

# MISSION LETTER

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission

**Teresa Ribera Rodríguez**

## **Executive Vice-President-designate for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition**

Dear Teresa,

The Commission we will serve in together will be called upon to make choices that will shape our Continent and our Union for years and decades to come. In a time of great global instability and great expectations of Europeans, we must live up to that responsibility. **We must deliver and lead from the front**, working closely with the people and regions of Europe and the parliaments, governments and institutions that serve them.

This was the spirit of the Political Guidelines which I presented to the European Parliament in July 2024 – our common plan for European strength and unity. It focuses on ensuring our **security** in every sense in a more dangerous and turbulent world, on supporting people and citizens by strengthening our **prosperity**, our social market economy, green and digital transitions and sustaining our unique quality of life. We will strengthen our **democracy**, rally around our values and ensure that we are stronger at home. We will work with our partners and better assert our interests around the world.

Together, we will respond to the real and legitimate concerns and expectations that Europeans expressed at the last elections. We will be closer to people and businesses where it really matters with practical support and sustained investment. We will strive to **make Europe faster and simpler** in the way that we act – and in the way we interact

with people. And we will work towards European unity at every turn, starting from within our College.

I am convinced that your experience, motivation, and European commitment will be an essential part of this team. This letter sets out my expectations for our collective work, as well as for your own mission.

## New Commission, new approach

The priorities that I have set out in the Political Guidelines are not standalone areas of work. They are all connected and they will all impact each other. The same will be true for the work of the College as a whole and for each of its Members working together in a spirit of **collegiality**. I expect every Member of College to take **full ownership** of what is agreed.

**Every Member of College is equal** and every Member of College will have an equal responsibility to deliver on our priorities. With this in mind, I expect cooperation at all levels and for you to take an active role across all priorities and to facilitate access to your services where other Commissioners' responsibilities require it.

You will work with myself and the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration for a **simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget** that reflects European strategic priorities and our ambition to be an **Investment Commission**.

Given the transformative nature of the next long-term budget – and in order to adapt to our modern approach and new spending priorities – **I will review the structure of the College and the missions** of each Member of College.

I would also like you all to play an active role in **supporting candidate countries to prepare for joining our Union** in your respective policy areas. I count on you when it comes to the pre-enlargement policy reviews and for our broader **ambitious reform agenda**.

I expect you to all contribute to achieving our agreed climate objectives, notably those set for 2030 and the climate neutrality goal for 2050.

As we head to 2030, each Member of College will ensure the delivery of the EU targets and objectives defined for that year, as well as of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy areas. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

Beyond what is listed in your individual mission below, I would like all Members of College to draw on recent or upcoming reports. This notably includes the **Draghi Report** on the future of European competitiveness, the **Niinistö Report** on how to enhance Europe's civilian and defence preparedness and readiness, the report from the **Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture**, as well as the **Letta report** on the future of the Single Market.

## *Working together for Europe, working closer to Europeans*

To ensure trust and confidence of Europeans, I also want the College to lead when it comes to openness, transparency and representation.

First, **this Commission will strengthen its relationship with EU institutions**. I expect all Commissioners to be present in the European Parliament, both in plenary debates, in Committee meetings and in trilogues. Equally, I expect all Commissioners to engage with Member States and participate in the relevant Council formations. This is essential for ensuring accountability and better communicating our work and our planning.

I will ask you to organise a **structured dialogue** with your respective Parliamentary Committee to chart a way forward for any Article 225 Resolutions adopted by the Parliament calling for legislative proposals. This will be part of our work in ensuring **transparency and information flow** with the Parliament and Council, notably before major events and at key stages about international negotiations.

Second, this Commission will be **more present on the ground, more often and in more regions**. I would like you to visit Member States regularly. I encourage you to go local, visit places and meet Europeans from across our Union, including in cities, rural and sparsely populated areas. Our network of Representations will support you in this. You should meet with representatives from regional or local areas, notably relying on our network of EU Local Councillors, and to give **more visibility to EU projects** making a difference to people's lives on the ground. When engaging with our international partners you will also be supported by our network of EU delegations around the world.

I expect you to **actively communicate** on the Commission's actions and decisions and explain the benefits and opportunities stemming from our work. You should also help **tackle disinformation**, notably by providing clear and accurate information at all times.

Third, this Commission will start **a new era of dialogue** with citizens and stakeholders. You should organise a first edition of the **annual Youth Policy Dialogues** within the first 100 days so that young people can be heard and can help shape your work.

This will be part of our work in embedding **citizen participation** in our work. We will build on the Conference on the Future of Europe to instil a true and **lasting culture of participative democracy**. We will choose policy areas and proposals where recommendations from a European Citizens' Panel would have the greatest value and follow up on their proposals.

Fourth, every Member of College must show a **true European commitment** beyond doubt and be fully independent in their action. I expect full adherence to all applicable integrity, impartiality and ethical rules from all, starting with the **Code of Conduct**. You will ensure that the rules on transparency and meetings with interest representatives are fully respected, including for your staff and services. We will **strengthen our transparency system** by extending the requirements of the Transparency Register to all managers.

Fifth, we will ensure that the Commission becomes **more representative** of the people we serve. We have made a lot of progress in terms of gender balance across management but there is clearly more to be done. Reflecting the EU's strength in diversity, your Cabinet should ensure **gender and geographical balance**.

While the Berlaymont will remain your primary headquarters, you will also have an office within your Directorate-General and be expected to be present on a regular basis to **work closely with your staff and services**. We will collectively ensure that the Commission is an inclusive, respectful and safe workplace.

### *Making Europe simpler and faster*

The success of this new Commission will be measured against our ability to meet the targets and objectives we set, notably as part of the **European Green Deal**.

You will be responsible for the delivery of the policy objectives and targets within your portfolio. To achieve this, you should make full use of all instruments for implementation and enforcement, including infringement proceedings.

You will ensure that existing rules are fit-for-purpose and focus on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying legislation. You must contribute to reducing reporting obligations by at least 25% – and for SMEs at least 35%. You should leverage the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions. We must listen to all companies and stakeholders who work on a daily basis to comply with EU legislation. You will organise at least two **Implementation Dialogues** per year with stakeholders to align implementation with realities on the ground. You will prepare an **Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation** for your respective Parliamentary committees and Council formations.

You will also work to **stress test the EU acquis** and table proposals to eliminate any overlaps and contradictions and be fully digitally compatible, while maintaining high standards.

New legislation must ensure that our rules are simpler, more accessible to citizens and more targeted. You will ensure the principles of **proportionality, subsidiarity and Better Regulation** are respected, including through wide consultations, impact assessments, a review by the independent **Regulatory Scrutiny Board** and a new **SME and competitiveness check**. Proposals must be evidence-based and the Joint Research Centre, our internal scientific service, can support you in that work.

## Your mission

**I would like to entrust you with the role of Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition.**

You will be responsible for the **Competition** portfolio.

### *A clean, just and competitive transition*

Europe's future competitiveness depends on getting decarbonisation right and ensuring a just transition. This reflects the analysis of the Draghi report which called for a **decarbonised and circular economy** and is in line with the driving purpose of the **European Green Deal**, designed as **our growth strategy** and central to our new industrial policy.

To support this, Europe needs a **new approach to competition policy** – one that is more supportive of companies scaling up in global markets, allows European businesses and consumers to reap all the benefits of effective competition and is better geared to our common goals, including decarbonisation and a just transition. Our aim must be to ensure a level playing field, ensure that business has the incentive to invest, innovate and grow, and help protect consumers from rising prices and lowering quality of goods and services. Competition policy should also reflect the growing importance of resilience in the face of geopolitical and other threats to supply chains and of unfair competition through subsidies.

I would like you to guide the work to ensure that we stay the course on our goals set out in the European Green Deal. You will coordinate the work, together with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy and working with the Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, on the **Clean Industrial Deal**. The aim will be to unlock investment, create lead markets for clean tech and put in place conditions for companies to grow and compete.

You will guide the work on the implementation of the existing legal framework to help reach our 2030 targets in the simplest, fairest way and in dialogue with all stakeholders. Once the **90% emission-reduction target** for 2040 is enshrined in the European Climate Law, we will need to work closely with all stakeholders to prepare a new architecture beyond 2030 to enable us to reach net-zero by mid-century.

As the Draghi report highlighted, one of the biggest breaks on our competitiveness and our industries' ability to grow is high energy prices. I would like you to guide the work to **bring down energy prices** and rid ourselves of our dependencies on fossil fuels, working closely with the Commissioner for Energy and Housing. You will also work together to invest in clean energy infrastructure and to address **energy poverty** across Europe as part of addressing the **housing** crisis.

Your role will be essential to ensure that Europe's transition is for the benefit of people and their jobs, helping to boost our economy and industry and ensuring no one is left behind. In this spirit, you will guide work to ensure that **taxation measures** support a just transition and decarbonisation, working closely with the Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth. You will work with other Members of College to steer our investment and

financing in a just and social transition, notably through the **Social Climate Fund** and **Just Transition Fund**.

I would also like you to work with the Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy to ensure that we make the most of Europe's **natural capital** and develop a **clean, circular economy**. We need to provide incentives for nature-positive actions and ensure that we invest in our biodiversity. It will also be essential to embed the **environment-health** nexus in all of our policies.

### *Competition*

In your responsibilities linked to the competition portfolio, you will **modernise the EU's competition policy** to ensure it supports European companies to innovate, compete and lead world-wide and contributes to our wider objectives on competitiveness and sustainability, social fairness and security. This will be an integral part of the work to make this an Investment Commission.

- As part of the **Clean Industrial Deal**, you should develop a **new State aid framework** to accelerate the roll-out of renewable energy, to deploy industrial decarbonisation and to ensure sufficient manufacturing capacity of clean tech. This should build on the experience of the Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework and preserve cohesion objectives. Strong **State aid control** continues to play a key role to address market failures while avoiding inefficiencies in public spending.
- Your work to modernise competition policy will include a **review of the Horizontal Merger Control Guidelines**. This should give adequate weight to the European economy's more acute needs in respect of resilience, efficiency and innovation, the time horizons and investment intensity of competition in certain strategic sectors, and the changed defence and security environment.
- You should preserve the level playing field while pursuing further **simplification of State Aid**, prioritising work on the most distortive aids and drawing the lessons from the temporary crisis and transition frameworks regarding decarbonisation of energy systems and industries.
- You will focus on the particular challenges facing **SMEs and small midcaps**, notably to address risks of **killer acquisitions** from foreign companies seeking to eliminate them as a possible source of future competition.
- You will support the implementation of the future **European Competitiveness Fund** to ensure coherence between it and State Aid policy, and the work with Member States for swift proposals for **Important Projects of Common Interest** (IPCEIs) for the most strategic sectors and technologies that can quickly access finance and get off the ground.
- I would like you to lead the work, in close cooperation with Member States, to make State Aid review of IPCEIs simpler and faster and to examine the proposal in the Draghi Report to expand IPCEIs for innovation in strategic sectors.

- I want you to **strengthen and speed up enforcement of competition rules**, in close cooperation with the national competition authorities in the Member States. You will focus action on the most distortive aids and practices, notably anticompetitive agreements and abuse of dominant position. You will work to accelerate authorisation of compatible aids and transactions in strategic fields, and to ensure timely clarity for economic operators that cooperate in such sectors, for example, when pooling data for artificial intelligence experimentation.
- You will work with other Members of College to vigorously **enforce the Foreign Subsidies Regulation**, including by proactively mapping the most problematic practices that could lead to competition distortions.
- You should also actively contribute to stronger **global cooperation** among competition authorities.
- More broadly, I expect you to work closely with other Commissioners. Exchanging information and market knowledge in a given sector can help to ensure that new legislation contributes to fair and open competition and that competition policy is evidence-based and takes into account sectoral policies. You will work with relevant Commissioners to **tackle anticompetitive practices**, such as those which affect the competitiveness and sustainability of the food and farming sector.
- You will address the challenges and dynamics of digital markets, including platform economies and data-driven business models. You will ensure the Commission takes rapid and effective enforcement actions under the **Digital Markets Act**.
- You will propose to **revise State aid rules to enable housing support measures**, notably for energy efficiency and social housing.

You will work under my guidance on all of the above issues. The Directorate-General for Competition will support you in your work on the competition portfolio.

## Way forward

The actions listed in this letter will shape your work. However, we will need to complete and adapt as we go along and I count on your ideas and expertise in this regard. In addition to College meetings and our continuous discussions, I will invite you every six months for a structured reporting meeting to discuss progress and challenges in delivering on your mission.

Reflecting the evolving nature of political priorities, the Commission must remain agile in allocating staff where most needed. I expect you to play a collegial role in this, by working with your services to identify efficiencies and contributing to corporate redeployment efforts across the Commission.

Given the scale of the challenges and the many issues in our in-tray, we must **hit the ground running on day one**. I invite you to take contact with your future services to prepare your hearing and the work ahead.

I look forward to working closely together for Europe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ursula v.d. L.', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Ursula von der Leyen  
*President of the European Commission*

