

Mr Chairman, Vice President Tajani,

I thank you for your warm welcome and take note of the questions you address to me. I hope to be able to answer thoroughly in the course of the work of the High Level Forum, and perhaps some elements today.

Firstly, however, I would like to congratulate you and the Commission on the important decision to establish this Forum.

Secondly I would like to thank you for inviting me to participate as an observer of the important work and the agenda of the Forum.

I am chairing The Norwegian Inquiry commission on the power-relations in the food supply chain. We have a clear mandate from the government and we are invited to suggest concrete measures for action. And perhaps can I say that we do take interest in some of the points made by the British Minister, Mr James Paice, before me.

The Norwegian agenda that I am chairing has a lot of common elements with the agenda that you are chairing, Mr Vice President. I am certain that the commonalities between our approaches will contribute strongly to the Norwegian agenda, and I certainly hope that I – on my side – will be able to contribute to yours.

Observing that there might be slightly different approaches to the priorities of our work, I would like to align my view very much in the same direction as the former speaker, the UK Minister Mr Paice.

I think the importance of our task – from a Norwegian perspective - can be summarized as follows:

- 1. value for money for the consumer and a sufficient range of groceries**
- 2. a fair competition between providers**
- 3. a reasonable application of purchasing power throughout the whole food supply chain**

To my mind it is a fundamental dilemma that structural realities in the food supply chain seem to impede these important goals that I think everybody agree on.

Therefore, Mr Chairman, I look forward to cooperating with you on these issues to the best interest of every stakeholder in the food supply chain, and to answer your questions to Norway.