




BRIEFING NOTE: Karel DE GUCHT

Name	Karel DE GUCHT 
First time Commissioner?	No, second time commissioner, previously Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid
Date of Hearing	Tuesday 12 January 9.00-12.00
Country	Belgium
Political Party	Open VLD (ALDE)
Previous Belgian Commissioner	Karel de Gucht/ Louis Michel
Portfolio	Trade
Services	DG TRADE (which now has the co-ordination of the Trans-Atlantic Economic Council (TEC) which has moved from DG Enterprise and Industry)
Personal details	Born January 27 th Overmere, Belgium Married to Mireille Schreurs Two children: Frederic and Jean-Jacques
Current duties	Since July 2009: European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid
Political career	2008-2009: Vice Prime Minister of Belgium 2006-2009: Mayor of Berlare and Chairman of the Municipal Council 2004-2009: Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and International Trade of Belgium 2003-2009: Member of the House of Representatives (National Parliament) 2002: Minister of State (Honorary title) 1999-2004: National President of the VLD (Flemish and Liberal Democratic Party) 1995-2003: Member of the Flemish Parliament 1994-1995: Senator 1989-2009: Municipal Councillor at Berlare

	<p>1985-1988: National Vice-President of the PVV (Flemish Party for Freedom and Progress)</p> <p>1983-1988: Alderman responsible for Finance at Lebbeke</p> <p>1980-1994: Member of the European Parliament</p> <p>1977-1979: National President of the Young Flemish Liberal Movement</p> <p>Since 1977: Member of the Bureau of the PVV/VLD political party</p> <p>1975-1977: National President of the Flemish Association of Liberal Students</p> <p>1974-1975: President of the Flemish Association of Liberal Students in Brussels</p>
Professional career	<p>1976-2001: Lawyer</p> <p>1991-2009: Professor in European law at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)</p> <p>Currently gives several hours of lectures in European law (free of charge) at the VUB</p>
Education	<p>1976: Law degree, VUB</p> <p>1971: Secondary school certificate (Latin-Math), Koninklijk Atheneum Aalst</p>
Languages	<p>Flemish: mother tongue</p> <p>French and English: excellent</p> <p>Italian: basic knowledge</p> <p>German: basic knowledge</p>
FYI....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 1980, he was elected the second-youngest Member of the European Parliament, at the age of 26, and served in this capacity for 14 years. Since then, he has been a defender of ever-greater European integration. ▪ Described the Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende as “a mix of Harry Potter and a rigid bourgeois without charisma”. ▪ Under De Gucht’s leadership as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Belgium renewed its active role in enhancing peace and stability in Central-Africa. He was deeply involved in supporting the first multi-party elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006. ▪ He is perceived as being the person who restored Belgium’s good ties with the United States and other Western allies, which had become strained in the wake of differences of opinion regarding the Iraqi conflict and Belgium’s ‘genocide law’ that enabled Belgian courts to try foreign leaders for crimes against humanity.

For more information on the Commission hearings and the other nominees, please contact:

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