

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE****Olivér VÁRHELYI****Health and Animal Welfare****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 Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

3. How will you work on strengthening the resilience of healthcare systems, ensuring access to and affordability of care and medical products in the EU and stimulating EU research and competitiveness in the pharmaceutical sector? Despite the efforts, the EU remains divided in terms of the access to healthcare and the availability of medicines, which affects both the quality of life of patients in the EU and their chance of curing diseases. How will you as Commissioner for health, including in cooperation with EU Member States, reduce these health inequalities, combat shortages of medicinal products, address shortage of healthcare professionals and ensure that all Europeans receive the best treatments regardless of where they live in the Union? Do you see a revision of the cross-border care Directive as a solution? What can you already say about the Critical Medicines Act in this context? How will the Act enhance the capability to respond to health crises, reduce the dependency from third countries for imports of critical medicines and ingredients and address critical needs in healthcare, while also improving access and affordability? How will you ensure that the EU fosters research and development of new medicines or treatments, in particular for rare diseases, and increase its competitiveness, innovation and strategic autonomy, while ensuring access to patients? How do you see the link to the European Biotech Act? How do you see the role of the EU4Health in this context, especially taking into account the recent budget cuts proposed?

4. What are your concrete plans to fight against AMR at national, EU and international level, in line with the One Health approach, with regard to environmental, human and animal health? In particular, what additional measures do you envisage in addition to those already proposed in the revision of the pharmaceutical legislation, both in human and veterinary fields? How do you plan to address shortages and ensure access to antimicrobials and diagnostic tools, while ensuring prudent use and stewardship? Will you present an update of the list of antibiotics reserved for human use? Since research and innovation are a crucial component of the fight against AMR, how do you plan to incentivise both public and private research and innovation in this field? Do you envisage looking into untapped medical counter measures such as bacteriophages?

5. What are your proposals to improve mandatory food information to consumers, in particular regarding nutrient content (for healthier choices, without oversimplification), sustainability aspects (CO2 footprint) and animal welfare labelling (AWL), while avoiding administrative burden and ensuring safe and affordable food? Will you commit to presenting the measure announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy in 2020 regarding the introduction of an EU-wide front of pack labelling scheme? Similarly, do you plan to present the delayed legislative proposal on sustainable food systems, which was also announced as part of the Farm to Fork Strategy? What is your vision on this initiative? Regarding pesticide use, what are your proposals to support the farmers to reduce the use and risks of chemical pesticides, and how will you accelerate the availability of alternatives, such as biocontrol products or low-risk substances? Lastly, what are your concrete plans to increase food safety controls on imported products?

#### Questions from the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

6. Animal welfare is increasingly considered a priority for citizens. As Commissioner-designate, how would you react to growing demand for higher animal welfare standards while addressing sustainability, economic considerations and farmer positions? How do you intend to modernise the existing regulations on animal welfare? Which new elements would you like to assess and address? Which legislative proposals on animal welfare are you planning to make? In addition, how do you intend to examine and address the varying levels of compliance and enforcement of the current legislation in EU Member States and ensure that new regulatory proposals as well as improved enforcement secure a level playing field and do not compromise the competitiveness of EU farmers?

7. As Commissioner-designate, how would you ensure that the increasing risks from animal disease outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance are granted a more prominent role in EU policy? What type of actions would you propose to ensure the improvement of animal health and eradication of animal diseases across the EU, particularly in terms of disease prevention, surveillance and biosecurity? In addition, how do you envisage addressing the growing threats posed by cross-border diseases and coordination between EU Member States? How would you guarantee that the future Commission ensures adequate funding and resources to enhance research on the development of affordable vaccines to combat diseases such as African swine fever and on the prevention of the spread of diseases such as bluetongue?

8. The availability of effective and economically viable alternatives is the main factor in reducing the use of chemical plant protection products. How would you improve biological control authorisation and implementation of integrated pest management? As Commissioner-designate, how would you spur the development of bio-pesticides, monitor their effectiveness and encourage their use? Do you think biological control agents should be subject to fast-track authorisation procedures? In a general way, do you think it is necessary to speed up the authorisation procedures for active substances used in the manufacture of plant protection products? How do you intend to counter the risk that Europe will run out of effective products to fight off plant diseases - especially since new pests are emerging in certain regions in the context of climate change? How would you ensure that the Union remains attractive for investment in this area? What are your views on the EU zonal authorisation procedure for plant protection products?

#### Question from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

9. What concrete measures do you envisage to further diversify supply chains and boost the competitiveness of the health sector? How do you plan to address the severe shortages of medicines and medical devices in the context of the Critical Medicines Act? What further actions will you propose to ensure the availability and competitiveness of medical devices? What measures do you think should be included in the new European Biotech Act and the action plan on cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers? How do you aim to complete the European Health Data Space?

#### Question from the Subcommittee on Public Health

10. How will you commit to work on preventive health as one of the key areas, ensuring a comprehensive approach to health promotion and disease prevention across the life course? In this regard, many proposals under the beating cancer plan were promised in the previous mandate but were not delivered by the previous Commission. Do you commit to delivering on the missing actions and goals under this plan including, inter alia, a review of the relevant legislation on tobacco (including to tackle novel products such as vapes), proposals for labelling and health warnings on alcohol beverage products? Concerning other non-communicable diseases, can you provide us with the main elements that you will put forward regarding a common approach in these areas? Will you continue to focus on boosting immunisation and vaccination as key components of this effort? In addition to the measures mentioned in your mission letter, can you elaborate on further actions you will take regarding prevention with

respect to mental health and the implementation of the Mental health strategy? Do you commit to deliver the revision of the Medical Devices Regulation and how will you ensure affordability, availability, safety and the prevention of shortages?