

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE**Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA****Startups, Research and Innovation****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 Industry, Research and Energy

3. 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?

4. What do you envisage for the European Research Area, the European Research Council, the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the European Artificial Intelligence Research Council and how would they relate to the European Innovation Act?

5. What do you see as the main purpose of the EU framework programmes for research and innovation and the added value of EU funding? How will you address the persisting need for simplification of the programme? Will you support a substantial increase to the budget of Horizon Europe and of its successor programme? How will you protect in general the EU budget dedicated to R&I policies? How do you plan to increase SME participation in the programme and boost public-private partnerships?

6. What concrete measures do you consider necessary for the long-term strategy to boost the European Research Infrastructure, including technology infrastructures? How do you see the role of research and innovation ecosystems? How do you plan to tackle the innovation and research divide in the EU? What widening actions do you envisage in that regard? How will you address the current challenges in the STEM fields, including low participation of women? How do you plan to promote research and academic freedom? How will you contribute to further developing the New European Bauhaus?

7. What is your vision for an EU start-up and scale-up strategy and what measures will you propose to stimulate their development? What initiatives will you take to scale up innovation in the EU? How do you plan to strengthen the ties between research, innovation, industrial and cohesion policies? What concrete measures do you think should be included in the Advanced Materials Act?

Question from the Committee on Culture and Education

8. How do you see the interplay between the European Education Area, the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area? What, in your view, are the synergies between the funding programmes in these different fields and the EU support to the next generation of researchers, taking into account cooperation between academic, private and public sector entities and the progress of the “European University Alliances” initiative? Linked to the above, how do you intend to make the European Higher Education Area more accessible and inclusive for all, while also improving the collaboration and exchange with Universities globally?