4-001

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BRÜSSEL

AUSSCHUSS FÜR UMWELTFRAGEN, VOLKSGESUNDHEIT UND LEBENSMITTELSICHERHEIT

ANHÖRUNG VON JOHN DALLI

DESIGNIERTES KOMMISSIONSMITGLIED

4-002

VORSITZ: JO LEINEN

4-003

Der Präsident. – Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Herzlich willkommen zur Anhörung des designierten Kommissars für Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz. Ich begrüße hierzu ganz herzlich Herrn John Dalli: Willkommen in unserem Ausschuss. Wir führen diese Anhörung zusammen mit dem Binnenmarktausschuss und dem Agrarausschuss durch. Ich begrüße die Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus diesen Ausschüssen, insbesondere den Vorsitzenden des Binnenmarktausschusses, Herrn Malcolm Harbour, herzlich willkommen hier bei uns zu der gemeinsamen Anhörung.

In den nächsten drei Stunden wollen der Ausschuss und die Abgeordneten einen Eindruck gewinnen, ob der Kandidat generell für die Ausübung eines so wichtigen Amtes geeignet ist, ob er eine europäische Überzeugung mitbringt, ob er persönlich unabhängig ist von irgendwelchen Interessen, um sein Amt ausüben zu können. Das Parlament beurteilt auch die für dieses Portfolio erforderlichen spezifischen Kenntnisse des Kandidaten und natürlich auch die Fähigkeit der Kommunikation, was in der Politik generell und in der Europapolitik speziell wichtig ist, um die Öffentlichkeit und die Bürgerinnen und Bürger zu erreichen. So steht es in den Leitlinien, die wir für die Anhörungen vor der Abstimmung des Parlaments über eine neue Kommission haben.

Kolleginnen und Kollegen, Sie haben den Ablaufplan bekommen. Ich will nur ganz kurz noch einmal darauf hinweisen, dass wir eine Fragezeit von einer Minute haben, zwei Minuten für die Antwort, 45 Sekunden für die Nachfrage und nochmals eine Minute Antwortzeit. Alle sollten sich an die Zeiten halten. Ich kann auch schon ankündigen: Wer nicht da ist, wenn seine Frage aufgerufen wird, dessen Frage verfällt. Also, ich hoffe auf Teilnahme während der ganzen Sitzung.

Herr Dalli, Sie haben in den letzten 20 Jahren in der Regierung von Malta viele Funktionen ausgeübt. Sie waren Minister in den Bereichen Finanzen, Wirtschaft, Außenpolitik und Sozialpolitik. Jetzt sollen Sie für die gesamte Europäische Union, für 500 Millionen Bürgerinnen und Bürger, Gesundheits- und Verbraucherschutz betreuen und verantworten. Das sind zwei Bereiche – sowohl der Gesundheitsschutz als auch der Verbraucherschutz –, die den Abgeordneten hier im Parlament und dem Europäischen Parlament sehr wichtig sind und auch bei unseren Bürgerinnen und Bürgern eine große Bedeutung haben. Ich habe Ihre schriftlichen Antworten auf unsere schriftlichen Fragen gelesen. Das war ziemlich allgemein gehalten, und wir hoffen, dass wir in den nächsten drei Stunden Ihre persönliche Note und Ihre politische Vision erkennen können, wohin die Reise in den nächsten fünf Jahren dieser Wahlperiode geht. Seien Sie herzlich willkommen. Wir gehen in *medias res*.

4-004

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, or good afternoon. Time is already running fast.

Mr Chair, honourable Members, it is a great opportunity for me to be engaged in this exchange of views with Members of the European Parliament, an institution which, through the Lisbon Treaty, has assumed greater responsibility for the advancement of our European visions and values.

I have been a parliamentarian in my country for over two decades. For three quarters of that time, I was a member of cabinet. This gives me a deep understanding of the interaction between Parliament and the executive and a respect for the views expressed by Parliament and its committees.

I have served as a member of cabinet in my country for many years, mostly in the economic and financial fields pushing reforms and adherence to the acquis. But I have felt the most fulfilled in the last 18 months when I was responsible for the social and health sectors. This has brought me closer to the people and in the front line to deliver the best possible service to the citizen, across gender, vulnerability and generation gaps. This gave me the satisfaction of fulfilling my basic mission as a politician.

During the next three hours, we will be touching on various topics and issues. We will be exchanging many views. However, this is all encapsulated in one theme – the people.

Allow me now to address some issues in my mother tongue.

4-005
Il-pazjenti l-ewwel, il-konsumaturi l-ewwel: din se tkun it-tema li se tirfed l-attività kollha li se nwettaq jekk ningħata l-opportunità li nservi. Se nkun indipendenti u oġġettiv quddiem id-diversi kwistjonijiet li rajt f'dawn l-aħħar ġimgħat ta' preparazzjoni fuq il-portafoll prospettiv tiegħi. Se nikkontribwixxi l-esperjenza tiegħi bħala wieħed li dejjem fittixt li jinstab kunsens, kif ukoll l-għarfien tiegħi fil-livell operattiv f'setturi varji sabiex inżid il-valur fil-proġetti li għaddejjin bħalissa u dawk li għadhom se jibdew. Il-viżjoni tiegħi hija li ċ-ċittadini Ewropej jgħixu aktar fit-tul u jkunu aktar b'saħħithom għaliex ikunu għażlu stil ta' ħajja aktar san għaliex ikollhom aċċess għal ikel bnin, ġenwin u sustanzjuż, u għaliex ikollhom aċċess totali għall-aħjar kura u pariri mediċi. Il-viżjoni tiegħi hija ta' konsumatur mgħarraf sew biex jista' jieħu deċiżjonijiet infurmati dwar il-prodotti u s-servizzi li jikkonsma, konsumatur li, mhux biss ikollu f'idejh ir-riedni tal-istil ta' ħajtu, imma wkoll li jkun jista' jinfluwenza l-politiki f'livell għoli għas-somma tad-deċiżjonijiet li jittieħdu fil-livelli differenti tas-suq. Il-konsumaturi jistgħu jinfluwenzaw mhux ftit oqsma għat-tibdil tal-klima, il-benessri tal-annimali, l-azzjoni fuq fatturi li jolqtu saħħitna, fost oħrajn. Jien nintrabat li nkompli niżgura li l-konsumaturi tagħna jgawdu mill-aktar livelli għolja ta' protezzjoni fejn tidħol is-sigurtà tal-ikel, livelli li nemmen huma l-mira ta' kulħadd f'dan il-qasam u jservu ta' parametri ta' referenza mad-dinja kollha. Għalija l-innovazzjoni hi prijorità importanti fl-oqsma li jaqgħu fil-portafoll tiegħi u li tant għandhom potenzjal, bħal, ngħidu aħna, il-ħarsien taż-żrieragħ u l-pjanti, it-trobbija tal-annimali u t-tekonoloġija tal-ikel, l-apparat mediku, id-dijanjostika tas-saħħa u l-farmaċewtiċi - hawn qed nitkellem dwar il-kapaċità li l-innovazzjoni sservi għall-konsumaturi u liċ-ċittadini.

4-006
On health policy, shrinking national budgets coupled with increased demands by citizens for better services bring to the fore the issue of the sustainability of our health systems.

To secure sustainability, we must focus on prevention. Alarmingly, 97% of health spending across Europe goes on treatment, as compared to only 3% on prevention. With your help and support I will strive to redress this imbalance by convincing all stakeholders that prevention is an investment offering very high future returns in health.

In the same vein, this focus on sustainable health outcomes will continue to drive our action regarding diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, mental health (including Alzheimer's), age-related diseases and youth health. We will also pursue vigorously our efforts against smoking, alcohol abuse, drugs and obesity, which have been scientifically proven as forces which lead to the hospitalisation and death of millions of our citizens every year.

Key in this vision is the access of all our European citizens, irrespective of nationality and socioeconomic status, to good and timely treatment and to affordable medicines. There is no reason why poor people should suffer from poor health.

(Applause)

In this context we will be working with the Spanish Presidency, the Council and Parliament to hammer out a solution on patients' rights in cross-border care. We will also be availing ourselves of the new synergies created by the inclusion of pharma and medical services in the health portfolio. For example, this can motivate patient-focused research and innovation and bring new technology to the market at affordable cost to patients and health systems in Europe.

Our objective will be to close the gap in health inequality that we are currently experiencing in Europe. A five-fold difference in deaths of babies under one year and a fourteen-year gap in life expectancy at birth of males, and eight for females, is a challenge to the European Union's fundamental objective of solidarity and cohesion. It is also a huge loss of human and economic potential – apart from the fact that this should surely be a concrete objective to set ourselves in our work towards social cohesion.

Information to patients is another issue that is currently at the forefront of discussion. We believe that patients should have access to information on prescription drugs that are on the market. The inclusion of pharma in the health portfolio gives us the opportunity to reassess the proposal on the table and to inject a stronger patient perspective. We will be following with attention the discussions in Parliament on this issue.

We must ensure the highest possible safety, including action against counterfeit medicines sold over the Internet. I propose that we should move fast on the counterfeiting and pharmacovigilance segments of the Pharmaceutical Package.

On consumer policy, I will endeavour to maintain the high profile of consumer issues which has been built over the past few years. Consumer issues cut across the various competences within the college, and I see my primary role as bringing to the fore the consumer dimension in all these discussions.

We have to ensure that the single market properly serves the consumer through better access to products and services, both in availability and prices. We must keep a critical eye on how well markets serve consumers and on how the structures may need to change in order to do this better. I see an opportunity for an enhanced consumer scoreboard. I intend to continue to make regular enforcement sweeps to strengthen consumer rights within the European Union.

We must continue to empower the consumer by backing him with clear, scientifically-based information. At the same time, consumers must be able to exercise redress swiftly and effectively. In this regard we will continue the work of my predecessor on collective redress, ensuring coherence also with the work underway in DG Competition and other services.

Turning to food safety, I aim to ensure that our legislation gets the balance right in ensuring high levels of safety and consumer information in a cost-effective, transparent and consensual manner. The food industry is the largest manufacturer, the biggest employer and a leading innovator in Europe. It is the bridge between the output of our farmers and what reaches our consumer plates.

Nobody, least of all our food industry, has anything to gain from poor safety standards. I want our high levels of safety to serve as a competitive advantage in both the European Union and international markets. Our current standards are a prerequisite for the effective operation of the internal market. This in turn serves the interests of both our 500 million consumers and our food industry.

Experience has shown us that the setting of standards pushes our industries to further innovate and find solutions that satisfy health and safety requirements, as demanded by our citizens, whilst at the same time creating higher value-added products.

Animal health and welfare is equally one of our core values, which I fully share. I attach great importance to ensuring that all animals benefit from the effective implementation of the current rules. In addition, I intend to present a report on animal transport in a year's time, which will direct future policy action on this sensitive issue.

(The Chair thanked the speaker. Applause.)

4-007

Chair. – It is the first time I have heard a speech of this length in Maltese. It is a wonderful language and probably needs more time than English so I gave you one minute more. Thank you for the introduction. We now start with the first round of coordinators and main speakers.

4-008

Peter Liese (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender! Herr designierter Kommissar, vielen Dank für Ihre Einführung. Sie hat gezeigt, dass Sie viel Erfahrung haben und auch im Gesundheitsbereich schon einiges vorweisen können. Meine Frage bezieht sich auf die Rolle der Patienten in der europäischen Gesundheitspolitik. In den schriftlichen Antworten haben Sie gesagt, dass sie unabhängige Patientengruppen aus dem *Health Action Programme* unterstützen wollen. Da müssten Sie etwas konkreter werden, weil das Programm ja sowieso schon unterfinanziert ist und es viele Wünsche gibt. Haben Sie noch andere Ideen?

Die zweite Frage betrifft die Information der Patienten über Arzneimittel. Sie haben es schon angedeutet: Es gibt heftige Diskussionen über den Vorschlag von Herrn Verheugen, aber auf der anderen Seite herrscht sicher Konsens darüber, dass die gegenwärtige Situation, in der Firmen noch nicht einmal geprüfte Informationen weitergeben dürfen, auch nicht zufriedenstellend ist. Vor allen Dingen brauchen wir mehr unabhängige Informationen. Können Sie sich vorstellen, gemeinsam mit uns den Verheugen-Vorschlag so umzuarbeiten, dass er den Patienten und die unabhängige Information der Patienten in den Mittelpunkt stellt, um da einen neuen Fokus hineinzubringen?

4-009

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** As far as patient groups are concerned, I believe that we all agree that these patient groups are of importance for the feedback and coordinated effort on information that we need to formulate ideas. It is important that, in the decision-making process, we do get the patient perspective in these policies, and therefore it will be our obligation, I would say, to ensure that these patient groups are properly supported.

I agree with you. I am again dealing with budgets here, and the health budget does not seem to be a very big budget. I agree with you that there are pressures on the budget in financing these groups, and we need to find certain new ideas on how this financing can be done.

I will be very receptive to ideas in this respect and maybe even here I can use some of my own experience on how these types of schemes to assist these patient groups and consumer groups can be properly financed, provided we ensure – and maybe it is important that we ensure – their independence.

This may be a way. If we come up with some sort of system whereby the funds that come to these patient groups do not come directly from industry, but even come through some type of system that we can build together, then I believe that this is something we can work very actively upon together, because this has been done completely with your cooperation and, I believe, your support and your ideas.

4-010

Peter Liese (PPE). – Das war sehr präzise. Die zwei Minuten erlaubten es nicht, zu dem Thema Patienteninformation zu kommen. Deswegen meine Nachfrage: Welche Änderungen an dem Vorschlag von Herrn Verheugen und welche Ergänzungen dazu können Sie sich vorstellen?

4-011

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I am sorry I could not cover all your questions, but on patient information I believe we have this pharmacological package on the table that consists of three main streams: counterfeiting, pharmacovigilance and information to patients.

All of them are important. Two of them are not controversial, and my suggestion is that we should move with the two of them as fast as we can, even if we have to detach information to patients from the total package.

Now that pharma is within the health portfolio, I will ensure that we reassess the current package on information, bring more of a patient perspective into the proposals, and then we will hold the necessary discussions with you.

Naturally, I know that you are also discussing this package in Parliament and I will be very attentive to listen to what you have to say on that.

4-012
Linda McAvan (S&D). – You mentioned the people and the importance of European citizens in your introductory remarks. We are sitting here and outside people are watching on the web stream what we are discussing. The Socialist Group has taken questions from the public and some of those questions are about alcohol, smoking, animal transport, tackling obesity. These are very important issues for the European public.

What would be your priority? What would be your legacy after five years as Commissioner? Will you be the Commissioner who was tough on tobacco, tough on animal welfare? What would you like to leave behind?

4-013
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I will be the Commissioner who was tough on all these issues because these are the issues that, as I said in my speech, are causing our people to suffer. They are causing deaths and they are causing hospitalisation and aggravation to the majority – to millions – of our people every year.

However, what I would like to be remembered for would be that I brought this debate into our schools because I believe that this is a question of life skills. This is question of pushing education into your way of life and into your choices. It is not imposition of a way of life. It is not imposing upon people what we want them to do, but of educating them, of informing them and giving them information about what might be bad and what might be good for them and then letting them decide. I believe that all the other issues that we will have – on labelling and all these things – are encapsulated in just one basic pillar.

So it is information. I believe that the earlier we get at our children, the better it is. If we start talking about the damage that tobacco does to you, about what abuse of alcohol means, about what to eat and how to avoid obesity and what a better life you can lead if you are attentive to your intake of fats and sugars and things like that and also to exercise, then I think our next generations will bless us.

4-014
Linda McAvan (S&D). – But is information enough? We have had information about the dangers of tobacco and the dangers of alcohol for a long time. Where should we go further? Some people liken our action to the nanny state, what do you say to those people? What action will you take?

4-015
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Informing our citizens is not the nanny state. The nanny state is, I believe, instructing people what to do. In this context, I would not be moving into instructing people and legislating against every minute event in our lives, but into pushing the formation and information aspects as much as possible, and also gleaning best practices in our various Member States and trying to interweave these best practices into the actions of other Member States.

This would require definitive programmes, action, and money as well. I will be coming back to money basically. If we want these things to happen, we can continue to complain that not enough is happening, but it is finally a question of needing proper budgets to do whatever we need to do. The cost of our health systems is high and is increasing every day. A little percentage of that to go into prevention and the education of people will go a long way.

4-016
Corinne Lepage (ALDE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous avez dit tout à l'heure l'importance que vous attachez à la prévention et je m'en réjouis, parce que ce chapitre-là ne m'avait pas paru majeur dans vos priorités.

La santé environnementale est effectivement un sujet central, et elle intègre l'alimentation, qui a un impact majeur sur la santé de nos concitoyens. De ce point de vue, vous avez hérité d'un dossier très important, celui des OGM. Sur ce dossier, comme sur d'autres, la décision publique doit s'appuyer sur des avis scientifiques exemplaires reflétant tous les points de vue et ne cachant ni les divergences d'avis, ni les incertitudes scientifiques qui existent sur les effets à long terme des nouvelles technologies.

Le travail effectué par l'Agence européenne de sécurité alimentaire sur les OGM a été très critiqué pour sa partialité, pour son déni des incertitudes scientifiques, et parfois même pour un manque d'indépendance. La controverse, aujourd'hui même, autour de Mme Renkens, passée de l'EFSA à Syngenta, en est une nouvelle illustration. Mes questions sont les suivantes:

Vous engagez-vous à ce que le panel OGM évite les conflits d'intérêts, respecte les exigences de la législation, évalue les effets à long terme et reconnaisse les incertitudes scientifiques, comme l'ont demandé les États membres lors du Conseil "Environnement" de décembre 2008?

4-017
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** The basis of our decisions in this area, when it comes to advice on standards that we use generally across the health and food safety sector, is science-based information and advice.

This makes it extra important to ensure that this advice is independent. Because if our decisions are going to be based on this, we have to be confident and comfortable that the information is objective, totally objective.

I will ensure, with my services, that all the information and assessments which we receive will be independent advice, and we will study the possibility of also instituting regular reviews on the question of the independence of the various agencies.

4-018
Corinne Lepage (ALDE). – Merci pour cette réponse, Monsieur le Commissaire, mais les OGM sont aujourd'hui uniquement évalués sur la base des données fournies par les industriels eux-mêmes, données qui ne sont pas accessibles au public, malgré les textes de la directive, ni aux scientifiques indépendants. Les rares tests qui ont été menés montrent qu'il faudrait mener des études complémentaires.

Vous engagez-vous, Monsieur le Commissaire, à faire mener des études sur l'impact sanitaire des OGM par des organismes publics indépendants et à garantir l'accès aux données fournies lors de l'évaluation des OGM ainsi que l'accès des scientifiques au matériel génétique? Cela fait partie de la démocratie.

4-019
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – Since the information is going to affect or concern, and as we pride ourselves on the democratic concept of dialoguing with stakeholders on our decisions, I believe that there should be independent review structures. I would not mind independent reviews of any decisions that are taken, except decisions where some questions could arise. I believe that the scrutiny of these types of decisions would also be helpful.

You have to bear with me because these are issues which I will have to delve into more deeply during the course of my work, once you accept me to do this job, but my thrust is 'yes' for scrutiny and 'yes' for information about decisions on which we base our policies.

4-020
Μιχάλης Τρεμόπουλος (Verts/ALE). – Κύριε υποψήφιε Επίτροπε, χρειαζόμαστε σίγουρα πριν το καλοκαίρι μια αναθεωρημένη νομοθεσία σχετικά με τις μεταφορές ζώων. Επίσης χρειαζόμαστε συγκεκριμένη νομοθεσία για να αποτρέψουμε την είσοδο τροφών που προέρχονται από κλωνοποιημένα ζώα και τους απογόνους τους στην ευρωπαϊκή αγορά. Τι θα κάνετε για αυτά τα θέματα;

Το ζήτημα των μεταλλαγμένων, όπως βλέπετε, απασχολεί το Σώμα, επειδή υπάρχουν και οι εκτιμήσεις ότι η διάσπαση των αρμοδιοτήτων της Διεύθυνσης Περιβάλλοντος και της Διεύθυνσης Υγείας έχει ως στόχο να μειώσει την αποτελεσματική προστασία των πολιτών. Πώς θα διασφαλίσετε ότι όλες οι περιβαλλοντικές παράμετροι, ιδίως οι συνέπειες των γενετικά τροποποιημένων στη βιοποικιλότητα, αλλά και οι κοινωνικοοικονομικές επιπτώσεις από την είσοδο στην αγορά των γενετικά τροποποιημένων θα ενσωματωθούν αποτελεσματικά στο σχεδιασμό και τη διαχείριση των κινδύνων;

4-021
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I tend to agree with you, from the information that I could glean in my induction process over these few weeks, that there is fragmentation in this area.

I also believe that the introduction of the issue of feed from cloned animals into the Novel Foods Directive might also create a lot of problems, not just for the debate itself on the issue of cloning, but also on the other issues that also need to be pushed forward for our citizens' benefit.

Therefore, what I can see happening – with the proviso that I have been here only a few weeks, I have just started to tackle this type of dossier, I cannot stand like Solomon here with all the solutions that everybody expects – is that we will propose making a specific assessment on this cloning issue and come with a report on the cloning issue.

I believe, and I have discussed this with my services already, that within a year we can come with a specific report on the issue of cloning which can be discussed with you here in Parliament.

4-022
Μιχάλης Τρεμόπουλος (Verts/ALE). – Κύριε Dalli, δεν θεωρώ ότι απαντήσατε για τα γενετικά τροποποιημένα και δεν λαμβάνετε υπόψη σας, απ' ό,τι φαίνεται, ότι η μεγάλη πλειονότητα των ευρωπαίων πολιτών είναι αντίθετη στους γενετικά τροποποιημένους οργανισμούς.

Πώς θα διασφαλίσετε το δικαίωμά τους να κάνουν ενημερωμένες επιλογές όταν πρόκειται για τρόφιμα που έχουν παραχθεί από ζώα που έχουν τραφεί με γενετικά τροποποιημένους οργανισμούς; Θα αναλάβετε συγκεκριμένες πρωτοβουλίες για αυτό το θέμα και - όπως ρώτησα και πριν - πώς θα διασφαλίσετε ότι θα ληφθούν υπόψη οι περιβαλλοντικές παράμετροι και η βιοποικιλότητα; Βέβαια οι πρωτοβουλίες αφορούν και την υποχρεωτική σήμανση των τροφίμων και σχετικά με την προέλευσή τους από ζώα που έχουν τραφεί με γενετικά τροποποιημένα.

4-023
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I do understand that there is this debate about issues of this nature, and that there is a move or a request by some, even here in Parliament, for the labelling of foods that are coming from genetically modified organisms.

What I can say at this stage is that I will actively consider every aspect of the issue that is on the table. I will discuss it in the appropriate forum, and naturally I will be engaging with you as well, here in Parliament, on these various issues.

As for the solution to these complex issues that we have here – because the complexity here is not just what you are eating, it touches on the full spectrum of international relationships, of food security in the future, it can revolve around a lot of things – I do not think the solution can come from one brain: it has to be a collective effort amongst ourselves.

4-024
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR). – I was pleased to hear in your opening remarks that you will be prioritising, in the first instance, consumer and patient positioning in health, although that does not necessarily sit well with the later comments that you are thinking of detaching the Patient Information Directive from the pharma package.

Given that the new Health Commissioner, as opposed to the Industry Commissioner, will now be responsible for pharma and the European Medicines Agency, how do you intend to maintain a balance between meeting the health needs of European patients and the economic benefits of the pharmaceuticals industry, such as repositioning of the trade balance and substantial investment in European-based research?

4-025
John Dalli, *Commisioner-designate***. –** As I have said in my opening remarks, patients first. It does not mean that it excludes a very strong commitment to ensure that our pharma industry remains competitive. Patients' interests are dependent on a strong competitive and profitable pharma industry. We cannot continue to develop the medicines and the cures which are needed by our patients if we do not have the cash flows which are needed for the investment required in research, in modernisation and in the development of these new products.

Therefore support for the pharma industry and patients' interests are not exclusive objectives. In fact I believe that the fact that it has been put into one portfolio gives the opportunity for us to develop greater synergy between these two positions. However, we need to emphasise that we will be pushing the pharma industry to move much further forward towards mission statements which put the patient in a better position and to be more front line in its objectives.

I believe that patient care, which has a lot of connotations, is very important. In this way I think we will be working also with the pharma industry to ensure that the patient is well-informed, correctly informed, not coerced. This will be part of the 'information to patient' question and the patient will be given his due in all the policies which will be developed.

4-026
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL). – Het Europees Parlement heeft een aantal malen aan de Commissie aangegeven dat het aparte regelgeving wil op het klonen van dieren. Het Parlement heeft zelfs een resolutie aangenomen, al in 2008, waarin het zegt dat we een ban willen op het op de markt brengen van vlees van gekloonde dieren en dat we dat absoluut niet in de nieuwe-voedingsmiddelenverordening willen.

Zonder een voorstel van de Commissie wordt het zeer onwaarschijnlijk dat er een compromis komt tussen de Raad en het Europees Parlement. Dat zou dan ook betekenen dat er over het hele heikele punt van de veiligheid, bijvoorbeeld ten aanzien van nanotechnologie in voedsel, nog geen besluit komt. Mijn vraag is: wanneer mogen wij een concreet voorstel over het klonen van dieren van de Commissie verwachten?

4-027
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** As I have said earlier, on the cloning issue, we hope that within one year we could come up with a report on how to tackle the cloning issue.

I believe that these are issues – as you said, and you are completely right in this – where we need to take action, because I believe uncertainty is the worst thing that we can generate, both for industry and for the patients themselves throughout the internal market.

We cannot have a strong uncertain internal market. We have to have certainty. Certainty, however, means that we would need to get together, we would need to be able to understand everybody's point of view and then come up with the necessary solutions that we think will be best in the long run for everybody. I do not think it is a question of where any of us is going to hang his flag. It is a question of what our citizens are really expecting, what is the long-term interest of our citizens, and on this I believe we have to work very closely together.

And this is my commitment. My commitment is that, as I will be working very closely with my services in developing issues and in getting the necessary advice, I will also be working with you on these issues.

In my concluding remarks, which I did not have time to go through, I was going to say that, during my induction process over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to meet with some of you. I was impressed by the depth of knowledge, the focused direction and the sense of purpose that I experienced. This is logical, as you bring to the table the aspirations and feedback of your constituents. Your views may be varied but you aim at a common goal: that of increasing the wellbeing of the people.

It is in this House that we can seek to build common solutions to shared problems, it is in this House that compromise is most naturally at home, and for this reason I will be working together with you with my full commitment.

4-028
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL). – U heeft het in uw antwoord over patiënten, maar ik vroeg eigenlijk wanneer u komt met een concreet voorstel inzake het klonen van dieren. En mijn vervolgvraag is dan: indien consumenten in de EU geen kloonvlees willen, hoe gaat u dan bewerkstelligen dat handelsbelangen in dit geval

niet zullen voorgaan op de belangen van de burger en de consument?

4-029
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I do not believe I mentioned patients. I mentioned what we will be doing. Perhaps it was the translation. I am sorry. I said what we will be doing. We will be coming with a proposal within a year on the issue of cloned animals. This is what I stated.

As far as what people want and what would be the trade requirements, people come first. I believe that our consumer should be well served, but not though emotional issues. Again, it has to be a scientific appraisal of what they really want. We cannot make decisions on perceptions. We have to make decisions on facts, so we have to get the facts about what people want. The probability is exactly what you were saying, but we have to have the facts. Once we have the facts, then we decide, and the decision will be in favour of the people.

4-030
Anna Rosbach (EFD). – Jeg vil gerne stille spørgsmål til den kommende kommissær om forbrugerbeskyttelse i EU. Især vil jeg gerne stille spørgsmål om hormonforstyrrende stoffer, som vi ved er skadelige selv i små mængder, og hvorom vi også ved, at vi ikke kun kan behandle dem enkeltvis, men må se på det samlede antal stoffer, vi udsættes for. Vil De, hr. Dalli, arbejde for at udfase brugen af hormonforstyrrende stoffer generelt?

Derefter vil jeg spørge om, hvem De vil favorisere i tilfælde af tvivlsspørgsmål, forbrugeren eller industrien. For det tredje vil jeg spørge Dem, om De vil sikre de enkelte lande retten til at have endnu strengere krav end Fællesskabet, f.eks. til at gå foran og forbyde skadelige stoffer. Vil De arbejde for, at al forbrugerlovgivning i EU udformes således, at det altid er muligt for den enkelte medlemsstat at beskytte borgerne endnu bedre, end der kan opnås enighed om på EU-plan? Vil De fremme brugen af bedste praksis på dette område?

4-031
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I believe that animals treated with hormones are not allowed to be imported into the European Union. This is the policy that is going to be sustained. It is the policy that we will be defending to our utmost in the international fora.

As regards allowing countries to have higher standards than the harmonised systems that we have, that is very dangerous. In fact I believe, unless I am persuaded otherwise, that it is very dangerous because then we will wreak havoc on the internal market.

The internal market has its benefits for consumers. The internal market is not there for the economic operators, it is also there for consumers. It has its benefits. I think it is our duty as well to safeguard the internal market in our decision process.

4-032
Anna Rosbach (EFD). – Hvis det er tilfældet, så vil der for nogle landes vedkommende en gang imellem rent faktisk være nogle beslutninger, der går den forkerte vej, det vil sige, at vi vil få nogle dårligere resultater for forbrugerne og på forbrugerbeskyttelsesområdet end dem, visse lande på nuværende tidspunkt allerede har opnået. Er det det, De dermed prøver på at fortælle mig? Begrundelsen er, at der ikke på EU-plan vil være mulighed for at indføre en så høj standard på alle områder, som visse enkeltlande allerede har. Derfor spørger jeg til bedste praksis.

4-033
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I will be pushing to have high protection everywhere. I believe it is either protection or no protection. When it comes to health issues, the question is: what is the correct level of protection that we should insist on our citizens having? The correct level of protection should be one which is high enough to protect!

We will not be aiming for equality and we will not achieve much more equality than we have now, if we accept a two-stream situation in standards of health care. We cannot allow that, and I will not be part of it, to tell you the truth.

Therefore, what we will be pushing for is to ensure, on this and on other items, that the levels we set, the standards we set are adequate levels which will be applicable in all the countries involved.

4-034
Renate Sommer (PPE). – Herr Dalli! Der Verbraucher muss ein selbstbestimmtes Leben führen können, haben Sie gesagt. Das ist richtig und gilt auch für den Bereich Ernährung. Er hat das Recht auf eine umfassende, verständliche und lesbare Lebensmittelinformation, damit er eine gezielte Kaufentscheidung treffen kann. Mehr und mehr tendiert aber die europäische Lebensmittelgesetzgebung zu einer Erziehung des Verbrauchers. Durch Werbeverbote oder Werbezensur, Negativkennzeichnung von bestimmten Inhaltsstoffen, Warnhinweise usw. soll der Bürger letztendlich zu einer gesunden Ernährung und zu einem gesunden Lebensstil gezwungen werden. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser ..., ja, es geht in Richtung Entmündigung des Bürgers? Ist der Bürger nicht mehr mündig? Muss die Kommission sich darum kümmern, wie der Bürger lebt?

Zweitens: Die wissenschaftliche Grundlage dieser Gesetzgebung fehlt oft in den Entwürfen der Generaldirektion Gesundheit. Aus politischen Gründen werden Werte angenommen, Schwellenwerte einfach festgesetzt – vorbei an wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen oder ohne wissenschaftliche Grundlage. Würden Sie dafür sorgen, dass sich das ändert?

4-035
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I did not get the second question completely, nor the translation, unfortunately. But on the first question, my own opinion is that I would not want to tell European citizens what to eat, but I want to tell them what they are eating.

(Applause)

Basically, this is the whole concept. It is the whole concept of what we are about here. This is where we need to really push and push, so that we empower our consumers.

Our consumers can make a decision if they have enough information on which they take this decision. How much decision there should be on a small piece of candy is one thing, and that is where we have to be smart. This is where the word 'smart' begins to take on a certain significance. I have to be smart about these things, but the objective that the consumer must – not needs to – must be informed is vital, because otherwise, what decision can he make? What decision can he make if he is not informed what something contains – not that something is good for him or bad for him?

I do not believe in telling people what is good for them and what is bad for them. I want people to decide themselves what is good for them and what is bad for them. But for Heaven's sake, we must inform them of the contents of what they are eating so that they can decide what is good for them and what is bad for them.

I believe that the empowerment that we can give consumers can go beyond this. I believe that consumers are an army of people deciding all the time about our market and about the policies we pursue. There are millions of micro-decisions being taken every day in the marketplace, and I will offer to lead this big army of consumers who are informed in terms of what they are eating so that they can influence climate change, they can influence animal welfare and all the other policies that we are talking about.

4-036

Renate Sommer (PPE). – Als Nachfrage nochmals meine zweite Frage. Das Problem bei den Entwürfen zur Lebensmittelinformation der Generaldirektion Gesundheit nimmt in den letzten Jahren zu. Der wissenschaftliche Hintergrund fehlt, es wird mit Vermutungen gearbeitet, Schwellenwerte werden willkürlich festgesetzt, z. B. bei Nährwertprofilen. Die Begründung ist immer: Es sind politische Gründe, das sind politische Entwürfe, man will damit politisch etwas erreichen und den Verbraucher zu einer gesunden Lebensweise anhalten. Deswegen machen wir das jetzt einfach, auch wenn die Wissenschaft sagt, das ist nicht möglich, oder wenn es überhaupt keine wissenschaftlichen Hintergründe und Erkenntnisse zu diesen Themen gibt. Wie stehen Sie dazu? Ist es richtig, aus politischen Gründen Schwellenwerte festzusetzen und bestimmte Regelungen zu treffen, auch wenn die Wissenschaft sagt, das geht nicht, oder wenn keine wissenschaftlichen Gründe vorliegen?

4-037

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Well, I want to make a statement here. My political reason is the long-term benefit of the European citizen. That is my political reason. Every decision that I take must have that one political reason in view.

There are interests, but other interests, peripheral interests, do not constitute a political reason as far as I am concerned. Everybody must now play their role in this dialogue. Everybody and every interest must be heard. Every interest must be taken into account when we come to a final decision.

But finally we have to have our priorities right, and my priority – and I can state this over and over again ad nauseam – my priority is the long-term well-being of the European citizen.

4-038

Dagmar Roth-Behrendt (S&D). – Member States are known for having a very restricted approach on European influence on health policy. Member States have not recognised the European role in the Treaty on health policy and the influence we have.

Currently there is a resistance to adapting EU legislation on health policy, particularly evident in the discussions and proposals on foot hygiene, pharmacovigilance, or especially cross-border healthcare, or patient information. How will you, Mr Dalli, try to ensure a high-level of health protection against the inactivity or blockage of the Council? How will you use your influence as a former health minister – your role in the Council as health minister when all the other colleagues are reluctant? How can we make sure that we decrease the inequalities in health in the Member States?

4-039

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** In my career I have been involved in the development of a lot of laws, and I have piloted a lot of legislation through my country's parliament. But any legislation is not worth the paper it is written on if there is no enforcement. So there has to be the threat of enforcement in every piece of legislation that one puts through.

When one is proposing legislation, the enforcement element must be in view. How am I going to enforce it? I believe this is a question that should be answered, even in the impact assessment on a piece of legislation. Is enforcement practical? Is enforcement implementable? Are we organised to obtain enforcement of this piece of legislation as we are going through?

This is important because then we come here, as Mrs Roth-Behrendt is saying, and say that Member States are not abiding by what the European Union is legislating. We have to enforce, and I believe that first of all we have to strengthen our enforcement capabilities and processes.

On the other hand, we must work with the Member States to ensure that their own systems have the capacity to enforce, because sometimes I believe that we have to reinforce the capability in the Member States themselves – and I know this now from the other side of the story –

how the other half lives – and this is what I would bring to you as well, when we are discussing together.

Sometimes it is a question simply of what they want to do, or that they do not want to adhere to legislation. But it is a question of prioritisation. We must push and persuade them that they have to prioritise. Also it is a question of human resources and capacities, which we have to build with them to…

(The Chair cut off the speaker)

4-040

Dagmar Roth-Behrendt (S&D). – I could not agree more that enforcement is necessary, but you were going a little bit too fast. I am happy to hear that you might also be fast in making legislation in future, but we can only speak about enforcement when we have legislation in place.

My complaint was more that Member States do not agree on legislation. They do not want European legislation. They want to block legislation; they want to diminish it; they want to weaken it.

How will you be a strong Commissioner to force them, and to kick them when it is necessary, to make sure that they give their citizens the amount of health equality which they deserve?

At the moment there is no health equality in the European Union and it is your, and our, task to change that. How strong will you be on that?

4-041

John Dalli, *Commissioner-delegate***. –** I will be strong. Again I believe that, if one goes into my past, into the way in which I have operated in my own country, one can see that I can be strong. In fact sometimes I was criticised for being too strong, especially when I was pushing through reforms.

But this is a reality, and once we are doing something worthwhile – and I will not be doing anything that is not worthwhile – then I will be believing strongly in what we are doing, and then I will be putting all my energies behind it: and I still have some!

4-042

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (PPE). – I was particularly happy to hear your strong commitment to a free choice for the consumer – to empower the consumer – as much as I was happy to hear that you are going to stand up to the Member States.

I have two specific questions on the food-labelling legislation that we are currently discussing.

How would you accommodate the necessity to have simple and correct information to empower the consumer and the industry's – especially the small businesses' – concerns that too prescriptive legislation would be an extra cost? Do you believe we can have a win-win situation, and what level of harmonisation would you foresee?

Second question: Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of the current proposal on mandatory national provisions and voluntary national schemes. We believe – I believe – it is a way of fragmenting the market that would create confusion to the consumer, hinder the function of the internal market and distort competition.

How much would you be able to stand up with Member States to avoid national provisions to restrict the internal market and provide less protection to the consumer?

4-043

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I do understand the issues of the various requirements that we put on our economic operators, our manufacturers, to adhere to the requirements that we have on information to consumers. As we have said, information to consumers is important and we have to abide by that as much as we can in all our decisions.

In the context of small- and medium-sized enterprises vis-à-vis large enterprises, I also believe that there are already flexibility provisions within the plethora of legislation that we have. I believe this should be pursued, because again I do not think it is in our interests to try and push forward policies that are going to be harmful to small and medium-sized enterprises, which we all know are one of the main cornerstones of our economies.

This is therefore very important. However, we have also to adhere to our information standards to consumers and, concerning the Member States and the voluntary national schemes and this disparity in the different markets, I repeat what I said earlier that I believe we should curtail as much as we can this disparity in the internal market.

On the other hand, sometimes one has to move at a slower pace in achieving certain objectives rather than trying to have the big bang solution on specific proposals. Again, my experience has also shown me that a gradual approach sometimes works better and works faster. This could be the approach that we should take. We will have a final objective of where we want to get to. However, persuading people that it is beneficial to them is very important.

4-044

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (PPE). – Thank you for your very balanced answer. Another controversial issue is the labelling of country of origin. Polls show that the majority of people want traceability and that the industry believes that this is an extra cost if not a protectionist measure.

Are you in favour of voluntary or mandatory labelling of country of origin of food products which are not already covered by legislation, i.e. honey, fish and meat? Thank you for being specific.

4-045
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I believe that the present situation is that country of origin labelling, apart from the exceptions that you have just mentioned – meat and fish – is voluntary except when the consumer can be misled. When the consumer can be misled then it becomes mandatory to put on the country of origin.

At the moment there seem to be no plans to move away from that situation, but it is a reality, as with all other issues, that we will be moving forward in the next five years, and five years is a long time. I hope we will be doing a lot of work together on this and other matters.

We have to decide which issues to set as priorities and what programme will best serve our citizens. Then we can move forward with this idea.

4-046
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D). – Herr Dalli! Sie sind ja auch für Waren und Dienstleistungen zuständig, und in diesem Zusammenhang ist die Verbindung von Sozialrecht und Verbraucherschutz von ganz besonderer Bedeutung. Nun machen wir uns im Ausschuss für Binnenmarkt und Verbraucherschutz große Sorgen. Große Sorgen nicht etwa, weil Sie der designierte Kommissar sind, sondern weil die Zersplitterung der Verbraucherschutzrechte in diesem Bereich der Dienstleistungen sehr groß ist. Neben Frau Reding und Frau Kroes sind auch Herr Barnier, Herr Tajani und Herr Šemeta – um nur einige zu nennen – zuständig. Wir machen uns Sorgen, wie da eine Kohärenz in der Verbraucherschutzpolitik im Bereich Dienstleistungen und Waren überhaupt erreichbar ist. Können Sie mir sagen, wie Sie sich in der Europäischen Kommission organisiert haben, um diese Kohärenz der Politik im Verbraucherschutz zu gewährleisten, und wer für die Koordinierung zuständig ist?

4-047
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** As the Commissioner responsible for the coordination of all consumer issues within the college, I will be the person who has to make sure that all discussions within the Council have a consumer perspective put into them.

When one says fragmentation, in effect everything we do in the college and Commission deals with people, so every single portfolio has a consumer connotation. I will make sure, and myself organise, that any proposal placed before the college has an input from the consumer angle. I will make sure that consumer considerations have been well considered.

I will consider myself to be the guardian of the consumer in the college. It is true that there are many fields and many other portfolios in which consumers have a high profile. You mentioned the financial portfolio, for example, and the internal market portfolio. There is Mrs Reding as well, with legal structures also involved in consumer legislation, which is good. This will ensure that the consumer perspective has a high profile when we come up with contract laws and civil legislation. That is not bad, it is good.

Therefore, as long as we coordinate these views, I am not all that worried. Naturally, it all depends on the way that we work, but I will commit myself to being very, very assiduous in this coordination, and I also hope that I will be coming back to you quite often. If you see that I am not doing my job properly, then I rely on you to tell me where things need to be corrected!

(Applause)

4-048
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D). – Das höre ich sehr gerne, was Sie gerade gesagt haben. Ich hoffe auch sehr, dass es so kommen wird. Ich muss nur noch einmal nachfragen: Ist diese Koordinierung auch mit Herrn Barroso so vereinbart? Denn vor zwei Tagen, als wir die Anhörung von Frau Reding hatten, hatten wir den Eindruck, dass sie davon ausging, dass sie für diese Koordinierung zuständig ist. Ich möchte schon ganz gerne sicher sein, dass Sie es sind, denn ich glaube, dass der Verbraucherschutz in Ihren Händen durchaus gut aufgehoben ist.

4-049
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** What I can say is that these are the discussions I had with Mr Barroso when he explained this portfolio to me. I am sure that this will be the case.

4-050
Kurt Lechner (PPE). – Herr designierter Kommissar! Es wird vielfach in den vergangenen Wortmeldungen unter Verbraucherschutz vor allem die Kontrolle durch den Staat und die Einräumung von Rechten für den Verbraucher, also Vorschriften verstanden. Ich möchte anders herum fragen: Welchen Stellenwert hat denn aus Ihrer Sicht der Wettbewerb in diesem Zusammenhang als Verbraucherschutz? Und welche Rolle – darauf sind Sie schon ein wenig eingegangen – messen Sie der Mündigkeit des Verbrauchers zu – Sie haben vorhin von Informationen gesprochen, das gehört ja dazu, auch dass der Verbraucher nicht immer nur nach dem Billigsten greifen soll, sondern auch gefragt ist, sich selbst um die Qualität des Produkts zu kümmern –, aber auch den unterschiedlichen Gewohnheiten und Traditionen und damit der Subsidiarität vor Ort – es muss nicht überall das gleiche Recht sein? Und inwieweit wollen Sie auch eine Gesamtbetrachtung von Kosten und Nutzen beim Verbraucherschutz vornehmen? Es ist ja im Leben nichts umsonst, und auch der Verbraucher bekommt seine Rechte nicht umsonst, sondern indirekt und auf Umwegen muss er sie wieder bezahlen.

4-051
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Competition, as you have rightly said, is a question of price and quality. I believe that in our system – as it has been working so far and I hope that if anything we will reinforce this – the quality question is new to us, because we ensure that everything that is put on our market has quality. Basically, once you neutralise that aspect, in the sense that everything that we eat is safe and everything we buy is not dangerous but has quality, then I believe that price considerations will become even more important.

I know then that there is quality and quality – that there is minimum quality and something above the minimum quality, but in the end it is the consumer's choice what to buy. That is the beauty of the internal market: consumers will have a whole spectrum of products available to them, a whole spectrum of goods of different quality levels and at different prices that they can buy off the shelf. These are their decisions to make.

4-052
Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – Gerbiamasis paskirtasis komisare, mano klausimas bus susijęs su Pacientų teisių direktyva ir pacientų judumu Europos Sąjungoje. Manau, kad tai yra vienas iš svarbesnių klausimų. Ši direktyva, be abejonės, jei ji būtų priimta, ji būtų labai naudinga Europos Sąjungai ir būtent todėl, kad viena iš Europos Sąjungos piliečių teisių yra teisė į prieinamumą, saugios ir aukštos kokybės sveikatos priežiūrą. Ir ši direktyva galėtų būti puikiu pavyzdžiu Europos Sąjungos piliečiams, kaip Europos Sąjunga įtakoja jų kasdienį gyvenimą. Raginčiau imtis aktyvesnio vaidmens siekiant surasti bendrą poziciją tarp valstybių narių ir Europos Parlamento. Būtent Europos Parlamentas dėjo didžiules pastangas dirbant ties šia direktyva, ir tas pranešimas, kuris buvo priimtas Europos Parlamente, būtent pasiuntė pozityvų politinį signalą, kalbant apie direktyvos reikalingumą. Ir būtent ponia Grossetête šitoje vietoje labai aktyviai dirbo, ir norėčiau jai padėkoti. Taigi, ar Europos Komisija planuoja gražinti šitos direktyvos klausimą į savo politinę darbotvarkę ir kokie būtų konkretūs įsipareigojimai?

4-053
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I likewise believe that this dossier needs to move forward, and we all know about the debates which have happened in the Council and about the problems that we have had in the Council. My predecessor has also made a lot of effort to make sure that this European project comes through. I will likewise do my best to ensure that an understanding will be reached for an effective policy on patient rights and mobility.

The indications, as I have been informed, are that the Spanish Presidency has said that it will be working very positively on this during the next six months, during its term in office. The first action, basically, that I will take, if I have your approval, is that I will have a meeting with the Minister of Health in Spain, which is holding the Presidency at the moment, to chart out a way in which an understanding can be reached. I hope that I will also give my input into this dossier and see that we can walk with it at a fast pace.

4-054
Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – Labai ačiū už atsakymą, ir tikiuosi, kad pavyks šį klausimą artimiausioje ateityje išspręsti.

4-055
Glenis Willmott (S&D). – I welcome the fact that responsibility for pharmaceutical policy has been moved from the Enterprise and Industry DG to the Health and Consumers DG. It is important that a health perspective, not an industry one, is paramount when dealing with pharmaceutical policy. Mr Dalli, how will you ensure that the pharmaceutical industry develops useful and safe medicines that can treat and cure life-threatening diseases, and how will you ensure that these medicines are priced fairly and cost-effectively and made accessible to all European citizens?

4-056
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I believe that you have touched on the three key questions: availability of medicines, accessibility for all concerned, and these medicines being sold at a price that makes them accessible.

The way to do it is that, with the pharma industry in this portfolio, we will have the ability to talk directly to them about these issues which are of basic interest to us. We want to redress inequality, as we already said. We want to have good medicines that are accessible to everybody. Therefore, it is very important that we and the pharma industry meet and see how to find a way to get this result that we want.

It is not a magic wand. We are all in politics here, and all of us know that these types of understandings are not achieved because one is trying to do a favour for the other. It has to be an understanding that is built on a realisation that finally it is a win-win situation, and I believe this. If we get to a situation where we persuade the pharma industry that there are also benefits for them for their operation and if they help us to meet these objectives, then I think we could have a much better situation than we have today.

4-057
Glenis Willmott (S&D). – Given the intense lobbying that all of us here have experienced from the pharmaceutical industry, how do you intend to ensure that the voices of the patients and the consumers do actually take precedence?

4-058
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – First of all I would rely on you, parliamentarians, to make sure, with regard to the lobbying that happens in Parliament, that finally you are bringing to the table your constituents' perspective, which is the patient perspective.

When I say I am going to engage with you, in my mind I have the firm belief that I will be getting from you the reactions and the feedback from your people, not from the pharma industry; I think the pharma industry can speak for themselves. They do not need lawyers – well, they need a lot but I do not think that in this context of the debate.

You are on the people's side as far as I am concerned, and this is the understanding that I would have in my deliberations. That is fair. Then we also have to rely on the patient organisations – which, as I said before, we should be reinforcing – to give us their points of view.

4-059

Louis Grech (S&D). – F'waħda mit-tweġibiet li int issottomettejt lill-Parlament Ewropew fuq il-"collective redress mechanism", inti għidt li għandu jkun hemm aktar konsultazzjoni li twassal għal pożizzjoni aktar effettiva. Din is-sitwazzjoni anomala qed toħloq ammont ta' diffikultajiet f'numru ta' Stati Membri, kif taf int, eżempju prattiku kien dak li seħħ reċentement f'Malta rigward il-VAT fuq ir-reġistrazzjoni tal-karozzi. Il-mistoqsija tiegħi għalhekk hija: illum ħadt impressjoni jien li inti favur li l-Unjoni tħaddan u timplimenta leġiżlazzjoni fuq dan ir-rimedju kollettiv għall-benefiċċju tal-konsumatur. Jekk fl-affermattiv, tista' telabora fuq l-azzjonijiet li biħsiebek tieħu biex issir proposta definittiva dwar dan fl-iqsar żmien possibbli, speċjalment meta wieħed iqis li dan is-suġġett ilu fuq l-aġenda Ewropea għal tant snin?

4-060

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I am in favour of moving forward with the collective redress mechanism for consumers. I believe this is something that we have to push.

I can say that the Health and Consumers DG has been working – and working very hard – on this issue. It has, in fact, already finalised an impact assessment on proposals that it has come up with, which have been put to the Impact Assessment Review Committee. These came back with some comments which the Health and Consumers DG is currently working on.

Therefore I believe that there is the will – not just the will, but the movement – towards getting this type of solution. As you know, however, another customer redress, or collective redress, procedure is being developed by the Commission's Competition DG.

I believe that we have to be very careful that we are not schizophrenic about the two pieces of legislation that could be developed. I believe that we have to take the time to ensure that we are coordinating our action. I believe that we also need to bring Mrs Reding into the picture on this, so that we legislate in the best way possible, and then to move forward on this.

We are talking about consumer protection legislation, while from the competition perspective they are talking about protecting consumers against unfair trading. I believe that the concepts are a bit different and, therefore they would need two focused approaches on how to handle them.

4-061

Louis Grech (S&D). – Fl-istess tweġiba int sostnejt li biex iċ-ċittadin ikollu saħħa, irid jingħata aktar informazzjoni. Fuq dan aħna naqblu kompletament. Tista' iżda llum tgħidilna xi inizjattivi li inti lest li tieħu biex niżguraw li ċ-ċittadin jingħata informazzjoni, li la tqarraq u lanqas li tkun reklamar, iktar reklamar milli informazzjoni. Illum ukoll smajtek tgħid li l-ħarsien tal-konsumatur, speċjalment dak l-aktar vulnerabbli, għandu jkun awtomatikament parti mill-pedament ta' kull liġi u politika tal-Unjoni Ewropea li nfasslu flimkien. X'se jkun is-sehem tiegħek bħala Kummissarju biex iġġib dawn il-bidliet meħtieġa. Grazzi.

4-062

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – The Commission is working very hard today to ensure that the information given to consumers is the correct information. For example, the initiative we have for health claims is a case in point. We want to be sure about any claims made by any producer on his goods – that something is good for you because it can make you taller or something is good for you because it can make you thinner – most recently I saw a package of sugar saying that it can help you lose weight!

We are in effect scrutinising these health claims and making sure that they are correct. As you know, we have gone through this process. It is taking more time than expected.

(The Chair cut off the speaker)

4-063

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). – Moje otázky se týkají ochrany dětského spotřebitele před nebezpečnými výrobky, kterými je zaplaven trh Evropské unie. Usiluji s odborníky např. o zavedení minimálních standardů, kterými by se museli řídit jak evropští výrobci, tak i dovozci dětského zboží z Asie. Zavedly se standardy pro tvar prodávaných okurek, ale např. na prodej obuvi pro děti nemáme žádné závazné ortopedické normy. Ptám se tedy, pane komisaři: Jste ochoten navrhnout legislativní zakotvení minimálních standardů pro obuv pro malé i větší děti, když studie ukazují, že nekvalitní obuv z Asie nevratně poškozuje v posledních letech dětem nohy a páteř? Jaký je Váš plán na zvýšení ochrany evropských dětí v prostředí globalizovaného světového obchodu tak, aby současně byla zaručena férová soutěž.

4-064

John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – Children are one of the vulnerable sections among European citizens. To tell you the truth, because of that they are very close to my heart.

We have to protect children and we have to make sure that we do not allow their exploitation in any way, big or small, even by pushing gleaming and glossy products on them that may eventually be harmful to them.

We have standards in Europe and my information is that any standards we have in Europe apply at the same level to any standards for goods that are imported from third countries. Therefore, the standards that we have, and that is a rule, apply equally to what we import.

If there are standards in shoes and toys – I believe these are things that are being discussed at present to come up with the minimum standards that we need – I will be working to make sure that we are covered by standards to protect all our imports, but especially imports of goods targeted at our children.

4-065

Zuzana Roithová (PPE). –My máme standardy pro hračky, ale nemáme je právě pro ty dětské boty, a já věřím, že budete s námi na tomto tématu chtít spolupracovat.

4-066
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** The answer is I will. I will work with you on this topic and other topics to ensure that the products that are presented to our children are safe.

4-067
Toine Manders (ALDE). – Mr Dalli, sometimes we politicians overreact in protecting consumers and this can lead to overkill of information and a lot of extra administrative burdens. Now President Barroso wants to reduce this administrative burden by 25%.

To provide this information I myself prefer using the Internet, just mentioning a product on the website with a product reference number which can make life for everybody much easier in the textile industry or in the food sector for example. Look for example at a bottle of water. The information which is printed on it is overloaded with information which most consumers are not interested in.

Another example: the Commission is not able to define the exact nutrient profiles in practice although the industry is obliged to do this. In my view this is damaging the economy and its citizens.

My question is: can you tell me where in your portfolio you will reduce this 25%? Who is going to control this and when? Are you willing to use the Internet to give consumers information instead of overkill on the labels?

4-068
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** We will consider every path, every way in which we can give information to customers, once we are assured that it is going to reach them, once we are assured that it will be available when they are going to make their decision to buy. This is the principle on which we should be moving.

For example, you have suggested just going on to the Internet for information. I tend to disagree with you, unfortunately. How many people have access to the Internet? How many people are computer-literate enough to get online information? How many people know English, which is in effect the basic language in which most information is distributed on the Internet?

Therefore just simply saying: let us put the information on the Internet and then whoever wants to take it can get it and whoever does not want to get it does not get it, I do not think is fair on the consumer, and it is short-circuiting our own responsibilities towards the consumers.

We have to move in a specific way. Where consumers need to be informed, let us inform them. I want information when I go to buy (and I do go shopping sometimes at home as well). When I go and buy, I go to a product and I have a look at the ingredients and the information on that product and then I decide whether to buy it or not.

That accessibility should be available to all consumers in the whole of the European Union. I do not see a product and say 'OK, let us leave it there', or 'I will take it and risk it' or 'I will go on the Internet to see what information there is on this product and then I will go back and buy it'. I do not think that is very convenient for the consumer, to tell you the truth.

(Applause)

4-069
Toine Manders (ALDE). – It gets a lot of reactions, but I thought we were living in a modern society. It does not matter.

You mentioned that you want to have more prevention and more information concerning children. This is nice. I am working at a virtual knowledge institute where academics can take a PhD to relay their specific knowledge in relation to food. With this information we want to create lessons for children in primary schools so that we can make food central again in our lives. With this information, those children can also even sometimes re-educate their parents when it comes to their eating behaviour. This will reduce health costs and can create economic growth. Are you willing to support such a kids' university for cooking?

4-070
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** To support what? I did not catch it.

4-071
Toine Manders (ALDE). – Are you willing to support such a kids' university for cooking – not with money but with ideas? A children's university of cooking.

4-072
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** It is a grand idea I think.

(Laughter)

But I believe – especially in my own country – in our school curriculum, even at the lower levels, that they do teach children to cook. It is not at university level, but they can fend for themselves if they are here in Brussels in the cold and they cannot get out to eat.

I will use this question to take me back to what I said earlier. I have already discussed this with Mrs Vassiliou. I will be working with her to make sure that education and life skills will be pushed in our schools as much as we can.

4-073
Elisabeth Jeggle (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender, Herr designierter Kommissar! Meine Frage bezieht sich einerseits auf die hohen europäischen Standards zur Lebensmittelsicherheit und zum Verbraucherschutz –

wir haben nun viel darüber geredet –, aber andererseits auch auf die Importe. Sie sagen: „Tierschutz muss allen Tieren gewährt werden." Hier werden wir Sie ganz sicher unterstützen. Es ist für uns auch wichtig, dass Sie beim Klonen von Tieren – ich füge noch das Wort Patentierung hinzu – sehr früh tätig werden wollen. Sie wollen – das habe ich gelesen – die Tiergesundheitsstrategie weiterentwickeln. Was sind hierbei Ihre Ziele? Und sind Sie vor diesem Hintergrund bereit, diese – unsere – hohen europäischen Standards dann auch bei Importen aus Drittländern zum Maßstab zu nehmen, zu kontrollieren und die Waren dementsprechend zuzulassen?

4-074
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I believe that cloning deserves to be considered as a specific issue and for us to focus on it, not as part of another big directive which contains a couple of paragraphs on cloning.

And this is where I can state, after discussion with the services – I am not just inventing this – that within a year we can come up with a report on the cloning issue, and therefore we will all have the opportunity to discuss the details and all the implications surrounding this area.

I am appreciative at the moment of the report from the Ethics Committee. I am aware of the fact that even EFSA, although saying that products from cloned animals are safe, are saying at the same time that the animal issue is very problematic when it comes to cloning. And animal welfare is on our radar as well. Therefore it is very important to focus on this issue together and to come up with the decisions that we need to take.

4-075
Iratxe García Pérez (S&D). – En el marco de la normativa generada por la DG SANCO en materia de sanidad animal y vegetal, bienestar animal y OGM, entre otros temas, se establece el cumplimiento obligatorio de unos estándares que son superiores –en algunos casos, muy superiores– a los establecidos en las normas internacionales y, por tanto, muy superiores a los utilizados por la mayor parte de nuestros competidores.

Esta situación repercute negativamente en la competitividad de nuestra producción agraria. Aceptando la necesidad de respetar las reglas del juego que marcan los organismos internacionales en materia de comercio internacional, ¿qué medidas piensa adoptar para evitar que los productores europeos sigan perdiendo competitividad?

4-076
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I do not believe that our standards should be those of our competitors. I believe that our standards should be scientific advice on the level at which our consumers are safe, irrespective of what our competitors are doing. The most important thing is that our competitors would not then have an advantage in our market because they can export things to us at a lower standard.

It is very important that we maintain the principle that anything that is imported has to have the same standard, and it has to be assured that imports are of the same standards as anything that is produced in Europe. The standards should be our standards, based, as I said, on what scientific advice tells us are the levels at which our consumers are safe.

4-077
Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). – Thank you for the clear and informed answers you have given us so far.

As the main rapporteur for the Commission's directive on human organs intended for transplantation, I hope that under the Spanish Presidency we will reach agreement and adopt it at first reading. That is the hope, because Europe needs it. I myself and the majority of shadow rapporteurs defend the already defined principle of Article 13 on voluntary and unpaid donation.

In order to prevent any inappropriate financial operations and traffic in human organs officially in the real market, and in order to respect the patient and his integrity, I would like to ask you whether you are prepared to defend this principle of voluntary and unpaid donation in the Commission and with the Council?

4-078
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I do not believe that there is any issue with this principle, and I can tell you that I am fully supportive of voluntary and unpaid donations.

4-079
Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE). – Thank you very much for a clear position. In order to have, let us say, unity and a very unified approach in all fields of health care, the question would be whether you would be inclined to revisit or to see this very principle you have just supported also in other texts, in other directives which already exist and, to put it clearly – or more clearly – also in the directive on cells and tissues, which dates from 2004.

4-080
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I will put it like this. I will be very receptive to any suggestions that might come from experts like you to make sure that we do whatever can be done to enshrine this type of principle within everything we do, and to be consistent because consistency is also key to policy and being consistent is very important. We have to make sure that we are consistent horizontally in the principles that we announce, but I rely on your advice.

4-081
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE). – Herr Vorsitzender! Herr Dalli, ich möchte meine Zufriedenheit über Ihre Äußerung zu den geklonten Tieren zum Ausdruck bringen. Ich möchte Sie aber ernsthaft bitten zu prüfen, dass das Dossier, das Sie uns einmal vorlegen werden, kein Bericht ist, sondern ein Vorschlag. Das würde uns doch sehr entgegenkommen. Vielleicht können Sie das bestätigen.

Seit 2006 gibt es in der EU die neuen Hygieneverordnungen. Sicher auch dank zahlreicher Übergangsregeln ist es gelungen, diese ziemlich störungsfrei zu überführen. Trotzdem ist es notwendig, einige Übergangsfristen bis 2013 zu verlängern. Ich persönlich halte das für nicht zielführend und möchte Sie deshalb fragen, ob Sie bereit sind, ausgehend von den verlängerten Übergangsfristen, die jetzt bis 2013 gelten sollen, mit dem Parlament zu prüfen, ob Änderungen an der Verordnung vorgenommen werden sollen.

Meine zweite Frage: Ich hätte gerne gewusst, wie wir den Mangel an Tierarzneimitteln in den nächsten Jahren beseitigen wollen. Seit Jahren kämpfen wir darum. Wir haben ständig neue Dossiers, und es ist bisher nicht gelungen. Vielleicht haben Sie kluge Ideen, wie dies endlich einer Lösung zugeführt werden kann.

4-082
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** What we will be doing on animal cloning, as I have said, is to focus on the issue, see the issue from the different perspectives – which also open horizontally with other DGs and other Commissioners, because we have to present something which has a holistic approach and a holistic view – and then put on the table something for discussion.

Again, I do not believe that we will be making decisions before coming to you for discussion. One of the principles I will try to adhere to, if I am elected by you, is to bring Parliament as early as possible into the decision-making process. I would rather take time and discuss policies with you than waste time fighting over policies with you. Therefore, this is a question where we need to really work together. Therefore, we must make sure that even the level – or the substance, sometimes – of a document is something that can be discussed fruitfully, and that one can be much more flexible in the positions which can be taken by the various people around the table. In that way there could be a better understanding that we can come to an agreement together.

On veterinary medicines, I would say that we have to be very careful in this area. I do not have much time, but I will mention only the anti-microbial resistance issue that we are facing. We have to be extremely careful that the standards on residues of veterinary medicines in our animals are well enforced and controlled.

4-083
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE). – Ich möchte noch einmal auf meine zweite Frage eingehen, nämlich zu den Hygieneverordnungen. Wir haben Übergangsregelungen bis 2013 verlängert. Das führt meines Erachtens nicht zur Lösung. Wir müssen dazu kommen – ich bitte Sie, das mit dem Parlament zu prüfen –, dass wir in gewissen Abschnitten Änderungen, kosmetische Änderungen an der Verordnung vornehmen können. Das wurde bisher von der Kommission abgelehnt. Ich halte das aber für notwendig. Vielleicht können Sie sich dazu nochmals äußern.

4-084
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Are you talking about animal testing? On this legislation, to tell you the truth, I need to go deeper into it before I can give you a substantial reply as I have done for the previous questions.

4-085
Anja Weisgerber (PPE). – Sehr geehrter Herr Dalli! Ich habe eine Frage zur Lebensmittelpolitik. Ziel der europäischen Verbraucherpolitik sollte ja sein, dass wir einen mündigen Verbraucher haben. In den vergangenen Monaten häuften sich Berichte über Lebensmittelimitate, die von Herstellern verwendet werden, um Kosten zu sparen, und die dem Verbraucher Zutaten vorgaukeln, die letztendlich gar nicht verwendet wurden. Ich nenne da z. B. den Analogkäse oder den Formschinken. Im Rahmen des Kommissionsvorschlags zur Lebensmittelkennzeichnung sollte es deshalb eine umfassende Kennzeichnungspflicht in diesem Zusammenhang geben, um die Verbraucher vor Irreführung und Täuschung zu schützen. Die Verbraucher sollten wissen, was in den Lebensmitteln enthalten ist, die sie essen. Werden Sie unsere Initiative zu einer besseren Kennzeichnung von Lebensmittelimitaten unterstützen? Wir wären sehr dankbar!

4-086
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** My position on imitation products is that they are a fraud. Therefore, I believe that we have to do our utmost – our utmost – to make sure that our consumers are not defrauded.

They cannot think that they are buying something when in fact they are buying something else. They cannot think that they are buying something that might be good for them, when in fact they are buying something that is killing them.

Therefore, this is very important, and the answer is yes, I will move – and move very quickly – to make sure there is proper labelling in this sector.

4-087
Anja Weisgerber (PPE). – Das war eine sehr klare Aussage. Wir werden darauf zurückkommen. In diesem Zusammenhang habe ich noch eine Frage zu den mündigen Patienten. Es ist ja das Thema Patienteninformation schon angesprochen worden. Werden Sie den Vorschlag unterstützen, dass eine europäische Internetdatenbank oder vielleicht auch nationale Internetseiten eingerichtet werden, die über die Behandlungsmöglichkeiten von bestimmten Krankheiten neutral informieren? Zusätzlich und neben der Information, die die Hersteller zu den Medikamenten geben, wäre das eine ganz wichtige Information für die Verbraucher und für die Patienten. Es gibt schon viele Informationen im Internet, aber nicht gut und nicht kontrolliert.

4-088
Der Präsident. – Frau Weisgerber, Sie kennen die Regeln. Die Nachfrage muss sich auf die erste Frage

beziehen. Sie war definitiv daneben! Also, Herr Dalli, Sie brauchen sie nicht zu beantworten.

4-089
Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Hr. Dalli! Jeg synes, at det, De taler om her i dag, alt sammen lyder særdeles godt. De vil være forbrugernes vogter, forbrugernes forsvarer. Vil det betyde, at De faktisk reelt kan love de europæiske forbrugere, at der, når De fremlægger lovgivning på forbrugerområdet i EU, ikke vil være nogen som helst europæiske forbrugere, der vil miste allerede opnåede forbrugerrettigheder i forbindelse med harmonisering på EU-niveau? Altså: Vil man miste sine rettigheder? I forlængelse heraf beder jeg Dem oplyse lidt mere præcist, om De er tilhænger af brug af især minimumsharmonisering, eller om De foretrækker brug af fuld harmonisering, når vi lovgiver på forbrugerområdet i EU.

4-090
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – In fact, this is one issue of the Consumer Rights Directive that I believe has been passed to Mrs Reding's portfolio for development.

However, on the issue of full harmonisation or minimum harmonisation about which I believe there is quite an argument, my opinion would be that one has to tread carefully in this area. For harmonisation – as I said earlier – I believe that consistency is the key. I do not think we can say something in one area and then say something different in another area because it suits us. We have to be consistent in our thinking. If we believe in the internal market and we believe that certain requirements, especially in consumer rights, are important for the internal market, then we have to move in such a way that we will harmonise the internal market as much as we can.

As I have already said, the question of standards is not a question of negotiation, to my mind. It is not a question of what I can give and what I can take, but it is a question of what is the right level of standards in anything that the European consumer expects, whether he be in Finland or in Bulgaria. What is the level of standards that we should give our consumer?

I believe that we now have to be receptive to this concept. There is talk about acquired rights – and I believe that consumer organisations are also up in arms about this type of issue at the moment – but getting rights is in fact a democratic process in any one country. However, on the other hand, there are also a lot of benefits that one can get from the single market. One has to weigh one thing against the other. I believe this should be on the discussion table. Are there benefits from the internal market or are there not?

4-091
Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Jeg ved ikke, om jeg blev meget klogere af det svar. Mit spørgsmål gik faktisk ikke på forbrugerrettighedsdirektivet. Jeg tænkte snarere på den lovgivning, De kommer til at fremlægge inden for Deres område, og på, om De på dette område vil fremlægge forslag, som skaber fuld harmonisering eller minimumsharmonisering. Men jeg hører faktisk Deres svar sådan, at der vil være europæiske forbrugere, som desværre kan forvente at miste rettigheder, de allerede har opnået.

4-092
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – If I have to make decisions between legislation that will affect the internal market and issues that will be important for the consumer market, then I would rather go for what would benefit the internal market, since I would believe that this is what is going to benefit the consumer in the long run.

If it means harmonisation, then I will decide on harmonisation. These, I believe, are the problems that we politicians have to face from time to time. They are problems. We are working here with a diverse Community of countries that have had their own political development over the ages, each country on its own. I believe that we are faced with situations where we have to compromise in many instances to get a solution that benefits all finally, and which benefits all in a true sense.

If we believe that the internal market is beneficial, then one can lose certain (*inaudible)* but on the other hand can gain a lot of accessibility to products that are today not accessible at prices that are today not accessible, as an example.

So all this has to be taken into consideration and we should not say that it is one thing or another.

(The Chair cut off the speaker)

4-093
James Nicholson (ECR). – Europe is a major importer of food from around the world and food produced in Europe by European farmers respects the highest food safety standards laid down here in Brussels. We also have the highest welfare standards. What is your view on imported food entering the European food chain which is not produced to the same high standard? Is this fair to the consumer? Will you defend European standards in the WTO?

Can I also ask you where you stand on GMO imports to the European Union, and the need for more efficient licensing within the European Union, in order to tackle the high cost of feed?

Do you share my concerns at the continued importation of Brazilian beef which does not meet the stringent requirements met by European farmers?

Will you be prepared to look again at the iniquitous implementation of electronic sheep tagging, which does nothing to improve the control or spread of disease within the sheep industry and will put many sheep farmers in environmentally sensitive areas out of business in the United Kingdom?

4-094
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Again, I am going to repeat what I have already said. The basic principle is that food coming into the European Union, be it fruit, be it Brazilian meat, must be up to the standards required by the European Union.

I would not accept that any food of whatever nature that comes within the European Union is of an inferior quality or of inferior standards, or does not meet the quality standards that we set for our own producers. This is the principle.

I know in fact what is happening is that, concerning Brazilian beef for example, the FAO Office has been certifying the locations from which beef can be exported from Brazil into Europe. If the operations in Brazil are certified as meeting our standards, then they are allowed to export to us. This is the issue.

On sheep tagging, as all of you know, this has now become operative as of the first of this month. This is something I think that has been implemented in many countries for some time now. Some have been dragging their feet in implementing it, but this directive has now been implemented.

If we see any extraordinary elements developing then one can have a look at the consequences, but for the time being the position is that the Sheep-Tagging Directive is implemented, and it is the policy that we have and will be operating with.

4-095
Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE). – Herr Dalli! Herr Barroso hat vorgeschlagen, den Mitgliedstaaten die Entscheidung über den Anbau gentechnisch veränderter Pflanzen selbst zu überlassen. Sie unterstützen wohl diese Initiative, obwohl es in unserem kleinräumigen Europa schwierig ist, Grenzen zu ziehen und Kontaminationen an Grenzen aufzuhalten. Wollen Sie mit dieser Entscheidung zur Renationalisierung die Verantwortung für mögliche Konflikte und Schäden in diesem Bereich abgeben?

Zweite Frage: Das Parlament ist sich beim Schutz von Saatgut sehr einig. Wir wollen die höchsten Standards für den Schutz von Saatgut. Können Sie sich der Haltung des Parlaments in diesem Punkt anschließen? Werden Sie alles dafür tun, dass wir gerade bei Saatgut eine Nulltoleranz gegenüber gentechnisch veränderten Verunreinigungen haben?

4-096
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** This subject again: from the few weeks I have been involved with these types of issues and dossiers, I can hear many views which are not united views. They are views that are divergent and views that are quite different from each other, even here in Parliament. Therefore this is a question where I think much discussion is required. You will be discussing GMOs; I will be listening to your discussions very attentively. I will be discussing with you all the issues relating to GMOs and hopefully we can come to a quick decision.

I again repeat what I have said earlier. The level of uncertainty that we have about these types of issues is, I think, not doing anybody any good. I believe that we really need to move fast on these dossiers and come up with possible solutions that are feasible and that are safe – because finally safety comes first – and that everybody can accept as being the right way to go.

4-097
Christofer Fjellner (PPE). – Thank you very much Mr Dalli. I am happy to hear that you want to empower consumers through information and choice, and I hope that you will be focusing equally on empowering patients through information and choice – though if you do so I think you should be prepared to make many new enemies among Member States.

Here, though, I think that you have to be tough, mainly for the sake of patients, especially those with chronic or rare diseases for whom the ability to explore or research treatment options might actually be a question of life or death. That is why we in the European Parliament have been pushing for the 'information to patients' proposal for almost eight years now.

You said you wanted to reassess the former package. I would like to know what you mean by 'reassess' and what you hope will be the outcome of such a reassessment?

Of course I totally and fully agree with you that less controversial parts of the pharma package should of course not have to wait for the more controversial parts of the pharma package, but can you promise us that this will never be an excuse to let the 'information to patients' part slip, letting it drag along for longer than necessary?

4-098
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I have been in politics for many years, and I have been in positions where I had to take very difficult decisions myself in my own country. Like enforcing taxation, for example, when I was Minister of Finance in Malta. Like liberalising the economy when I was Minister of Finance and Trade; and like liberalising a lot of other issues in Malta. Unfortunately in positions like this, making enemies comes with the job.

This is not something which is going to frighten me or to derail me on whatever I believe would need to be done for the consumer. You make a lot of enemies in this world for one reason or another, but fortunately once you know your direction has been correct and you have been moving in the right direction, then I believe you have to carry on.

On the outcome of the reassessment of the 'information to patients' proposal, I do not know the outcome now. I have to wait for the reassessment to be able to come with an outcome, so you will have to be patient with me.

4-099
Christofer Fjellner (PPE). – I am patient to a very large degree, but I would be happy to hear why there is to be that reassessment. Could you elaborate a little bit on that, because then we might know your thinking, which is what I was hoping for.

I am very happy to hear that we have a Commissioner-designate who is ready for a fight, because that is what we need here. I hope that if you are willing to have a fight in this controversial area, we do not get a result that ends up with the lowest common denominator. Unfortunately, that is very often the result when we deal with controversial issues here, so I hope you will be willing to stick to your position and fight hard in this area, but please tell us why there is to be that reassessment, as that might guide us.

4-100
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – In this reassessment, for example, we will ensure that there may be a harder demarcation between information and advertising. That is one issue. This is very important, because we do not want to run the risk that people, at a point of life when they are vulnerable because they are suffering from some type of malady or disease, are coerced into purchasing products that might not be good for them. So, we have to be careful about that. I will therefore be insisting that there will be a very hard demarcation between information and advertising.

Then we have to make sure what information the patient needs – the patient perspective. When does he need it? Personally, I am afraid that we may have a situation where people take decisions about their health without consulting professional advice. This can be very dangerous to people. This is something that I really have to discuss with you to see where we have to draw the line.

4-101
Edite Estrela (S&D). – Sr. Dalli, as responsabilidades da União Europeia no domínio da saúde são reduzidas. No entanto, o Tratado de Lisboa introduz a possibilidade de acção relativamente a doenças específicas.

Quais serão as doenças em que irá concentrar a sua atenção? E, como não vou poder replicar, agradeço que refira se as doenças reumáticas vão fazer parte das suas prioridades.

4-102
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – The opinion that I have formed up till now is that I would rather concentrate on health determinants than on specific diseases. Within the limited financial resources that we have, I believe it is very important to make sure that we address causes of diseases that are horizontal to several diseases.

I am not a doctor and I do not want to give advice here, but there are specific health determinants that cut across specific diseases. If you have obesity for example, it is linked to cancer and to cardiovascular disease. Therefore I would say that concentrating on specific diseases will give us a short-term and narrow outcome, while concentrating on the health determinants will give us a much wider outcome.

I also believe that this work on prevention would move us much more quickly into health equality, because it is much easier to deliver – easy in a sense, that is. When you compare it to the actual treatment it is much easier to deliver – and it is something where we, as a Commission and a Parliament, especially working together, can do much more together in all the countries in Europe, pushing this fight against health determinants.

4-103
Der Präsident. – Obwohl wir natürlich auch Aktionsprogramme zu Krebs und anderen Einzelkrankheiten haben. Die Frage betraf Rheuma. Aber das kann sich ja noch ergeben.

4-104
Heide Rühle (Verts/ALE). – Herr Dalli! Sie betonen *law enforcement* und das Modell des informierten Verbrauchers. Das ist schön, aber mir fehlt das Element der Kontrolle, der Marktüberwachung. Viele Mitgliedstaaten machen hier zu wenig, und das trotz des *goods package*. Hier haben sich nur zwei Mitgliedstaaten nach dem *goods package* bereit erklärt, mehr zu tun. Was wollen Sie konkret tun, um die Marktüberwachung in Europa zu verstärken und damit die Verbraucher auch vor schadhaften Elektroartikeln oder schadhaftem Spielzeug und anderen Dingen zu schützen?

Ferner möchte ich Ihnen die Frage der Transparenz stellen. Es gibt in der Kommission zahlreiche interne Ausschüsse, und es ist viel zu wenig bekannt, wer in diesen Ausschüssen sitzt und wer die Kommission hier berät. Sind Sie bereit, hier mehr Transparenz herzustellen und eine Veröffentlichung der Ergebnisse vorzusehen?

Außerdem möchte ich die Frage der Normungsausschüsse ansprechen. Auch bei den Normungsausschüssen weiß das Parlament zu wenig Bescheid. Vor allem bei Normungsausschüssen besteht das Problem, dass die Zusammensetzung nicht ausgewogen ist. So ist z. B. die kleine und mittlere Industrie in den Normungsausschüssen zu wenig vertreten, und es gibt zu wenige Verbraucherverbände in den Ausschüssen. Würden Sie hier etwas tun, damit die Normungsausschüsse besser zusammengesetzt sind?

4-105
John Dalli, *Commissioner-delegate***.** – I will be going into all these issues, in effect to make sure that whatever we set up as vehicles for helping us to decide is working well. So when it comes to standardisation committees, as you have said, if there is a bias one way or another, we have to find out what this bias is, and we have to correct bias. Because we need objective positions and we need objective advice.

The same with transparency. I believe that this Community – the European Union – is all about

transparency. I believe that we should apply this principle consistently in whatever we do. Again, with certain caveats as well, because you can be transparent but then there are certain instances where you have to retain a certain confidentiality in the process that you are going through, depending on what type of process you will be dealing with.

On surveillance, it is a question of building the capacity in the Member States and ensuring that the capacities in the Member States are up to the level that we require – capacities both in terms of the number of human resources, the volume of human resources that they apply to it, as well as to the mechanical and technological capacity that they have, and also in terms of the level of the human resources which are operating there. Our action as a Commission in this area will not be to take over surveillance ourselves, but we will make sure that, in all of our Member States, the capacity is up to the right standard.

4-106
Heide Rühle (Verts/ALE). – Ich möchte nochmals bei den Normungsausschüssen nachhaken. Wir haben inzwischen sehr viele Richtlinien, die auf der Basis des *new approach* funktionieren. Die letzte Überarbeitung einer Richtlinie, die wir vorgenommen haben, war die der Spielzeugrichtlinie. Das Interessante ist, dass wir als Parlament viel zu wenig erfahren, was hinterher passiert, wenn solche Richtlinien verabschiedet worden sind. Beispielsweise hatten wir eine Verpflichtung, dass der Lärm stärker berücksichtigt wird. Wir haben bis heute keine Schwellenwerte für Lärm vorliegen. Die Schwellenwerte im Bereich der allergieauslösenden Aromastoffe sind mir viel zu wenig bekannt. Ich bin der Meinung, Sie müssten überprüfen, ob dieser *new approach* richtig ist. Und Sie müssten überprüfen, wie hier Transparenz hergestellt werden kann und wie das Parlament in seiner Entscheidung gestärkt und nicht durch den *new approach* geschwächt wird.

4-107
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Whenever an action is taken, for example with toys as you have mentioned, then the next step would be to set up the standards, most of the time. On this we will be calling on EFSA, most probably, to set the standards for us.

Now allow me to make a little advertisement myself. We need money for EFSA to be able to cater for all the additional requirements that we are pushing their way. This is something that we have to consider as well. All of us need speedy and accurate decisions made in the most independent way. But again, let us put our money where our mouth is sometimes, and let us finance these organisations in the proper way so that they can deliver what we expect of them.

4-108
Emma Mcclarkin (ECR). – My question also touches on the food information for consumers, which is currently under discussion. Once this proposal has gone through, European citizens will already find on food packaging all necessary information to make their own informed choices on the foods that they buy and eat. Therefore Renate Sommer, the rapporteur for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, is absolutely right in proposing the deletion of nutrient profiles, foreseen under Article 4 of the Claims Regulation.

But, regarding food labelling, it is crucial that people should not be overburdened with complex information that they cannot understand, which means that they will not grasp the most important elements, and this therefore defeats the objectives. How will you strike a balance between ensuring the functioning of the single market for consumers by providing the information they need, whilst protecting their freedom of choice?

4-109
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** In all the initiatives that we take on labelling, I do not believe that the Commission has ever gone the way of prohibiting any type of food being put on the market. So as far as choice is concerned, I think the choice is there. The choice remains there.

The issue is: do consumers have a choice if they want information and they do not find the information? So the question is: do they want information? I think it is our duty to lobby our consumers so that they ask for information, because it is what we believe is good for them.

Once they want that information, is that information available to them? So the availability of information is important. How much? Is it cluttered information that is unreadable? That is wrong. This is why I stated earlier that we have to be smart about these issues.

But we cannot stop there either. We cannot stop at the level of having the correct balance of information on our packaging, whether it is at the front of the package, the back of the package, or whatever. But are the consumers educated to read that information?

This is the next level we need to go to. We have to work with our consumers to make sure that the information we are putting on the packages is understandable to them, that they know what it means. Therefore I believe that this is the thrust that will surround the issue. Smart labelling – yes but enough – readable, and then an education programme for our consumers to make sure that they can use the information they are getting.

4-110
Emma Mcclarkin (ECR). – I would now like to touch on alcohol, and I would like to know your thoughts on how we might approach this when we look at the programme in 2012 with regard to misuse of alcohol. I hope that you would look at it in a balanced way, taking into account other useful tools such as consumer education campaigns, rather than constant over-regulation and potential labelling systems regarding ingredients of alcohol, which consumers will not find useful or will not understand. Can you explain how you

will, throughout your mandate, deal with alcohol-related matters?

4-111
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I can talk about this from first-hand experience, because this was a specific responsibility that I had as Minister of Health in Malta.

I believe that abuse of alcohol has to be attacked, first of all, through a vast information campaign – 'what is bad for you'. But I also believe that there have to be some other controls for alcohol abuse: for example, testing for drinking and driving. I think this is something that we need to start pushing more and more, although it is not in my portfolio, in order to achieve an aim. This is very important. We will not tell people not to consume alcohol but we will tell them not to abuse the consumption of alcohol.

Therefore, I do not think that the solutions are simply solutions of labelling on alcohol. I think it is far-reaching, and we have to have some novel ideas on this.

4-112
Marit Paulsen (ALDE). – Herr Dalli, ni har förmodligen fått den portfölj i kommissionen som absolut mest och direkt påverkar de enskilda medborgarna i Europa.

Jag vill ta upp ett problem som är akut och starkt växande, nämligen antibiotikaresistensen. I dag har vi alltfler oerhört farliga bakterier, som är pan- och multiresistenta mot alla former av antibiotika. Detta är ett allvarligt problem. Det som skrivs ut av humanmedicinen har vi någorlunda styrsel på. Det skrivs emellertid ut lika mycket till våra djur. I fråga om det har vi mycket liten aning om hur mycket som skrivs ut, varför, till vilka sjukdomar, till vilka djur och i vilka geografiska områden. Det är också vetenskapligt signifikant att mycket god djuromsorg ger friskare djur, innebär mindre antibiotika och därmed en stark påverkan på folkhälsan.

4-113
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I totally agree both with the preamble and with the statement that we need healthier animals that can give us healthy food. Therefore we will be working in this direction, which is a continuation of what has been done in the past. Our services have been working very hard to set the proper standards on the residues of medicines in animal products, and to check on residues of these medicines in the final products. So, this is an area on which we are working and an area where we have to move.

Moving on towards the prescriptions and how many prescriptions and suchlike, this again is an area where, to tell you the truth, I cannot delve in depth at the moment, but it is something we can look at. We can also see how we can coordinate with the Commissioner for Agriculture as far as the management of livestock is concerned, because I believe that is also part of the management of agriculture.

4-114
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR). – The Cross-Border Health Directive envisages that standards for healthcare professionals across the EU will be harmonised.

In a recent case, a doctor from one Member State was able to set up practice in the UK without being able to speak English. This resulted in the death of one of his patients.

How does the Commissioner-designate intend to ensure that the current proposals are not only common-sense, cost-effective and implementable, but that they also ensure the highest level of patient safety?

4-115
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I will have to see in fact whether this particular issue concerns more the international market portfolio, as far as action is concerned.

However, when it comes to health delivery, when it comes to professionals in health, it is very much within our remit.

We then have to be careful to work with the other Commissioners on a horizontal basis to ensure the safety of patients – not just to think about markets, not to just to think about the basic economic principle of movement, of providing a service, but also about the very important issue of the standards that are required for patient safety.

4-116
Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE). – D'abord, je me réjouis que les médicaments reviennent enfin à la Direction générale de la santé et non plus à la Direction générale de l'industrie comme c'était le cas auparavant. Je voudrais revenir sur la gestion de la vaccination contre la grippe A en Europe. Une série d'actualités montrent qu'il y a eu, dans différents pays, un gaspillage énorme d'argent sur un virus qui s'est avéré relativement bénin; mais il y a eu également de très nombreuses questions qui ont soulevé le problème des conflits d'intérêt entre nos institutions européennes, des institutions internationales et les laboratoires pharmaceutiques.

Ma question est la suivante: Comment renforcer l'objectivité et l'indépendance de nos institutions, que ce soit l'Agence européenne des médicaments ou le Centre de contrôle des maladies infectieuses, par rapport aux laboratoires pharmaceutiques?

4-117
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** Undoubtedly we have to work on it. We have to really assess what the situation is today, and then we have to see what type of action is called for to ensure the quality of service that is required by the patient.

As I said, in all this we have to have a balance. We have to strike a balance between the need to have a strong

pharma industry and the need that patients have for a first-class service from the pharma industry. We cannot sacrifice patient interest for anything. But, on the other hand, as I said, a strong pharma industry is in the interests of the patient. Therefore we should not disregard it. In this way I believe it is very important that we keep a balanced view of what is done.

Naturally there is interaction in these areas. There is so much that we can talk to the pharma industry about – for example their prioritisation of research – but we should not dictate to them what they do. We are not here to dictate to them, but to show them our vision, from the patient's standpoint, of what type of medical research we think should be done.

This is just an example. However, there is a lot to do and especially also in these areas that you have just mentioned.

4-118
Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE). – Mr Dalli, you made a very strong commitment in your written questions to our committee to developing practices which will combat the counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals.

We had a very strong debate here in our House related to the Counterfeit Medicines Directive, and we think that this directive covers just 1% of the practices – or rather, it affects just the legal chains, the pharmacies. Do you actually intend to go into depth with the counterfeiting of medicines, and especially the Internet trade and also the parallel trade?

4-119
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** As I have said in my written replies to your questions, I consider counterfeiting to be an affront to consumers and dangerous as well to a lot of consumers. It is also a very big danger to the innovation drive that we have in Europe, so it must be fought.

It is normally not so difficult to take steps on the off-line segment –pharmacies and things like that – because the physical word can be monitored and controlled a little easier. I have also stated in my written replies that I will make every effort to ensure that the same controls applying to the off-line word also apply to the online word.

We all know that most counterfeiting is being generated from the Internet and from sites on the Internet. Today, anybody with a very small amount of money can set up an Internet website and they can basically do whatever they want with this Internet website. Therefore it is quite important that we do that. I know it is not easy. It is not easy from many angles, not only the question of censorship, when you start meddling with the supply of information over the Internet but I will be working with my fellow Commissioners in the college to address the issue of counterfeits on the Internet particularly.

4-120
Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE). – Most of these practices are related to organised crime. Do you intend to work in close cooperation with your colleagues responsible for justice and home affairs? There are also other practices which are dangerous and which put our health at risk, like the electronic medical service – the e-doctors and the e-consultations. Do you intend to go in this direction?

4-121
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I believe that these are the directions we must take. I think it is very important that we work as hard as we can to fight both organised crime and these concepts of giving medical advice at long distance. It is a question, as I said, where I have to work very closely with my fellow Commissioners in the college.

4-122
Judith A. Merkies (S&D). – Europe is coping with an ageing population and that brings all kinds of problems, yet this demographic change is not really reflected in European health policy. How are you going to go about this? Is this a priority for you? Should this be European policy or rather left to national policy? How are you going to guarantee the same level of health and treatment in Europe, and also how are you going to make sure that this ageing population has the same type of mobility everywhere?

The second question, which is not allowed! Can you spend one second on animal transport and the time that they spend before going to the slaughterhouse?

4-123
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** The answer is that ageing is a priority. It is a demographic reality. I agree with you that it is not reflected in a proper way in the policies which we have at this time in Europe. I will make it one of the areas where we need to work very hard, because ageing is not simply a question of the treatment of the ageing population, but also a question of the type of life they lead. It is a question of feeling that they are not a burden on the shoulders of other people.

Therefore, the issues are much broader than simply saying that there should be medicines. There are specific medicines when we talk, for example, about Alzheimer's or about dementia and other issues. These are issues which need to addressed but, more than that, it is a question of making sure that people can lead a healthier life for a longer time, and this is the issue we have to address.

Whether we have to go to national or European policies, I hesitate a little bit on that because it needs a lot of reflection, and we will be reflecting on it. It is going to depend as well on the types of solutions that we are going to have – the measures and the particular initiatives that will be taken – and on whether they should be national or European.

This also relates to mobility, because, again, care of the elderly is a very important issue. I have now been

dealing directly with this over the past year and a half – nearly two years – in Malta and it is not an easy issue. It is a pressing issue and it is something that needs a fast resolution.

On animal transport, if you give me a minute, we will also be looking into these directives. However, let us first make sure that whatever we have today is being enforced properly, and then let us make an assessment of the results of this enforcement. We have very clear lines on where we want to go on animal welfare, and I do not think there should be problems with Parliament on these issues because I believe animal welfare is also very close to our heart.

4-124
Judith A. Merkies (S&D). – Thank you for that, because it is also very much an issue close to our heart. I think we can work together. It is just that we want it fast. I hope that you can come up with some target-setting here on both issues and on animal transport, and also because I want to give you my time since you were not able to answer.

If you think that the ageing population issue is a European matter, how are you going to go about telling that to the Council?

4-125
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – We will move on animal transport. We will move as fast as we can. We have heard here today, over these hours that we have been together, the very many priorities that everybody has. We have to prioritise action, but animal welfare is going to be one of the top priorities in our minds. Therefore we will move as fast as we can on this issue as well.

I have not said that there is a European responsibility for the ageing population. I have said that we have to reflect on these issues and then, depending very much on the type of initiatives we will take, we will have to take decisions on where the competence will lie.

4-126
Richard Seeber (PPE). – Ich hoffe, ich habe nicht das letzte Wort, sondern das vorletzte, weil ich auf eine Antwort vom designierten Kommissar hoffe! Sie haben jetzt viele Fragen inhaltlicher Art beantwortet, Herr designierter Kommissar. Mich hätte jetzt interessiert, wie Sie es mit der Zusammenarbeit mit dem Parlament und insbesondere mit dem Umweltausschuss halten. Wie Sie wissen, ist das Europäische Parlament eigentlich das einzige Parlament, das auf der einen Seite ernstzunehmen ist, aber trotzdem kein Initiativrecht, ein typisches parlamentarisches Recht, hat. Wir haben ja nur eine Art Krücke in den Verträgen vorgesehen, und die alte Kommission hat eigentlich nur sieben Mal in der letzten Legislaturperiode davon Gebrauch gemacht, dass sie, wenn wir mit qualifizierter Mehrheit Initiativen gefordert haben, das auch aufgegriffen hat. Das ist meiner Ansicht nach enttäuschend. Wie werden Sie das halten, wie werden Sie sich im Kollegium verhalten, und vor allem, werden Sie auch zu uns in den Umweltausschuss kommen, wenn Sie größere Gesetzesvorhaben planen, um vorab mit uns eine Beratung abzuhalten, oder wollen Sie von diesem Recht bzw. dieser Möglichkeit nicht Gebrauch machen?

4-127
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***.** – I have already had the opportunity to say – and I restate it because I believe it – that my intention is to come to you as early as possible in the decision-making process so that your input would be involved in the process as early as possible. As I said, I would rather spend time talking about policy with you than fighting over policy with you.

I do not want to fight over policy because I would like to put policies on the table that have already been ruminated on, already thought about with Parliament's involvement as well.

This is what I would like to do and, in this regard, what I can promise you is that I will give all the time necessary to be able to go through this discussion process with you.

I know, for example, that my predecessor used to make it her habit to come to Parliament before going public with any major announcements. I also think that, as far as possible, this is something that is good because, as I told you before, I consider you to be the representatives of your constituents. Any announcement that we make is going to be made to your constituents and I think it is only fair that you know so that, if you are asked about it, you know how to answer.

4-128
Chair. – This is the end of the question time. I thank you all for participating in this hearing, all those from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection who have put questions, and Mr Dalli for the answers.

There was a large *tour d'horizon* through health protection and consumer protection, and we acknowledge that these are questions that are of great interest and importance to citizens.

One could see that Mr Dalli has 20 years' experience in politics; one could see it from his answers. We saved a lot of time by precise and short answers, and we had the permanent repetitive applause of Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, so that must mean that what we heard was in general positive.

This has been a joint hearing and Malcolm Harbour, my colleague from the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, would like to address you as well before Mr Dalli gives his last contribution.

4-129
Malcolm Harbour (ECR), *Chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection***.** – Thank

you very much, Mr Chair. First of all, I want to thank you on behalf of the members of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection for extending a warm welcome to us. The association with you has worked very well, and I particularly want to thank my 10 members who asked questions.

I particularly wanted to emphasise what Mr Dalli said in response to Mrs Gebhardt's question, that I think one of the most important aspects for us is your absolute assurance that you will be the consumer champion within the Commission. We had an extremely good relationship with your predecessor, Mrs Kuneva, on that basis and, even though we have not had time to explore a lot of these areas, that relationship between us and the Commissioner was crucial. We, of course, are custodians of the budget for consumer programmes and consumer strategy and the support that is under your control for consumer organisations.

I think that it has been extremely helpful for us to have that clear view, and your assurances about your role as the guardian – I use your term – of consumer interests has been absolutely crucial for my committee today, so thank you for that.

(Applause)

4-130
Chair. – Thank you, Malcolm Harbour. Mr Dalli, please take your five minutes for final comments if you would like to.

4-131
John Dalli, *Commissioner-designate***. –** I would like first of all to thank you all for this, for me, very interesting exchange of views about many issues. I could already sense, in relation to the various issues that are in front of us, the areas which Parliament is looking at and prioritising. I believe that we will be working together in the future.

I emphasise this working together because, as I have said, I do not think this is something that one person can do on his own. I think managing Europe is quite a heavy burden and, in the very complex situations that we face in these areas, we need everybody's input, including this rainbow of ideas in this Parliament, which is so nice and which gives additional value to whatever we do in the future.

So let us move together into the future. I will now, naturally, await your judgement. I would like to have the opportunity – and I am very excited about this – to work hard to put patients and consumers first in our policies.

(Applause)

4-132
Chair. – Thank you, Mr Dalli. The hearing is finished. The coordinators will meet at 16.30 in Room 1G2.

(The hearing closed at 15.40)