

Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Chair

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ACCES RESERVE

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Jerzy Buzek
President
European Parliament

Dear President,

At its meeting of 12 January, the Committee on Foreign Affairs held its hearing of the Commissioner designate, Mr Štefan Füle.

In his **introductory statement** and during the Q&A session, Mr Füle made a number of important statements to which I would like to draw your attention:

On the fundamental question of his **relationship with the Parliament**, he showed a strong and genuine willingness to work closely with Parliament. In particular he stressed that his relationship with Parliament would not only be about informing Parliament about policy decisions already taken, but rather about seeking Parliament's advice and political support before such decisions are taken. On the issue of **democratic accountability**, Mr Füle acknowledged that he was fully accountable to Parliament as Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy.

With regard to Parliament's concerns on the coordination between the EU external action and the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies, Mr Füle positively stressed that the final decision on the coherence of the external action would always be with the Vice-President/High Representative for CFSP and further added that he would always be a constructive and loyal partner.

In reply to questions and concerns on the possibility of countries moving from the neighbourhood policy to the enlargement policy and vice-versa, Mr Füle clearly stated the different nature of Enlargement and Neighbourhood policies and emphasised that there was no automatic permeability between the two and no shortcuts.

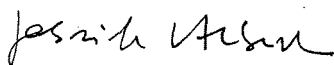
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During the hearing Mr Füle proved a keen supporter of the **enlargement strategy** as beneficial to both enlargement countries and the EU. This strategy would be guided by strict compliance with the Copenhagen criteria and would not be dictated by predetermined timetables. Mr Füle accepted Article 49 as the sole basis for enlargement, subject to the political will of all parties. He recognised the importance of the integration capacity of the EU, which the Union should strive towards developing. With regard to the **Neighbourhood Policy**, Mr Füle stressed the importance of an engagement by all Member States with regard to both the Eastern and Southern dimensions of ENP and pledged to work to this end. He further acknowledged the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation and pledged to engage in closer dialogue both at bilateral and multilateral level. Finally, Mr Füle expressed his commitment on visa liberalisation for all the countries concerned.

On several occasions Mr Füle took the opportunity to stress the importance of **human rights and fundamental freedoms** as the core values in the definition of EU policies and in the relationship with enlargement and ENP countries.

In the light of the above considerations and on a mandate by the coordinators of the political groups of my committee, I am pleased to inform you all the political groups, with the exception of GUE, consider that Mr Füle has the adequate grasp of the issues within his portfolio and therefore the ability to carry out the tasks entrusted to him.

Yours sincerely,



Gabriele Albertini