

Professor Danuta Hübner
EPP AFCO Coordinator, European Parliament

***Council and Commission statements – Preparation of the European Council
meeting of 12 and 13 December 2019***

26th November 2019, European Parliament, Strasbourg, France

The December meeting of the Council will take place in the changed environment: with President Charles Michel at the helm of this important body, with new Commission, very clear as to what the priorities for the next term should be, and with this House more pluralistic and more assertive.

We, here in Strasbourg and in Brussels, will be very cooperative, but also very watchful as to checking whether the priorities and the promises are being kept.

There is a widespread feeling, and I share it, that we need to significantly change our institutional gears and redirect our efforts more decisively from pleasing the member states toward meeting the expectations of citizens.

We must spare no effort to strengthen the pro-European sentiment among our main constituents: the people of Europe. And when I say among the people I mean also migrants, British expats after Brexit, those who look for asylum to gain security for their lives, refugees from war-torn areas and climate refugees soon to come.

Our dialogue on Europe and its future with citizens and others who are stakeholders in European future should become permanent by principle.

These are the times when we can have again a hope for creating European demos.

I know that we somehow have forgotten this ambition. But we must not divest ourselves of the ideal of making the Union much more than a convenient meeting place for mutual recognition of member states interests.

We see that this elusive European demos is arising spontaneously, especially among the young people, in response to climate crisis.

Our role should be to facilitate the creation of a welcoming and generous space, where this nascent demos will not only emerge, but will thrive. And not only in response to climate emergency, but to tackle jointly other issues as well.

There is no better environment than the EU to construct a sustainable and flexible space to leave to future generations a better Europe.

With political landscape changing so fast the citizens should feel they are the primary gardeners of this new landscaping.

With these thoughts, I wish the new leaders of the Council and the Commission Godspeed in the task they undertake.