

President-elect Juncker must do more than a vague commitment to ‘sustainability’

The Green 10 welcomes reports that ‘sustainability’ has been added to the portfolio of First Vice-President designate Frans Timmermans, together with oversight of climate and energy policy.

However, our organisations call on the European Parliament to obtain full clarification and clear commitments from President-elect Juncker regarding these changes. It is our firm belief that the European Parliament cannot risk being left with an empty agreement, especially in light of its approval of the heavily contested Commissioner-Designate for Climate and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete¹.

In addition, the proposed changes to Frans Timmermans’ mandate are only one part of the changes needed to the structure of the new European Commission, the mission letters, and the choice of Commissioners, as highlighted in [earlier Green 10 statements](#) and supported by Parliament’s ENVI Committee.

The Green 10 still deplores the apparent roll-back of existing EU commitments on sustainable development, resource efficiency, health, air quality, biodiversity protection and climate action which the new structure suggests. We therefore believe that guarantees must be given to the European Parliament on the range of environmental policies affected, before approval of the full college of Commissioners.

What can the European Parliament do?

Before approving the European Commission, the Green 10 urges the European Parliament to:

- 1. Ensure that meaningful changes are brought in writing to the mandate and title of Frans Timmermans to reflect his responsibility for sustainability and climate and energy policy.**
His mandate must require him to:
 - Reflect sustainability and resource efficiency in the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy led by Commissioner-designate Jyrki Katainen;
 - Ensure environmental protection in the context of sustainability as in Article 11 of the Treaty, and coordinate with all Commissioners responsible for sectoral policies to ensure they contribute to the 7th Environmental Action Programme and Biodiversity Strategy towards 2020;
 - Enforce the polluter pays principle as well as the precautionary principle as outlined in the Treaty².
- 2. Demand for clarity to be given on the role of the Vice-President designate for Energy Union and the project team, as well as how this cluster will interact with the powers on climate and energy newly given to Mr Timmermans.**

¹ More than [550.000 concerned citizens](#) have called out against Arias Canete being appointed as Commissioner-designate for Climate and Energy, and conflicts of interest regarding his family ties to oil industry were never resolved.

² Article 191(2) TFEU

3. **Revise the mandate of the Commissioner-designate for Environment, Fisheries & Marine Affairs to make it an explicit task to fully implement the 7th EAP, as asked by the ENVI Committee in its [recommendation letter](#), rather than weakening the Birds and Habitats Directives and key legislation on air quality and chemicals.**

Without changes to the mandate of the Commissioner-designate for Environment and Fisheries & Marine Affairs, little progress can be made in the field of environmental protection since his current mandate is entirely focussed on re-assessing existing and even future policies, without any reference to the implementation of the 7th EAP, a legally binding commitment that was negotiated and agreed by Commission, Member States and European Parliament.

4. **Organise a hearing of First Vice-President designate Timmermans in front of the ENVI and ITRE Committees to understand how he will make use of his newly acquired powers to ensure environmental protection requirements are integrated into all relevant Union policies and activities (as stipulated in Article 11 of the TFEU and Article 6 of the TEU), as well as tackling climate change at the highest political level. It is crucial that such a hearing still takes place before the Parliament approves the European Commission.**



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