



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

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## Mission letter

Brussels, 1 December 2019

**Maroš Šefčovič**

### **Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight**

Dear Maroš,

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, our economy and our 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 this new 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 Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.**

Europe moves forward when it works together. As our objectives become more ambitious, so does the need to improve the way we collectively design, negotiate and implement policies and laws become more urgent.

I want you to lead the Commission's work on interinstitutional relations, better policymaking and strategic foresight. At the heart of this is the need for the European Union to act together where it matters the most and where it can provide the most added value. To do this, we need to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and identify long-term trends on which we need to act and about which we need to know more. As part of this work, I want you to play an active role in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

### *Interinstitutional relations and better regulation*

The EU's institutions need to work together to ensure that its policies deliver impact and results. Policies need clear goals, buy-in from Europeans and thorough scrutiny to ensure it delivers where it counts.

- You will support me in strengthening the **special partnership with the European Parliament**. You will ensure that the Framework Agreement between the two institutions is respected, and you will be responsible for relations with the Conference of Committee Chairs.

- In light of my support for a **right of initiative for Parliament**, and my commitment that, when Parliament, acting by a majority of its members, adopts resolutions requesting that the Commission submit legislative proposals, the College will respond with a legislative act, in full respect of the proportionality, subsidiarity and better law making principles. I want you to work closely with all other Commissioners on Parliament resolutions requesting that the Commission submit legislative proposals.
- You will be responsible for the overall implementation of the **Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making**, and will lead the interinstitutional discussions on annual programming.
- You will be in charge of **relations with national Parliaments, advisory bodies and the European Ombudsman**.
- In the same spirit, I want you to coordinate the Commission's work on **better regulation**. You will ensure that Commission proposals respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.
- To help **alleviate the regulatory burden** for people and for business, you will develop and apply the new 'One In, One Out' principle. You should also work closely with the Member States to avoid unnecessary additional red tape when transposing EU legislation into national law.
- You will chair the **REFIT Platform**, bringing together representatives from the Member States and other stakeholders to look at how to improve existing EU legislation.
- You will represent the Commission in the General Affairs Council and in discussions on cross-cutting issues in the Parliament.

### *Putting foresight at the heart of better policymaking*

As part of our commitment to designing laws that better address our needs, I want you to lead efforts to strengthen our culture of **evidence-based policymaking**. You will ensure that we make full use of the knowledge, information and research within the Commission.

This will be particularly crucial to supporting our work on the twin digital and climate transitions. It should also feed into the debates of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

- I want you to lead the Commission's work on **strategic foresight**. You will focus on long-term trends and identify areas in which policy, research and technological developments are most likely to drive societal, economic and environmental progress. This will help us better design our laws and initiatives, as well as helping us develop future-oriented policies.
- As part of this, you will coordinate the Commission's work on the **European Battery Alliance**, working closely with Member States and stakeholders.

- Drawing on the work of the Commission's Joint Research Centre, you will produce a **yearly foresight report** to help us adapt and improve our priority setting. As part of this, you will look at how we can better link policies in different areas so they work towards the same objectives.
- To ensure this approach is fully embedded in our work, you will support me in developing the annual **Commission work programme**.

You will work under my guidance on all of the above issues. The Secretariat-General will support you in your coordination work on Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.

## 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,



Dr. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

