



AGE Platform Europe

168 avenue de Tervueren, box 2, B-1150 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 280 14 70

www.age-platform.eu



Hearings of Commissioners-designate European Parliament, 30 September – 8 October

Here is the set of questions submitted by AGE to key Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) prior to the hearings of Commissioners-designate.

If you are willing to share these questions with MEPs from your country you are in contact with, do not hesitate! We advise you to select the most relevant questions for the identified MEP and to copy/paste them in an e-mail. Such a long document would frighten them!!!!

To access the list of Members of the European Parliament and sort out by country and/or political group: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/home>

The list of Commissioners-designate and their portfolio is available at:
<https://ec.europa.eu/commission/interim/commissioners-designate>



AGE work is co-funded by the **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** of the European Union.
The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of AGE Platform Europe and cannot be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



Questions for High Representative and Vice President-designate Josep Borrell (relevant committees in the EP: AFET/DROI)

- When addressing the European Parliament on 16 July, the Commission President-elect committed to strive for more in nurturing, protecting and strengthening our democracy and to strengthen EU unique brand of responsible global leadership. Do you intend to apply the President-elect's commitment for European leadership in the world by ensuring the meaningful involvement of the EU in the existing UN human rights fora, such as UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing, CRPD Political Forum, the UN Commission on Status of Women?
- How will you ensure coherence between EU's internal and external action?

Questions for Vice-President-designate Vera Jourova (relevant committees in the EP: LIBE/JURI/COP)

- How are you planning to ensure the EU accedes to the European Convention on Human Rights, as stipulated in the Treaty of Lisbon?
- How will you ensure that all EU initiatives are in coherence with and reinforce the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights?
- Which actions will you promote to ensure both younger and older generations are adequately represented in democratic decision-making?
- Do you agree that digitalisation of political life is experienced as a challenge to older citizens? Which actions will you promote to close the digital age divide?
- As Commissioner responsible for the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, do you plan to take into account the Fundamental Rights Agency's opinions regarding necessary EU action to implement the Charter, including the recommendations included in its 2018 Special Focus of its Annual Report on a rights-based approach to ageing?



Questions for Vice-President-designate Dubravka Šuica (relevant committees in the EP: EMPL/LIBE)

EMPL

- When developing a Green Paper on ageing, which Commission services will you involve to ensure a comprehensive approach?

LIBE

- When drafting the Green Paper and organising a conference on the future of Europe, how will you ensure a genuine involvement of older persons?

Questions for Commissioner-designate Helena Dalli (relevant committees in the EP: LIBE/FEMM)

LIBE

- The Commission President-elect tasked you as Commissioner on Equality to propose new anti-discrimination legislation. What concrete measures will you include in the Commission's next five-year programme to ensure that the gap in legal protection against discrimination is closed across the European Union?
- Do you support the initiative to move from unanimity voting to co-decision in matters relating to anti-discrimination?
- A recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities demonstrated that older persons with disabilities are excluded from disability policies and services and are not equally supported to live independently and participate in society. How do you intend to address these protection gaps as Commissioner in charge of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
- Will you conduct a systematic review of legislation to ensure the full application of the UN CRPD?
- Will you push for the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the EU?
- Are you planning to review the EU Employment Equality Directive at its 20th anniversary to strengthen the provisions against discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief in the labour market?
- Elder abuse is widespread, but truly invisible to society. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an alarming 25% of older people with high care needs



experience abuse. As Commissioner for Equality do you plan to take any action against elder abuse? Do you intend to include to include older persons under EU Rights and Values Programme's Daphne strand to protect victims of crime?

FEMM

- The President-elect called for a European Gender Strategy. How will you ensure that the EU's actions on gender equality also reach older women, in particular how do you intend to tackle the gender pension gap of 37% and the gender gap in old-age poverty rates?
- How will you ensure that the announced European Gender Strategy will equally combat violence against older women and ensure support to older victims?
- How will you ensure that gender equality can be reached through the development of affordable, person-centred care services in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- What is your approach in monitoring the implementation of the EU Directive on work-life balance so that it succeeds in bringing about more gender equality in providing informal care?
- How will you ensure the Commission President-elect's commitment to ratify the Istanbul Convention by the EU and all its member States?

Questions for Vice-President-designate Vladis Dombrovskis (relevant committees in the EP: ECON/ITRE/IMCO/EMPL)

ECON/ITRE/IMCO

Accessibility of banking services

- When addressing the European Parliament on 16 July, the Commission President-elect committed that Europe must lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world, by bringing all people together. Underlining that 'we are experiencing demographic change', the President-elect referred to some related challenges, such as pensioners with no choice but relying on online banking: What measures do you envisage to fight digital exclusion and ensure that the digital transformation is not leaving anyone behind including older persons?
- With the rise of digital means of payment, it can become difficult for persons with disabilities or older persons to actively participate in social life and to conduct their



personal affairs on their own. Which steps are you envisaging to guaranteeing accessibility of payments, in light of the adoption of the European Accessibility Act?

Financial services

- How do you see the role of the Commission in monitoring member states' obligation to provide financial education? Do you think this obligation could be expanded to other financial services than Mortgage Credits? How will you ensure that financial education provided is independent from the industry?
- What will you do to ensure that consumers' organisations have the technical expertise and are empowered to bring forward the voice of consumers?
- How could EU regulation help to reduce costs and fees in financial services such as personal pension products and make them financially interesting?
- Which actions will you pursue to enable the development of safe, simple and comparable financial products for European consumers?

EMPL

- How do you intend to reconcile the challenge of demographic change with the Stability and Growth Pact and the European Semester?

Questions for Commissioner-designate Nicolas Schmit (relevant committee in the EP: EMPL)

European Pillar of Social Rights, European Semester and Sustainability of Public Finances

Considering the nomination of a Vice President responsible for demography:

- When developing an action plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, how will you implement the principles 15 (adequate income for older women and men) and 18 (long-term care)? Through which legislation or other initiatives?
- Will you continue funding the Active Ageing Index to ensure the EU and member states measure the level to which older people live independent lives, participate in paid employment and social activities and, more broadly, their capacity to actively age?



Adequate income in old age

- How can the European Commission contribute to member states' efforts to improve the balance between sustainability and adequacy of their pension systems?

Fight against poverty and social exclusion

- How will you step up the fight of the European Union against poverty and social exclusion, including by adapting the EU's 'poverty' target to reach SDG1 on the eradication of poverty?
- Are you in favour of a European framework to assess the adequacy of minimum income schemes, including minimum pensions?

Long-term care and support

- Do you agree that common access targets, similarly to the Barcelona targets for childcare, are necessary to persuade member states to improve access to quality services for older persons?
- Given the prevalence of informal care in the provision of long-term care for older people, how do you intend to ensure carers' access to social protection, training and support services?
- How do you seek to ensure workers' rights, as well as to enhance their vocational training and skills profiles, in the care sector, including in multinational care companies?

Inclusive labour markets for all ages

- Over 40% of persons between 55-64 are not in employment. What will you propose to combat age discrimination in the labour market and facilitate older workers' access to quality jobs? How will you support Public Employment Services in that regard?
- How do you intend to follow up on the Council Recommendation on Services for the Long-Term Unemployed (Feb. 2016)?

Lifelong learning and skills

- How do you think the EU can improve the recognition, valorisation of skills and experience acquired along the life span?



Questions for Commissioner-designate Stella Kyriakides (relevant committee in the EP: ENVI)

- All Europeans are concerned about their health and the future of health care systems. What measures do you plan to help Member States better address health challenges including prevention and health promotion across the whole life span, in the context of the climate and demographic changes?
- The WHO will launch in October 2020 a Decade of Healthy Ageing aligned with the Agenda 2030 and which aims at leaving no older person behind, how do you intend to collaborate with the WHO on this initiative given that the EU has lots of experience to share in this area and would also benefit from others' experience?
- How do you intend to follow up on the implementation of the European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-Being, notably to ensure accessible, available and affordable mental health services for all, including older persons, in the community?
- The digital transformation of health systems can bring many benefits to citizens, notably older citizens. However, there is a risk that people in vulnerable situations are left behind in this transition. Which actions will you promote to make sure this transformation will further improve health equity?
- There is significant evidence showing that health is an area that delivers major returns on investments. At the same time, the continuing prevalence of certain communicable diseases and high and increasing prevalence of chronic, non-communicable – and largely preventable – conditions, along with demographic changes, put the sustainability of our healthcare systems at risk. Many of the decisions that can change those issues do not fall under the competence of the Health Commissioner, but have to be taken by your colleagues leading on other portfolios. How will you ensure by improving the Better regulation toolbox that a meaningful health impact assessment with relevant indicators is compulsory for all Commission proposals?



Questions for Vice-President-designate Margrethe Vestager (relevant committee in the EP: ITRE)

- In your mission letters', you are asked to coordinate the work on a European approach on artificial intelligence, how do you intend to engage civil society in this work in order to make sure this work will result in a comprehensive strategy guaranteeing the democratic values, the rule of law and fundamental rights?

Questions for Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel (relevant committee in the EP: ITRE/CULT)

- When addressing the European Parliament on 16 July, the Commission President-elect committed that Europe must lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world, by bringing all people together. Underlining that 'we are experiencing demographic change', the President-elect referred to some related challenges, such as pensioners with no choice but relying on online banking: What measures do you envisage to support digital literacy and close the digital skills gap including for older persons?

Questions for Commissioner-designate Sylvie Goulard (relevant committee in the EP: ITRE)

- European standardisation has proved a valuable tool for the regulator for over 40 years. Yet it was not until Regulation (EU) 1025/2012 that the inclusiveness of the European Standardisation System became required, and participation of underrepresented stakeholders, such as consumers, facilitated. What steps will you take to deepen the inclusiveness of the European Standardisation System, in order to ensure European standards reflect the needs and expectations of all stakeholders?

Questions for Commissioner-designate Rovana Plumb (relevant committee in the EP: TRAN)

- Mobility plays a key role in older persons' life notably to live autonomously and independently, to participate to the social and civic life and to access essential services, notably community and health services. Knowing how essential is environmental sustainability, how do you intend to improve accessibility, availability and affordability of public transport to all, including persons with reduced mobility wherever they live?