

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 returning to join me in a new mandate 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 Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

You will be the Commissioner with responsibility for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. You will also Vice President. 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.

Building on the considerable progress already made, the redesigned Justice, Fundamental rights and citizenship portfolio should put our citizens at the heart of its agenda and open a new phase in the development of these areas, using possibilities offered by the new Treaty and the ambitious multiannual Stockholm programme.

- I would like you to propose in early 2010, an Action Plan to implement the Stockholm programme and to negotiate it in these areas.

Ms Viviane REDING
Commissioner Designate

- You will be responsible for ensuring compliance by the EU and its Member States with fundamental rights when implementing EU policies. The fight against racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination are key priorities, as well as ensuring the protection of children's rights and personal data.
- I would like you to take the lead in promoting EU Citizenship, through ensuring free movement of people within the Union, consular protection abroad, and greater access to information on EU matters.
- Your task will also be to develop a genuine Justice area where citizen, consumers, and businesses are able to exercise their rights across national borders, and enjoy greater mobility without legal and procedural obstacles.
- Together with me, you will also be responsible for the communication policy of the Commission.

To help you to fulfil these responsibilities, Directorates D, and E of DG JLS (Directorate A will serve both JLS portfolios); DG COMM; and Directorate G of DG EMPL (directorate G) will be under your authority, as well as the Publication Office, and the European Fundamental Rights Agency. In order to ensure consistency between portfolios, Consumer contract law and marketing (unit SANCO B.2) will be transferred to JLS; and Citizenship unit (EAC D.4) and Visitors unit (EAC D.5) will be moved to DG COMM.

Working together as a College

As President, I am determined to ensure that the College of Commissioners is the political heart of the Commission. You know from your own experience how collegiality is central to how the commission works. 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: as you know, 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.

I believe that the past five years have 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 again to shape a successful future for the EU for the decades to come.

José Manuel BARROSO