

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

INVITED COMMITTEE:
COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD
SAFETY

HEARING OF APOSTOLOS TZITZIKOSTAS

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
(Sustainable Transport and Tourism)

MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2024

BRUSSELS

1-0002-0000

IN THE CHAIR:

ELISSAVET VOZEMBERG-VRIONIDI

Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

1-0003-0000

(The hearing opened at 18:34)

1-0004-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – Colleagues, before starting our meeting today, I would like to express our solidarity with Spain. On 29 October, Spain was hit by dramatic floods that left more than 2 000 people dead and many others injured. Our thoughts and hearts go out to all those families who have lost their loved ones. We mourn the dramatic loss of life, and we stand in sympathy with all the people of Spain that have been affected by this catastrophe.

Now, dear colleagues, we can start.

Θα μιλήσω ελληνικά. Αγαπητέ ορισθέντα Επίτροπε, αξιότιμα μέλη, θα ήθελα τώρα να καλωσορίσω σε αυτή την ακρόαση έγκρισης τον κύριο Απόστολο Τζιτζικώστα, ορισθέντα Επίτροπο για τις Βιώσιμες Μεταφορές και τον Τουρισμό. Θέλω να υπενθυμίσω ότι σύμφωνα με τον Κανονισμό του Κοινοβουλίου, κατά τη διάρκεια της συνεδρίασης αξιολόγησης που θα έχουμε αργότερα, οι συντονιστές θα πρέπει να δηλώσουν με σαφήνεια αν θεωρούν ότι ο υποψήφιος έχει τα προσόντα τόσο να είναι μέλος του Σώματος των Επιτρόπων όσο και να εκτελέσει τα συγκεκριμένα καθήκοντα που του έχουν ανατεθεί. Όπως όλοι γνωρίζετε, πριν από την ακρόαση, ο ορισθείς Επίτροπος απάντησε στις γραπτές ερωτήσεις. Οι απαντήσεις έχουν σε όλους σας διανεμηθεί, σε όλες τις γλώσσες. Θέλω να υπενθυμίσω ότι η αρμόδια για νομικά θέματα επιτροπή αξιολόγησε το ζήτημα πιθανής ή πραγματικής σύγκρουσης συμφερόντων και δεν προέβαλε καμία αντίρρηση για τη διεξαγωγή της ακρόασης.

Τώρα θα σας εξηγήσω τη δομή της ακρόασης έγκρισης. Πρώτον, ο ορισθείς Επίτροπος θα κάνει μια αρχική, εναρκτήρια δήλωση διάρκειας όχι μεγαλύτερης των δεκαπέντε λεπτών και στη συνέχεια θα έχει επίσης πέντε λεπτά στο τέλος της ακρόασης για την τελική του δήλωση. Μετά την αρχική δήλωση, θα περάσουμε στις ερωτήσεις των βουλευτών που θα οργανωθούν σε τέσσερις γύρους. Ο πρώτος γύρος θα είναι για τους συντονιστές των πολιτικών Ομάδων της επιτροπής TRAN με πέντε λεπτά για τον καθένα: ένα λεπτό για την ερώτηση του ερωτώντος, δύο λεπτά για την απάντηση από τον ορισθέντα Επίτροπο με δυνατότητα συμπληρωματικής ερώτησης εν συνεχεία από τον ίδιο βουλευτή, διάρκειας όχι μεγαλύτερης του ενός λεπτού, με ένα λεπτό για την απάντηση από τον ορισθέντα Επίτροπο. Ο δεύτερος γύρος είναι για τα μέλη της επιτροπής TRAN, 3 λεπτά ο καθένας: 1 λεπτό ο ερωτών, 2 λεπτά η απάντηση από τον ορισθέντα Επίτροπο. Ο τρίτος γύρος θα είναι για τον πρόεδρο ή τον εκπρόσωπο της επιτροπής ENVI, που είναι η προσκεκλημένη επιτροπή, με μία ερώτηση και μόνο με χρόνο ομιλίας τρία λεπτά: ένα για τον ερωτώντα, δύο για την απάντηση από τον υποψήφιο επίτροπο. Θα ακολουθήσει ένας τελικός γύρος ερωτήσεων από τους εκπροσώπους κάθε πολιτικής Ομάδας με αντίστροφη σειρά, επίσης με χρόνο ομιλίας τρία λεπτά, όπως εξηγήσαμε και παραπάνω.

Σήμερα είναι διαθέσιμη διερμηνεία σε 23 γλώσσες, επομένως όλοι οι ομιλητές μπορούν να χρησιμοποιήσουν τη γλώσσα που θέλουν. Υπενθυμίζουμε ότι, επειδή ό,τι ειπωθεί, θα ερμηνευθεί κατά λέξη, οι ομιλητές θα πρέπει να μιλούν καθαρά και όχι πολύ γρήγορα, αλλά πάντα μέσα στον χρόνο που μας έχει δοθεί. Θα ήθελα επίσης να ενημερώσω ότι η ακρόαση έγκρισης θα μεταδοθεί μέσω διαδικτύου

στον ιστότοπο του Κοινοβουλίου και ότι είναι επίσης δυνατή η πρόσβαση σε βιντεοσκοπημένη εγγραφή της ακρόασης στον ίδιο ιστότοπο, λίγες ώρες μετά την ακρόαση.

Αγαπητέ κύριε ορισθέντα Επίτροπε, αναγνωρίζουμε τις απαντήσεις σας στις οριζόντιες γραπτές ερωτήσεις και την ετοιμότητά σας να συνεργαστείτε με το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο. Αυτό είναι ιδιαίτερα σημαντικό στο πλαίσιο της αναθεώρησης της συμφωνίας-πλασίου μεταξύ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και της Επιτροπής, ιδιαίτερα όσον αφορά στη δέσμευσή σας να παρίστασθε τακτικά στις συνεδριάσεις των επιτροπών και της Ολομέλειας, να παρακολουθείτε τις νομοθετικές πρωτοβουλίες του Κοινοβουλίου και να ανταλλάσσετε εγκαίρως πληροφορίες με το Κοινοβούλιο ως συννομοθέτη και βραχίονα της αρμόδιας για τον προϋπολογισμό αρχής. Βασιζόμαστε στην πλήρη εφαρμογή αυτών των δεσμεύσεων και τονίζουμε τον ρόλο της Επιτροπής ως έντιμου διαμεσολαβητή σε όλες τις νομοθετικές διαδικασίες και τις διοργανικές διαπραγματεύσεις, διότι έτσι διασφαλίζεται η ίση μεταχείριση του Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου. Βασίζομαι επίσης στην πλήρη συνεργασία σας και την εκ των προτέρων ενημέρωση της επιτροπής μας για όλες τις επικείμενες προτάσεις με λεπτομερή αιτιολόγηση για όσες απαιτούν επείγουσα δράση. Αυτό θα διασφαλίσει τη διαφάνεια και θα επιτρέψει στο Κοινοβούλιο να ασκήσει σωστά τα δικαιώματά του. Τώρα, χωρίς άλλη καθυστέρηση, δίνω το λόγο στον ορισθέντα Επίτροπο για την αρχική τοποθέτησή του, η οποία, επισημαίνουμε, δεν θα υπερβαίνει τα 15 λεπτά. Κύριε Τζίτζικώστα, το βήμα είναι σε εσάς, έχετε τον λόγο.

1-0006-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to offer my deepest and sincere condolences to the people in Valencia. I am informed that the transport infrastructure has been heavily affected and I want you to know that the Commission stands ready to support whenever it can.

Honourable Members, it is an immense privilege to present to you today my vision for sustainable transport and tourism that shape the lives of millions of Europeans and influence our continent's connectivity, economy and environment. As regional governor, former parliamentarian and committed European, I have the utmost respect for you, the elected representatives of the people of Europe.

During my presidency at the European Committee of the Regions, I worked closely with Members of the European Parliament, bringing the voices from the regions and cities of our Union to this very House. Now, I'm truly honoured to be entrusted with the portfolio of Sustainable Transport and Tourism. This not only aligns with this committee's remit, but brings close together two sectors that can work in great synergy to overcome the similar challenges they face, from competitiveness to climate change, from the need of skilled workers to investments.

Coming from Greece, I know these challenges well and I know that both sectors can contribute to competitiveness and regional development. As President von der Leyen said, in this Parliament, Europe needs a new plan for sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. Transport and tourism are basic pillars to achieve both.

Transport is a sector that has a huge potential, with 1.4 million companies driving our economy, both SMEs and global champions. And I want to work with you in order to deliver results. Reducing bureaucratic burden, boosting investment and innovation, increasing sustainability and developing climate-friendly technologies. The European automotive sector is the best example, having huge strategic importance but facing major challenges today. It has a trade surplus of EUR 100 billion and 14 million jobs. We need concrete, transformative actions that build on the future Clean Industrial Deal. When developing the EU Industrial Action Plan for the automotive sector, I will

address the needs of the entire value chain, pulling all the levels of automotive competitiveness, from securing critical supply chains to ensuring affordability, and from infrastructure for refuelling and recharging, to fully exploiting automation and data.

My goals are clear: defend our industry and its workers; reduce dependencies; create a level playing field; and fulfil our climate objectives, not only for the automotive industry, but for all transport modes, especially maritime, where we must revive the historic European industry. Also, early in my mandate, I will present a strategy for European ports. In a volatile international environment these gateways to international trade and prosperity must keep us connected to the world, but also economically independent and safe, while ensuring the transition towards a climate-friendly industry.

Honourable Members, competitiveness must build on sustainability. Transport is the only sector whose emissions continue to rise compared to 1990. To achieve climate neutrality by 2050, we need to implement the legislation that is already adopted, notably the Fit for 55 package that you agreed on during the last legislature. You can count on me to support Member States and companies in this crucial task of implementation.

We also need to see where we can support the sector more in the transition, on road, sea and air. Road transport is the largest contributor to pollution today. We must encourage greater use of zero emissions cars and cleaner heavy-duty vehicles. One element is to accelerate emission reduction from corporate fleets, helping our cities fight against air pollution, but also creating a second hand market for consumers and making zero emission cars more affordable.

Furthermore, I will continue to promote sustainable urban mobility. Today, the average driver in Europe spends 38 hours per day stuck in city rush hour traffic, 30 hours per year. Clean public transport can help us reclaim this time while cutting emissions. And I will closely follow the application of the European Cycling Declaration for which this Parliament fought, and I congratulate you for that. That includes improving data, creating a network of national cycling points and supporting the cycling industry. We must also increase our efforts to shift freight transport to more sustainable modes, such as rail and inland waterways.

Now, achieving zero emissions will be harder for aviation and maritime, and we know this. Here we need to support the production and the affordability of sustainable fuels and electrification, where possible. To support the decarbonisation of the sector, I will come forward with a sustainable transport investment plan in 2025, and because climate change does not stop at our borders, I will work with ICAO and IMO to pursue an equally ambitious global agenda in coordination with the Member States.

To be truly competitive, to seize the opportunities offered by digitalisation, real-time data and artificial intelligence, and promote the green and digital transition, disruptive technologies are also key. Innovation has given us a proud history and we must have a proud future. I want the European Union to be the place where new ideas are developed, tested and rapidly brought to the market. This requires a supportive regulatory framework. We did this for drones and remote digital control towers for aviation. We must do it again for other cutting edge technologies such as driverless cars, urban air taxis and Hyperloop.

Honourable Members, the Draghi and Letta reports point to transport as a catalyst for our economic and social life. A primary focus will be completing the 243 000 km Trans-European Transport Network, the TEN-T, by the agreed deadlines. Rail is central to the TEN-T and one of the greenest

modes of transport available. Completing the railway network and connecting cities by high-speed rail is, for me, a top priority. Doing so will cut travel time, for example from Hamburg to Copenhagen from 4h20 to 2h30.

So next year, if confirmed as Commissioner, I will put forward a plan to connect EU capitals and large cities by high-speed rail. And I also want to improve rail connectivity overall so that no region is left behind. Citizens and businesses don't hesitate to switch to rail, including night trains, when the connections are affordable, convenient and reliable. Rail can also carry more freight, work better across borders, more in synergy with road transport.

Transport does not only connect us inside the Union, but also beyond. Extending the TEN-T network will help us integrate future EU Member States - Ukraine, Moldova, Western Balkans - into the single market, helping to protect them and us from future shocks. It also secures connectivity for peripheral Member States.

Transport plays a key role in our security architecture. A good example are the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes and the road agreement with Ukraine. And I'm convinced and committed to further work with our Ukrainian partners for the benefit of both the EU's and Ukraine's economies.

Finally, developing military mobility will also reduce our vulnerabilities. The need for dual use infrastructure has never been greater. The single market is the heart of our Union. We need to tear down national regulatory barriers where they persist. We still have fragmentation in our skies and on the ground. A train between Paris and Cologne must comply with six different signalling systems. A car rented in Venice today can only be dropped in Ljubljana, for a fee of more than EUR 1 000. Why?

It's time to make our single market really single. For rail, I will present to you in the first year of my mandate a proposal for a Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation. Improving existing obligations in this area. Passengers rights must evolve accordingly, offering protection for an entire journey, including those involving different operators.

And let me now move to the other major sector, tourism, which is a major economic activity today in Europe with a wide ranging impact on economic growth, employment and social development. Europe is the number one tourist destination. We have more than three million active micro-enterprises, many of them family-run businesses in accommodation, restaurants, passenger transport and travel agencies.

More sustainability and resilience will ensure that tourists keep coming and the sector keeps thriving. I will continue our efforts to strengthen the ecosystem's resilience while also encouraging regional and local authorities to evolve into effective destination management organisations to address imbalanced visitor flows. After consultation with all relevant stakeholders, I will present the strategy for sustainable tourism to support the industry while preserving the environment and well-being of the local communities. Also, I will cooperate with you, with the TRAN Tourism Committee.

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, je n'ai pas encore parlé de la grave pénurie de personnel qui constitue un frein à la croissance dans le secteur des transports.

Au niveau européen, nous devons mobiliser les outils à notre disposition pour former et préparer les travailleurs aux nouvelles exigences et opportunités de ces professions. Je vais organiser, dans les

premiers jours de mon mandat, un dialogue avec les jeunes. J'ai envie de comprendre leurs attentes et de savoir ce que nous pouvons faire pour rendre les métiers liés aux transports plus attractifs.

Nous pouvons déjà accomplir beaucoup, comme adopter la nouvelle législation pour le permis de conduire, soutenir la formation et la reconversion des travailleurs, ou continuer à soutenir la plateforme de l'Union européenne «Les femmes dans les transports» pour encourager les femmes, notamment les jeunes, à intégrer ces secteurs.

Je tiens à être clair: il n'y a pas de place pour l'exploitation et les abus envers les travailleurs dans l'Union européenne. Je veillerai à ce que la législation européenne soit dûment respectée et appliquée de manière uniforme.

And this brings me to another important issue: accessibility and affordability of transport. In 2022, EU households spent 12.5 % of their budget on transport. Transport needs to be affordable for everyone in every region of our Union. Notably, in rural areas, public transport is key for development and I will present a recommendation on transport poverty to ensure that the funds available for transport are spent wisely. And I want to make sure that the Social Climate Fund addresses real need so that nobody is left behind.

Finally, the issue that comes, and must come, above all others is safety. In Greece, we have suffered an unbearable tragedy – the Tempa rail accident in February 23rd should not have happened. Such an accident should never happen again anywhere in Europe. So safety will be my number one priority. And I will be strict with all Member States, because we have common rules and tools to prevent such accidents today. But they are not always respected or deployed and this is unacceptable. I will work to change this with you, by pursuing and supporting the Member States to implement all the safety measures: not only in rail, but also on our roads, where 20 000 people still lose their lives every year.

Dear Members of the European Parliament, I will not over-promise today. Credibility comes with actions, not words. But I can promise you one thing – I will do my best to meet your expectations, the expectations of the people of Europe. Thank you.

1-0009-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – Thank you very much for your introduction, Mr Tzitzicostas. We turn now to the first round of questions from our TRAN coordinators. I would kindly ask everyone to strictly respect the speaking time. We have a long list of speakers. Otherwise, I would need to switch off the microphones to allow all the speakers we have to take the floor and finish the hearing on time. I pass now the floor to our first coordinator speaker, Mr Gieseke, from the EPP.

1-0010-0000

Jens Gieseke (PPE). – Thank you Chair, and welcome, Mr Tzitzikostas.

As EPP, we would like to hear your clear commitment to our guiding principles: we must enable transport and tourism instead of limiting it. Choice and technology neutrality instead of imposing a mode or a technology. Cost efficiency instead of cost blindness. European solutions, wherever they have a clear added value, instead of national egoism, because it has always been that way.

We have no doubt that you are sharing these principles. We have no doubt that the clear majority of groups here and this group is sharing them. But transport-bashing and forbidding have been invoked in the parliamentary term.

This term we are facing anti-Europeans rejecting common-sense solutions only because they are European. We need you to be both together with a majority in this committee, pro-transport, pro-tourism and pro-European. Thank you.

1-0011-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, M Gieseke.

Let me assure you that I'm a convinced pro-European and this is why, after all, I want to be part of this college and contribute my vision.

Now, I fully share your assessment: transport and tourism are two sectors that really influence our lives, especially transport. Every family in Europe uses one mode of transport on a daily basis, and tourism brings us together.

However, transport and tourism have common challenges, have common sensitivities and above all, what to need to make sure is to make them sustainable.

So on technological neutrality, we need to use all the technologies and solutions that we have, and we need to work on using more rail and inland waterways, make transport modes cleaner. In aviation and maritime, we need to invest in sustainable fuels.

And this is why I announced earlier I would create the sustainable transport investment plan to boost their uptake.

But I would also take my efforts to ICAO and IMO, because global problems need global solutions.

And of course on road transport, let's be clear, we have CO₂ standards, we have specific goals and we have to stick to the plan. 2025: 15% reduction. 2035: 100% reduction. The inclusion, of course, of e-fuels will be ensured as part of the foreseen revision in 2026.

But we also need charging infrastructure and I will work in the remit of the TEN-T network to make sure that we have charging infrastructures, because otherwise the citizens, the travellers, will not trust electric vehicles.

When it comes to China, the heavy subsidies that they have chose as a path is not something we will accept, and this is why we import duties. But we will also support the EU manufacturing and everything that I told you now will be included in the EU industrial plan.

1-0012-0000

Jens Gieseke (PPE). – Many thanks, Commissioner-designate, for that solid answer. I'm sure my EPP colleagues will come back to what you have said with more specific questions.

Let me open the other overarching topic with a plea: please take cutting red tape seriously. Recently, a directive from DG MOVE told us that around 20 % of the EU *acquis communautaire* would be transport-related. I'm not sure this is only a good thing. Transport companies, public

administrations, simple citizens are drowning in rules and forms and guidelines. They deal with paper where it could be digital and they ask us for help.

So please tell us, how will you be cutting red tape? Not in abstract terms, but very concretely. Will it be one in, one out or one in, two out? How will you reduce the number of hours spent on compliance and legal advice? How will you bring down the number of euros lost by bureaucracy? And will you stick to the principle of 'no proposal without impact assessment'?

1-0013-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Mr Gieseke. I want you to know that I take simplification and burden reduction very seriously. The EU acquis in transport is vast. But this is a good thing if you think about it, because we rest on a solid European legal framework.

Of course, we need to cut down on obsolete requirements. Today, for example, you know that only 1 % of cross-border operations in road transport are paperless – only 1 %! Pilots and drivers today they use certificates in paper. To rent a car, you still need to go to the guichet, to get a counter approval. So this needs to stop. We need to move to new technologies that we will incorporate.

So I want to put forward an initiative to make transport paperless by 2030. In addition, I very much believe in the need to cut all the obsolete obligations that today exist. As you know, President von der Leyen has said that we have to cut 25 % of obligations, reporting obligations and 35 % for SMEs, and we will do that.

We've done that and we know how to do it. One last thing, one warning: we cannot play with safety, and this is why I will be very careful in cutting requirements concerning safety.

1-0014-0000

Johan Danielsson (S&D). – Commissioner-designate, in your written answers, you rightly emphasise the importance of working conditions with a focus on implementing and enforcing current rules. We fully support this, of course, but given the gravity of the problem in the sector, we need other initiatives as well.

Therefore, firstly, will you commit to conducting a comprehensive evaluation of working conditions across all transport modes within your first 100 days, identifying challenges and suggesting solutions to address them?

Secondly, looking specifically at aviation, can you commit to revising the Air Services Regulation to tackle the problem caused by precarious work, including bogus self-employment, abusive subcontracting, and the misuse of wet leasing?

Thirdly, in the maritime sector, will you commit to take some action to ensure all crew, regardless of nationality or residence, that work on vessels operating between European ports, also receive European wages and working conditions?

1-0015-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Mr. Danielsson. First of all, let me start by saying that transport workers are the greatest asset for us – they are our real heroes. We saw their work during the COVID pandemic, they kept the economy running, they kept our lives going.

You know very well that there are great working shortages in the transport sector, which we need to deal with, so we need to make better working conditions for them. And, indeed, we are monitoring these working conditions on a constant basis, however, I like your idea. So, yes, we will do a comprehensive evaluation, just like you proposed, on the working conditions to address possible gaps so that the profession can become more attractive, because if we want to solve the problem of shortages in the transport sector, we need to make the profession more attractive.

And of course, by saying that, we also need to make sure that we have strengthened the enforcement of the already existing rules that are sometimes unevenly enforced among Member States, and I will make sure that we have an even enforcement. And of course, I will look into extending the European Labour Authority remit into transport workers as well, I will talk about this with the Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights. We will put smarter and digital technologies to help us in this respect.

And of course, answering your question very directly: yes, I will bring early in my mandate the aviation review, the 1008, which has been pending because of COVID and Ukraine issues. And we will deal with many issues: working relations, standards and also issues like the home base and the operational base.

1-0016-0000

Johan Danielsson (S&D). – Thank you very much for the answers, firstly. Then, perhaps, looking at another mode of transport, as you know, in road transport we have had severe problems with the proper enforcement of the mobility package.

So building on your first answer, how will you ensure that Member States fulfil their obligations to conduct, for example, regular roadside checks and implement effective national control systems, which should be already with the EU requirements?

Then, secondly, after the judgment of the European Court of Justice, how do you intend to go forward concerning the 'truck return' principle and provision?

Finally, and perhaps on another note, there are, as you know, a few transport procedures stuck in Council. Do you foresee that you will take action to get movement on any of them?

1-0017-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Mr Danielsson, but in one minute I don't have the time to respond to all that. I will try, though, to say that, of course when it comes to truck returns, you know we had the decision of the Court of Justice, which we respect. I don't see any need for any new legislation at this time – after all, you know that the Commission opposed the proposal from the very beginning because it caused a lot of burden on the environment and on our roads. However, I will assess the working situation, the conditions of our workers under this new rule and, if there is any need, I will intervene to make changes. But I don't see any reason at this point.

When it comes to maritime, I want again to reassure you that I will also look at the European Labour Authority and the extension of its remits and effective enforcement. But, because it's maritime, we need to go global. So I will take it to the international level – the IMO – because we need to see passenger ferries and seafarers in the ships.

1-0018-0000

Roman Haider (PfE). – VW schließt drei Werke in Deutschland; Mercedes will alle Autohäuser verkaufen; bei BMW steht die Produktion still; Fiat schließt Werke in Polen und Italien, und auch Audi, Ford, Volvo, Peugeot, Citroën, Opel sind von Schließungen und Produktionskürzungen betroffen: Die europäische Automobilindustrie stirbt wegen des desaströsen *Green Deal*. Würden in der Kommission und in diesem Parlament Vernunft und Hausverstand regieren, dann hätte man dieses *Green-Deal*-Desaster schon längst gestoppt. Aber davon ist leider nicht auszugehen. Wenn man sich den *mission letter* durchliest, den Ihnen die Kommissionspräsidentin von der Leyen mitgegeben hat, dann muss man jegliche Hoffnung auf Vernunft und Hausverstand aufgeben.

Daher frage ich Sie angesichts der Vernichtung der Automobilindustrie, die durch die umstrittenen und größtenteils sinnlosen Maßnahmen des *Green Deal* beschleunigt wird: Welche konkreten Schritte zur Unterstützung, noch besser zur Rettung dieser Schlüsselbranche wollen Sie setzen, damit Arbeitsplätze, Innovationskraft, Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und der Wohlstand Europas auch langfristig gesichert werden?

1-0019-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Mr Haider. It's obvious that I disagree with you.

However, I would like to say that the rules are very clear, and the rules were set years ago, and so there is market clarity and certainty and stability because exactly we have these measures in place throughout these years.

And so the companies had and still have 11 years to make sure that we will get there progressively. First of all, you know that the 2025 targets are allowing hybrid vehicles, plug-in hybrids, improvement on conventional vehicles, so we are not talking about a disruption of the automotive sector here. We don't have full electrification by 2025. So we cannot slow down what the projects of the automotive industry are already in place.

What we need to do is to help the automotive sector make the transition, go to the CO₂ goals. How we will do that? By creating a market, by creating cheaper vehicles accessible to citizens, by putting the infrastructure that is needed so that citizens are confident and feel safe to take a car, to go on a trip, a long-distance trip. And this is how they will increase sales.

And don't forget that by having these targets, Europe will be able to continue to have a leading role and be a protagonist in industry in the world. Why? Because we will invest heavily on new high technologies and greening technologies. We shift the model to survive in the European Union.

1-0020-0000

Roman Haider (PfE). – In diesem Haus hat sich eine Unart entwickelt, demokratisch gewählte Vertreter rechter Parteien vom politischen Mitwirken auszugrenzen. In diesem Parlament wird zwar viel über Demokratie gesprochen, aber in der Praxis sieht das so aus, dass etwa Abgeordnete meiner Fraktion bei der Vergabe von Positionen in Ausschüssen und auch im Präsidium dieses Hauses ausgegrenzt werden, Stichwort *cordon sanitaire*. Auch die Vorsitzende unseres Ausschusses, Ihre Parteifreundin und griechische Landsmännin, die Frau Vozemberg-Vrionidi, ist durch die Anwendung genau dieses schändlichen Instruments in ihr Amt gekommen, und alle ihre Parteifreunde im Ausschuss haben bei diesem schäbigen Spiel auch mitgespielt. Jetzt eilt Ihnen der Ruf voraus, dass Sie als Gouverneur sich immer bemüht haben, ein Gleichgewicht zwischen den

politischen Kräften herzustellen, und sich nicht dazu verleiten haben lassen, so etwas wie den *cordon sanitaire* anzuwenden.

Daher meine Frage: Sind Sie bereit, unvoreingenommen mit uns, der Fraktion Patrioten für Europa, zusammenzuarbeiten, ohne den *cordon sanitaire* anzuwenden? Sie können mit einem ganz einfachen und klaren Ja oder Nein antworten, das würde mir reichen.

1-0021-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, I want to be very clear with you. I am here, and I'm ready to hear and discuss with every Member of this Parliament.

However, I will work with those who share our common European values and are willing to work with me constructively in order to forge European unity, to defend European interests and to make Europe stronger.

So this European unity will always be based on our values: European democracy, respect of the rule of law and a just a lasting peace in Ukraine, respecting its territorial integrity.

1-0022-0000

Roberts Zile (ECR). – First of all, Mr Tzitzikostas, we are united in the TRAN Committee and we wish you an increase in the hierarchy of the new Commission transport policy as such.

We can measure it also by TEN-T progress, on CORE network particularly, which requires, of course, a pretty financially rich Connecting Europe Facility 3.

Otherwise we will not take care of the high-speed trains connecting capitals, even we don't have in some capitals train at all until 2030 because this is the last call for CEF 2. It means there would be no money from CEF almost three years, instead we have a new MFF.

Would you fight for CEF very much, not to make it a refurbishment in MFF? And also the second issue related, of course, you mentioned military mobility, but this is the only one example when you said about defence challenges in a transport policy.

Would you say a bit more about it? How do you see new challenges coming from this?

1-0023-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Mr Zile. First of all, allow me to say that the completion of the TEN-T network is of utmost importance.

It was highlighted under the Draghi and Letta reports, it is something that we all understand: without the TEN-T network, there is no connection, there is no free movement, there is no single market, okay?

So I will fight for the completion of the TEN-T network, not only the core TEN-T network by 2030, but also the extended one by 2040 and the comprehensive one by 2040, in order to connect all regions and all places so no one can feel left out.

Now you know that the funds for this endeavour are huge: only for the core network we need EUR 515 billion. So of course we will fight during the negotiations on the next MFF. I mean, we will negotiate and we will try to get as much as we can for infrastructure work and of course we will

have to see how we will use national Member States' funding, how we will incorporate private-public partnerships, and of course, private investment. And we will involve banks, the EIB, the European Investment Bank, as well.

Now, in military mobility, I've already met with the Commissioner-designate for Defence. We discussed it because there are common interests in this project. Its corridors of dual use, 99 % of the times it's used for citizens but we need to be ready to have infrastructure that will allow our troops to move, heavy vehicles to move. We have to have bridges that can withstand heavy trucks and military equipment.

And also, one last thing, I will have a new military mobility action plan that I will present to you early in the mandate after cooperating with NATO.

1-0024-0000

Roberts Zile (ECR). – You mentioned also about the new strategy for European ports. I will give you example: there is a new challenge coming from the war in Ukraine because some Baltic Sea ports inside of EU, they are losing freight completely and cargoes. And Saint Petersburg for example, is growing up very quickly.

Do you see anything that could be done in this framework? Not after three or five or four years, but immediately.

And the second issue, would you agree to communicate with the Commissioner responsible for competition and state aid rules in the aviation sector? For example, airlines coming out of COVID and other crises like shortages of new Boeing aircraft and so on, some of them are losing market shares and some of them are concentrating power.

Do you see some difficulties here in aviation policy if it will continue like that with the different state aid judgements on aviation since COVID?

1-0025-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, thank you, Mr Zile.

Well, first of all, about the port strategy: as I said in my opening speech, I will present an EU port strategy, which I think is very, very important because, after the aggression of Russia on Ukraine, we know very well by now how important, also after the influence of third countries in our ports like China have created issues that we need to be very, very careful.

So I will push for an EU port strategy. The Niinistö report as well is highlighting the importance of maritime security, of transport infrastructure, military mobility, digital infrastructure as well.

So the exact scope of this EU port strategy will be, one, to obtain strategic independence from mainly third countries and also including cybersecurity threats. Resilience of transport infrastructure and connections, and also the supply chains.

I don't have time, but I'm sure we will elaborate in a little bit on the EU port strategy.

1-0026-0000

Jan-Christoph Oetjen (Renew). – Thank you Chair, Commissioner-designate, first of all, apologies for having arrived some minutes late – I had a flight. This brings me to the topic.

Colleague Danielsson already asked you about the 1008 EU Air Services Regulation, but normally we discuss about this as a package, so together with airport charges and slots, which were included in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. Do you think that those will come up? How do you see this? Do you think we need an update of the EU Aviation Strategy?

Secondly, in ReFuelEU Aviation there is a requirement for the Commission to assess possible additional measures to increase the supply of sustainable aviation fuels, notably the possibility of setting up or recognising a system of tradability of SAF, which is called a 'book and claim system'. Are you in favour of such a system? And would you see the necessity to include it in a broader liquid fuel strategy?

1-0027-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Mr Oetjen. It's a very important question indeed. We know very well that in aviation and maritime we have different goals, different ways of measuring the goals that we need to achieve and we have different fuels. So we need to indeed work very hard. This is why I will create the STIP, the Sustainable Transport Investment Plan, in order to help get investments that will heavily get involved in the creation of these alternative fuels, mainly for air and maritime.

Now, you know that the ReFuelEU Aviation gives a great level of flexibility already to the air carriers, so I don't see that we should move now into adopting a 'book and claim' system. Let's wait first, because the ReFuelEU Aviation will start the 1st of January of 2025, in two months from now. So let's see how this evolves, let's see what the trend of the economy will be concerning air transport. After we see that, if indeed there are discussions about moving to a 'book and claim' system, we can see it then. But I want to remind you that during the Commission's discussions with different stakeholders, they had different point of views on the issue because SAF certificates can be vulnerable to fraud and to double claims, so we need to be very careful. There will be a report coming soon from the Commission on the 'book and claim' system.

1-0028-0000

Jan-Christoph Oetjen (Renew). – Thank you. Chair, I will be quick on this one, it concerns air passenger rights. You know that the Commission has made several proposals for strengthening air passenger rights but Regulation 261, the core regulation, remains untouched, even though this is the regulation where we have the most complaints from passengers. How do you see the situation on 261, and do you see the need for an update of air passenger rights?

1-0029-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Mr Oetjen, thank you for your question. First of all, we need to make progress on three already existing proposals. We have two from 2023, the one on enforcement and the other on multimodal passenger rights, and we have the one from 2013 on air passenger rights. By the way, it's very important that the European Union was the first continent that brought passenger rights – so we have raised the bar very high.

What we need to do at this point is, since the 2013 remains valid, work along with the other two that we need to discuss and pass and engage, that we will facilitate a compromise for these two agreements. So I count on your support because I'm willing to bring this very soon in my mandate, and I will tell you later how I will connect the passenger rights to other initiatives I have. Thank you.

1-0030-0000

Kai Tegethoff (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Commissioner-designate. You mentioned it: high-speed rail network and attractive night-train services. We need to boost the European rail sector.

To get people on the train, it must be simple for passengers. We understand that you will propose three initiatives.

First, the single digital booking and ticketing regulation. Will it include making all ticketing data freely available in the market? Or, let me rephrase, will we get a system of a single ticket in case of bookings with several operators, or a system of multiple tickets with guaranteed passenger rides?

Second, a potential amendment to the rail passenger rights legislation. How will you ensure that passenger rights are protected for journeys involving different operators and for cross-border journeys?

Third, a multimodal digital mobility services initiative. Can you confirm that this will be a legislative and mandatory initiative?

1-0031-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Many questions I will try to answer as quickly as I can. To give you a short answer, it will be 'yes'. The exact scope, of course, will be decided with the new college, but my intention is to bring a single digital booking and ticketing regulation as soon as possible, which will benefit European citizens, and I will bring it by 2025.

Now, what is this about? This is about ending this difficulty that passengers have that they cannot book one single ticket for one connection if it's cross-regional or cross-border. So you will be able to book a ticket from one country to another, or to a third country, by train – one ticket, one click on your cell phone, just like it happens today with airplanes and air tickets.

It's unbelievable that in 2024 we don't have that.

So with this I will have also the multimodal initiative that will accompany it. The multimodal will mean that you will be able to have the single ticketing for different modes, for example using an aeroplane on one leg of your trip and a train for the second leg of your trip.

Then, along with these two initiatives, we will bring, of course, passenger rights changes because you understand that we need to protect them under these new initiatives that will come, which will create a new reality on the ground.

So we will have these new initiatives coming, and they will come quickly. They will come accompanying one and the other. We will protect the travellers for whom, by the way – and allow me to take the opportunity to say that – we need to do something else as well, which is to increase the awareness of the passengers on the existing rules.

1-0032-0000

Kai Tegethoff (Verts/ALE). – Thank you. Second, I want to stress a different topic. We need to build up the European electric car industry. Two thirds of new cars are corporate. You have announced proposals for clean corporate fleets. This has the potential to boost the demand for electric cars in the EU and, as you mentioned, also the second-hand market for electric vehicles.

Therefore, can you commit to making this initiative a legislative proposal? Furthermore, in order to meet our climate targets for the road sector, ambitious targets for the electrification of corporate fleets are essential. Can you commit to mandatory electrification targets within the Clean Corporate Fleets proposal?

1-0033-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Mr Tegethoff. I like corporate fleets as an idea, and I will support this initiative. We all know by today that more than half of the cars on our roads today are corporate.

So, if we go with corporate fleets, we have two advantages. The first one is that these cars have high mileage, so they help a lot the environment if we do it. The second, it will create a second-hand market for the citizens, therefore reducing the prices of electric vehicles.

So I'm very keen on taking on board electric vehicles. I'm very keen on taking aboard the corporate fleet. It's an issue of the college. I cannot today tell you if this will be by incentives, by taxation, but I cannot exclude legislative action.

1-0034-0000

Merja Kyllönen (The Left). – Dear Madam Chair, dear Commissioner-designate, dear colleagues, the Commissioner will be responsible for the correct application of EU law and standards across the EU. This is of utmost importance to the left group, because the correct application of EU law can save lives.

You said that safety is very important to you. Unfortunately, late or non-application of EU standards can cost lives, as we have seen from the horrifying railway accident of Tempi, in Greece. This horror could have been avoided if EU regulation had been properly applied. The lesson of this catastrophe still needs to be learned in order to avoid the same fatal mistakes.

Here again, EU law should apply and provide that the inquiry is made by a full independent body and in full transparency, which is still not the case in the whole of the EU. And that worries me a lot. I love transport safety and I hope the same heart is inside our new Commissioner-designate.

1-0035-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Ms Kyllönen, I couldn't agree more with you. And I say this because, as I stated in my opening speech, I witnessed the tragedy that we had in Greece. So safety, rest assured, will be my number one priority, exactly because I come from Greece and we suffered from this tragedy.

So the first thing I will do is engage with Member States, make sure that they understand the rules, that they implement the European rules, that they enable systems like the ERTMS with which we can avoid all the accidents that have happened these last years all across the European continent, and that they will follow strictly the guidelines and the timelines set by the Commission.

Rail safety, for me, is a top priority and I will help all the Member States, all the Member States, to take the action needed on security, on safety of the rail in order to minimise the chances of having such accidents again in the future.

1-0036-0000

Merja Kyllönen (The Left). – Chair, I go to the Baltic Sea. It is also a security issue. Operating conditions of the region are critical for the entire EU internal market and security of supply.

What actions does the Commission intend to take to ensure the security of the Baltic Sea Region, especially considering the security risks caused by the Russian shadow fleet in the Baltic Sea and increased GPS interference?

What concrete measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure the continued unity of the Baltic Sea roads, even in crisis situations?

1-0037-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Ms. Kyllönen, it's a very, very important issue the issue you are raising and I want you to know that, first of all, I fully support the sanctions against Russia and that I take the shadow fleet issue very, very seriously.

As you know, it is up to the Member States to implement all the rules and to safeguard that this is not happening I will be following very closely this matter and, of course, if I see that there is no compliance, I will act decisively against any Member State.

I want to be clear about that. Why? Because it's not only about maritime safety, but it is also about the environment. If we have an accident, we will have real issues to deal with.

So I will push to make the requirement of proof of marine insurance mandatory so that this way we can put the spotlight on suspicious vessels and I will also engage with IMO to monitor even better using digitalisation to be able to survey our waters in a better way. I will use also the European Maritime Safety Agency for that because it is of utmost importance.

1-0038-0000

Станислав Стоянов (ESN). – Уважаеми г-н кандидат-комисар, сред Вашите основни приоритети като бъдещ комисар по транспорта е и намерението Ви да представите специален план за подобряването на свързаността на европейските столици и големите градове чрез високоскоростни железопътни линии, включително и нощни влакове, както и да предложите единен Регламент за цифрово резервиране и издаване на билети за железопътен транспорт.

В тази връзка бих искал да Ви попитам как точно възнамерявате да подобрите свързаността между регионите в Европа, най-вече при тези, които продължават да страдат от слабо развита инфраструктура, която пък от своя страна води до тревожни нива на обезлюдяване и сериозни икономически различия? Предвиждате ли допълнително финансиране, по-опростени правила или нови инструменти? Каква ще бъде Вашата стратегия за насърчаване на интермодалността в тези проблемни региони?

1-0039-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Mr Stoyanov, this issue is very dear to me. After all, I am presently the governor of a big region in Greece, which is not the capital region. So I know very much how it is to have a need for connections and I worked these last 10 years in my region as a governor to make sure that we are connected, so we constructed roads and we managed to increase the flights and the connections also in maritime and in our airports.

So, indeed, I agree with you that and I'm sure you all agree that it's very important that no one is left behind. So having said that, we have the TEN-T core network, which will be concluded by 2030. And then I will start already working on the next project, the extended network, by 2040, and the comprehensive one as well later. There, we will give responses to the connections of regions.

My goal is to have an adequate connection for every region and every corner of the European Union. Of course, this will not probably happen with high-speed rail, okay? It's understandable. But I will and we will find ways to connect all these regions.

How will we do that? We will do that, of course, with CEF funding and we will also do that with Cohesion funding. I already discussed and have a clear view now of how we can see that Cohesion funding could be used for infrastructure in order to respond to that.

My goal is to have no one left out of the European project in transport and I will work very hard for that because, again, I believe that this affects our single market, our economy and the people's connectivity.

1-0040-0000

Станислав Стоянов (ESN). – Как ще гарантирате, че ще има по-малко, но по-добро законодателство в сектора? И хващам се за Вашите думи, какви стимули бихте създали за пасивни до момента страни членки да участват по-активно в плана за подобряване на свързаността?

1-0041-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Mr Stoyanov, there was a problem. I didn't hear your question. Please repeat.

1-0042-0000

Станислав Стоянов (ESN). – ... че ще има по-малко, но по-добро законодателство в сектора. И вторият ми въпрос е какви стимули бихте създали за пасивни до момента страни членки да участват по-активно, да се включат по-активно в плана за подобряване на свързаността?

1-0043-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Well, I will tell you that I will continue, of course, working with Member States on the enforcement of the fourth mobility railway package - I'm sorry, because you asked about rail, correct? - ensuring that there is enough choice and, of course, regulation of the use of railway capacity, which is another issue that we need to deal with.

As I said earlier, the Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation, revisions to the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation that we said earlier, a plan for an ambitious European high-speed rail, an action plan to boost long-distance and cross-border passenger rail and, you know, the very important issue of having harmonised systems. Today, the gauge between countries or even regions is different. So it does not allow a train to go from one country to the other. We need to do a very big plan making the gauge common for all European countries.

1-0044-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chair of the TRAN Committee. – Now we have finished the first round, and we pass directly to the second round of questions. The TRAN members can ask a question for one minute, and Mr Tzitzikostas will reply in two minutes.

There are no follow-up questions, and I have to beg you one more time to respect the speaking time, because we have a long list of speakers. I pass directly to the first speaker.

1-0045-0000

Sophia Kircher (PPE). – Thank you, Chair. Commissioner-designate, how will you promote a shift from road to rail? All of us want rail freight to double by 2050.

In your written answers, you focus on the completion of the trans-European transport network. You're completely right that if the rail infrastructure is not ready, then we will not succeed in shifting traffic to rail. Therefore, we need you to be tough on Member States to deliver their obligations.

Beyond infrastructure, various national regulations hinder rail freight transport. The harmonisation of these regulations would boost rail freight immediately. For example, introduce English as a fall-back language for train drivers. Currently, train drivers have to speak the language of every single country they are passing through. The Executive-Director of ERA, Josef Doppelbauer, has complained about the absurdity of having the following situation: cargo trains stopping at borders to switch drivers. The list could go on, and this has to be solved.

So, Commissioner-designate, when will you take action and present a proposal to address this issue?

1-0046-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Ms Kircher. We agree that we need to promote the modal shift. I think we all agree here. Of course, the sustainable smart mobility strategy is exactly one of its pillars. We have the TEN-T and the implementation of the existing rules that, of course, we are all working on.

Of course, you know that in order to promote the increase of rail use, we need, first of all, a plan on an ambitious high-speed rail network. This will facilitate citizens and freight as well, and it will be something that will increase the shift.

Second, I believe that the new Digital Ticketing Regulation that we will bring will also help the shift.

Thirdly, we need to improve the rules that you know very well on the use of railway capacity, because this is also a problem in many Member States today – and, of course, enforce existing rules, because we have rules there.

So I believe that the Combined Transport Directive, the increase in multimodal and intermodal transport are both proposals that will help us towards this direction.

Now, we do understand that there is a need for support measures that would ensure a level playing field so that no mode of transport has a better 'dealing', if you want, but that it's rather on a single level playing field. There we have the Energy Taxation Directive, that is here, and, of course, the work that I will do with ICAO and the IMO for the other two modes, to make sure that there is a level playing field.

On the language, I will tell you that we need to improve the certification of drivers, ensuring the cross-border mobility of them, and propose a revision of the current Train Drivers Directive, where we will see what is the best way to address the issue of the language.

1-0047-0000

François Kalfon (S&D). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, je vais m'exprimer en français.

La décarbonation des transports ne doit pas se faire avec la désindustrialisation: c'est un enjeu fondamental pour les travailleurs et l'emploi. Nous avons soutenu la décision de la Commission de taxer davantage les voitures chinoises. Nous soutenons aussi la révision du règlement sur le filtrage des investissements étrangers. C'est une première étape.

Votre lettre de mission comporte déjà un plan de soutien au secteur automobile et une stratégie maritime industrielle.

Concernant l'automobile, que contiendra concrètement ce plan de soutien? La dimension énergétique, principale charge pour les industriels européens, sera-t-elle présente? Car, contrairement aux idées reçues, ce ne sont pas les travailleurs qui sont la principale charge des industriels.

Concernant les véhicules électriques, soutiendrez-vous la mise en place d'un leasing social, comme nous le faisons en France?

Concernant la stratégie maritime industrielle – c'est un secteur important, 80 % du commerce extérieur transite par bateau, 70 % des marchandises viennent d'Asie –, comment comptez-vous faire pour soutenir les armateurs européens, pour faire construire et réparer les bateaux en Europe?

1-0048-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you. We need indeed to protect our industry from unfair competition and we need not to be dependent on foreign partners. You know very well that in the automotive industry, we have 14 million people working, and we cannot risk that.

Also, we have had in the past a bad example of not taking measures against third countries' influences and allowing them to infiltrate in the market with different levels of competition. I'm talking about the solar panels – we all remember what happened in Europe with the solar panels. We were a leading force and then, suddenly, with no measures, we found ourselves being left behind.

We have to learn from our mistakes – we cannot allow this to happen again. This is why it is very important that the Commission in October imposed anti-subsidy duties on electric vehicles imported by China because China is heavily subsidising their cars, so it's unequal competitiveness, which we cannot allow. So, I fully support this initiative.

When it comes to the maritime, I will tell you that indeed, maritime and shipment is a great pride for Europe for decades. I will bring a Maritime Industrial Strategy that will deal with this issue concretely on how to gain leadership in new growth segments, on how to maintain leadership, on how to use our competitive advantages in shipment and, of course, in create better conditions for the European industry and its workers.

1-0049-0000

Dariusz Joński (PPE). – Chciałbym wyrazić pełne poparcie i wsparcie dla rozwoju korytarzy transeuropejskiej sieci transportowej TEN-T, w szczególności projektu szybkiej kolei łączącej Berlin z Kijowem przez Łódź i Warszawę. Ta inicjatywa jest kluczowa, i nie tylko z uwagi na połączenie

społeczeństw i gospodarek, ale również jest niezbędna dla mobilności wojskowej, aby wspierać naszych braci i siostry na Ukrainie. I chciałbym zapytać – i czy może Pan rozwinąć ten temat – w jaki sposób wyobraża Pan sobie sfinansowanie tych korytarzy łączących właśnie zachód ze wschodem Europy?

I kolejna kwestia. W poprzedniej kadencji przyjęto wiele aktów prawnych opracowanych przez DG CLIMA, które miały ogromny wpływ na transport i mobilność. W szczególności chodzi o ETS, ETS w sektorze lotnictwa oraz normy emisji CO₂ dla samochodów. Ostatni z nich jest jednym z kluczowych czynników obecnego kryzysu w sektorze motoryzacyjnym. Jak zamierza Pan zapewnić, aby DG MOVE miało decydujący wpływ podczas rewizji i proponowania nowego prawodawstwa...

(Przewodnicząca odebrała mówcy głos)

1-0050-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Mr Joński, two very interesting questions, thank you.

When it comes to the TEN-T network, I tell you that it's a priority for the connection of the European Union with Ukraine: it's a top priority. There are already four European transport corridors at this point, including the North Sea-Baltic Corridor, of course, but we will need to work on the rail connection – and not only the rail but the connection generally – to be better.

You know that, from Berlin to Warsaw, this part is already in the core network, which is due in 2030. The Warsaw-Kyiv part is already included in the extended network of the TEN-T. That will end by 2040. And I will make sure that this is a first priority: to develop, on a timely manner, this network.

Also, I would like to inform you, but I'm sure you know already, that there is an issue with the gauge between the lines of the trains in the Ukraine side and even some countries of East in the EU with the rest of the EU. And we need to work on that a lot, it's very costly, but we need to do it because otherwise trains cannot move from one place to the other.

I will work very close with Germany, with Poland, with Ukraine, to make sure that these public works are being done. And of course, this ambitious plan for high-speed connections is going to be placed there as well.

Now, on how we will collaborate: the principle of collegiality. Mr. Joński, you know, we are Commissioners. We are sharing our missions: 'co-missioners'. So we will work together very closely. We have already discussed on these issues, and I assure you that all decisions are taken in college collectively.

1-0051-0000

Anna Maria Cisint (Pfe). – Nella legislatura passata, la Commissione europea, estendendo l'ETS al settore marittimo, ha determinato un grave svantaggio competitivo soprattutto per i porti europei di *transshipment* che si trovano nel bacino del Mediterraneo rispetto a quelli extraeuropei, come i porti del Nord Africa e della Turchia. Anche i porti del Nord Europa, per quanto in misura minore, sono stati svantaggiati rispetto ai porti britannici nel segmento *transshipment*.

Lei, signor Commissario, viene dalla Grecia e conosce questo fenomeno deleterio per i nostri porti del Mediterraneo. Le misure correttive contenute nella direttiva ETS sono insufficienti.

Quindi Le chiedo: quali sono le soluzioni che Lei ha in mente per eliminare questo svantaggio per i porti del Mediterraneo europeo? Ha parlato di una normativa oggi, mi chiedo se è prevista anche la modifica dell'ETS per il settore marittimo, visto che, per come è strutturata oggi, c'è un alto rischio di delocalizzazione del traffico, di fuga di capitali e quindi basta anche non toccare i porti europei per non pagare la tassa.

(La Presidente toglie la parola all'oratrice)

1-0052-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – I want to be very clear with you, Ms Cisint: I take carbon leakage very, very seriously because, as you all know, 70% of EU global trade happens through our ports, so we need to protect our ports.

So carbon leakage is something that we will deal with. I will cooperate also closely with the Commissioner on climate on that matter. But you should know that we are monitoring the situation, of course, and we have data – we continue to have data all the time in order to follow this situation – but if we really want to find a solution that will end this carbon leakage, we have to take global measures.

This is why I will take the issue in the IMO. I remind you that 2025 is a very important year because we will be present there as representing the European Union, we will make sure that the IMO will agree on specific targets by 2050 to decarbonise the maritime sector. So if we have global measures, then we don't have any more any problem with carbon leakage.

However, we will not stop there, because until then we need to find how we will deal with it. I remind you and, as you very well know, there is a list of ports, non-EU ports, that we do not consider to be ports that can be considered as stops between a very long trip to the EU. It is the case of Tangier, it is the case of Port Said.

So I think in the revision of this list we will need to include even more ports, especially of the part of the northern African peninsula of the South Mediterranean area.

1-0053-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi (PPE). – Mr Commissioner, I ask you one more time – and all of you – to respect the speaking time. I don't want to switch off microphones.

1-0054-0000

Kosma Złotowski (ECR). – Szanowny Panie Komisarzu! W ramach rewizji TEN-T do sieci bazowej został dołączony projekt Centralnego Portu Komunikacyjnego w Polsce. Czy zna Pan ten projekt? Na pewno zna Pan ten projekt. Czy zna Pan znaczenie, także militarne, tego projektu? Jakie będzie stanowisko Komisji wobec niego? Czy Komisja będzie sprawdzała rozwój tego projektu?

Druga rzecz to, jak wiadomo, Trybunał Europejski orzekł, że należy zrezygnować z powrotu ciężarówek raz na 3 tygodnie czy raz na 6 tygodni do kraju rejestracji. Jaki będzie ruch ze strony Komisji Europejskiej?

I w końcu, motoryzacja nie może istnieć bez usług i technologii cyfrowych, ale te usługi i technologie cyfrowe coraz bardziej skupiają się w rękach produ...

(Przewodnicząca odebrała mówcy głos)

1-0055-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Mr Złotowski, for your very good Greek. Yes, I do know the situation of the CPK Airport. First of all, let me start by saying that you know that the current airport of Warsaw is within the core network of the TEN-T. The CPK is indeed included in the extended network of the TEN-T. I think it's an important airport, not only for civil, but also for military, reasons due to its geographical position.

I will discuss with the Polish authorities on this matter because, as you know, it's the Polish authorities, the Polish Government, that will decide the timing and the way of implementing this project. But I will discuss with them, if confirmed by you, as soon as I get in office.

Of course, I will work not only with you about the CPK Airport, but also with other colleagues of the TRAN Committee in order to see if there are sensitive projects in other regions of Europe of interest, to see if we can incorporate them either in the extended or the comprehensive networks, for which we will start already working.

On truck returns, let me tell you that the decision is here now. The Commission never supported this proposal. I'm not planning to take any legislation. I will monitor if there is no problem with the working conditions. I will not do something – otherwise I will act accordingly. We need to have fair conditions for workers and the data of vehicles. If I understood well your question, I think indeed it's key for businesses. We need to implement the recently-revised directive on intelligent transport systems and allow this data to be used.

1-0056-0000

Marjan Šarec (Renew). – Thank you, you stress the importance of tourism for the economic prosperity of the European Union in your own Member State. During your tenure as governor, you mentioned that you have successfully promoted your region as a top tourism destination of Greece. You also mentioned that the EU must maintain its position as number one tourist destination in the world.

During your mandate, will you work alongside DG GROW in order to ensure that disproportionate restrictions to the provision of touristic services will be avoided, taking into consideration the relevant case law of the European Court of Justice such as the Cali Apartments Decision and EU legislation, namely the Services Directive? Thank you very much.

1-0057-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you, Prime Minister, for your question. I want to say, first of all, that I'm really honoured to be the first Commissioner explicitly for tourism in the European Union's history. I'm really looking forward to working with you, the TRAN Committee, and the task force that you have created, in order to make sure that we keep the European Union being the number one destination in the world.

Having said that, indeed, through my experience as governor the last 10 years, we have worked a lot on tourism. I believe that we need to transform the local and regional authorities in destination management organisations. In other words, not only dealing with how to promote a destination,

but also in how to manage the flows, the incoming tourism, and issues like the ones you raised earlier.

I also understand that tourism today has been funded by several different programmes and this can cause issues for the reasons you mentioned earlier. What we need to do in the new MFF is not only to ask for adequate funding for tourism, but also to make sure that we simplify the rules and the way that stakeholders, SMEs and local administrations can get a hold of the funding on tourism. So we need a more targeted budget.

We are talking about increasing the awareness of the people involved and I really believe that the link between transport and tourism is very strong and we can really promote the effort to have a sustainable tourism sector by the end of this mandate. This is why I will present the EU Sustainable Strategy for Tourism, which will be based on the EU Agenda 2030.

1-0058-0000

Vivien Costanzo (S&D). – Wir haben auch schon ganz viel gehört zum Thema TEN-V-Netz. Ich habe eine ganz praktische Frage, und zwar: In der Umsetzung gibt es ja immer noch viele Herausforderungen und Hindernisse im grenzüberschreitenden Schienenverkehr – vor allem ganz praktisch mit Blick auf die Digitale Automatische Kupplung – also DAK – oder die harmonisierte Einführung des ERTMS, des europäischen Eisenbahnverkehrsleitsystems. Und wir haben viele Regionen mit älterer Bahninfrastruktur.

Daher meine Frage: Wie wollen Sie denn mit den genannten Verzögerungen und Problemen, die es bei der Einführung von ERTMS und DAK gibt, in Regionen mit älterer Bahninfrastruktur umgehen, und sind da zum Beispiel in den nächsten fünf Jahren spezielle Fördermittel vorgesehen?

Meine zweite Frage zielt auf die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Dazu haben wir ja in den letzten Tagen schon ganz viel gehört. Im Bereich der Schiene: Wie wird die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten dazu ermutigen und eben auch motivieren, Verwaltungskosten wie Trassenpreise oder andere Gebühren zu senken, um die Kosten der Schiene zu reduzieren und sie damit attraktiver zu machen und eben auch wettbewerbsfähiger?

1-0059-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Ms Costanzo. We already have a strong framework in place to increase the shift to rail, and I will work to implement and enforce the existing rules that already are here.

However, to address this issue, these issues, we need, first of all, to ensure the proper implementation and the enforcement of the Fourth Railway Package. We need to find an agreement on the Regulation on Railway Capacity. We need to put forward a plan for an ambitious European high-speed network, as I said earlier.

We need a proposal for a single digital booking that will come early in the mandate. We need to support the rollout of DAC, of the digital automatic coupling of trains. We will revise the Train Drivers Directive and, of course, we will support the uptake of digital technologies in the sector.

When it comes to the economic aspect of your question, I will tell you that we have measures that incentivise rail indirectly – like, for example, the ETS and the Energy Taxation Directive that has been in place for some months now. This way we can create a level playing field for all transport modes.

But I will work with you as the TRAN Committee, and with the Members that are interested – because there are many Members interested in this aspect – in order to find the best ways to propose to other Commissioners as well, in the college, to make this shift a success.

1-0060-0000

Tom Berendsen (PPE). – Dear Commissioner-designate, it will be no surprise that my question is about port strategy, because we call our ports 'the gates to Europe' but we gave away the keys to China. That is why this Parliament called upon the previous Commission and the previous mandates to present the European Port Strategy – I'm very happy to see that you commit to this.

We as the EPP have a suggestion for you: don't stop at communication. We need a package of concrete legislative proposals with real impact to strengthen our ports. The FDI proposal was the first step, but we're wondering what further measures will you propose to make sure that the Member States reduce risks, and that we avoid a race to the bottom of European ports, in which in particular China benefits?

So, in short, I would like to know what can we expect from your proposal and what will it include? Thank you.

1-0061-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Mr Berendsen. Let me start first of all by congratulating you for the European Parliament resolution on January 24th on the ports. We also recognise, as I said, the Niinistö report, which underlines the importance of maritime security. If we want to be pragmatic, port security is very important for EU sovereignty. So indeed, this will be the exact scope of the port strategy that I will bring forward.

First of all, to ensure strategic independence, especially from third countries, including cyber security. Second, the overall resilience of the transport infrastructure, namely the port, the connections, the supply chains, because we need to make sure that they are resilient. Thirdly, the competitiveness of the European ports.

We also need to reflect on the energy transition. We need to include hubs of energy production in our ports – we have the means to do that with offshore wind, with hydrogen and other technologies. And of course, we will address shortages of labour and upgrading of the skills of the workers in our ports.

Now financing is indeed the key. We will involve, other than EU funds, also private and public money. This will come within 2025, so the first year of my mandate. We will have a screening mechanism as you already know, in the countries for foreign direct investments that are happening in critical sectors. I will continue working with the Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency.

1-0062-0000

Jutta Paulus (Verts/ALE). – Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you very much, Commissioner-designate, for being here with us. I'm very glad to hear that you are very motivated to fulfil what we started in the last mandate.

My first question is around the maritime issue. You said that you want to fulfil FuelEU Maritime and also ReFuelEU Aviation. These two are connected. What is your plan in order to make sure that we

have the necessary ramp-up of e-fuel production and also SAF production within the EU so that the sector will have investment clarity?

The second question, how do you envisage to put more emphasis on wind propulsion? The more modern ways of wind propulsion could save us a lot of money and fuels, and bring us forward on our climate goals.

1-0063-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, let me start first with wind propulsion, Ms Paulus, because I find it actually a very interesting technology. We already grant recognition to wind propulsion under FuelEU Maritime.

We recognise that we still have need to assess a little bit more on how this technology works and measure the actual contribution to the goals that we have.

So I count on the work of researchers, of course, for this, and in the context of the European Sustainable Shipping Forum, which you know very well, at a global level I will continue engaging with the IMO to promote wind technologies. In my opinion, they should be accounted for in the fuel standard that we are promoting within the IMO, and of course at EU level.

Coming to your other question, on fuels, we all know that the fuels for aviation, the fuels for maritime, are totally different from the situation that we face on transport on road. So we need to work a lot into incentivising investments and having investment clarity in order to have investors investing in the creation of alternative fuels, SAF and other technologies, of course, for maritime.

This is why I announced earlier today that I will create the STIP mechanism – the sustainable transport investment plan. Exactly within the scope of the STIP – and you will see the details when we discuss it when it comes – I am willing to address these issues, mainly for fuels for air transport and maritime transport.

1-0064-0000

Borja Giménez Larraz (PPE). – Señor Tzitzikostas, la aplicación de las iniciativas «FuelEU Maritime», «ReFuelEU Aviation» y del régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión está afectando de manera negativa a la competitividad de los puertos y aeropuertos europeos frente a la de países terceros. La legislación incluye cláusulas para evitar comportamientos evasivos, pero la realidad es que se están produciendo. Por ejemplo, vemos como rutas marítimas se están desviando a puertos del norte de África. Hay que actuar con urgencia o será demasiado tarde. ¿Cómo va a hacer frente a esta situación?

Como ya se ha apuntado, la movilidad militar tiene una gran relevancia. Tenemos un problema claro de infrafinanciación. El Consejo recortó más de cuatro veces el presupuesto. ¿Cómo se va a evitar que esto vuelva a ocurrir?

Y, en relación a las inundaciones causadas por la DANA en Valencia, ¿qué planes tiene la Comisión para destinar fondos europeos a la reconstrucción y mejora de las infraestructuras de transporte? ¿Cómo garantizará que esos fondos se utilizan de manera eficaz para aumentar la resiliencia frente a futuros desastres naturales?

1-0065-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you. I will try three questions in two minutes. I will start with Valencia, of course, to tell you that, as I said in my opening remarks, we will stand by Valencia and the situation that you are dealing with. The Commission as a whole is looking for funds at this moment to see how we can support Spain and Valencia.

When it comes to us and the CEF, you know very well that we have concrete projects from Valencia in the CEF and the TEN-T. I will make sure that these are going to become very flexible. I know that the timeline now cannot be followed. I know that it's very difficult to conclude the works. Many of them will have to start from zero again. So we will be very flexible with you, with the timelines and how we will move forward, and, of course, we will cooperate to see how we can construct a better in a more resilient way, and how we will find money from the new MFF to address issues.

Now, when it comes to carbon leakage, as I told you, I take it very seriously. We will have a biannual report that we will present here, in the Council and in the Parliament. We conduct background studies to make sure that we have all the data available. But, again, it's the Member States' responsibility to oversee that. If they don't do it, I will certainly consider remedies. As simple as that. Because it's an important matter.

Finally, on military mobility, 1.7 billion is not enough. This is obvious. We will have negotiations with the next MFF – I have already discussed with the Commissioner on Defence and Space and we agree on that. I will have this clear plan for military mobility for the next decade after a consult with NATO.

1-0066-0000

Έλενα Κουντουρά (The Left). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, θα μιλήσω ελληνικά. Κύριε Τζίτζικώστα, ένας από τους βασικούς στόχους που έχετε θέσει αφορά την ενίσχυση της σύνδεσης των ευρωπαϊκών πρωτευουσών μέσω σιδηροδρόμων υψηλής ταχύτητας και την ενίσχυση των σιδηροδρομικών εμπορευματικών μεταφορών. Ωστόσο, η υφιστάμενη κατάσταση του δικτύου σε αρκετά κράτη μέλη απαιτεί σημαντικές επενδύσεις σε σύγχρονες υποδομές ασφαλείας. Στην Ελλάδα, το τραγικό σιδηροδρομικό δυστύχημα στα Τέμπη αποκάλυψε σοβαρά κενά στην ασφάλεια των ελληνικών σιδηροδρόμων, τα οποία εξακολουθούν να υφίστανται. Λίγους μήνες αργότερα, ο ERA συνέταξε ένα αναλυτικό πόρισμα προς την Επιτροπή σχετικά με την εφαρμογή της ευρωπαϊκής νομοθεσίας και φέρεται να καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι υπάρχουν σημαντικές παραβάσεις της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης στην ασφάλεια των σιδηροδρόμων. Πώς σκοπεύετε να διασφαλίσετε ότι το ευρωπαϊκό σιδηροδρομικό δίκτυο θα εξοπλιστεί άμεσα με σύγχρονα συστήματα ασφαλείας και δεσμεύστε ότι, αν εκλεγείτε Επίτροπος, θα δημοσιοποιήσετε και θα υιοθετήσετε το πόρισμα του ERA; Επιπλέον, εάν επιβεβαιωθούν οι παραβάσεις, θα ασκήσετε το θεσμικό σας καθήκον, όπως απαιτεί η ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία, κινώντας τις διαδικασίες επί παραβάσει;

1-0067-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Ορισθείς Επίτροπος*. – Κυρία Κουντουρά, το τραγικό δυστύχημα στα Τέμπη δεν έπρεπε να είχε συμβεί ποτέ. 57 άνθρωποι έχασαν τη ζωή τους. Και βέβαια, για μένα το ζήτημα αυτό είναι πολύ ιδιαίτερο, γιατί μπορεί το ατύχημα να μην έγινε στην περιφέρειά μου, μπορεί να μην είχα καμία απολύτως αρμοδιότητα στη διαχείριση της τραγωδίας αυτής, ωστόσο οι περισσότεροι συμπολίτες μας που έχασαν τη ζωή τους επέστρεφαν στη Θεσσαλονίκη από τις διακοπές τους, κυρίως νέα παιδιά. Μόνο εγώ, γνωρίζω τρεις οικογένειες που έχασαν τα παιδιά τους. Η προσωπική μου γραμματέας έχασε πολύ στενή συγγενή της και έζησε αυτό το δράμα από κοντά καθημερινά. Θέλω λοιπόν, κυρία αντιπρόεδρε της επιτροπής TRAN και εκλεκτά μέλη της επιτροπής, να σας διαβεβαιώσω, όπως και όλους τους συγγενείς των θυμάτων, ότι δεν θα διστάσω ούτε μία στιγμή, αφού πρώτα ενημερωθώ, όταν αναλάβω επίσημα τα καθήκοντά μου και λάβω μια πλήρη ενημέρωση για το θέμα, δεν θα διστάσω ούτε μία στιγμή να πράξω

ακριβώς όσα προβλέπονται από την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία, την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, και δεν πρόκειται να παρεκκλίνω καθόλου από τις ενέργειες και τις διαδικασίες που προβλέπονται. Αυτό θέλω να είναι ξεκάθαρο. Προσέξτε, είπα στην αρχή στην ομιλία μου ότι η ασφάλεια είναι η κορυφαία μου προτεραιότητα, και το εννοώ. Και να μην έχετε καμία αμφιβολία ότι θα είμαι αυστηρός με όλα τα κράτη μέλη και φυσικά με την Ελλάδα, προκειμένου να υλοποιηθούν τα έργα που απαιτούνται για να αποτρέψουμε ανάλογα δυστυχήματα στο μέλλον. Ξεκάθαρες κουβέντες.

1-0068-0000

Ελισσάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυωνίδη, *Η πρόεδρος της Επιτροπής TRAN.* – Παρακαλώ, υπάρχει μια συνάδελφος, μια κυρία, που διαμοιράζει χαρτιά στη συνεδρίαση. Διακόπτετε τη συνεδρίαση μας. Παρακαλώ σταματήστε. Απαγορεύεται αυτό που κάνετε. Διακόπτετε τη συνεδρίαση.

1-0069-0000

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – I have one question. You mentioned the taxation issue, but there is also a necessity of the revision of the ...

(The Chair interrupted the hearing)

1-0070-0000

Ελισσάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυωνίδη, *Η πρόεδρος της Επιτροπής TRAN.* – Παρακαλώ να σταματήσει αυτό το οποίο γίνεται, παρακαλώ. Να σταματήσει αυτό που γίνεται. Σεβαστείτε τη συνεδρίασή μας παρακαλώ, είστε συνάδελφος. Να αποχωρήσετε από την αίθουσα. Τώρα! Δεν είναι σωστό αυτό που κάνετε. Τώρα παρακαλώ! Παρακαλώ συνοδεύστε την κυρία έξω. Παρακαλώ. Please! Είναι ντροπή αυτό που κάνετε. Ντροπή! Διακόπτετε. Παρακαλώ να περάσει η κυρία συνάδελφος έξω. Παρακαλώ. Παρακαλώ. Τι περιμένετε για να επιβάλλετε την τάξη, παρακαλώ οι υπεύθυνοι;

Mr Schieder, excuse me, you have the floor.

1-0071-0000

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – Thank you. One question is if there will be a revision of the directive on taxation of energy products, which will also give an end to the unequal tax treatment of planes and trains, and the introduction of a kerosene tax?

My second question would be if you could be, Commissioner-designate, a little bit more concrete on the corporate fleets, for example will there be the legal proposal, and will it also include cars, vans and trucks?

Then my last point is also, as we spoke very often about jobs in the transport industry and speak about cars, we should not forget that also jobs in the rail industry are very huge and important ones.

Therefore, I also want to underline how important it is to also establish a more dense network of regional transport, and especially public transport. What is your opinion on this?

1-0072-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate.* – I didn't hear the first question.

1-0073-0000

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – It was on the different taxation between planes and trains, and the kerosene tax, and things like this.

1-0074-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – And the question is what?

1-0075-0000

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – The question was whether there will be a revision of the tax directive to end this unequal taxation between trains, planes and other means of transport.

1-0076-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – On corporate fleets, as I said earlier to Mr Tegethoff, I am planning to bring this, we will discuss this initiative. It's too early to commit on which exactly form this will have, whether it's going to be through incentives, whether this will be legislative or not. You will allow me some time, if confirmed today, to see the matter and discuss with stakeholders and find the best possible solution for this initiative.

When it comes to regional connections, if I understood well – because there was a lot of noise in the room – your question is about how I will make sure that remote areas are well connected. Is that a question? Yes.

Well, as I said earlier, we will use cohesion funds. We will use funds from the TEN-T network, the extended and the comprehensive, to make sure that no place is left out. It's for me a number one priority. Of course, we need to address the unequal taxation. We have to have a level playing field. I will work with the Commissioner responsible for taxation to see what we can do in this respect.

1-0077-0000

Julien Leonardelli (Pfe). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, je souhaite vous interroger sur la volonté de la Commission européenne d'imposer aux constructeurs automobiles européens des objectifs contraignants en vue de l'interdiction de la vente des véhicules thermiques et hybrides neufs à partir de 2035. Au regard de la décision unilatérale de la Commission de ne pas appliquer la clause de revoyure, les conséquences s'annoncent funestes.

Tout d'abord, les prix inabordables des véhicules électriques priveraient nombre d'Européens de leur seul moyen de locomotion. Vous qui avez longtemps été engagé auprès des régions, vous savez que les habitants des territoires ruraux ne doivent pas être stigmatisés et relégués à des régions mortes, hors d'atteinte de l'autonomie limitée des moteurs électriques. Ensuite, se jeter, en raison d'une échéance arbitraire, dans un marché dominé par la Chine, sans aucun protectionnisme, c'est condamner le secteur automobile européen à la mort.

Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, lors des dernières élections, les peuples européens ont fait part de leur inquiétude légitime face à l'écologie punitive. Comptez-vous donc revoir l'échéance de 2035 et annuler les mesures contraignantes déjà en place sur les véhicules thermiques?

1-0078-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Mr Leonardelli, I stated very clearly earlier that we have specific rules and goals that we want and we need to obtain, and we have to stick to the plan. Otherwise, the message that the European Union will convey to our competitors, but also to our internal market, is not a message of stability and trust.

So we have these decisions that are decided now, and we need to make sure that the transition will happen the smoothest possible way.

I don't share your opinion on the fact that electric cars are not going to be a technology for everyone. We know all very well that the technology is going forward. There are many companies – I know at least two – that in 2025, next year, they will present their first cheap models, electric models, that will be easy to obtain for every family.

And at the same time, we need to use funds from the Social Environmental Fund in order to be able - after having seen the national plans, of course, of the Member States - to help address transport poverty.

So, when it comes to China, I will repeat to you that I am fully aware of the situation, I believe that the duties that we have put are in the right direction, and I will be in close collaboration with the Commissioner on Trade to see how we can, if needed, increase the protection of our automotive industry.

1-0079-0000

Carlo Ciccio (ECR). – *(inizio dell'intervento fuori microfono)* ... a Commissario per i trasporti perché vivendo in un paese del Mediterraneo, conosce i nostri problemi. L'interruzione totale o parziale dei traffici ferroviario e su gomma nel quadrante alpino e mediterraneo, cito il Frejus, il Monte Bianco, il Gottardo, ove non corretta, penalizza gravemente soprattutto l'Italia e la fluidità di tutti i traffici, dal nord al sud dell'Europa.

Lei giudica che l'Unione europea debba dotarsi di strumenti operativi e organizzativi di coordinamento più efficaci? Ad esempio una forza operativa per risolvere le frequenti e sistematiche interruzioni che causano gravi danni economici alle imprese e ritardi nello sviluppo della TEN-T e a tutte le reti logistiche di trasporto di terra e navali.

Seconda domanda: si stima che entro il 2030 saranno necessari 500 miliardi di euro di investimenti per realizzare la rete ferroviaria centrale. Sono previsti appena 20 miliardi nel 2021-2027. Per conseguire gli obiettivi dobbiamo aumentare assolutamente i bilanci del settore ferroviario, utilizzare al meglio i prestiti BEI e attrarre forti finanziamenti privati. Quali azioni intende intraprendere?

1-0080-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Let me start, Dr Ciccio, from the Alpine region, which is of utmost importance for European commerce and movement of single market. Why? Because it's in the centre of Europe and about 45 % of freight is transported through this area. So yes, indeed, it is very bad that we have the situation with a series of issues there, including the Fréjus Tunnel, that was caused by natural events. But, I have to tell you that already there is a contingency plan for transport that guides this situation and that allows Member States to inform each other when there is a problem and to deal with it together. I will make sure that when we have issues like this, the Commission will be present. Indeed, also for this issue, I will discuss and engage with the Member States to make sure we have a solution quickly and promptly.

But we understand all that we need to move, it's about time, to a climate-proof infrastructure. We saw what happened in Valencia, we see what happened in many areas of the European Union because of climate change. So we need more resilient infrastructure and we want to work in this direction.

Now, when it comes to the funding of TEN-T, yes, indeed, CEF was EUR 26 or 27 billion, of which 1.7 was for the military corridors, we need in the new MFF to together manage, so as in the

negotiation, transport gets the funds that will allow it to complete the TEN-T network. And I will give this fight with you, the members of this Committee, I need you. I need your support.

1-0081-0000

Valérie Devaux (Renew). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, dans le cadre de la transition vers la mobilité électrique, qui a ralenti en 2024, comment comptez-vous répondre aux besoins massifs de déploiement des infrastructures de recharge sur les routes européennes?

Par ailleurs, la transition vers la mobilité électrique est aussi une révolution industrielle et votre lettre de mission prévoit un plan d'action pour le secteur automobile. Dans ce contexte, comment comptez-vous accompagner les sites industriels et les travailleurs qui produisent des éléments de la chaîne de valeur du thermique voués à disparaître, comme les boîtes de vitesse?

1-0082-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Ms Devaux, I had a problem with, I didn't hear you. Can you please repeat, especially the last part?

1-0083-0000

Valérie Devaux (Renew). – La dernière partie était: «Comment comptez-vous accompagner les sites industriels et les travailleurs qui produisent des éléments de la chaîne de valeur du thermique voués à disparaître, comme les boîtes de vitesse?»

1-0084-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Well, again, the automotive sector is facing a lot of issues, and all transitions are difficult. It's very clear that we are under a transition. So as much as I said earlier that we need to stick to the plan, to the measures that we have, that we need to obtain, I will tell you that we also need to help and support our industry.

So we need to find ways, and we need to find funding, that will allow us to help the automotive sector make the transition and be able to obtain the goals that we have set. It is not an easy task, I know, but we are here.

We have the European plan, which is very important, and we believe that, together, by implementing policies supporting companies, like the one that you just described, by giving incentives or by supporting in other ways, we will be able to go through this transition smoothly, or at least the smoother way possible.

1-0085-0000

Nikolina Brnjac (PPE). – Thank you, Chair, Commissioner-designate, it is great to see tourism under a remit, and a Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism is what the EPP has been asking for, and other groups have been joining us in making this TRAN request.

So we all know that EU competences in tourism are limited and so please tell us more concretely, what will you do to support tourism in digitalisation and the sustainable transition.

And you have mentioned SMEs in tourism. How will you help SMEs in tourism go digital?

And also, how will you ensure growth, jobs and long-term opportunities together with our local communities?

And finally, the question of all questions. Will you be fighting for tourism to finally get its own dedicated budget line in the EU budget? This is a years-old request from TRAN and we count on you and your energy to finally make it come true. Thank you.

1-0086-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – I will start with the last part on budget. We know that today, for tourism, there are about EUR 15 billion that are allocated in different budget lines and different programmes. First, the funding is not enough. So we need to work on that. Second, we need to make it simpler. Why? Because today SMEs that are in tourism and also local and regional authorities that have main responsibilities on tourism have difficulties finding these funds, accessing them and using them. So my goal will be, in the next MFF, to have a simpler and a more targeted tourism budget line. Okay?

Now, when it comes to the digitalisation of the sector, we all know that without digitalisation tourism will not be able to cope with the goals for the twin transition. So, indeed, we need to help the digital market. We have a Digital Markets Act, as you know, a Digital Services Act, which also can help the SMEs, the Platform-to-Business Regulation. So we have the tools here to help SMEs cope with the digital transition.

What I believe is very important is, in order to maintain the European Union to be the leading destination in the world, we need - and I hope that there is a question maybe later coming up - we need to not only make sure that we have sustainable tourism, but that we also use all the synergies possible to make this happen in the private and the public sector.

So thank you very much for your question, because indeed digitalisation is of utmost importance for the sector's competitiveness.

1-0087-0000

Rosa Serrano Sierra (S&D). – Señor comisario propuesto, queremos que la movilidad sea un derecho y, como usted ha dicho, la movilidad sostenible debe ser accesible y asequible para todos. Debemos garantizar que toda la ciudadanía pueda adquirir vehículos de cero emisiones y acceder a un transporte público de calidad, independientemente de su origen o su situación económica.

El Fondo Social para el Clima reconoce la pobreza vinculada al transporte, pobreza que sufren en particular los ciudadanos de la Europa rural, que dependen mucho del vehículo privado por la falta de servicios públicos frecuentes y de calidad. Se ha comprometido a elaborar una recomendación para abordar la pobreza de movilidad: ¿cuándo podemos esperar dicha recomendación? También me gustaría preguntarle si prevé usted aumentar el Fondo Social para el Clima para abordar la pobreza de transporte.

Por último, me alegra escuchar que la Comisión está buscando fondos para recuperar las infraestructuras que han sido gravemente dañadas por la DANA en España. Necesitamos que el Mecanismo «Conectar Europa» tenga en cuenta el cambio climático. ¿Puede confirmar usted —y se insistirá— que el Mecanismo «Conectar Europa» tendrá en cuenta...

(la presidenta retira la palabra a la oradora)

1-0088-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Ms Serrano Sierra. I will start with Valencia again by saying that, yes, the CEF funding is already allocated for this MFF, so we

will facilitate Valencia in the timeline, and we will give them flexibility in order to address this difficult situation that the infrastructure is facing now in Valencia. At the same time, the Commission is trying to find, currently, funds to help Valencia and Spain cope with this tragedy.

I'm going to transport poverty. Transport poverty is a very important issue. We know by today that 6 % of citizens cannot afford to buy a car. We also know that transport costs are about 12.5 % for each household in the European Union. So we need to address transport poverty, because it will help us make the shift and get to our goals of CO₂ reduction.

The most useful tool to address transport poverty is indeed, as I said earlier, the Social Climate Fund. This is a fund, EUR 85 billion, of which EUR 65 billion are going to be European money. The Member States are going to present us their national plans, and I will make sure that, in these national plans, transport is taken under serious consideration, because with the funding from the Social Climate Fund, we cannot only address transport poverty, but we can also help urban mobility and support the transition to new technologies. So I will bring a recommendation early in my mandate on addressing transport poverty.

1-0089-0000

Nina Carberry (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, with the UK now positioned as a third country between Ireland and the EU, securing Ireland's full integration with mainland Europe is essential.

What concrete actions will you take to ensure Ireland's resilience, growth and sustainability are protected and strengthened amid these challenges?

And how will you address potential efforts by the UK to undercut EU standards on environmental, labour and competition issues for our ports and airports?

And also, which specific pieces of EU transport legislation will you prioritise with the UK to uphold a fair playing field for our industries?

And finally, can you assure us that you will work to address ongoing and future challenges when it comes to cross-border transport between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland? Thank you.

1-0090-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate.* – Thank you very much, Miss Carberry, I have to tell you that this issue is of great importance to me because indeed, Ireland's connectivity post-Brexit is of utmost importance. It's not a country that can be left out.

So indeed, England is part of the TEN-T network, as you know, of two major corridors: the Atlantic Corridor and the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean Corridor. But also these corridors not only help connectivity, but they help also trade, especially after Brexit.

Now, Ireland has several ports as well that are part of the TEN-T network: Dublin, Cork, Shannon Foynes. These ports are indeed crucial for Ireland, but also for the European Union's trade, and of course for the transport of goods and citizens.

The EU has already strengthened Ireland's connectivity, as you well know, supporting this infrastructure through the CEF, the Connecting Europe Facility. And I will continue, if I receive your trust tonight as Commissioner, I will continue to support with investments this strengthening the trade routes and the seamless transport of Ireland to the EU.

In relation to the UK, one last word: in my opinion, the full, faithful and timely implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement needs to be happening. It's key, in my opinion.

1-0091-0000

Luis-Vicențiu Lazarus (NI). – Doamnă președintă, domnule comisar desemnat, două întrebări:

Cum credeți că o țară ca România, care nu are niciun fel de infrastructură, pentru că am avut un președinte care a spus de-a lungul timpului că România nu are nevoie de autostrăzi, motiv pentru care am rămas fără autostrăzi și iată că nici astăzi nu avem una sau nu are infrastructură de cale ferată rapidă, ar putea să se integreze în cele două coridoare pe care le-ați menționat? și.

Practic, am observat că în această comisie nu prea se discută despre turism. Poate știți sau poate nu știți că, de pildă, unele agenții de turism care în acest moment se află în Ucraina, Moldova și Turcia, unele dintre ele chiar rusești, au pus în pericol de faliment agențiile de turism din România. Dacă puteți să răspundeți ...

(Președinta a retras cuvântul vorbitorului)

1-0092-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Yeah, I didn't quite get the last part because the microphone was not working.

I will tell you, I will start with tourism to tell you that I consider tourism to have an equal importance with transport. And after all, transport and tourism are interconnected, so we will talk about tourism these five years and we will talk a lot because we have a lot of things to do in order to make sure that we have a sustainable and resilient tourism model.

Now, when it comes to the TEN-T importance in Romania, I will tell you that, as you know, my predecessor created a taskforce to oversee the issues of infrastructure in Romania, especially the ones funded by CEF and the European Union.

So I will tell you that this task force for Romania will continue. I am planning to keep this task force, which has been, I understand, very helpful to the authorities of Romania, and we will push for timely implementation.

Of course, we will give our guiding, we will provide Romania with technical assistance whenever it's needed. And a similar instrument could be potentially used in the context of other Member States, because this model of this task force has been very helpful to Romania.

So please rest assured that I am here knowing, of course, that the EU budget is not enough, and we will need to involve the EIB as well.

But rest assured that I'm here knowing that Romania needs our help and support.

1-0093-0000

Philippe Olivier (Pfe). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, je voudrais mettre l'accent sur ce qui m'apparaît être un retard d'action de nos institutions pour les ports et les voies maritimes. Je me félicite que vous annonciez en faire une priorité de votre mandat. Au Havre, sur 6 000 conteneurs, seuls 5 sont contrôlés. Nombre de ports européens sont tombés aux mains

des mafias et un rapport d'Europol s'est alerté de cet état de fait, mais cela n'a donné lieu à aucune initiative lors du dernier mandat.

Sur les voies maritimes, l'Union européenne semble inerte, au moment où la Chine déploie avec beaucoup d'énergie les routes de la soie. Nous faisons la proposition d'un port en eaux profondes à Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, île française au large du Canada, pour mieux maîtriser les flux maritimes entre l'Europe et le nord-est américain.

Que comptez-vous faire pour la sécurisation des ports contre les mafias et pour le développement de voies maritimes maîtrisées?

1-0094-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, Mr Olivier, you know very well that when it comes to issues of maintaining security in ports, it is the Member States that are responsible for that. The European Union cannot deal with protecting our ports from Mafia gangs.

However, I will be here to monitor the situation and make sure that we include, in our port strategy, issues concerning the safety and security of our ports, because indeed, as I said earlier, European ports are trading 75 % of the whole EU trade. So it's very important not only to have good connectivity, but at the same time to have secure and safe places for our workers and the people that are involved in this chain.

1-0095-0000

Andrey Novakov (PPE). – Thank you Chair, Mr Tzitzikostas, it's not me, it's the European Transport Committee, it's the European transport industry who is asking that question. When you become a Commissioner of Transport, what are you going to do to address the issue of the shortage of drivers, how are you going to motivate young people or non-qualified people to choose that profession and to become professional truck drivers?

And now it's me who is asking: what are you going to do to tackle the issue of the long waiting times at the borders inside Schengen and outside Schengen, which is one of the main reasons that makes people not choose that profession. Spending precious family time on the borders, waiting for no purpose. So those are my two questions. Thank you so much.

1-0096-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Mr Novakov, let me start with the worker shortage that indeed affects all transport modes, especially our truck drivers.

There is a study that says that we are missing 500 000 truck drivers today in Europe. So, indeed, we need to work on several fronts: do more to improve working conditions; address the current uneven enforcement between Member States, and this is something I will look into it very carefully; we need to create safe and secure parking spaces because, as you know in the TEN-T network, in the regulation, there has to be one secure parking area every 150 km that will be safe for the drivers to spend the night. This is not the case. We need to push Member States to continue this work; we will push for the accompanying driving scheme that's proposed as part of the review of the Driving Licence Directive, which is very important also; rules for cross-border train drivers; upskilling of the workers in the sector.

We need to make the profession more attractive. Only 22 % of the workers in the transport sector are women and only 12 % are younger than 30. This needs to change. So coming to the Schengen,

of course we need to put digitalisation at the checking points because that's one of the reasons I want to have and I will bring this initiative for paperless transport by 2030.

But we also need to see, if you allow me to say, the issue of Schengen for Romania and Bulgaria. It's high time, in my opinion, because Bulgaria and Romania have met the criteria of Schengen. And now I support the idea that we move to the next step. This will strengthen, after all, the unity of the European Union. Thank you.

1-0097-0000

Daniel Attard (S&D). – Thank you, Madam Chair. Commissioner-designate, a sustainable tourism strategy is welcome and much-needed. But this requires funding and a clear action plan. Would you consider setting up a European Tourism Union, similar to the Health Union, to pool resources, address shared challenges and keep Europe as the world's top destination?

Second question: tourism has bounced back post-COVID, but also has mass tourism during the peak season. With last year's Palma Declaration in mind, how would you guide Europe from mass tourism to a socially sustainable model?

Finally, I welcome your commitment to increase and simplify funding for tourism in the new MFF, but this only starts in 2027. So how would you secure structured funding for tourism over the next three years?

1-0098-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Mr Attard. Indeed, I will tell you that I don't believe that today there is a need for the creation of a separate agency. We don't think there is a need today for such an agency – as we said earlier, we don't want to create more and more burden. I believe that there are more urgent issues that we need to prioritise, like funding, as you correctly said.

There are funds available now within the current MFF, but of course it's not enough. We need not only to have secured adequate funding for tourism in the new MFF that is coming, but we also need to see how we will collaborate with private investments and, of course, with the support other instruments, in order to make sure that we have sustainable tourism.

Because today, indeed, as you rightfully said, there is sometimes an uneven balance and an unbalanced tourism in some areas. Just think that only four regions in Europe received about 12 % of the incoming tourism flows this summer. So this shows us that we need to do several things that will help towards addressing uneven tourism.

What are these? The DMOs, the creation of destination management organisations within regions and cities. We will help them. We will facilitate them. It's not only about marketing the product but also managing the destination.

Second, we need to find and showcase alternative tourism areas that support, for example, ecotourism and alternative destinations for tourism. And, of course, we need to make sure that when tourism income arrives in a society, it is well distributed to all stakeholders and that the tourism does not create problems of sustainability and of resilience in the communities of the destination. I don't have time, but we will come back, I'm sure, to this later.

1-0099-0000

Virginijus Sinkevičius (Verts/ALE). – First of all, thank you for your answers so far. I heard your answer on corporate fleets, but really, for our group, this is a critical question.

As a former Commissioner, I can tell you that, of course, the most effective tool that we have is legislation. But taxation is not an answer, because I can tell you that very quickly you will have Member States on your back reminding you of subsidiarity, so we really need to see what are the tools at your disposal.

I would really want to hear from you your take on how we can ensure that we, first of all, help our automotive industry, who are crying out for demand, how we ensure that there is available clean fleet in the second-hand market, and most importantly, that we end up by reaching our Green Deal goals? Thank you very much.

1-0100-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Mr Sinkevičius, it's an honour to have the youngest Commissioner of the previous college with us and with great work in the college.

As you know, having worked these past five years as Commissioner in the college, you know very well that decisions are made in a collegiality way. So it's an issue that we will need to discuss with two or three other Commissioners that have relevant issues for the matter of corporate fleets. What I told you today is that I like the idea, a lot.

I remind everyone that corporate fleets are about 60 % of the total vehicles today in our road. So by adopting the Greening Corporate Fleets Initiative, we will have a quick move to electric vehicles. And it's good because, again, it is cars with high mileage and it is cars that create a second-hand market, which today is one of the problems that people don't choose electric cars, bringing prices down. In this respect, I will tell you that I believe that we certainly need to give incentives, and I cannot exclude that we will see legislation on that matter as well.

I will come back to you if confirmed today after some period of time when I will be ready, having discussed with my fellow Commissioners on more specific answers to how we can make corporate fleet go ahead. But we will.

1-0101-0000

Maciej Wąsik (ECR). – Chciałbym się Pana zapytać, jak Pan się zapatruje na korytarz transportowy Morze Bałtyckie – Morze Czarne – Morze Egejskie. Czy przewiduje Pan jakieś specjalne mechanizmy finansowania tego przedsięwzięcia, w szczególności oczywiście infrastruktury kolejowej? Jak Pan patrzy na możliwość wsparcia projektu, jakim jest Rail Baltica, czyli transeuropejskiego korytarza kolejowego Warszawa – Kowno – Ryga – Tallin – Helsinki?

Te oba projekty mają ogromne znaczenie nie tylko gospodarcze, ale także są ważne z punktu widzenia polityki bezpieczeństwa. Myślę, że Pan jako Grek powinien na te szlaki północ-południe patrzeć przychylnym okiem.

I chciałbym jeszcze zapytać o ewentualną rewizję pakietu mobilności. Czy mógłby Pan zagwarantować, że przyjrzy się Pan przepisom, wobec których jednak branża transportowa mocno protestuje?

1-0102-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – I didn't quite get the last part of your question. However, I will tell you that in the revised TEN-T Regulation, which has just entered into force, it improves significantly the connectivity with Poland, for example.

Today there are three corridors that are relevant to Poland. First is the Baltic Sea-Adriatic, the second one is the North Sea-Baltic and the third one is the Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Aegean Sea corridor.

So all these corridors are very important, especially the BBA, this new corridor is an eastern border for the European Union, and you understand how important that is, not only for the functioning of the single market, but also for military purposes.

So it is a corridor that helps the military mobility and that I am keen in continuing the collaboration that we have with Poland and the other countries involved in order to make sure that these projects of great significance are really functioning correctly and timely.

I'm not sure I understood the second part of your question.

1-0103-0000

Maciej Wąsik (ECR). – Chodziło o pakiet...

1-0104-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – You cannot reply. Sorry, you cannot.

1-0105-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Just to clarify the second question, no? So we will talk later about it.

1-0106-0000

Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez (Renew). – Ha mencionado cómo va a trabajar usted para completar la RTE-T en los plazos que ya han sido aprobados, pero es que lo que sabemos es que hay proyectos que no se van a cumplir ya en plazo. Anunciaba también un plan ambicioso para conectar ciudades y capitales europeas con la alta velocidad, y la pregunta es qué va a hacer para exigir que los Estados miembros cumplan con esas inversiones que están pendientes para finalizar la red transeuropea de transporte, que incluye ya compromisos previos con la alta velocidad y que se hace, además, con criterios claros de conectividad y de vertebración territorial.

Me gustaría saber también qué va a hacer para que no se generen desequilibrios entre el Arco Mediterráneo y el Arco Atlántico en lo que son infraestructuras críticas clave: puertos, aeropuertos y redes ferroviarias. Quisiera saber también cómo puede trabajar la Comisión para que las penalizaciones por contaminación de transportes no castiguen a las regiones ultraperiféricas e insulares.

1-0107-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Let me be clear, Ms Agirregoitia Martínez, there cannot be uneven, you know, dealing with issues in the European Union. We have to evenly deal with everything in the European Union, among the 27 Member States. That's a very clear message to all.

And another clear message is that I am willing to work a lot on this project, on the fast connections with trains. And I don't think we need to pressure anyone, because Member States will be on board in this project.

The data that we have from the liberalisation of trains, for example, that started in 2020, show us that we have more routes, faster routes, cheaper tickets, better connectivity. For example, in Spain and Italy, the prices decreased by around 30%. The increased modal share and passengers increased frequency in France, for example, between 50% and 100%.

So what I'm trying to tell you is that I don't think we need to impose it to Member States: they understand the benefits of high railway connectivity in Europe, and so we will give them technical assistance, we will give them all the tools and I am sure that we will start. It's already happening in Spain, it's already happening in France, there are already examples of a successful high-speed rail connection, which will help us also, by the way, attain the goals that we have on CO₂ reduction.

1-0108-0000

Siegbert Frank Droese (ESN). – Frau Vorsitzende, Herr Kommissarsanwärter! Im Rahmen des sogenannten EU-Green-Deals, auch im Verkehrssektor, sollen Maßnahmen der Dekarbonisierung umgesetzt werden, die oft mit hohen Kosten verbunden sind. Wie wollen Sie sicherstellen, dass diese Maßnahmen nicht auch in Zukunft zu finanziellen Belastungen der Bürger in den Mitgliedstaaten werden, insbesondere in Ländern mit sehr geringem Durchschnittseinkommen?

Dem zweiten Teil meiner Frage möchte ich voranstellen, dass Sie Humor bewiesen haben: Sie sagten in Ihren Einführungsworten, dass Sie einen Secondhandmarkt für E-Mobilität etablieren wollen. Ich weiß nicht, wann Sie das letzte Mal bei einem Autohändler waren. Es gibt aktuell in meinem Mitgliedsland nicht mal einen ersten Markt für Elektromobilität – in Deutschland. Da würde mich mal interessieren, wie Sie das gestalten wollen. Es ist ja klar, dass bei gebrauchten Autos oft die Batterie das Problem ist. Das überzeugt mich nicht, was Sie gesagt haben. Wie gesagt, ich habe es sehr, sehr köstlich aufgenommen. Das würde mich interessieren.

1-0109-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Well, I don't share the same opinion with you. Indeed, the electric car market is struggling at this point, but we need to see how we will find ways to make the electric industry, the automotive industry basically, to make the transition, as I told you.

So we are talking here about a very big industry that has a EUR 100 billion trade surplus and 14 million jobs in the European Union. So we need to make this work. How will we make this work? The clean industrial deal that is coming is going to give a lot of answers to that within the green industrial deal we will have a stable framework for investments that will help make the shift.

At the same time, we need to see the whole value chain. It's not only the cars, it's for example the batteries as well, and the charging infrastructure. How are you expecting, how are we expecting to have electric cars on the road when they are not cheap, when there is no infrastructure adequate for them to be recharged?

So I will work a lot with the Member States to make sure that there is adequate infrastructure, electric vehicle infrastructure in the TEN-T network – number one.

Number two, we need to find ways like corporate fleets and other incentives to minimise the costs of the car in order to make it easier for a family to obtain one. And, of course, these issues will be

also in the industrial action plan for the automotive sector that I will present early in my mandate. We need to boost both the manufacturers' and the consumers' confidence if we want to succeed. And, of course, we need, as I said, to accelerate and give incentives to accelerate the infrastructure and the automation and connectivity.

1-0110-0000

Tomas Tobé (PPE). – Thank you, Chair, Commissioner-designate, our truckers in Europe need a safe place to sleep, to take a shower and also they need, I would say, basic comfort while on the road.

At the same time, we also need to ensure cargo safety on our roads. In Germany, for example, about 26 000 cargo thefts are reported every year and the TEN-T Regulation is clear. Member States need to build safe and secure parking areas for truck drivers along the network, but I would argue that this is going more than slow.

So, Commissioner-designate, how do you plan to make sure that Member States deliver so that these parking areas are finally built? Thank you.

1-0111-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, let me tell you, Mr Tobé, that the issue that you are raising is very serious because indeed, today, the lack of parking spaces for truck drivers is a major issue for the shortage of truck drivers in the EU.

We need today 400 000 parking spaces, safe parking spaces, 400 000. And we have about 10 000. Only 10 000. So the first thing I will do is push the Governments, push the Member States to start implementing this because it's a regulation.

Every 150 km there needs to be a safe parking space, parking area for our working people in the trucks. And this is not only about issues of safety that you mentioned correctly, but it's also about receiving the minimum level of services for the people that are on the road all the time and sanitary facilities, food, beverages and so on. And of course, being secure. How can we attract women in the transport sector if they cannot even feel safe when they stop at the parking?

Now, of course, we need to work closely with our social partners as well to make sure that everything is taken on board on what their concerns are. This goal of creating the safe parking areas is, the deadline is 2040 and I will make sure that we will even get there earlier because we need to. I will present in the first half of 2025 a report to the Parliament, the Council, on the availability of secure parking spaces.

1-0112-0000

Έλενα Κουντουρά (The Left). – Κύριε Τζίτζικώστα, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση είναι παγκοσμίως ο κορυφαίος τουριστικός προορισμός, με τον τουριστικό τομέα να συνεισφέρει το 10% του ΑΕΠ, ενώ απασχολεί άμεσα ή έμμεσα περισσότερους από 27 εκατομμύρια ανθρώπους. Για να μπορέσει όμως ο ευρωπαϊκός τουριστικός τομέας να συνεχίσει να πρωταγωνιστεί αλλά και να καταστεί ανταγωνιστικός, βιώσιμος και να θωρακιστεί καλύτερα για τις προκλήσεις του μέλλοντος, το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο έχει δουλέψει πολύ σκληρά και σε όλα του τα ψηφίσματα έχει υποστηρίξει την ανάγκη για ενίσχυση της ανθεκτικότητας και της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης του κλάδου, μέσω της θέσπισης, πρώτον, μιας ξεχωριστής γραμμής προϋπολογισμού για τον τουρισμό, ενός Ευρωπαϊκού Οργανισμού Τουρισμού, ενός ευρωπαϊκού μηχανισμού διαχείρισης κρίσεων και μιας φιλόδοξης στρατηγικής για ένα βιώσιμο και ανθεκτικό τουρισμό. Μπορείτε λοιπόν να δεσμευτείτε ότι εφόσον εκλεγείτε Επίτροπος, θα θέσετε ως προτεραιότητα τη δημιουργία μιας νέας στρατηγικής; Θα υποστηρίξετε τη δημιουργία ενός Ευρωπαϊκού Οργανισμού

Τουρισμού και ενός ευρωπαϊκού μηχανισμού διαχείρισης κρίσεων; Θα συμβάλετε στην καθιέρωση μιας αυτόνομης γραμμής προϋπολογισμού για τον τουριστικό τομέα;

1-0113-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Ορισθείς Επίτροπος. – Κυρία Κουντουρά, σας ευχαριστώ για την ερώτηση. Άλλωστε, γνωρίζομαστε καλά από τον καιρό που, ως Περιφερειάρχης, συνεργαζόμασταν, την περίοδο που ήσασταν υπουργός Τουρισμού στην Ελλάδα και νομίζω ότι είδατε από πρώτο χέρι τη σημαντική δουλειά που κάναμε στην Κεντρική Μακεδονία για να αναβαθμίσουμε το τουριστικό μας προϊόν, αλλά και να διασφαλίσουμε, πράγματι, ότι ο τουρισμός αυτός είναι ανθεκτικός και βιώσιμος. Και δουλέψαμε πολύ για αυτό. Πώς μπορούμε αυτό να το πετύχουμε; Αυτό μπορούμε να το πετύχουμε, πρώτα απ' όλα, αντιλαμβανόμενοι ότι θα πρέπει να σεβαστούμε το περιβάλλον, θα πρέπει να σεβαστούμε την πολιτιστική ταυτότητα κάθε περιοχής, αλλά, φυσικά, να σεβαστούμε και την ίδια την περιοχή, τον ίδιο τον προορισμό. Εκεί, λοιπόν, θεωρώ ότι πρέπει να δουλέψουμε με τις περιφέρειες, με τους δήμους, με τα υπουργεία Τουρισμού σε όλη την Ευρώπη, προκειμένου να πετύχουμε το σωστό ισοζύγιο.

Σε κάθε περίπτωση, θα σας πω ότι τα 15 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ, τα οποία βρίσκονται στον ευρωπαϊκό προϋπολογισμό για τον τουρισμό, βρίσκονται σε διαφορετικούς φακέλους, βρίσκονται σε διαφορετικά προγράμματα και πολλές φορές καθιστούν ιδιαίτερα δύσκολη την προσέγγιση τους από εταιρείες του τουρισμού, από περιφέρειες ή από άλλους ανθρώπους που εμπλέκονται με τον τουρισμό. Αυτό που θέλω σε πρώτη φάση να κάνω, εκτός από το ότι πρέπει να διεκδικήσουμε περισσότερα χρήματα για τον τουρισμό, είναι επίσης να απλουστεύσουμε τη διαδικασία με την οποία θα μπορούν οι άνθρωποι από τα 27 κράτη μέλη και οι εταιρείες να προσεγγίσουν τους πόρους. Άρα, το πρώτο που θα κάνω είναι να διαβουλευτώ με όλους τους ανθρώπους που εμπλέκονται στην τουριστική οικονομία της Ευρώπης και το δεύτερο που θα κάνω είναι ότι θα φέρω μια ολοκληρωμένη στρατηγική για τον βιώσιμο τουρισμό, στο οποίο θέλω τη συνεργασία σας και τη δική σας και όλης της task force της επιτροπής TRAN του Κοινοβουλίου για να μπορέσουμε να προχωρήσουμε μπροστά με αυτούς ακριβώς τους στόχους.

1-0114-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chair of the TRAN Committee. – We have finished the second round. We arrive now at the third round. As you well know, we have the ...

(in response to remarks from the floor)

You cannot. You don't have the floor. You don't have the floor, sir. Please do not interrupt the meeting. Please take your seat. You interrupt the meeting. Please. I don't want to. Please. Respect the meeting, sir!

Order!

You should respect the meeting. You are a member of the Parliament. Shame on you! You should respect the meeting. Please, why don't you hurry up, please?

As you know, we have the ENVI Committee as our invited committee. So I will give the floor directly to the Vice-Chair of the ENVI Committee, Ms Esther García, for one minute, for her question to the Commissioner-designate.

1-0115-0000

Esther Herranz García, vicepresidenta de la Comisión ENVI. – En nombre de la Comisión de Medio Ambiente, Salud Pública y Seguridad Alimentaria, le hago esta pregunta al señor comisario propuesto: en su respuesta a la pregunta escrita a la Comisión ENVI, señaló usted que cooperaría

con el comisario de Clima, Cero Emisiones Netas y Crecimiento Limpio para asegurar que la Unión representa un frente unificado y que liderará los esfuerzos de reducción de emisiones globales de gases de efecto invernadero, principalmente en los sectores marítimo y de aviación. ¿Podría detallar cómo piensa cooperar con el comisario de Clima, Cero Emisiones Netas y Crecimiento Limpio con respecto a la Organización de Aviación Civil Internacional y la Organización Marítima Internacional, y así incrementar el liderazgo de la Unión Europea en la reducción global de emisiones de CO₂ en ambos sectores?

1-0116-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much, Ms Herranz García, indeed, I will have a very close cooperation with the ICAO and the IMO. Global problems need global solutions, so we have to take these issues to IMO and ICAO.

And I want to repeat something: this year, 2025, is a very important year for the decisions both in ICAO and IMO in order to have clear targets by 2050. I will be there, we will be there, the European Union will be there to make sure that we obtain the goals that we need. We already have good results from the previous meetings of IMO, but this year, 2025, is crucial for the decisions both in IMO and ICAO.

So, the IMO plans to adopt global decarbonisation measures in 2025. This should include the fuel standard and the greenhouse gas pricing mechanism. And the ICAO, you know that they adopted a global framework on sustainable aviation fuel, the SAF. That was in November of 2023 and at this point, I will also work very closely with the Commissioner on Climate, as you said.

I remind you that here we work with no silos in the European Commission. We have good collaboration: decisions are taken in the college and they are binding to all of us, so there is no issue of good collaboration between Commissioners.

I don't have more time.

1-0117-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – We have now reached our final round of questions, where one member of each political group will ask a question. We start in reverse order, with the ESN.

1-0118-0000

Siegbert Frank Droese (ESN). – Herr Kommissarsanwärter! Ihre Antworten in der zweiten Runde haben mich also nicht überzeugt, deswegen versuche ich nochmal einen neuen Ansatz. Sie sprachen ja vom Tourismus, Sie wollen ja Tourismuskommissar werden. Meiner Meinung nach braucht dieses Parlament keinen Tourismuskommissar, weil es sehr gut nationalstaatlich organisiert wird. Aber Sie wollen ja Tourismuskommissar werden, deswegen dürften Sie wissen, dass Tourismus eng mit nationaler Kultur und Identität verbunden ist. Wie stellen Sie sicher, dass die EU-Initiativen im Tourismusbereich die Vielfalt und das kulturelle Erbe der einzelnen Länder respektieren und nicht versuchen, eine – sie werden also nicht versuchen, hoffentlich – EU-weite Identität, die es ja bekanntermaßen nicht gibt, zu implementieren oder aufzuzwingen. Wie können wir uns das vorstellen? Wie erhalten Sie kulturelle Identität und Kultur der Regionen, der Nationalstaaten?

1-0119-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Mr Droese, there is not one European identity, but there are many European identities, national identities, becoming one in the European Union. This is what the European project is all about. This is what we pro-Europeans believe. Yes, of course, the countries, the regions, the cities, the villages, the islands keep their own characteristics, of course, but that's the richness of the European Union, because we can be a big family with different identities.

So believe me when I say that I want to work to promote the European Union as a leading destination of the world. You know why we can do that? Exactly because we have different identities throughout our continent, throughout our regions or cities. We have a rich culture, different cultures. The European Union is a superpower in culture.

This is why I believe that we can maintain the leading role, the leading position in tourism worldwide, by promoting and showcasing to the world all these different cultures, these different identities. And, of course, we will respect the identities of each place.

In tourism we are talking about destinations. We are not talking even about countries or regions, but destinations. So I'm keen in promoting the different destinations. But I also want to bring up the destinations that are less promoted, or this year's destinations that work on ecotourism, on alternative tourism. Because this way we will enlarge the period of tourism and we will make sure that we remain a leading force in the world.

1-0120-0000

Arash Saeidi (The Left). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous l'avez dit, le transport est le seul secteur à avoir échoué à réduire ses émissions. Si nous voulons atteindre nos objectifs climatiques en transférant notamment une part substantielle des 75 % de fret intérieur accaparé par la route vers le rail et doubler le trafic ferroviaire de marchandises d'ici 2050, comme le veut la Commission, il est urgent de renverser cette tendance. En effet, le basculement du transport routier vers le rail n'a tout simplement pas lieu et nous nous apprêtons au contraire à autoriser les méga-camions. Les décennies de libéralisation sont un véritable échec, et cet échec est flagrant.

Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, pour développer une offre ferroviaire solide et constante, allez-vous rompre avec la logique dogmatique de vos prédécesseurs, cette logique qui impose la concurrence à tout prix, allant, comme en France, jusqu'à casser le fret ferroviaire et supprimer une part de ses emplois? Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, allez-vous soutenir et développer les opérateurs publics européens et favoriser les coopérations entre opérateurs historiques plutôt qu'organiser leur mise en concurrence contreproductive?

1-0121-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Mr Saeidi, I believe in the liberalisation of trains.

And it's not something that comes without data. Again, Spain and Italy, the prices decreased around 30% after the 2020 liberalisation of trains. In Austria, train frequency increased by 41% after the liberalisation, and in France the frequency increased between 53% and 100%.

Having said that, of course – and these are data that the Commission presented with a study one month ago, they're very recent data – the problem of rail is not the opening of the market. The problem of rail is insufficient funding for infrastructure, it is the lack of interoperability, the lack of connections, the capacity allocation, the non-availability of rolling stocks and, of course, the

inadequate ticket offer that we have today, as well as the fact that we have different gauge in different countries that do not allow cross-border communication of trains.

So I will work on the implementation and the enforcement of the fourth railway package. I will work with you to find solutions on the Regulation on the use of railway infrastructure capacity, as I said earlier to Ms Costanzo, and I will at the same time put forward a plan for these high-ambitious, high-speed connections between capitals and big cities of Europe and the Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation, which I really think will help this transition.

But border obstacles persist and we need to work on that. And I will be very happy to collaborate with you in this respect and find out how we can help railways in Europe.

1-0122-0000

Lena Schilling (Verts/ALE). – We talked a lot about investments and infrastructure today. That's good, but, in fact, people have to be in the centre of all the policies. You mentioned the 20 000 deaths on the road yearly. So what concrete measures do you envisage to advance the Vision Zero targets, would you consider a recommendation on speed limits, which would also tackle overall emissions?

Second, on tourism, we know it's the third largest socioeconomic sector in the EU. However, labour market segregation is a huge challenge. So can you commit that your DG will take a gender perspective while allocating funds? In short, make sure that through gender budgeting, public funds are fairly distributed to reach all people equally.

1-0123-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – It goes without saying that I agree with this position you just expressed. We need equality, we need to support equal treatment of workers, of women, of young people. I told you the data that we have and that we need to work on it because we need to make sure that there is intergenerational fairness, gender mainstreaming.

I will work with the Commissioner responsible for these issues as well, because it's cross-cutting objectives for the Commission across all policy areas. At the same time, I know that we have the Women in Transport platform that I'm willing to work with, we have the ambassadors for Diversity in Transport that again, I will support and collaborate with them. And, as I said earlier, I will organise the first 100 days of my mandate, I will organise a youth dialogue because I want to see what young people have to say about transport and tourism.

I want to ask you for the first part of the question, please, if you can repeat it, because there was a problem, Madam Chair.

1-0124-0000

Lena Schilling (Verts/ALE). – I will make it short – it's about road safety. So you mentioned the 20 000 deaths we see yearly, and I wanted to ask you if you would consider a recommendation on speed limits, which would lower it and also decrease carbon emissions.

1-0125-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much. Very quickly – speed limits is an issue that national governments deal with, it's in their remits, in their responsibility,

either governments or regions and cities. We have seen that when you decrease within the cities the speed limits, it helps a lot with accidents and even deaths.

What we can do is provide the data to the Member States, but it's for them and the cities or regions to decide on whether they will choose to enforce the existing speed limits or change them.

1-0126-0000

Benoît Cassart (Renew). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, en ce qui concerne la réglementation sur la protection des animaux pendant le transport, les agriculteurs et les transporteurs partent du principe que tout changement de législation doit être scientifiquement analysé. Par exemple, ne pensez-vous pas que vouloir interdire le transport sur de longues distances aurait des conséquences négatives sur la durabilité et la viabilité de l'élevage européen et de nos fermes, et donc sur la compétitivité des aliments européens?

En effet, si cette interdiction nous empêchait de livrer nos bovins au Maroc ou au Liban, elle conduirait à la perte de nos clients et à une forte augmentation de la durée du transport des animaux, puisque nos clients s'approvisionneraient alors au Brésil ou en Australie. N'est-il pas temps de traiter les défis du bien-être animal et de l'environnement de manière globale, sans toujours pénaliser les entreprises européennes?

1-0127-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Mr Cassart, this is a very interesting topic, and to me it's also very important because I believe that animals should be treated in a decent way in transport.

You know very well that animal welfare is not under my responsibility. We will have a Commissioner on Animal Welfare and Health, so I will collaborate with him to see how we can find the right balance, at the same time making sure that there is a certain quality, a certain level of protection for the animals, but at the same time that this will not hurt our competitiveness and our economy. And we can do both: we can improve animal welfare and safeguard competitiveness.

We also need to see the working conditions of our drivers, the drivers that do these transfers of animals, and I'm sure that there is sufficient, by now, willingness of the Member States to improve the situation. But the truck drivers that transport animals need to be well trained and of course this is why they are already required to have a specific training on animal transport, because this will also help increase the level of how animals are treated during transport.

So I will work with the Commissioner on Health and Animal Welfare, and we will soon bring results to the table that will take under consideration the right equilibrium that we need to have.

1-0128-0000

Adrian-George Axinia (ECR). – Chair-designate, you've made clear that you will address transport poverty during your mandate. What about the transport poverty of the entire sector, road transport?

The road transport sector is losing billions of euros annually in Romania and Bulgaria due to their exclusion from the Schengen Area. However, it is not just these countries that are affected. The entire EU road transport industry is suffering.

Moreover, significant CO₂ emissions are being released as hundreds of trucks remain idle at Schengen borders.

While I understand that may fall outside your direct portfolio, do you intend to collaborate with the Home Affairs Commissioner to expedite Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen Area and address these challenges? Thank you.

1-0129-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Yes, Mr Axinia, I believe that Romania and Bulgaria have met all the criteria for the Schengen membership, and I will work, of course, it's not in my remit, it's in the responsibility of the Commissioner for Home Affairs and Security, but I will discuss, and I believe that the extended Schengen rules should be extended to the internal borders. This will boost economic growth, it will strengthen the unity of the European Union and it will finally bring an end to this issue.

Now, when it comes to the targets of the CO₂ emissions, let me repeat. The targets are very specific. The targets have been agreed. We need to stick to the plan, and we will stick to the plan. But at the same time, we will make sure that the industry, which had long-term certainty and predictability because of the measures that were announced much earlier, will be supported. And the people who work in the automotive sector will also be supported by skilling and reskilling. We consider - because I talked earlier about technological neutrality, and I said we need to use all the modes that are here - we will consider in the renewal of 2026 the inclusion of e-fuels as well.

So you understand that the automotive sector - and this is a goal that I have - we have to make everything in our power to make it survive. And the automotive industrial plan that I will bring will give answers to all this scepticism that you might have.

1-0130-0000

Rachel Blom (Pfe). – We kunnen de impact van de Green Deal op de Europese auto-industrie niet ontkennen. Automakers van wie de nek wordt omgedraaid en die niet langer meer kunnen concurreren. Burgers voor wie elektrische auto's onbetaalbaar en onbereikbaar blijven. De vraag blijft achter. Fabrieken sluiten en mensen verliezen hun baan. Plannen die op papier misschien mooi lijken, maar in de praktijk juist desastreus uitpakken.

Mijn vraag aan u is: Hoe voorkomt u dat de overige modaliteiten van de transportsector hetzelfde lot wacht als er linkse klimaathobby's en onuitvoerbare regelgeving worden opgedrongen? Gaat u luisteren naar de transportsector zelf, zodat de plannen ook realistisch, uitvoerbaar en betaalbaar blijven? Hoe bent u van plan de burger en de sector gerust te stellen? Want voor nu zijn er grote zorgen over hun financiële zekerheid en economische positie.

1-0131-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, *Commissioner-designate*. – Let me reassure you, Ms Blom, that no citizen will be sidelined. As I said earlier, the Social Climate Fund, which is adequate funding, will be used in order to address transport poverty, in order to make sure that no one is left behind in transport. And at the same time, we will make sure through the Sustainable Transport Investment Plan that I announced and I would bring early in my mandate, that we will have the right investments for alternative fuels, mainly for air transport and maritime.

So believe me when I say that there is no reason to be worried. We will work very closely with all the stakeholders, with the businesses, I will continue the dialogue with the industry. It is one of the first things I will do if I get your trust tonight and I am Commissioner.

One of the first things I will do is continue the dialogue with the industry, build on the existing Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels Alliance that has done an incredible job. The alliance, I remind you, is a collective effort, including industry leaders, technology providers, finance providers, society organisations.

So I will push for a focus on aviation and maritime sustainable fuels. Private-public partnerships, sustainable fuel allowances, even a sustainable fuels bank are issues that we should consider in this respect.

1-0132-0000

Matteo Ricci (S&D). – Commissario designato Tzitzikostas, ho ascoltato con grande interesse le Sue risposte, che dimostrano una convergenza con le priorità del nostro gruppo, dal Green Deal alla protezione sociale dei lavoratori.

Però Le voglio fare una domanda molto concreta, perché senza finanziamenti adeguati non c'è futuro. Lei ha illustrato il piano, che io condivido, della rete di alta velocità con le reti TEN-T. Solo questo piano costa circa 600 miliardi di euro. Se ci aggiungiamo poi il fondo per la transizione giusta, è evidente a tutti noi che il *Connecting Europe Facility* è del tutto insufficiente.

Allora Le voglio chiedere: cosa pensa del rapporto Draghi, che ipotizza addirittura l'esigenza di 800 miliardi all'anno per recuperare competitività? Cosa pensa di un meccanismo permanente tipo NextGenerationEU che garantisca finanziamenti stabili? E quanto sarà grande? Come verrà finanziato il fondo di competitività annunciato dalla Presidente von der Leyen?

Infine una domanda tecnica: le norme per il rientro dei camion ogni sei settimane sono state annullate dalla Corte. Secondo noi hanno dato grandi risultati. Le chiedo se si può impegnare ad analizzare questi risultati in questi due anni e mezzo.

1-0133-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – There was a study that indicated that when it comes to the issue of truck returns, we had indeed high environmental costs and high infrastructure damages. So, indeed, it was not an initiative that was good either for the environment or the infrastructure of Europe. This is why the Commission from the beginning was against this proposal. And again, I will repeat that I don't see any reason for new legislation now, but we will assess the conditions of the workers, and if there is a difficult situation in the level of the working conditions, then I will intervene.

Now, when it comes to the funding, Mr Ricci, please understand that, indeed, in order to complete all these important TEN-T networks, there is a need for huge amounts of money and of funding. Draghi report 800 billion, 500 billion only for the core TEN-T network. But I will tell you that we need to prioritise – if we don't make priorities and find funding for these priorities we will not make it.

In my opinion, the priorities that we have are competitiveness, the twin transition and how we will make it happen, the resilience of our economy, also the sustainability, the connectivity that we need to have through TEN-T networks, the military mobility and the transport infrastructure, because

without transport infrastructure, we will not be able to have a functioning single market and good connectivity for our citizens.

1-0134-0000

Jens Gieseke (PPE). – Thank you Chair. Commissioner-designate, as the EPP we have clear expectations. For us, competitiveness and technology neutrality are key. Full stop. I heard commitments to our EPP request on strengthening military mobility, and on English as a fall-back language. At least you did not exclude it. On the European ports strategy, you proposed concrete legislation, with the fight on carbon leakage, on ports and airports. Very fine.

What I liked very much is your promise on digitalisation, paperless transport by 2030 – but you are a clever guy of course, because you were elected just for five years. I need your commitment till 2029! So this you have to deliver still. We are elected for five years as well, so let's have there a common approach.

I want to tell you 'continue in my impression'. You have been all over the place the last seven weeks. What we need is this commitment over the next five years. So stay with us the next five years. That would be your commitment we need in order to make real progress.

1-0135-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Mr Gieseke, it's true that I want to commit to whatever I said today. You should take them as commitments on my behalf.

Paperless transport is something that I will put forward in the fastest possible way. I also want to commit for another thing. I will continue this work that we had with most of you these past months or weeks – unfortunately not all of you, because there was no time or our schedules were not in accordance. But I will meet with all of you.

I want you to know that I will be here for bilateral meetings, for questions that the Parliament, the TRAN Committee, might have. I will appear regularly in the European Parliament's plenaries and committees whenever it's needed, and I would suggest that we also organise missions on the ground – the TRAN Committee and the Commission – on transport together.

So I think we have the tools to work together, and we have ways to make these five years really matter for our citizens. Transport and tourism is in the everyday life of citizens, and so by working together, and by having these set priorities that we have commonly agreed on, work, we can make a difference these next five years.

I'm committed to work with you to bring the results that we need, both in transport and in tourism.

1-0136-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chair of the TRAN Committee. – Thank you very much. We are now reaching the closing of this hearing. Thank you all for your questions to the Commissioner-designate and himself for his answers. But before closing the hearing, I will invite now the Commissioner-designate for his final closing statement of no more than five minutes, please.

1-0137-0000

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Honourable Members, thank you for this evening's exchange, which reaffirms that our success depends indeed on collaboration.

For me, it is an honour and a privilege to witness first-hand your dedication to sustainable transport and tourism, and your commitment to serving the citizens and the businesses of our regions. I fully share this dedication that you have, and I hope I've been able to convey that today.

I have listened carefully to your concerns. I have listened to a range of critical issues that you raised, from competitiveness to sustainability, from infrastructure development to workforce shortages and security challenges.

So, finding a balance is indeed the most crucial task of our time. We must protect our environment. It is a responsibility we cannot afford to neglect. We must strengthen our resilience. We have to prepare our transport and tourism infrastructure and ecosystems to withstand future shocks.

Equally, we must enhance on competitiveness. We need to support and protect our people and our businesses – fostering growth, creating jobs and spreading prosperity.

My commitment extends further. I aim to make lasting improvements to current conditions, elevating our standards and expectations. My vision is a Europe where mobility is both efficient and accessible, but also sets the global standards for sustainable development, investing in innovation and infrastructure, completing the TEN-T network, making all transport modes more sustainable, creating a level playing field for our transport industry, reducing fragmentation, cutting red tape and ensuring that no community or region is left behind. This is how we will achieve our goals in a fast-changing global landscape.

In tourism, our future-focussed strategy is to ensure that the sector keeps thriving and to support the industry, while preserving the well-being of our local communities and their heritage.

Honourable Members, I recognise the concerns you have outlined over the very specific challenges your communities face, from automotive jobs to connectivity issues, and from infrastructure to tourism impact. These challenges – and I want you to know this – are very important to me as well.

If you confirm my nomination today, I assure you that I will be available to this committee to further discuss the issues, to consider possible options, to fight for adequate funding and to find solutions together.

Regarding safety, I want to repeat what I stated in my opening remarks that every life lost is an unspeakable tragedy. Knowing that building strong systems, following rules and using modern tools could prevent accidents like this makes this mission even more pressing.

Honourable Members, having been in your position as former parliamentarian, I understand the importance of close and effective collaboration, and I am confident that by working together we can make a meaningful difference for the people and the businesses in Europe and that we can create a future of sustainable prosperity and competitiveness in both transport and tourism.

I'm really looking forward to working with you. Thank you very much.

1-0138-0000

Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – Thank you very much, Mr Tzitzikostas. I would like to remind the TRAN coordinators and the ENVI Chair that the evaluation meeting will be held in camera at 22:30 in the room that has been communicated by the secretariat. I thank you all once again. The hearing is now closed.

1-0139-0000

(The hearing closed at 21:57)