

GUE/NGL - Il Gruppo della Sinistra Rosso Verde vota contro la commissione Europea. A sostegno della Van der Leyen le destre "sovraniste" e social democratici.

Qui i nominativi del voto di oggi

1) Conflicts of interests

The fact that several candidates were rejected, their replacements subjected to further scrutiny, or in need of a second hearing, says a lot about this incoming batch of Commissioners.

Not only are many lacking, some are downright unsuitable for holding such important positions. The Belgian nominee comes with a baggage of scandals, for example. Meanwhile, original French nominee Sylvie Goulard had so many holes and conflicts of interests in her qualifications that it was all the more remarkable that her replacement, Thierry Breton, had even more conflicts of interest through his role as the former CEO of the IT firm, Atos.

Breton will now be in charge of a portfolio that largely overlaps with the areas of operation of his previous job. He is exactly the kind who should NOT be a Commissioner due to his conflicts of interest.

Such cases reaffirm the revolving door culture that has tainted so many previous Commissions. It doesn't bode well for the next five years. It also underlines the need for a credible, independent ethics body to vet European officials.

Then again, the European Parliament's Grand Coalition reared its ugly head again with conservative, social democrats and liberals playing childish games with the nomination process. Blocking one dodgy nominee in a tantrum, but approving another as a quid pro quo.

2) Climate justice

From unambitious targets on reducing emissions to a pro-aviation transport commissioner who doesn't seem to like trains, and an Estonian who rather prefers pollutants like gas to renewables, the new Commission is all about flashy headline-grabbing slogans like the 'Green New Deal' but low on details on the Just Transition or biodiversity.

As if the market solutions proposed by the Estonian nominee to tackle our energy use weren't bad enough, the Commission doesn't seem to have great plans to change our Common Agriculture Policy, trade policy, industrial policy and consumption patterns either.

Dutch nominee Frans Timmermans's lack of desire to address the inconsistencies between climate and agricultural policies is also worrying, and makes the Commission's climate policy look rather hollow.

3) Inequality

One of the Commissioners has a rather abstract but grand portfolio titled 'An economy that works for the people' though listening to Valdis Dombrovskis at the hearing, you'd think it is more 'An economy that works for the rich'.

This incoming Commission has no concrete plans to deliver economic sustainability, nor enough investments to make up for the cuts.

Our economic and monetary union have macroeconomic imbalances which are systematic and unsustainable in the long term.

Yet, EU rules do not favour indebted economies whose fiscal revenues are usually expropriated - only to then end up in other fiscal or tax jurisdictions. Such an unfair regime will only foster inequality, increasing social tension, unemployment and rise of the far-right in deprived regions.

4) Tax justice

The EU has had a full decade of austerity. Yet, none of the Commissioners offered a wholehearted commitment to sorting out the injustice of corporate tax dodging or EU member states doubling up as tax havens.

We have Italy's Paolo Gentiloni who had previously invested heavily in Amazon - a company which uses aggressive tax planning to deprive EU citizens of billions in tax every year. Can Gentiloni really be trusted to introduce measures against tax dodging?

The EU is becoming a race to the bottom in terms of tax competition, and the rich are getting more and more shrewd in their aggressive tax planning. We need Commissioners who will press the Council to unblock tax transparency. Gentiloni and Dombrovskis do not seem to be up to the task.

5) Women's rights

Rather incredulously, the Commission has put up a conservative, anti-abortion nominee in the 'Democracy and Demography' portfolio.

Dubravka Šuica's past voting records on women's sexual and reproductive health rights, LGBTI rights, rule of law, transparency and electoral reform are poor, and the Croatian failed to provide a firm commitment to support and promote women's right to self-determination in relation to their own bodies.

Her overall portfolio also draws on a far-right and nationalist terminology that is used to express anti-immigration views, and promotes population increase centred on a boost to 'native European birth-rates'. That is unacceptable.

6) Migration

The EU's unjust migration policy looks unlikely to change under Ursula von der Leyen. The EU will continue to cooperate with the Libyan coastguards despite clear evidence of human rights abuses with talk of strengthening cooperation with third countries as well as continuing with the same returns policy for asylum seekers.

With humanitarian crises in both Greece and the Balkans after the dirty Turkey deal, the Commission's lack of vision means the suffering will go on.

7) Orbán's man in Brussels

As his country's EU ambassador, Olivier Várhelyi had been peddling the very policies that triggered the Article 7 infringement procedures against Hungary until very recently. A far-right politician in charge of the Commission's Enlargement portfolio, how can Várhelyi be trusted to take a firm stance on pre-accession countries. What implications will this have on human rights?

Will Várhelyi be loyal to citizens, or to Viktor Orbán? As shown by the Gruevski scandal in North Macedonia or his silence in the face of Orbán's far-right rhetoric, Várhelyi is not a Commissioner you can trust.

8) Xenophobia

Even after heavy criticism of the original title for being xenophobic and racist, the Commission changed just one word in Margaritis Schinas's portfolio in the end: from 'Protecting our European Way of Life' to 'Promoting the European Way of Life'.

However, the problem remains. First of all, there is NO European way of life. The EU is a melting pot of multiculturalism and rich diversity. New or old, the title still panders to far-right rhetoric, and underlines the Commission's misguided belief that Europe is superior to other cultures. The fact that

von der Leyen has barely listened to the criticisms, or that Schinas seemed unable to grasp the dangerous implications of the mix of culture, security and migration in the same portfolio, does not bode well.

9) Workers' rights

If anyone was in doubt about the Commission's bias towards the multinationals and business sector, von der Leyen's 'One in, One out' spells out very clearly the true intentions of her administration. This idea was proposed so that any new EU initiative that would create a 'burden' on businesses would be 'compensated' by throwing out an equivalent and existing burden in the same policy area. In short, the 'one in, one out' principle is all about deregulation. Labour rights will be threatened and environmental standards degraded. Trade unions and environmental groups are already up in arms about this. This also marks a complete U-turn for the EU: EU regulation is supposed to work in favour of the citizens - not the costs it would incur to businesses at the expense of workers. If anything, given the proliferation of the gig economy and zero hours contracts, workers need more protection than ever.

10) Trade deals

By persisting with Mercosur, the Commission has failed to listen to the concerns expressed by citizens regarding CETA and JEFTA, and the neoliberal agenda that rewards multinationals, far-right leaders and illegal loggers.

Human rights must be at the heart of any EU trade policy. Unfortunately, this new Commission is doing little to alleviate our concerns.

11) Militarisation

With French nominee Thierry Breton's dodgy links to defence funds and the incoming Spanish High Representative responsible for selling weapons to Saudi Arabia as a foreign minister, the EU Commission is littered with seasoned pros with a militaristic bent.

In fact, von der Leyen's foreign policy could look awfully like the Juncker administration. That can only mean more dangerous directions being taken. The EU could look increasingly indistinguishable from Donald Trump's America - without ever asserting itself as an international actor with the defence of human rights as its core.

Furthermore, Josep Borrell has already indicated his unwillingness to change the EU's position on arms sales, on Palestine, Western Sahara and a host of other issues. Trade deals will also likely dictate the direction of many EU foreign policies. That can only spell trouble for all those who defend international law and human rights.

12) Democracy

As democratic values and EU fundamental rights come under unprecedented attacks in member states such as Poland, Hungary and others, our group would have hoped for greater commitment from the college of Commissioners to stand up for citizens.

But as with the example of the Hungarian nominee whose links with Viktor Orbán are all too obvious to ignore, other candidates seemed unable to even guarantee our rights to peaceful assembly and protection for NGOs from being attacked.

13) Fundamental rights

Mass surveillance looks set to become one of the Commission's priorities in the next five years, with an emphasis on 'interoperability' and the political importance of member states adopting it.

This would violate many of our privacy and fundamental rights at EU borders, for example, with new technologies in place to share data with other parties.