



Committee on Development  
The Chair

300328 13.01.2010

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Mr Jerzy BUZEK  
President  
European Parliament  
Brussels

ACCES RESERVE

Dear President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Development held a public hearing on Monday 11 January 2010 with Mr Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for development.

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

Mr. Piebalgs opened the hearing by making a statement in which he referred to the following:

- that the Millennium Development Goals must be achieved by the target date of 2015 MDG;
- that he will do everything he can to urge Member States to keep their promises on Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets and identify those who fail to meet their commitments;
- that development policy should not be seen in any way as a tool to achieve wider political goals for the EU;
- that it is important to develop a partnership between Parliament and the Commission on development policy including discussing policy at its formative stages as well as in its practical implementation;
- that he would give real political momentum to establishing a European approach between Member States in their development policies and reduce the fragmentation of modalities for implementation of development assistance;
- that the respect for fundamental human rights, in particular the rights of women, is an integral part of development policy;
- that the focus has to be on more, faster and better aid, which leads to poverty alleviation, not poverty management.

During the debate, Mr. Piebalgs stated his position and made specific commitments regarding his future Commission portfolio:

- that European financing to combat climate change will be additional to the Member States' commitment of 0.7% of their GNI for ODA by 2015 and that he will press Member States to keep their promises in this respect;
- that he is in favour of the Tobin Tax as an innovative mechanism to provide additional finance for combating climate change;
- that he will follow reform in fisheries policy to ensure that it will not endanger the work of development policy;
- that he supports the encouragement of the enterprising spirit, especially in the areas of food security and property ownership;
- that he will place priority on Least Developed Countries, concentrating support on those most in need;
- that he will take forward Policy Coherence for Development on the basis of assessing the impact of Commission proposals for negative impacts on development and also in the positive sense of signalling what needs to be changed to promote development;
- that he does not consider the idea of "ODA +"<sup>1</sup> to be a valid concept;
- that he fully supports the budgetisation of the EDF and will approach it by explaining to the ACP countries that they will not lose as a result of it and by working with Member States to convince them that it is the right step;
- that he will not place pressure on developing countries to liberalise their public services;
- that he views the values of non-discrimination on which the EU is based as non-negotiable and that this specifically includes the rights of lesbian and gay people;
- that he considers it his most important duty to be fully transparent and fully accountable to Parliament and that he will always be available to appear before Parliament to answer questions;
- that he would not support any process to re-define the MDGs prior to their target date of 2015 but to value the agreed goals and seek to achieve them;
- that he will instruct his services to avoid, as much as possible, conducting operations involving tax havens and to support the initiatives taken by developed countries to combat tax havens;
- that he would engage with China over its support for developing countries with a view to promoting Europe's approach to development placing poverty reduction on the basis of fundamental rights;

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Communication on "Policy Coherence for Development - Establishing the policy framework for a whole-of-the-Union approach" COM(2009) 458 final

- that, when considering measures relating to the return of illegal migrants, he will always take account of the risks of returning such people to countries where they might be subject to human rights violations;
- that he would place strong attention on communicating the achievements of development policy to EU citizens, in particular using the internet and a blog by the Commissioner himself;
- that he will listen to non-state actors in development, and be ready to increase support to them within the limitations of the financial rules;
- that he is hesitant about the use of political conditionality in development policy;
- that, after the establishment of the European External Action Service he will be responsible for all development policy planning, independently of the precise office in which the programming is being done; that his services will be responsible for EDF programming and that horizontal initiatives on development will also fall within his responsibility;
- that development policy will not suffer as a result of the establishment of the EAS;
- that he will be the lead Commissioner responsible for the EuropeAid Cooperation Office.

Before the end of the hearing, the Commissioner-designate made a brief closing statement in which he added that it was necessary to take further the Consensus on Development, agreed in 2005, on the basis of possibilities opened by the Lisbon Treaty and reaffirmed that the MDGs must be achieved.

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

The Commissioner-designate was assessed for his personal qualifications (integrity and independence, professional aptitude and experience), his European commitment, his ability to communicate and initiative, his commitments on cooperating for Parliament and its committees and his aptitude as regards his specific policy area. He acquitted himself well in all respects. He also gave an optimistic and dynamic perspective of development for which he will need to secure the necessary support inside the Commission.

Without prejudice to this evaluation of the Commissioner-designate, the Committee expects that, in addition to the programming of development cooperation under the EDF, programming under the Development Cooperation Instrument should also fall under the responsibility of the Development Commissioner.

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

This represents the unanimous opinion of the Coordinators of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Eva JOLY

