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Committee on Budgets

Committee on Budgetary Control

The Chairmen

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ACCES RESERVE

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Jerzy BUZEK  
President  
European Parliament  
rue Wiertz  
B - 1047 BRUSSELS

Dear Mr President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control, as associated Committee, held a public hearing on Monday 11 January 2010 with Janusz Lewandowski, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for financial programming and budget. The Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Regional Policy participated in the hearing by sending one representative each.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. Our committees noted that Mr Lewandowski answered those questions in a fully satisfactory way.

Mr Lewandowski opened the hearing by making a short statement in which he referred to the following issues:

- the necessity to ensure the smooth adoption of the 2011 budget and beyond within the new institutional framework deriving from the Lisbon Treaty and in the period of economic crises;

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- the obligation to seek for more flexibility within the financial framework;
- the need to respect accumulated knowledge and experience on various policy areas, including agricultural and cohesion policy;
- his aim to make the Financial Regulation more user-friendly and better oriented to meet citizens' needs; and
- his intention to upgrade the relations with the European Parliament.

Members then asked questions on the following subjects in particular:

- the budgetary arrangements for the creation of the External Action Service, including the accompanying revision of the Financial Regulation;
- Mr Lewandowski's personal values on policy choices, especially on those relating to social inclusion, development issues and gender equality;
- the urgency of the mid-term review;
- the review of the own resources system;
- the inclusion of climate policy as a priority in the budget;
- the future development of agricultural and cohesion policy in the budget;
- the possibility to develop new financial instruments involving e.g. the European Investment Bank; and
- the future development of the European Globalisation Fund.

During the debate, Mr Lewandowski stated that the future financial framework should be far more flexible than the current one in order to ensure the capacity of the EU to react to unforeseen events. He also made a clear commitment to closely cooperate with the European Parliament, and in particular, with the relevant committees.

On the basis of the responses of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by the committees' enlarged bureaux, who met after the hearing, we hereby give the following assessment:

Given his political and professional background as a minister of Polish government and as a long-standing member of national parliament and the European Parliament, and in particular, his experience in the field of his future portfolio, Mr Lewandowski is well-qualified to exercise the functions for which he is proposed. This was also demonstrated by his replies during the hearing. Members of the two Committees also welcome his commitment to work independently in the European interest. Mr Lewandowski's integrity does not give rise to doubts.

The Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control put a number of specific questions to the Commissioner-designate, and received broadly satisfactory replies. In particular, when questioned on the tolerable risk of error, Mr Lewandowski emphasised the need to differentiate the approach depending on the specific policy areas, and on the question of revision and simplification of the Financial Regulation, he confirmed his commitment to simplify the procedures. However, Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control noted the rather general nature of Mr Lewandowski's replies, and the lack of a particular vision or plan for the issues raised by the Members. Subject to these remarks, Committee on Budgetary Control noted the Commissioner-designate's communication skills and good knowledge of the subject.

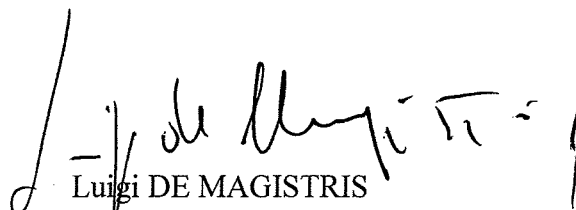
The Committee on Budgets notes that the Commissioner-designate had assumed a pragmatic approach. It expects him to show a strong leadership to enable the Commission to make the necessary proposals to fulfil the urgent and forthcoming challenges, such as the mid-term review and a new system of Own Resources, as well as to respond to the international requirements and those following the Lisbon Treaty, and to assume the role of a finance minister in the College of Commissioners. In this context, the Committee on Budgets calls for appropriate proposals by the end of the first semester of 2010.

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

Yours sincerely,



Alain LAMASSOURE  
Committee on Budgets



Luigi DE MAGISTRIS  
Committee on Budgetary Control