

## ECDA Questions for the Hearings of the EC Commissioners

### ENVI Committee

#### Questions for *Health Commissioner designate*:

- Non-communicable chronic diseases account for over 80% of the deaths and almost 80% of the disease burden in Europe. Yet, in the new Commission President's political guidelines, health is barely mentioned. Since real improvements in health require a strong political commitment at the European level, how do you intend to make sure health and in particular the scourge of chronic diseases are high on the agenda of the new Commission?
- Could the Commissioner designate outline her/his ambition, objective and plans for tackling EU's massive burden from chronic diseases? In particular, does the Commissioner intend to pursue the establishment of a Coalition on chronic diseases as proposed during the Chronic Disease Summit that took place in April this year?
- European Union member states dedicate 97% of their health budget to care and only 3% to prevention. Would the Commissioner designate commit to work with this Parliament to encourage member states to increase their investment in health and in particular in preventing the onset of those non-communicable chronic diseases that are preventable?
- Tobacco control is one of the most effective and cost-effective public health policies that can prevent and reduce unnecessary illnesses and deaths across the European Union. Considering the tobacco industry interference in tobacco control and tobacco regulation in recent years, particularly during the recent adoption of the Tobacco Products Directive, what actions will the Commissioner designate undertake to ensure the application of the EU's obligations under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control within the Commission? In particular, how will you interact with the tobacco industry, and what will you do to protect public health from the vested interests of the tobacco industry?
- Three major files related to one of chronic diseases major risk factors - food and nutrition - are still awaiting European political will to be moved forward: nutrient profiles on food (which should have been established already in 2009

and are called for in the Council conclusions on Nutrition and Physical activity adopted in June 2014), regulation of trans fats in food (which will hopefully consider a legislative approach as is currently the case in three EU member states – Austria, Denmark and Hungary as well as Norway, Switzerland and the certain US states) and measures to achieve a reduction of intake of salt and reduce raised blood pressure to reach the targets agreed in the WHO Global Monitoring Framework. Will Commissioner designate ensure these subjects are fully part of the European Union health agenda?

- Can the Commissioner designate comment on how he will strengthen the EC's efforts on alcohol-related harm in the EU? Does the Commissioner designate consider that voluntary measures will be adequate to reach the targets agreed in the WHO Global Monitoring Framework: by 2025, achieve at least 10% relative reduction in the harmful use of alcohol?
- President-elect Juncker's programme - *A New Start for Europe* - has identified the need for the Commission to put into place policies that address the social impact of the economic crisis. The health sector is obviously key. As the new Health Commissioner how will you instigate and lead coordination of policies at European level on the different aspects of public health to ensure that essential services are delivered at the highest standards in an affordable and sustainable way? Given this momentous challenge, how will you work collectively with key public health stakeholders in Member States, the European Parliament, civil society and industry?

***Question for Environment Commissioner designate:***

- Today 9 in 10 people die of chronic diseases. It is often forgotten, but the environment is a major determinant for health: according to the OECD, air pollution will be the biggest environmental cause of premature death by 2050 causing serious heart and lung disease. For decades evidence shows that airborne particulate matter (PM) and ground level ozone (O3) are the major culprits. Current EU limit values for PM exceed the WHO air quality guidelines and offer no protection from adverse effects on public health. During your term as Environment Commissioner, and given that EU member states have committed to achieving clean air in Europe, how will you strengthen the enforcement of existing air quality legislation in Member States, and how will you address pollutants of most concern for human health i.e. particulate matter (PM) and ground level ozone (O3)?

**ITRE Committee**

***Question for the EU Commissioner designate for Research & Innovation***

- Chronic diseases are the biggest killers in Europe – causing 80% of all deaths in Europe. Does the Commissioner designate agree that health and medical research must focus on the biggest killers in Europe? If so how will you ensure that this is where the focus of health research will be?

## **INTA Committee**

### ***Question for EU Commissioner designate for Trade***

- Can the Commissioner designate guarantee that the Trans Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will not undermine the EU's right to regulate on health issues, and especially as regards non-communicable chronic diseases, which account for over 80% of the deaths and almost 80% of the disease burden in Europe?
- Will the Commissioner designate ensure that less progressive US policies on health will not be imposed on the EU? How will the Commissioner designate ensure that the voice of patients are heard during TTIP negotiations in the face of large US corporation lobbying in the context of the TTIP?
- What steps will the Commissioner designate take to ensure that the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) will not undermine the EU's regulatory efforts on health?

## **ECON Committee**

### ***Question for EU Commissioner designate for Taxation***

- The Directorate General for Taxation has started a process of reviewing the implementation of the Tobacco Taxation Directive with a view to a possible legislative revision. Taxation is the single most effective tobacco control measure. Raising tobacco taxes is proven to achieve health outcomes while increasing government revenues and is particularly effective in preventing uptake in young people and among people with a lower socio-economic status. Will the Commissioner designate ensure that a revision of the Tobacco Taxation Directive takes into account the highest level of health protection, in line with EU Treaty provisions as well as the provisions of Article 6 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control?

## **LIBE Committee**

### ***Question for EU Commissioner designate for Justice***

- In his address to the European Parliament on July the 15th, President Juncker underlined the 'particular importance of data protection as a fundamental right'. It is true that, especially in our digital age where personal data can be constantly at risk, there is a need to ensure safety of a person's data. However, the debate surrounding the voting of the General Data Protection Regulation (2012/0011) have raised some concerns from the scientific and research community. In particular, proposed amendments to Article 81 and 83 would have a most detrimental impact to scientific research, by preventing the use of any identifiable data in research without consent and making the use of pseudonymised health data in research without specific consent very difficult, if not impossible. Will the Commissioner designate commit to maintain the consent exemptions' provisions for processing of personal data for research purposes during the trilogue negotiations?

