



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

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## Mission letter

Brussels, 1 December 2019

**Kadri Simson**

### **Commissioner for Energy**

Dear Kadri,

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 Energy.**

It is of paramount importance that Europeans have access to affordable, secure, reliable and clean energy. Regional interconnectivity, a better-functioning market for energy, and research and innovation are key to achieving these aims.

To become the world's first climate-neutral continent, Europe must reduce emissions further and faster, and by at least 50% for 2030. Given energy production and use accounts for 75% of the EU's emissions, energy will have a central role to play in the European Green Deal.

### *Safe, secure and sustainable energy*

Drawing on the success of the Energy Union, you will focus on further developing an **integrated, interconnected and properly functioning European energy market**. This will help keep prices down for consumers, help increase the use of clean energy and make energy supply more reliable and secure.

- I want you to focus on the rapid implementation of **energy-efficiency** and **renewable-energy** legislation. You should work closely with the Member States to set out how they will contribute through their National Energy and Climate Plans. Given the increased ambition of the European Green Deal, you should assess the need to review legislation.
- You should ensure Europe follows the **energy-efficiency-first principle** across the board. As part of this, you should look at how Europe can further improve the energy performance of buildings and speed up renovation rates.

- To **speed up the deployment of clean energy** across the economy, you should promote a power system largely based on renewables, with increased interconnectivity and improved energy storage. You should look at how to facilitate the smart integration of the electricity, heating, transport and industry sectors.
- You should help set the right signals and financial incentives to **scale up investment in clean energy**, notably through the new Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. We must also invest in the missing infrastructure in our energy system. This should support Europe in meeting its electricity interconnection target and developing cross-border cooperation on renewable-energy installations and networks.
- You should support all **regional cooperation** efforts to ensure integrated markets.
- Gas will have a role to play in the transition towards a carbon-neutral economy, notably by making use of carbon capture and storage. In this context, you will assess how sources of supply can be diversified at competitive prices, in particular by making full use of the potential of affordable **liquefied natural gas**.
- You should contribute to the review of the **Energy Taxation Directive** to ensure that it is consistent with our climate-neutral commitments, as well as the design of the new Carbon Border Tax.
- The EU is the world's largest energy importer, yet roughly 85% of our imports are currently paid in dollars. As part of wider efforts to increase the international role of the euro, I want you to look at ways to sharply increase the **use of the euro in energy markets**.
- You should focus on further **enhancing nuclear safety and safeguards** across Europe and continue the ongoing nuclear decommissioning.
- We should make full use of the clauses in the Treaties that allow proposals on energy to be adopted by co-decision and qualified majority voting.

### *Empowering people and regions*

People and regions will help drive the transition to a cleaner and more efficient energy system. At the same time, we must support those most affected and most exposed by the transformations, ensuring that we leave no one behind.

- I want you to focus on **putting consumers at the heart of our energy system**, notably through the full implementation of the recently revised electricity market design.
- You should seek to empower citizens and cooperatives to play an increased role in the take-up of renewables through **self-consumption**.

- You should contribute to the design and implementation of the new **Just Transition Fund**, notably by making sure it provides targeted support to industrial, coal and energy intensive regions, as well as energy islands.
- Over 50 million European households cannot afford to properly heat their homes. You should make use of the **Energy Poverty Observatory** to help Member States identify areas needing the most support.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal. The Directorate-General for Energy will support you in your work.

## 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

