

Press release – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Thierry Breton



The presidents and political groups' coordinators from both committees will meet at 17.00 to assess the performance of the Commissioner-designate.

Digital, environmental and social challenges

In his [introductory speech](#), Mr Breton spoke of the digital, environmental and social challenges the EU is facing and how he plans to address them during his mandate. The digital transformation and climate change will be high on his agenda, in line with President-elect Ursula von der Leyen's priorities.

Mr Breton said that 5G, blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud and quantum technologies would enable the EU to be a "key industrial player". He defended "ambitious industrial policies", which should also be socially responsible, in order "not to leave anyone behind".

Industrial and technological sovereignty

The Commissioner-designate stressed the need to regulate tech and cyber space, as well as to ensure that single market rules are properly implemented and that the EU collectively addresses the challenges arising from outside competition. "We have to work on our technological sovereignty", he told MEPs. Measures to simplify SMEs' and start-ups' access to finance and to regulate digital platforms with a new Digital Services Act will also be among

his tasks, he added.

MEPs questioned the French candidate on competition, technological sovereignty, the services sector and the challenges posed by new technologies. They also inquired how he will deal with such a broad portfolio and on possible conflicts of interests, especially how he intends to defend the general, instead of private, interests.

“I sold all my shares”, the former CEO of Atos tech company assured MEPs during his speech, committing to respect the Commission Code of Conduct and to recuse himself on issues that could entail a possible conflict of interest.

Members also put forward questions on ways to defend the European industry and defence sectors, and to ensure healthy and fair competition in Europe between SMEs and larger groups.

You can watch the video recording of the full hearing [here](#).

Press point

At the end of the hearing, the Chair of the Internal Market Committee, [Petra De Sutter](#) (Greens/EFA, BE), and the acting Chair of the Industry Committee, [Zdzisław Krasnodebski](#) (ECR, PL), held a press point outside the meeting room: [watch it here](#).

Next steps

Based on the committees’ recommendations, the Conference of Presidents will decide on 21 November if Parliament has received sufficient information to declare the hearing process closed. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to elect the Commission as a whole on 27 November, in Strasbourg.