

Press release – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Janusz Wojciechowski



Political groups' coordinators from the committee will meet shortly after the hearing to assess, within 24 hours, the performance of Commissioner-designate Wojciechowski.

Future of EU farming and farmers

During his introductory speech, Mr Wojciechowski said the EU needs a “long-term vision for European agriculture”, inspired by current EU climate and energy strategies. The first step should be a “special report” looking into the “true picture” of the current situation on the ground. He called for further support for EU farmers, better environmental protection and for animal-welfare standards to be improved.

MEPs put forward several questions on the ongoing reform of EU farm policy, on how to make sure it remains a truly common policy that delivers both for farmers and consumers and how to make it more environmentally sound. Mr Wojciechowski said he was “open to discussions” to improve legislative proposals on the reform of the EU’s farm policy already on the table.

Members also questioned the Commissioner-designate on ways to ensure that EU

farmers and consumers are better protected in free-trade talks, specifically mentioning for instance the ongoing EU-Mercosur negotiations, and asked him how foreign countries' protectionist measures should be handled. They also discussed strengthening farmers' position in the food supply chain, fairer distribution of direct payments within and among member states and measures to tackle anti-microbial resistance.

You can watch the video recording of the full hearing [here](#).

Next steps

Based on the committees' recommendations, the Conference of Presidents will decide on 17 October if Parliament has received sufficient information to declare the hearing process closed. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to elect the Commission as a whole on 23 October, in Strasbourg.

Background

The hearing with Agriculture and Rural Development Committee MEPs was chaired by Norbert Lins (EPP, DE). Members from the associated Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee also participated in the hearing.

[Article – Wednesday's commissioner hearings: Reynders, Dalli, Goulard, Ferreira and Lenarčič](#)

Didier Reynders



Helena Dalli



Sylvie Goulard



Elisa Ferreira



Janez Lenarčič



On Wednesday 2 October Didier Reynders (Belgium), Helena Dalli (Malta), Sylvie Goulard (France), Elisa Ferreira (Portugal) and Janez Lenarčič (Slovenia) must prove to MEPs that they are ready to meet all the expectations of the new European Commission.

Before the European Parliament votes the new European Commission, led by [Ursula von der Leyen](#), into office, parliamentary committees will assess the suitability of the commissioners-designate.

Each candidate commissioner is invited to a live-streamed, [three-hour hearing](#) in front of the committee or committees responsible for their proposed portfolio. The hearings take place between Monday 30 September and Tuesday 8 October.

[Learn more about the hearings process.](#)

[Updated technical documentation and parallel publication of the monthly](#)

calculation of the technical information related to the risk-free interest (RFR) term structure

The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published today [updated technical documentation of the methodology to derive EIOPA's risk-free interest rate term structures](#). The new risk-free rate methodology reflects changes in the main market data provider. It also includes updates due to the depth, liquidity and transparency assessment (DLT) of the financial market instruments used in the calculation of the term structures.

The changes included in the published technical documentation are subject to the procedure specified in Article 43 of the Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35 as amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/981, and hence have been submitted to the European Commission.

The updated technical documentation would be effective for calculations from 1 January 2020 onwards and applied for the first time in the production of the technical information for the reference date 31 January 2020. As of then, EIOPA will use Refinitiv as the main source for the RFR production process.

Furthermore, as of October 2019, EIOPA will publish monthly calculations of the technical information relating to the risk-free interest rate (RFR) term structures based on data from Refinitiv in parallel to the current official published RFR information.

This parallel publication will allow stakeholders to compare their own calculations with those conducted by EIOPA. It will be published together with the current official monthly technical information for the reference dates 30 September 2019, 31 October 2019, 30 November 2019 and 31 December 2019 and can be found [here](#).

Stakeholders are invited to submit any comment on these publications by email to marketdata@eiopa.europa.eu **at the latest by close of business on Friday, 15 January 2020**.

Background

The technical information relating to risk-free interest rate (RFR) term structures is used for the calculation of the technical provisions for (re)insurance obligations.

In line with the Solvency II Directive, EIOPA publishes the technical information relating to RFR term structures on a monthly basis via a [dedicated section](#) on EIOPA's Website. This section contains also the release calendar for 2019, the RFR Technical Documentation, the RFR software source code and Frequently Asked Questions.

With this publication, EIOPA ensures consistent calculation of technical provisions across Europe.

[Press release – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Jutta Urpilainen](#)



Political groups' coordinators from the committee will meet within 24 hours to assess the performance of Commissioner-designate Urpilainen.

EU-Africa strategy, gender in development, and EU values

During her introductory [speech](#), Jutta Urpilainen said that the 2030 agenda for sustainable development goals is “a golden opportunity for the European Union” to continue to play a leadership role in supporting partner countries

to eradicate poverty worldwide, whilst also “promoting values, including empowering women and girls as a precondition for inclusive societies”. Gender equality should be a top priority and mainstreamed in all policies and programmes, she added.

MEPs put forward several questions on the ongoing negotiations on the proposed Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, the post-Cotonou agreement with countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, calling for greater transparency to keep the European Parliament and the public informed.

Members also questioned the Commissioner-designate on how she would ensure that EU values are respected, particularly on gender equality and women’s empowerment, which are a priority in international cooperation. Later in the hearing, MEPs raised the issue of linking development to migration challenges and the Paris Agreement on climate action.

You can watch the video recording of the full hearing [here](#).

Press point

At the end of the hearing, Committee Chair [Tomas Tobé \(EPP, SE\)](#) held a press point outside the meeting room: watch it [here](#).

Next steps

Based on the committees’ recommendations, the Conference of Presidents will decide on 17 October if Parliament has received sufficient information to declare the hearing process closed. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to elect the Commission as a whole on 23 October, in Strasbourg.

[Press release – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Nicolas Schmit](#)



Political groups' coordinators from the committee will meet within 24 hours to assess the performance of Luxembourg's Commissioner-designate Schmit.

European Social Pillar of Rights and fair minimum wage

During his [introductory speech](#), Mr Schmit underlined his strong commitment to the European project and values, and to the economic and social progress of citizens. "The strength of the European model is to reconcile economic and social issues and to fully incorporate the environmental dimension."

If confirmed, Mr Schmit will pursue two main goals: Firstly, to boost employment and to promote a well-skilled workforce responsive to the digital and climate transition ahead of us. Secondly, he announced he would put social rights for all and social inclusion at the centre of his priorities.

MEPs put forward several questions on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, particularly about concrete legislative proposals and financial support to create a genuine Social Europe. Members wanted to know how to adequately protect the social rights and working conditions of digital platform workers. Members also questioned the commissioner-designate on his commitment to establish an EU Child Guarantee to fight child poverty, in particular how such a policy should be funded.

Members also asked about legislation on an EU minimum wage, in light of protecting well-established social dialogue and collective bargaining practices in some countries. Others asked about plans to support digital vocational skills and related issues on training and education. Later in the hearing, MEPs raised questions about supporting SMEs to meet today's

challenges while ensuring fair wages and decent working conditions. Furthermore, members raised issues such as posting of workers rules, access to jobs for disabled people, how to boost the social economy and increase social housing. They also raised concerns over the EU unemployment reinsurance scheme.

[You can watch the video recording of the full hearing here.](#)

Next steps

Based on the committees' recommendations, the Conference of Presidents will decide on 17 October if Parliament has received sufficient information to declare the hearing process closed. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to elect the Commission as a whole on 23 October, in Strasbourg.