QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

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Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence

What aspects of your personal qualifications and experience are particularly relevant for becoming Commissioner and promoting the European general interest, particularly in the area you would be responsible for? How will you contribute to implementing the political guidelines of the Commission? How will you implement gender mainstreaming and integrate a gender perspective into all policy areas of your portfolio? How will you implement youth mainstreaming?

What guarantees of independence are you able to give Parliament, and how would you make sure that any past, current or future activities you carry out could not cast doubt on the performance of your duties within the Commission?

2. Management of the portfolio and cooperation with the European Parliament

Can you commit to duly informing Parliament about your actions and those of your departments? In what respect do you consider yourself accountable to Parliament?

What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of your engagement with and presence in Parliament, both in committee and in plenary, transparency, cooperation and effective follow-up to Parliament's positions and requests for legislative initiatives? In relation to planned initiatives or ongoing procedures, are you ready to provide Parliament with timely information and documents on an equal footing with the Council?

Questions from the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Capital Markets Union (CMU)

3. What are the key obstacles and which priorities would you set for the development of the Capital Markets Union/Savings and Investments Market in order to boost private and public financing to invest in high-growth projects and have capital markets investing in innovation? How will you ensure that efforts to enhance the competitiveness of the EU financial sector will not undermine financial stability or lead to excessive risk-taking? How do you view the role of securitisation in this agenda?

Competitiveness Coordination Tool

4. What should be the main pillars of the newly proposed Competitiveness Coordination Framework? How does this interact with the European Competitiveness Fund?

Investment

5. How do you envisage the future of the InvestEU programme? How do you envisage your cooperation with the EIB? What is your plan to unlock private investments to support the European economy? What are other tools you would be inclined to mobilise to address the significant funding gap?

Questions from the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

6. How will the Clean Industrial Deal build on and complement the Green Deal? What key measures do you intend to put forward in the context of the Clean Industrial Deal, the Circular Economy Act and the Chemicals Industry

Package, also in the context of the Draghi report on the EU Competitiveness? How will you ensure consistency and synergies among the initiatives? How will they contribute to the environmental goals, including the zero pollution ambition? How do you intend to accelerate the industrial decarbonisation while investing, ensuring the EU's global competitiveness and preserving high-quality jobs, and reducing unnecessary administrative burden? What measures will you take to ensure that EU legislation regarding the clean transition is tailored to SMEs? What measures will you put forward in the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act to support European lead markets for the development, production and diffusion of clean tech in industry, and which financial resources will you mobilise to reach this goal? What specific strategies do you plan to implement to accelerate permitting procedures for critical projects to allow for timely progress on climate objectives, while safeguarding high-level environmental protection? What measures will you put forward to strike a balance between reducing dependencies on critical raw materials and boosting European competitiveness, circularity and ensuring the respect of high environmental standards? How will you ensure that the new Circular Economy Act will contain sufficient concrete incentives to sufficiently boost market demand for secondary materials and for the establishment of a single market for waste?

7. How will you ensure that the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is implemented effectively, fully and in a timely manner, while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and double protection? What measures will you propose to close potential loopholes upstream and downstream and for the expansion of the scope of CBAM in accordance with the Regulation, while avoiding carbon leakage along the value chain and taking into account the situation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs)?

8. What are your priorities for the upcoming Chemicals Industry Package? How will you achieve the transition to safe and circular green, less water- and energy-intensive chemicals while providing long-term predictability for investors towards sustainable innovations? When will you present a proposal for a revision of REACH that ensures simplification while guaranteeing enhanced protection of health and the environment and a competitive industry? What is your plan on PFAS to minimise human and environmental exposure to them while ensuring a clear and feasible framework for industry by taking into account essential uses?

Questions from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

9. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the Clean Industrial Deal, the European Prosperity Plan, the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act, the European Competitiveness Fund and the Circular Economy Act? What financial resources do you think should be allocated to these initiatives? How will you finance in particular the European Competitiveness Fund without prejudice to existing commitments to other EU policies? What should be, in your view, the economic logic and the industrial funding needs to be addressed by the European Competitiveness Fund? How do you see the relationship of these initiatives with the Net Zero Industry Act (NZIA), the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), STEP, as well as the 2040 emission-reduction target? How do you intend to address the social dimension of these initiatives? How will you also address in the same context energy cost and efficiency, use of renewables and other sources of energy? What is your vision for the Competitiveness Coordination Tool and how should it work to enable you to fulfil the tasks set out in your mission letter?

10. What actions do you envisage for the effective implementation of the CRMA and the NZIA in order to strengthen European competitiveness? What should be the next steps to complete this legislation within and beyond the broader scope of European strategic autonomy? How do you intend in particular to strengthen the value chains related to the NZIA and promote resource efficiency in the context of the CRMA? How will you contribute to the creation of lead markets for clean tech? What other actions will you propose to unlock long-term investments and strengthen the competitiveness, resilience and autonomy of the EU industry, including defence production, while maintaining the European social model? What sectorial and horizontal measures do you envisage to support European industry? What will be your criteria to define Europe's specific vulnerabilities in certain sectors and to guide your actions to protect European industry from external unfair competition? What concrete measures do you think should be included in the steel and metals action plan? What sectors and technologies do you think should be included in the new IPCEIs, and how this would support the EU industrial strategy and SMEs? How do you intend to revise public procurement rules in order to ensure security of supply and support the use of European products in certain strategic sectors and technologies to the benefit of all Member States? Which criteria will you use to identify those strategic sectors and technologies? How will you contribute to the action plan for the automotive sector? Do you have any specific plans for PFAS?

11. How do you plan to address regulatory issues affecting companies, especially SMEs, including when operating cross border? How do you plan to ensure that SMEs will benefit from the strategic autonomy roadmap? What legal consequences will have the introduction of a new category of small midcaps on existing and future EU legislation? What will be the criteria for defining small midcaps? Will it be a separate binding legal definition or will existing legal categories (e.g. EU SME Definition) be extended to include this new category? What are your concrete plans to make speed, coherence and simplification key political priorities in order to reduce administrative burden and simplify implementation, reporting and permitting? How will you concretely implement the 'new SME and competitiveness check'?

Questions from the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection

12. In her political guidelines for this new term and in her mission letter to you, the President of the Commission underlines that the Single Market is a key pillar of the EU and that a new momentum is needed to deepen it, especially in the services sector where many barriers still persist, to ensure EU prosperity. In the fields of free movement of services and goods, which actions, including legislative measures, are you planning to undertake and how would the new Single Market Strategy contribute to bring about this new momentum, further integrate the Single Market, reduce unjustified barriers, administrative burdens and reporting obligations, while empowering and protecting consumers, promote entrepreneurship, and make the EU globally competitive in the coming decades? How do you foresee to increase product safety and fair competition in the Single Market in relation to products originating from third countries, addressing also third-country e-commerce platforms flooding the EU with products that often do not comply with EU standards while avoiding customs?

13. With regard to the mission letter of the Commission's President, what do you envisage on possible content and timing of the specific measures indicated thereto, in particular in relation to the Single Market Barriers Prevention Act, the European Competitiveness Fund, the SME passport, the Single Digital Gateway, the Circular Economy Act, and the evaluation of the EU Standardisation Regulation? How will you develop in concrete the new Single Market Strategy? How do you plan to engage with the IMCO Committee and its Working Groups, in the framework of its scrutiny activities, in order to keep the Committee updated in a transparent, regular and timely manner about the implementation of current legislation, the upcoming initiatives, including those mentioned in the mission letter, and the results of the enforcement actions in the Single Market for services and goods by the Commission and the Member States?

14. How do you plan to realise your assigned mission of revising the Public Procurement Directives in order to use the potential of public procurement for the benefit of EU single market, and EU citizens and businesses, among them of SMEs to enhance competitiveness, including EU digital competitiveness, and to ensure fair competition, security of supply for certain vital technologies, products and services? What technologies and sectors do you find strategic thus requiring an intervention through public procurement and what solutions should be applied, bearing in mind the need to maintain a level playing field and equality of opportunity for EU companies across the Single Market? When do you consider the revision of the public procurement framework will take place, and are you planning to revise it through EU regulations instead of EU directives?

Question from the Committee on International Trade

15. In a climate of heightened global uncertainty and an increased need to consolidate the Union's economic security agenda and to strengthen our competitiveness, how will you ensure that economic security, trade, investment and industrial policies are all part of a cohesive approach that fosters the Union's open strategic autonomy and resilience? How will you design and implement the economic security agenda and over what time frame? Building on the earlier exchanges between Parliament and the Commission on the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/1441, will you give an assurance that when the first report on the implementation of the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) is presented by 13 July 2026, a legislative proposal to amend the FSR will also be presented? Given the significantly higher than expected case load related to notified bids in public procurement procedures, will you ensure a substantial increase in the number of staff responsible for the implementation of the FSR within the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs?

Question from the Committee on Budgets

16. In her political guidelines, the President-elect calls for the establishment of an EU Competitiveness Fund that will invest in strategic technologies (from AI to space, clean tech and biotech) and in Important Projects of Common Interest (IPCEIs) and will also leverage and de-risk private investment in our common goals.

The scope of such a fund will encompass a wide variety of existing policy priorities.
Can you tell us about the rationale underpinning this approach and elaborate on your vision for implementing it and how it will drive the twin transitions, in particular detailing the policies and existing programmes that would fit in such a fund, the degree of harmonisation these programmes will be subjected to, the balance between repayable and non-repayable support the fund will provide and the safeguards put in place to ensure that Parliament is involved on equal footing with Council in the decision making process, programme implementation and the monitoring of the implementation of the fund?

Question from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

17. As Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, you will be in charge of the revision of the Public Procurement Directive. This Directive can play a pivotal role in the promotion of high labour standards. Social partners at EU level are very clear on the necessity to bring more protection to European workers through this Directive.
How will you ensure that the social aspects of the EU public procurement legislation are strengthened, notably with regard to social award criteria in public contracts, in view of: limiting subcontracting chains and regulating the role of labour intermediaries; ensuring the respect of workers' rights and the application of collective agreements; enhancing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and workers with support needs; ensuring that not-for-profit/social economy providers of social services are not excluded from public contracts?

Question from the Committee on Legal Affairs

18. Intellectual property without copyright

In your mission letter, one of your areas of action is to ensure that "our intellectual property policy continues to reward innovation and creativity and step up enforcement of the current rules".
The 2020 Commission IP Action Plan aimed at enabling the European creative and innovative industry to remain a global leader and at speeding up Europe's green and digital transitions. This IP Action Plan led in particular to the strengthening of the protection of IP with the adoption of the Regulation on the protection of geographical indications (GI) for craft and industrial products and with the revision of the 20 years old Design legislation that make it fit for the digital age. The Patent package - where the European Parliament adopted its first reading position and that will be negotiated during this term - aims to propose new rules to help companies, especially SMEs, to make the most of their inventions and creations and supports the EU's competitiveness and technological sovereignty notably in ensuring that key-patented products can be made available in times of crisis. Among the patent package files, one seems to encounter particular difficulties in the Council (the SEPs file), despite recent trends indicating that the EU is losing market shares compared to Asian and US economic players. The IP Action Plan also led to the adoption of the EU Toolbox against counterfeiting which "aims to foster collaboration between rights holders, service providers, and law enforcement, while encouraging best practices and the use of modern tools and technologies". IP is a key driver for economic growth as intangible assets play an increasing role in the global innovation race. Nevertheless, as underlined by the Draghi Report, it seems that EU companies, especially SMEs, feel discouraged to protect their IP assets due notably to the complex, costly and lengthy procedures required when filing IPR applications. This situation would prevent companies from competing globally and leveraging the Single Market. Besides, the evolution of AI technologies or the unethical use of some technologies, such as the use of dark patterns, may pose new challenges to the IP framework that still remain unaddressed and that may have potential effects on innovation, creativity and on the EU's competitiveness, thinking in particular about Generative AI and its relationships with patents, but also trademarks, trade secrets as well as with the question of IP enforcement. In addition, currently the Commission carries out a periodic review of the EU legislation on trademarks. As regards trade secrets, in particular for SMEs, additional efforts are needed to promote awareness and fight against theft of trade secrets in the context of global technological innovation.
Bearing these challenges in mind, what measures would you take to ensure that all the current IP rules are properly enforced and will you put forward new initiatives, for example in the area of trade secrets or trademarks, to ensure that the EU framework is still fit-for-purpose to reward innovation and creativity in the digital age and to support the EU's long-term growth and competitiveness, while stepping up efforts to facilitate negotiations on proposals carried over from the previous term?