

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

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International Cooperation and Development

1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence

What aspects of your personal qualifications and 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?

For almost three decades, I have been active in politics, public policy-making and government; carrying out various diplomatic, state administration and political functions at the national and since last year at the European level. Building mutually beneficial relationships with neighbouring and third countries through foreign, trade and economic policies has always been at the core of my professional and political work. I was also chief negotiator for Croatia's accession to the WTO.

From start to finish I actively participated in Croatia's integration into the Union, in particular as chief negotiator for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the Union, as Minister for European Integration, as chairman of the European Integration Committee of the Croatian Parliament, as member of the National Committee for monitoring the accession negotiations with the Union, and as Deputy Prime Minister for Internal, Foreign and European Policy. I passionately supported the accession process as it offered Croatia the unique perspective of changing everything and everybody for the better – modernising the economic, social, institutional and legislative set-up and changing people's mind-set.

This unique experience would inspire my work as Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development. If confirmed as a commissioner, I will endeavour to assist partner countries in their efforts to build resilient societies and economies that offer their people peace, economic prosperity and social security in full respect of their fundamental rights: this is an undertaking which, in some transformational aspects, resembles the European integration process I participated in with Croatia.

Upon Croatia's accession, I was honoured to be nominated Member of the European Commission from Croatia. This gave me the opportunity to take part in formulating, implementing and communicating European policies, in particular consumer policy, a cross-cutting policy which touches the daily life of every European citizen.

As Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, I would in particular draw on my experience in foreign and trade relations and the Union's internal policies. Early in my career I worked as economic counsellor and minister counsellor in the embassy of my country in Egypt. This allowed me to deepen my interest in third countries, in particular in Africa, develop my understanding of their culture and underpin my eagerness to help building trustful and beneficial relations. I have also been involved for more than two decades in key issues of development policy. In 1994, I actively participated in the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo where countries agreed that population and development are inextricably linked, and that empowering women and meeting people's needs for education and health, including reproductive health, are necessary for both individual advancement and balanced development. In 2012, I had the opportunity

to lead the Croatian delegation to the "Rio+20" conference on Sustainable Development and coordinate Croatia's contribution to initiating this key process for the post-2015 development framework.

Following the goals set by President-elect Juncker, my key priorities for the mandate, if confirmed, will include preparing the Union positions and taking active part in the negotiations on the post-2015 framework; and launching negotiations for a post Cotonou agreement. I would work closely with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President to strengthen the Union's strategic partnership with Africa. To help ensure that our policies are coherent and support our international cooperation and development goals towards all developing countries, I would work closely with fellow Commissioners responsible for other policies.

Integrity and independence from any undue influence is crucial for the public's confidence in the Commission's work, its quality and the respect it enjoys. I have always paid the utmost attention, including in my current function as Commissioner, to avoid any links to economic activities that could cause conflicts of interest. This can be seen from my Declaration of Interests that I have prepared according to the Code of Conduct for Commissioners.

Should my nomination be confirmed, I am committed to abide by the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, as reflected in the Code, and to update my Declaration of Interests regularly once per year or immediately if changes occur. I solemnly undertake to comply with the obligations and ethical standards set out in the Treaty and the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. In particular, I shall neither seek nor take instructions from any government or any other body and will refrain from any action incompatible with my duties such as to engage in any other occupation.

2. Management of the 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?

I strongly believe that close cooperation within the College of Commissioners is essential in order to ensure coherence, quality and effectiveness of the different policies. As Commissioner in charge of consumer policy my portfolio has required direct collaboration with a dozen other Commissioners, from Justice to Energy, Internal Market to Enterprise. I commit to strictly abide by the principle of collegiality, if my nomination is confirmed for the new mandate.

It is the effectiveness of the Union's overall action that counts, not the difference between individual policies. As Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, I would therefore seek very close and regular cooperation with the High Representative/Vice-President and other external relations Commissioners, as well as with fellow Commissioners in charge of policies such as humanitarian aid and crisis management, migration, environment and fisheries, climate action and energy, trade, or agriculture, just to name a few. Coherence of policies, avoidance of overlap and strengthening of aid effectiveness requires clear agreement on priorities and working arrangements, as well as day-to-day cooperation and consultation. The crises in third countries, such as the Ebola crisis, call for a coordinated common immediate response, but remind us also about the need for integrated and coordinated mid- to long-term policies.

I will assume full political responsibility and accountability for my activities and those of the services under my responsibility in order to allow the Parliament to exercise its democratic oversight effectively.

I am firmly committed to ensure transparency of my work and that of the services under my responsibility towards the European Parliament in order to ensure good inter-institutional co-operation, strengthen legitimacy and accountability of my work, and contribute to efficiency and good governance. I fully support our new commitment to transparency set out in the political guidelines by the President-elect and commit to making public all the contacts and meetings I hold with professional organisations or self-employed individuals on any matter relating to EU policy making and implementation. Equally will I support and contribute to the

Commission's broader efforts to further enhance transparency for the general public and their consultation as part of the policy-making process.

I will always be available for meetings and the exchange of information with the European Parliament, and I commit to provide prompt and clear information. I will pursue a constructive political dialogue with the Parliament and its committees based on mutual trust, transparency, regular reporting and exchange of information. I would be ready in particular to regularly meet the relevant Parliamentary committee. I will also stand ready to further explore synergies between the valuable work and knowledge of the Parliament with the Commission, for example before and in follow-up to Parliamentary visits to third countries.

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. In this context, I support and fully endorse the commitment made by President-elect Juncker that the future Commission will be particularly attentive to legislative initiative reports. I will also seek equal treatment of the Parliament and the Council within the limits of the treaties and the Framework Agreement.

Questions from the Committee on Development

3. Post-2015 development framework/ Sustainable Development Goals

We are approaching the end of the global development framework, namely the Millennium Development Goals. There was some progress made, but still a lot remains to be done under the post-2015 development agenda. Considering the imminent start of the negotiations on the post-2015 global framework, the new Commissioner will need to become active quickly and ensure a coherent and ambitious European contribution to defining and realising the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

How does the Commissioner-designate see the EU's role in the post-2015 global development framework especially when it comes to setting development priorities, agreeing on financing for development and aid efficiency, and better donor coordination?

Do you agree on the importance of addressing inequalities both within and between countries, as a key issue and objective of the post-2015 framework? How will you ensure that no one is left behind and that human rights are guaranteed for all irrespective of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation?

How does the Commissioner-designate see the EU's role in ensuring that climate and energy goals within the SDGs are ambitious and will be reached, taking into account the fact that people who are already facing the greatest development challenges will suffer the worst consequences of climate change, and how will you ensure that aid invested in the energy sector will benefit those people most in need, especially in rural areas? Finally, will you place property and land rights and land registration as a priority for the post 2015 development agenda?

The European Union should aim at taking a leading role for the post-2015 global development framework.

If confirmed as a commissioner I will push for an ambitious outcome which is universal and transformational. Ambitious means to move to an even more effective fight against poverty through a more comprehensive agenda encompassing the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

As part of this framework, we need a comprehensive agreement on financial and non-financial means of implementation by all actors. The Union needs to set out a strong offer, building on a clear confirmation of the 0.7% ODA commitment. Such agreement has to put strong emphasis on further improved Policy Coherence for Development.

I would pledge to further integrate the commitments made at the Busan Forum in our operations and continue our leadership in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, to help implement the post-2015 agenda. Further strengthening aid efficiency and donor coordination would be another priority, building on and further developing initiatives such as the Joint Programming or the creation of trust funds.

The post-2015 framework must aim at inclusive and sustainable development in which the reduction of persisting inequalities is one of the corner stones. My ambition would be to support countries in their endeavour to develop sustainable economies offering jobs as well as robust social sustainability encompassing social security as much as full respect of human rights of all. A rights-based approach including human rights must be at the heart of our cooperation and development actions.

I strongly support ambitious targets on climate and energy. These challenges are closely interconnected. Sustainable development and poverty eradication go hand in hand. The new framework needs to be coherent and mutually supportive with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as the primary framework on climate. I am committed to systematic mainstreaming of the climate and energy goals in the design, implementation and monitoring of development programmes and projects. In the area of my responsibility, I would ensure implementation of the commitment to make at least 20% of the budget climate-relevant. On energy, sustainability considerations regarding for example renewables and energy efficiency have to be pursued together with the need for enhanced access to energy, notably in rural areas. I would take ambitious measures in line with the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and the Sustainable Energy for All objectives.

Property and land rights have a critical role to play in the post-2015 agenda. They empower people, giving them the means to work and produce food, earn their living, and move a significant part of informal labour into the formal market. In so doing, they can also contribute to increase domestic revenue mobilisation.

4. Cooperation with Parliament and stakeholders in relation to the Development Cooperation Instrument and post Cotonou Agreement

The Development Cooperation Instrument and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement constitute the most basic legal foundations of the Union's development cooperation. In this respect, the Development Committee considers close cooperation with the incoming Commission as key to a successful mandate and therefore would like to remind the Commissioner-designate that a new 'Strategic Dialogue' mechanism between the Commission and Parliament was created to allow for Parliament's involvement in decision-making process regarding the strategic choices taken in the multiannual programming documents. It further recalls that the Cotonou Partnership Agreement will expire in 2020 and that the next five years will therefore be crucial to set a blueprint for a new EU-ACP framework. The European Parliament has expressed concerns with the Agreement as it stands, especially with regards to the shortcomings of the political dialogue on human rights.

How does the Commissioner-designate intend to involve him/herself in the Strategic Dialogue with the European Parliament on DCI? Can you confirm that the Commission will adopt amending delegated acts on the DCI annexes containing the areas of cooperation and indicative financial allocations after the mid-term review, as provided for in the DCI regulation (art. 17)?

How do you intend to involve Parliament and other stakeholders from ACP and European countries, including parliaments and civil society in the preparation and negotiations of the framework for EU-ACP relations to follow the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement and ensure that Parliament's concerns be addressed accordingly?

I fully respect the political oversight of the Parliament. The Strategic Dialogue represents a key opportunity to discuss strategic programming orientations at political level with the European Parliament. If confirmed, I would stand ready to personally represent the Commission at future Strategic Dialogues on the DCI with the Parliament. I would ensure that the positions expressed by the Parliament are taken into account before the adoption of programming documents.

I welcome the empowerment given by the legislator to the Commission to amend the DCI areas of cooperation and indicative financial allocations, allowing the Union to adapt to a changing environment. Based on the recommendations of the mid-term review report, the Commission shall adopt delegated acts.

The expiry of the Cotonou Agreement and the shape of its successor will have a profound impact on the relations between the Union and the ACP countries. The scale of the consultation we engage in must reflect the scale of the initiative we are undertaking. I will engage into a broad and in-depth public consultation in 2015 on the scope and the priorities of the successor agreement.

I want to have the closest possible relationship with the European Parliament on this issue and would therefore make the fullest use of our possibilities for dialogue. In parallel, I would engage into close consultations and dialogue with ACP representatives and other relevant partners.

5. Food, land and property rights

2014 is the UN International Year of Family Farming and the AU year of Agriculture and Food Security.

Could the Commissioner-designate express his/her view on how to address the needs of small-scale and traditional farming in rural areas, which represents the main source of livelihood for over 60% of the African population? Does the Commissioner-designate support the development of a strategy to protect land user rights (e.g. customary, collective and community land tenure agreements) against land grabs? Do you see a need to foster property rights in developing countries and to improve land governance? Will you support a clearly-defined budget line for property rights in developing countries designed to support long-term land governance reform and to mainstream land tenure in drafting and implementing Country Strategy Papers?

Investments in smallholder agriculture have proven to yield outstanding results in poverty reduction. I would therefore prioritise actions which enhance smallholder farmers' incomes and increase the resilience of rural communities.

Large-scale investments in land should not jeopardise secure land tenure and land user rights, which are prerequisites for food security and agricultural sector's sustainability, and crucial in reducing poverty, especially for women and indigenous groups. If confirmed, I would carry out actions that secure these rights, in the context of local customs and traditions.

I believe that property rights within effective national land policies are essential, requiring governments' commitment to take priority action. In this sense, I will boost the Union's participation in international initiatives defining frameworks on responsible investments in farmland, so as to ensure that they are sustainable and respect human rights and livelihoods, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, endorsed in 2012 by the Committee on World Food Security, and the on-going process to develop voluntary principles for responsible agricultural investment.

I would strongly support that geographic and thematic budget lines contribute to the Union's flagship on 'Pro-poor land governance' foreseen under the Global Public Goods and Challenges programme to support implementation at country level, policy dialogue and capacity building, taking into due account the gender perspective.