

***Flash report on bilateral meeting of Commissioner-designate Kadri Simson and ITRE MEP Niels Fuglsang (S&D/DK) on 14 Nov 2019***

- Fuglsang referred to the latest UN climate report, recalling that we would only have five years to make the energy revolution happening. Therefore, we need to work on closing the gaps for 2030 and really push MS by pointing out their deficits (he indicated that binding targets would actually help in that regard). He also offered his own as well as the S&D's support to put pressure on national governments if needed. On the other hand, we would need to raise the ambitions even further, especially for renewables, which should be based on a proper and comprehensive impact assessment.
- On the 4th PCI list, Fuglsang informed that the ITRE committee, initiated by the S&D, RE, Greens, and GUE has asked for an extension of the non-objection period, in order to gain more time to discuss this topic together with the revision of the TEN-E regulation with Ms Simson once taking office. He would like to see a stop on financing of any conventional gas projects, at least by public EU money.
- He also asked to focus more on green gases and reflect this in a potentially upcoming decarbonisation package.
- Ms Simson assured that the Commission was currently putting a lot of pressure on Member States to adjust their National Energy and Climate Plans until the end of the year in order to reach the 2030 EU targets collectively. For renewables, future possibilities for cross-border projects in off-shore wind or solar areas would offer MS even more options to realise their ambitions. Financial support from the Climate Bank of the EIB would also help a lot in that regard. An upcoming communication from the Commission would also push for higher ambitions, which would be counter-balanced by the just transition fund, being very important for countries like PL.
- On the TEN-E revision, it is clear for her that advanced types of gas would need to be in the focus. Gas will have to play an important role in the decarbonisation and have to be used wisely.

***Flash report on bilateral meeting of Commissioner-designate Kadri Simson and MEP Ville Niinistö (Greens/FI), ITRE coordinator of the Greens, on 14 Nov 2019***

- Next to strict implementation of existing legislation, Niinistö put emphasis on the importance of the financing and investment angle of the European Green Deal and offered support from the FI government, where his party is currently involved. (He also mentioned that the FI PCY has also signalled to push this topic stronger under the MFF discussions in Council). This is particularly important in the buildings sector, where more investments would also trigger more jobs.
- On the 4<sup>th</sup> PCI list, Niinistö explained that he would like to see less gas projects on the list and would hope this would be examined again once the new Commission will take office. At the same time, the funding of fossil gas infrastructure would also need to be addressed in the upcoming TEN-E revision so that the 5<sup>th</sup> PCI list would be based on new provisions, which ought to take into account more sustainability aspects; on the other hand, green gases might have to play a more long-term role to which he was open.
- In the future, more electrification (based on renewables) would be necessary, and the potential of (clean) hydrogen would need to be explored in more detail.
- On coal regions in transition, one would need to work closely with the Member States and affected regions and support them; however, in his view, more often than not the existing gas infrastructure is actually sufficient and wouldn't need any additional EU funding.
- Also, any money from a just transition fund would need to be spent wisely, e.g. on smart projects that are actually contributing to the decarbonisation of the energy system (e.g. use of biomass, district heating).
- On Nordstream 2, he regretted the construction and asked the new Commission to put pressure on the German government to ensure that all provisions under the amended Gas Directive would be fulfilled.
- Mr Niinistö showed general openness/curiosity when it comes to the use of small medium reactors, for which in Finland there are currently a few interesting pilot projects in place; district heating could be an interesting field to explore the long term use. However, the projects are still more in a R&D status and would need much more research before anything could be tested for real purposes.
- Ms Simson agreed with Niinistö on the need for green financing and mentioned the EIB/Climate Bank that would bring support in form of loans in that regard; local initiative would also be important, though (e.g. by the Covenant of Mayors).
- On the PCI list, Ms Simson showed openness to discuss the topic in more detail and would try to push for an early revision of the TEN-E revision as much as possible.
- In view of the just transition fund she would welcome some sort of conditionality to be introduced to the spending of the money and would count on the EP to support the Commission in that regard.
- On Nordstream 2, Ms Simson agreed that the pipeline would not help to achieve any of our goals, especially not in more diversification.

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- Asked about which regions the new Commissioner should visit on her trip to Poland during her first months in office, Mr Buzek suggested to put a focus on the area around Katowice, capital of Silesia and the heart of the Metropolis GZM (Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia). This area, historically a heavy industrial and coal mining place, is undergoing challenging transformations, which need to be taken into account when talking about European energy and climate policies. The next European Economic Congress of Katowice in May 2020 could also be a good occasion to attend.
- Another important region in Mr Buzek's view is the area around the Bełchatów lignite power plant in Poland, which is still the world's largest lignite-fired power station. However, the amount of lignite would probably come to an end in a few years, hence the area would be extremely vulnerable.
- Last but not least, being the capital of Poland Warsaw would also be worthwhile a visit.
- Ms Simson showed openness to those suggestions, including the next European Economic Congress.
- On the future role of gas, Mr Buzek would expect the Commission to put forward a new "gas market design", similar to the electricity market design just established under the Clean energy package. The current legislation in place, such as the Gas Directive, would not adequately or comprehensively address topics such cross-border gas trading, network codes, or consumer and prosumer rights; new forms of gas (e.g. hydrogen, biogases, gas based on renewables, methane etc.) would need to be addressed as well.
- On "green financing criteria" of the EIB, Mr Buzek showed his disagreement with the role the EIB has taken on recently; in his view, the EIB would need to follow the Commission's views, as it stands under the Commission and under Member States – not above. A decision not to further finance any gas infrastructure anymore would not help to achieve our decarbonisation goals and the Paris Agreement, but would actually put these aims at risk.
- In the same direction, the 4<sup>th</sup> PCI list would have to be defended in the EP.
- However, on Nordstream 2, Mr Buzek reiterated his concerns mentioned in the past, as he fears that this project would lead to more dependency on Russian gas rather than diversification.