

MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

STRASBOURG

**THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND
HOME AFFAIRS**

**HEARING OF SIR JULIAN KING
COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE
(SECURITY UNION)**

1-0002

IN THE CHAIR: CLAUDE MORAES
Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice
and Home Affairs

The hearing opened at 19.05

1-0003

Chair. – Dear Colleagues, I welcome Commissioner-designate Sir Julian King to this hearing before the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. I am going to make a couple of introductory remarks before we begin the introductory statement by Sir Julian and the questioning by Members.

First of all on procedure. Pursuant to Rule 118 and Annex 26 to the Rules of Procedure, Parliament shall evaluate Commissioners-designate on the basis of their general competence, European commitment and personal independence. It shall also assess the knowledge of their prospective portfolio and their communication skills. I would also like to remind you that Parliament has submitted a preparatory questionnaire to the Commissioner-designate with two common questions drafted by the Conference of Committee Chairs and three specific questions prepared by the LIBE Committee. All of these were endorsed by the Conference of Presidents. The Commissioner-designate has replied in writing to the questionnaire and the answers have been distributed to Members in all languages. You have got the answers, the media has the answers and I encourage all of you to read those answers if you have not already.

On the structure of the debate, the debate will be structured as follows. The Commissioner-designate is invited to make an opening oral statement of no longer than 15 minutes. After his introduction there will be time for 45 questions and answers. Each slot will be of three minutes, one minute for the question and two for the answer. In agreement with the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr Brok, one question will be asked by the AFET vice-chair, Mr Paşcu. The first round of questions will be asked by representatives of political groups; at the end of the hearing the Commissioner-designate will have five minutes for a closing statement.

Colleagues, as usual please be aware that I have to be very strict in ensuring that speaking time is respected, otherwise the last speaker will have no time left to ask their questions. Now if people are particularly disciplined, we will have time at the end for supplementary questions, but probably we will not have time for supplementary questions, but if you are particularly disciplined, that option is on the table. Interpretation will be provided in 23 languages, and you can therefore use your own language but please keep in mind that what you say needs to be interpreted so do not speak too quickly. The debate is going to be streamed live on the Parliament's internet site and it will also be possible to access a video recording of the hearing on the same site. All of us are quite used to this room but

the Commissioner-designate is not used to this room, so when you indicate to speak if you could just additionally put your arm up so that he can see where you are in the room, that would be also helpful, thank you, and also for the external viewers, the media and so on.

So finally I have two things to say before I give the floor to the Commissioner-designate. I want to emphasise two points in relation to his responsibilities and accountability. You saw that in the mission letter, which President Juncker wrote to Mr King, he said that he wanted him to be the Commissioner for the Security Union, working under the guidance of the first Vice-President in charge of better regulation, interinstitutional relations, the rule of law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and supporting the work of the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. Now he added that he would like him to support the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship in eight specific tasks. We will be interested in this hearing to understand what Sir Julian's priorities will be and how he will interact with other relevant Commissioners. He has answered that to some extent in the written answers but it is important that we understand his lines of accountability in this hearing.

Secondly, we also read that representation in the European Parliament and in the Council on issues related to the Security Union will, as a rule, be ensured by the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship unless otherwise decided on a case-by-case basis by the First Vice-President, in agreement with the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. I am sure that Sir Julian will again shed some light on how this might work in practice so that we will have his full accountability to this Committee and a fruitful dialogue between the institutions. His accountability to this Parliament and to this Committee is extremely important and I am sure he would agree with this. I note with interest that Sir Julian wrote in his written answers 'I am ready to consider together with the LIBE Committee useful forms of dialogue to review with me priorities of and progress on delivery of my portfolio or to discuss topical issues, be it ad hoc or in a more structured way'.

So with those two key points of accountability and responsibility for this committee, I am now happy to give the floor to Commissioner-designate King for his presentation. Sir Julian, the floor is yours.

1-0004

Julian King, commissaire désigné. – Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, merci de m'avoir invité ici ce soir. Si quelqu'un m'avait dit, il y a quelques mois, que je serais ici aujourd'hui avec vous, je ne l'aurais pas cru.

Nous vivons une situation particulière. J'ai eu l'honneur d'être nommé par le gouvernement britannique. Le Président Juncker a saisi cette occasion pour renforcer la

Commission en créant ce poste de commissaire pour l'union de la sécurité.

Certains pourraient s'interroger à propos du fait qu'un commissaire nommé par un État membre qui a décidé de quitter l'Union européenne se voie attribuer un rôle aussi important, mais je pense que je peux avoir une réelle valeur ajoutée, dans un domaine qui est prioritaire aux yeux de nos citoyens. J'ai une expérience concrète dans ce domaine à travers mon parcours au Conseil, et également sur le terrain, en Irlande et en Irlande du Nord et, plus récemment, à Paris.

En effet, il y a deux mois, j'étais à Nice le matin du 15 juillet et j'ai vu de mes propres yeux les conséquences dévastatrices de l'attaque qui avait eu lieu la veille, qui a fait tant de victimes et davantage de blessés encore, et qui a traumatisé l'ensemble de l'Europe. Cela m'a fait prendre conscience, une fois de plus, de l'immense coût humain du terrorisme.

J'ai dédié ma vie aux affaires européennes, à travers plusieurs postes, à Bruxelles, au Conseil, puis à la Commission, en tant que chef de cabinet. En tant qu'ambassadeur en France, j'ai vigoureusement défendu la position du gouvernement britannique pendant la campagne pour le référendum. Personnellement, j'ai toujours été fier d'être Britannique, et également fier d'être Européen. Je ne vois aucune contradiction entre les deux. Mais le 23 juin, la majorité de mes compatriotes ont décidé de quitter l'Union européenne, et nous devons respecter cette décision.

Pour qu'il n'y ait aucun doute, j'aimerais être absolument clair. Si je suis confirmé, je vais tout mettre en œuvre pour faire mon travail du mieux possible et servir l'intérêt général européen et uniquement l'intérêt général européen.

Je suis conscient du haut niveau d'intégrité et d'impartialité ainsi que d'engagement européen que vous attendez, à juste titre, de ma part. Si, à la suite de ce processus, je deviens commissaire, je prêterai serment avec toutes les responsabilités qui l'accompagnent.

1-0005

It is 15 years since 9/11. How we think about such threats and react to them has moved on, but terrorism and organised crime still threaten our values and our way of life, some might say more today than ever before.

Since the Madrid bombing of 2004 there have been dozens more terrorist attacks, 14 completed in the last year alone, with nearly 600 killed over that time. Some of these were well planned and coordinated attacks by groups, others were attacks using nothing more than a knife. Most of these terrorists were home-grown, but some were returning foreign fighters. Some of them had been under surveillance, others were known to the authorities only as petty criminals. Some were long-standing terrorist sympathisers, others were radicalised

in a matter of weeks. Some attacks took place on targets known to be sensitive, others were totally unexpected.

And on organised crime, criminals are developing new ways to operate across borders. Cybercrime is growing daily, becoming increasingly hostile, threatening fundamental rights and the economy. Neither terrorism nor organised crime respects national borders. Indeed their business models thrive on the lack of coordination between states.

There is obviously a European dimension. Take the horrific attacks in Paris of last November: they were planned in Syria; some of the terrorists allegedly travelled with fake passports; they then stayed in Belgium, where they got trafficked weapons from across the EU and the Balkans. They only travelled to France the day before the attacks.

So given the multinational supply chains, the only way to defeat the terrorists and criminals is by working together effectively. In today's world, security of one Member State is the security of all. Article 4 of the Treaty is clear: national security remains the sole responsibility of Member States. But they cannot address alone threats which are transnational.

That is why this post is needed now: to help face these growing threats from those who would seek to take away our freedom and hard-won fundamental rights. It is also what our citizens expect. When asked in the last Eurobarometer, 82% called for stronger EU action on counter-terrorism.

The creation of this role is an opportunity to draw together all the areas in which the Commission is taking operational measures to promote security, and to pursue targeted actions where the EU can make a difference. It will require the closest possible teamwork with First Vice-President Timmermans, Commissioner Avramopoulos, Commissioner Jourová, and many other colleagues. Very much in the spirit of this Commission, as set out in my mission letter, President Juncker has proposed to create a cross-cutting task force to support this role, working with staff from across the Commission, from Justice to Home Affairs, to Transport, to Education.

We will also need the highest possible degree of coordination and joined-up teamwork with Member States and, crucially, with Parliament, particularly this committee. I know how passionate this committee has been about getting security right, and the energy and commitment you have devoted to making progress on a whole range of proposals. So we now need to re-double our efforts together to deliver the security that our citizens expect. We need to create an effective and sustainable Security Union.

Effective: this means focusing relentlessly on implementation, ensuring the transposition of agreed rules, helping national authorities identify obstacles to implementation and tackling those together, making sure

the rules work as intended and that existing systems are actually used to their full potential. Member States can count on the Commission to assist them in every possible way, but when necessary, we will not shy away from enforcing the law, including using infringement procedures. We should be ready to take new steps when needed, but let us work first on delivery.

Sustainable: these repeated attacks call not only for a comprehensive EU response but one that provides for a lasting and joined-up European security framework, one in which policies are properly thought through and based on evidence.

Fundamental rights must be at the heart of this framework. My own experience in Northern Ireland taught me that peace, and the accompanying greater security, can only become real when rooted in the full respect of fundamental rights. The long fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland made progress when people came to believe that their fundamental rights were being taken seriously. They moved away from violence and joined the political effort to build a shared future.

So I am fully committed to the Charter. Our actions must always be based on the rule of law, with appropriate safeguards and exceptions only when necessary, proportionate and legally justified.

In terms of my priorities, the starting point is the Commission's April 2016 communication on an effective Security Union, and with that as the roadmap, we need to advance on both: what we can do to strengthen our common fight against terrorism and organised crime, and the means that support them; and what we can do to strengthen our own defences against these challenges and to build our resilience.

So first we must urgently agree the proposal for a Directive on Combating Terrorism. Working with you and the Council, I hope we can do this by the end of the year. We also need to continue cutting terrorists' access to finance and funding. The Commission will make proposals in the coming months. On firearms, for me the biggest challenge remains reducing access to illegal weapons. We need to accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan and in these, as in other areas, we need to reinforce our cooperation with third countries.

Second, our Agencies should play a stronger role in supporting national authorities in their efforts against terrorism and organised crime. I will always champion Europol. We should now make full use of the opportunities offered by its new framework. Europol's European Counter-Terrorism Centre has started to deliver, but we need to reinforce it further. We also need to support the European Cybercrime Centre so that it becomes the central hub in the fight against cybercrime, and takes the terrorist threat into account. Our law enforcement agencies need to be able to investigate effectively and access digital evidence. National authorities also need to make more use of Joint

Investigation Teams, with the help of Europol and Eurojust.

Third, we need to tackle radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism and terrorism. Our work must start well before people are radicalised, with a special focus on children and youth. The collaborative grassroots approach of the Radicalisation Awareness Network has already delivered results, helping those on the front line to tackle radicalisation in prisons and in schools. We should step up our work further in this area, for example by supporting civil society in developing counter-narratives.

Fourth, we need to do more to tackle terrorist propaganda and hate speech online. In addition to our efforts on the EU Internet Forum and Europol's Internet Referral Unit, we should pursue the possibility of a joint referral platform with the internet industry, and explore whether social media companies can do more to take down unacceptable content.

As I said, we also need to strengthen our own defences against terrorism, build our resilience, and improve further the way we work together and central to all of this is how we share information effectively. So fifth, existing information systems need to be fully implemented and applied. For example Member States still need to do more to implement Prüm. We also face substantial challenges in implementing the Passenger Name Record Directive. Member States still need to build their Passenger Information Units to make the system work.

Sixth, in addition to making existing instruments work, we need to look at how we share information across our various systems. Current arrangements are complex and fragmented. While respecting purpose limitations, we need to look at how to make best use of the existing information at EU level. We need to ensure the quality of data that is going into our systems, that it is processed appropriately and that it is available to the right people when they need it, all the time respecting our rules on data protection. We should encourage the High Level Group on IT systems to look at the options and see what more we can do.

Seventh: we need to strengthen security at the external borders. Terrorists and criminals act across borders, and checks at the external borders are a key way to stop them. The proposed Entry-Exit System is important as it will improve the effectiveness of our border checks. An EU Travel and Information Authorisation System would provide prior security checks for third country nationals travelling to the EU. And the European Border and Coast Guard will soon be operational, helping to ensure that we maintain a strong and effective external border.

Checks at the border help us to crack down on smuggling and trafficking networks as well as to identify returning foreign fighters, but we must not conflate issues of terrorism and migration or identity. Doing so risks feeding populism, which stigmatises vulnerable

populations and reinforces exclusion, providing a perfect breeding ground for radicalisation.

Eighth, we have to strengthen our capacity to protect critical infrastructure and soft targets. Recent attacks have highlighted vulnerabilities. Research and new technologies can help. Important work has already been done on aviation security, and we should take further steps in that area and extend our approach to other areas such as maritime security. Our work on cybersecurity should help build our resilience in the digital world.

Finally, any action we take to fight terrorism and wider criminal activity must address the needs of victims. We have recently reformed the EU law on victims' rights, but we need to think specifically about victims of terrorism. The proposed Directive on combating terrorism addresses victims' needs. I know how important this is to the committee and I hope together we can take that work forward.

I would like to conclude by saying briefly a few words about how I see myself working with you here in LIBE. As well as co-legislator, you are a source of ideas and inspiration, you can help create political pressure so that issues can get moved forward, and you can help us focus on delivery and implementation on the ground.

I strongly believe in the executive's accountability to Parliament. In addition to any formal engagements you request, I would be happy to report to you on a regular basis about progress we are making on delivering the Security Union. You have called, on a number of occasions, for a more comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of all our different strands of counter-terrorism policy. I agree and I want to work with you on this. We also need to look at how we might share greater operational knowledge, taking account of the highly sensitive nature of some of this information. I want to work with you on how best to take forward these important matters.

If I am confirmed, I will work tirelessly with my Commission colleagues, you and national authorities, to close down the space for those who would seek to attack our freedoms; to deliver an EU which is safer for our citizens, more inclusive and more resilient. Running through all of this will be the fundamental rights and values that we are not only looking to protect but to promote, because without these we will have failed.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to your questions.

(Applause)

1-0006

Chair. – Thank you, Commissioner-designate, and we now move to the first round of questions which will be from the coordinators of our political groups in the LIBE Committee. We begin with the EPP Deputy Coordinator, that is going to be Roberta Metsola, a one-minute question and a two-minute answer.

1-0007

Roberta Metsola (PPE). – Thank you, Commissioner-designate, for appearing in front of us tonight and for your very comprehensive opening statement. As I am the first person to ask a question, could you please go a little bit further into detail about how you would go about promoting a Security Union in the difficult climate that we are facing today in Europe, and particularly on current and ongoing intergovernmental approaches to security matters.

And on a related issue, what efforts would you make, keeping in mind the relative competences, particularly in the case of dual-nationality foreign fighters, to push for the cancelling or revocation of passports? Would that be something that the Commission under your leadership and direction would be looking into as a possible measure on how to tackle the current threats we have with the foreign fighters that have dual nationality?

1-0008

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I was able to spot you but this is a big room so can I just please ask for your forbearance, as we go through these questions, if I am looking around to try and find someone.

I agree with what the European Parliament has said about the need for a comprehensive, multi-layered and coordinated EU response. Now obviously we operate within the framework of the Treaties, but I do not think Member States can do it all alone; as I said, there is a clear EU role, and I think there is a lot that we can bring. We can bring our agencies, our systems – information and others – we can help strengthen borders, and we can help strengthen behind borders through effective use of SIS.

We can bring legislation. That legislation can help to set standards: I am thinking for example of money laundering. It can facilitate cooperation: I am thinking for example of the investigative order that is coming in in the spring. We can provide a framework and a network: for example I mentioned the excellent network on radicalisation awareness. We can provide funding, obviously through the ISF but also through Horizon 2000, and we can provide cooperation with third countries. So I think there is a range of things that we need to do at EU level.

Now on the particular question of passports and foreign fighters, both passports and nationality are of course for Member States, and there have been big debates about nationality. Some Member States do take action on passports, and EU law of course allows Member States to refuse entry or expel on public safety grounds. So this is something that I would certainly want to pursue in cooperation with my colleague Commissioner Jourová.

1-0009

Birgit Sippel (S&D). – The S&D Group has long been calling for a comprehensive overview of all the existing EU measures in the area in order to assess what works well and where the shortcomings and implementation gaps are – in vain. In your role as Commissioner for the Security Union, do you intend to conduct such an

evaluation – especially regarding full use in practice – to identify existing shortcomings and how to remedy them so as to guarantee that gaps or excessive legislation do not exist? How will you proceed?

And a second question: to defend our free and democratic societies, how will you guarantee that all measures proposed by the Commission follow the fundamental rights principles, especially the requirement of proportionality and necessity and the protection of personal data and privacy?

1-0010

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – As I said at the end of my remarks, I agree with those of you who have been calling for an overview of the effectiveness of policies in this area. If you confirm me, my arrival in this role would be an appropriate point for us to do that. Some people have occasionally called for a pause on activity while that is going on. I do not think that in the circumstances that is going to be possible, but I do think that, working with you to define exactly the modalities, we should be able to manage such an overview – both an overview of what we are doing at the EU level, and an overview of how that is having effect with Member States and in Member States. So I have made that commitment to you.

On the second part of your question, which is, of course, an absolutely central part of the whole framework in which we are working, I want to be absolutely clear: we exist in a framework defined in some very famous rulings: Digital Rights Ireland, Schrems and others, which you can see now being carried forward in various opinions. I accept that framework – that is the right framework for us to use to build a sustainable Security Union. Exceptions should, as you said, be necessary, proportionate and legal. We should have strict rules on access and use and we should respect purpose and duration limitations. That is the basis on which we should take our work forward.

1-0011

Timothy Kirkhope (ECR). – Sir Julian, can you reassure members of this committee that the Security Union, whilst important, is not going to stretch beyond its competences and that there will be maintained a clear division between national intelligence gathering and the exchange of law enforcement information? And how do you see the developments in this area over the next couple of years, particularly given the calls by some political groups in this House to move far beyond what the Treaties have foreseen or can legitimately control?

My second quick point is this: I was the rapporteur for Joint Investigation Teams back in 2001. I think there are mixed views on the success of JITs since that time. Would you and the Commission please look at bringing forward a revised and enhanced proposal on JITs given the greater need than ever for more cross-border cooperation in anti-terror investigation?

1-0012

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – As I said in

answer to the first question, I am clear that we operate within the framework of the Treaties. That said, I think there is a lot that we can and should do within that framework. These threats that we are facing, that I described briefly, are common threats that affect us all, all across Europe, and we should do what we can to work together to respond. And for me that means looking at ways of reinforcing cooperation and crucially building trust because your systems will not work unless people trust them. I think we do have an opportunity now with, particularly relevant to your question, the establishment and reinforcement in Europol of the Counter-terrorism Coordinator, which will give us, I hope a framework for practical cooperation to build that kind of trust with Member States and all the different constituent national authorities. And the example after the Paris attacks of cooperation between Europol and the French and Belgian authorities, in an operation called *Fraternité* that you will be familiar with, gives me confidence that we are going to be able to build that kind of practical, solidly-based cooperation. There is a lot we can do within the Treaties.

On JITS, I support the idea that we should do more to encourage national authorities to take advantage of JITS and I am a bit surprised, talking to people who have been working in this area recently, that that has not happened quite as much as you might have expected. Again I hope that through positive examples of successful cooperation, like *Fraternité*, we can encourage greater use of those kind of JITS, not only with Europol but with Eurojust as well, and that we can encourage cooperation with other agencies, Frontex and in future the border guards too.

1-0013

Cecilia Wikström (ALDE). – Commissioner-designate, on behalf of the ALDE Group I would like to welcome you to this hearing. You have been assigned an important portfolio, but unfortunately it is often misused by those who would prefer to see the EU divided. The Security Union is something we still need to deliver on. How would you ensure that the upcoming discussion and policy developments on security are evidence-based and focused on concrete security outcomes? In this regard, can you commit in ensuring a clear, definite distinction between the Union's security policies on the one hand, and asylum and migration policy on the other hand?

And secondly, while a series of EU wide security and law enforcement instruments are under implementation, the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism appears to be lagging behind. In concrete terms, what would be your main recommendations in order to step up our efforts in this area? Would you advocate rebalancing of resources at EU level in order to further support Member States' efforts in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, in particular when it comes to work at Community level and the fight against discrimination and stigmatisation?

1-0014

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Well, as I

said in my opening remarks, the only way I know of making effective policy is for it to be evidence-based. That is the tradition in which I have been brought up and that is the tradition that I would intend to carry forward. The exact mechanics of how that will work, in particular instances, we'll need to look at. But I know there's been some frustration on occasions that stuff has gone quite quickly, and there hasn't always been the full application of the procedures that might otherwise have been expected. I will want to look at that with you. I think we need to have a sound evidence base for our policies.

On security and migration, I am absolutely clear, as I hope I said in my introductory remarks, that we should not mix these things up. We have an excellent effort underway, and I salute the work in particular that the Commissioner Avramopoulos is doing on migration. It is very different from our work on security. Now there are some reported cases of terrorists perhaps using migration routes in order to come back to, or come to, Europe, and that is why I think it is good that we have taken steps, and I would support those, to reinforce hot spots and to spread best practice, including reinforcing some of our arrangements at borders. But all of that must, firstly, respect our fundamental rights principles and, secondly, be clearly separate from the work, which is ongoing, on migration.

Very quickly, on the third part of your question, on counter radicalisation: I have lived some of this in an entirely different and separate distinct set of circumstances in Northern Ireland, and my personal lived experience is that it is not something you can do from on high. The people you are trying to reach do not really want to engage with the state. So we have to work with effective, respected local actors and members of civil society.

Now I am very glad to see that the RAN network is already doing that, and I would do whatever I can support it, and if that means arguing for more funding to support across-Europe learning, but bringing together of local actors, I would be very happy to do that.

1-0015

Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL). – Ich möchte gerne zwei Fragen an Sie stellen. Die erste Frage – ich möchte wissen: Wie grenzen Sie Ihre Arbeit zu Kommissionsmitglied Avramopoulos ab? Sie haben ja auch keine eigene Generaldirektion. Wer berät Sie da eigentlich? Wie funktioniert das System? Das ist mir nicht klar.

Und die zweite Frage hängt natürlich auch damit zusammen, was Sie dargelegt haben. Sie wollen Gesetze umsetzen, es geht aber auch um die Konformität von EU-Recht. Ich würde gerne wissen: Wie werden Sie agieren, wenn der EuGH dem Generalanwalt hinsichtlich des EU-Kanada-Fluggastdatenabkommens entsprechen wird und dieses für rechtswidrig erklären wird? Was werden Ihre Aktionen hier sein? Wie werden Sie mit dem Fluggastdatenabkommen umgehen?

1-0016

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I am glad you asked me about the practical questions of how we are all going to work together. Again it reflects my culture: I am used to a culture where people work together in teams. So for me it is entirely natural that the key Commissioners in this area should work together as a team and, at a time when there is an increased demand from our citizens for a focus on security and related matters, I would consider myself as an additional resource for that team, working with the other members of the team to take our dossiers forward and to deliver, with you, for our citizens.

And I mean not just with Commissioner Avramopoulos, because if we start thinking, for example, about some of the work that needs to be done on de-radicalisation, it means going into a great deal of detail on youth, education and some of the relevant support structures, including economic support. I will want to work with a full range of colleagues, so I welcome the fact that the President has created a task force to support me.

The last time I was in the Commission I worked in a DG that can remain nameless but it worked very much in a silo, and sometimes that was effective and sometimes it was not, so I entirely embrace this idea of a task force that functions in a cross-cutting, networked way in the Commission.

On EU law, on respecting EU law – well I am absolutely committed to that. You mentioned the EU-Canada PNR (passenger name records) Agreement, and obviously I have read the Attorney General's opinion: he raises issues to do with the structure of the agreement, including on access use and some of the limitations. We will need to see what the Court rules, but I will obviously work with the Court's ruling.

1-0017

Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE). – Mr King you addressed the need to cut terrorist access to finance, and as the rapporteur for the new proposed amendments to the anti-money laundering directive, I want to address the trusts, as these are and can be vehicles for criminal and terrorist activities. Trusts, including the non-profit making or non-taxpaying trust can be misused for criminal and terrorist activities. As a Brit, how do you judge the risks of British trusts and can we count on your support to improve this Commission's proposal on the table on the issue of trusts?

And the second question, you have a long career working as a diplomat, as a civil servant, but you have not demonstrated political experience. I am not questioning your capabilities, but I would like to understand the choice of the British Government to refrain from nominating a political figure as Commissioner. Should I see this as a signal that the UK wants to de-politicise the European Commission and wants to have the Brexit negotiations mainly, or perhaps solely, with the Council?

1-0018

Sir Julian King, Commissioner designate. – Well, thank you for that. Can I start at the end? I am not a politician but I spent about the last 25 years swimming in a political sea. I do not want to do politics on this dossier, but I do want to use the political skills that I have got to advance this dossier. It does not look to me like a dossier or a role that is kind of part time or second class, so I respect President Juncker's vote of confidence and I will repay it by working as hard as I can with you to take forward work in this area. I do not think you should read anything into my role on these subjects and the wider Brexit issues. I am not here as a representative of the British government and if others want to ask about issues to do with Brexit and the British government's position I am afraid they will get the same reply. I am here before you to discuss the role that, subject to confirmation, I would be charged with doing.

On the question of terrorist financing I think terrorist financing is a very important area for us to address. I welcome the work that you are doing on this. I want to bring forward as soon as possible a series of proposals, the sort that you know, on harmonizing criminal offences and sanctions, mutual recognition, freezing and confiscation orders on criminal assets to address illicit cash movements and to address terrorist financing related to goods; ways in which they raise their money. And as part of that, I will actively engage in the discussion around trusts and I would do so as a member of the College in line with the oath that I would have taken, not as a representative of the British government or British interests.

1-0019

Gerard Batten (EFDD). – Good evening, Sir Julian. My first thought on this subject is why on earth is Britain nominating a commissioner at all, given that the last one had to resign because his position was untenable? Twelve weeks ago we had a referendum when the British people voted to leave the European Union, but to listen to you this evening sounds very much like business as usual. Now, you have already said that to take this role you have to give the EU a solemn oath of independence, which of course includes that you must work for the interests of the EU and not the UK. And you must not seek or take instructions from the British Government. Now, we are told that a servant cannot have two masters, in which case I have got two questions. If the interests of the UK and the EU conflict, which master will you cleave to, which master will you serve? Secondly, how long do you think the job will last given that Britain is on the brink of leaving the EU at any moment. Unless of course, Mrs May is not serious about 'Brexit meaning Brexit' and her nomination of yourself, with all due respect to your long, distinguished career, would indicate that.

1-0020

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Well, I am not entirely in agreement, but let me try and help on one or two of those points. I do not think that you should read anything into my nomination to do with the wider issues of Brexit: I am not here to present or defend the positions of the British Government this evening. But I

think that Prime Minister May has been crystal clear about respecting the result of the referendum. How long would I be here as a result? That is another way, a clever way of asking me to make a prediction about the negotiations, which I cannot do. I am not going to be able to give a running commentary on the negotiation process, still less a negotiation process that has not yet formally started.

On the question of the oath, I take the oath very seriously and I will respect and abide by the oath, which as you as you rightly say means that I will be completely independent in carrying out my responsibilities and I will neither seek nor take instruction from any government or from any other institution, body, office or entity, and that is how I will conduct myself as a member of the College.

1-0021

Janice Atkinson (ENF). – Welcome Sir Julian, I am glad your tenure will be as short as mine, to get out of this place. I am going to reiterate what my colleague here, Gerard Batten said: I am deeply disturbed that you are taking the oath to this place.

After 23 June the rules of engagement changed and you actually work for the 65 million British people, the majority of whom voted to come out of this place, you do not owe an allegiance to this place. You work for us. You answer to us. You do not work for them, you do not answer to them.

I am glad you agree that security is a national competence, but if you were to listen to some of the debates that go on in this place, it is open borders, free movement of people. Until you actually stop that, do you agree that the jihadis are not going to respect fundamental rights at all? Do you agree that Hungary has had to take its national security seriously because this place is so incompetent at coming up with ideas about protecting its external borders? Do you agree with what Viktor Orbán has courageously done in Hungary, and do you think that should be replicated throughout?

1-0022

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I am genuinely not here to speak for the positions of Her Majesty's Government, that is not the basis on which you are having this exchange with me this evening. If, subject to this process, I am confirmed as a Commissioner and a member of the College, I will take the oath – I will have no problem taking the oath and I will have no problem acting in accordance with it. I will work at that point for the general European interest and on behalf of all of the European citizens, citizens of the European Union, including those people in the United Kingdom for as long as it is a Member State and until it leaves; and when it leaves my job here will cease.

On the question of security and whether this place and Europe can help, I believe it can, which is why I believe there is such an important job to be done here, which I have tried to set out in my remarks.

I agree with you that jihadi terrorists do not respect fundamental rights. That is why we need to fight jihadi terrorism and strengthen our defences against the ill-will that they bear our way of life.

1-0023

Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE). – Thank you, Mr King, for an excellent presentation. I hope that my English will be as good as your French. Do you think that the UK should be involved in the process of harmonisation in security and immigration issues once it has left the EU? Do you do support opting-out clauses, or do you rather think that negotiations on Brexit could be a chance to work on closer partnership on this matter?

1-0024

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – The problem I have in trying to give you a structured answer to this is that you are again asking me to discuss UK Government positions and policies and indeed to speculate about a negotiation process and the outcome of that negotiation process. So I do hope you will bear with me if I limit my answer to the following, which is, as I have said on a number of occasions, I believe that these threats and this security challenge that we face is a common challenge. It affects all of us in Europe. Once the British Government has done what it has clearly stated, which is to respect the outcome of the referendum, London will still be two hours away by train from Paris and two hours away by train from Brussels. The jihadi terrorists do not make any distinction between Brussels, Paris and London and do not make any distinction between the relationship a country has with the European Union. That will still be the case and we will still have a shared interest in trying to tackle these threats.

1-0025

Marju Lauristin (S&D). – Distinguished Commissioner-designate, as a part of your portfolio you will be in charge of the development of efficient and interoperable information exchange systems. You have already mentioned in your introductory speech that you will encourage the High Level Expert Group on information systems to go on with this work.

In this context, could you describe a bit more what could be the kind of cooperation you will have, what kind of ideas you will prioritise? And particularly, would you support this expert group in its intention to create a so-called 'super database', a common repository of data in the form of a single European database, instead of the current system based on separate databases like Eurodac and others.

And specifically, could you tell us a little about what kind of risks you can see in this kind of super database when we look at it from the viewpoint of protection of personal data? You said that you will be very much interested in preserving the proper balance between the protection of personal data and security interests, so in this case of a super database, how could you see this as possible?

1-0026

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I appreciate very much the framework and approach you have in asking this question because, of course, I appreciate the very in-depth knowledge you have about data protection.

The reason I mentioned it in my remarks is because I think this group is a very important group that is addressing some very important issues. I hope that I can work with them to take their work forward quickly. I know that they are scheduled to report by summer 2017. If I can work with them to try and bring some of that forward on a tighter timescale I would be very glad to do that.

They have to look at legal, technical and operational aspects of this network of systems that we have, and I hope that they will look at a range of options, not just one model – you mentioned one particular model – and in looking at that range of options I hope and am confident that they will have fundamental rights and in particular data protection at the heart of their work.

There is a need for us to have a look at the options, because these systems are as good as the data that goes in, how it is processed, and who can get it out in a timely fashion. So I hope that they will have a look at an option around whether there is scope for one shared interface when you are consulting data. I hope they will have a look at whether distinct systems can talk to each other. And one of the options which I understand they will look at is the one that you particularly cite of a common database.

But whatever options they examine and whatever recommendations they bring forward, I am clear that those will have to respect data protection rules. And I am very happy to undertake to you to report to this committee on a regular basis on the progress of the work of this important group.

1-0027

Helga Stevens (ECR). – Sir Julian King, do you believe that the Member States, either through national or EU-led programmes, need to work more closely with internet service providers in order to collect relevant and useful information in order to prevent and prosecute terror offences? In this regard, is the Commissioner disheartened by the recent opinion of the ECJ with regard to the EU-Canada PNR agreement?

Further to this, does the Commission intend to come forward with proposals for the collection of PNR data for trains and boats, as these are also increasingly being made targets for terrorist attacks?

1-0028

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – On working with internet service providers, I think that this is an important area. It has many different aspects. One aspect that I am particularly conscious of, as I have been thinking about tackling radicalisation, hate speech and very unwelcome terrorist propaganda, is the whole network of what is legal, illegal, what is therefore

compulsory, what is voluntary and how to have an effective dialogue with the internet service providers about these issues. I am very grateful that I inherit an EU Internet Forum that brings together Member States and internet experts to discuss some of these issues. I want to see whether we can develop that work and take it further forward.

You ask, as has already been asked, about the EU-Canada PNR and the Advocate General's opinion. As I have said before, I think we need to wait for the court judgment, but if there are issues arising from that we will need to work with the court judgment.

On the question of extending PNR, I am conscious that when this was discussed it was decided, at that stage, not to include or extend PNR to cover different forms of transport, land and rail and maritime as you mention, and I imagine that in part that was because of the significant increase in data that that would mean was collected and processed, and that unlike some of the airlines, these were sometimes providers who did not collect that data in the normal course of their business.

If and when we look again at the implementation of PNR, and there is of course a programmed review after it has come into effect, then I think that we need to have an open mind and learn lessons from how it is being put into practice and see whether it could be extended, but any extension would have to satisfy the tests of necessity and proportionality.

1-0029

Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE). – Monsieur le Commissaire candidat, votre lettre de mission mentionne clairement, parmi les très larges responsabilités stratégiques qui sont proposées pour ce portefeuille, la cybersécurité et l'intelligence numérique renforcée, mais c'est un domaine que vous avez – et pour les raisons qu'on connaît, étant donné le temps – très brièvement développé.

Comme vous ne l'ignorez pas, évidemment, les réseaux criminels et les réseaux terroristes utilisent de plus en plus le numérique et Internet. J'en veux pour preuve, il y a quelques jours, l'organisation d'un attentat qui a été déjoué dans mon pays, la France, à Paris, et qui était commandité quasi exclusivement sur Internet. Quelles sont, dans ce domaine, vos priorités pour agir?

Deuxièmement, l'exploitation sexuelle des enfants en ligne est un véritable fléau, alors même que l'application de la directive de 2011 montre chaque jour ses limites. Là également, quelles sont vos intentions si le vote du Parlement européen vous permet de prendre la responsabilité de commissaire?

1-0030

Julian King, commissaire désigné. – Merci pour vos questions. Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour exprimer toute ma solidarité avec la France en cette période, parce que, vraiment, nous avons un travail à accomplir face à des attentats qui se multiplient.

1-0031

On cyber, I think there is some work to be done to reinforce our resilience and I would want to prioritise implementation of the Network and Information Systems Directive. I think we need to make sure that Member States have plans in place for cyber resilience, that they have operating CERTs in order to deal with incidents and I salute the fact that there is an agreement now on a new public-private partnership between business – which also goes to the last question – and public authorities in order to fund further work in this area, and I think there is a role for the EU in supporting that work.

On children and the follow-up to the 2011 directive, I am acutely conscious of the importance of this dossier and I will want us to continue as the Commission to monitor the *mise en application* of the directive and we should report soon – I am sorry that the report has been a little bit delayed, but we will definitely report this year.

1-0032

Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL). – Il 23 agosto scorso i ministri dell'Interno di Francia e Germania hanno annunciato che al vertice di Bratislava chiederanno alla Commissione, dunque a lei, Sir King, una direttiva sull'*encryption*, la quale obbligherebbe compagnie come *WhatsApp* o *Telegram* a indebolire gli standard di cifratura o a istituire *back door* per l'accesso delle forze di polizia ai dati personali.

La proposta è criticata dai sostenitori della privacy e dal CNIL, l'autorità francese per la protezione dei dati: la tesi è che togliere la cifratura espone i cittadini a rischi di *hacking* e di altre forme di terrorismo più di quanto minacci i terroristi.

Ecco le domande: che tipo di garanzie si intende fornire a salvaguardia della privacy e della sicurezza dei cittadini? Non crede, Sir King, che il terrorista aggirerà l'ostacolo usando, o anche creando, app alternative?

1-0033

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, and thank you for raising such an important subject. The internet, as the last few questions make very clear, is absolutely central to our lives – the conduct of our lives and all aspects of our lives, including our private lives – and we should be entitled to privacy in the online world as we are in the offline world. Encryption, for secure communication, is part of that world and is part of the privacy that all citizens should be able to enjoy in that world. It is also the case that some very bad people use encryption, including terrorists. Indeed, in the attack, just mentioned, that was recently foiled in France a well-known encryption device had been used to help its planning. Not just terrorists, however, but also paedophiles and other criminals are using encryption. So there is no easy answer.

I am not convinced that there is a sort of silver bullet. Personally speaking, I am not convinced that some kind of systematic process of introducing 'backdoors' would make us all safer. I think, as you say, that it risks

introducing systemic weaknesses, which could be used against us, as well as by all sorts of third parties – so this is not a simple subject. I am very glad that we have the Internet Forum as a group of experts, including both Member State representatives and practitioners, who can look at this subject. I will certainly be encouraging them to do so and to offer us some recommendations which I would be happy to discuss further with you.

1-0034

Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE). – I wanted to pick up on the issue of cooperation with third countries in this sphere. We have already mentioned Canada, but of course it concerns a variety of countries – Turkey, Afghanistan – and to look at that issue of cooperation and the balance between the respect for fundamental rights and expediency. We have seen this tension in a number of Parliament's reports, for example around events on extraordinary rendition and the involvement of some Member States, which I think have raised a lot of questions about accountability and the effectiveness at times of side-stepping international law. So I wanted to ask what you consider the key principles are for cooperation with third countries, and how will you ensure greater transparency about those principles?

1-0035

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Well, my principles for dealing with third countries are the same as the principles I would want to apply among Member States and in the EU, and that is why actions that are completely outside international law and clearly flout fundamental rights, like rendition, should be unreservedly criticised, as this House has done on many occasions.

But extreme cases should not stop us from pursuing effective cooperation against the background of a shared approach to fundamental rights and international law. And if you are thinking, amongst our strategic partners, of the partnership with the United States, it is one that I think, not least thanks to the efforts of many here in this Parliament, and in particular in this committee, is on a sounder footing than it was perhaps a few years ago. I am not saying everything is perfect, but it has definitely moved in a very positive direction. And I think that the triptych, if you like, of the Privacy Shield, the Redress Act and the Umbrella Agreement, put us in a much better place to pursue that strategic cooperation in a way that is consistent with the values that we expect of ourselves and therefore should expect of others.

1-0036

Laura Ferrara (EFDD). – Sir King, lei sarà responsabile della sicurezza interna. Nonostante la lettera del Presidente Juncker, nonostante ci abbia parlato di questa *task force* e dunque della collaborazione con gli altri Commissari, non mi è ben chiaro dove finisce il confine del suo mandato e dove comincia quello degli altri suoi colleghi, in particolare il riferimento al Commissario Avramopoulos e alla Commissaria Jourová.

Nelle sue dichiarazioni, a parte qualche accostamento al terrorismo, non ho trovato riferimenti a specifiche misure volte a contrastare il fenomeno della criminalità organizzata, un fenomeno d'importanza pari a quella del terrorismo. Ecco, mi chiedo dunque se la Commissione intenda affrontare il tema della sicurezza senza affrontare il fenomeno della criminalità organizzata nella sua complessità e nella sua interezza, perché l'agenda europea non contiene delle misure specifiche in tal senso.

Il Parlamento ha adottato una risoluzione nell'ottobre del 2013 e si appresta ad adottarne altre con delle raccomandazioni specifiche sia nei confronti degli Stati membri, sia nei confronti delle istituzioni europee e mi piacerebbe capire quale seguito intende dare a tali raccomandazioni e, se possibile, anche l'ordine di priorità.

1-0037

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak, albeit briefly, about the very important subject of organised crime, which I know is very close to the hearts of many of this committee. Your report will be an opportunity for us to have a more in-depth conversation about this area, and I look forward to that.

I think that some of the priorities that you, with your colleagues, have been setting out, namely to tackle corruption, to look at confiscation, which I have mentioned, and to look at some of the new and novel forms of organised crime around environmental crime, and – one that is particularly close to my heart – wildlife trafficking, merit close examination.

As we think about renewing the policy cycle, I would want us to build on the success of the last policy cycle, which you mentioned, from 2013 to date, looking at subjects like counterfeit, fraud, cybercrime and arms, and renew it to take account of some of the developments that have taken place in between times. I will certainly want to work with all of the instruments available at EU level in the agencies to address this area – organised crime and cybercrime – and work with colleagues in the EEAS and on the external side of the Commission to make this one of the key elements of our dialogue with third countries.

On how I hope to work, as I have said – and you will have to come back to me and test me on this in practice – I intend to be a member of a team. I intend to work in the closest teamwork with a whole range of Commissioners on these different subjects, and I will be accountable to you, for the security dimension of those actions.

1-0038

Janice Atkinson (ENF). – Again, just looking after the UK's interests. In July this year as part of your former role you met UK Border Force staff at the Gare du Nord. Since being elected as an MEP, I have met the UK Border Force staff in Paris and Brussels on quite a number of occasions, and they have repeatedly shared

with me their personal safety fears, because if a jihadi terrorist attack were to happen, specifically they called on the then-Home Secretary, Theresa May, twice and I have asked her twice, whether she would address the issue with her French counterparts as well, to move the border controls, the passport controls, specifically behind the security areas. They are very, very concerned about their own safety. Is this something you can look into to protect our hard-working, overstretched border force? And I make no apology for protecting British citizens again.

1-0039

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – No, and I 100% agree with you – protecting British citizens and citizens across the European Union is at the heart of this proposed task. Again, I am not going to dodge the question, but I am not here this evening to talk about my previous responsibilities or as a representative of the British Government. I will draw on those experiences in thinking about the new role, and actually one of the experiences that I would draw upon is the very close work that I have had over a number of years, but very intensively over recent months, with the British Border Force as one example of that kind of force. They do fantastic work. Thank you for giving me the opportunity, even if it is slightly out with the main purpose of today's hearing, to salute the work the Border Force are doing across the north of France, helping travellers move between France, the whole of the continent and the UK. If there are particular measures that need to be taken to support effective action on borders, I will want to pursue that with my Commission colleagues starting with Commissioner Avramopoulos.

1-0040

Ελισάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυωνίδη (PPE). – Σας καλωσορίζω και εγώ με τη σειρά μου, κύριε King. Έχετε δηλώσει ότι στις προτεραιότητές σας συγκαταλέγεται και ο αποκλεισμός πρόσβασης τρομοκρατών στη χρηματοδότηση. Αυτό το επαναλάβατε και σήμερα αναφερόμενος σε κάποιες επικείμενες πρωτοβουλίες από την Επιτροπή. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, παρακαλώ να μας ενημερώσετε αν προτίθεστε να υποβάλετε νομοθετική πρόταση για τη δημιουργία ενός ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος με σκοπό την παρακολούθηση της χρηματοδότησης της τρομοκρατίας που θα καλύπτει, παραδείγματος χάρι, πληρωμές εντός της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης εφόσον αυτές δεν περιλαμβάνονται στο πεδίο εφαρμογής ανάλογου αντίστοιχου προγράμματος μεταξύ Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών.

1-0041

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you for the question. I think this also goes to the earlier question on what are some of the concrete things we can do around terrorist financing. The EU-US arrangement that you refer to at the end, rooted again in Europol, is a very effective arrangement. Even if people are not moving large sums of money around, sometimes tracing the movement of funds can be extremely helpful in investigations. There were literally hundreds of leads generated from that system after the terrorist attacks in Brussels and Paris, which proved to be incredibly useful.

Now you are asking about whether that could be mirrored or complemented by an arrangement amongst EU Member States, or at least within the SEPA area. As I understand it, the last time this was looked at some years ago, three years ago, that idea was not pursued by the Commission, but in my view the threat situation, the threat picture, has changed as we have been discussing all the way through this hearing. So I think that we should reassess, we should look again and come forward with some options – I do not know what those options would be at this stage – but come forward with some options to discuss with you this year.

1-0042

Péter Niedermüller (S&D). – I have three short questions. First, according to your mission letter, you will also be responsible for initiatives to upgrade Europol's Counter-Terrorism Centre. Could you elaborate on what these initiatives could entail? Secondly, against the backdrop of the Snowden revelations and, more recent European requests to ban encryption, mandate obligatory backdoors and allow mass bulk data collection, what is your stance on that? Thirdly, there have recently been many European Court judgments against certain EU measures, for example the Safe Harbor agreement. How will you ensure on your portfolio that the Commission does not propose legislation that will later be overturned by the Court?

1-0043

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I will try to deal with the middle question first because, if I've understood it correctly, I haven't got an enormous amount to add to what I've already had an opportunity to say about encryption. I think encryption is a key part of the online world: it serves very good purposes, preserving our privacy. It's also used misused by terrorists, criminals and paedophiles. There's no easy answer or silver bullet about what to do to stop that, and I want to have an expert dialogue with the internet service providers and others, to come forward with some ideas for discussion – I don't think we'll be able to move anywhere near straight to any recommendations.

On the ECTC and reinforcing Europol, this is a real opportunity for us now, which we need to seize with both hands. I want to work with the Director of Europol to make sure that he has the right resources, funding and expertise to make the ECTC as effective as possible. I want to encourage Member States to second experts and share their expertise, and I want to build on the concrete examples of effective cooperation that are already building up – most notably, as I've mentioned, the cooperation in Operation *Fraternité* after the recent attacks in Paris – to encourage a greater exchange of information between Member State authorities and the ECTC.

On how we do good legislation: I hope you're going to help me to do good legislation where necessary, because, as I said in my introductory remarks, we also have to put into practice some of the things which are already on the statute books and which we've agreed. But if new measures are needed, then we must not shy

away from that, and any such measures need to be really sound, quality legislation that will stand the test of time and live up to the structure of fundamental rights that I described earlier.

1-0044

Jussi Halla-aho (ECR). – Sir Julian, I would like to hear your views on two legislative proposals related to the European Agenda on Security.

Firstly, the Firearms Directive, according to the Commission, aims to cut terrorists' access to firearms. In reality, however, the proposal is rather an attack on the legitimate private ownership of firearms, with a very thin 10-year logical link to crime or illegal weapons. Do you believe this proposal respects the principles of proportionality, necessity, subsidiarity and high-quality lawmaking?

Secondly, on the smart borders package, and more specifically, the Entry-Exit System: one question that has raised concerns in Parliament is the access law enforcement authorities have to the data collected and stored. The national authorities that we have heard have made it clear that such access does bring added value, but there are some in Parliament who are not convinced. How do you see the balance between information sharing for law enforcement purposes and privacy protection?

1-0045

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you. I am going to try, Chair, but a number of these questions seem to come in a number of parts.

1-0046

Chair. – Yes, I have noticed, colleagues, that you are asking two or three questions and taking, on average, 1 minute and 20 or 30 seconds, and then you are asking the Commissioner-designate to have to answer two or three questions. But if you are going to insist, we are going to take more time. Anyway, I am now taking up your time as well. Commissioner-designate, please go ahead.

1-0047

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – But I think those are excellent questions. Thank you very much.

1-0048

Chair. – It all ends in hell if I just keep going on like this, but you know what the score is. You are all experienced, so let us just keep it tight. Carry on Commissioner-designate: this is how it is going to be when you come before us, you know that! Carry on. If you are approved accordingly. Sorry everyone out there. If it all goes well and the coordinators so approve.

1-0049

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – On the first question, on firearms, I think I said – I hope I said – in my opening remarks that for me the first challenge is illegal arms trafficking, and there I want to work with Europol, the SIS system and the Interpol system iARMS, and to work with our third country partners. I think that there is good work already being done in the

dialogue between the EU and the Western Balkans. I think that should be continued and strengthened, and extended maybe to other countries as well, to crack down effectively on illegal trafficking of arms.

That said, if we are cracking down on illegal trafficking, I do think there is a link to tightening arrangements on legal ownership of arms, because there is some risk of diversion. I welcome the fact that, as part of that, decisions have already been taken on reactivation, or going-back on deactivated arms. I think that is very helpful. Unfortunately, as we know from the attacks in Paris, sometimes deactivated arms are reactivated and used. But I do think we have to be sensitive. We have to be sensitive to the concerns of legitimate use of arms by our citizens and I will want to look at that and see how we get that balance right.

On smart borders and the entry-exit system, this is a new proposal which reflects extensive discussion and consideration. I want to work very closely with Commissioner Avramopoulos as he takes that forward. I do think, as I said, that – without confusing things – there is a security dimension to controls that we exercise on our borders, and as long as we can do that consistent with the framework of fundamental rights, proportionality, necessity, legality and access and use, then I think we should be prepared to look at it.

1-0050

Louis Michel (ALDE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, une question très concrète: dans le cadre de la directive "terrorisme", actuellement négociée en trilogue, nous avons, je pense, une opportunité sérieuse de combler les lacunes du nouveau système PNR européen. Le Parlement européen demande un échange automatique des données PNR des personnes suspectées ou condamnées au titre de la directive "terrorisme". Il s'agit là d'une mesure très concrète qui permettrait de garantir un échange effectif de l'information entre États membres.

J'ai donc une question très précise: comptez-vous soutenir cette proposition?

De plus, l'échange de données a ses limites, si celles-ci ne sont pas analysées de manière semblable. Comment comptez-vous, par exemple, faire en sorte que les données PNR soient analysées de la même manière par tous les États membres? Ne serait-il pas opportun de mettre en place, au niveau européen, une analyse de risque commune de ces données en harmonisant, par exemple, la définition du comportement suspect? Quelles mesures concrètes comptez-vous prendre en la matière?

1-0051

Sir Julian King, commissaire désigné. – D'abord, avant de poser la question de l'analyse commune des données tirées de ce système de PNR, il faut qu'il existe. Mon premier objectif serait donc, le cas échéant, de coopérer étroitement avec nos États membres pour qu'ils puissent établir leurs PIU parce que, sans ça, la question ne se pose même pas. En ce moment, pour autant que je sache,

il y a deux, peut-être trois États membres qui sont capables de monter un tel système. Donc, il reste quand même pas mal de travail devant nous.

Si on peut en arriver à ce point-là – et je l'espère, bien évidemment –, nous devons certainement aussi nous demander comment instaurer une coopération efficace entre les PIU des États membres. Je serai tout disposé à essayer d'établir des *guidelines*, *best practices*, etc., pour y arriver. En effet, dans toutes ces questions, je trouve que, en agissant dans le cadre de nos traités, il faut faire le maximum pour établir une culture commune partagée de responsabilité.

En ce qui concerne les directives, s'agissant de ce que nous pouvons faire contre le terrorisme, j'espère qu'ensemble nous pourrions avancer rapidement sur tous les volets, que ce soit le volet voyages, sous tous ses aspects, ou le volet entraînement, y compris peut-être isolément, et le volet lié au financement.

1-0052

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL). – Commissioner-designate, what deliberations have you given to the security considerations for the island of Ireland, post-Brexit? It is not within the gift of the British and Irish Governments to say, at this stage, that there will not be a hardening of the border. So in light of your opening comments about cross-border crime, how are you going to work, in the here and now, to prevent potential economic crime across what will be an external border of the EU? And how are you going to work, obviously before you leave, to secure this back door?

Now you are obviously going to be strategic, you are going to be planning and preparing before you leave, so how are you going to secure the Customs Union so that you do not potentially have produce, for instance, coming from Britain coming into the Six Counties and wandering across into another Member State and to the rest of the EU? And how are you going to ensure that all of this protection across the border doesn't actually reinforce the partition of Ireland, which would be an absolute disaster?

1-0053

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I think I probably can try and answer that because it is not a question solely about the position of the government that I work for for the moment but, subject to your deliberations may not work for for much longer, and it will touch upon the security responsibilities that will be in my new role, subject to confirmation.

I know from personal experience how profoundly important life across that border is to everyone, north and south. I have walked it, I have crossed it and I have friends who live either side and I think that it is going to be very important in Dublin, Belfast and London that an attempt is made to identify a way of avoiding the disadvantages that you set out, were there to be a hard border. But that is a subject, the detail of which would have to be taken forward in negotiations, negotiations between the UK and the EU 27, which I have chosen not

to comment on today, and I hope you will understand why. That will be an issue for the future.

1-0054

Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE). – As there have already been plenty of questions raised, most of them I think very comprehensively answered, I would like to add the perspective of relations with the Member States. You already laid out your position in the Commission and how you will work in the Commission and with the Parliament. But how will we really get implementation of the existing measures in the Member States. How are you going to get support from Member States for a common action plan when it comes to the Security Union, and in particular when it comes, for example, to deradicalisation measures – where we think that, for example, also the issue of radicalisation in prisons needs to be addressed in Member States?

1-0055

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I think there are at least two parts to that question. One is how do we engage and build trust with national authorities, and the other is what more can we do across a range of contacts, sometimes with national authorities but very often not with national authorities but with wider civil society and front-line actors – in education, you cite prisons, and there are a range of other areas which are in the front line of tackling radicalisation.

On what we can do with Member States, as I was saying at the start, I think there is a very clear EU role within the framework of the Treaties to encourage, to help, to get stuff implemented and if necessary to enforce. There is also a role to set standards and remove barriers to cooperation. I earlier cited the investigative order, which I think is an excellent example of improving common standards in order to remove barriers to cooperation. There is a key role for the institutions to shine a light on where Member States are falling down, and I support that, and there are all sorts of practical ways in which the agencies and our systems can help build the necessary trust with Member States, some of which we have already discussed.

But it is not just with Member States and that is the point that I would like to emphasise in answering your question. I passionately believe that the most successful counter-radicalisation work is not done by states, it is done by civil society actors, and therefore we have an opportunity to help provide them with funding, with expertise and a contact network across the whole of Europe so that people can come together and build themselves from the bottom up effective best practice.

1-0056

Ioan Mircea Pașcu (S&D). – We all know that there is a tendency today to integrate internal aspects of security with external aspects of security, and this is probably one feature of the security situation we are confronted with. Concretely, you will be put in a position exactly at the heart of this integration and I would like to know have you given thought to the concrete forms of cooperation on the one hand with the people around the

High Commissioner, Commissioners dealing with external affairs, and on the other hand with the Coordinator of the anti-terrorist centre?

1-0057

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I have started to work on that. I have met with them and discussed exactly the point you put your finger on, which is that there are two sides to this coin – internal and external. In many areas we need to reinforce both, and they are mutually reinforcing if we get it right. So I will want to work with Vice-President Mogherini and Commission colleagues who work on external dossiers, as closely as possible to make sure that we are mainstreaming some of these security concerns – internal security concerns, shared security concerns – in our third country dialogues. I am thinking, for example, of the cooperation we can have with third countries in countering violent extremism, the dialogue we can have with third countries about the input that they can have in support of our de-radicalisation efforts, the obvious cooperation we need on funding and funding for terrorism and, coming to the question that we had a few moments ago, the need to tackle illegal trafficking in arms.

Those are just some of the areas that I think that we need to focus on, and there are some structural relationships which are extremely important. I have touched upon what I believe to be the improved structure of our strategic relationship with the United States and I do think that, both in general and on some of the specific programmes – and a colleague who was sitting just where you are sitting was asking about the terrorist financing programmes – our cooperation with third countries is essential to our internal security.

1-0058

Gerard Batten (EFDD). – Sir Julian, now you are here, or you will be, to establish a Security Union. Europol stated in 2013 ‘policies enabling free trade and movement across the EU are exploited by organised crime in trafficking and fraud. The free movement of people and goods across the EU’s internal borders reduces the chance of detection.’ Do you agree with Europol that free movement has caused major security problems for the EU and its Member States? Isn’t the proposed Security Union another example of the EU creating a problem and then proposing a solution which always requires more power to be taken by the EU? Isn’t the driving force behind the Security Union the need to protect and keep the borderless European project alive, rather than to protect its citizens?

1-0059

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-delegate. – I sincerely hope the driving force, certainly my motivation were I to be confirmed, is to keep our citizens safe. The driving force is to combat terrorism, cybercrime and organised crime. I hope that that came through very, very clearly in what I had to say because I really mean that. That is what this work is designed to do, and I would put that at the heart of any work with you, with Member States, authorities or with civil society, to help build the

Security Union. Once again, the worst cases that we are tackling, the frankly evil terrorist intent, they are not worried about which bit of Schengen or non-Schengen Europe they attack. They are attacking our way of life, and that is what I think we need to defend.

1-0060

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – Señor presidente, señor King, sinceramente le doy la bienvenida y le deseo muchos éxitos.

«La Unión de la seguridad» es una bonita frase de la que vamos a vivir durante un tiempo, pero lo cierto es lo que dice el artículo 4 —usted lo ha citado—: «la competencia es nacional». Por tanto, estamos en el ámbito de la cooperación y de la colaboración.

En este sentido, Europol, cuyo Reglamento será de obligado cumplimiento para los Estados miembros el 1 de mayo de 2017, es un instrumento de cooperación y de colaboración inequívoco. Le doy una noticia que no sé si le han dado ya sus colaboradores: la Comunicación de la Comisión de 20 de abril establece, sobre la aplicación de la Agenda de Seguridad, que en otoño del año 2016 —es decir, tiene usted 90 días prácticamente— tiene que presentar iniciativas para reforzar el Centro Europeo de Lucha contra el Terrorismo de Europol y tiene que presentar medidas concretas. Por eso, redundo e insisto en las preguntas, pero de una manera específica, a este respecto.

Según su criterio, ¿qué medidas a corto y a largo plazo nos va a presentar para reforzar el CELCT en 90 días?

Segundo: ¿cómo se puede mejorar la capacidad de planificación preventiva y operativa?

Y, por último, ¿cuál va a ser la relación entre el CELCT y el Centro de Análisis de Inteligencia de la señora Mogherini? No hablo de declaración de principios, sino de cómo se va a coordinar eso.

Muchas gracias y buena suerte.

1-0061

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you. I hope to be able to benefit from your own expertise and experience as we – *le cas échéant* – take work forward in this area. You are right that there is a commitment to come forward with some concrete ideas and proposals. I am confident we will meet that deadline – and we need to, because we need to get in shape to take full benefit of the new legal framework which kicks in in May next year, and we need to prepare for that from now. So in as far as I can, if I am in the position to do so, and as I have said unambiguously, I will champion Europol. That will be through offering support on the policy framework, offering support on funding and offering support on staffing, whether that is finding new staff from resources for Europol or encouraging Member States to get better at seconding staff to Europol. I estimate, on the basis of papers I have seen, that we need an uplift of maybe 80 or 90 staff to effectively do the new tasks that are being

proposed for Europol, and I will want to work to deliver that.

You ask about the operational capacity. There is obviously the key work of the CTC, including the work on the internet side and on financing, and the continued dialogue with national authorities, which I would like to work to reinforce, to build on the best practice of CT information sharing and coordination from across our Member States. But I do not want to lose sight of the vital work that Europol needs to do on cybercrime or of the importance of the Smuggling Centre, which are also key parts of the operational capacity of Europol which I support. In answer to an earlier question, I said that I wanted to do whatever I could to encourage Member States to make greater use of the Joint Investigative Teams that come out of Europol, and indeed Eurojust. I think that is very important.

On the last point that you raised, about the IntCen, I think it is very important that we find the most effective cooperation between the IntCen and the CTC. It is another version of the question we had about the two sides of the same coin – internal and external security.

1-0062

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Commissioner-designate, I want to pick up on the issue of new security technologies. What is your stance on the development of new security technologies in your role, and especially how will you secure or ensure that EU-financed security research does not only meet the need of security practitioners, as mentioned in your mission letter, but also meets the stringent fundamental rights test?

On another issue, there is more and more pressure for the use and exchange of biometric data. What is your stance on the push to further invest in facial recognition technologies at EU level, and how would you counteract the negative fundamental rights implications?

1-0063

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I do think that making the connection between our research funding and our security objectives is very important; increasingly important. I am massively encouraged that there have been some breakthrough pieces of research, funded by us, that are very relevant to security. For example, there is a piece of research that the EU funded to put explosive precursors out of action so that when you mix them together, they do not develop an explosive of the sort that unfortunately we have seen used in a number of attacks. There is another piece of excellent research, funded by the EU, to improve over-the-horizon radar, which is now being put into practice, including in Operation Sophia.

So there is a direct link between some of these research projects and security, and I would want to continue to encourage that. But, as you say quite rightly, in encouraging that we need to have in mind all the time the framework – which we spoken about a number of times today – of fundamental rights that is the bedrock of the Security Union. So that is part of the scrutiny

process that I would want to develop with my Commission colleagues who are directly responsible for scheduling the next round of research funding, which is coming up very soon.

1-0064

Monica Macovei (ECR). – I have two short questions. We have several dossiers in Parliament relating to anti-terrorism. One of them is the enforcement of checks against the relevant databases at the external borders of the European Union. It is basically about a change in the Schengen Code. We have different opinions on this, and we are negotiating. My question to you is how you see your role, given the urgency of a more secure environment for our citizens, in better managing and protecting the external borders of the Union? Do you think that systematic checks and effective use of all relevant databases would enhance security and make our borders more efficient in defending against possible terrorists?

The second question is how would you improve cooperation and information sharing among intelligence and law enforcement agencies in Member States, and also cooperation and information sharing among the relevant European agencies? This is a problem; we sometimes have poor cooperation, lack of cooperation or not full cooperation.

1-0065

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – On security at our borders, as I said I think early on in this session, I think that you need a number of layers of security, but one of those which we should certainly look to reinforce is at the border. I will want to work very closely with Commissioner Avramopoulos and other colleagues as we work through some of these proposed reforms that you refer to. I do think there is a case for us moving to systematic from non-systematic checks. I do think there is a case for us looking, as I said earlier, at different sorts of checks that could be exercised at the border, in particular for third country nationals. And I do agree that we need to think about how to use that information effectively across the different systems, consistent with fundamental rights, and especially purpose limitations, which is why, as I said earlier, I think there is some very, very important work that needs to be done with the specialists to look at that and to come back to you with some recommendations.

On the question of building cooperation, including between intelligence and law enforcement agencies, I agree with you that it can sometimes be difficult. It can sometimes be difficult within a Member State and not only between Member States and the European level, but we must do what we can to build on best practice. I have cited before, but I will cite again, the example following the Paris attack of the excellent cooperation between Europol and the French and Belgian authorities in Operation *Fraternité*, which made concrete progress in the follow-up to those attacks. So I am hopeful that by building on practical cooperation we can reinforce trust

and help to address some of the blockages that exist, sometimes, in effective communication.

1-0066

Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE). – Welcome, Commissioner-designate. Two questions. I very much welcome your emphasis on delivery and your promise to evaluate the counter-terrorism strategy, and I was just interested to hear whether you think our strategy so far has been a success or a failure. Have we been effective in fighting terrorism over the last 15 years or not, and do you think that there are any measures that could possibly be repealed? We have been talking about new measures, but do you think there are any that could be repealed?

Second question. You seem to suggest that criticism of the United States might actually have a negative impact on our cooperation. I think that is funny, because I think inside the United States criticism is much fiercer – and I am thinking, for example, of Senator Feinstein and her committee – and was wondering what you will do to achieve accountability for the role of the EU and its Member States in the CIA rendition and black sites scandals.

1-0067

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – On evaluation, what I do think is that the way we have learned to react to some of these threats and attacks has evolved enormously over the last 15 years. It is just not the same today as it was in the immediate aftermath of those horrible events that we have just been seeing again on our TV screens on 9/11. Personally I welcome that, because I think it has become more intelligent and more targeted and, I hope, more effective. But how do I assess that, if it is a test of a counterfactual – would we have been better or worse had we not done some of these things? I think that is very, very difficult to say. But I do agree that if we are doing a proper evaluation then we have to be ready in the spirit of better regulation that informs the work of this Commission as a whole – which I personally support very strongly – not only to apply necessity and proportionality as we give effect to things that we have agreed, but also as we review the things that we have agreed in the past. Elsewhere across the work of this Commission some things have been repealed and rolled back, and I think that there is no reason why the best practices of better regulation should not apply in this field as they apply in others.

On criticism of the US, sorry, but I probably mis-expressed myself. What I think actually is that some of the criticism that came, including from this Parliament, including from this committee, has helped significantly to improve the situation in the US, and our relationship with the US, because it was after things that you and others in this committee put persuasively that we managed to get the structure with stricter rules on access and use, stricter rules on monitoring of companies, a better role for the Ombudsman, strengthened redress, assurances on limitations, safeguards for law enforcement, no mass and targeted over bulk, in the US and in transit, and annual reviews. So I think we can be very effective.

1-0068

Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL). – Monsieur King, merci pour votre excellente maîtrise du français.

Je vais, moi aussi, revenir sur la question des bases de données et, surtout, de l'interopérabilité de celles-ci.

Depuis que je travaille sur ces questions, je trouve que le principal problème est la mise en œuvre par les États membres et je ne partage pas votre optimisme au sujet de la coopération entre la France et la Belgique. Même si celle-ci s'est quelque peu améliorée, il y a encore beaucoup d'efforts à accomplir, et si elle avait été meilleure, on aurait peut-être évité certaines choses, du moins dans ces proportions-là.

Je crois que nous sommes encore loin de la responsabilité partagée à laquelle vous aspirez. Les États membres sont cramponnés à leurs compétences régaliennes. Les questions de sécurité sont, certes, des questions de sécurité internationale, mais pas seulement. Elles sont aussi des questions de sécurité transnationale à l'intérieur de l'Union européenne.

Et j'ai l'impression qu'on déplace de plus en plus le curseur, au mépris des questions des droits et des libertés, y compris en modifiant les bases de données au fur et à mesure de leur évolution. *Smart Border* et le système d'entrée et de sortie étaient au départ destinés à contrôler les flux touristiques. Or, aujourd'hui, il s'agit de plus en plus d'un contrôle des frontières, notamment par rapport au crime organisé.

Les deux sont louables, mais il faudrait quand même qu'on essaie de savoir ce que l'on fait et je pense qu'on a absolument besoin, en urgence, d'une véritable évaluation de l'ensemble de ces bases de données par rapport à leurs objectifs initiaux précis, de la façon dont on les a fait évoluer, des raisons de cette évolution et des résultats techniques et juridiques, notamment au regard des questions des droits de l'homme.

1-0069

Julian King, commissaire désigné. – Je suis d'accord qu'il faut que nous puissions évaluer nos actions et l'efficacité des mesures que nous avons mises en place, et je suis prêt à avancer avec vous pour y parvenir.

Je suis d'accord également qu'il y a une question de mise en œuvre et que cette question doit être prioritaire, et, parfois, il faut plus qu'encourager nos États membres dans ce domaine.

Je pense, par exemple au système Prüm où, dans les trois volets, il y a entre dix-huit et une vingtaine d'États participants qui sont complètement en mesure de mettre en œuvre les accords. Cela veut dire que, pour l'ensemble des trois volets, de nombreux États membres ne sont pas en position de le faire, et là, il faut poursuivre nos efforts.

Je pense, par exemple aussi – et ce n'est pas lié aux systèmes informatiques – à ces questions des précurseurs d'explosifs, pour lesquelles les règles ne sont pas

appliquées dans tous nos États membres. Nous devons être disposés à poursuivre les objectifs que nous avons tous mis en place.

1-0070

Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE). – Sir King, one of the missions of our Internal Referral Unit (IRU) is the identification of terrorist content. You referred to this. My question is, how are you going to guarantee that only terrorist content is identified and erased? More importantly, who – and where and when – will clearly define what terrorist content is? How are you going to make sure that Europol or the IRU complies with the principle of purpose limitations when undertaking their tasks?

1-0071

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – There is clearly a distinction between, on the one hand, hate speech and incitement to violence, which is illegal and should be acted upon in the framework of our laws, and some reprehensible terrorist content or propaganda, which is not hate speech or incitement to violence – not illegal – but is highly undesirable. And it is that category, that second category, that you are asking me about, and which I think we need to continue to work on. I am very glad that we now have in place some structures that are looking at that in full transparency and that they are establishing cooperation with the internet providers, who are, from their side, cooperating in transparency in this dialogue, and I want to take that forward.

I have not got a ready-made answer to your question, because I do not know quite how we would apply the test. But I think we know when we see stuff that we think is really quite reprehensible. In some cases, it is about getting it taken down. In other cases, and I am entirely open to this, it may be about making sure that there are alternative messages and alternative narratives that are available as well. That raises technical issues that we need to pursue with the internet providers, but I think that we owe it as part of our wider work on tackling radicalisation to give people choice and different messages and encourage them to exercise their critical intelligence in assessing those different messages.

1-0072

Beatrix von Storch (EFDD). – Ihre Aufgabe wird die Sicherheitsunion sein. Dazu gehört laut Jean-Claude Juncker vor allem die Umsetzung der Europäischen Sicherheitsagenda vom April. Die betrifft zahlreiche freiheitsrelevante Themen: Fluggastdaten, Informationsaustausch und die Verschärfung der Feuerwaffenrichtlinie. Wir haben das schon vielfach heute gehört. In erster Linie geht es also darum, Menschen Freiheiten zu nehmen und ihnen dafür im Austausch vermeintliche Sicherheiten zu geben. Ich denke, das wurde schon oft versucht, und das hat noch nie wirklich gut funktioniert, auch dieses Mal nicht. Denn eines fehlt in Ihrem Auftrag: Sie sind für die Sicherheitsunion zuständig, aber in Ihrem Auftrag, dem *mission letter* vom 2. August dieses Jahres, kommt das

Wort „Grenze“ nicht ein einziges Mal vor, nur einmal „*cross-border crimes*“, aber das Wort „Grenze“ nicht.

Im Verhältnis zu allen genannten Maßnahmen – Verschärfung der Feuerwaffenrichtlinie usw.: Wie wichtig ist für Sie der Grenzschutz?

1-0073

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I agree, as we have been discussing, that one of the points at which we need to address some of these threats – not the only point, but one of them – is at the border. Because, by their very nature, as you rightly say, these are cross-border threats and if you address them at the border you increase your chances of disrupting them. Which is why, in answer to a number of the questions, I hope I have started to explain how, when working with fellow Commission colleagues, we will take account, in the measures that we already have in place or which we have planned to put in place soon on borders, of the security dimension. And on the security dimension of those measures, I would hold myself accountable to you for their effectiveness and their consistency with our fundamental rights and freedoms because, like you, the last thing I want to do is take people's freedom away.

1-0074

Monika Hohlmeier (PPE). Lieber Kandidat Julian King – ich will es mal so formulieren. Im Gegensatz zu Frau von Storch interessiert mich nicht die Errichtung von Grenzzäunen, sondern mich interessiert mehr, wie Polizeien sich untereinander besser koordinieren und eventuell über die Grenzen koordiniert zusammenarbeiten können. Da treffen wir allerdings in der Europäischen Union auf ein ganz heterogenes Feld. Die einen haben 30 Minuten, die anderen haben 30 Kilometer. Das heißt, es gibt noch kaum Vorstellungen dazu, wie man über die Grenzen hinweg koordiniert die Nacheile, wenn es einen dringenden Fall gibt, garantieren kann. Da würde mich interessieren: Wie garantieren Sie, oder wie versuchen Sie zu garantieren, dass man über die Grenzen hinweg die Sicherheit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger der Europäischen Union schützt und die Polizeien zusammenarbeiten?

1-0075

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – I entirely agree, and a number of questions have touched upon the fact that in tackling these threats you need to take action upstream, you need to take action sometimes at the border and you need to take action within borders as well, in a joined-up way. We have touched, in various parts of this discussion, on the different ways in which you can do that, and I completely and totally agree.

On encouraging cross-border cooperation, I think that part of that is about making our EU-level instruments, systems and agencies work to encourage cooperation between Member States effectively. Part of this is about using legislation or other encouragement to remove barriers to cooperation. Sometimes those barriers are about standards, and if you can raise standards so that people recognise each other's standards that facilitates that cooperation. A little earlier I cited the investigative

order, which is coming in shortly and which I think is a very good example of effective action to encourage our levelling-up of understanding between Member States and facilitate, in this case, rapid action in pursuit of prosecutions in cases. So in those different ways I think we can make progress.

1-0076

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Sir Julian, timely exchange of relevant information is very crucial for successful law enforcement cooperation, especially at an EU level. However, the past attacks that we have witnessed have highlighted how Member States fail to use existing instruments such as the Schengen Information System or the Prüm Decision. This is all the more surprising as, for example, in 2005 the Council adopted a decision that prescribed in great detail Member States' obligations to exchange information concerning terrorist offences with other Member States as well as with EU agencies.

My questions. What concrete steps do you intend to undertake in order to foster timely exchange of information between Member States, in order to improve the quality of data shared? Are you willing to launch infringement proceedings against Member States that continuously fail to live up to their legal obligations to share information?

1-0077

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, in the case of Prüm, which we have already discussed, we have launched a number of pilot structured dialogues in a last effort to encourage people across Member States' authorities to do what they have undertaken to do, and I do not rule out going beyond that. As I mentioned in answer to another question, on explosive precursors, we have launched and are launching a number of infringement proceedings. Obviously, it is best if you can act a little bit upstream and encourage Member States to do effective implementation.

I just want to pause for a moment on Passenger Name Records (PNR), because we have mentioned PNR a number of times from the legal framework, and that is very, very important. But there is also a very practical side, which is the building of the Passenger Information Units (PIUs). Without the PIUs it is not going to stand up and work, and too few Member States at the moment have plans in place effectively to develop those PIUs. So there I hope, starting already, we can work to encourage them and help them with implementation through legal assistance, technical assistance, the spreading of best practice and, in this particular case, funding. I think there is EUR 50 million for this year and EUR 70 million for next. So it is not just about infringements but, where necessary, yes.

1-0078

Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR). – Hr. kommissærkandidat, jeg har to meget konkrete spørgsmål til dig i dag. Det første handler om, at der fra lederne fra de store grupper her i Parlamentet, S&D, EPP og ALDE, har været udtrykt ønske om at udbygge Europol til et europæisk FBI. Kan du fortælle os i dag,

om det er en ambition, du deler, og hvordan et sådan forbundspoliti på europæisk plan skal struktureres og se ud i Kommissionens optik? Mit andet spørgsmål går på det danske retsforbehold, som p.t. forhindrer Danmark i at deltage i Europol, Eurojust og PNR-forslaget, selv om Danmark er medlem af Schengenzone gennem en parallelaftale. Danmark har en ansøgning ude om parallelaftaler på disse områder. Kan du se nytten i, at Danmark deltager på disse områder i terrorbekæmpelsen, og kan du gøre noget for at facilitere, at disse parallelaftaler kommer på plads hurtigst muligt?

1-0079

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – My answer to your two separate questions is conditioned by what we have said on a number of occasions in this discussion, which is that there is much we can do and do, but within the framework of the Treaties. I want to be clear about that. That is what I have been saying. So Europol can and should support analytical and operational work at Member States' requests. It can and should help to build trust and enhance cooperation, but it cannot be an FBI because it cannot coerce, and that is set out clearly in the Treaty and Article 88.

On your second question, on Denmark and the relationship with Europol, I support Europol – as I hope I have made clear – and I support Member States' engagement with Europol – as I hope I have made clear – but within the framework of the Treaties. As you know better than me, Denmark has Protocol 22 and that conditions its relationship in this area. There was a referendum on the subject and for this, as for other referendums, we have to respect the decision of the referendum.

1-0080

Филиз Хюсменова (ALDE). – Г-н Председател, сър Джулиън, през юли Европейският парламент гласува доклада за европейската гранична и брегова охрана и аз като български гражданин съм доволна, че той ще се прилага и спрямо държавите членки, които все още не са част от Шенгенското пространство. В настоящата геополитическа ситуация България има твърде отговорната и нелека задача по управлението на стратегически външни граници на Съюза.

Отчитайки, че граничните ни служители нямат пълен достъп до някои бази данни, например Шенгенската информационна система, в контекста на европейската програма за сигурност, какви инструменти смятате, че трябва да бъдат развити за подпомагане усилията по разкриването и борбата с трансграничната престъпност и тероризма на държавите членки с външна граница за Европейския съюз, но извън Шенген?

1-0081

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much. Can I first all salute the efforts that Bulgaria is making and its contribution in Europol, with Frontex, on CEPOL training and in other areas. I have a good deal of sympathy for your question. As you say,

Bulgaria is in SIS for police and judicial cooperation, but not for border and migration issues. In the end, the question is linked with membership of Schengen, and the question of membership of Schengen, as you know better than me, is a question for Schengen Member States. I do think it is a question that is very worth asking. Is it really serving the collective interests of the Union as a whole not to include countries like Bulgaria in a border situation inside the available information systems? I think that is a very legitimate question.

1-0082

Michal Boni (PPE), – Commissioner-designate, as the digital revolution is going forward and changing the world, cybercrime in a broad sense is also growing very fast. The global economic value of all types of cybercrime is over USD 400 billion. All crimes now have digital forums, from phishing for money to sexual abuse of children. There are challenges, and it is important to strengthen cooperation among all stakeholders and build the European network for fighting crime. We need to strengthen cooperation inside the European Commission and among Member States. First of all, we should treat all crimes in the same way, in real life and in cyberspace. What will the priority actions be in the area of combating cybercrime in this broad sense?

1-0083

Sir Julian King, *Commissioner-designate*. Thank you very much. I welcome the opportunity to focus on this aspect of organised crime and our fight against organised crime. I think there are two elements that I would want to pursue with colleagues across the Commission on cyber. One is the absolutely central area of tackling cybercrime. The other, as I have mentioned, is building cyber resilience, which is also linked to fighting cybercrime. On building resilience, as I have said already, I want to prioritise the implementation of the Network and Information Systems Directive, and there are a number of things I think we can do on that.

On fighting crime, the offensive part of this agenda, I think that we need to make the best use we can of the Europol cybercrime centre and that may mean, I think, reinforcing it with funding and staffing and expertise so that it can contribute to working with Member State authorities in tackling cyber attacks, payment card fraud and online sexual exploitation, as you mention. I also think that we need to work with the private sector in this field and, as I think I mentioned earlier, the public-private partnership that has just been established to knit together public funding and private funding and channel 1.8 billion into research and development in this area of fighting cybercrime is, I think, a very important step forward. I would want to work with the participants to develop that, and we need to work with third countries on this agenda, as on some other agendas. We need to make progress on e-evidence, and we are consulting on the options on that and, overall, I think it is probably time that we had a look at updating the 2013 strategy. So it is a very full agenda on cyber.

1-0084

Caterina Chinnici (S&D), – Sir Julian King, gli ultimi attacchi terroristici sono state altamente imprevedibili per le loro modalità e allora ritengo sia cruciale investire nella prevenzione e nell'integrazione, oltre che nella deradicalizzazione. Le chiedo quindi quali misure concrete intenda mettere in atto per rafforzare l'azione dell'UE contro l'estremismo violento, non solo per prevenire la deradicalizzazione dei potenziali terroristi, ma anche per avviare programmi di reinserimento nella società. Qual è la sua valutazione in merito allo stato di attuazione di tali programmi da parte dell'UE e degli Stati membri?

Come intende assicurarsi che la RAN (rete per la sensibilizzazione in materia di radicalizzazione) da lei prima citata diventi un vero luogo di scambio di buone pratiche nel campo della prevenzione all'estremismo violento? E infine, in assenza di una specifica strategia per contrastare il ritorno dei cosiddetti *foreign fighter*, è sua intenzione proporre una strategia comune o un piano d'azione a livello europeo per far fronte a questo specifico problema?

1-0085

Sir Julian King, *Commissioner-designate*. – I agree with you that tackling radicalisation is not only about preventive action, to prevent people becoming radicalised, it is also about action after radicalisation to try and deradicalise people who have taken that path. And I would want to work with the existing programmes in the existing networks to cover both of those aspects. And in deradicalisation, helping people who have taken that path, I think it is particularly important that we work with those in the front line in prisons where they come up against this – as we know tragically from incidents recently in France, but they are not unique.

This can be a real challenge. But I think there is a range of expert advice available which we should draw upon with prison practitioners and people who are working on deradicalisation across the European Union, bringing them together, sharing best practice and learning the lessons.

On particular action against foreign fighters, I hope it goes like a red thread through what I have been saying during this session, that action both at the border and behind the border, to stop foreign fighters and others who are trying to harm our way of life, would be an absolute top priority of this role.

1-0086

Axel Voss (PPE), – Zunächst einmal vielen Dank für die bisherigen Ausführungen. Es ist natürlich so, dass sich das eine oder andere jetzt auch wiederholen wird. Ich hätte dennoch vielleicht zusätzlich eine Frage: In diesem ganzen digitalen Bereich – das betrifft Cyberkriminalität, aber vielleicht eben auch die Frage, wie man letztlich mit der Interoperabilität Datenbanken besser nutzen kann – habe ich das Gefühl, dass wir nicht das beste transatlantische Verhältnis haben, um hier eine Kooperation zu machen. Ich habe aber auch das Gefühl, dass wir eine Kooperation bei der Terrorbekämpfung und auch bei der Cyberattacken-Bekämpfung brauchen.

Deshalb fände ich es schön, mal zu hören, wie Sie denn denken, wie wir dieses Verhältnis letztlich besser darstellen können, weil ich das Gefühl habe, es ist doch recht gestört, weil wir unterschiedliche Herangehensweisen haben – Datenschutz als Grundrecht oder eben als Verbraucherrecht. Dort ist das gegenseitige Verständnis nicht das gleiche.

Wie möchten Sie also bei der Abwehr von Cyberattacken, bei organisierter Kriminalität, bei einer besseren Verarbeitung von Daten die Kooperation mit den USA verbessern?

1-0087

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Well, I think we need to start with putting our own house in order. I do agree that there are some strategic relationships and partnerships that are also very important in our fight against terrorism and cybercrime and, as I have sought to explain, I think there is a framework and a set of conditions that should go around those relationships.

But I do think that in this area, as you highlight in your question and as one or two other questioners have highlighted, there is some real work for us to do at home to make sure that we are getting the best out of the systems that we have, that we are addressing the complexity and the fragmentation and the gaps as effectively as we can. One example – which I do not think has come up so far, but which has been put to me – is that the Europol database on terrorism and the SIS database of alerts linked to terrorism and terrorist activities can talk to each other, but on an individual case-by-case basis. There would be some practical potential, practical benefit, in greater inter-connectivity between those two particular databases into which information is being put for a very similar purpose.

So there is one example of the sort of thing that I think the High Level Expert Group could look at. But I hope I have been absolutely crystal clear about the framework and the conditions that would surround their discussion and which would govern any discussion we had subsequently on any proposals or suggestions that they made.

1-0088

Soraya Post (S&D). – Thank you, Chair. Sir Julian, in your mission there is no mention of cooperation with civil society organisations regarding the three priority areas of tackling terrorism and preventing radicalisation, the fight against organised crime, and cybercrime. However, it is very often these who, through their work in the field of promotion of human rights and tolerance and also fostering social inclusion, have a vital role, especially in the prevention of radicalisation and terrorism. Could you explain if you intend to work with civil society organisations and, if so, what form such cooperation should take? Secondly, how equipped is your team to follow and to tackle all forms of violent extremism and radicalisation, including violent, right-wing forms?

1-0089

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Can I comment, in particular, on a couple of elements? The first is your last point. You are absolutely right to recall that there are different sorts of radicalisation and that we should not get blinkered into thinking only about one sort of radicalisation.

This links me to my second point, which is that, as I hope I have said, in taking this role forward – should I be confirmed – I would want to draw on my own experience. An important part of my experience in the security field was on the ground in Northern Ireland, and we did deal there with the problem of radicalisation – obviously a very different sort of radicalisation, but there was radicalisation going on in certain parts of the community, trying to steer people towards violent dissident terrorist activity. We found, and I am absolutely clear about this, that it was not the state that could be effective; it was civil society actors who could be effective.

So I do not feel constrained, I am afraid, by the fact that it might not say ‘civil society’ in my letter. It says ‘reinforcing security responses to radicalisation’, and I am absolutely clear, taking that in the broadest sense, that that means working with credible civil society actors. In the case of Northern Ireland, we found that ex-prisoners were a very credible voice. We managed to work with some ex-prisoner groups and we managed to bring together people from across Northern Ireland who were ex-prisoners and who learned from each other about the kind of programmes that they were working on and how effective they were. I saw with my own eyes the practical results of that. How do you assess it? How do you evaluate it? I do not know, but if we stopped one youngster from going down the path towards violent extremism through those exchanges and dialogues, that was good enough for me. If we can do that on the level of local exchanges in Northern Ireland, I believe we can do it equally effectively in cross-European exchanges between qualified civil service actors.

1-0090

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE). – Thank you very much, Sir Julian. Your nomination comes at a historic moment of EU-UK relations. You have already said here today that you cannot comment on the future Brexit negotiations, and I can understand and respect that. However, there are decisions that will soon have to be made regardless of the Brexit negotiations, and one of the first things that comes to mind is Europol. You have said twice here today that we need to champion Europol and that we need to make full use of the new mandate of Europol. At the same time, we see that the British Government – the government that nominated you – seems to be inclined to move towards an opt-out of Europol. How would you assess the necessity of the UK’s involvement and participation in Europol? Do you think that a British Europol opt-out could potentially undermine the work that you will have to do as a Commissioner for Security Union?

1-0091

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Well, I am not here as a spokesman for the British Government. I cannot pre-empt decisions that the British Government may or may not take, but I want to be clear that I think that Europol is an excellent organisation that does a fantastic job. If confirmed in this role I would do everything I can to champion it, and I would do everything I could to encourage Member States – within the constraints of the Treaty, as we have already discussed – to engage with it. That would be without fear or favour. I would work with all Member States.

In the particular case of the United Kingdom there is a challenge. They have a decision to make on whether to opt in or not. However, if they choose not to do so, then there is a problem, because there would be a gap until such time as they had – upon exit – the possibility of a third country-type relationship. So, in my discussions with the UK, one of the points I would want to make to them is that surely it is in everybody's collective interest to avoid such a gap opening up.

1-0092

Chair. – Both a good question and good answer, if I may dispense with my neutrality for just a few seconds and then move on and be neutral again.

(Laughter)

I will just put it down to tiredness, but let us move on. Well done Commissioner-designate. Moving on to question No 42 quickly. Mr. Lopez Aguilar.

1-0093

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Good evening, Commissioner-designate King. The question I would like to raise concerns the accountability aspect of your expected delivery – because after all it is about accountability, the role that we as members of the LIBE Committee are to secure before the Commission. So that relates, first, to your mission letter concerning your portfolio as Security Union Commissioner-to-be, because you would have to support Commissioner Avramopoulos on the one hand, and then cooperate narrowly with Commissioner Jourová in matters such as radicalisation and information sharing.

So the first question concerns the balance that you have to strike between your responsibilities before multiple Commissioners, a variety of Commissioners. How independent can you foresee you will be in executing your portfolio, and to what extent do you think that portfolio is to overlap or to be overshadowed by Commissioner Avramopoulos specifically?

And the second question goes...

(The Chair interrupted the speaker, pointing out that he had overrun his time of 1 minute 30 seconds)

It will be a final point about the principle of accountability before this LIBE Committee, as your mission letter states that it will not be, or may not be,

performed exclusively by Commissioner Avramopoulos when it comes to security matters.

1-0094

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you. I welcome those questions because they give me an opportunity again to explain, as I have done in some of the written responses, how I hope this is going to work. I have no problem about this discussion around 'overshadowing' or anything like that, because it does not seem to me to be consistent with the importance of this role. This does not look like a part-time or second order role. This is a very, very important agenda.

But consistent with my own political culture, I will want to work in the closest possible cooperation with fellow Commissioners – particularly Commissioner Avramopoulos, but not only – a range of fellow Commissioners covering the full range of issues that we have been discussing this evening. Because together I think we need to move this agenda forward. In terms of accountability to you, as I have said from the outset, I am very happy to be accountable to you whenever you want to talk to me, and I will hold myself accountable to you for the security dimension of any of these dossiers.

It is for you to judge, but it seems to me that in the end what you get is a net increase in Commission accountability before this committee and before this Parliament. That is certainly the spirit in which I would want to approach this.

1-0095

Мария Габриел (PPE). – Г-н Председател, уважаеми сър Кинг, искам да обърна внимание на един много специфичен въпрос още веднъж. Гарантирането на сигурността по външните граници на България означава, съгласни сме тук, сигурност за Европа. Затова искам да задам въпрос, свързан с това, че от години България подава информация към Шенгенската информационна система, а не разполага с пълен достъп до базата данни. Това противоречие представлява потенциален риск за сигурността на Съюза.

Затова и моят въпрос е: Какво конкретно възнамерявате да направите, за да може страната, която де факто е изпълнила техническите критерии за Шенген и която де факто гарантира сигурността на Европа, да може да засили приноса си към сигурността на Съюза и да има достъп до истински обмен на данни? Това е една от ключовите думи, която Ви употребихте.

Вторият ми въпрос: Притеснява ли Ви фактът по отношение на сигурността, че страни – членки на Европейския съюз, позволяват издаването на национални и следователно европейски паспорти на граждани от трети държави? Какви мерки ще предприемете?

И един последен въпрос: Какви инструменти ще мобилизирате, за да има по-тясно сътрудничество в областта на борбата срещу тероризма със страните

от Средиземноморието? Сигурност за Средиземноморието означава сигурност за Европа.

1-0096

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much. On the situation of Bulgaria and Romania, as we were discussing a little bit earlier, I am very sympathetic to the questions that you raise. Bulgaria can see alerts on refusals, but is not in a position to act on them. It is a genuine question: is that in the collective interest of the European Union?

Legally, the situation is clear. Restrictions are lifted when Schengen member states so decide, but politically I do understand the question, and I think it is legitimate to ask whether in today's circumstances, given the threat we face, this is in the best collective interest.

The questions of passports and nationality, which we touched on, are for Member States. But when you grant citizenship of one Member State, you are in effect granting citizenship of the European Union. I think it is right, therefore, that Member States should think about the general interest of the European Union when they are taking that decision, including the security interest. I think it is right for us to urge Member States, when they are taking such decisions, to be vigilant.

1-0097

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Sir Julian, there is evidence that terrorist organisations finance their activities through organised crime. I noted your answers on money laundering and trust funds specifically. But do you see the main gaps in the current security architecture to address terrorist financing, since much of it is money laundering – realising opaque incorporation systems often operated or assisted by European banks, lawyers, consultant companies, real estate businesses – particularly using tax havens in the EU and elsewhere? And in this regard, do you share a concern about the so-called 'golden visa' schemes offered by Member States? I seemed to detect that in your last question. Do you intend to address it, finally?

1-0098

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you very much, because we come back to an absolutely crucial area, an area that will be central to the action that I would want to take forward, which is cutting terrorists' access to finance. And there are a whole range of activities which we have touched upon: harmonising criminal offences; mutual recognition of freezing and confiscation; addressing cash; cutting off different sources of funding, which can be as wide-ranging as trading in rare species and wildlife; but also reinforcing some of our instruments such as the terrorist finance tracking instruments, on which I think we should be thinking very seriously about whether we can do something internally in the EU, given how effective the EU-US cooperation has been.

So there is a whole programme that I would want to take forward with you. And that programme would be informed by the, I think, increasingly strong

international cooperation on cracking down on corruption, tax avoidance and the misuse of some vehicles, including for terrorist financing.

So I would want to build on the lessons that are emerging from the G7, the G20, a summit which Mr Cameron, the ex-Prime Minister and ex-Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, hosted in spring this year to reinforce international cooperation in these vital areas. And if there is anything I can do, working with you, to make this a priority area where we see some real progress over the next couple of years, I would be proud to do so.

1-0099

Емил Радев (PPE). – Г-н Председател, уважаеми сър Кинг, през последните години Европа беше залята от огромна мигрантска вълна, като част от мигрантите за съжаление пресичат европейските външни граници нерегламентирано и за някои от тези хора не могат да се направят елементарни проверки за принадлежност към терористични организации или криминални структури.

С оглед на това, какви мерки ще предприемете като Комисар по европейската сигурност, за да се предотврати рискът от радикализация и извършване на терористични атаки от мигранти, пристигащи в Европа, особено тези, които не могат да се ползват с международна закрила?

1-0100

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – There are lots of possible causes of radicalisation, and I guess a sense of isolation and injustice can play a part. I think the response needs to be rooted in prevention, as we have been discussing. That comes in countering hate speech and propaganda. It comes in tackling radicalisation in schools, deradicalisation in prisons and through wider prevention in making sure that we are effective in supporting integration policies.

Integration is different and distinct from tackling radicalisation. But if we can help on integration policies we should do that too. We have an EU action plan on integration which I would want to work with various of my Commission colleagues to pursue, because here again, in order to make progress, we need a team effort.

1-0101

Chair. – A big thank you particularly to colleagues who have stayed for this entire session; this has been a marathon session. I want to thank those who came at the beginning and have stayed right through, I am very grateful for your patience and discipline and forbearance. We now go to the closing statement by Sir Julian King, the Commissioner-designate, for five minutes.

I want you to stay for just a moment after that, and not run, as I am just going to say a couple of sentences on how we will democratically decide on the position of the Commissioner-designate, so just stay for a moment after the five-minute closing statement. I now invite

Commissioner-designate Sir Julian King to make a closing statement for up to five minutes, if he would kindly do so.

1-0102

Sir Julian King, Commissioner-designate. – Thank you, Chair, and thank you to all members of the committee for your questions, for listening to what I had to say and for bearing with me. Let us see whether I can beat the clock at least this once. I think that it is obvious from our exchanges over the last few hours that there is much work to do and if, as a result of this process, I am confirmed, I want to get on with it as quickly as possible.

As I said when we started, I consider myself fully accountable to you and I would want us to develop the closest possible relationship. Our fellow citizens are understandably worried about the rise in terrorism and organised crime. They ask and expect that together we do what we can to respond, and our response needs to be collective, coordinated and comprehensive. We need to pull together to join up the various strands of existing and future work, to fight terrorism and the means that support it, and to strengthen our defences. All of this must be done in a way that is true to our values and respects fundamental rights.

If you agree, if I am confirmed, I will move heart and soul to work with you to help make Europe safer. Our objective should be to ensure the freedom and security of all the people who live or travel in the European Union, and achieving that in a way that is rooted in fundamental rights and values. That is also the best way, in response to the last question, to prevent radicalisation and indeed to prevent organised crime. Thank you very much. Thank you for your attention.

(Applause)

1-0103

Chair. – So in answering my plea, colleagues, you are not running, thank you. Commissioner-designate, you have ticked one of the main boxes in this Parliament by using only part of your allocated time – one of the most likable things that you could do to be approved.

Colleagues, in order to assess the hearing of the Commissioner-designate, a meeting of coordinators will be held tomorrow, Tuesday 13 September at 09.00. The coordinators, on your behalf, will decide under our formal rules whether or not the Commission-designate meets the required levels to be confirmed by Parliament, and these are under formal rules. That will be decided tomorrow at 09.00, and they will report back to you at the political groups. If there are any questions, please speak now; if not your coordinators will report to you tomorrow following their in-camera meeting.

It remains for me to thank you for being here at this hearing, particularly members of LIBE, also members of AFET and those other colleagues who came and did not speak from other committees, but particularly to those hardworking members of the LIBE Committee, who

were so disciplined and exhaustive in their questioning, I just want to thank you again, and Commissioner-designate to thank you for an extraordinary session. You will never do anything like that again probably in your career, you probably do not want to, but we take the Security Union portfolio very seriously, as you have seen in this hearing. If you look at Twitter it looks a lot more exciting on there that it did perhaps in this room, but it is a serious portfolio and I hope that you saw during the questioning that we in the LIBE Committee take it seriously. We look forward to your full accountability to our committee. Thank you, colleagues, and thank you ,Commissioner-designate.