen nagyobb hangsúlyt helyezzenek a vasúti közlekedés fejlesztésére. És ha már hátat fordított nekünk, hiszen itt ülünk az elnöki pulpituson, csak jelzem, hogy Kramer elnök úrnak és nekem van egy közös kedvenc témánk, ez a kerékpáros közlekedés támogatása. Elnök úr nem tud kérdést fölteni, hiszen megnyit és zár, ezért csak mondom Önnek, hogy hátranézve csináljon egy ilyet, és mondja azt, hogy a közlekedésben és a kerékpáros turizmusban segít nekünk majd közös céljainkban.

1-088

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > I will try to get commitments from the first, second and third packages in place. First, the highest priority is safety. Everything regarding safety has to be implemented first.

Allow me to answer the second question. I am a very devoted cyclist. If you go to Slovenia you will see ministers leaving the meetings with very nice big cars, and I am at the back cycling my bike. I just love it. I go to work by bike, and I have seen what the Cohesion Funds and Structural Funds have done for cycling, for example in my own country. We now have some incredible cycling routes, and we use them really well. So I hope that this culture of cycling will be part of our culture as well.

1-089

(PPE). – Bulc,

90%

1-090

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Okay, I had better do it really quickly. First of all, ports are part of the CEF agenda as well, so as I said, I am going to be very much in line with whatever it said in the agenda, and that is one of the ways in which ports will be financed in the future. Even with ports, I think that, because there is such an extensive need for improvement to stay competitive, we will need to seek other mechanisms as well – only this will not be enough in the long run. But it is a big subject, so it is hard for me to really get into it. But we know about the challenges that China presents and everything else.

On the other hand, you ask – I love Greek islands – so of course it would be great if I could promise you something, but I cannot at this point. I think that it is going to be very important that the development will be tied also to the tourism and entrepreneurial agendas. So altogether, with that I think we can make the ports attractive and support it for investment as well.

1-091

Der Präsident. > Das war nicht nur die letzte Frage der EPP, sondern die letzte Frage überhaupt von den Mitgliedern des TRAN-Ausschusses. Jetzt haben Sie nochmal fünf Minuten die Gelegenheit – so lange haben Sie die ganze Zeit nicht reden dürfen, sondern nur am Anfang –, das noch einmal zusammenzufassen.

1-092

Violeta Bulc, Commissioner-designate. > Thank you for all your questions and for a chance to present my views as well. You have learned that I walk on fire, right? There were a couple of times that I thought I was going to burn but I did not. At least that is what I think; you might be going to judge me differently.

I am really happy that I have another chance to say that these four days make me really passionate about transport and I really see so many new opportunities that we can address and move on. This is a sector that brings innovation, connectivity and quality of life and I can feel the essential role that it can play in modern Europe. It is important for businesses to thrive and for people of course to travel and move.

We can easily say that when transport stops, everything stops. That is a huge obligation but it is also an excitement. Therefore we need transport to be high-performing, properly linked, reliable, safe and sustainable. To achieve that, the Single European Transport Area has to be completed; there is no doubt about it. That is how transport can play its part in Europe's economic recovery: by making its full contribution to the European single market. Working towards this goal will be my very first priority, as set out in the political guidelines issued by President-elect Juncker.

I am aware of the vital role of transport in improving Europe's competitiveness and making sure that European companies stay global leaders. To be ready for this challenge we need to invest and innovate, these are two essential elements that we all need to be aware of.

I am a socially-minded person. I am of course in favour of step-by-step liberalisation as well, the one that leads to competitiveness. But we have to make sure at the same time that everything we do will benefit people and improve our lives. For me this is the bottom line. I am committed to provide concrete answers to the demands for reliable, affordable and high performing transport services that can be provided in a safe, secure and environmentally-friendly manner.

Honourable Members, I can promise you that every initiative I take should be justified in terms of the good that it does for Europe's quality of life. If appointed as Europe's next Transport Commissioner, I can promise you my energy, spirit of innovation and readiness to work closely and openly with all Members of the European Parliament, especially with you in this committee. I believe that any problem that we, people, create, we, people, can solve – if we sit down and work together. Therefore I believe that together we can put transport back at the top of Europe's political agenda. Together we can create the transport as a backbone of the economy that modern society needs and deserves. And only together can we shape the future of European transport for the next five years and beyond.

(Applause)

1-093

Der Präsident. > Nach diesem letzten Vortrag der designierten Kommissarin kommen wir zum Schluss der heutigen Anhörung. Ich danke allen Abgeordneten für ihre sachdienlichen Fragen, die

sich über das weite Feld der Verkehrspolitik erstrecken. Ich danke aber auch Frau Bulc recht herzlich für ihre Antworten und Stellungnahmen. Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass es nicht einfach war, aber jetzt ist es vorbei.

Ich erinnere die Koordinatoren und die Vizevorsitzenden daran, dass die Sitzung zur Bewertung der Kommissarsanwärterin morgen Früh stattfinden wird, und zwar um 8.30 Uhr im Raum WIC200. Diese Sitzung wird *in camera* abgehalten.

Zum Schluss danke ich natürlich den Dolmetschern für ihre exzellente Arbeit und Geduld während dieser langen Nachtsitzung heute. Wir haben die Zeit aber diesmal nicht überschritten, sondern waren sechs Minuten vor zehn fertig. Trotzdem allen vielen Dank.

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(Die Sitzung wird um 21.55 Uhr geschlossen.)