

ANSWERS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
Jyrki KATAINEN
Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness

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

Throughout my professional life, I have been a committed European who firmly believes in the added value of the European project. It was in particular during my Erasmus student exchange in 1995 that I came to realise the importance of European integration. This invaluable experience, made possible by the EU, is precisely one of the foremost examples of how the EU has given our citizens unprecedented opportunities to live, work and travel all across our continent. But above all, it must always be remembered that the Union has promoted peace, stability and welfare in Europe and provided us with global influence and responsibility. The basis for our cooperation lies in our common values as set out in the Treaties. These values must continue to be respected and promoted in all our policies. Our primary task must be to deliver the kind of EU that addresses the concerns and priorities of our citizens. This is my guiding principle and primary motivation.

As Minister of Finance from 2007 to 2011, I worked intensively on finding solutions to the unprecedented financial and economic crisis. I actively contributed to shaping EU policies, not least as an active member of the European Council and, in parallel, in my capacity as Prime Minister of Finland, a duty that I was honoured to carry out from 2011 until June 2014. These experiences, combined with 15 years as a Member of Parliament in Finland, have given me extensive experience in both national and European policymaking. I am now well-equipped to put this knowledge and experience to the service of European citizens as a member of the European Commission.

My ambition has been, and will continue to be, to act as a bridge-builder. As Prime Minister of Finland I led a government of six parties, ranging from the left to the right of the political spectrum. I want to continue on this consensus-building path and strive to find common ground on the challenges that require action at EU level. Based on my experience, I am convinced that the best way for Europe to emerge from the crisis is by tackling our challenges together, across borders, across institutions, and across the political divide.

In the new Commission, my role would be as a team leader, coordinator and bridge-builder who works constructively and fairly with other members of the team in a spirit of collegiality and mutual dependence. My main goal as Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness would be to help support a more solid and lasting economic recovery, to create more jobs, to stimulate investment in the real economy and to enhance Europe's competitiveness. In doing so, a key priority, both in the short and long-term is to put due emphasis on creating the right framework conditions and policy actions for sustainable growth and job creation. President-Elect Jean-Claude Juncker has proposed major changes to the European Commission. The focus will be on priority projects for jobs and growth where Members of the College will work together as a team, coordinated by the Vice-Presidents. I believe this provides the European Commission and EU institutions as a whole with a good opportunity to focus on what is most relevant for all our citizens across Europe. I would be honoured to be part of this new beginning. We have a challenging task ahead of us and I would do my utmost to

contribute constructively to this new collaborative way of working. In this vein, I would look forward to a regular dialogue with the European Parliament, as the voice of EU citizens, to further this agenda for jobs and growth.

In carrying out my duties, I commit to continue 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 continue 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 updated and made accessible to the public my Declaration of Interests. In case of changes, I will immediately update my Declaration.

I also commit to continue avoiding any position or situation which might put into question my independence, impartiality and availability to the Commission. 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 European Commission if a situation involving a potential conflict of interest in the performance of my official duties were to emerge.

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?

The Juncker Commission will be a strong and focussed Commission. It will be based on significant political experience and a commitment to deliver change. It places strong emphasis on collegiality and "being bigger and more ambitious on big things, and smaller and more modest on small things". The Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness has a key role to play in that respect, and my previous political experience – including as a Prime Minister leading a six party coalition – will help me to fulfil that role.

If confirmed, I would be entrusted with coordinating projects which truly reflect collegial and European priorities. I will ensure, together with the appropriate colleagues, that efforts are directed where they are most needed. I see my role as a team leader, coordinator, and bridge-builder in this process. Past experiences have taught me the value of collegiate decision-making as a means of taking into account all considerations and ensuring joint ownership of decisions taken.

I would aim to promote a shared understanding among individual Commissioners about the programme to be delivered, to gather various viewpoints, identify possible gaps, and to ensure that a common approach and understanding is found to our proposals and activities going forward. I would seek to achieve the greatest possible visibility and ambition for Europe's foremost priority, namely to promote jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness in Europe.

The inter-institutional set-up of the EU requires mutual trust and openness. This is fundamental for the Parliament to exercise its democratic oversight effectively. In this spirit, I commit to engage in a constructive and regular dialogue with the European Parliament.

I intend to develop a very close working relationship with the European Parliament and its committees. This relationship would be demonstrated through my regular attendance in plenary and committee meetings, a frequent and direct flow of information, in particular with the Chairs of relevant parliamentary committees, and my availability for informal discussions and bilateral contacts with Members of the European Parliament.

I would exercise my role of managing and organising the representation of the Commission in my areas of responsibility in a way that maximises the Commission's political presence in committee meetings and in trilogue negotiations. It is also in this respect that the new working methods of the Commission and the role of

coordinating Vice-Presidents should offer important added value to the special relationship between the European Parliament and the Commission.

The European Parliament is the representative of the Union's citizens and hence an essential source of legitimacy. The Commission is accountable to the European Parliament and depends on its political support. I strongly value that responsibility and, if confirmed, as a member of the Commission I would continue taking that responsibility very seriously. Without prejudice to the principle of collegiality – which this Commission and the function of Vice-President seek to reinforce, I also accept my personal political responsibility in the areas assigned to me, in line with the Framework Agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission.

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 support and commit to fully implementing the principle of equal treatment for the European Parliament and the Council regarding access to meetings or the flow of information, in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Agreement.

Questions from the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs:

3. Investment package

How in the coming 3 months will you deliver the investment package announced in the Political guidelines presented by the elected president of the Commission? What concrete steps are you going to take? Which instruments will you use and/or create in that perspective? How will you involve the European Parliament?

The launch of an ambitious Jobs, Growth and Investment Package will be the first priority for the new Commission.

Investment fell drastically in the crisis and still remains subdued. The lack of investment reflects a more cautious lending behaviour of an impaired banking system, policy uncertainty and a certain weakness in aggregate demand. Decisive action is urgently required in order to both create the right financial and sector-specific regulatory environment for private investment, and ensure the best possible use of EU and national public resources.

Neither supply nor demand alone can solve this problem. This package should be a comprehensive one in order to boost investment by both the public and private sector at both EU and national level.

I therefore intend to deliver on this package by mobilising all the available tools at EU and national level that would allow us to address the issue in a bold and determined way. The package would have to target investments that ensure high economic and social returns. The right projects would have to be identified and the pipeline of current projects would have to be accelerated.

Regarding the better use of available public resources at EU and national level, I intend to promote a better use of the EU budget funds, improve and maximize the role of the EIB and National Public Investment Banks and ensure that the composition of fiscal consolidation supports investment:

- At EU level, we need to make sure that the available funds are used more effectively in supporting investment – this can include the use of innovative financial instruments. The Commission is completing the programming and I would work with colleagues and Member States to encourage concentration on job-creating growth. The mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework in 2016, on which I would support the Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources, will be an important opportunity to further strengthen the focus of the EU budget on jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness. I also intend to work closely with the EIB to identify possible ways for improving its role in stimulating investment.

- At national level, we need to look into ways of improving the quality of public expenditure and other instruments such as National Public Investment Banks. As regards the use of national budgets for growth and investment, I would work with my future colleagues for Member States to respect the Stability and Growth Pact, while making the best possible use of the flexibility that is built into the existing Pact.

I also intend to help create the right regulatory incentives to private investment. I would do so by encouraging the implementation of the right reforms at national level to remove obstacles to investment; and by promoting the completion of the Single Market in key sectors from energy to the digital economy, in close cooperation with the other responsible Vice-Presidents. Such measures would provide the right incentives to growth and job creation. I would also work closely with my fellow Commissioners to build a Capital Markets Union to ensure that financial sector regulation helps facilitate better financing of the real economy. In particular, this would include the following elements:

- Implementing reforms conducive to growth and jobs, including further completing the Single Market: The right reforms can contribute to creating the framework conditions for private investment and restoring investors' confidence. Competitive markets, efficient regulations, good governance arrangements and a well-functioning public procurement system and administration are important factors. Providing a fair, efficient and predictable regulatory framework is of crucial importance, especially for network industries, which are characterised by long investment horizons and large-scale initial investments. Working with my future colleagues, I intend to contribute to concrete proposals for the removal of regulatory bottlenecks, increase certainty and improve confidence to unlock investment in key sectors such as energy, telecom, or transport. I further intend to contribute to deepen the EU economic governance framework to increase ownership and commitment in Member States for the implementation of such reforms.

- Completing the Banking Union and creating a Capital Market Union: Implementing the Banking Union, on which I would work closely together with the Commissioner-designate for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union will be an important step for overcoming financial fragmentation and ensuring that good projects get the finance they deserve. To develop a more diversified financial system, we need to remove barriers to capital market financing. Kick-starting high quality securitisation can play an important role here.

All these actions together, which need to be developed and translated into concrete initiatives on the basis of thorough work and discussion within the Commission, make for an ambitious project to stimulate investment in Europe. They will include both legislative and non-legislative measures in a wide range of areas. The European Parliament will be a key partner for making this overarching approach a reality. Stimulating investment in Europe requires a broad consensus and sound democratic legitimacy and accountability. I intend to have regular exchanges of views with the European Parliament both concerning the package as a whole and the concrete initiatives stemming from it.

4. Competitiveness

Jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness are at the core of country-specific recommendations, but Member States have been slow to implement these recommendations. What has to be done in this field? How will you improve the competitive position of Europe in the global economy? In view of this goal, how do you see your role as regards the various areas of responsibility that fall under your portfolio, inter alia creating a climate of entrepreneurship that is a precondition to job creation within the European Union? What concrete steps will you take to promote a better environment for entrepreneurship?

Over the past couple of years, some of the top reforming countries in the world have been in Europe. Substantial reforms have been implemented, or are underway, that closely mirror the annual Country-Specific Recommendations proposed by the Commission in the context of the European Semester. The CSRs are a key policy benchmark in many Member States. These efforts have started to bear fruit. Macroeconomic stability is a precondition for any investment and employment decision so this is an important achievement. In particular, there has been tangible progress in sustaining fiscal consolidation. This can be seen in the number of Member States which have moved out of the Excessive Deficit Procedure. The number of Member States in EDP has more than halved since 2011, from 24 to 11. Steps have also been taken to reform employment policies, for instance through the mobilisation of active labour market policies and the establishment of youth guarantees.

In my view, the reform effort has been more limited as regards taxation, especially with respect to the reduction of the tax wedge on labour, in the area of product and services markets and network industries, as well as on measures to improve the business environment and the framework conditions for R&D and innovation. Member States could do more to improve the coverage and performance of education and welfare systems, as well as to upgrade the efficiency of the public administration. The impact of the crisis on employment and social cohesion is far-reaching. This is evidenced by unacceptably high rates of unemployment, in particular among young people, but also by rising levels of poverty and social exclusion in many countries. The level of public and private debt remains very high in several countries, as well as in many sectors of the economy. Furthermore,

financing conditions remain very difficult in many parts of Europe, notably for SMEs and start-ups, and the euro area lending market is still highly fragmented. Looking ahead, making the CSRs a more effective tool will be a key challenge.

Reinforced competitiveness will not come from one single action or from one single area alone. It will be the result of pooling and directing all our efforts at EU and national levels to reform in order to ensure a predictable macroeconomic environment, to strengthen the Single Market, develop entrepreneurship, stimulate investment in education, infrastructure and new technologies, and ensure the attractiveness of the EU as a production and investment location. Through a variety of actions we need to promote a growth-friendly business climate, in particular for SMEs and a modern public administration. We need to help enterprises make the most of cross-border opportunities, both within the Single Market and outside the EU, thereby making them in a better position to create jobs. We need to promote a forward-looking trade policy and international convergence of standards and regulations. With an estimated 90% of global growth originating overseas by 2015, access to the markets of non-EU countries will remain a key factor for Europe's competitiveness. Addressing non-tariff barriers to trade is increasingly important to open markets but also to defend EU interests and actively promote a level-playing field in other markets.

Questions from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs:

5. Working methods

How do you see the role of the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness developing over the next mandate? How will you exercise your right to influence initiatives submitted by the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility? [See the mission letter which Mr Juncker addressed to you: "As a general rule, I will not include a new initiative in the Commission Work Programme or place it on the agenda of the College unless this is recommended to me by one of the Vice-Presidents on the basis of sound arguments and a clear narrative that is coherent with the priority projects of the Political Guidelines."'] How will you improve the involvement of the European Parliament in the preparation of Delegated Acts, in particular as regards information on and access to experts meetings? Do you commit to improving the transmission of secondary legislation and 'comitology' documents?

The role of the Vice-Presidents and the Commissioners together will be to deliver the Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change presented by the President-elect. Each Vice-President has been assigned precise areas of responsibility and will have to ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation inside the College. This is about working as a team, based on collegiality, in the European interest. This will be the guiding principle for the entire mandate. I would work in close co-operation with, all relevant Commissioners to help boost jobs and growth throughout the European Union.

If confirmed as Vice President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, I would focus on coherence, effectiveness and act as a bridge-builder. As Prime Minister of Finland, I led a very broad-based government, ranging from the left to the right of the political spectrum. I want to continue on this path of consensus-building by striving to find the most appropriate answers to the challenges requiring action at EU level. Based on my personal experience, I am convinced that serving the interest of European citizens requires working across borders, across institutions, and across the political divide.

I would strive to ensure that all relevant parliamentary committees, including the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, are fully informed at the same time as the Council about any major developments. I would be also ready to regularly attend meetings of your committee. I would also do my utmost to be at your disposal for bilateral meetings. I would ask my colleagues to assist you and give you detailed explanation of legislative, non-legislative, delegated and implementing acts, including on their implementation.

I am aware that the distinction between delegated and implementing acts has led to some inter-institutional controversies in the legislative process over the recent years. This is a subject of common interest to all institutions and we will need to work together to find joint, treaty-compliant solutions to these issues. Reflections are ongoing on how to ensure more ownership and transparency. I fully support these efforts. I consider that they need to be taken forward at a horizontal level in the Commission, as they touch upon all portfolios and are of an inter-institutional nature.

In the areas under my responsibility, my colleagues and I would ensure that the Commission's existing commitments are in line with the Common Understanding on delegated acts, and that the Framework Agreement with the European Parliament is fully respected. This concerns, in particular, the commitment to carry out appropriate and transparent consultations at expert level in the preparation of delegated acts and to ensure that the Parliament and the Member States receive the relevant information. It also means full respect of the provisions in the Framework Agreement in relation to the participation of Parliament's experts in expert groups meetings. This should also facilitate the Parliament's scrutiny, in particular of delegated acts, where the Parliament has ex-post control rights. For implementing acts, the rules set out in Regulation EU 182/2011/EC need to be respected and transparency ensured via the Comitology Register.

6. Priorities

What are the main priorities you intend to pursue as part of your responsibilities in view of the social and employment crisis, in particular youth unemployment, which affects several Member States? What will you do to improve the social and employment dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to achieve its' goal to effectively create quality jobs? How do you see the balance between economic freedoms and fundamental social rights in Europe? How will you ensure President Juncker's statement in his political guidelines that "social dumping has no place in the European Union" and that "the same work in the same place should be remunerated in the same manner"? What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives in the fields of 'Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility' you intend to put forward together with Commissioner-designate Thyssen, and according to what timetable?

Unemployment is high and, in many parts of Europe, remains unacceptably high. I am particularly concerned about the number of young people who find it difficult to find work, who find themselves lacking the right skills, training and education. I am also very concerned by the situation of those who find themselves in long-term unemployment. I would work tirelessly to try to reverse these trends. Europe cannot afford to waste talent.

In Europe, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, is an explicit Treaty objective, which is reflected in the Europe 2020 target of a 75% Union-wide employment rate. Strengthening job creation is the first priority in my portfolio and the first in President-elect Juncker's Political Guidelines. We have a responsibility to deliver.

Employment levels are largely driven by macroeconomic factors and the Treaties provide the Union with limited competence in the area of employment policies. This is why my co-ordinating role in the areas of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness is particularly important. We need to mobilise all possible instruments to deliver for our citizens. Our primary responsibility in the area of employment is to better co-ordinate and support the efforts of Member States using the recently-enhanced governance framework. That means in particular the employment dimension of the European Semester process and the Country-Specific Recommendations.

I see four immediate priorities here:

- We need to invest in human capital, modernise our education and training systems, including at intermediate and vocational levels to provide EU citizens with high-quality skills. We need to enhance the culture of entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship, and promote competitiveness through high-quality and highly skilled jobs.
- We need to make sure that education and training match the current and future needs of our businesses and societies as a whole. We should also further step-up efforts to help ease the transition from education to work. The Youth Guarantee is a key instrument to help fight youth unemployment. Developing and delivering a Youth Guarantee scheme throughout the EU requires strong co-operation between all key stakeholders. We need to ensure that the implementation of the Youth Guarantee with the financial support of the Youth Employment Initiative is effective and delivers tangible results. Its implementation has to therefore accelerate and broaden progressively to make sure it is available where it is most needed.
- We need to promote a more responsive, open and inclusive labour market. This means improving the effectiveness of active labour market policies and public employment services, tackling labour market segmentation by modernising employment protection legislation and by supporting upward job and occupational mobility. Our policies must be attentive to the needs of our citizens and avoid social exclusion.

- We need financially and socially sustainable social security systems to provide effective protection to EU citizens when and where it is needed. Social security is an investment in our prosperity and upholds social justice. At the same time, the ageing of the population is putting social protection systems under extreme pressure. We need to modernise our social protection systems and make them better targeted and more effective for the future. I also want to ensure that promoting policies that support vulnerable groups and fight against social exclusion and poverty is very high on the Commission's agenda.

The EU maintains important social objectives such as "constantly improving people's living and working conditions" and ensuring social progress. More specifically, a number of rights and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights are of direct relevance to labour law and working conditions.

President-elect Juncker stated in July that "social dumping has no place in the European Union". In this context, the effective implementation and application of the recently-adopted Posted Workers Enforcement Directive, that considerably increases and reinforces existing tools and mechanisms to combat abuse and circumvention of applicable rules, will be crucial. President-elect Juncker has also announced a targeted review of this Directive. Fighting undeclared work represents another important means to help improve working conditions for people, which I will support.

As far as remuneration is concerned, we must not forget that equal pay for equal work is one of the European Union's founding principles, set out in the Treaties since 1957. Ensuring that everyone gets a fair and equal chance on the labour market is crucial. I fully support the President-elect's call for progress in this area.

One of the next Commission's main objectives will be to use all our policy, legal and financial instruments to give fresh impetus to meeting the objectives set in 2010 in the Europe 2020 strategy. In order to achieve tangible results, we need to look for initiatives that boost job creation by companies, address the skills mismatch and improve our competitiveness. An ambitious jobs, growth and investment package that brings together public and private resources will be one of the new Commission's first acts. We need to move quickly and smartly. The mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy will draw on the outcome of the current public consultation, the Commission's own reflections and the inputs received.

The outgoing Commission put forward a Communication on strengthening the social dimension of the European Monetary Union. We would continue to develop our evidence base through the employment and social scoreboard, enhance our co-operation with national parliaments, social partners and all relevant stakeholders to ensure ownership and delivery. Crucially, as set out by the President-elect in his Political Guidelines, in future, any support and reform programme for Euro area countries in difficulties would go not only through a fiscal sustainability assessment, but also through a social impact assessment.

I wholeheartedly agree with President-elect Juncker that the free movement of workers has always been one of the key pillars of the internal market and holds great opportunities for our citizens as well as for our economy. More EU labour mobility will also have a positive effect on our international competitiveness. I would therefore pursue the modernisation and reform of our tools and instruments to support employment and job matching through mobility. Together with my colleagues, I would work together with national authorities to ensure that existing rules are well understood and implemented, and would help them fight abuses or fraudulent claims.

I look forward to working closely with colleagues in the College to ensure that social and economic policies are well aligned.

Questions from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy:

7. Priorities

What are the main priorities you intend to pursue as part of your proposed portfolio, taking into account the emphasis on jobs, growth, competitiveness and sustainable development? What timetable do you envisage for achieving those priorities? What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward, and according to what timetable? How will you personally ensure the good quality of legislative proposals, full transparency of lobbying activities (directed at you and your services), and consistent and balanced consultation of all stakeholders taking also into account the need to carry out thorough impact assessments?

My two most immediate priorities are the swift delivery of an ambitious jobs, growth and investment package as well as the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy. As outlined above, these priorities require mobilising all tools available, including reforms that serve to unlock growth potential, smart and sustainable fiscal policies and actions to address regulatory bottlenecks in key sectors.

The jobs, growth and investment package aims to provide a comprehensive plan that addresses both supply and demand-side measures. It must be a joint effort with action taken at both European and national level and should draw on both public and private sources. The package would have to target investments that ensure high economic and social returns. The right projects would have to be identified and the pipeline of current projects would have to be accelerated. We would also need to make better use of the financial resources of the EU. The Union has a number of financial instruments to support jobs and growth across the continent, including by leveraging private investment. If confirmed, I would work with fellow Commissioners and the European Investment Bank to maximise the impact of these instruments and fully bring to bear their European scale, concentrating on job-creating growth. The comprehensive plan would further encompass other priorities of the new mandate such as further completing the Single Market. A crucial element would be the work on the establishment of a Capital Markets Union and stable banking sector to further improve the ability of the financial system to contribute to financing long-term investment. Companies need easier access to alternative sources of finance. It needs to be possible for capital to move within the Union according to demand. In line with the President-elect's Political Guidelines, my objective would be to deliver the jobs, growth and investment package within the first three months of our mandate.

Regarding the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy, the starting point would be the outcome of the ongoing consultation exercise, which closes by the end of October. I warmly welcome the input of the European Parliament in this context, and look forward to engaging with you in order to be able to step up our efforts for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Together with my colleagues, I would carefully assess the results of the consultations, draw conclusions on the implementation of the strategy and examine possible avenues for its further development. The Commission will also look at the implementation of the "six-pack" and "two-pack" legislation and present its findings. The precise timing for the review will need to be determined collegially, but the review is a priority for the first months of the new Commission.

An overarching priority of relevance both in the short and long-term is putting due emphasis on creating the right framework conditions and policy actions for sustainable growth and job creation. A well-designed and effective structural reform agenda is an essential element of the Union's response to the crisis. My priorities in that area include promoting a growth-friendly business environment and a climate of entrepreneurship; further deepening the internal market for goods and services; further progress towards the digital single market and the internal energy market; a growth-friendly tax system that encourages working and making sustainable choices; a more efficient and citizen-oriented public administration as well as industrial competitiveness. Europe needs to remain, and become, a more attractive place for investment, work and production. In pursuing these and other reforms, I would pay utmost attention to the employment effects of the Commission's proposals and to their impact on sustainable jobs and growth in the long-term. I would also aim to ensure that better regulation and competitiveness concerns are systematically mainstreamed in the Commission's work, working closely with the other Vice-Presidents.

I would support the Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources in the preparation of the 2016 review of the Multiannual Financial Framework. The EU budget is the Union's main financial instrument to support growth. I would work towards ensuring that the impact of expenditure that supports jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness within the budget is maximised.

All legislative and non-legislative measures would be subject to the collegial decision-making procedure. I would make evidence based policy-making and better regulation principles important benchmarks for my work and will advise my colleagues to do the same. I would work closely with the Vice-President in charge of Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and other colleagues to ensure that legislation is innovation-friendly, fosters sustainable competitiveness and does not impose disproportionate burden on SMEs. Legislative quality based on solid impact assessments and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality would be yardsticks for my decisions on whether or not to recommend an initiative for the Commission Work Programme or the College agenda.

The quality of policies and legislation also relies on a sound knowledge base and balanced stakeholder consultation. I understand the importance of extensive and early discussions with stakeholders. Business and non-business stakeholders are the final addressees of EU legislation. Their feedback and requests need to be

listened to and carefully taken into account. I would therefore engage with all legitimate stakeholders, including representatives of businesses, consumers, employees, NGOs, civil society, academics, amongst others, as appropriate. This process must, and will be, transparent and guided by the sole ambition to find the best solutions in the European interest. I fully endorse President-elect Juncker's ambition to lead the way as a modern, efficient and transparent public administration and would be happy to make public, on my website, all contacts and meetings I hold with professional organisations or self-employed individuals on any matter relating to EU policy-making and implementation.

8. Cooperation/scrutiny

As Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, how will you manage coordination with the Commissioners in your team and with the other Vice-Presidents whose policy areas have an impact on, or are affected by, your policy area? In addition, how will you ensure enhanced cooperation with the Committee on Industry, Energy and Research? In particular, what steps will you take to facilitate scrutiny by the Committee of legislative and non-legislative procedures (including preparation of legislative acts and delegated and implementing acts) and scrutiny of their implementation?

The priorities outlined above reflect important overall priorities of this Commission which can only be delivered by working with other Vice Presidents and Commissioners. Through my actions, I hope to be able to provide impetus, to direct efforts where they best fit our common goal and help ensure overall coherence and focus on the imperative of promoting growth, jobs and competitiveness.

I would be in permanent contact with Commissioners working on our jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness objectives, both bilaterally and collectively. I would also coordinate closely with the other Vice-Presidents, with whom I would form a strong voice in the Commission to put jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness considerations first.

Close cooperation is vital not only within the Commission, but also among European institutions so that we can deliver on our mutual priorities for the benefit of citizens. I would strive to ensure that all appropriate committees, including the Committee on Industry, Energy and Research are fully informed at the same time as the Council about any major developments.

With regard to the specific question relating to the consultation of experts, please see my reply to question 5.