



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

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Transport and Space

### 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?**

Since the completion of my studies in international relations and following my entry into the diplomatic service in 1990, I have been actively involved in EU affairs for about 20 years. I have acquired detailed knowledge of the EU institutions notably in my five years as Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the EU, followed by my mandates as Commissioner in charge of education and culture at the end of the Barroso I – Commission and now, over the past five years, as Commissioner and Vice-President responsible for inter-institutional relations and administration. To obtain a democratic mandate I successfully ran for the 2014 EP election in Slovakia.

In my current mandate, I have focused my work on the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and modernising the European civil service. This requires good teamwork with the other Members of the College, as inter-institutional issues in particular touch on many different policy files. I have always taken a keen interest in the collegial work of the College and actively participated in the debates on key initiatives - a practice I would intend to continue in the new mandate as well – in order to move the strategic agenda of the Commission forward. My responsibility for administrative reform and staff matters in general have allowed me to also develop a wide knowledge of the internal rules and working methods. A close relationship and constructive co-operation with the European Parliament have been my key principles throughout my mandate in the Commission. I negotiated the Framework Agreement with the European Parliament on behalf of the Commission and, introduced structural dialogue between the two institutions. I have been a regular visitor to Parliament - not only to the plenary and the Committees responsible for my policy areas, but also to the Conference of Committee Chairs and Conference of Presidents - and I have intensively developed bilateral contacts with the Honourable Members of Parliament. I consider this a prerequisite for a successful mandate and I would hope to build on this very valuable experience of the past few years throughout the next mandate.

As representative of the Commission in the General Affairs Council (GAC) I have, moreover, held close working relationships with Member States on a broad range of European issues, notably in preparing the European Council agenda. Regular presentation on the Commission's work programme and the negotiations over the new financial perspective in GAC have given me a good understanding of the key budgetary and programming issues for the coming years. In my current mandate, I was also entrusted with the relations with the National Parliaments in the context of the newly established subsidiarity mechanism which is also highly relevant for the transport and space area. Furthermore, I represented the Commission during the negotiations over the establishment of the European External Action Service (and the subsequent review exercise), which allowed me to

further deepen and broaden my keen interest in international affairs.

During the current mandate I have also proposed and successfully negotiated key files such as the European Citizens' Initiative, the European Political Parties proposal, the Common approach on agencies, the Common understanding on delegated acts and the Transparency Register, which I believe have demonstrated my deep commitment towards promoting the European general interest in areas that are also important for the transport and space portfolio. Last but not least, the many debates and decisions taken by this Commission on the economic and financial crisis in which I actively participated have clearly shown me the need to substantially invest in Europe's infrastructure if we want to generate more jobs and growth and preserve Europe's competitiveness.

Transport and space are important European policy areas with a strong inter-institutional, international and transversal dimension. Against the background explained above, I believe that I have the necessary qualifications and experience to become a Commissioner in the new mandate to promote the European general interest, notably in this area.

I am fully aware of and strongly committed to respecting the obligations stipulated in Article 17.3 TEU, 245 and 339 TFEU and the Code of conduct for Commissioners, laying down the basic guarantees of independence and ethical principles to be respected by the Members of the Commission. In particular, I would not accept any instructions from any government or any other body, I would refrain from any action incompatible with my duties, I would not engage in any other occupation - whether gainful or not - during the term of office, and I would respect the obligation to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance of certain appointments or benefits after my mandate. My declaration of interests foreseen by the Code of conduct for Commissioners is completed and I am committed to update it regularly in case of any changes. Finally, I would like to stress that in my previous and current mandate as Member of the European Commission, I have fully respected the letter and spirit of the EU Treaties, as well as the obligation to act in the European interest.

## **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?**

Collegiality is the guiding principle and the basic pillar for a well-functioning Commission, to which I have also fully subscribed during my current and past mandates in the Commission. As a Member of the College, I would be first and foremost dedicated to the portfolio assigned to me by the President-elect. My duties would be carried out in full cooperation with the other Members of the Commission and in accordance with the political guidelines and working methods established by the President-elect. With respect to the work carried out by my own services, I would be committed to take the political responsibility for their activities in my field of competence and without prejudice to the principle of collegiality. The relations between my Cabinet, services and myself would be based on loyalty, trust, transparency and the mutual flow of information and assistance.

While fully respecting the responsibilities of the other Members, if I am confirmed as Commissioner, I would like to contribute to the decisions of the Commission with my own experience, expertise and ideas to the widest possible extent, with the aim of achieving the best possible result for the European general interest. I would, in particular, like to make sure that we build our policies on the basis of a wide EU consensus developed through partnership with the European Parliament and the other EU institutions. Once adopted, I would fully bear the responsibility with the other Members for the decisions taken.

Having negotiated the current Framework Agreement with the European Parliament on behalf of the Commission, I am fully aware of and deeply convinced about the need for equal treatment of the two co-legislators. I see this not only as a legal requirement in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure but also as a Member of the College who is accountable to the directly elected Members of the European Parliament. I would therefore be fully committed to ensuring a constructive political dialogue with the European Parliament and its committees based on openness, transparency, mutual trust, regular reporting and exchange of information, in order for the European Parliament to exercise its democratic control effectively. I would like to confirm my full support for the President-elect's intention of reinforcing the special relationship between the European Parliament and the Commission, and I am ready, as I was during the whole of the current mandate, to maintain the regular structural dialogue with the Committees, to participate personally in important trilogue negotiations and to work very closely with the European Parliament on the basis of the Framework Agreement. This applies, in particular, to establishing and maintaining intensive and close relations with the two portfolio-related Committees (TRAN and ITRE), where I would like to continue my practice of being available to attend all Committee meetings if I am asked to, of maintaining a regular and direct flow of information with the Chair of the parliamentary committees, of making myself available for bilateral meetings and for direct communication with all Committee members, as well as providing prompt and clear information and following-up on the views expressed during these meetings. I fully subscribe, in this context, to the Framework Agreement's provisions asking the Commission to provide written responses to the European Parliament's resolutions within three months. I also fully support the President-elect's commitment to be particularly attentive to Parliament's request for legislative proposals according to Art. 225 TFEU.

In my current term as Vice-President responsible for inter-institutional relations and administration, I have been also in charge of the Commission's transparency initiative. In this context, I am deeply convinced about and aware of the importance of transparency towards the European Parliament. I am therefore committed to fully implement the wide-ranging provisions of the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission regarding transparency and the flow of information between the two institutions. Moreover, I remain fully committed to the broader efforts of the Commission, to which I have contributed in my current mandate, towards promoting further transparency towards the general public and ensuring the widest possible consultation as part of the policy-making process. I fully support President-elect Juncker's call for enhanced transparency in relation to contacts with stakeholders and lobbyists, as

expressed in his political guidelines. I commit to making public all the contacts and meetings I hold with professional organisations or self-employed individuals on any matter relating to EU policy making and implementation

## Questions from the Committee on Transport and Tourism

### 3. Completion of the Single European Transport Area and of the EU Satellite Navigation Systems

**What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward to complete the internal market for transport and create a genuine Single European Transport Area across all transport modes (Single European Railway Area, Single European Sky, European Maritime Space without Barriers, etc)?**

**How will you ensure that the opening of transport markets, including road cabotage, goes hand in hand with job creation, quality employment and working conditions, prevention of social dumping, high-standard services, and improved safety and competitiveness of EU transport operators (in particular SMEs)?**

**How do you propose to address the large divergences in terms of transport infrastructure across the Union and the poor connectivity of many EU areas? What measures do you envisage to stimulate investment and ensure more efficient funding of transport infrastructure, and to promote the development of Trans-European Transport Networks?**

**Can you reassure us that the Commission will thoroughly and continuously evaluate the implementation of the Connecting Europe Facility and apply the 'use it or lose it' principle according to the Regulation? What is your vision for the future of the European space policy, and the timely implementation of the deployment and exploitation phases of the EU Satellite Navigation Programmes?**

**How do you see the future role and powers of the EU transport and space agencies in implementing the Union's policies in those areas?**

The Single European Transport Area is crucial for the economy, underpinning industry's competitiveness and ensuring citizens' mobility across the continent. Following President-elect Juncker's political guidelines, completion of the internal market will therefore be one of my priorities.

If I am confirmed as Commissioner, I intend to work at three levels:

Firstly, I will ensure the proper and timely implementation of the legislative and non-legislative acts already adopted, through dialogue with national authorities, stakeholders, social partners and the public but, if necessary, also by using all the legal means at the Commission's disposal. Correct application of EU law is non-negotiable.

Secondly, I will work actively with the European Parliament and Council in order to achieve the rapid adoption of pending legislative proposals aimed at completing or adapting internal market rules, such as those contained in the 4th railway package and in the Single European Sky package, to name but two.

Thirdly, I will also consider whether further proposals are necessary to, for example, simplify the existing acquis, to address persistent technical barriers and regulatory restrictions or to support innovation where these will help to create more efficient transport and a Single European Transport Area. Whatever I will propose, it will take into account the environmental, economic and social impact of the legislative framework. These aspects are crucial for its acceptance by citizens.

I want to build together with you a new shared strategy for transport. To this end, I will look into the implementation of the 2011 Transport White Paper and reflect with you and the new College about its review.

Any new legislative proposal must be prepared on the basis of a full evaluation, in-depth consultations with stakeholders, taking due account of the experience gained in Member States and of the conclusions of solid impact assessments. In such assessments, I will pay particular attention not to put additional, unnecessary regulatory burden on national administrations, citizens and companies (notably SMEs). In this respect, if confirmed, I will work closely with my fellow Commissioners and notably the Vice-President for Better Regulation. Furthermore, I will pay specific attention to the socio-economic impact of measures, including on job creation and safety,

and to the subsidiarity aspects of whether legislation at EU level is the most effective instrument.

Market opening is not an objective in itself, but rather a means to optimise efficiency, laying the foundation for growth and job opportunities with a particular focus on quality and efficiency of transport services for the benefit of our citizens, workers and economic operators. New proposals should more systematically contain review clauses with mid-term evaluation of social impacts in order to mitigate any negative effects.

At the same time, if confirmed, I want to enhance a culture of compliance, and improve the effectiveness and consistency of social law enforcement practices in the transport sector to avoid a race-to-the-bottom, preserve services of general interest and to make sure that employees in the sector are fully aware of their rights under EU legislation, in order to prevent social dumping.

I will reinvigorate social dialogue as an effective mechanism to improve skills, qualifications and working conditions in a sector which faces an ageing workforce and difficulties in attracting young jobseekers. I want to help to make working in the transport sector more attractive, particularly to young people.

Besides well-designed internal market rules, the Single European Transport Area needs modern transport infrastructure. In this respect, the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) set out a clear basis for action. The CEF funds should be focused on strategic investments, which generate added-value for the EU economy. These investments are at the same time an important driver to boost innovation in Europe. Additional investments should focus in particular on major cross-border projects and the main bottlenecks in the TEN-T multimodal corridors, areas where Member States have been more reluctant to invest. The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) shall provide expertise and high quality programme management to infrastructure, research and innovation projects in transport, as well as energy and telecommunications. I want to put an end to the patchwork of infrastructure, with its missing links notably at borders, and to complete the pan-European network. These investments should also support intelligent traffic management systems and logistics, which allow us to make the best use of the existing infrastructure. It is now time to put in place the agreed work plans for each corridor, to finalise the projects and to allocate the funds accordingly to accelerate their realisation. It is time to deliver and bring the benefits to citizens and businesses in terms of shorter, safer, more reliable journeys.

The development and maintenance of efficient and sustainable Trans-European Transport Networks requires massive investments that cannot only be provided by public grants from European, national or local budgets. We will need to leverage private funds and build up projects to do so. Attracting the additional €300 billion investment announced by President-elect Juncker will require innovative thinking. Blending public and private financing on specific projects or for pools of projects will have to be part of the solution in order to maximise the leverage effect. The Commission will provide support to ensure that the necessary regulatory conditions are in place at national and European level to promote investment and increase absorption capacity and promote private investments by providing more legal security and an access to investors.

I also want to coordinate further with key partners, such as the European Investment Bank and national or regional development banks, which have valuable expertise in project preparation and implementation. We will also need to maximise the synergies between the Connecting Europe Facility and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), in particular the Cohesion fund, by concentrating more of these funds on the Trans-European Transport Networks, in order to accelerate the development of the integrated network. Last but not least, the Connecting Europe Facility must remain true to its principle of funding only the most mature projects that bring true European value-added. This means not only allocating funds based on a competitive process, but also reallocating them from underprepared or underperforming projects ('use it or lose it').

European space policy must also be an instrument to stimulate innovation and enable European citizens, public authorities and companies to benefit from space applications. It is of strategic importance for the European Union, Member States, citizens and businesses alike if we want to remain a key actor on the global scene. My priorities will be to enhance the competitiveness and autonomy of the Europe in the area of space, including access to space, and to continue towards the deployment and full exploitation of Galileo and COPERNICUS. With regard to the already operation European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), I intend to look into ways how to move to its next generation and its gradual geographical extension.

I would be responsible for the relations with four decentralised agencies (European Aviation Safety Agency - EASA, European Maritime Safety Agency - EMSA, European Railway Agency - ERA and the European Global Navigation Satellite System agency – GSA or GNSS agency) and two joint undertakings (Single European Sky Air Traffic Management research and Development Joint Undertaking - SESAR and Shift2Rail) with activities related to transport and space policy. These agencies play a major role for safety, the implementation of the acquis and the provision of specific services. In line with the principles agreed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the Common approach on EU decentralised agencies, I will endeavour to increase the efficiency of the agencies under my responsibilities to the benefit of a safe, secure and efficient transport system in Europe.

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

**How do you intend to improve the quality, accessibility, reliability and intermodality of transport services?**

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

**What actions do you envisage for the revitalisation of regional trans-border rail connections that have been dismantled or abandoned?**

**How will you ensure an effective protection of passenger rights in all transport modes, including the rights of persons with reduced mobility, and a harmonised and effective enforcement of the existing legislation?**

**What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of enhancing transport safety and security in the different transport modes (road, rail, waterborne and air)?**

To provide citizens with efficient, reliable, and safe transport services, the entire transport chain must become more customer-oriented and innovative. If confirmed as Commissioner I will therefore promote the further opening of passenger markets wherever there is evidence that a lack of competition keeps prices high and of poor quality, but with due regard to the social aspects, public service obligations and the need to ensure a high level of safety. I will also seek to ensure that all citizens have access to mobility, at an affordable price, with particular attention being paid to persons with reduced mobility. I consider public service obligations to be of great importance, applied in a manner that is non-discriminatory and that offers the best value for money.

If we want to overcome today's scattered mobility offer that in most regions undeniably favours using individual cars, we have to start thinking of mobility as a series of well-connected services provided through different means of transport and delivered directly to customers. Only a cross-modal approach, with the user at the centre, will allow for an optimal use of existing transport capacities and enhance customers' travel experiences. If confirmed, I will therefore work towards promoting a network approach with a full integration of schedules and ticketing.

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) are increasingly important for enhancing mobility in multimodal transport chains, making transport more sustainable and safer, improving the efficiency of logistical operations and better managing traffic to reduce congestion. I will also exploit the potential that ITS offer, notably for urban mobility, by helping to develop the framework conditions for more comprehensive multimodal travel information, planning and ticketing systems for passengers and universal real-time road traffic information systems. I intend to work very closely with stakeholders to enable ITS to be not only developed and exported but also deployed in the EU, taking into account interoperability, security of the system, data protection and privacy issues. I believe we need to create a regulatory framework and foster public acceptance.

Regarding the development of GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) applications, which already exist in particular for telecommunication, aviation and agriculture, I intend to propose a comprehensive action plan based on EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) and Galileo for all transport modes. The action plan could include regulatory or other measures to support the use of Galileo and EGNOS. I will also seek to exploit synergies between

the space part and the transport part under Horizon 2020. COPERNICUS will play a role in relation to transport safety and security, and first steps have already been taken by the European Maritime Safety Agency to integrate existing operational services with new COPERNICUS applications for enhanced maritime surveillance.

The current situation with widespread road congestion and pollution in cities is not sustainable in the long run. While having full regard to the principle of subsidiarity, I will therefore attach particular importance to supporting the capacity of local authorities to make urban mobility more sustainable, notably through the adoption of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and to create greater synergies between the various funding programmes. To increase the accessibility of urban areas, non-motorised forms of transport such as cycling and walking need further promotion. For this, road users that are most vulnerable must be better protected. The offer of mobility services, in particular public transport, must become more attractive across the EU.

As regards rail transport, we need to ensure that the relevant EU rules apply to cross-border connections as much as they do to rail services within individual Member States. Cooperation of infrastructure managers across borders will need to be promoted.

The effective enforcement of passenger rights, including for people with reduced mobility, is very important to me in all modes. I will examine if the current legislative framework needs to be clarified, especially in regard to rail transport, through interpretative guidelines or if necessary through improvement of the legislation. Effective enforcement and complaint-handling procedures are also key for me; in this context I will ensure a full implementation of waterborne- and coach-passenger rights, promote awareness of basic principles across all modes and work towards a quick adoption of the revised air passenger rights Regulation. In addition, I will consider how to better ensure the rights of passengers who combine different modes for their journey.

The EU has the safest and most secure transport system in the world. It is my firm intention to maintain this position. I will, therefore, advocate a regulatory framework based on the assessment of risk. In my view, this is particularly relevant to aviation. I will also adapt the regulatory framework to new technologies and business models, e.g. remotely piloted aircrafts. Road safety is one of the European success stories: the number of road deaths in the EU decreases every year in spite of increasing traffic volumes. Nonetheless, last year some 26,000 lives were lost on EU roads and the first figures for 2014 unfortunately show a reverse trend. It is clear that we cannot be complacent about this serious issue, and I will therefore continue to strive towards the goal of halving road fatalities by 2020. In particular I will look at the safety of infrastructure, the skills of professional drivers and promoting innovative in-vehicle safety technologies. Moreover I will focus on reducing not only fatalities, but also serious injuries which affect the lives of thousands of citizens every year.

The development of safer and more secure infrastructure and technologies will be driven by EU funded research conducted by SESAR (Single European Sky Air Traffic Management research and Development Joint Undertaking), Shift2Rail and other projects financed from Horizon 2020 and the Connecting Europe Facility, which deserve full support. Professional qualifications and training, in particular as regards seafarers and workers in the road sector, will need to be looked into as they have a major impact on the safety and security of our transport system.

I will attach great importance to international cooperation, in particular within the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) and IMO (International Maritime Organisation), as well as bi- and multilateral relations with important trade partners, and will ensure that EU interests are promoted effectively. It will be important to strike the right balance between international regulation, EU rules and national responsibilities. Commission inspections are an important instrument to safeguard aviation and maritime security and safety and I will make sure that they will be impartial, effective and cost-efficient. Finally, the European Aviation Safety Agency - EASA, the European Maritime Safety Agency – EMSA and the European Railway Agency - ERA are crucial to maintaining the safety and security of our transport system. I will therefore lend them my full support.

## **5. Sustainable transport**

**What specific initiatives will you take in order to mitigate the environmental impact of transport and ensure that all transport modes contribute to the fight against climate change, considering that greenhouse gas emissions from transport, unlike those of other sectors, have significantly increased in recent years?**



**What measures and new technologies do you envisage to minimise transport's dependency on oil and to integrate the different transport modes into a sustainable low-carbon transport system? How do you intend to ensure a wider application of the 'polluter-pays' and 'user-pays' principles, including the internalisation of external costs?**

Citizens and businesses need transport and mobility. This has a big impact on our environment. At the same time, this offers our policy area the chance to make a huge contribution to greenhouse gas reduction and for our businesses to become more efficient, more innovative and thus more sustainable (green growth). I am firmly committed to reducing this impact and to making transport more sustainable, with the 20 percent target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission by 2020 being a particularly important objective.

I believe we need a mix of instruments to address the challenges we are facing: market-based and regulatory measures, international cooperation, as well as support for innovation and new technologies.

We need to do more and better to reach the objectives for the reduction of GHG emissions and to break transport's dependency on oil. I will, therefore, support energy efficiency measures and the move towards alternative transport fuels. The Directive for the deployment of alternative fuels' infrastructure will make a major contribution to decarbonising transport and reducing emissions, if we manage to get it implemented properly. Member States must adopt their national policy frameworks in time and set themselves ambitious objectives for the deployment of such infrastructure. The Commission will cooperate and support them through guidelines, exchange of best practices and recommendations, and provide funding through the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020.

Breaking the dependence on oil by diversifying into alternative fuels offers huge opportunities to the European industry, in particular related to the development and deployment of new propulsion systems, alternative fuels and new concepts for vehicles. To reduce congestion, improve the management of traffic flows and optimize multimodal transport and logistics chains, I will push for a greater use of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), including ITS that are satellite based. I will advocate for this to be supported by a high-performing and responsive infrastructure design. With the development of multimodal corridors, the new Trans-European Transport Networks will allow enhanced use of rail and inland waterways on long distances and across borders. For air transport, I will seek to make progress on improving the operational performance at our airports and progress with the Single European Sky initiative.

International cooperation, for instance in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), is crucial in today's globalised economy if we want to make transport more sustainable while keeping it competitive. It is important to reduce GHG emissions from shipping and to make progress in setting binding international standards for the environmental performance of ships. I will promote ongoing work in ICAO to curb greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft. I believe that, whilst growth in the aviation sector is to be welcomed, given its significant contribution to the economy and greater mobility for citizens, it must be environmentally sustainable and contribute its share to the fight against climate change.

It is very important to me that charges for infrastructure best reflect the actual use and incorporate external costs such as air, noise pollution or congestion. A smarter pricing of infrastructure usage must be based on the 'polluter-pays' and 'user-pays' principles.

In road transport, the application of differentiated distance-based charges (tolls) is a fair and efficient way forward. I will examine whether initiatives in this area are necessary and useful. Using market-based instruments, which would not only send the appropriate price signals to users but also generate additional revenues to be invested in infrastructure, would help building and maintaining infrastructure. In devising such instruments, the overriding principles must be non-discrimination, proportionality and strive for interoperability. For rail infrastructure I will also continue work towards the harmonisation of noise-differentiated track access charges, as well as a strategy on reduction of railway noise. In other areas, such as in ports, I will also promote best practices in environmental charging.

Next to infrastructure charges, I also see scope to re-assess transport taxation, to rebalance it and link it more closely to environmental performance, in particular to support reductions of GHG emissions, in line with the Commission's proposal on the taxation of energy products.

I look forward to working closely with my fellow Commissioners to ensure the full contribution of transport in both the 'Energy Union' and our future climate policy; and the Digital Union— two of the ten policy priorities of the Juncker Commission.