

ANSWERS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
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Commissioner-designate for Innovation and Youth

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? How will you implement gender mainstreaming and integrate a gender perspective into all policy areas of your portfolio? 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?

I have been Commissioner responsible for Digital Economy and Society for the past two years, and before that, I was a Member of the European Parliament for eight years. As a committed European, I can think of no higher political honour than to work for Europe, especially in challenging times as we live today. I am convinced that Europe's future depends on the strength of our unity. The President-elect has entrusted me with two missions.

First, I will ensure that the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation helps us deliver on our ambitions and wider objectives. In this area, I will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age in matters relating to research and innovation, and the Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life in matters relating to education, culture, youth and sports. This will support our competitiveness and ensure that Europe leads in the digital and climate-neutral transformation. Addressing these policies together will ensure that people are equipped with the right skills to thrive in our evolving society. What motivated me to go into politics in the first place, and what indeed motivates me today as Commissioner-designate, is to be as inclusive as possible, work for the benefit of our citizens, everywhere in Europe.

Second, I will focus on younger generations and the perspectives to empower them. Culture is Europe's DNA in terms of diversity, fundamental rights and values. I will, under the guidance of the Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life, continue promoting it together with European creators. The preservation of our cultural heritage, including through digital means, will continue to be at the centre of my political action.

These policies nicely build on experiences that I gained over the last two years. In the position of a Commissioner responsible for Digital Economy and Society, I have notably managed the ICT part of Horizon 2020 programme (€13 billion), the Connecting Europe Facility (€1 billion) and the Creative Europe Programme (€1 billion, MEDIA). Moreover, I have

successfully carried out work that led to the presentation of the proposal to create of a Digital Europe Programme for the next financial framework, which among others should help to mainstream within European industry the output of our Research and Innovation.

Beyond funding, a number of policies that I managed are directly relevant for my new portfolio. This is for example the case of the new set of copyright and audio-visual rules, which I negotiated on behalf of the Commission and are paramount to European culture. Another example is the Digital Education Action Plan which I put forward with the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and which I will update in the next term. A final example is my continuous commitment to digital skills as exemplified by the creation of a traineeship programme, financed with Horizon 2020 funds but implemented through Erasmus +, which helped thousands of young European graduates to gain a digital experience abroad.

Integrating and mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies has been and will remain a priority of my political action. Under the previous term, I have developed and promoted a 'Women in digital' strategy, bringing together actions to combat digital gender stereotypes and promote role models; enhance digital skills and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for girls and women and stimulate female digital entrepreneurship. This is monitored through the Women in Digital Scoreboard - part of the Digital Economy and Society Index and the European Semester reports. Our #DigitalRespect4Her campaign raised awareness about the difficulties women face online. All Member States and the CEOs of 23 major high-tech and media companies signed a Declaration on creating an inclusive working environment in their companies. In the audio-visual sector, we started tracking gender balance in the Creative Europe MEDIA programme and launched the 'Women on the Move' initiative with a 'good practice' guide.

I have as well always consistently applied a European approach to our relations with our international partners. In this context, we have amply enhanced dimensions of all digital files such as the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans, the relationship with the Eastern Partnership, Africa and Southern Mediterranean.

I commit to continue complying without fail with the Treaty obligations on independence, transparency, impartiality and availability, as defined in Article 17(3) of the Treaty on European Union and in Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

If confirmed as Commissioner, I will fully respect the letter and spirit of the Treaty, in particular the obligation to act in the European interest and without taking any instructions. I will continue to honour the Code of Conduct of Members of the European Commission and its provisions on conflicts of interest. My Declaration of Interests is complete and accessible to the public and, as during the past mandate, I will update it rapidly should any change be required.

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?

If confirmed a Commissioner, I will take full political responsibility for the activities in my area of competence. I attach great importance to the principle of collegiality and will collaborate fully with the other Members of the College.

Three times elected to the European Parliament, it is with respect and commitment that I will continue engaging closely with the Parliament and relevant Committees at all stages of both the policy-making process and the political dialogue.

I am fully committed to the guiding principles that allow an effective interinstitutional cooperation and an efficient and legitimate EU decision-making system. These include openness, mutual trust, efficiency, and regular exchange of information. I fully stand by the President-elect's Political Guidelines and the Mission Letters, which fully reflect these principles, and stress the intention to reinforce the special partnership between the European Parliament and the Commission. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will do my best to achieve this objective, and in doing so I will fully respect the provisions of the 2010 Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission and the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

As during the current mandate, I commit to take part in all relevant plenary debates, committee meetings and trilogue discussions. I will ensure that the relevant Committees of the European Parliament are involved in any major developments under my responsibility while at the same time I am fully aware of the importance of equal treatment of the Parliament and the Council as co-legislators.

Specifically, I will ensure a regular flow of information with the Chair of relevant parliamentary committees, directly communicate with committee members, and ensure that I am available for bilateral meetings.

I will also ensure that the questions from Members of the European Parliament to the Commission that come under my responsibility are responded to swiftly and accurately. I will appear before the European Parliament's plenary and Committees whenever called to answer a question or provide any particular response.

I concur with the President-elect's Political Guidelines that stress that in order to regain citizens' faith in the Union, our institutions should be open and beyond reproach on transparency issues.

I am therefore fully committed to implementing the wide-ranging provisions on transparency and the flow of information in the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission and the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making. In particular, I will ensure that these provisions are respected in my structured dialogues and other contacts with the Committees of the Parliament.

I will also continue efforts to inform citizens on role of the Commission in the EU's institutional set-up, notably by pursuing numerous citizen dialogues. In addition, policy proposals and programme implementation under my responsibility will be based on proper consultations of experts and the public, in line with Better Regulation principles.

I fully subscribe to the President-elect's support for a right of initiative for the European Parliament and commitment that the Commission follows-up on Parliamentary resolutions adopted by majority of its members with a legislative act, in full respect of the proportionality, subsidiarity and better law making principles.

As part of the next College's commitment to a deepened partnership with the European Parliament, I will work hand in hand with Parliament at every stage in debating resolutions under Article 225 TFEU. I commit to work closely with the relevant parliamentary Committees, and be active and present during the preparation of Article 225 TFEU resolutions. I strongly believe that this will improve dialogue, foster confidence and a sense of working together towards a common goal.

I will also ensure that the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations in areas under my responsibility.

I am fully aware that the provision of information and documents is an essential aspect of deepening the partnership between the European Parliament and the Commission. I therefore commit to fully implement the relevant provisions of the Framework Agreement between the two institutions, and of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making. I will ensure that the equality of the co-legislators is respected in terms of how information is shared in areas under my responsibility.

Questions from the Committee on Culture and Education:

1. Portfolio

Education. It is your job to make the European Education Area a reality by 2025. How will you ensure that recently adopted measures translate into tangible action on the ground and which further measures do you envisage to deliver on this aim? How do you see the future of Union policy on digital skills and media literacy and what are the next steps for the Digital Education Action Plan? You have been tasked with delivering a tripling of the Erasmus+ budget in the next MFF and Erasmus+ is to become more inclusive and open to people with fewer opportunities. How are you going to make sure that the budgetary increase becomes a reality in the new MFF and how, concretely, will you make Erasmus+ more inclusive? How will you support a more joined-up policy approach to education and research across universities in the EU? Finally, what is your vision for long-term EU education policy?

Leading the work on making the European Education Area a reality is a key part of my Mission Letter. In full respect of the Treaty competences in the field of education, I will work very closely with the European Parliament, Member States and education stakeholders. The European Parliament and Member States strongly welcome the European Education Area; the priority work strands to bring it into effect were identified by the European Council in December 2017. This momentum is still very strong. I will therefore fully make use the EU framework for exchange, comparison, benchmarking and mutual learning about the largely common challenges that Member States face in education and training. I will focus on ensuring access to high quality and innovation-driven education and training systems. I will work to overcome obstacles that hinder learning in another country and the free movement of learners; one such hindrance is the absence of a European student card. I will foster cross-border learning mobility and cooperation in education and training, not least through the

further development of the first pilot on European Universities. I will continue the work started on key competences, quality early childhood education, mutual recognition of diplomas and learning outcomes and language learning.

On Erasmus, I will work hard to deliver on the President-elect's call to triple the budget, echoing the wishes of the European Parliament. A strongly reinforced budget will also be crucial to further develop the inclusiveness of the programme. Measures will include targeted grants for people with specific needs, more flexible formats suiting the needs of people from a disadvantaged background or targeted measures to make the programme better known. Furthermore, I will look at the possibilities under Structural Funds and InvestEU to support Member States in providing equal access to high quality inclusive education in line with the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Given the speed and scale of digital transformation, we must urgently step up our action on digital skills. 43% of the EU population has low levels of digital education, and 17% are lacking any digital skills, which puts them at serious risk of exclusion. The President-elect has made it clear that this is a priority area for us. I believe an upgrade of the Digital Education Action Plan is timely. As studies show, teachers should be a particular focus of this effort; they are keen to improve their own digital skills and use technology to support their work. If we can improve the digital capacity and confidence of teachers, this in turn will help them equip young people with the digital skills they need, both for their professional life, and for their participation in society.

Expanding digital education opportunities is another priority. We need to make education institutions fit for the digital age in a lifelong learning perspective. I am in particular going to focus on the opportunities such as massive open online courses, to reach as many people as possible. We need to use digital technology intelligently to make education both more effective and more inclusive.

The main goal of all our efforts, however, needs to be to equip the young generations with strong digital skills. We can help achieve this for example through focusing on digital literacy, computer science and informatics for all, so that children and young people understand and deal critically with digital technology – both in terms of its promises but also its dangers. The world is already digital, so are our children, but our education is not yet there.

Research and education belong together. There cannot be cutting-edge research without well-educated and trained people who also have the right attitudes and mindsets to quest for new discoveries. Research is the natural continuation of the lifelong learning spectrum. In fact, most higher education institutions in Europe do both, teaching and researching, and education and research are already linked up under the current mobility programmes. The new programmes will provide even more synergies. As Commissioner responsible for both education and research, if confirmed, I will give a strong steer to further link up the two policy areas in close cooperation with the stakeholders.

To sum up, my long-term vision for EU education policy is strongly rooted in the European Education Area. I fully endorse the ambitious political vision of creating a space where no borders hamper learning, studying or carrying out research; where spending time studying or working in another country is the standard for the majority of students and teachers; where educational institutions offer high-quality inclusive education for all.

Culture. You have been tasked with driving forward the European Agenda for Culture. How will you ensure that there is a joined-up EU policy and funding approach to culture and which steps are needed to deliver this? Do we need a broader, more ambitious EU Culture Strategy? How will you ensure greater visibility for EU culture policy and active follow-up of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018? How will you ensure that EU policy respects and promotes cultural and linguistic diversity? You also have responsibility for promoting the cultural and creative sectors. Which further EU measures do you consider necessary to support the sectors?

Joined-up policy and funding for culture are indeed essential, as culture cuts across many policy fields, from education to research, from social cohesion to external relations. Significant EU funding is available for culture in other programmes. An example, in the 2014-2020 period, the overall funding available for culture from the European Structural and Investment Funds can be estimated at over EUR 9 billion, far beyond the financial capacities of the Creative Europe programme. In this context, I will work closely with the College of Commissioners and with Member States and regions to ensure that investment in culture puts due emphasis on integrated local development strategies.

The objectives and principles laid out in the European Agenda for Culture will guide us in our work across policy fields and departments.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 was an excellent example of how synergies between different EU policies and programmes can work to the benefit of communities, on the scale of individuals, in localities, regions, cities and, sometimes, entire States. The European Year addressed one clear objective: promoting our shared European Heritage as a resource for Europe. 15 Commission services contributed to making the European Year a success, and this is exactly how I intend to continue following up on it: by cooperating, joining up forces, and maximising every contribution. I will steer policy so that heritage contributes to answering the pressing questions of our time, particularly on inclusion, on sustainable development and on climate change.

Furthermore, like the European Capitals of Culture each year, the European Year of Cultural Heritage has significantly raised awareness about and visibility of EU culture policy. It reached millions of European citizens and showed them the importance of culture at EU level. I think we can learn from this experience. I will examine if specific activities that we currently do can be made more visible, for example the various prizes that we currently fund in the field of culture. In order to unlock Europe's great potential when it comes to creativity, we need to bring creativity to the fore as one of the key competences for a competitive and sustainable Europe. All of this can be done keeping in mind the cornerstone of my mandate: safeguarding and promoting our cultural and linguistic diversity, the latter also by continuing with our literary translation scheme. With it, I want to proactively contribute to helping authors from all countries reaching audiences in other countries in their own languages.

I believe a genuine European strategy for cultural and creative industries needs to be based on an understanding of existing practices and future challenges, span across sectors and be geared towards impact and sustainability. The Commission is already well on its way, with a proposal for a new Knowledge and Innovation Community of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, dedicated to the Cultural and Creative Industries. The Commission's approach seeks to test new ideas and to promote contacts between the industries, connecting entrepreneurs to each other, to companies and to the best research, in order to solve what I see as the major problem in the sectors - fragmentation. The goal would

be to eliminate barriers to access to finance, to generate enough critical mass and to break silos so that the sectors could become bigger together, capable of making our culture more available worldwide.

Youth and sport. What do you regard as the EU's policy priorities in the fields of youth and sport? How will you ensure that the Youth Strategy makes a tangible difference to young people? How do you intend to ensure better youth engagement with, and involvement in, EU policy-making and the meaning of European citizenship? How will you reach out to young people from diverse backgrounds and those with fewer opportunities? With sport now anchored in the Lisbon Treaty, EU policy-making in the field has developed. How do you see the role of the EU in shaping the future of sports policy and, in your view, are there particular areas of sports policy where EU measures should be envisaged?

The priorities in youth and sport are, indeed, quite intertwined. Through the Youth Strategy, we aim to ‘engage, connect and empower young people’, to involve them in democratic life, and to bring them closer to the EU. Through our efforts in promoting a European dimension of sport, we aim to reach out to marginalised members of society, bringing them into inclusive communities, while promoting a healthy lifestyle for all.

My main priority in youth policy is to make sure more young people benefit from EU policies and programmes and to ensure equal participation. Even if today we reach many young people through exchanges and various formats of dialogues, we are still far from reaching the majority of young Europeans. Consequently, we have to make our policies and programmes more inclusive and get more young people to participate regardless of background, educational level or financial means. We have already made some progress in this respect. For instance, we have rooted the EU Youth Dialogue more locally and young people can now easily join EU actions, such as the European Solidarity Corps or DiscoverEU.

The EU Youth Strategy sets out a vision for younger generations in Europe. It helps identify young people’s challenges and how the EU can help tackle them. It designs a policy framework that Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and Discover EU can support. It guides Member States’ national youth policies. And last but not least, the EU Youth Strategy gives young people a chance to participate in EU policy-making. Indeed, to ensure the engagement of our youth we should not only provide them a platform to make their voices heard. We must listen to them carefully and take their opinions seriously. I will advocate their ideas towards Ministers in the Youth Council when action is required in the Member States. I will use all the instruments in my portfolio ranging from education to sport and culture to the benefit of young people, addressing their needs and concerns.

As for sport, I believe the EU plays an increasingly important role. We help Member States identify common challenges and elaborate possible solutions in close cooperation with all stakeholders concerned and in full respect of the autonomy of sport organisations. I have four clear policy priorities in this area. First, protecting the integrity of sport. I would like to see real progress in the field of match fixing. After years of blockage I will quickly take contact with the Presidency in order to consider how the Convention on Manipulation of Sports Competitions process could be unblocked. But integrity of sport is not only about fighting against match fixing and doping. It is also about promoting good governance, transparency, democracy and gender equality in sport organisations. Second, the trend of physical inactivity is worrying in Europe. We need to fully exploit the positive impact of sport on the society. It

binds people together, forges communities and keeps people healthy. Therefore, I intend to capitalise on this potential and use sport to enhance the health of European citizens but also to promote social inclusion and gender equality. Third, sport is not only beneficial to our societies but also to our economy. The sport industry contributes to our competitiveness significantly and is an important employer. I therefore want to use sport as a driver for economic growth, employment and innovation. Fourth, I know that the European Parliament has a keen interest in developing grassroots sport, I want to make it a priority for the coming months to discuss how we can do even better for our local and regional organisations. I want to make it the subject of our next EU Sport Forum.

2. Coordination within the Commission

In many areas of education, culture, youth and sport (digital skills, international cooperation, European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe etc.), your portfolio overlaps with that of other Commissioners or with a Vice-President. How are you going to ensure a coordinated approach within the Commission? How will this coordination and cooperation translate into policy-making? How will you ensure a coordinated approach to existing activities and initiatives in the field of education, culture, youth and sport? The word ‘innovation’ is in your title. How will you promote innovation across education, culture and the creative sectors?

It is clear from my Mission Letter that, if confirmed by the European Parliament, I will be the Commissioner responsible for education, culture, youth and sport. I see complementarity with other portfolios, for example with Commissioner-designate Schmit for vocational education and training and adult education and with Commissioner-designate Goulard for digital and media files. As for Vice-Presidents-designate, they will coordinate policy fields including those falling under my portfolio. The system of Vice-Presidents steering and coordinating the work of a group of Commissioners is already in place under the current Commission and has proven to be an effective way to break silos and work across portfolios and teams.

Naturally, I will work together very closely with the other Members of the College in order to ensure complementarity and coherence of my policy activities with theirs and to capitalise on the synergies between our portfolios.

The word ‘innovation’ in the title of my portfolio reflects its future-oriented nature. Indeed, education, youth, culture and sport are very closely linked to innovation. Take education: promoting inclusive, lifelong-learning based and innovation-driven education and training systems is one of the goals of the European Education Area. The 2018 Council Recommendation on Key Competences specifically includes ‘creativity and innovation’ to describe where specific knowledge, skills and attitudes contribute to the development of new ideas or approaches. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities provide students, entrepreneurs and business innovators with the knowledge, competences and the skills necessary to transform ideas into valuable products or services. In the field of youth: we cannot ignore the voices of young people, not only because they will be the leaders of tomorrow, but also because they bring fresh ideas and innovation to our policy-making. As regards culture: the Commission has proposed to launch a Knowledge and Innovation Community in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, in 2022.

3. Parliamentary scrutiny

The digital dimension of both education and culture policy sits primarily outside your remit and resides with Vice-President-designate Vestager and Commissioner-designate Goulard and yet it has a profound impact on education, culture and audiovisual. How will you ensure that the CULT Committee is able to scrutinise the work of those Commissioners over the course of their mandate? How will you ensure that parliamentary resolutions feed into Commission policy-making? With respect to the MFF programmes within your remit, how will you ensure that the Parliament has an ongoing role in determining policy and budgetary choices as the programmes evolve?

Having been a Member of this House myself, I strongly value the important role the European Parliament plays in ensuring the democratic oversight of EU legislation and programmes. This is why I will engage with the CULT Committee regularly to hold structured dialogues with you on the latest state-of-play of important files and on the implementation status of funding programmes. I will also engage in an open dialogue with you on future policy initiatives and will share your proposals with my other Members of the College to see how these could be translated into tangible policymaking. In particular, I will work closely, seek synergies and avoid silos with the Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age and the Commissioner for Internal Market in areas of joint interest. Regarding the evolution of the programmes falling under my remit, I and my services will always ensure full transparency and provide you with all the necessary information to facilitate your determining role as one of the two branches of the budgetary authority.

I believe that such a cooperative approach from the outset is crucial to ensuring we meet citizens' expectations and deliver concrete actions that have a positive impact on their lives. This is not only my belief. In her Mission Letters, President-elect, Ursula von der Leyen, has tasked all the Commissioners-designate to strengthen the Commission's special partnership with the European Parliament. I will work hand-in-hand with the European Parliament, and in particular the ITRE and CULT committees as well as STOA throughout my mandate and I have no doubt that the CULT Committee will develop similar constructive cooperation mechanisms with all the relevant Vice-Presidents-designate and Commissioners-designate to ensure the European Parliament's right of scrutiny.

Questions from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

1. What are the main policy priorities you intend to pursue in the context of the part of your portfolio that falls within the remit of the ITRE Committee, namely Research and Innovation? What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives, including financial instruments, you envisage for achieving those priorities? What would be the main content and timetable for those initiatives? How will you concretely apply the 'One In, One Out' principle in relation with any legislative proposals in your portfolio?

My first priority is to ensure swift agreement on pending legislative proposals, in particular the Horizon Europe programmes and to focus on their timely implementation. This includes continuing the co-creation process (i.e. involving citizens, civil society organisations and end-users) for the first Horizon Europe strategic plan, the establishment of the first missions and the preparation of legal proposals for institutionalised partnerships. This also includes the setting up of the European Innovation Council. Depending on progress with the Multiannual

Financial Framework and the adoption of Horizon Europe, the legislative proposals for institutionalised partnerships, the adoption of the implementing acts of the strategic plan and the first Horizon Europe work programme are foreseen for 2020.

Second, I want to build a true European Research Area in which we pull together all national and European efforts. A revitalised European Research Area should boost Europe's science lead, provide high quality and the circulation of knowledge, a critical mass of investment and deliver innovative sustainable solutions across national systems. It should also stimulate national reforms in all areas that seek improvements. Open science and open innovation are essential policies to realise a true European Research area. I want to strengthen further links with the European Education Area as skills, education and life-long learning are key drivers of Europe's competitiveness and innovation, in support of the Green Deal and of digital transformation.

Third, I am convinced that research and innovation are key drivers and enablers for innovation-led sustainable growth and essential to deliver on many of the priorities mentioned in the political guidelines of the President-elect, ranging from the Green Deal, to the beating cancer plan, sustainable and smart mobility, technology sovereignty, the development of clean energy, zero pollution for the health of our citizens. It is my priority that research and innovation deliver a maximum contribution to our common objectives through an agenda, for enabling ecological, economic and social transitions that joins up research and innovation investments, reforms and regulation.

Fourthly, I will foster international cooperation in education, research and innovation, which is an important element in strengthening the role of the European Union as a global actor. Horizon Europe will pursue strategic cooperation with key partners through targeted actions in line with EU priorities and it will be more proactive in seeking synergies with other EU programmes.

Finally, I am committed to successfully exploiting the results of our EU Framework programmes on Research and Innovation, the current Horizon 2020 programme and the future Horizon Europe programme. This includes strengthening the uptake of research and innovation by engaging with young innovators and local leaders and giving them the chance to scale up quickly, inter alia through the European Innovation Council. This also includes reaching out and involving citizens in our programme, for example through the "Science meets Regions" project.

Every step of the way, my intention is to engage fully with the Parliament, in particular ITRE, but also with Member States, the research community, civil society and other Commissioners. Research and innovation can give direction towards the future we want to create: sustainable, fair and prosperous. By combining co-creation, investment, smart regulation and reform, I want to demonstrate that research and innovation can turn major challenges into major opportunities.

Concerning the 'One In, One Out' principle, EU legislation can achieve objectives and deliver benefits that Member States acting separately cannot do. However, to achieve its objectives, the EU legislation can lead to burdens on final beneficiaries or users. The 'One In, One Out' principle will alleviate these burdens: every legislative proposal creating new burdens should relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. The 'One In, One Out' principle will be applied by looking at the entire policy area, going therefore beyond each individual piece of legislation imposing new burdens. This will

ensure that the overarching policy objectives are achieved efficiently and with minimum burden and the Commission always has the leeway to act where needed.

- **Your mission letter only refers to the objective of tripling the budget for the Erasmus+ Programme. Will you keep an ambitious budgetary goal for the Horizon Europe Programme in order to fund a larger number of excellent projects, thereby increasing the success rate of the current Programme which is very low? Will you support Parliament's position on the budget of Horizon Europe, which has a broader scope compared to its predecessor?**

In my Mission Letter, research and innovation is recognised as a key factor for the European competitiveness in a global scale.

Horizon Europe will be central in setting the direction, principles and framework for EU investments in R&I. Within the overall MFF, Horizon Europe is the programme for which the proposed budget increased the most for the next programming period 2021-27, with a 26% increase, in a context of competing priorities and limited resources. I will vigorously defend an ambitious budget for Horizon Europe as this is indispensable for Europe to deliver on its objectives, without it Europe will not be able to lead the transition to a climate-neutral economy and new digital age. I am grateful for the Parliament's position on the Horizon Europe budget. This is the largest ever budget which reflects our collective ambition and commitment to make Europe a global leader, in particular in the creation and diffusion of high-quality knowledge and technologies. This reflects the programme's undisputed added value, and leverage effect. As requested by the Parliament during the Horizon Europe negotiations, we will closely monitor and report on the issue of oversubscription.

- **Your mission letter puts a greater emphasis on innovation rather than on frontier research, and this is also reflected in the restrictive title of your portfolio. Yet, one of the greatest success stories of the past two Framework Programmes is the European Research Council (ERC), which supports the most prominent European scientists. How do you intend to strike the right balance along the whole value chain, from blue-sky research activities to close-to-market actions, in individual as well as in collaborative projects, as requested by the co-legislators in the provisional agreement on Horizon Europe?**

Fundamental research is an essential asset and an important condition for increasing the Union's ability to attract the best scientists in order to become a global hub of excellence. The history of science shows that the importance and impact of many great discoveries was not recognised straightaway. That is why it is essential to give our scientists some freedom to explore the frontiers of knowledge. And that is what the European Research Council (ERC) does so well. The ERC selects the most promising researchers with the most exciting ideas in any field. ERC grantees therefore produce outstanding results and showcase the best European science. In just a few years since its set-up, the ERC has become the point of reference for excellent frontier research in Europe and indeed the world, and this in all fields of research. Nobody contests this. The Horizon Europe proposal precisely foresees full continuity as far as the governance of the ERC is concerned and also proposes to boost funding for the ERC for the next Multiannual Financial Framework from EUR 13.1 billion to EUR 16.6 billion. I will continue to fight for sufficient budgetary resources for frontier

research in Horizon Europe. Support to frontier research will also be pursued in the other two pillars.

I will ensure that the collaborative parts of the programme will be balanced in between different levels of technology maturity, thereby covering the entire value chain through the strategic planning process. In the Horizon Europe work programme we can strike the right balance by making individual research topics less prescriptive and more impact driven, thus increasing the freedom of our potential beneficiaries. Coupled with innovation, this will support the Union in its transition to a climate-neutral, healthy, prosperous and fair society.

At the same time, we should ensure that Europe is equipped with the Research Infrastructures it needs to carry out both frontier research and produce innovation. I want to support the Member States in better coordinating their investments to provide scientists with the resources they need to produce new knowledge, but also to contribute to resolving the challenges we face. This requires more cooperation across infrastructures and across disciplines.

- **How will you coordinate and interact with Commissioners whose policy areas have a critical research component, such as the EU industrial policy, the EU digital policy, the EU defence policy, the EU climate policy, the EU transport policy, the EU maritime policy or the EU space policy?**

Science underpins and informs most EU policy areas because it delivers new technologies, creates space for social innovation and experimentation and provides new knowledge and evidence-base for policy-making. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will therefore work closely with all other Members of the College. In particular, I will work in collaboration with the Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age regarding the artificial intelligence agenda and regarding the new long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future and the new SME strategy

Digitalisation and new technologies are revolutionising the way we live and work. We are at the cusp of a new wave of innovation with unprecedented complexity, concentration of innovation benefits and a steadfast pace of change. The digital transformation is rapidly changing the life of European citizens and putting pressure on the competitiveness of European companies. It is my intention to ensure that EU level policy on education, research and innovation is responsive to this rapidly changing landscape, so that Europe becomes a leading player in riding that wave.

When appropriate, I will contribute to the work on the European Green Deal. Research and innovation will have a key role in the transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy.

Missions in particular, as a new and powerful tool in Horizon Europe, will enable research and innovation to deliver public goods across a set of EU policies. This will strengthen synergies with other policy areas, including climate, digital and industrial policies.

Co-creation and Strategic Planning are an important tool for this, and also ensure the coordination and interaction with other Members of the College in areas that have a critical research component. Co-creating Horizon Europe and the EU's research and innovation policy with all related Commission departments will help set common strategic directions for research and innovation and better focus its impact on achieving our common objectives. Co-creation will increase the focus and integration of action on future policy goals that are

meaningful for society (e.g. climate change, citizens' health, biodiversity, clean water, clean air, food security, environment, healthy oceans, healthy people).

- **In the context of an ambitious agenda for climate presented by the President-elect, how will you make sure that Horizon Europe meets the climate mainstreaming requirements, and contributes to the 2050 climate targets, given the current difficulty of Horizon 2020 to meet its climate target?**

Becoming the world's first climate-neutral and sustainable continent by 2050 is a unique opportunity to modernise Europe's economies and societies and to re-orient them towards a sustainable future. This will never happen without a very strong input from European researchers and innovators, without their pivotal discoveries and new technologies, without a successful cooperation of industry and academia, nor without the active involvement and buy-in of citizens and major behavioral changes. All this calls for strong and effective European framework programmes on research and innovation.

I am determined to contribute as much as possible to linking research and innovation investments with reforms and regulations and mobilising a collective response across Commission services, Member States, regions, private companies of all sizes, academia and the public. Through cooperation at all levels, our Framework Programme's powerful instruments and innovative governance can drive the necessary systemic changes to reach climate neutrality and ensure an inclusive ecological and economic transition.

Research and innovation resulting from Horizon Europe will accelerate solutions in order to reach our 2030 and 2050 climate goals. Climate change research is a major component of Horizon Europe and cuts across many themes and actions that go beyond the cluster on Climate, Energy and Mobility. Four out of the five agreed mission areas in Horizon Europe directly support a Green Deal: adaptation to climate change; healthy oceans, seas and coastal and inland waters; climate neutral and smart cities; and soil health and food. This will also have a mobilising effect across other parts of the programme, such as the pillar on Excellent Science. The climate transition will require the development of adaptation and mitigation measures for which only research and innovation can provide evidence. Bringing together multiple scientific disciplines, different industrial sectors and different types of actors will create a strong push for innovative solutions that are needed to reach our climate goals.

We naturally need equally ambitious budgetary means to support this transition, as proposed by the Commission. Furthermore, the Commission has proposed to earmark at least 25% of expenditure supporting climate objectives over the Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2021-2027 period. For Horizon Europe this will be at least 35%. I will make sure that my services will continuously monitor the state of implementation of this target and make this data publicly available on-line in an accessible manner. Moreover, I will report on the climate impact we are achieving through Horizon Europe and will act immediately in case of any possible shortfalls.

- **According to Article 179 of the TFEU, the Union shall have the objective to achieve a European Research Area and promote its competitiveness. Which measures, and possibly legislative initiatives, do you envisage to revitalise the European Research Area and to allow the EU to assert itself as an excellent partner on the global scene? In particular, by which concrete means do you intend to attract worldwide talents to the EU and to reduce any further "brain**

drain”? How will you address the gap in research and innovation performance across the EU Member States?

My ambition is to revitalise the European Research Area (ERA), both to make it fit for purpose in a globally changing environment and to tackle its longstanding challenges. I want to work with the European Parliament and the Member States in the coming months on a modern, forward-looking vision for the ERA. It is my ambition to link the ERA with Education and Innovation as part of a broader knowledge policy, including through changed incentives and rewards systems and improved links to innovation ecosystems. This offers a great opportunity, because they are policy fields which need to interact and provide feedback to each other to create a virtuous spiral of knowledge contributing to the wellbeing of our society and to (re)create a relation of trust between the world of science/research and society.

Regarding brain drain, as stated in the President-elect’s political guidelines, equal opportunities in all parts of Europe must be nurtured. This is also true for Europe’s researchers. Currently, we face many differences in for example working conditions of researchers, the availability of positions, and access to funding. In order to address all these factors, as well as to attract and keep talents, actions are needed to promote common standards for researchers and institutions in Europe.

Thanks to the Horizon 2020 Widening measures, the European Semester and the Policy Support Facility, working conditions for researchers have improved. In the context of a new European Research Area initiative, I intend to pay particular attention to the issue of brain drain.

To begin with, Europe must be an attractive place for researchers to work. As agreed during the Horizon Europe negotiations, the Commission will perform a study on this topic as a base for further steps. Also, as requested by Parliament, the Commission will start monitoring the evolution of researchers’ salaries with a view to formulating recommendations for coordinated action. The new set of Widening measures, will furthermore provide a new toolset to develop new solutions that could be scaled up. Working closely with Vice-President-designate Dubravka Suica will offer new opportunities for areas most affected by the brain drain.

As regards the innovation gap, I see four strands of action for the future under my portfolio to support low performing regions. First, under Horizon Europe a dedicated part for widening participation and spreading excellence will account for at least 3.3% of the total budget, which is three times more than in Horizon 2020. This programme part builds on the experience of Horizon 2020 and has, thanks to the European Parliament, also new tools to foster the excellence-based participations from all Member States, including the low performing Member States; to facilitate the collaborative links in European Research and Innovation; and to stimulate brain circulation in Europe. Second, further developing the European Research Area will also help reducing national disparities, e.g. by putting a focus on particular aspects of the innovation gap, such as the issue of brain drain. Third, we need to continue supporting Member States with their national reforms, for example through the European Semester and the Policy Support Facility or by supporting regional initiatives like the BIOEAST initiative. Finally, Horizon Europe alone will not suffice to overcome the technology, innovation and excellence gaps between Member States and the low integration of some Members States R&I systems in the European innovation ecosystem. We need to strengthen synergies across programmes and policies. In particular the synergies between Horizon Europe, and our cohesion funds will be crucial for further closing the R&I divide.

- **Concerning the external dimension of research, with which third countries will you cooperate as a matter of priority and in which thematic fields? Do you intend to have the same degree of open cooperation along the whole value chain, from fundamental scientific research to close-to-market innovative activities? Will you promote reciprocity with the Union's cooperation partners worldwide? Do you see a risk that the multi-speed association policy, proposed by your predecessor, could result in making the Framework Programme more complicated for participants?**

The EU approach to research and innovation has traditionally consisted of two elements. First, openness to the world to allow our European researchers and innovators to maximise their interaction with the world's best minds and the latest scientific and technological knowledge and to tackle global challenges together. Second, targeted EU-led activities with select partner countries, whereby the selection of countries and themes for international cooperation is subject to the test of EU interest and mutual benefits.

The participation in Union programmes can be considered as a tool of Union policy for cooperation with third countries in a broader policy context.

As discussions on the conditions for association are ongoing, it is too early to say which countries will be finally associated to Horizon Europe, the closest form of cooperation with an international partner country. With Horizon Europe, we are likely to seek full association for the European Economic Area, the EU Enlargement countries and the European Neighbourhood countries.

Beyond European Economic Area, Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries, third countries may only participate in Horizon Europe if the **programme** expressly allows for that.

I want to promote reciprocal openness to our international partners by making maximal use of the leverage that our instruments can apply; thus ensuring multilateralism and openness, while assertively negotiating a global level playing field.

However, Horizon Europe should enable us to pursue strategically targeted cooperation and restrict openness when dictated by the EU's strategic interests. Programming tools are in place to safeguard EU interests such as limiting participation in specific actions to Member States only, set additional eligibility criteria and exploitation obligations to ensure that transfers, licences and exploitation are beneficial to the Union. For example, the European Innovation Council's 'Accelerator' instrument, designed to promote the breakthrough of market-creating innovation and scale-up of companies, will make use of these tools.

By pursuing strategic engagement and reciprocity with global partners, we can achieve greater impact in line with EU interests, remaining competitive, tackling global societal challenges, supporting the Union's external policies and promoting our priorities and values in the world.

- **The provisional agreement on Horizon Europe includes a commitment from the European Commission for extensive exchanges with the European Parliament in the Strategic Planning process. How could these extensive exchanges be organised? Will you commit to establishing, together with Parliament, a process that ensures that all the information pertaining to the Strategic Planning of**

Horizon Europe reaches Parliament in a structured, timely and regular manner? Furthermore, how will you ensure regular reporting to the European Parliament on the implementation of the Programme, the funded projects and their impact, in order to allow thorough parliamentary scrutiny?

During the interinstitutional negotiations on Horizon Europe, the Commission presented a Declaration as regards extensive consultation with the Parliament: ‘Upon request, the Commission intends to exchange views with the responsible Committee in the European Parliament on: (i) the list of potential partnerships candidates based on the Articles 185 and 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which will be covered by (inception) impact assessments; (ii) the list of tentative missions identified by the Mission boards; (iii) the results of the Strategic Plan before its formal adoption, and to present and share with that Committee documents related to work programmes.’ I commit to give maximum effect to this Declaration within the parameters of relevant existing agreements and legal acts.

On the basis of the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission relevant documents for the Commission expert group to act as ‘shadow’ strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee, which has been set up to help prepare the first strategic plan, are also sent to the European Parliament. We will continue to do so until the end of the operation of this expert group. Afterwards and in relation to the operation of the Programme Committees’ configurations of Horizon Europe, I will ensure that the agendas of committee meetings; the draft implementing acts on which the committees are asked to deliver an opinion; and information on the final draft implementing acts following delivery of the opinion of the committees will be made available to the European Parliament.

We will continue to do so until the end of the operation of this expert group. Afterwards and in relation to the operation of the Programme Committees’ configurations of Horizon Europe, I will ensure that the agendas of committee meetings, the draft implementing acts on which the committees are asked to deliver an opinion and information on the final draft implementing acts following delivery of the opinion of the committees will be made available to the European Parliament through the Comitology register.

I am fully available, as are my services, to meet your committee or any other configuration you deem appropriate on a regular basis to inform you on the recent developments and to listen to your views. In particular, I would welcome your views on potential institutionalised partnerships candidates based on the Articles 185 and 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, tentative missions identified by the Mission boards, and the draft Strategic Plan before its formal adoption. I am looking forward to fruitful extensive exchanges on this.

The Commission provides full transparency on programme implementation through the Horizon Dashboard. The Dashboard gives public access to real-time information on projects and their results, programme-wide statistics, and dedicated views of important initiatives such as the European Innovation Council. Furthermore, the novelty of Horizon Europe on the Key Impact Pathways will allow me and my services to perform and bring to your attention a thorough and clear analysis of the progress we are making towards scientific, economic and social impacts of the Framework Programme, both as a whole and in each of its parts.

2. 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, in particular concerning the impact of all proposed legislation on SMEs?

I am convinced that the EU should act where research and innovation matters the most, where it can provide the most added value and where it can transform Europe. In the spirit of the Interinstitutional agreement on better Law making, I look forward to working closely with the European Parliament to improving the evidence base of EU programmes and legislative proposals and I renew my commitment as regards transparency and the flow of information between the two institutions. In close collaboration with the Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight I will make sure we will fully embrace the digital age, make use of the latest advancements in artificial intelligence and big data to obtain the best intelligence needed to design our future policies. In this context, I would like to highlight that we can count on Commission in-house scientific competences, including the Joint Research Centre, the Commission's science service and knowledge manager and the Scientific Advice Mechanism.

Of course, any proposed new initiative with significant impacts will go through a robust impact assessment and will be reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board, like the current Horizon Europe proposals, which I hope will be soon fully approved with your support. We are also undertaking, for the first time, coordinated impact assessments of twelve candidate European Partnerships, which will underpin possible legislative proposals. I want to make sure we take actions which foster synergies and maximise their impact towards achieving our societal objectives.

I am committed to ensure that the approach to new legislative proposals is open and cooperative from the start. Stakeholder consultations will continue to be an important element of every part of the policy cycle from policy design to the final legislative agreement and later on, policy monitoring and evaluation. I will strive to make continuous monitoring, in addition to ex-post and interim evaluations, part of the process. I want to make sure everyone is involved in this process from researchers to innovators, citizens, SMEs, universities, foundations. I will continue to publish all information regarding meetings with stakeholders and lobbyists in the mandatory lobby register.

I also want to ensure that we use our better regulation tools to design legislation encouraging out of the box innovation able to bring not only economic returns but – first and foremost – social and environmental benefits to all Europeans, with full involvement of civil society and considering the impacts on innovation throughout the policy cycle. Innovation should be analysed as part of our regulatory policy tools (impact assessments, evaluations and stakeholders consultation), and I will discuss with the Executive Vice President-designate for Inter-Institutional relations how we can do this better. An innovation-friendly and predictable regulatory framework will be key not only to achieve sustainability objectives but also to strengthen Europe's competitiveness and stimulate growth

3. How will you and your services ensure enhanced cooperation with the ITRE Committee? What concrete steps will you take to ensure that the ITRE Committee is given in a timely and proactive manner the same information, as Council and Member States, with respect to planned legislative initiatives or other major initiatives? How will you facilitate scrutiny by the ITRE Committee of legislative and non-legislative procedures, providing at an early stage all necessary information concerning the preparation of legislative acts, delegated and implementing acts and facilitate monitoring of their implementation? How do you intend to ensure that ITRE is kept appropriately informed in relation to any international agreements in your policy area?

I will ensure that the European Parliament and the ITRE Committee in particular is fully informed at the same time as the Council about any major developments. I am fully available to attend regularly meetings of your Committee and exchange views with you within the Structured Dialogue.

My services are committed to provide you with up-to-date information on and detailed explanations of legislative, non-legislative, delegated and implementing acts, including on their implementation.

The Common Understanding on Delegated Acts (annexed to the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making) provides for both the transmission of the indicative planning of delegated acts and for timely information of the European Parliament and of the Council on the work of the expert groups helping the Commission in the preparation of delegated acts. Set up in 2017, the Interinstitutional Register of Delegated Acts provides information on the whole life-cycle of delegated acts, from planning to publication, thereby allowing the European Parliament to be fully up-to-date on the Commission's work in this area. Similarly, the Comitology Register provides information on the meetings of comitology committees: whenever a committee meets to discuss a draft implementing act, the European Parliament is actively informed. A new version of this Register will soon provide additional information, such as on the planning of implementing acts that will be published for feedback.

I remain fully committed to keeping the Parliament informed of any intention to enter into negotiations and progress in negotiations of association Agreements to the Horizon Europe programme and to renew science and technological cooperation agreements. I will fully respect the prerogatives of the Parliament under Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and act in line with the duty of mutual sincere cooperation when exercising the commitments, which the Commission undertook in the interinstitutional Agreement. Information concerning international Agreements, both science and technological cooperation Agreements, as well as association Agreements to the Horizon Europe programme will be given in a proactive and regular manner at the ITRE Committee. In particular, I would welcome if an update on international agreements is included as a regular point at the ITRE meetings.