

# The new European Commission: Bad news for research and innovation?

*An analysis of the Juncker Commission*



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# Bad news for research and innovation?

Advocates for cross-sectoral R&D support fear a downgrade in the new Commission – but in individual areas such as energy, digital technologies, and pharmaceuticals, a stronger emphasis on growth and investment is good news for many

By Richard L. Hudson

With great fanfare at a Brussels press conference on Wednesday (10 September), President Jean-Claude Juncker presented his slate of fellow-Commissioners – and, more importantly, their job definitions. That night, one EU official reflected privately to friends: “This could go very badly for research.”

For the past five years, the European Union has been steadily upgrading the budgets and importance of anything labelled research and innovation, in an effort to show it is investing in growth, jobs and Europe’s future. There was an Innovation Union policy, an Innovation Council of Commissioners, a 30 per cent jump in funding for research and innovation – making it the third biggest budget line in Brussels, after farming and regional development. Now, a bare 48 hours after the new Commission is announced, many are asking if this particular policy idea is no longer “trending” in Brussels.

With so few of the details yet communicated – or even decided – it’s premature to draw sweeping conclusions; and Juncker confidantes, closeted in meetings, weren’t immediately commenting. But that doesn’t stop anybody in Brussels, where jobs and power depend on such things, from poring over the official documents and frantically ringing around town for some instant guidance.

As one senior official jokingly put it: “Now is the time to fear for the worst, and spin for the best.”

## Reading the tea leaves

The “bad news” signals include:

- The new Commission doesn’t include innovation among its stated priorities, as reflected in the new organigram. Individual areas of research and innovation – notably energy and digital technologies – get an upgrade in importance with their own Vice Presidents; and pharmaceutical and chemical companies were rejoicing that their new bosses will now be in more industry-friendly hands than before. But the idea of

research and innovation as a cross-cutting issue of top-level importance in its own right isn’t reflected in the new structure. Whether that’s on purpose, or just an oversight in the administrative rush, is a question much-discussed in the past 48 hours; but either way, the answer wouldn’t be encouraging to R&D advocates.

- The new research commissioner, Carlos Moedas of Portugal, has had part of his empire carved up. Some of the EU’s Executive Agencies – which handle the basic tasks of pushing grant money out the door – are having their portfolios distributed among several commissioners rather than reporting to just the Research Commissioner as in the past. Thus, for instance, transport research grants will be under the direct control of the new Transport Commissioner. At the same time, several insiders observed, Moedas appears to have been given a relatively junior status. His letter of mandate has him working with four different Vice Presidents, rather than having a single champion as with the more-weighty energy and digital portfolios. Of course, none of this means Moedas can’t have impact; but if so, it will be due to his political skills and force of character, rather than official status.

- Science is looking wobbly. Moedas’ formal title is Commissioner of Research, Science and Innovation – just like his predecessor, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn of Ireland. But his letter of mandate doesn’t list science or basic research as a priority, and many in the Commission are speculating that could be bad news for universities and other recipients of fundamental research grants. The European Research Council, the main basic-science agency of the Commission, is highly regarded by both the Parliament and the Council, so its budget is presumed safe; but other so-called “Excellence in Science” programmes may be less secure.

- One of the biggest surprises was the transfer of the Joint Research Centre, a 3,000-employee collection of government laboratories and policy analysts, from the control of the Research Commissioner to that of the Education Commissioner. In fact, it took some of the



new commissioners themselves by surprise, suggesting it was a last-minute adjustment in the Juncker plan. Exactly what it will mean, in substance, is a mystery in Brussels right now – but a Juncker spokeswoman said the move is intended to enhance its transversal role of providing science and technology advice to all other directorates-general. Exactly how, isn't clear.

### On the other hand...

There are, however, plenty of “good news” signals, as well – if your interest is in a particular sector, rather than in the overall concept of research and innovation.

- Energy R&D is a winner in the new line-up. The decision to appoint two commissioners responsible for energy portfolios – both tasked with speeding the creation of an integrated European energy market – reflects growing concerns for EU energy security. Linking 28 national energy systems into one integrated network will be one big job. Developing low-carbon technologies to underpin it, another. A revised Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan set to roll out in 2015 already makes network integration technologies such as smart grids a top priority, so no major changes to the new plan are expected. What's new? Both energy commissioners have portfolios that pool energy and climate dossiers – an effort to break down silos and enhance coordination among directorates.

- Health policy now comes with all the care of a physician. In his letter of mandate to Andriuskaitis, Juncker is frank: the tasks of the health Commissioner will be “limited”. For those who prefer their Commissioners to focus on a few key tasks, this is welcoming. The pharmaceutical and biotech industries are happy anyway: with medicines, medical devices and health technology moving to the newly enlarged Enterprise directorate, a greater emphasis is on increasing their economic performance. What's new? Regulation of pesticides – “biocides” officially – is now under the roof of the health directorate.

- In the digital domain, Brussels has called in two men to replace the indomitable Neelie Kroes. ICT loomed large in the mind of Juncker during his election campaign. Creating a connected digital single market Europe can generate up to €250 billion of additional growth over the next five years, he believes. While the drafting-in of an extra Energy Commissioner was a product of concern for energy security, the move to binary in digital is surely a product of growing opportunities. What to look out for: Ansip's six month deadline for a data protection deal, renewed attention on copyright, online piracy and net neutrality and Oettinger's grapples with Google Inc.

### Breaking the silos

Overall, the reaction inside the Commission to Juncker's changes were mostly positive. Several senior officials praised the concept of the two-tier Commission, with its Vice Presidents sitting on top of large portfolios handled by narrower, lower-tier Commissioners. It was viewed as a surprisingly bold step towards a once-radical idea: To break down the institutional silos inside the Commission by putting individual Vice Presidents in charge of large policy clusters, rather than scattering the work of the Commission among 28 different equal Commissioners, one for each member-state. Some officials speculated that, if it goes well, the next President might be able to do the unthinkable: Reduce the number of Commissioners to a manageable dozen or so.

But, as one senior Commission official put it, “the test is yet to come.” By that, he means that it's not clear yet whether, as planned, the new Vice Presidents will actually have the authority to filter proposals out before they come to decision. Under the Juncker system, no proposal is supposed to reach decision unless the Vice President for that policy cluster agrees; the aim is to keep the Commission focused only on major issues – something many industry executives, weary of proliferating minor regulations, have advocated. But officials with long institutional memories speculated that some of the new Commissioners might manoeuvre around the Vice Presidential barrier – perhaps by appealing for help from their national governments, or engaging in some creative horse-trading with their colleagues. Another potential problem is ambiguities in the boundaries of the various Commission portfolios. In an area of overlap, some officials said, the two directorates-general involved could waste time in turf warfare. That happens today, of course; but with, for instance, two energy commissioners and two digital commissioners, the opportunities for conflict are multiplied.

### Don't hold your breath

Of course, the effect of all this change is going to be delayed, and slow. For starters, the new Commission has first to be approved by the European Parliament, in hearings scheduled for Sept. 29 through Oct. 3 in Strasbourg. Already, two of the Commissioners – from Spain and Hungary – are expected to hit rough political waters there. If all goes as planned, the survivors of the hearings will take office Nov. 1. And, within three months of taking office, they are supposed to deliver a new economic growth plan.

That sounds bracing. But in fact, the overall contours of

the EU budget have already been fixed in law through 2020. And while there is plenty of room for manoeuvre within each of the individual budget lines, the EU bureaucracy has so much inertia that it may be a year before any systematic change starts to be seen. Within the research and innovation field, the most obvious first opportunity for change will be during the course of 2015, when the Commission is writing its new “work programme” for Horizon 2020, the main research and innovation budget; it is currently operating on a programme that runs through 2015, so any new plan wouldn’t take effect until 2016.

Another opportunity for change will be the scheduled mid-term review of Horizon 2020, set for 2017.

As for the importance of innovation, some industry officials have long noted that the whole trend seemed a bit superficial. For instance, Raymond Hegarty, Managing Director, International Licensing for Intellectual Ventures, an IP strategy firm, observes that “most people use the word “innovation” without understanding what it means. It is a cool buzzword and most examples point to Steve Jobs without really knowing what he did or how the lessons could transfer to other firms. For me, I see most people confusing ‘research’ with ‘invention’ and ‘innovation’.”

Whether the new team are thinking that way isn’t yet known. One official noted that they appeared to

have little real knowledge or interest in the topic of innovation. Instead, what mattered to them were their stated priorities such as better regulation, budgetary discipline and economic growth. But a more sympathetic official said they appear to view innovation as “an enabler” that cuts across all portfolios and all sectors, rather than something to develop for its own sake. So, by this view, the changes aren’t a descent in importance at all; instead, they are a kind of bureaucratic apotheosis.

## **A REACTION FROM THE PARLIAMENT**

**Carlos Zorrinho, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)**

“The announcement of the commissioners’ team gives me some doubts, mainly because I feel there is a lack of people with fresh ideas, and I fear that the power of financial pillars could cut good intentions in other areas, as has happened before.

The Lisbon Strategy was a precursor to the EU’s research vision – and launched in Portugal. So this portfolio recognizes the hard work that Portugal has done.

Moedas’ first priority will be to align the Horizon 2020 programme with an ambitious vision of sustainable development and global competitiveness of the EU.

Moedas needs to make choices and decide how the EU could “put a man on the moon – or on Mars if you prefer.” We need take advantage of experience and knowledge from centres and companies of excellence, but with a dynamic approach to open opportunities and newcomers with quantum leap ideas to enhance European prospects.”



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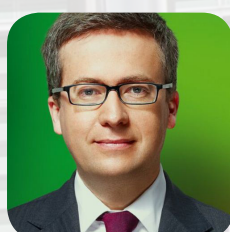
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# Commissioner-designates set for tense encounters with European Parliament

By Éanna Kelly

**Hungary's Tibor Navracsics has been handed a hot potato of a portfolio. Like his Spanish counterpart, Miguel Arias Cañete, he will need to use all his political skill to get round the Parliament**

Upon learning that he had been selected as the new Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship on Wednesday (10 September) Hungary's Tibor Navracsics reacted in simple fashion. "I like it. Let's have a try," he wrote on Twitter.

Despite his modesty, Navracsics, 48 and a trained lawyer, can expect a tough grilling from the European Parliament later this month during his hearing.

A close confidant of controversial Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whose government frequently clashes with Brussels on media and judicial reforms rolled out in Hungary, Navracsics comes to Europe's capital with some hard-to-ignore baggage. An impressive CV – including a stint as justice minister when many of these same laws were drawn up – may now hang round Navracsics' neck like a millstone.

Then there's the portfolio the incoming President, Jean-Claude Juncker, cooked up for him: Navracsics has been put in charge of culture, education and promotion of civic rights. This despite being from a government seen to be stomping on these areas. Someone with a dark sense of humour must have had a hand in it.



*Miguel Arias Cañete (left) and Tibor Navracsics*

Navracsics, who speaks Croatian and Serbian, alongside fluent English, comes from a solid background in academia. An expert on the Western Balkan region, he is an author of a number of papers on the former Yugoslavia.

"I firmly believe in and am fully committed towards European integration," he wrote in another message on Twitter following his nomination.

## Spain's pain

Meanwhile, Spain's Miguel Arias Cañete, 64, the new Commissioner for Energy and Climate Change, has his own problems. He hasn't won many female admirers for his televised comments earlier this year that debates with women are "complicated" because "if you show intellectual superiority you are branded sexist." Cue loud groans in Spain and further afield.

Green groups will be gunning for him too, a Commissioner with links to oil and his hand on the Climate Change dossier. His declaration of financial interests, published on the European Parliament's website, shows he has a 2.5 percent holding in Petrolifera Ducar S.L and a 2.5 percent holding in Petrologis Canarias S.L. oil companies.

"Juncker's team is full of surprises – not all of them good," Greenpeace EU managing director Mahi Sideridou said in a statement. "To prove he is the right man for the job, [Cañete will] have to resolve conflicts of interests and improve on his environmental record as a minister."

A bull-fighting enthusiast and bull breeder, Cañete will need to borrow some of their spirit.

Cañete's saving grace may be a network amassed over his career: he's no stranger to the Brussels bubble. For more than twelve years, 1986 to 1999, he was an MEP, variously serving on Committees on Agriculture (AGRI) and Fisheries (PECH). He was re-elected to the European Parliament in May this year.



## Right of veto

The European Parliament has a track record for turning controversial Commission characters away. The Italian centre-right candidate for Commissioner, Rocco Buttiglione, who sat before his own European Parliament hearing in 2004, raised uneasy murmurings when he was nominated.

"I may think that homosexuality is a sin," he said, in response to a question from a member of the European Parliament (MEP), "but this has no effect on politics, unless I say that homosexuality is a crime...The state has no right to stick its nose into these things." His portfolio? Justice, freedom and security.

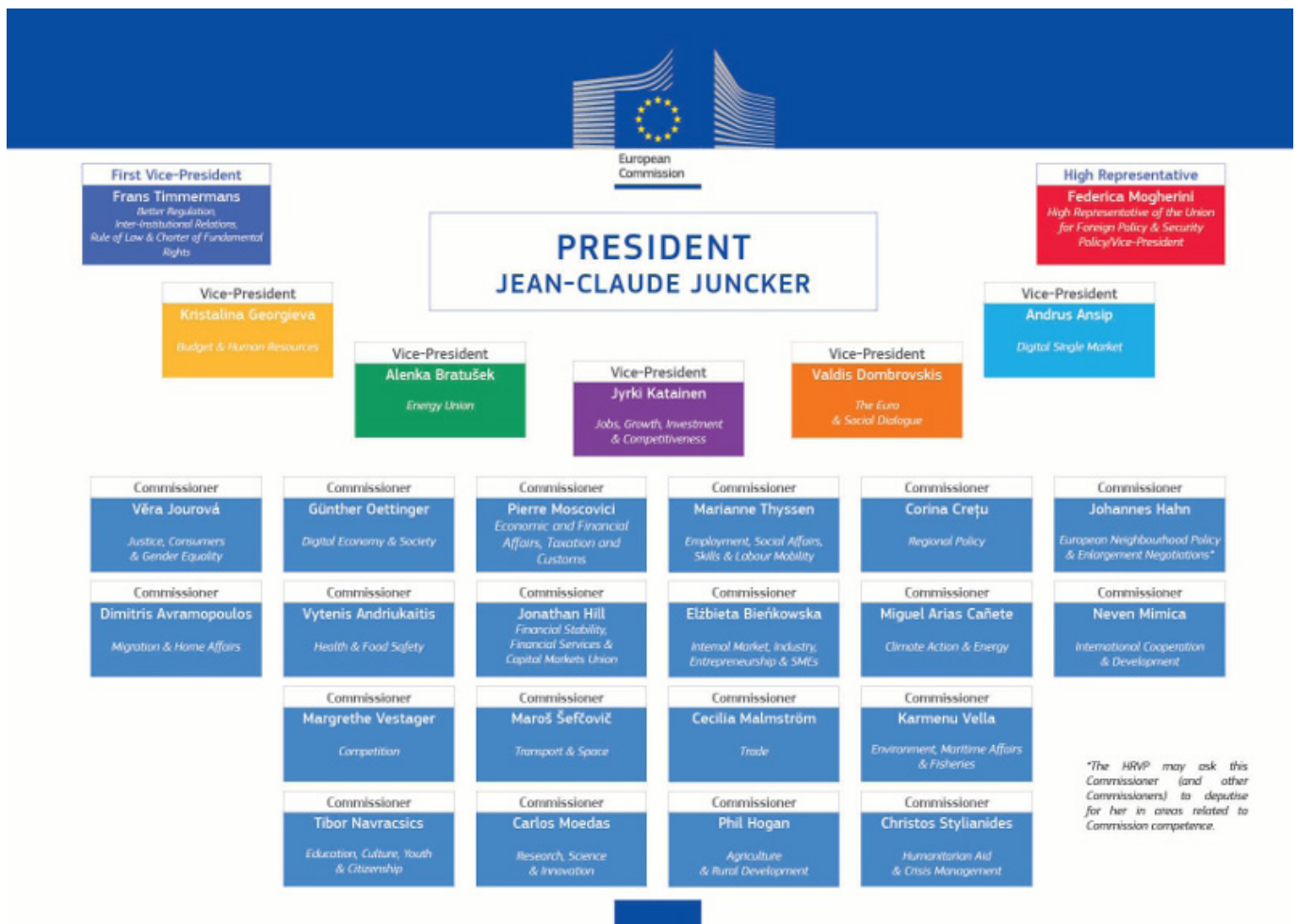
Liberal groups threatened to reject his candidacy over comments on homosexuality and women's role in society. Buttiglione was forced to withdraw.

Bulgaria's Commissioner-designated, Rumiana Jeleva, was also sent packing in 2009 after Socialists

and Democrats (S&D) and Liberal groups expressed concern about her lack of experience and hazy financial declarations.

The episode emboldened the politicians of the day. The Parliament's right of veto, very easy to scoff at before, was suddenly a weapon. The new crop of parliamentarians may relish using it.

Confirmation hearings will take place on 29 September-3 October.



# Carlos Moedas: the EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

By Éanna Kelly



Carlos Moedas, secretary of state to Portugal's centre-right prime minister, was today (10 September) offered the keys to the European Commission's department of research (DG Research). If his appointment can clear the hurdle of the European Parliament hearing later this month, he will take over from the incumbent, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, for a five-year term.

Born in Beja, South of Portugal, Moedas, 44, has no particular background in research policy. He developed his career in the financial sector, working as a banker for Goldman Sachs and Eurohypo Investment Bank, and later in real estate, when he became managing director for Aguirre Newman in Spain.

Moedas is scientifically qualified however, with a degree in civil engineering from Lisbon's Instituto Superior Técnico, bolstered by an MBA from Harvard Business School. Before his foray into finance, he worked briefly as an engineer for the Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux group in France.

## From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following:

- Contributing, as part of the project team steered and coordinated by the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, to the jobs, growth and investment package to be presented within the first three months of our mandate. This includes mobilising innovative financial instruments available under Horizon 2020, facilitating investment in education, research and innovation infrastructure and maximising synergies with the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds at national and regional level.
- Promoting the international excellence of the EU's research and science and strengthening research capacities and innovation strategies across all Member States. Monitoring action at national level should also contribute to the work on the European Semester of economic policy coordination, as part of the project team steered and coordinated by the Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, and to make progress towards the research and development target set in the Europe 2020 strategy.
- Establishing strong coordination across the Commission regarding research, science and innovation matters, to make sure that Commission proposals and activities are based on sound scientific evidence and contribute best to our jobs and growth agenda. The Joint Research Centre, under the responsibility of Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship, should also contribute to this work.
- Focusing more on applied research, with a greater participation of the private sector and a special focus on SMEs, in particular in Horizon 2020, with a view to reinforcing our industrial leadership and our capacity to address societal challenges.
- Maximising the value added and impact of Horizon 2020, ensuring effective use and dissemination of project results. This should also support and enrich policy-making at national and EU level.
- Maximising the synergies between projects funded under Horizon 2020 and the realisation of our priorities as regards the Digital Single Market and the European Energy Union, by making effective use of funds available for instance for energy efficiency, low-carbon technologies and digital technologies.

Fluent in French and English and more technocrat than politician, the bright spot on Moedas' CV is his involvement in helping Portugal exit its €78 billion bailout programme in May 2014. Those who greeted



his appointment today with warmth suggest that this experience will stand him in good stead when it comes to overseeing the similarly giant €80 billion budget of the EU's research programme, Horizon 2020.

Today's announcement also put to bed the speculation linking Spain's Miguel Arias Cañete with the position. The Spanish government's different priorities, believed to be in capturing a large economic portfolio, meant that the offer of the position passed to Portugal.

## Reactions

There's a sense in Moedas' home country that he lacks the experience to be appointed and that there are others with a stronger track-record for the job. His involvement in discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), over terms for the Portuguese bailout, did not make him popular across sections of Portugal.

He nearly did not make it to Brussels for another reason. Juncker's first choice Portuguese candidate was the Minister of State and Finance, Maria Luís Albuquerque. The Portugal's prime minister, Pedro Passos Coelho, was reported to have been said to be happy to nominate her if it looked like his country could secure a top economic brief. When it became evident that this would not happen, Coelho sent Moedas.

Whether a candidate has academic qualifications is not the most important thing for everyone. "I value a person with common sense and a clear vision that can be acted on," said Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General of the League of European Research Universities (LERU). "Moedas seems promising. His experience shows that he's clever and can work with a large brief. I look forward to meeting him."

## Mission: steer Horizon 2020, work out the chain of command

In a letter from by Jean-Claude Juncker, Moedas is

asked to ensure Horizon 2020 focuses more on applied research and attracts more participation from the private sector and small businesses. Other priorities should be improving investment in infrastructure and the performance of financial instruments, as well as ensuring a good combination of Horizon 2020 funds with regional structural funds for innovation.

Moedas is also instructed to keep a watchful eye to ensure, "proposals and activities are based on sound scientific evidence". Juncker advises that the Joint Research Centre, currently an outpost of DG Education, should be jointly responsible for this. Curiously, there is no mention of the role of the Chief Scientific Adviser, although privately Juncker wanted to delay making a decision on the future of this office until after he got the new Commission line-up out of the way.

One novelty in the new Commission structure is the creation of six Vice-Presidents without portfolios, with a remit for coordinating and motivating groups of commissioners in related policy areas, to work together. "As a rule, liaise closely with the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness," Juncker advises Moedas in the letter.

The chain of command will be a bit more clogged than this. The letter also suggests that Moedas, depending on the subject, will be answerable to the Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, as well as the Vice-President for the Digital Single Market and the Vice-President for Energy Union.

### His responsibilities

Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (RTD)

The relevant parts of the European Research Council executive agency (ERCEA)

The relevant parts of the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)

The relevant parts of the Innovation and Networks executive agency (INEA)

The relevant parts of the Research Executive Agency (REA)

# Surprise! The Joint Research Centre is moving house

By Richard L. Hudson and Éanna Kelly

**The science advisory arm of the Commission is switching political masters, catching many unawares – and adding to the portfolio of the education commissioner**

For most of its long history, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission has laboured quietly in the background – running in-house nuclear, environmental and other laboratories, and providing technical advice to other parts of the Commission. This week it got some unexpected attention, a new political master, and a big mystery about what it all means.

The news was in a small line of the official letter of mandate for the incoming education Commissioner, Tibor Navracsics of Hungary: He, rather than the research commissioner, will supervise the JRC in the future. Given their normal responsibilities, that's a bit like assigning nuclear labs to a culture minister – and in fact, that's exactly what it is, as the JRC's work includes nuclear research and Navracsics' portfolio includes culture.

The switch came as a surprise to many insiders, including some of the commissioners themselves – suggesting to many that it was a last-minute adjustment to the Juncker plan. But some senior officials insisted it was deliberate policy, to emphasise that it's not in a research ghetto associated only with the Research Commissioner; instead, its new position underscores that its policy advice service is to be used by all the rest of the Commission, and integrated with other innovation activities.

## Official view

A Juncker spokeswoman confirmed that view, in an email to Science|Business: “The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is an agency that has a major role to play in prospective research that is related to the knowledge economy. The Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship (Tibor Navracsics) will be able to use JRC's work to advance a broader policy agenda, well beyond the traditional confines of traditional R&D policy, as was the case up to now.

“The Joint Research Centre covers a wide range of activities aiming to address old and new societal needs. These needs are regularly debated, including at school and universities and in broader citizens' debates. We want the JRC to continue to develop its cross-cutting role as a service supporting all Commission services with its knowledge and expertise, but also to be responsive to citizens' concerns and reach out to a broader public – which will be a clear responsibility and priority for this portfolio. There are also possible synergies to tap with the work of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and its growing role in building bridges between the worlds of education, research and business – the famous “knowledge triangle”. The association with DG EAC, which is responsible for the European Institute of Innovation, may provide an interesting dynamics.”

## Institutional jigsaw

The education portfolio appears to have gone through an unusual number of changes, simultaneously gaining and losing responsibilities. Programmes to promote citizenship moved from the communications to the education directorate, while some involving media move over to the digital affairs directorate. Responsibility for multiculturalism passed to the Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility brief. The Skills unit went the same way. Up until now, the Employment portfolio managed various programmes for employment services, job markets and youth unemployment, while DG EAC had oversight for vocational and apprenticeship training. Now, they've been bundled under the same roof – the idea being that it will improve impact and create more jobs. The JRC will now cosy in next to other units in the education directorate, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for research mobility and the EU's flagship education institute, the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT).

For many, these make intuitive bedfellows. The effect, as referred to in Juncker's letter to the incoming Commissioner, is a “reinforcement [of] the “knowledge triangle” between education, business and research” and a useful replacement for the vacated Skills unit.



# Will two EU energy czars be better than one?

By Gail Edmondson

**Juncker splits the energy portfolio between two commissioners in a move to overcome obstacles to a single European energy market. No major changes expected to the revised Strategic Energy Technologies Plan. New bundling of energy, climate and environment dossiers seen to help break down silos and accelerate innovation**

The growing threat to Europe's energy supply from conflicts in Ukraine and Iraq has catapulted energy policy to the top of Europe's new agenda. The appointment of two commissioners to handle energy portfolios – including a new “vice-president for energy union” – signals an urgent focus on speeding new low-carbon technologies to market and overcoming obstacles to the long-delayed single market for energy.

Former Slovenian Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek, designated vice president and commissioner for energy union, and former Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment Miguel Arias Cañete, commissioner-designate for climate action and energy, have been jointly tasked with completing the EU internal energy market. That will require regulatory savvy, as well as a tool kit of new technologies.

In fact, Europe's revised Strategic Energy Technologies Plan set to roll out in 2015 already puts a high priority on the technologies needed for a more integrated EU energy market, including a focus on smart electricity grids and energy storage to allow greater volumes of renewable energies. These new SET Plan research priorities are not likely to change, Commission officials told Science|Business, because they align with the new Commission's energy union and security goals.

## Weak coordination

Europe's aim to lead the world in developing new energy technologies – first laid out in the 2008 SET Plan – got off to a slow start in part because of weak coordination and widely diverging energy innovation priorities across 28 member states. Commission officials said EC President Jean-Claude Juncker's decision to bundle energy, climate and environment dossiers was a structural shift that should enhance

coordination and help break down the policy silos that undercut the effectiveness of the original SET Plan.

Spain, in particular, is confronted with a growing volume of renewables which cannot be effectively integrated into the national electricity grid, making Cañete acutely aware of the need to better connect EU electricity markets.

Commissioner-designate Bratušek also has been tasked with making sure the EU achieves its 2030 and 2020 energy targets, coordinating the vast array of Horizon 2020 programs across the energy, climate change and environment portfolios. EU President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker asked Cañete to ensure the EU is world leader in renewable energy technologies, identify key energy network infrastructure projects and strengthen the EU's Emission Trading System.

Less clear, for now, is how exactly DG Research and Innovation and DG Energy will coordinate energy research programmes under the new Commission structure. Until now, those responsible for energy research at both directorates reported to one energy commissioner. Another unknown is whether shale gas research and development will be given a higher priority as worries over the EU energy security grow.

## Alenka Bratušek: the EU Vice-President for Energy Union



Alenka Bratušek was born on 31 March 1970 in Celje and spent her youth in Žalec. She was previously Prime Minister of Slovenia from March 2013 until May 2014. Following her graduation from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology, she obtained a master's degree in management of non-profit organisations from the Faculty of Social Sciences in 2006. She first worked for a small textile company. In 1995, she took up employment with the Ministry of the Economy, where as part of her work in the area of small business, she participated in the setting up of the small business promotion network. After the birth of her second child, she moved to the Ministry of Finance in 1999, becoming head of its Budget Directorate in 2004. In 2007 and 2008, she played an active role in the preparations for the Slovenian EU Council presidency.

### From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following, in your role as Vice-President:

- Coordinating Commission efforts to ensure the EU achieves its targets in the field of energy for 2020 and 2030, including as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- Completing the internal energy market, by connecting infrastructures and engaging with regulators and stakeholders at national and European level in order to improve, reinforce and fully apply EU legislation in this area. Increasing competition should help drive down costs for citizens and businesses and boost growth.
- Coordinating specific actions to strengthen energy security on a European scale, starting with the need to counteract any possible energy shortages over the first three to twelve months. Europe's energy dependency should also be reduced by diversifying sources and routes of energy imports and pooling our negotiating power.
- Supporting the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness in the project to present, within the first three months of our mandate, the jobs, growth and investment package announced in the Political Guidelines. The package should help to mobilise additional public and private investment in infrastructure such as energy networks, as well as in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Tapping the job potential of "Green Growth" and making Europe the world number one in renewable energy.

### Her responsibilities

As Vice-President for Energy Union, Ms. Bratušek will work closely with the other Vice-Presidents. In her area of responsibility, she will steer and coordinate the work of several Commissioners, in particular the Commissioners for Climate Action and Energy; Transport and Space; Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; Regional Policy; Agriculture and Rural Development; and Research, Science and Innovation.



## Miguel Arias Cañete: the EU Commissioner for Climate Action & Energy



Miguel Arias Cañete is a Spanish politician born in Madrid in 1950. He graduated in law from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Between 2011 and 2014 he served as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment in the current Partido Popular government. On 9 April 2014 he was selected by his party to head its list in the European Parliament elections. Previously, he was professor of the Faculty of Law of Jerez de la Frontera. In politics Arias Cañete served first as a representative in the Parliament of Andalusia from 1982 until 1986, resigning upon being elected to the European Parliament where he served until 1999 and chaired the Agricultural and Regional Politics Committees.

### From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following:

- Contributing, as part of the project team steered and coordinated by the Vice-President for Energy Union, to the completion of the internal market for energy. You will have to identify and select infrastructure projects on which to focus, assess the need to add to the current legal framework and monitor very closely the implementation of existing legislation.
- Contributing, as part of the project team steered and coordinated by the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, to the jobs, growth and investment package to be presented within the first three months of our mandate. I would like you to be very hands-on in terms of working with Member States to bring about the conditions necessary for investment decisions and ensure that the EU can be a catalyst for public and private investment. A particular focus of this additional investment should be in infrastructure such as energy networks, as well as in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Increasing Europe's energy security by diversifying sources and routes of energy imports and combining our negotiating power.
- Steering the preparation and negotiations of the legislative instruments that will follow political agreement on the 2030 energy and climate framework. These proposals should be made early on in the mandate.
- Continuing to develop EU policy for renewables. The EU should be a world leader in this sector. Similarly, you will need to guide work on energy efficiency.
- Strengthening and promoting the Emissions Trading System to ensure we reach our climate goals in a cost-effective way.
- Supporting the Vice-President for Energy Union in order to ensure that the EU plays a leading role in international climate policy, starting with the 2015 international climate conference in Paris.

### His responsibilities

DG Climate Action (CLIMA)  
 DG ENERGY (ENER)  
 The Euratom Supply Agency (ESA)  
 The relevant parts of the Executive Agency for Small Medium-Sized Enterprises (EASME)

The relevant parts of the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA)  
 Responsible for relations with:  
 The Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)  
 DG Competition (COMP)

# A stronger focus on economics in health?

Vytenis Andriukaitis: the Commissioner for Health & Food Safety

By Zsófia Bakonyi



**The track record of the new health commissioner includes a strong interest in the health system and its sustainability**

As new Commissioners go, Vytenis Andriukaitis carries few surprises: Last year, when his country held the

rotating presidency of the EU, he already signaled some of his priorities: a focus on responsive and sustainable health systems.

In 2013 a Lithuanian Presidency conference was held that resulted in the so-called “Vilnius declaration”, a call for immediate action in Europe to make healthcare systems more sustainable, inclusive and to deliver better results for patients. It highlighted three ways to achieve this:

- Increase investment in disease prevention
- Ensure universal access to high-quality health services
- Ensure that health system reforms – including workforce planning – are evidence-based and focus on cost-effectiveness, sustainability and good governance

Andriukaitis is expected to keep this focus as Commissioner for Health and Food Safety – and his mandate letter highlighted economic assessment of healthcare systems as a great priority.

At another conference just last week, organised by the European Public Health Alliance he stated that health matters can be included into the discussions around each Commission priority, and that health can contribute significantly to growth. The report on the conference also mentioned that Mr. Andriukaitis expressed his interest in addressing health inequalities and their impact on public health in the EU.

## Healthy growth?

At the 2013 Annual EPHA conference Andriukaitis said: “Health is not a consequence of growth but also

a condition for growth. Investments in public health increase productivity and boost job creation. Health should not only be seen as product of growth: health encourages growth.”

The economic angle was also highlighted in some of the bureaucratic changes announced inside the Commission, as a result of the new appointments. For instance, regulation of pesticides – “biocides” officially – moves from the environment directorate to the health directorate, under Andriukaitis’ control. That could be good news for industry, which has been battling for years with the environmental directorate. Certainly, it took environment officials by surprise. One told industry publication *Chemical Watch*<sup>1</sup> that “we are flabbergasted. There are lots of uncertainties now, as we are not sure how this will affect our work and the team, or how it might be reorganised. For now, the work will continue and we will have to see what will be the consequences for the team.”

The pharmaceutical industry also got some good news in the new Commission: Its regulation moved from the health directorate to that for enterprise and industry, signaling a stronger focus on development of the European life sciences industry. Specifically, the dossiers of medicines, medical devices and health technology move to a newly enlarged Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, under Elżbieta Bieńkowska, the Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

## Quick reactions

This is a move “back to the future” – as the industry directorate in the past had some responsibility for pharmaceuticals, but then had it yanked away during the just-ending Commission, in part because of fears that it was being too soft on Big Pharma. The reaction from outside the Commission was swift and somewhat predictable.

“A good day for the pharmaceutical industry, but a bad day for public health,” is how Jim Murray, a former director of BEUC, the European Consumers Organisation, described it in his blog on the Euractiv

<sup>1</sup> <http://chemicalwatch.com/21130/biocides-brief-moves-to-dg-health-in-new-eu-commission>

news site<sup>2</sup>. And Glenis Willmott, a British Labour member of the European Parliament, lambasted the move on her Web site as “a bad decision from President Juncker. I hope he will quickly come to his senses and rectify it.”

But a biotech executive argued that the change makes sense. Pharma and biotech should be under the Commissioner for Industry, because “we are an industry in which SMEs and medium companies are extremely important in enabling innovation.”

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Vytenis Andriukaitis is a physician, politician, and one of the authors of the 1992 Lithuanian Constitution. His positions have included deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Vice-Chairman LSDP, the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania. He is currently Minister of Health. He enrolled in medical school in Kaunas, graduating in 1975. He entered politics in 1976 as a Social Democrat, going on to receive a degree in history from Vilnius University in 1984.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/health-consumers/bad-start-new-com-mission-308376>

### From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following:

- Ensuring that the Commission is always ready to play its part in supporting the EU’s capacity to deal with crisis situations in food safety or pandemics.
- Within the first six months of the mandate, reviewing the existing decision-making process applied to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in line with the Political Guidelines.
- Developing expertise on performance assessments of health systems, drawing lessons from recent experience, and from EU-funded research projects to build up country-specific and cross-country knowledge which can inform policies at national and European level. To the extent that it relates to the quality and productivity of the EU workforce, to the modernisation of social protection systems and to the quality and effectiveness of public expenditure, this expertise can also usefully inform the work of the European semester of economic policy coordination.

## Elżbieta Bieńkowska: the Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs



### From the letter of mandate

Europe needs a high-performing industrial base, as much as it needs a strong services sector, and the synergies between the two should be fully exploited. This should ensure that Europe maintains its global leadership in strategic sectors with high-value jobs such as the automotive, aeronautics, engineering, chemicals and pharmaceutical industries....

To support innovation and competitiveness, we must not come with too prescriptive and too detailed recommendations, notably when it comes to SMEs, which are the backbone of our economy...

Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, as well as Minister of Infrastructure and Development. Before that, for six years she was Minister of Regional Development in the Cabinet of Donald Tusk, who has just been named President of the European Council. She received a master’s degree in oriental philology from Jagiellonian University in 1989. She also holds

a post-graduate diploma from the Polish National School of Public Administration and an MBA from the Warsaw School of Economics.



# The Digital Agenda: A renewed priority

## Getting jobs and growth from the ICT industry snags two, not just one, top post in the Juncker Commission

The digital economy got one Commissioner in the old Brussels line-up. Under the Juncker Commission, it goes binary – with two commissioners. The change highlights the redoubled importance of the portfolio in the years ahead.

The digital challenges facing Europe are many. There's fighting over data protection, Google's market power, telecoms regulation, open access publishing and the continuing weakness of the region's ICT industry.

In his mission letter to the Vice President, Andrus Ansip of Estonia, Juncker asks him, within the first six months of the mandate, to coordinate ambitious legislative steps towards a connected Digital Single Market, notably by reforming telecoms rules, modernising copyright rules, and modernising and simplifying consumer rules for online and digital purchases.

Likewise, Juncker asked Günther Oettinger, the German Digital Economy Commissioner (and formerly Energy Commissioner) to contribute to activities that turn digital research into successful European innovation stories, encouraging entrepreneurship and providing a framework that drives start-ups, the take-up of new businesses and job-creation.

Other priorities for Oettinger are developing and implementing measures to make Europe more trusted and secure online, and finalising the negotiations on an ambitious Data Protection Regulation in 2015. Oettinger commented on Wednesday that Google's market power could be limited. EU authorities are

seeking more concessions from Google in the "right to be forgotten" case.

## Pirates displeased

Several MEPs reflected surprise over Oettinger's appointment. MEP Julia Reda from the German Pirate Party said: "It is encouraging to see digital issues taking a prominent position in the new Commission. However, I cannot expect much from Commissioners Oettinger and Ansip, who will be in charge of internet policy. The future Commissioner for Digital Economy & Society, Günther Oettinger, hasn't previously demonstrated any expertise in the area. It is unlikely that he can credibly follow in the footsteps of Neelie Kroes."

On the other hand, John Higgins, Director General of DIGITAL EUROPE, welcomed the move: "We are pleased to see a structure that recognises what we have been saying: digital is a golden thread that ties so many policy areas together – 12 directorates according to the charts. We think the structure of the new Commission brings a sharper focus on making that digitally powered single market a reality."

According to an MEP's office from the European People's Party, little change is expected in EU research and innovation policy during the next Commission mandate. As far as Horizon 2020 is concerned, the task is to oversee the execution of the programme. "The policy is already done. The most interesting part for a politician is to guide the policy itself. It will be a softer term because everything has been almost done; but we must not forget the important role of implementation that must be lead in the coming years."

### Andrus Ansip: his responsibilities

As Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, Mr. Ansip will work closely with the other Vice-Presidents. In his area of responsibility, he will steer and coordinate the work of several Commissioners, in particular the Commissioners for Digital Economy and Society; Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility; Justice, Customs; Regional Policy; and Agriculture and Rural Development.

### Günther Oettinger: his responsibilities

DG for Communications Network, Content and Technology (CONNECT)  
DG Informatics (DIGIT)  
The relevant parts of: the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA); Enterprises (EASME); the Innovation & Networks Executive Agency (INEA); the Research Executive Agency (REA)  
Responsible for relations with:  
The European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)  
The Office for the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

## Andrus Ansip: the EU Vice-President for Digital Single Market

By Isabel Ortega and Ross Melzer



Andrus Ansip, born on 1 October 1956, is an Estonian politician who was Prime Minister of Estonia from 2005 to 2014 and chairman of the liberal Estonian Reform Party from 2004 to 2014. He has been selected to be Vice-President in charge of the Digital Single Market by the European Commission President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker. Ansip graduated from the University of Tartu with a degree in Chemistry in 1979. Before his entry into politics, he worked as an engineer at the university from 1979 to 1983. He was an instructor in the Industry Department and he has also been involved in several banking and investment ventures. Ansip entered Parliament in 2004, quickly becoming Minister of Economic Affairs, and subsequently Prime Minister in April 2005.

### From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following, in your role as Vice-President:

- Bringing together the different regulatory powers of the Commission to complete the Digital Single Market.
- Steering and coordinating, within the first six months of the mandate, ambitious legislative steps towards a connected Digital Single Market, notably by adding more ambition to the ongoing reform of our telecoms rules, modernising copyright rules in the light of the ongoing digital revolution – taking full account of Europe's rich cultural diversity – and modernising and simplifying consumer rules for online and digital purchases. This should be based on a clear assessment of the main obstacles still to be removed and the formulation of a clear long-term strategy for the Digital Single Market. You should also oversee, during the first six months of the mandate, the conclusion of negotiations on the reform of Europe's data protection rules as well as the review of the Safe Harbour arrangement with the U.S.
- Supporting the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness in the project to present, within the first three months of our mandate, the jobs, growth and investment package announced in the Political Guidelines. The package should help to mobilise additional public and private investment for infrastructure such as broadband networks.
- Coordinating work on building the framework conditions that will allow all EU citizens to participate in and benefit from the digital economy, with the same freedoms and protections online as they have offline, including by working to fight cybercrime.
- Supporting the development of creative industries, helping Europe's culture and audiovisual sectors to reach out to new audiences, adapt to the digital era and thrive in the connected Digital Single Market.
- Supporting ways to make public administration more open and effective by championing the digital and eGovernment approaches across all Member States and within the Commission, in cooperation with the Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources. You should also look at how to improve the interaction with Member States' administrations, for example on reporting and exchanging information on systems needed to make the EU function, and facilitating cross-border interoperability between them.

## Günther Oettinger: the EU Commissioner for Digital Economy & Society



Günther H. Oettinger has been selected to be the Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society. Since 10 February 2010, he is Member of the European Commission responsible for energy. From 2005 to 2010, he was Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg (Germany) and, since 1984, member of the State Parliament. He was Chairman of the CDU Baden-Württemberg parliamentary group in the State Parliament from January 1991 to April 2005. A lawyer by training and CEO of a firm of auditors and tax consultancy (1988-2005), Oettinger became actively involved in politics during his adolescence. He is Member of the Governing Board and the Federal Executive Committee of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU Deutschland) since 2005.

### From the letter of mandate

During our mandate, I would like you to focus on the following:

- Preparing, as part of the project team steered and coordinated by the Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, ambitious legislative steps towards a connected Digital Single Market. [...]
- [...] You should focus on supporting the deployment of a high-quality, digital network infrastructure, underpinning all sectors of the economy across borders, progressively on a continental scale. Supporting the development of creative industries and of a successful European media and content industry able to reach out to new audiences, adapt to the digital era and thrive in the connected Digital Single Market.
- Supporting, in close cooperation with the first Vice-President, in charge of Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom and pluralism of the media, the openness of the internet and cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Contributing to activities that turn digital research into successful European innovation stories, encouraging entrepreneurship and providing a framework that drives start-ups, the take-up of new businesses and job-creation. The Commission needs to play its role in ensuring that promising new developments such as the cloud, the Internet of Things and big data can thrive in Europe and that citizens, innovative web entrepreneurs and other businesses can take full advantage of their potential.
- Supporting the work of the Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources to modernise administration in the European Commission, and promoting the use of eGovernment solutions at all levels. [...]
- Developing and implementing measures to make Europe more trusted and secure online, so that citizens and business can fully reap the benefits of the digital economy.
- Supporting the Vice-President for the Digital Single Market and the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality in finalising the negotiations on an ambitious Data Protection Regulation in 2015. [...]
- Developing and promoting a sustainable business model for Euronews, including by further developing its public service remit, by helping to identify new partners and by making better use of digital transmission technologies, in full respect of the editorial independence of Euronews.
- Working with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President to develop the relationship with strategic partners in order to build a global governance architecture for the Internet which is legitimate, transparent, accountable, sustainable and inclusive. [...]



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