



Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
The Chairs

D 309026 21.11.2024

VP/LH/da
D (2024) 33814

CONFIDENTIAL

Bernd LANGE
Chair
Conference of Committee Chairs
PHS 08B043

Dear Mr Lange,

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, in accordance with Rule 129 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, held a public confirmation hearing on 6 November 2024 with Mr Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner-designate, who, subject to the positive outcome of the nomination procedure, will be responsible for Health and Animal Welfare.

On 16 October 2024, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to Rule 129 of the Rules of Procedure and Article 3 of Annex VII thereto, received the letter from the Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs regarding the scrutiny of the declaration of financial interests of Mr Várhelyi.

Prior to the confirmation hearing, Parliament had sent the Commissioner-designate a list of written questions.

The course of the confirmation hearing is described in the verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

During the course of the confirmation hearing Mr Várhelyi made specific commitments regarding his future action as Commissioner, which are also reflected in the verbatim.

At their evaluation meeting of 6 November, the ENVI and AGRI coordinators did not reach the necessary two-thirds of the committee members belonging to a political group to agree that the Commissioner-designate is qualified both to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to him. Consequently, a majority of coordinators requested additional information through further questions.

Following the additional information provided by the Commissioner-designate annexed to this letter, at their evaluation meeting of 20 November 2024, in accordance with Rule 129 of the Rules of Procedure and Article 5 of Annex VII thereto, the coordinators of both Committees representing a majority of two-thirds of committee members belonging to a political group agreed that the

Commissioner-designate Várhelyi is qualified both to be a member of the College of Commissioners and to carry out the specific tasks assigned to him.

In addition, a large majority of coordinators agreed to request the following readjustment of Olivér Várhelyi's portfolio:

- DG HERA will be transferred to another Commissioner;
- Competences on sexual and reproductive health rights will be transferred to another Commissioner.

The European Commission President should present this proposal to the Parliament via a change in the mission letters of all the Commissioners-designate concerned.

The opinion of the committee invited to participate in the confirmation hearing is annexed to this letter.

During that evaluation meeting, the coordinators of the Greens/EFA and The Left groups requested the inclusion of minority views, which are annexed to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Antonio DECARO
Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety



Veronika VRECIIONOVÁ
Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

cc: Boris Budka - Chair of Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
Adam Jarubas - Chair of Subcommittee on Public Health

Annexes:

- Opinion of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- Answers to the additional written questions
- Minority views

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

CONFIDENTIAL

D 308599 07.11.2024

Mr Antonio Decaro
Chair
Committee on the Environment,
Public Health and Food Safety

Ms Veronika Vrecionová
Chair
Committee on Agriculture and
Rural Development

Ref.: D (2024) 32290

Subject: ITRE opinion on the evaluation of Mr Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner-designate for Health and Animal Welfare

Dear Chairs,

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, invited to the confirmation hearing of Commissioner-designate Olivér Várhelyi, which took place on 6 November 2024, considers that the Commissioner-designate is qualified to be member of the College and to carry out the particular duties he has been assigned.

This opinion has been adopted by Coordinators representing at least a simple majority of committee members belonging to a political group.

Yours sincerely,



Tsvetelina PENKOVA
ITRE Vice-Chair

Annex III - Minority positions
Evaluation - Commissioner-designate Olivér Várhelyi

GREENS/EFA

In the hearing that took place on November 6th, commissioner-designate Olivér Várhelyi, was unable to provide a satisfactory reassurance that he is fit to be a Commissioner or to be entrusted with responsibility for health and animal welfare.

In health policy, his answers showed little regard for the need for transparency in public funding, procurement and investments in health, nor the importance of patient access as a key challenge in this policy area. Further, his answers on sexual and reproductive health and rights did not convince that he recognises abortion as a health issue.

As concerns animal welfare, his answers mainly referred to the task of improving implementation and enforcement of current rules, yet did not put forward detail as to how to achieve this, nor demonstrate any practical knowledge of the current obstacles to proper implementation.

Despite its relevance throughout his portfolio, he showed little recognition of certain dimensions of the One Health approach, in particular the importance of animal welfare, biodiversity and environment within this approach.

Along with his ambiguous track record on cooperation as Commissioner for Enlargement, his failure to prioritise the awaited legislation for sustainable and healthy diets, makes it impossible to support him as Commissioner.

THE LEFT

The candidate does not have the appropriate track-record, experience, personal qualifications or in-depth understanding for this portfolio. More particularly, he failed in regard to understanding the need for additional legislative measures, including on animal welfare at EU level. The candidate displayed a lack of understanding of and a lack of respect for the problems LBGTQI+ persons and women are facing, also particularly with regard to the right to abortion. The candidate has an insufficient understanding of the public health systems and the challenges and opportunities to guarantee the right to appropriate care and medicines for all, also in the global context. The candidate was unwilling to commit to the necessary changes to justly transform our food systems so that they provide healthy and accessible food for all citizens, while respecting the planetary boundaries and the rights and welfare of animals.

Furthermore, The Left denounces the process of evaluation of Commissioner-designates and deeply regrets that the Parliament did not perform its duty in scrutinising and properly evaluating the candidates. The decisions were made behind closed doors and the evaluation meeting was redundant as the decision on the candidates was already communicated to the press.