

Brussels, 27 November 2009

In the political guidelines for the new Commission which I presented to the European Parliament in September, I set out why this is a time of great opportunity for Europe. Our ambition should be to use the next five years to put the enlarged Europe firmly on the path to a sustainable and successful future. I am delighted that you will be joining the Commission to work within these guidelines and to help deliver our agenda for 2020.

The Commission is the essential motor for the European Union's efforts to address tomorrow's challenges and to use the benefits of the Lisbon Treaty to best effect. Europe needs a strong, political and dynamic Commission to offer the leadership and direction to drive this work forward.

The portfolio for Research and Innovation

You will be the commissioner with responsibility for Research and Innovation. As in the past, changing circumstances may also mean that I will need to take a fresh look at the mix of portfolios in the course of the mandate and may change responsibilities accordingly.

Your main priority should be to take a decisive step forward in building the European Research Area (ERA). Specific actions which will contribute to this include strengthening intra-EU co-operation, pooling human and financial resources across the EU, and promoting the fifth freedom - the free movement of knowledge, ideas and researchers:

- You will take the lead in making the "Fifth Freedom" a reality. The European Research Area should provide attractive conditions and effective governance for carrying out research in Europe. It should also ensure the free circulation of researchers, knowledge, ideas and technology across the EU.
- I would also like you to lead a cross-cutting approach to innovation.

Mrs Maire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN
Commissioner designate

- Coordination of EU and national research activities is a key issue. We should work towards specialisation, based on recognised strengths and excellence. To this end, I would like you to improve coordination between EU and national/regional activities so that we can exploit the advantages of scale offered by the EU.
- You will prepare the future policy framework for EU R&D policy, in particular the future Framework Programme (FP8).
- One of your main tasks will be to increase the efficiency of the EU support to scientific research, by rationalising and simplifying the existing financing mechanisms and adapting the current institutional and regulatory framework.

To help you fulfil these responsibilities you will have DG Research, and the Joint Research Centre under your authority, as well as the following European agencies: European Research Council Executive Agency (ERC), Research Executive Agency (REA) and the a number of joint undertakings. In order to ensure consistency with other portfolios, the management of the Marie Curie programme (units RTD T.2 and T.3) will be transferred to DG EAC.

Working together as a College

As President, I am determined to ensure that the College of Commissioners is the political heart of the Commission. Being a College means that all can contribute to decisions, and all share collective responsibility once initiatives are adopted. The Commission must be a team working together effectively to ensure the coherence and consistency of Commission policies. I will lead regular meetings and orientation debates to discuss important or cross-cutting proposals during their preparatory phase, to ensure relevant input from all Commissioners. My Cabinet, the Secretariat General and the Legal Service will work closely with your Cabinet and your services to make this approach a reality. As you know, and according to the Treaty, the President is the guarantor of collegiality.

Our effectiveness and credibility rests upon the quality of our output, our professionalism, and our respect for the highest standards of public service ethics. This requires a rigorous smart regulation agenda, respecting subsidiarity and proportionality and devoting our attention to where we can bring clear added value; particular attention to sound financial management; and full respect for the Code of Conduct of the Members of the European Commission. It also, of course, means that we must stay focused on our overriding mission to promote and defend the common European interest. I will establish the guidelines within which the Commission is to work and we will discuss them in more detail at one of our forthcoming seminars.

An effective Commission must also form a successful partnership with the Member States and the other institutions, and in particular with the European Parliament. The Treaty of Lisbon sets out the roles of the institutions very clearly. As you know, according to the Treaty, the Commission "shall ensure the application of the Treaties and of measures adopted by the institutions pursuant to them". The Treaty will also bring an important new dimension to our relations with national parliaments.

I would like us to take our partnership with the European Parliament to a new level. That requires an investment, in terms of political attention and in terms of time, from every member of the Commission. Availability for plenary sessions and committee meetings of the

Parliament is a central part of the responsibilities of Commissioners, and directly linked to the accountability and legitimacy of the Commission as a whole.

Our first opportunity to start this process will be when you take part in hearings with the parliamentary committee covering your portfolio area. This is one of the foundation stones of the Commission's democratic accountability: it is not only an opportunity to set out your ambitions for your portfolio, but also to illustrate your understanding of the role of the Commission and the obligations of Commissioners.

My experience of a first mandate has shown that when the Commission focuses on the key challenges for Europe, and when we work together effectively, we can deliver enormous benefits to Europeans. I look forward to working together with you to shape a successful future for the EU for the decades to come.

José Manuel BARROSO