



Committee on Fisheries
The Chairperson

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CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Jerzy BUZEK
President
European Parliament

Dear Mr President,

In accordance with Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Committee on Fisheries, with the participation of the Committee on Transports and Tourism, held a public hearing on Tuesday 19 January 2010 with Ms Maria Damanaki, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

Prior to the hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions. My committee noted that Ms Damanaki gave reasonably complete replies on the "standard" questions (addressed to all Commissioner-designates) submitted by Parliament but, unfortunately, but rather noncommittal and unspecific replies to very precise (and, in our view, important) questions raised by our Committee concerning the implementation of the Lisbon treaty and the involvement of our institution in international negotiations (bilateral and regional) on an equal footing with the Council.

Ms Damanaki opened the hearing by making a statement in which she referred to both fisheries policy and maritime affairs.

On fisheries, she announced that the ongoing CFP reform would be a central focus of her work. She underscored the large number of contributions received in the framework of the public consultation on the Green Paper, stated her intention to take this consultation very seriously, and insisted on sustainability, democratic responsibility, the global dimension and compliance being the four "keywords" for her future proposals on this subject.

On maritime affairs, Ms Damanaki said that the time had come to give effect to the ideas contained in the Blue Book on integrated maritime policy by focusing on opportunities for blue growth, the creation of blue jobs, security for citizens, fisheries and transport, and the reinforcement of the knowledge economy.

PE 432.454/CPG

Members then asked questions on the following subjects in particular (non exhaustive list):

1. Concerning fisheries: possible regionalisation/decentralisation of the CFP; labelling of fisheries and aquaculture products; financing of both the CFP and the Integrated Maritime Policy; interinstitutional cooperation in the reform and implementation of the CFP; relations with Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands; involvement of the sector and Regional Advisory Councils in the reform and implementation of the CFP; special treatment/protection to be given to artisanal fishing, inshore fishing and islands in the framework of a reform of the CFP (including the question of the definition of artisanal fishing); application of CFP rules to angling/recreational fishing; overcapacity of the EU fishing fleet and the ways and means to deal with it efficiently; specific problems concerning the Baltic Sea (including the cod quota and industrial fishing of pelagic species); respective merits of resource management instruments (quotas; effort limitation; fishing rights - including the question of transferable fishing rights); increasing costs faced by fishing industry; problems related to the marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products and the need for a new Common Market Organisation; problems related to imports (EU high level of dependency on imports; perceived unfairness of competition from imports; strict application of EU standards to imported products); Fisheries Partnership Agreements with third countries (economic importance; human rights and development issues; greater involvement of the EP in their negotiation and implementation); challenges and future of the EU aquaculture industry and strategy to encourage its development; specific problems related to the Mediterranean (including relations with neighbouring third countries and the role of GFCM and ICCAT); social challenges in the fisheries sector (including the role of women); specific challenges faced by ultraperipheral regions and support to these regions.

2. Concerning maritime affairs: implementation of the Blue Book on the IMP; piracy in the Indian Ocean; specific problems concerning the Black Sea; liberalisation of port services; need for greater coordination on maritime affairs within the Commission and for a clearer delimitation of responsibilities between the Commissioner for maritime affairs and the Commissioner for transports.

During the debate, Ms Damanaki gave clear and convincing answers to most of the questions, thereby displaying, despite her lack of specific prior experience of these issues, a remarkable degree of preparation and an obvious ability to quickly grasp the most technical aspects of her future portfolio.

Although her institutional commitments towards the EP still lack specificity, especially with respect to placing the Parliament on an equal footing with the Council for the negotiation and implementation of international agreements, this reluctance appears to be due to horizontal constraints imposed upon the candidates of the new college rather than to a position adopted by Ms Damanaki herself, whose sincere desire to cooperate with our institution and our committee is obvious.

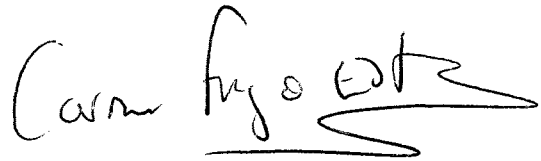
On the basis of the reactions of the Members present at the hearing, as well as the comments made by my committee's coordinators and vice chairs, who met after the hearing under my chairmanship, I am in a position to confirm that Ms Damanaki is a well qualified candidate with the highest degree of independence, professional aptitude and European commitment, as well as outstanding communication skills.

On the basis of her performance at the hearing, we are also very confident about her capacity to master all aspects of her portfolio and to cooperate loyally with our committee.

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

This represents the opinion of a consensus of the Members who attended the hearing.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carmen Fraga Estévez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Carmen FRAGA ESTÉVEZ