

**ANSWERS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE**

**Violeta BULC**

**Transport**

**1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence**

**What aspects of your personal qualifications and past experience are particularly relevant for becoming Commissioner and promoting the European general interest, particularly in the area you would be responsible for? What motivates you? How will you contribute to putting forward the strategic agenda of the Commission?**

**What guarantees of independence are you able to give the European Parliament, and how would you make sure that any past, current or future activities you carry out could not cast doubt on the performance of your duties within the Commission?**

Twenty years ago, when I started my professional career, I worked on how new technologies can improve people's lives and offer them new ways to communicate, interact and do business. As an engineer by training, I wanted to merge innovation with economic, human and societal developments. I helped to create the network monitoring performance system for a global logistics company, then as a Director I led the Carrier Business Group in a national telecoms company and later I became a member of the executive board of a then fast growing telecoms company, which is still a very strong market player in Slovenia. After a decade, I decided to set up my own company becoming a consultant to some of the major Slovene industrial and service companies. With my business experience both in big companies and in a SME, I gained knowledge and experience in leadership as well as in grasping complex economic and societal challenges allied with the capacity to reconcile different and sometimes diverging viewpoints.

I have joined politics fairly recently but I have dedicated a lot of my time as a business woman in community and public activities. As an elect member of the board of Slovene Managers' Association, I made a good number of proposals and recommendations to the Slovene Government on economic decisions. As a member of the Ethical Committee of Slovene Managers' Association, I promoted actively business ethics within the business community and in the public sphere.

I am an explorer at heart. Innovation and progress have always been at the centre of my interests. I do not come from a founding Member State of the European Union. I am therefore in a position to measure the contribution to a society of the evolution of the European Union. I know how important it was for my country to become part of the European Union and I know what my country and its people have gained since then. I am a devoted European, who believes that our diversity and multiple influences enrich us all and make us stronger in a direction of sustainable growth and global positioning.

I am also a solution-driven person. I try to meet and face problems with a solution-oriented mindset. Usually solutions lie at the intersection of different viewpoints and it is my passion to find those innovative solutions in collaboration with all those who have a stake to claim.

I know the importance of discipline, endurance, resilience but also the importance of team work and of being focused on objectives. I have learnt that by practising various sports at the highest level; I believe that all of these aptitudes are important to take up a high public office such as European Commissioner.

If confirmed as European Commissioner, I commit to fully respect the treaty obligations on independence and integrity, impartiality and availability, as defined in paragraph 3 of Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union and in Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. I solemnly declare to comply with the ethical standards as set out in the above mentioned articles and the Code of Conduct for Commissioners.

In line with the rules set out in the Code of Conduct of Commissioners, I have completed and made accessible to the public my Declaration of Interests. In case of changes, I will immediately update my Declaration as foreseen by the rules.

I also commit to avoiding any position or situation which might put in question my independence and impartiality. I will refrain from holding any other public office and from engaging in any other professional activity, unpaid or paid. I pledge to immediately inform the President of the Commission if a situation involving a possible conflict of interest in the performance of my official duties were to emerge.

## **2. Management of portfolio and cooperation with the European Parliament**

**How would you assess your role as a Member of the College of Commissioners? In what respect would you consider yourself responsible and accountable to the Parliament for your actions and for those of your departments?**

**What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of enhanced transparency, increased cooperation and effective follow-up to Parliament's positions and requests for legislative initiatives? In relation to planned initiatives or ongoing procedures, are you ready to provide Parliament with information and documents on an equal footing with the Council?**

If confirmed as a Commissioner, I intend to be a strong team player and an engaging leader within my responsibilities in the new college. The Commission must be a strong and effective team, working and deciding on the basis of its guiding principle: collegiality. This means that I intend to contribute to the decision-making process of the Commission with my own experience, expertise and ideas to the widest possible extent, with the aim of achieving the best possible result for the European general interest.

I will be dedicated to the responsibilities entrusted to me by the President-elect. I will carry out my duties and obligations in full cooperation with the other Members of the Commission and in accordance with the political guidelines and working methods set by the President-elect.

I will be committed to take the political responsibility for the activities in my field of competence without prejudice to the principle of collegiality. The relations between me, my team and the services will be based on loyalty, trust, transparency and the mutual flow of information and assistance.

President-elect Jean Claude Juncker has set out the priorities for this Commission in the political guidelines – Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change – presented to the Parliament on 15 July. As Commissioner for Transport, I will work with determination and sense of purpose to contribute to meeting those priorities. I will do that working with other institutions.

I intend to treat the European Parliament and Council equally, as legally required in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure, but also as a Commissioner who is accountable to the directly elected Members of the European Parliament.

If confirmed by the European Parliament, I will take up my tasks with dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism. I will use my past professional experiences to bring about new perspectives and a fresh look at the policy area that has been entrusted to me by President-elect Juncker. I will work closely with all my colleagues in the College of Commissioners and especially with Vice-President designate Sefcovic for the best public European interest. I commit to work very closely with the European Parliament with whom I would like to set up a mutually beneficial relation based on trust and respect. I am aware of the importance of an open dialogue with all stakeholders and I intend to tackle it with special care.

I will endeavour to ensure that we build our policies on the basis of a wide EU consensus developed through partnership with the European Parliament. To that end I will reach out to the European Parliament. I agree fully with President-elect Juncker's view that there is need to reinforce the special relationship between the European

Parliament and the Commission. This special relationship is an important source of the democratic legitimacy of the European Commission. It must be a political relationship and, if confirmed, I will make myself available for and take an active part in plenary sessions, committee meetings and trilogue meetings. I will therefore make myself and my team available to engage in regular reporting and sharing of information on the activities under my responsibility and to facilitate the Parliament's effective democratic oversight.

Concerning the follow-up to European Parliament's positions and requests, I will apply the provisions of the Framework Agreement and, in my areas of responsibility, make sure that the Commission responds to parliamentary resolutions or requests made on the basis of Article 225 TFEU, within 3 months after their adoption. The new Commission, under the initiative of the First Vice-President in charge of Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Frans Timmermans, will look at the status of pending proposals, while respecting the obligations stemming from the Framework Agreement. I believe in the need for broad stakeholder consultation and rigorous impact assessment and will work with the First Vice-President with the aim of proposing initiatives that contribute to the Better Regulation agenda.

In this context, I support and fully endorse the commitment made by President-elect Juncker to be particularly attentive to legislative initiative reports.

And of course, if I am confirmed as Commissioner, I fully support the commitment to transparency set out in the political guidelines by the President-elect.

I commit to making public all contacts and meetings I hold with companies, professional organisations or self-employed individuals on any matter relating to EU policy making and implementation.

## **Questions from the Committee on Transport and Tourism**

### **3. Completion of the Single European Transport Area**

**What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward to complete the internal market for transport and create a genuine Single European Transport Area across all transport modes (Single European Railway Area, Single European Sky, European Maritime Space without Barriers, etc)? How will you ensure that the opening of transport markets, including road cabotage, goes hand in hand with job creation, quality employment and working conditions, prevention of social dumping, high-standard services, and improved safety and competitiveness of EU transport operators (in particular SMEs)? How do you propose to address the large divergences in terms of transport infrastructure across the Union and the poor connectivity of many EU areas? What measures do you envisage to stimulate investment and ensure more efficient funding of transport infrastructure, and to promote the development of Trans-European Transport Networks? Can you reassure us that the Commission will thoroughly and continuously evaluate the implementation of the Connecting Europe Facility and apply the 'use it or lose it' principle according to the Regulation? How do you see the future role and powers of the EU transport agencies in implementing the Union's transport policy?**

If I am confirmed as Commissioner, and with a view to developing the strategy in the Transport sector for the next 5 years, I will look into the implementation of the 2011 Transport White Paper and reflect with the new College and with you on what remains to be done and needs to be done. We will then be able to proceed with a joint vision. My objective is that of a truly integrated system, across modes and countries.

Building on the strength of the Single market is one of the pillars of the Political Guidelines presented by the President-elect Juncker in July. As such, the completion of the Single European Transport Area will be one of my priorities. I will do my part when it comes to promoting the swift adoption of those pending proposals that are kept on the agenda with particular emphasis on getting the fourth railway package adopted and working on the completion of the Single European Sky.

I intend also to work towards the adoption of these proposals as well as other legislative initiatives put forward by the Commission but not yet adopted. Ports and airports as gateways into the network also deserve our attention.

It is vital to remove the remaining technical and administrative restrictions and to support innovation where it will help create more efficient transport and a Single European Transport Area, to make sure that, in all modes of transport, services can really operate across the whole EU without being limited by national boundaries.

I will make sure we simplify the existing rules and complete what remains to be done. In this respect, if confirmed, I will work closely with my fellow Commissioners and notably with Frans Timmermans the Vice-President for Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. We need to assess whether our legislation is fit for purpose and take into account the environmental, economic, technical and social impact of the legislation we propose. It is equally important to ensure that the legislation already in force is correctly implemented by Member States and understood and respected by all.

Market opening is not an objective in itself, but rather a means to optimise logistics, laying the foundation for growth and job opportunities with a particular focus on quality and efficiency of transport services for the benefit of our citizens, workers and economic operators. Transport is a network industry, and we need a holistic approach. For those working in the transport sector, social conditions need to be fair. We also need fairness to guarantee equal opportunities across Europe, for workers and operators. For instance in road transport, it is of utmost importance that the current legislation is fully and equally applied and understood across the EU, independently of any future developments. Together with all stakeholders, I will foster a "culture of compliance". Working conditions must ensure equality of treatment and fairness to ensure that, social dumping is not allowed. Transport needs to be compatible with the environment and its climate impact must be reduced.

One way to increase efficiency and sustainability is to modernise and complete the transport infrastructure. The Parliament has recently adopted a clear basis for action within the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The CEF funds will be focused on strategic investments, which generate value added for the EU economy. Investments geared to railways, inland waterways, short sea shipping and intermodal operations will focus in particular on major cross-border projects and the main bottlenecks in the TEN-T multimodal corridors, areas where Member States have been more reluctant to invest.

These investments should also support intelligent traffic management systems and logistics, which allow us to make the best use of the existing infrastructure. In this context, I will push with great resolve for the deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS). It is time to deliver and bring the benefits to citizens and businesses in terms of shorter, safer, more reliable and affordable journeys. The CEF must be performance driven; this means not only allocating funds based on a competitive process, but also reallocating them from underprepared or underperforming projects ('use it or lose it').

Infrastructure investments plough resources back into the real economy. Direct and indirect job creation relates to works such as construction, mechanical engineering and business services. The call made by President-elect Juncker to mobilise up to €300 billion in additional public and private investment in the real economy will address this fall in financing, and at the same time contribute to creating much-needed jobs. It will set the environment for better links between industrial centres and lay the conditions for future prosperity. I will work intensely to ensure that the transport sector contributes to this package by taking an innovative approach in leveraging EU funds allocated for the modernisation of EU infrastructure. It is important to provide support to ensure that the necessary regulatory conditions are in place and that projects are mature and attractive to private investors. Together with Jyrki Katainen the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness I will coordinate with the European Investment Bank and national or regional development banks and with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), in particular the Cohesion fund.

The agencies active in the transport area are recognised as playing a major role to guarantee safety and the implementation of the *acquis* in their respective areas, I will give them my full support. I would ensure that the joint undertakings build fruitful private and public partnership that will bring innovative solutions, ready for deployment, for the transport sector and support European industry in defending its leading position in the global market.

#### **4. Transport for citizens**

**How do you intend to improve the quality, accessibility, reliability and intermodality of transport services? What measures do you envisage to promote public transport and inter-modal ticketing, non-motorised mobility and intelligent transport systems? How will you promote the effective development of transport applications within the Galileo and EGNOS systems? What concrete initiatives will you take to facilitate sustainable urban mobility and to tackle transport congestion and infrastructure undercapacity?**

**What actions do you envisage to revitalise regional trans-border rail connections that have been dismantled or abandoned? How will you ensure effective protection of passenger rights in all transport modes, including the rights of persons with reduced mobility, as well as a harmonised and effective enforcement of the existing legislation? What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of enhancing transport safety and security in the different transport modes (road, rail, waterborne and air)?**

Innovation has a key role to play to make our transport system more efficient and reliable, and to further improve its safety. New technologies can make a major contribution and provide a new way of looking at transport. I am convinced that we need to re-conceptualise the transport system as a network of integrated services, with the customer in the centre and use technology available to us today, to make this concept a tangible reality.

Connected mobility, with Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) at the heart of the system, has enormous potential that is waiting to be tapped into. Public transport must be made more attractive, available and accessible. If I am confirmed as Transport Commissioner, I will work to develop the framework conditions for more comprehensive multimodal travel information, planning and ticketing systems for passengers and for universal real-time road traffic information systems. The EU industry is very active in ITS but we still need to seriously start its deployment, ensuring the security and interoperability of the system, while addressing concerns on the protection of personal data. I will work intensively with my colleague Commissioners as well as with industry to address these issues and promote the use of ITS across all modes of transport. At the same time I am in favour of making our solutions also a global market success.

Satellite based systems are important for transport applications for instance in safety and security, aviation and in maritime surveillance. I will therefore closely cooperate with other Members of the Commission to ensure that transport needs are actually taken into account in the developments of EGNOS and Galileo.

Urban areas are often the first place where new technologies and business models such as shared mobility or automated driving are being taken up. Respecting the subsidiarity principle, I will support local authorities and their partners: companies, local initiatives, foundations and others in tackling together persistent problems such as congestion and pollution, including through Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, and to use the different sources of EU funding in the most effective way. The "smart cities" initiative is an important instrument to facilitate strategic partnerships between industry, European cities and other parties to develop the urban systems and infrastructures of tomorrow and achieve their widespread roll out. Together with the Commissioner for Regional Policy, the Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy and the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, I will ensure that transport contributes to the development of smart cities.

I am convinced that we need to make alternatives to private car usage more attractive. I will therefore promote non-motorised forms of transport such as walking or cycling, i.a. through better protecting the most vulnerable road users, and strive to improve the quality of public transport. I will also work to improve all citizens' access to mobility, at an affordable price. I will pay particular attention to persons with reduced mobility in close cooperation with colleagues responsible for EU disability legislation. I consider public service obligations to be of great importance and will ensure that they are applied in a non-discriminatory manner which offers the best value for money.

As regards rail transport, there should be no more differences between cross border and national traffic within the EU. To this end, cooperation of infrastructure managers across borders will need to be strengthened. I will advocate for the opening of passenger markets where lack of competition leads to high prices and low quality. I will do so with due regard to social aspects, public service obligations and safety prerequisites.

The quality of transport also depends on the effective enforcement of passenger rights. I will examine the situation in all modes to identify gaps and shortcomings. Where necessary, we must clarify the rules enforced and revise legislation. The enforcement of passenger rights for the newest legislation, waterborne-transport and coach-passengers deserve particular attention. Users, especially persons with reduced mobility, which are likely to become more numerous with ageing population, should be aware of their rights, which still is not the case to a sufficient extent. Furthermore, I will press for a swift adoption of the revised air passenger rights regulation and will consider how we can ensure the rights of those passengers that combine different modes, possibly with an integrated ticket for a multimodal, cross-border trip.

I am determined to maintain the high level of safety and security that characterises the EU transport system today. To achieve this at reasonable cost, we must move towards risk-based controls, in particular in the area of aviation security and adapt our framework to technical progress, changing mobility patterns and new business

approaches. Commission inspections contribute to security and safety in the aviation and maritime sector. I will therefore ensure that they are carried out according to the highest standards of professionalism and cost-effectiveness. I will promote safety and security also through international cooperation, either through multilateral organisations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) or bilateral relations with Europe's partners.

Too many accidents happen because of human failure. Therefore, I will pay particular attention to the qualification and training of professionals working in the transport systems and ensure that relevant rules, including those ensuring proper working conditions, are enforced effectively.

Last but not least, road safety is an issue that, despite a trend that is generally encouraging, deserves our full commitment. To progress towards the vision zero, I count on using the full range of instruments, including new technologies to make vehicles and infrastructure safer, soft measures to build a road safety culture or strategic targets, for instance for serious injuries in road accidents.

## **5. Sustainable transport**

**What specific initiatives will you take in order to mitigate the environmental impact of transport and to ensure that all transport modes contribute to the fight against climate change, considering that greenhouse gas emissions from transport, unlike those of other sectors, have significantly increased in recent years? What measures and new technologies do you envisage to minimise transport's dependency on oil and to integrate the different transport modes into a sustainable low-carbon transport system? How do you intend to ensure a wider application of the 'polluter-pays' and 'user-pays' principles, including the internalisation of external costs?**

There is an urgent need to ensure that the growth in transport is sustainable. If confirmed, together with the Vice-President designate for Energy Union, I will make sure that transport policy participates in the greening of our economy through the development of sustainable networks.

We need to address key challenges and future constraints such as oil scarcity, dependency on foreign imports, growing congestion and the need to cut greenhouse gas emission. And at the same time we should use this as an opportunity for new and innovative European companies to prosper. I will devote all efforts necessary to reach the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport, including the most imminent target of achieving a 20% reduction by 2020 compared to the level in 1990.

We must be prepared to use the full array of instruments in our toolbox. This includes improving regulation so that markets will work better, supporting (financially and in promotion) the development of new technologies and innovative solutions, working together with our international partners to find common solutions to our shared problems and making better use of taxes and user payment.

In recent years transport policy has developed substantially and progressed into new areas, such as alternative fuels, the role of technologies in transportation, urban policy or logistics. The aim has been to improve the balance between the different transport modes and encourage multimodal and sustainable development.

We need to promote energy efficiency measures and to diversify our energy sources in the area of transport as well. The Clean Power for Transport initiative aims to remove technical and regulatory barriers across the EU to facilitate the development of a single market for alternative fuel infrastructure and alternative fuel vehicles and vessels. The technological lead in these areas will also give those companies a competitive advantage in other parts of the world that are facing similar problems. We must ensure that Member States adopt ambitious national objectives for the deployment of the necessary infrastructure. This important development deserves support, including financial support through the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020.

I am committed to innovative solutions, and in particular Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), which can make important contributions to reducing congestion on the roads and in our cities, managing traffic flows and facilitate multimodal transport and logistics. The Connecting Europe Facility will also promote the use of ITS with support for investments in smart infrastructure and the development of multimodal corridors within the framework of the Trans-European Transport Networks. This approach will promote an optimal use of railways and inland waterways over longer distances and across borders. Better integration of different transport modes will be ensured with links to ports, urban nodes and airports. These initiatives together with further progress on

establishing a Single European Sky will all make important contributions to emission reduction and greening of transport.

We must also work closely together with our international partners and with international organisations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to promote sustainable transport for modes in global competition. In this way we can best ensure that aviation and shipping make a fair and proportional contribution to the greening of transport and the reduction of emissions, while at the same time ensuring a level-playing field in the world economy.

Transport activity generates costs to society that are not fully paid by transport users. Important examples of such 'negative externalities' are accidents, congestion, local air pollution, climate change and noise. The 'internalisation' of the costs of these externalities is an economically efficient and fair way to deal with this. I therefore fully support the application of the 'polluter-pays' and 'user-pays' principles in transport policies.

The Commission has already introduced these concepts in the Directive for the charging of heavy duty vehicles ("Eurovignette directive"), as well as in initiatives on rail noise and on port charges. There is however strong resistance from the concerned sectors and much more needs to be done. The search for a sustainable source of funding for infrastructure is also making governments look towards the introduction of various forms of road charging. Whilst it is a decision of the Member States to introduce any such schemes, EU guidance could help avoiding incompatible systems as well as removing any possible discrimination between users.

In conjunction with an increased application of the 'user-pays' principle to infrastructure, we should also look at how we can ensure smarter, more balanced systems of taxes and charges in the area of transport. Such systems could be better linked to the use of infrastructure and to the production of negative externalities, thereby providing the necessary incentives to use more environmentally friendly modes of transport.

I believe that sustainable transport is first and foremost a question of choosing the right combination of transport solutions to meet the needs of citizens and businesses in a resource-efficient way. Our job is to facilitate this choice. I therefore look very much forward to working together with my fellow Commissioners and with the European Parliament to ensure that the easy, straightforward choice of transport is also the most sustainable solution.