



Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with Mario Draghi on the report on the future of EU competitiveness

Brussels, 9 September 2024

Good morning everyone,

I am glad to be back in the press room. A very warm welcome to you, Mario Draghi. Thank you very much for being here today to present your much expected [report](#) – the report on the competitiveness of the European Union. I think no one was better placed than you, dear Mario, to carry out a thorough analysis of Europe's competitiveness – and of course how to improve it. Your track record speaks for itself, I do not have to introduce you. A year ago, I asked you to prepare a report on the future of Europe's competitiveness with recommendations to tackle the economic challenges we face at home, and to reach a stronger position in a world of tough economic competition. Since then, the topic has even gained momentum, especially with the impulse of EU Leaders in the European Council. Now there is wide consensus that it must be at the top of our agenda, and at the heart of our action.

Throughout this year, dear Mario, we had the pleasure to meet very often and to have an intensive exchange. We shared analyses of the economic situation and started shaping solutions. This was facilitated by our agreement on two fundamental principles. First, the only way to ensure our long-term competitiveness is to shift away from fossil fuels and towards a clean, competitive, and circular economy. Second, our efforts on competitiveness must go hand in hand with increased prosperity for everyone in Europe. All the transformations that we will set in motion must be fair. We can build on our very successful social model – the social market economy.

Our exchanges over the past months have certainly also enriched my Political Guidelines. And your findings will continue of course to inspire our work for the months and years to come. Let me just deep-dive for a moment, and then hand over the floor to you, dear Mario. There are three key examples I want to focus on.

First, to be competitive, we need to master the clean and digital transition. We set the basis for this, as you know, the clean and digital transition, in my first mandate. Now it is time to see it through. We must support our industry to go through decarbonisation through innovation and turn this into a competitive advantage. This is why we need to act on all the principal levers that are at our disposal: bringing down energy prices; mobilising public and private investment; improving the business environment and cutting unnecessary red tape.

Second, we totally agree that we need more skills because technologies are only as good as the people designing, producing, and of course operating them. We need to step up investment in skills and we need to bring more people into the job market, equipped with the skills that are needed for the clean and digital transition.

Finally, let us not forget that to be competitive, we need to be resilient. We have gone through multiple shocks over the past years, and we have been working on building more robust industrial value chains, especially when it comes to security of supply. Key concepts here are access to critical raw materials and to essential components, strong energy and digital grids, just to name a few. But it is certainly not the end of the road. So, I am very keen to listen to your ideas, dear Mario, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT/24/4601

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