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Canete: not fit for the job

Green MEPs Bas Eickhout and Claude Turmes deem energy and climate commissioner-designate Cañete unsuitable

What is your overall impression of how commissioner-designate Cañete performed?

Mr Cañete failed to allay the serious concerns about the conflicts of interest regarding his nomination as EU climate and energy commissioner, notably the continued involvement of his brother-in-law in the oil industry, coming on the back of his and his sons' very recently severed involvement. Mr Cañete is not transparent and during his career has never been able to distinguish his role as politician and as a business man. For the Greens/EFA group, his candidacy is clearly untenable and we will be pressing other political groups to acknowledge this by pushing for his replacement.

Were there particular issues or answers that stood out – either in positive or negative sense?

Mr Cañete denied all conflicts of interest and refused to answer about the continuing links within his wider family to problematic businesses, including in the oil industry. He denied any links to companies in fiscal paradises or tax fraud. He denied any responsibility in permitting shale gas or oil drilling, despite his role in a government that did so, saying he was only responsible for environmental impact assessment which he says were done by leading experts and found no issue. On the substance he was competent on the content although we have major concerns about his political perspective. Of the many issues of concern - like shale gas, tar sands, fossil fuels in general, on carbon leakage, favourable treatment of polluting industries in the EU emissions trading scheme, climate and energy targets, standards on car emissions etc. - we should be under no illusions. While he restated the importance of energy efficiency and renewable energies, he is still very focused on energy supply/production, rather than tackling demand. He is committed to EU leadership on climate change, however he thinks the EU is already leading as it stands with current policies and proposals. His trustworthiness is questionable and it will affect his credibility also in the international negotiations.

Do you think he is suitable for the portfolio for which he has been appointed?

No. Mr Cañete has fundamental and direct conflicts of interest, apart from the obvious political incompatibility.

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Bas Eickhout

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