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Team Juncker and employment and social policy

Green MEP Jean Lambert assesses proposed commissioner Marianne Thyssen



So, overall, are you happy with the proposal from Jean Claude Juncker?

Overall, no. It is certainly not the "greenest Commission ever" and I think that some of the nominations defy logic. I am also not convinced that the restructuring of the Commission will mean better decision-making: it may make it a more 'closed' Commission, with more gatekeepers and less transparency, not least for civil society input.

What is your initial reaction to the proposal of Marianne Thyssen to become employment and social affairs commissioner?

Unlike some other Commissioner-designate proposals, that of Marianne Thyssen for the employment and social affairs portfolio has some credibility. She knows the European Parliament and has been involved in the response to the European Semester, where we feel she was open to proposals coming from an employment and social affairs and Green perspective, rather than pushing a pre-determined agenda.

What about the structure the employment and social affairs portfolio they will have?

I have yet to be convinced that social dialogue should no longer be part of the employment and social affairs brief. There is some confusion about who is dealing with the crucial issue of equality under the new structure. The reduction of lifelong learning to 'adult education' is a regrettable narrowing of interpretation. On the question of the sustainable transformation of the economy and society – a key part of EU2020 – it is not clear who is responsible for driving this, unless the President himself sees it as his

role.

If you could pose one question to Marianne Thyssen, what would it be?

How will you work with other commissioners to ensure that the sustainable transformation of the economy and society is maintained and strengthened as a priority of the Commission, so that we fulfil our climate change ambitions, whilst ensuring greater social justice?

What other issues do you think she will need to address in her hearing?

How can we ensure a job-rich recovery – quality jobs and decent pay, social inclusion, reducing inequalities? how the EU can contribute to reducing poverty rather than increasing it in the EU; how to ensure the social dimension is not playing second-fiddle to the economic situation; how the EU can help ensure a diverse workforce; how the EU can help to strengthen social dialogue; how to remove the barriers to the free movement of workers; how to deliver crucial EU legislation on maternity leave, working time and minimum income.

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