



Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Mission letter

Brussels, 1 December 2019

Johannes Hahn

Commissioner for Budget and Administration

Dear Johannes,

Earlier this year, the people of Europe made their voices heard in record numbers at the European elections. They presented us with a mission to be decisive and ambitious on the big issues of our time that are shaping the future of our society, economy and planet.

Changes in climate, digital technologies and geopolitics are already having a profound effect on the lives of Europeans. We are witnessing major shifts all the way from global power structures to local politics. While these transformations may be different in nature, we must show the same ambition and determination in our response. What we do now will determine what kind of world our children live in and will define Europe's place in the world.

Our job as the European Commission will be to lead, to grasp the opportunities and to tackle the challenges that these changes present, working hand in hand with people from across Europe and with the governments, parliaments and institutions that serve them.

This is the guiding principle behind my Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024, which I presented to the European Parliament on 16 July 2019. I outlined six headline ambitions on which I want the European Commission's work to focus. These priorities are interlocking and are part of the same picture. In this spirit, I have put together a College in which we will all work, decide and deliver together.

An open and inclusive way of working

This approach reflects the open, inclusive and cooperative way of working that I will instil throughout the Commission, as well as in our relationships with others.

The College: One team

The European Commission functions on the **principle of collegiality**. This means we are one team: we all work together following a whole-of-government approach, we all have our say, we all decide collectively and we all take ownership of what is agreed.

To help us deliver on our ambitions and commitments, **I will empower eight Vice-Presidents** to steer and coordinate thematic Commissioners' Groups on each of the Commission's priorities. They will be supported in this role by the Secretariat-General. All Commissioners will be in one or more Groups. The Commissioner for Budget and Administration will report directly to me.

Of the eight Vice-Presidents, the **three Executive Vice-Presidents** will have a dual function. As Vice-Presidents, they will lead a Commissioners' Group and be supported by the Secretariat-General. In addition, they will also manage a policy area and have a Directorate-General under their authority for this part of their job. One of the three Executives, First Vice-President Timmermans, will chair the College in my absence.

The High Representative/Vice-President will support me in coordinating the external dimension of all Commissioners' work. To ensure our external action becomes more strategic and coherent, it will be systematically discussed and decided on by the College. To support this, all services and Cabinets will prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis, mirroring the process already in place for interinstitutional relations. This should also better align the internal and external aspects of our work. This will be a **'Geopolitical Commission'**.

I believe that we need to **speak and listen more to one another**, starting from within the Commission. College meetings will be places of open and honest discussion. As President I will set the agenda, but all College decisions will be taken collectively. In line with our commitment to fully digitalise the Commission and the need to use resources conscientiously, College meetings will be paperless and digital.

Each Commissioner will ensure the delivery of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy area. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

Interinstitutional relations and better policy making

Along with our close relations with the Council, I want to strengthen the Commission's **special partnership with the European Parliament**. This priority must cut through the work of each Member of the College, starting with myself.

I will expect you to ensure the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations. In light of my support for a right of initiative for the Parliament, you should work closely with the relevant Committees, and be active and present during the preparation of resolutions requesting that the Commission legislate.

The more we build a consensus when designing policy, the quicker it can become law and make a difference to people's lives. This is why we need an **open and cooperative approach throughout the legislative process**, from policy design to final agreement. I will expect you to attend all political negotiations, known as trilogue meetings, with the other institutions.

We need to ensure that regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. The Commission must always have the leeway to act where needed. At the same time, we must send a clear signal to citizens that **our policies and proposals deliver and make life easier** for people and for businesses.

In this spirit, the Commission will develop a new instrument to deliver on a '**One In, One Out**' principle. Every legislative proposal creating new burdens should relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. We will also work with Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add unnecessary administrative burdens.

Proposals must be evidence based, widely consulted upon and subject to an impact assessment reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board. You will ensure that they respect the principles of **proportionality and subsidiarity** and show the clear benefit of European action.

Given that any legislation is only as good as its implementation, I want you to **focus on the application and enforcement of EU law** within your field. You should provide support and continuous guidance to Member States on implementation, and be ready to take swift action if EU law is breached.

Bringing Europe closer to home

I want to **strengthen the links between people and the institutions that serve them**, to narrow the gap between expectation and reality and to communicate about what Europe is doing.

We must engage with all Europeans, not just those who live in the capitals or are knowledgeable about the European Union. I will expect you to **visit every Member State within the first half of our mandate** at the latest. You should meet regularly with national parliaments and take part in Citizens' Dialogues across our Union, notably as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

A stronger relationship with citizens starts with building trust and confidence. I will insist on the **highest levels of transparency and ethics** for the College as a whole. There can be no room for doubt about our behaviour or our integrity. The Code of Conduct for Commissioners sets out the standards and the rules to follow.

You will ensure budgetary spending represents value for taxpayers and follows the principles of sound financial management.

Making the most of our potential

The College which takes office today is the **most gender-balanced to date**. It makes good on my pledge to put together a Commission that is more representative and draws on all of our potential. This is a good start, but there is plenty more work to be done.

I expect you to **draw on all of Europe's talents** when it comes to setting up your own Cabinets. That means striking an appropriate balance in terms of gender, experience and geography.

The Commission should also lead by example when it comes to ensuring better representation and a diversity of voices in our public life. With this in mind, all public events organised by the Commission should aim to feature gender-balanced panels and a broad range of perspectives from across Europe.

Your mission

I would like to entrust you with the role of Commissioner for Budget and Administration.

The European Union's budget helps turn our priorities into results that make a difference to people's lives. It allows us to invest in our future and match our ambitions with the resources we need to make them a reality.

A modern, diverse and flexible European Commission with a skilled and dedicated workforce is equally important to delivering on the issues that matter the most. They are the cornerstone of European public administration.

A modern budget and administration to deliver for Europe

Your task over the next five years will be to ensure that the Commission has the appropriate financial, human and institutional resources to deliver the best results for Europeans. You should ensure the smooth transition from the existing long-term budget to the future one.

- You will support me in concluding the negotiations on the 2021-2027 **Multiannual Financial Framework**. The final agreement should deliver a modern and ambitious budget that reflects our strategic priorities. It should be streamlined, simpler to understand and include the flexibility we need to adapt to new challenges and opportunities as they emerge. You should ensure the **rule of law** is an integral part of the next long-term budget.
- You will support other Commissioners to ensure coherence between **individual sectoral programmes** within the next long-term budget. This should be done as swiftly as possible to ensure that there are no delays in funding or in getting projects off the ground.

- You will contribute to the new **Just Transition Mechanism** and its implementation within the EU budget.
- You will lead the Commission's work on the **annual discharge process**. I want you to focus on improving the overall performance of budgetary spending and on maintaining the lowest possible error rate. You should work closely on this with Member States, the European Court of Auditors and other Commission services responsible for shared management.
- I want you to develop a new human resources strategy to continue the **modernisation of the Commission**. This should seek to create the right conditions for our skilled and motivated workforce to thrive and deliver on our priorities. The need to attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff from across all Member States will be crucial to achieving this.
- We will work closely together on my commitment to **gender equality at all levels of Commission management** by the end of our mandate, as well as on ensuring the Commission is a diverse and inclusive place to work.
- I want you to implement the **full digitalisation of the Commission** and ensure that staff have the digital skills they need.
- You should also ensure that the Commission has the right infrastructure to **face up to ever evolving physical and digital security threats**. This will include putting in place a genuine security culture and raising awareness on threats and the need to handle sensitive information appropriately.
- You will oversee the Commission's work to **protect the financial interests of the European Union**. I want you to focus on the implementation of the Commission's anti-fraud strategy. You will also support the work of the European Anti-Fraud Office and ensure its investigative independence is preserved. You should help ensure its smooth cooperation with the new European Public Prosecutor's Office.

You will report directly to me on all of the above issues. The Directorate-General for Budget, the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security and the Directorate-General for Informatics will all support you in your work. You will be responsible for the Directorate-General for Translation and the Directorate-General for Interpretation.

You will also be responsible for the Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements, the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels, the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Luxembourg, the European Personnel Selection Office, the Publications Office of the European Union and the European School of Administration.

You will also be responsible for the European Anti-Fraud Office, respecting its investigative independence, in line with its specific status.

The way forward

The mission outlined above is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Other opportunities and challenges will no doubt appear over the course of the next five years. On all of these issues, I will ask you to work closely with me, and with other Members of the College.

Once there is more clarity, we should be ready to pave the way for an ambitious and strategic partnership with the United Kingdom.

I look forward to working closely together at what is an exciting and testing time for our Union. You can of course count on my full personal and political support throughout our mandate.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dr. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

