

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE**Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS****Sustainable Transport and Tourism****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?

I am a Regional Governor, former Parliamentarian, former President, and currently the first Vice President of the European Committee of the Regions. Above all, I am a staunch pro-European.

I am honoured to be entrusted with the portfolio of sustainable transport and tourism. It brings closer together two sectors with immense synergies but also facing similar challenges in their move towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

During my tenure as Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece, I promoted the transformation of urban mobility in the city of Thessaloniki, making transport greener, smarter, more sustainable and affordable. I implemented specific policies for reducing vehicle emissions in my region fostering the use of electric vehicles and promoting active mobility, including by setting up new electric charging stations and extending the cycling lanes network. Moreover, I managed European funds to upgrade transport infrastructure to connect urban and rural areas and to improve road safety. I have also successfully promoted my region as a top tourism destination of Greece, while supporting projects investing in sustainable tourism. Furthermore, in cooperation with other local and regional stakeholders, we established new maritime and aviation connections, promoting regional connectivity and outreach. At the same time, my experience in the European Committee of the Regions makes me confident that I will be effective in bridging the gap between European, national, and regional authorities to deliver a sustainable, smart and safe transport system that serves and connects all citizens and is ensuring that the EU remains a leading tourist destination. As President of the European Committee of the Regions I fostered stronger collaboration with the European Parliament and the European Commission, working side by side with other regional and local leaders and the other European Institutions. I grew convinced that we can achieve much more when we stand united.

Thanks to my previous experiences, I know very well how crucial the two sectors are for our Union. I have witnessed first-hand the real-life challenges they face. I know how important transport is for the remote regions of the EU and for their sense of belonging to the EU. I have also seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism, and on our citizens and businesses at large. Both sectors have enormous potential to deliver on our increased prosperity, make success of their green and digital transitions, and sustain our quality of life. My previous experiences and my work on the ground will help me design policy responses that make citizens the focal point of our efforts.

The political guidelines of President-elect von der Leyen set out a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. I would like transport and tourism, as well as their industrial ecosystems, to play a central role in this undertaking as part of their twin green and digital transition. I will do my utmost to make European

transport and tourism more competitive, more sustainable and more resilient. I will work tirelessly to fully implement and take forward the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the EU Agenda for Tourism 2030.

In delivering on this task, I will focus on supporting our businesses and Member States in the implementation. I will work to strengthen the single market for transport and on a Sustainable Transport Investment Plan, to facilitate the shift towards sustainable transport solutions. I will support the roll-out of trans-European transport infrastructure, while making the most of digital tools, new tech and innovation. I will also take every effort to maintain Europe's standing as a leading tourist destination while ensuring the sector's sustainability, resilience and competitiveness.

I will work under the guidance of Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms, and I will collaborate with other relevant Executive Vice-Presidents and Commissioners in order to promote the green and digital transition and increase the competitiveness of European transport and tourism.

I recognise that the workforce of transport sector is not sufficiently diverse. In fact, it remains one of the most male-dominated sectors. At the same time, the transport workforce is ageing fast, which further increases the urgency of attracting a more diverse pool of talent into the sector. I am committed to ensuring equality mainstreaming in transport policy, especially in relation to gender and age, in order to effectively address the challenges the transport sector is facing, including staff shortages and the need for workers to upskill and reskill to stay fit for the technological change and the ongoing automation and digitalisation.

In particular, I will be eager to support the "Women in Transport-EU Platform for Change" and the network of Ambassadors for Diversity in Transport. I also intend to maintain a regular dialogue with young people on their aspirations and perceived challenges with respect to jobs in the transport sector, to better understand their expectations and concerns. I therefore look forward to organising a Youth Dialogue already in the first 100 days of my mandate.

I am fully aware of the obligations set out in the Treaties (Articles 17(3) TEU, 245 and 339 TFEU) and confirm my commitment to fully respecting these obligations, including with the highest ethical standards and respecting the Code of Conduct for Commissioners. My Declaration of Interests foreseen by the Code of Conduct for Commissioners is complete and accessible to the public and will be updated as relevant.

I commit to avoiding any position or situation which could put into question my independence, impartiality and availability to the Commission. I commit to informing the President of the Commission of any situation which might involve a conflict of interests in the performance of my official duties.

I also commit to complying with transparency obligations, as set out in the Code of Conduct, as regards meeting only with those organisations or self-employed individuals that are registered in the Transparency Register.

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?

If confirmed as Commissioner, I will take full political responsibility for the activities in the area of sustainable transport and tourism, as set out in the Mission Letter sent to me on 17 September. I will carry out my responsibilities in full cooperation with the other members of the College of Commissioners and in accordance with the working methods established by the President, in full respect of the collegiality principle. I will closely involve my colleagues in the development, adoption and implementation of policy initiatives that are necessary to deliver on the President von der Leyen's political guidelines presented to the European Parliament in July.

I believe inter-institutional cooperation is at the very heart of the effective functioning of the EU's institutional system, and of the efficiency and legitimacy of EU decision-making. My action in this area will be inspired and guided by fundamental principles such as openness, mutual trust, efficiency, and regular exchange of information. I will support and fully respect the provisions of the 2010 Framework Agreement and the 2016 Inter-institutional

Agreement on Better Law-Making. I am aware that the European Parliament and the Council must be treated equally as co-legislators.

I am fully committed to ensuring that my interactions with the European Parliament are open, transparent and constructive. I want to build a relationship of mutual trust. I will make myself available to take part in all relevant committee meetings, trilogue discussions, and plenary exchanges relevant to my portfolio. I will work with the Parliament and relevant committees at all stages of both the policy-making process and the political dialogue. Whenever necessary, I will engage in proceedings related resolutions under Article 225 TFEU.

If confirmed as Commissioner, I will establish constructive relations and ensure a regular flow of information with the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), with the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and other committees as relevant. I believe also in transparent, direct and regular communication with committee members. I will be available for bilateral meetings whenever necessary. I will ensure the questions addressed to the Commission from members of the European Parliament in areas or on issues falling under my responsibility receive timely and informative responses. I will be ready to appear before the European Parliament's plenary and committees as needed.

Likewise, I am fully committed to ensuring that the European Parliament is well-informed about the key stages of international negotiations that may unfold in areas under my responsibility, as well as about other major events.

I am fully committed to bringing – together with the European Parliament and Council – more transparency throughout the legislative process. I will implement the provisions on transparency, including those concerning the multiannual programming exercise at the beginning of the term, as set out in the Framework Agreement and the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making. I will also comply with Commission's very high transparency standards for meetings with interest representatives. I commit to the implementation of the better regulation agenda and to ensuring that policy proposals under my responsibility are based on consultations of experts and the public. I will strive to find new ways forward and ideas to improve the voice of citizens and civil societies in the European Union, in particular for our youth. We need to promote participative democracy so that the citizens are well informed and engaged in our policy making. I will actively fight disinformation and put effort to communicate timely and clearly about the Commission's actions, as well as to carefully listen to the concerns of those affected.

Likewise, I also commit to ensuring that relations with the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport and other Commission services are based on loyalty, trust, transparency, a two-way information flow and mutual assistance.

Questions from the Committee on Transport and Tourism

3. President von der Leyen tasked the future Commissioner for sustainable transport and tourism in her mission letter to "make European transport more competitive, more sustainable and more resistant to future shocks and to ensure transport is safe, accessible and affordable for all EU citizens". What would be your strategy and priorities, also in terms of concrete legislation, to accomplish this task and under what timetable? What are in your view the most pressing challenges and how do you intend to address them?

Transport is a crucial enabler for the competitiveness of the European economy and the Single Market. That is also how I see it: not only as an important economic sector in its own right, but also as an essential catalyst for other economic activities, not least of which tourism. At the same time, the transport sector is key to achieve our climate targets for 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. This also makes clear that transport policy cannot and should not operate in a vacuum. In line with the mission entrusted to me by President elect Ursula von der Leyen, if confirmed, I will work very closely with the Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms and all other Members of the College of Commissioners to ensure that our policies are designed in a consistent manner and that they fully draw on the transport and mobility sector's potential to deliver our goals of competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the EU economy.

I believe that the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy adopted by the European Commission in December 2020 laid down an ambitious plan for EU transport policy and it remains largely valid for the years to come. The Strategy's three pillars of shifting to zero-emission mobility, achieving seamless, safe and efficient connectivity, and delivering a more resilient Single European Transport Area align with my vision for the future of European transport. I intend to continue the work that has already started and to rapidly progress on the new Commission's priority actions for sustainable transport and tourism.

My focus will be on working towards a transport system that can support the competitiveness of our businesses and the connectivity of our citizens while respecting climate and environment. This goal can only be achieved through continued efforts to successfully achieve the twin green and digital transitions of the sector, to pursue breakthrough innovation, and to ensure that transport in Europe is and remains safe, accessible and affordable. At the same time, the EU transport sector, including its industrial ecosystems, must be able to compete globally, anticipate and prepare for any type of exogenous shocks and be able to recover from disruptions swiftly. These concern natural disasters, geopolitical tensions or wider disruptions to the economy like the one we have witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It must also support Europe's defence and security, inter alia through enhanced military mobility.

Numerous challenges lie ahead of us as have been laid bare by Mario Draghi and Enrico Letta. They range from the massive investment needs to regulatory fragmentation, from labour and skills shortages to the uneven playing field with third countries.

First of all, I will take action to support our sector in the transition towards our sustainable and digital goals and remove barriers to enhance its competitiveness. In this spirit, I intend to present a Sustainable Transport Investment Plan to scale up and prioritise investments in transport decarbonisation solutions, and I will develop an EU industrial action plan for the automotive sector and a new industrial maritime strategy. These initiatives are critical to maintaining the competitive edge of our industrial ecosystem. I will also present a dedicated plan to help connect EU capitals and large cities by high-speed rail, including night-trains. To further support modal shift and promote cross-border travel, I will put forward a Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation for rail, complementing and improving existing obligations in this area, as well as a multimodal digital mobility services initiative to make it easier for our citizens to opt for more sustainable travel options. Furthermore, I will coordinate the preparation of a comprehensive EU Port Strategy to improve the security, sustainability and competitiveness of the EU's ports. Subject to my confirmation and the agreement by the rest of the College of Commissioners, I will aim to put forward these initiatives as early as possible during my mandate.

Second, enhancing transport safety will be at the forefront of my work. We need to protect our passengers and transport workers by implementing in full the EU's transport safety standards across the EU and across transport modes, improving the tools at our disposal to support and strengthen the oversight of national safety bodies, and supporting the rollout of smart technologies and infrastructure improvements that can make our transport systems safer. I intend to present early in my mandate the roadworthiness package, improving the way crucial safety and emission control systems in vehicles work and addressing odometer fraud.

Third, I will focus on ensuring that the substantial body of the EU transport acquis that is in force is effectively and consistently implemented and enforced. After all, crucial policy objectives – from fair competition to high social, environmental and safety standards and effective passenger protection – are entirely dependent on the agreed rules being fully applied across our Union. Without a focus on implementation and enforcement, a genuine Single Market for transport services will remain no more than an aspiration. As part of this work, I will carefully listen to the views and experience of all concerned stakeholders and administrations and hold implementation dialogues. I will regularly report to the European Parliament and to the Council on this exercise. I will spare no effort in promoting simplification and alleviating the regulatory burden for our businesses and public administrations where this is due, including by making the best use of digital solutions.

Fourth, the fast-changing geopolitical context in recent years has further highlighted the importance of a stable neighbourhood and solid international ties. Together with the Commissioner for enlargement, I will, if confirmed, pursue an active enlargement agenda to take forward the candidate countries' integration into the EU transport systems. My focus here will be on extending the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), improving our physical links, and support the candidates' alignment to our EU rules. At the end of the day, transport will be critical for the successful integration in the Single Market and the cohesion of these countries. I will work towards better connections and cooperation with our other international partners and allies, to allow efficient and effective logistics routes for our critical supplies and exports, as well as to promote EU standards and practices globally. I am deeply convinced that many of the challenges ahead can only be solved if we engage beyond our borders. I will therefore make sure that the EU plays a leading role in relevant international fora and towards our key international partners, promoting our highest safety, social and environmental standards.

I will also work to defend the interests of the European transport industry and its industrial ecosystems, including through strengthened implementation of existing third country agreements (e.g. air transport agreements) and by pursuing new mutually beneficial trade agreements and partnerships.

To achieve these policy goals, I will work with the European Parliament and the Council to finish the legislative negotiations on the outstanding initiatives which are crucial for the competitiveness, safety and sustainability of our sector. This includes initiatives aimed at addressing regulatory fragmentation in the EU's Single Market for transport, improving road and maritime safety, and further incentivising sustainable transport solutions.

Last but not least, transport in Europe needs investments on an unprecedented scale. These range from the key objective of completing our TEN-T network, our transport backbone, making the EU's infrastructure more resilient to natural disasters or hostile actions and contributing to European defence and security through actions to improve military mobility, to the deployment of innovative solutions and the modernisation of our fleets, facilitating investment in sustainable fuels and technologies to decarbonise the sector, and to a smarter organisation of our mobility in cities.

4. What actions will you take to ensure that the EU reaches its climate goals in transport, both in terms of implementing and/or adapting current and proposing new legislation, while ensuring a level playing field for European transport companies, the competitiveness of the European transport sector and high-quality and attractive jobs in Europe?

It is estimated that reaching climate neutrality by 2050 will require a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, and to increase the share of renewable energy used in transport to 94%. In line with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, I will work on making all transport modes more sustainable, on increasing and facilitating access for citizens to available and affordable sustainable transport and mobility options, and on providing the right incentives to citizens and companies so that they can make informed choices. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will work hand-in-hand with the relevant Executive Vice-Presidents as well as the Commissioners for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth and for Energy and Housing to deliver on our shared sustainability objectives, which can only be successfully achieved through close collaboration between us and coordination between our respective policy areas.

The general policy framework has already been put in place in the previous mandate of the Commission, and I trust that these rules provide the necessary predictability for all stakeholders to continue their investments and their transition towards cleaner solutions. At the same time, we need to work more on bringing about the right enabling conditions, in a technology-neutral manner. In particular, this will require us to ensure that sufficient sustainable energy sources are available and affordable for all transport sectors. If confirmed as Commissioner, will do so also through the regular dialogues with stakeholders to discuss how best to align implementation with realities on the ground.

To this end, first of all, I intend to put forward a Sustainable Transport Investment Plan. Building on the Clean Industrial Deal, it would identify measures to effectively support the energy transition in transport and to boost investment in the production and supply of sustainable transport fuels in Europe, in particular for aviation and maritime transport, as well as access to electricity for transport. I will carefully monitor and assess the progress towards the agreed uptake of sustainable aviation and maritime fuels, for our rules to deliver on their objectives, and I will not hesitate to come forward with possible adjustments, if needed.

Climate change is a global problem and requires global solutions. In coordination with Member States, I will engage with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to pave the way for an equally ambitious global agenda. This is also crucial to secure a level playing field and the competitiveness of the European aviation and maritime companies that operate globally, as well as to make progress on our transport sustainability and decarbonisation goals on a global level (see my replies to Question 8).

Second, to help put road transport on a stable decarbonisation pathway, I will oversee a swift build-up of user-friendly charging and refuelling infrastructure across Europe, monitor closely developments in the Member States and prepare a review of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation by 2027 to address any shortcoming. I will work with the Commissioner for Energy and Housing to ensure that we align transport and energy infrastructure development needed to accommodate the future increase in transport electricity demand, including for heavy-duty vehicles. I also intend to assess how to promote a faster transition to zero-emission vehicles, including in corporate fleets (see also reply to Question 8).

In parallel, I will work to increase investment and deployment of rail infrastructure and high-speed rail services and improve the passenger experience through single digital booking and ticketing across Europe in order to promote greater use of rail as a sustainable mode of transport (see my reply to Question 5). At the same time, I will support European cities in their preparation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, which place public transport

and safe active mobility at their heart. I will also follow up on the implementation of the European Declaration on Cycling with a detailed report already next year.

I will also work to strengthen the EU's Single Market for transport, build an efficient transport infrastructure network, and promote innovative transport solutions (see my replies to Questions 3 & 6). These are all areas with much untapped potential for increased efficiency and growth potential for the EU, which can at the same time deliver emission savings.

The competitiveness of European transport companies is dependent on availability of skilled and trained personnel. We must urgently address the current shortage of workers in the sector and respond to the challenges linked to re-skilling and upskilling of the workforce. A recommendation on the means to address the impact of automation and digitalisation on the transport workforce was adopted in 2024. I will work with national authorities and relevant stakeholders to intensify their efforts in ensuring that the workforce has the necessary skills to adapt to new technologies and innovation both in the field of sustainability and digitalisation. I will also support the work of the Pact for Skills large-scale partnerships on Automotive and on Shipbuilding and Maritime Technology, in close cooperation with the Executive-Vice President for People, Skills and Preparedness.

Another crucial way of addressing the current labour shortage is to improve the working conditions of our transport workers. Complementing the initiatives which the Executive-Vice President for People, Skills and Preparedness will put forward to support quality jobs, such as the Quality Jobs Roadmap, I will further the efforts to improve the working conditions of our transport workers specifically. The EU has a whole range of social rules aimed at improving the well-being of our drivers, crews and other transport staff. My priority will be to improve the implementation and enforcement of such rules, which today remains uneven. Key areas of work in this field include the implementation of rules to improve working and resting conditions of drivers, support for the development of safe and secure parking areas, as well as awareness raising actions on labour and social rights and obligations of (mobile) workers taking into account the characteristics of each transport mode. We must attract more women and young workers to transport professions.

In all of the above one thing remains clear: the transition to more sustainable mobility must be reconciled with necessary connectivity and transport affordability. This is particularly acute as transport already accounts on average for 12.5% of the household budget in the EU. To tackle the negative social impacts, I will encourage Member States to take transport and mobility needs duly into account in the formulation of their Social Climate Plans, and I intend to help them by preparing recommendations to address and prevent 'transport poverty'. This will contribute to the work of the Executive-Vice President for People, Skills and Preparedness on the EU's Anti-Poverty Strategy.

5. According to the Draghi report, improved infrastructure and services, as well as more effective railway and inland waterway management, can unlock further growth, help to tackle congestion and accommodate increasing demand. Road congestion is estimated to cost the EU around EUR 230 billion a year. Furthermore, there is currently a persistent shortage of qualified labour across all transport modes. What steps do you intend to take to turn modal shift and multimodality targets into a reality, for both passengers and freight in line with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and tackle the labour shortage in the transport sector? In this context, how will you ensure that more effective rail and inland waterway transport (the latter notably absent from the mission letter) remain a full part of this strategy? Also in terms of multimodality, what concrete legislative actions do you intend to take to make multimodal transport more effective, accessible and affordable for EU citizens? Under what timeline?

The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy provides a clear vision for making transport more sustainable and sets important milestones related to the need to increase the use of more sustainable transport modes, such as significantly raising high-speed rail and rail freight traffic and increasing transport by inland waterways and short sea shipping. To achieve these milestones, the Commission, national and local authorities as well as other stakeholders, all need to do more.

If confirmed as Commissioner, I want to make sure that the Commission takes a leading role. As a matter of priority, I intend to prepare an ambitious plan to help connect EU capitals and large cities by high-speed rail, through the effective implementation of our TEN-T policy and targeting the numerous remaining obstacles to better connectivity of all European rail services, which are lack of interoperability, such as in signalling and lack of sufficient deployment of other digital technologies. These actions will also contribute to enhanced connections, including by night trains and more modern and flexible rail freight so that all regions of Europe are adequately served. Since rail must be supported by a strong and diverse rail supply industry and a competent labour force, my

focus will also include promoting solutions expected to contribute to a better functioning of the European railway system.

Implementation and enforcement of the Fourth Railway Package remains crucial to improve the rail service offer for our citizens.

As explained above, I also intend to launch an initiative to address multimodal ticketing as soon as possible, including through a Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation by the end of 2025, complementing and improving existing obligations in this area, as well as by a multimodal digital mobility services initiative, to make travel options by rail easier to access and to enhance the protection of passengers.

Beyond this, enhancing rail connectivity through infrastructure upgrades and new cross-border connections, and better integrating the rail network with other transport modes, will be key areas of activity. Addressing the current issues related to the certification scheme of train drivers will also be important (see my replies to Question 4 on the issue of labour shortage).

For effective multimodality, the important role played by other collective modes of transport such as public transport, shared mobility and coaches should also not be forgotten and their transition to greater sustainability should be facilitated. The effective use and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, investments in sustainable and safe urban transport infrastructure, and the promotion of active transport modes will all be vital to make our multimodal transport system more sustainable and efficient, and to alleviate congestion on urban roads.

As regards inland navigation, I will focus on implementing the Naiades III Action Plan to help shift more goods onto inland waterways transport. I will pay particular attention to ensure continued navigability all over the network, and I will push the sector towards zero-emissions vessels and ports. At the same time, I will work to promote digital solutions for increased efficiency in the sector and its better integration in the logistics chain. In this context, it is essential that the European Parliament and the Council reach an agreement on the proposed revision of the Directive on harmonised river information services (RIS).

I am committed to increasing intermodal freight transport, which combines the environmental performance and energy efficiency of rail, short sea shipping and inland waterways with the flexibility of road transport. This is the most promising and dynamic market segment of freight transport. I will make every effort to reach an ambitious agreement on the proposed revision of the Combined Transport Directive.

I will also focus on paperless transport – to further bring down the barriers to intermodal transport and to simplify administrative procedures in other areas, for the benefit of both companies and citizens. This work will complement and build on the existing tools, such as electronic freight transport information (eFTI), and the European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe), which, once fully implemented, are expected to bring substantial efficiency gains to freight transport and the logistics sector.

Furthermore, we must empower consumers, who increasingly demand cleaner products and services. In this context, I count on the cooperation of the European Parliament and the Council to agree on the proposed CountEmissionsEU initiative, allowing to set a common framework for the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions of transport services. The upcoming labelling scheme informing passengers about the environmental performance of flights - resulting from the implementation of ReFuelEU Aviation - will also be useful in this regard.

As indicated above, I will work with national authorities and relevant stakeholders to intensify their efforts in ensuring that the workforce has the necessary skills to adapt to new technologies and innovation both in the field of sustainability and digitalisation, working with the Executive-Vice President for People, Skills and Preparedness.

6. The completion of the TEN-T network is projected to bring an annual GDP increase of EUR 467 billion in 2050, but will require an estimated EUR 845 billion and so far the Commission and the Member States have not presented a comprehensive plan to secure the necessary financing. How would you ensure that the implementation of the TEN-T network is adequately financed, notably under the upcoming CEF Regulation and in the next MFF? How can the Commission incentivise and attract private investment to close the gap and how would you suggest to boost public-private partnerships?

My key objective will be to significantly improve Europe's connectivity during my mandate – both within the EU, with our neighbours and with the rest of the world. This underpins a functioning Single Market enabling the free circulation of goods, services, passengers and workers. Passengers, workers and goods need to be able to move across our Union with the same ease they move within their Member State.

The revised Regulation establishing the guidelines for the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) sets the objective of completing the core European transport network by 2030. This means that the five years to come are essential to progress on the completion of the core network and to show we can deliver. In this regard, I will very closely monitor the implementation of this and other provisions of this Regulation. Working with the TEN-T coordinators, the Member States and the European Parliament, I will ensure proper monitoring of progress and improved coordination with the Member States and the relevant authorities. In addition to the core network, I will also aim to ensure that we progress on the extended core and comprehensive networks not to leave any region behind. This is crucial not only to improve territorial – and social – cohesion in the EU, but also to strengthen our Single Market.

The revised TEN-T Regulation has extended our transport corridors to Ukraine and Moldova, laying the ground for the longer-term connectivity of the two countries with the EU. At the same time, our transport network has now been extended to the Western Balkans, which will help accelerate the region's integration into our European transport market. My priority will be to deliver on these plans on the ground. At the same time, I commit to continue the critical work on the Solidarity Lanes to provide well-functioning alternative logistics routes between the EU and Ukraine (and Moldova) via inland waterways, road and rail.

Completing the TEN-T network will require sizeable investments: the core network alone is estimated to require some EUR 515 billion in investments. The Connecting Europe Facility under the current Multiannual Financial Framework has helped advancing on closing key cross-border links and speed up the post-pandemic recovery of the EU. I will work closely with the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration to ensure that the next multiannual financial framework reflects the challenges facing the transport sector, notably the cross-border, missing links and military mobility, to support large scale movements of troops and materiel.

At the same time, I will continue to engage with Member States and local authorities to ensure that they are fully reflecting our commonly agreed objectives in their own budgets and investment plans. We also need to explore financing opportunities beyond the public sector and I will therefore work on developing innovative sources of funding, including by building on the positive experience of blending grants with loans under the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility. I will engage in particular with the European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to ensure their lending strategies reflect the most pressing policy needs. Further reflection is also necessary on how the very robust and mature project pipeline stemming from the European Transport Corridors can attract long term investment by private actors and funds. Last but not least, I will push Member States for accelerating time for obtaining permits, and to cut the administrative burden for the participation of private partners.

7. How do you intend to promote a resilient, sustainable and competitive tourism sector, in line with the EU Agenda for Tourism 2030 and the 2023 Palma Declaration, while ensuring economic growth and better management of tourism flows in line with the needs of local communities? Ahead of the next MFF negotiations, would you commit to insist on the longstanding TRAN Committee call for a separate budgetary line for tourism?

First of all, I am honoured to be, if confirmed, the Commissioner for sustainable tourism. I intend to give real substance to this decision of President von der Leyen so that it translates into a fully-fledged European policy.

Sustainable tourism provides a positive drive for the European economy as well as for the regional and local communities across Europe. It is a vibrant industrial ecosystem representing more than 3 million SMEs. The sector also brings value to our shared natural and cultural heritage and contributes to the economic and social cohesion of the regions, including those more remote or disadvantaged. However, tourism is also highly concentrated in specific regions and faces a number of challenges, from climate change to labour shortages, which are common to

transport. I believe that the EU must maintain its position as the number one tourist destination in the world, while making tourism more sustainable, balanced and preserving the well-being of local communities.

I am committed to promoting a resilient, sustainable and competitive tourism sector, as agreed by the Member States under the EU Agenda for Tourism 2030. While the direction of travel is clear, with agreed actions, targets and responsibilities, I believe we need to better exploit the synergies that exist across different EU policies, and in particular with transport, to support and promote tourism more effectively. That is why, if confirmed as Commissioner, I will come forward, after wide consultation of relevant stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, with a strategy to accelerate the implementation of this agenda and promote the business case for resilient and competitive tourism. I will support the tourism industry in their efforts to reduce environmental impacts and to go for new, greener business models. I will encourage businesses and in particular SMEs to choose recognised, reliable sustainability schemes and labels, which in turn will allow them to be more competitive to meet tourism demand. At the same time, I will promote excellence, including through the continued European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism awards.

European destinations need to be equipped to manage tourism flows in a balanced way. I propose to continue supporting them through effective knowledge exchange, peer learning and sharing of best practices aimed, in particular, at reducing pressures on tourism hotspots, applying preventive measures, raising awareness on the responsible tourism behaviour, and at involving host communities in the creation and implementation of sustainable tourism models. The 2023 Council Palma Declaration highlighted social sustainability of tourism as a key issue. It is also central point in the transition pathway for tourism. I will continue supporting destinations in their preparedness to face climate change.

Data will also play a major role in ensuring an optimal management of tourism flows by destinations. In this respect, the Commission is setting up a data space for tourism that will allow tourism actors, including destinations, to make more accurate and better-informed decisions.

Today, EU support for tourism is spread across different EU funding programmes. The preparation of the next multiannual financial framework will provide an opportunity to make the EU's budget simpler, more focused, and more responsive. I will work with the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration on these elements.

More work will also need to be done to increase the awareness of the tourism ecosystem actors of the funding opportunities that exist, in particular for SMEs. I will build on the ongoing work to ensure that our tourism businesses and cultural venues find it easier to find funding opportunities – at European, but also national and regional levels.

Question from the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

8. Emissions from the transport sector represent almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions; it is the only major sector of the economy where these have increased at EU level since 1990. Therefore, further efforts are essential to make sure that all parts of the sector contribute to decarbonisation and to have the right framework. The transformative changes necessary come with manifold challenges such as those related to a growing transport volume on the infrastructure, the increase of sustainable alternative fuels and the stimulation of battery manufacturing. Which improved enabling conditions, specific steps, timeframes and legal instruments will you bring forward so that sustainable transport policies contribute to economic growth, job security and competitiveness in Europe, while ensuring to reach the 2030 targets as part of the European Green Deal and for the Union to become climate-neutral? How will you ensure - in cooperation with the Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth - that the Union leads the way to increased international commitments to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime and aviation sectors? What concrete measures do you plan as part of the EU industrial action plan for the automotive sector? What will be the legal nature and timing of the announced proposal on clean corporate fleets?

The need to transform the EU's transport sector for a climate-neutral future is undeniable. I will articulate my efforts along the objectives already outlined in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and based on the legislation agreed so far. More concretely, I will focus on rapidly deploying zero-emission vehicles, on ensuring that sustainable transport fuels and technologies are both available and affordable, on overseeing the swift rollout of infrastructure, and on increasing transport activity by more sustainable transport modes. I see this transformation not just as an environmental necessity. It is also an economic opportunity for Europe. By leading the global

transition to sustainable transport, the EU can strengthen its place at the forefront of technological innovation. This leadership will also strengthen its competitive position, drive growth, and secure employment in Europe.

The regulatory framework for the sector's emission reductions has already largely been established through the Fit for 55 package, the Efficient and Green Mobility package, and the Greening Freight package. We now need to deliver. My first area of focus will therefore be on working with the co-legislators to reach an agreement on the proposals on which the agreement is yet to be found, including key initiatives to incentivise zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles, improve the use of railway infrastructure, promote intermodal transport operations, and establish a framework to assess and compare the greenhouse gas emissions of transport services. I will also make sure that all the instruments established by these packages are rapidly and effectively implemented.

The success of the EU's efforts depends on a number of crucial enabling conditions being in place. The EU needs to improve, and future-proof, its transport infrastructure, further strengthen its Single Market for transport, facilitate investment, promote technologies such as more efficient batteries and zero-emission powertrains, and increase efficiency in the transport system through digital solutions. A critical area of work lies in ensuring access to much more renewable electricity and affordable sustainable fuels. I will work with the Commissioner for Energy and Housing to ensure that we align transport and energy infrastructure development needed to accommodate the future increase in transport electricity demand, including for heavy-duty vehicles. At the same time, I will work to ramp-up the production and distribution of renewable and low-carbon transport fuels, particularly needed in the hard-to-abate aviation and maritime transport segments.

We need to make more efforts to successfully reconcile our environmental goals with the social and economic imperatives of transport, notably connectivity and affordability. We also need to use all available instruments to make sure that European prosperity and industrial strength is well-supported. These will all be priorities for my work, in line with the mission entrusted to me by President-elect Ursula von der Leyen.

Another critical aspect is to increase the availability and quality of sustainable transport options. In this regard, I will continue promoting rail – for both passenger and freight transport. This will include an ambitious plan to help connect EU capitals and large cities by high-speed rail and a proposal for a Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation complementing and improving existing obligations in this area, both of which I intend to put forward early on in mandate (see my replies to Question 5). I will also support the legislators in reaching an ambitious agreement on the Commission proposal for a regulation on the use of rail infrastructure capacity.

As transport is international in nature, it is clear that the EU cannot and must not go it alone. This is not only crucial to effectively limit global warming in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement, but also to ensure a level playing field for our businesses. We need to maintain the EU's leadership in climate mitigation. I will work in full cooperation with the Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth to ensure that the EU presents a unified front and leads the global efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, notably for aviation and maritime transport.

In relation to aviation, under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Long-term Net-Zero Target for Aviation and the Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels, Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels and other Aviation Cleaner Energies provide a compass and a solid basis for our continued global efforts. It will be crucial to ensure that the agreed framework delivers. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will work to strengthen the rules and implementation of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) to ensure that it brings tangible climate benefits on a global scale. This will include an assessment of whether the scheme is sufficiently aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. At the same time, I will spare no effort in our cooperation with third countries and in the framework of ICAO to support the development of sustainable aviation fuel policies and projects, building on the pioneering experience of the 'ReFuelEU Aviation' Regulation and EU external assistance and cooperation programmes, including the Global Gateway.

As regards maritime transport, 2025 will represent a critical year for global climate mitigation efforts. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will focus on ensuring that ambitious mid-term greenhouse gas emission reduction measures are agreed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The goal here will be to ensure that the measures that are agreed can boost the uptake of zero-emission fuels in shipping, deliver a steady reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the sector, and ensure that the framework accounts for the needs of the developing countries. At the same time, I will take effort to strengthen the short-term greenhouse gas emission measures and support projects aimed at reducing the price difference between zero-emission and conventional fuels globally.

The global transformation of the transport sector is an opportunity for Europe's industrial champions – current and future. This is particularly the case for Europe's automotive industry. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will build on the Clean Industrial Deal and develop an industrial action plan for the automotive sector to ensure that the EU remains a global leader and maintains a strong European production base. Action will be needed across the value chain: from critical raw materials to charging infrastructure. We must ensure that EU can rely on the needed infrastructure, both for refuelling and recharging, and can fully exploit automation and data. The ultimate goals of the measures we need to take are clear: bolster our industry and its people, reduce our dependencies and vulnerabilities, and bring the sector on the path to meet the objectives of the twin sustainable and digital transitions. Similar objectives need to be pursued for aeronautics, rail and shipbuilding and maritime industries. I will work with all the relevant members of the College of Commissioners to achieve this as part of the Clean Industrial Deal.

A sustainable transformation will not only require action in support of our industrial base. It will also require action to make sustainable mobility an affordable and accessible choice for all citizens. In this respect, I will support the implementation of the Just Transition Fund and the Social Climate Fund and will prepare guidance on transport poverty. If confirmed as Commissioner, I will work with the other Commissioners, Member States and the European Parliament to promote appropriate incentives for consumers and businesses to purchase European electric vehicles. In line with my mission letter, I will develop proposals for clean corporate fleets to stimulate demand.