VON DER LEYEN COMMISSION: ONE YEAR ON

#vdLcommission

1 December 2019 – 1 December 2020
CONTENTS

ACHEIVEMENTS ................................................................. 4
A NEW COURSE FOR EUROPE .................................................. 5
1. The first 100 days ............................................................... 6
2. Europe’s unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis ................. 9
3. A global health crisis and the geopolitical Commission ......................... 14
4. A better Europe after the pandemic ....................................... 17

TIMELINE ................................................................. 20
A NEW COURSE FOR EUROPE

The year behind us is a story of endurance. Following the result of the European elections, and the mandate received from the European Council and the European Parliament, the von der Leyen Commission put forward a set of ambitious goals for Europe’s future: climate neutrality by 2050; making the 2020s Europe’s Digital Decade; and making Europe stronger in the world with a more geopolitical approach.

In the first 100 days of the mandate, we presented the European Green Deal and its first building blocks: we committed to making Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. We came up with a package to make Europe a global leader in digital innovation. We presented an industrial strategy to define a new way forward for industry in Europe during the green and digital transition. In doing so, we also focused on strengthening Europe’s competitiveness on the global stage. In just over three months, we set out the most ambitious roadmap towards a green, digital and prosperous future for Europe.

Then came the coronavirus pandemic – with the human tragedy, the lockdowns and the economic backlash. This crisis called for a truly European response, and we have responded with the greatest collective mobilisation in our Union’s history.

At first, the Commission worked to organise a concerted and coordinated European response to the emergency – procuring and distributing protective equipment, repatriating stranded Europeans and securing doses of a future vaccine. This was uncharted territory for the European Union: we reacted boldly when EU action was needed to protect our citizens’ health and safety.

The next step was to act swiftly and kick off the recovery of our economy. NextGenerationEU – the recovery plan proposed by the Commission, agreed by the European Council and submitted to the European Parliament and all Member States – breaks new ground in the EU’s history. It is the centrepiece of the most powerful long-term EU budget ever designed, and together they are worth EUR 1.8 trillion of firepower.

We have adapted to unforeseen and dramatic circumstances, and worked to get Europe out of the crisis as fast as possible.

We have adapted to unforeseen and dramatic circumstances, and worked to get Europe out of the crisis as fast as possible. At the same time, our compass has not changed. We have remained faithful to the principles and aspirations outlined in President von der Leyen’s political guidelines one year ago. The twin green and digital transitions are now even more firmly at the core of our programme, with new resources to accelerate the transformation.

In the international arena, Europe has led the Global Response against coronavirus. All in all, 94 proposals have been agreed by and with the other EU institutions since 1 December 2019. We are not just repairing to our economy; we are reshaping it for the next generation.

Frontline workers have performed their duties heroically, citizens have accepted sacrifices to their fundamental freedoms and unprecedented measures have been taken to stem the spread of the virus.
1. The first 100 days

During the first 100 days, the von der Leyen Commission laid out a set of proposals to address the great challenges of this generation. These include the building blocks of a new growth strategy for Europe, structured around three pillars: the European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age and an economy that works for people.

Eleven days into its mandate, the von der Leyen Commission presented the European Green Deal. With this initiative, the EU has embarked on the greatest transition by design in its history. The European Green Deal sets out a roadmap for how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 while at the same time enhancing growth, providing new and better jobs and improving people’s well-being.

Climate change and environmental degradation are existential threats to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, Europe needs a new growth strategy that transforms the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy that works for people.

The European Green Deal sets out a roadmap for how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

On 14 January, the Commission announced the European Green Deal investment plan, to mobilise private money in support of the green transition. The investment plan also includes the Just Transition Mechanism, which will ensure an inclusive and prosperous road ahead.

The transition towards climate neutrality will provide opportunities and challenges for regions and sectors. While some will reap the benefits immediately, for others it will take longer.

Our generational challenges – the twin green and digital transitions – have become even more urgent now than they were before the coronavirus crisis began. The time for the green transition is now. The investment wave that we are about to unleash will have the European Green Deal as its compass. Likewise, the coronavirus crisis and subsequent lockdowns have shown that access to digital solutions is essential for people and businesses alike – and that the lack thereof can turn into a source of new inequalities.
To ensure a more even distribution of opportunities, the Commission has proposed to mobilise up to **EUR 100 billion** through the Just Transition Mechanism to help those **regions, industries and workers** that will face the greatest challenges relating to the green transition. We will succeed only if citizens and communities are empowered to become agents of the transition.

On 4 March 2020, the von der Leyen Commission proposed a **European climate law**, to transform political promises into legal obligations. We set a legal commitment to achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050 and a mechanism to keep everybody on track.

On the same day, we launched a public consultation on the **future climate pact** for regions, local communities, civil society, industry and schools. Together, they will design and commit to a set of pledges to bring about a change in behaviour, from the individual to the largest multinational.

On 11 March 2020, the European Commission adopted a new **circular economy action plan**, with a view to making our economy fit for a green future, strengthening our competitiveness while protecting the environment, and giving new rights to consumers.

The second pillar of our new growth strategy is a new push to make Europe a **global leader in digital innovation**. 19 February 2020, the Commission announced its agenda for shaping Europe’s digital future, opening up new opportunities for businesses while focusing on trustworthy technology for citizens.

This second pillar encompasses everything from cybersecurity to digital education, and from supercomputing to global competitiveness, with two specific strategies on **data and artificial intelligence**.

The Commission and the Member States have also defined a common approach to ensure the **secure deployment and functioning of 5G networks** in the EU, thereby broadening connectivity while creating jobs and opportunities.

According to estimates, artificial intelligence and robotics alone could create almost 60 million new jobs worldwide in the next 5 years.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G networks and super- and quantum computers have the potential to revolutionise our way of life, and to create **new and exciting opportunities** for all European industries (such as artificial intelligence to help analyse medical symptoms), increasing job opportunities while also enhancing the EU’s global competitiveness.

Around a quarter of industrial and service robots are produced by companies headquartered in Europe. A **European approach to the digital transformation** deepens our democratic foundations, respects fundamental rights and contributes to a sustainable, climate-neutral and resource-efficient economy. Citizens can only feel confident and empowered in a trustworthy environment where they know their privacy is respected.

European industry can lead the way in the transition towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. On day 101, the von der Leyen Commission presented a **new industrial strategy** to empower European businesses to achieve their ambitions while strengthening their global competitiveness.
A more integrated and fully functional **single market** would provide European businesses with opportunities, and would generate additional annual growth of EUR 183–269 billion for manufacturing and EUR 338 billion for services. This represents a rise of approximately 12% in the EU’s gross domestic product. The single market is a **success story** that continues to provide prosperity and opportunities for EU citizens and businesses alike.

The foundation of Europe’s economy is the ability to reconcile the market with the social aspect, growth with fairness and disruptive innovation with age-old values.

14 January 2020, the Commission launched a first-phase consultation of social partners – businesses and trade unions – on the issue of **adequate minimum wages for workers** in the EU, which will act as a stepping stone towards a strong social Europe for just transition. No one will be left behind, whether women or men, whether from the east, west, south or north, whether young or old.

In the following weeks, coronavirus virus spread in Europe and was characterised as a pandemic. The mandate took a different turn, calling for leadership to face a **public health crisis**, and what would soon become an **economic crisis**.
2. Europe’s unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis

The coronavirus pandemic has shaken Europe and the world to the core. What began with isolated cases quickly turned into an emergency that affects every country, region and person. Since the beginning of the year, nearly 307,000 lives have been lost in the EU because of COVID-19; many more have been lost in other parts of the world.

The European Union and its Member States acted swiftly and decisively to protect EU lives and livelihoods. Frontline workers have performed their duties heroically, citizens have accepted sacrifices to their fundamental freedoms and unprecedented measures have been taken to stem the spread of the virus.

Europe has become the beating heart of world solidarity.

Hospitals have welcomed and treated patients from across borders; Member States have teamed up to purchase medical equipment; mobile health teams have been despatched to answer the most urgent needs; approximately 600,000 stranded EU citizens have safely reached their homes from beyond the borders of the European Union; and public and private investment, at European and national levels, has been mobilised to find a vaccine for everyone across the world. This crisis has shown European solidarity at its best.

The Commission has pulled out all the stops to fight the pandemic and its economic fallout: 1104 measures have been adopted since March, including 510 State aid decisions giving European companies a lifeline. The great majority of public health, mobility, tourism and economic measures have been designed to address the immediate public health crisis directly. Meanwhile, the Commission has worked to make our economies, our societies and our Union more resilient to the challenges of tomorrow.

FIGHTING A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Europe has become the beating heart of world solidarity. Saving lives was our first priority. We delivered urgently needed aid through numerous humanitarian air bridges organised by the Commission. We brought Member States together to jointly procure medical equipment. Strategic rescEU stockpiles and distribution hubs were established to serve as a common European reserve for vital medical equipment. Equipment such as life-saving ventilators, masks and disinfectants was channelled through the European Emergency Response Coordination Centre to those Member States most in need.

In addition, under the newly created Emergency Support Instrument, some 10 million masks to protect healthcare workers were purchased and delivered in batches to countries that requested them. We sent medical teams from across the continent to hospitals in Milan and Bergamo in Italy. We made medical imports cheaper by waiving customs duties. We helped scientists gather and share their data. We gave additional resources to the most promising research projects. Through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and
its Emergency Response Coordination Centre, we organised and coordinated 369 flights to repatriate close to 82 000 EU citizens and 10 000 non-EU citizens stranded abroad.

**In the area of public health, the EU achieved what no Member State could have done alone.**

In the area of **public health**, the EU achieved what no Member State could have done alone. A Recommendation on testing strategies, including the use of rapid antigen tests, guidelines on free movement of healthcare professionals, medical devices and protective equipment, along with voluntary contact tracing applications, has guaranteed that best practices were shared and scaled up. The ‘**European roadmap towards lifting coronavirus containment measures**’ set out common principles and accompanying measures for exiting lockdown in a coordinated way.

In line with the **EU’s vaccine strategy**, the Commission has concluded several agreements and exploratory talks with different vaccine developers to secure doses of a future vaccine for Europeans. The Commission’s communication on **short-term EU health preparedness for COVID-19 outbreaks** outlines key measures to be taken in the coming months.

Since January, the Commission has mobilised more than EUR 660 million under **Horizon 2020** to develop vaccines, new treatments, diagnostic tests and medical systems to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and save lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that to step up the fight against it and **be prepared for future health emergencies**, more coordination at EU level is needed. The Commission therefore laid down the first bricks of a **European Health Union**. Drawing lessons from the current crisis, new proposals should ensure stronger preparedness and response during the current and future health crises. They include actions to strengthen the EU’s health security framework, and to reinforce the crisis preparedness and response role of key EU agencies.

**The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that to step up the fight against it and be prepared for future health emergencies, more coordination at EU level is needed.**

The Commission has safeguarded the integrity of the **single market**. As long queues of trucks started to form at border crossings inside the EU, the Commission created the ‘**green lanes’** system to ensure that essential goods could be transported swiftly across borders, and acted against disproportionate internal restrictions that were creating new shortages. In addition, the Commission issued a proposal to ensure that any measures taken by Member States that restrict free movement due to the pandemic are coordinated and clearly communicated at EU level.
All the while, the EU has provided as much information as possible to its citizens. The EU has developed a new online tool – ‘Re-open EU’ – that brings together information on travel, transportation and tourism restrictions across European countries. ‘Re-open EU’ has been used by millions of people in Europe and beyond.

**REPAIRING THE ECONOMY AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

What began as a public health crisis has morphed into a major economic shock. To prevent mass lay-offs, the Commission set up a EUR 100 billion European instrument to support short-time work – Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE). The Council has already approved a total of EUR 90.3 billion in financial support to 18 Member States, based on the proposals from the Commission. In October, the Commission issued the first social bonds to raise the necessary resources on financial markets, and ten Member States have already received support under SURE.

To further cushion the blow, the Commission applied – as promised in its political guidelines – the full flexibility of the EU’s State aid rules, and activated for the first time ever the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact. The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives (CRII) were set up in record time to provide liquidity to businesses and support to the healthcare sector.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the EU mobilised over EUR 13 billion in investments to tackle the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. This helped national, regional and local communities in countering the negative socio-economic impact of the pandemic.

The European Union and its Member States have acted resolutely to support workers and businesses. The Commission triggered the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact to leave Member States maximum flexibility, which will allow them to support everybody – their healthcare systems and staff, as well as the people so severely affected by the crisis. The total firepower mobilised so far by the EU has reached EUR 3.7 trillion, which represents more than 28 % of the EU’s gross domestic product.

The total firepower mobilised so far by the EU has reached EUR 3.7 trillion, which represents more than 28 % of the EU’s gross domestic product.

The magnitude of the crisis has been such that, despite a swift and decisive public response, the EU economy will experience a recession this year.
The necessary measures to contain the spread of the virus have slowed down social and economic life – almost to a standstill in some cases.

In 2020, the EU economy is expected to contract by 7.4 %, before recovering with growth of 4.1 % in 2021 and 3 % in 2022. All Member States have been hit differently, and this risks creating divergences between our economies. At the same time, the impact of this crisis will be felt by all.

Unemployment is set to rise to 7.7 % in the EU in 2020, disproportionately hitting women, young people, low-skilled workers and those in temporary work. Poverty, social exclusion and inequalities are likely to rise, underlining the importance of an inclusive and fair recovery for all.

The economy is expected to rebound to positive growth in 2021, but the outlook is uncertain and how the public health situation evolves will prove crucial. The EU is taking no chances: the recovery plan proposed by the Commission is unprecedented in its design and ambition.

The Commission’s recovery plan for Europe will repair the damage and secure the future for the next generation. The Commission is working with the European Parliament and the Council, so that they can reach and agreement. This would be the largest package ever financed with the EU budget.

It is made up of the EU’s long-term budget worth EUR 1 074 billion topped up with an additional EUR 750 billion temporary recovery instrument, NextGenerationEU. It will support

The Commission’s plan will support Member States in kick-starting the recovery and facilitate public and private investment. It will help rebuild Europe in a way that makes it greener, more digital, more resilient and fitter to meet current and future challenges. 30% of NextGenerationEU funds are to be raised through green bonds.

More than 50 % of the amount will support modernisation through research and innovation, fair climate and digital transitions, and preparedness, recovery and resilience. Traditional policies, such as cohesion and the common agricultural policy, will continue to receive significant financial support, to ensure stability and modernisation.

30% of the EU funds will be dedicated to fighting climate change. This represents the highest share ever of the European budget. Finally, the package also pays specific attention to biodiversity protection and gender equality.

The Commission’s recovery plan for Europe will repair the damage and secure the future for the next generation

The Commission will borrow EUR 750 billion on financial markets, channelling the funds to Member States via the EU budget, as grants and loans. According to a model simulation, it is estimated that the investment mobilised will raise real EU gross domestic product levels by around 1.75 % in 2021 and 2022, rising to 2.25 % by 2024. This investment wave will create
up to 2 million jobs by 2022. A EUR 672.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility will support essential investment and reforms in the Member States through grants and loans.

Prosperity in each European country depends on prosperity in all other European countries. Our unity is our strength.

By reinventing the way it works, the European Union is rediscovering its true vocation. We have given unprecedented firepower to the EU budget. We have agreed to use the European Commission’s very strong credit rating to raise resources that will be used by all Member States, including those in greatest need and with limited spending capacity. By doing so, the European Union is reviving the founders’ original idea: prosperity in each European country depends on prosperity in all other European countries. Our unity is our strength.

In addition, the Commission has adjusted its 2020 work programme in response to the crisis. While focusing on initiatives that deliver an immediate and impactful response to the crisis, the Commission is also delivering on its strategic priorities.

OVERALL BUDGET 2021-2027

TOTAL
EUR 1 824.3 billion

EUR 1 074.3 billion
Multiannual financial framework
The EU’s 7-year budget

EUR 750 billion
NextGenerationEU
COVID-19 recovery package front-loaded over the first years
EUR 750 billion
EUR 390 billion in grants
EUR 360 billion in loans
Capital raised on financial markets
3. A global health crisis and the geopolitical Commission

The European Union has a unique asset in global affairs, beyond its economic and financial strength: we have an unparalleled convening power. We are at the centre of a global network of alliances; we are a pillar of the multilateral system; we can rally broad coalitions in support of a common cause; and we know how to bring regional powers and rival nations around the same table.

We have put this convening power at the service of our friends in need and of the common good. Countries that usually do not even talk to one another have joined forces for a common cause.

LEADING THE GLOBAL RESPONSE AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

The EU has led the global response to the health crisis. Throughout the pandemic, President von der Leyen has kept in constant contact with G20 leaders and other international partners. We worked closely with multilateral institutions, national governments and non-governmental organisations to raise resources for a cure and a vaccine.

Together with this diverse international coalition, we launched the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a global cooperation platform to accelerate research, development and the equitable distribution of medicines and, eventually, a vaccine. We worked hand in hand not only with the World Health Organization and nations from across the planet, but also with global health actors such as GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and CEPI, and with civil society organisations such as Global Citizen. It was a marathon of global solidarity, and we were proud to have been a leading force in making this possible.

On 4 May, the European Commission kick-started a global pledging effort that by the end of the month had raised EUR 9.8 billion for universal access to affordable coronavirus vaccination, treatment and testing, and support for health systems worldwide.

Later, on 27 June, on the initiative of President von der Leyen with Global Citizen, in a landmark moment for global solidarity, the ‘Global Goal: Unite for our Future’ pledging summit and concert brought together artists, scientists and world leaders to ensure universal access to coronavirus medicines. This helped to mobilise an additional EUR 6.15 billion to provide universal access to affordable coronavirus vaccination, treatment and testing, and support for health systems and health systems support the economic recovery of vulnerable countries.

Throughout this work, we have made sure that treatments and a future vaccine are also accessible to low-income countries, which could not otherwise afford to pay for it. It is in this spirit that we joined the COVAX Facility, which aims to guarantee fair and equitable access to a vaccine for every
country in the world. The European Union is today one of the largest contributors to COVAX, with EUR 400 million in guarantees and a EUR 100 million grant. Caring for others makes Europe strong too.

In our external action against the coronavirus, we have always acted as ‘Team Europe’. This means that the European Commission, the EU financial institutions and the Member States have joined forces to achieve a shared set of goals, as outlined in the communication on the global EU response to COVID-19, presented in early April. One team for a stronger EU in global affairs.

The Team Europe approach has already yielded more than EUR 38.5 billion to address the emergency response and consequent humanitarian needs, strengthen health, water/sanitation and nutrition systems and mitigate the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic worldwide. The EU’s role in the world as a credible leading development and humanitarian partner continues.

BECOMING THE GEOPOLITICAL COMMISSION

The vision of the von der Leyen Commission is to become geopolitical. Being geopolitical means understanding the links between our domestic decisions and our external action. This is as true in our fight against pandemic as on a wealth of other policies, from climate action to migration, from internal security to economic recovery. The success of our policies in Europe depends on our ability to work with others outside our borders.

Since day one, the von der Leyen Commission has defended European interests and values on the international stage – working to strengthen climate action, to defuse trade disputes, to address crises in our neighbourhood and to reform the multilateral system.

President von der Leyen chose Africa and the African Union’s headquarters in Addis Ababa as the destination for her first foreign visit. On day 100, we presented a new ‘strategy with Africa’ to bring our partnership to the next level. The strategy proposes to boost cooperation in the areas of sustainable growth and jobs; the green transition; the digital transformation; peace, security and governance; and migration and mobility.

On day 67, the Commission adopted a new methodology for EU accession negotiations, to make them more credible, predictable and dynamic, all with a stronger political steer. This cleared the way for the European Council to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, the draft negotiating frameworks for which have already been submitted to the Council by the Commission. The European Commission stood in full solidarity with our friends in the Western Balkans during the coronavirus crisis, providing immediate and long-term support and including them in many initiatives normally reserved for the Member States. In October, we put forward an economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans.

Together with the leaders of our six Eastern partners, we have agreed on a new set of priorities to shape the Eastern Partnership’s second decade. This agenda can make the entire European continent more resilient to all sorts of shocks, from economic crises to climate change.
We have sought cooperative solutions whenever possible, and we have not refrained from speaking the language of firmness when it was necessary.

After the Presidential election in the United States, we are looking forward to working with our US counterparts on a new transatlantic agenda fit for today’s world. This should cover everything from fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, to tackling climate change together, to promoting digital transformation and strengthening our common security, as well as reforming the rules-based multilateral system.

The EU is sponsoring a root-and-branch reform of the World Trade Organization, precisely to enable our Union to continue reaping the opportunities of global openness and integration, while addressing the vulnerabilities of our economic and political systems.

We want to find an agreement that fixes the Organization’s dispute settlement system. Yet, as the system is currently not working, the Commission has decided to strengthen its trade enforcement rules: in the event of a trade dispute, we are ready to use countermeasures that protect European interests, in full compliance with international law.

We have supported the UN Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire, and we continue to take a leading role in mobilising the international community in situations of concern, co-organising major conferences on Venezuela, Sudan or Syria.
4. A better Europe after the pandemic

Our generational challenges – the twin green and digital transitions – have become even more urgent now than they were before the crisis began. The time for the green transition is now. The investment wave that we are about to unleash will have the European Green Deal as its compass. Likewise, the coronavirus crisis and subsequent lockdowns have shown that access to digital solutions is essential for people and businesses alike – and that the lack thereof can turn into a source of new inequalities.

The work on the Commission’s strategic priorities has never stopped, in spite of the pandemic. On 20 May 2020, the Commission presented a comprehensive new biodiversity strategy to bring nature back into our lives, and a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. The two strategies are mutually reinforcing, bringing together nature, farmers, businesses and consumers to work towards a competitively sustainable future.

On 8 July 2020, the Commission adopted the EU’s strategies for energy system integration and hydrogen. The latter addresses how to transform the potential of the decarbonisation of industry, transport, power generation and buildings across Europe into reality, through investments, regulation, market creation and research and innovation.

On 18 September 2020, we presented two proposals to advance our digital agenda. The first proposal is a new regulation for the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking. The second proposal is a recommendation for Member States to boost investment in connectivity infrastructure.

A few days later, we also adopted a new Digital Finance Package and legislative proposals on crypto-assets and digital resilience for the financial sector. This package will boost Europe’s competitiveness and innovation in the financial sector, paving the way for Europe to become a global standard-setter. In the coming weeks, a Digital Services Act and a Digital Markets Act will follow – outlining the EU response to a digital world transformed by online platforms.

On 24 September 2020, we adopted an action plan to boost the European Union’s Capital Markets Union over the coming years. Developing the EU’s capital markets, and ensuring access to market financing, will be essential for Europe’s recovery from the unprecedented economic crisis caused by coronavirus.

Europe must now lead the way on digital – so that the 2020s can be Europe’s Digital Decade.

In October, we presented three pillars of the European Green Deal: the Renovation wave strategy, doubling the renovation rate to cut emissions, boost recovery and reduce
energy poverty; **EU chemicals strategy** for sustainability, the first step towards a zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment; and **EU methane strategy** to reduce methane emissions.

We launched the new **European Bauhaus** which will be a driving force to bring the European Green Deal to life in an attractive, innovative and human-centred way.

**TOWARDS A UNION OF EQUALITY**

The European Commission has kept **EU citizens** at the heart of its decision-making and has looked after their interests in a whole variety of different ways.

We launched the **youth employment support**, a bridge to jobs for the next generation, focused on vocational training and education, apprenticeships, support for youth employment and funding. In October, the Commission proposed a framework to ensure that the workers in the EU are protected by **adequate minimum wages** allowing for a decent living wherever they work.

In March, the European Commission presented its **new strategy for equality between women and men** in Europe. While the EU is a global leader in gender equality and has made significant progress in the last decades, gender-based violence and stereotypes continue to persist: one in three women in the EU was subject to physical and/or sexual violence. To address this, the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 sets out key actions for the next 5 years and commits to ensuring that the Commission includes an equality perspective in all EU policy areas.

Following President von der Leyen’s State of the Union address, we also presented the first-ever **EU strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) equality**. The strategy proposes to extend the list of EU crimes to cover hate crime, including homophobic hate speech and hate crime and to bring forward legislation on the mutual recognition of parenthood in cross border situations, among others. It also ensures that LGBTIQ concerns are well reflected in EU policy-making, so that LGBTIQ people, in all their diversity, are safe and have equal opportunities to prosper and fully participate in society.

The European Commission adopted its first-ever **EU strategy on victims’ rights**, with the overall objective of ensuring that all victims of crime can rely fully on their rights, no matter where in the EU the crime took place. The strategy focuses firstly on **empowering victims** to report crime, claim compensation and ultimately recover from the consequences of the crime; and secondly on working together with all relevant actors on victims’ rights.

The Commission has put forward the first **EU strategy to protect children from sexual abuse**, a crime that has demonstrably been exacerbated during the coronavirus crisis by physical isolation and increased online activity. We have also adopted new strategies to combat the illegal drugs and firearms that fuel organised crime.

To build a truly **anti-racist Union**, we put forward an action plan against racism and a 10-year plan to support Roma in the EU.

At the beginning of the mandate, the von der Leyen Commission called for a fresh start on how Europe manages migration. To this goal, we presented a **new pact on migration and asylum**. It sets out improved and faster procedures throughout the asylum and migration system. It balances the principles of fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity. This is crucial for rebuilding trust between Member States and
confident in the capacity of the European Union to manage migration.

**Security** ranks as the highest priority and concern for people in the EU. From combating terrorism and organised crime to cybersecurity, from preventing hybrid threats to increasing the resilience of our critical infrastructure, the **EU security union strategy** unveiled on 24 July will help strengthen security in our physical and digital environment over the next 5 years. The Commission has also presented a **new action plan on preventing money laundering and terrorist financing**.

The Commission has stepped up the **fight against misinformation, disinformation and foreign interference** by working with online platforms, civil society, academia and researchers. Together with the European External Action Service, it outlined all of these efforts and the next steps in a joint communication. This will not only reinforce public trust in the Union, but also **protect people** living in the EU from potential economic and bodily harm due to scams and fake coronavirus cures.

The work of the European Commission in the next 12 months will be crucial for the years and decades to come. The coronavirus pandemic has once again shown that Europe’s strength lies in its unity, and that the great challenges that we face are bigger than any single country can deal with.

---

**The coronavirus pandemic has once again shown that Europe’s strength lies in its unity.**

---

NextGenerationEU and the new long-term EU budget will give us the means to meet the expectations of citizens. The coming months and years represent a pivotal moment in European history and for future generations. At the beginning of its mandate, the Commission envisioned a **healthy, green and prosperous future**. Now is Europe’s moment to power on, to realise that future and to deliver on its citizens’ expectations.
The Von der Leyen Commission: One Year On

Timeline

Legend

- Political priorities
- Response to the coronavirus crisis
- Negotiations with the United Kingdom

2019

December

11.12
Launch of the European Green Deal, setting out a roadmap for how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050

2020

January

8.1
Meeting between President Ursula von der Leyen and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

19.1
Berlin International Conference on Libya

21.1
Meeting between President Ursula von der Leyen and US President Donald Trump

31.1
The United Kingdom leaves the European Union

14.1
The European Green Deal investment plan to mobilise EU funding and stimulate public and private investments needed for the transition to a climate-neutral, green and inclusive economy

The Just Transition Mechanism, a key tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind

First-phase consultation of social partners – businesses and trade unions – on a fair minimum wage for workers in the EU

29.1
Secure 5G networks: the Commission endorses the EU toolbox agreed by Member States
February

The EU starts facilitating the repatriation of citizens to Europe, as part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

4.2 Public consultations to shape Europe’s ‘beating cancer’ action plan.

3.2 Presentation of the Commission’s proposal for a Council recommendation on directives for the negotiation of a new partnership with the United Kingdom.

5.2 New methodology for EU accession negotiations – to make them more credible, predictable and dynamic, as the first element in the Commission’s renewed enlargement strategy.

17.2 EU and international donors pledge EUR 1.15 billion for reconstruction after the earthquake in Albania.

19.2 Publication of the agenda to shape Europe’s digital future, a strategy on data and a White Paper on artificial intelligence, opening up new opportunities for businesses, while focusing on trustworthy technology for citizens.

25.2 The European Commission receives a mandate to begin negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom.

March

4.3 With the European climate law, the Commission proposes a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

5.3 A new gender equality strategy for 2020-2025 sets out key actions to ensure equality between women and men in Europe.
THE VON DER LEYEN COMMISSION: ONE YEAR ON

TIMELINE

9.3
A new EU strategy paves the way for a stronger, more ambitious partnership with Africa

10.3
A new industrial strategy prepares the green and digital transformations of European industry

11.3
A new circular economy action plan aims to create a cleaner and more competitive Europe

13.3
The Commission calls for a decisive coordinated economic response to the coronavirus crisis

16.3
An advisory panel on coronavirus brings together epidemiologists and virologists from different Member States

18.3
The Commission proposes new policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership

19.3
A temporary framework enables Member States to use the full flexibility under State aid rules to support the economy in the context of the coronavirus outbreak

20.3
The general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact is activated

23.3
‘Green lanes’ are implemented to ensure the availability of goods and essential services

26.3
European Council members give the green light to accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia

First meeting of the EU-UK Joint Committee on the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement
THE VON DER LEYEN COMMISSION: ONE YEAR ON

**TIMELINE**

**APRIL**

24

Launch of the new instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency *(SURE)* worth EUR 100 billion

15.4

A European roadmap sets out the path towards **common lifting of containment measures**

20.4

The **global EU response** to coronavirus, to help partner countries’ efforts in tackling the pandemic, with the EU contribution reaching EUR 15.6 billion

24.4

Round 2 of negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom

29.4

Package to support the **transport sector**

30.4

Measures to support the **agricultural sector**

**MAY**

4.5

During the **Coronavirus Global Response** pledging event hosted by the European Commission, EUR 7.4 billion in pledges is raised from donors worldwide for universal access to vaccines

6.5

The **EU-Western Balkans Zagreb summit** takes place via videoconference

7.5

Action plan for a comprehensive Union policy on **preventing money laundering and terrorist financing**

8.5

The **EU humanitarian air bridge** is set up to transport humanitarian workers and emergency supplies to some of most critical areas around the world
THE VON DER LEYEN COMMISSION: ONE YEAR ON

TIMELINE

13.5
The Commission presents guidance on how to safely resume travel and re-boot Europe’s tourism in 2020 and beyond

20.5
The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 addresses the five main drivers of biodiversity loss, and ensures the full implementation of EU legislation

The farm to fork strategy to enable the transition to a sustainable EU food system that safeguards food security and ensures access to healthy diets

25

15.5
Round 3 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom

26.5
Videoconference meeting takes place between leaders of the EU and Japan

27.5
The Commission presents a new recovery instrument, NextGenerationEU, embedded within a powerful, modern and revamped long-term EU budget

JUNE

15.6
High-level meeting between President von der Leyen, President Michel and President Sassoli and the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

The ‘Re-open EU’ web platform is established, containing essential information allowing a safe relaunch of free movement and tourism across Europe

5.6
Round 4 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom

17.6
EU vaccine strategy

White Paper on levelling the playing field as regards foreign subsidies

18.6
Eastern Partnership leaders’ videoconference
The 22nd EU-China Summit takes place via videoconference.

The ‘Global Goal: Unite for our Future’ pledging summit organised by the European Commission and Global Citizen mobilises EUR 6.15 billion in additional funding to help develop and ensure equitable access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments.

Launch of the EU strategy on victims’ rights (2020-2025).

EU and Republic of Korea leaders discuss how to foster global cooperation in the recovery phase.

The repatriation of close to 78,000 EU citizens and 10,000 non-EU citizens to Europe is facilitated by the European Civil Protection Mechanism.

The youth employment support package is based on 4 building blocks: reinforcing the Youth Guarantee, training policy, apprenticeships and additional measures.

The European skills agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience sets out objectives for upskilling and reskilling for the next 5 years.

Restricted round of negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom.
The Commission adopts a communication to help national authorities, businesses and citizens prepare for the inevitable changes that will arise at the end of the transition period with the UK.

The Commission signs its first contract with a pharmaceutical company, AstraZeneca, which will allow the purchase of a vaccine against COVID-19 for all EU Member States.

A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe is published.

The EU-India Summit takes place via videoconference.

EU leaders agree on the recovery plan and multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027.

Within hours of the deadly explosion in Beirut, the EU’s Civil Protection Mechanism is activated. Twenty EU Member States and participating countries respond with in-kind emergency assistance, including nearly 300 search-and-rescue experts.

Round 6 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom.

Round 7 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom.

Round 8 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom.

The first interinstitutional meeting takes place on NextGenerationEU and the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework.

Powering a climate-neutral economy: an EU strategy for energy system integration is published.

The Commission confirms its interest in participating in the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX) for equitable access to affordable COVID-19 vaccines and, as part of a Team Europe effort, announces a contribution of EUR 400 million in guarantees to support COVAX.
THE VON DER LEYEN COMMISSION: ONE YEAR ON

TIMELINE

The EU and China hold a leaders’ meeting via videoconference, discuss climate change, economic and trade issues

The Commission raises climate ambition and proposes 55% cut in emissions by 2030

A second contract with a pharmaceutical company, Sanofi-GSK, enters into force

New pact on migration and asylum, to build confidence and strike a new balance between responsibility and solidarity

The Commission presents EU’s action plan against racism 2020-2025

New action plan to boost the European Union’s Capital Markets Union

Digital Finance Package: Setting out new approach to encourage responsible innovation to benefit consumers and businesses

First-ever annual report on the rule of law situation across the EU

The Commission sets out a vision of the European Education Area to be achieved by 2025, and a plan for a new European Research Area

OCTOBER

22nd EU-Ukraine Summit

2020 enlargement package and a new economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans

Round 9 of the negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom

The Commission launches a new 10-year plan to support Roma in the EU
The Commission approves a third contract with a pharmaceutical company Janssen Pharmaceutica NV to ensure access to a potential vaccine against COVID-19.

The first social bond issued under the EU SURE programme, and worth EUR 17 billion, is listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.

EU-Canada Leaders’ meeting confirms joint determination to fight the pandemic and to ensuring a sustainable economic recovery.

The Commission proposes a framework to ensure that the workers in the EU are protected by adequate minimum wages allowing for a decent living wherever they work.

Renovation wave strategy: doubling the renovation rate to cut emissions, boost recovery and reduce energy poverty.
EU chemicals strategy for sustainability, the first step towards a zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment, and EU methane strategy to reduce methane emissions.

Western Balkans Summit takes place in Sofia, in the framework of the Berlin Process.

The European Parliament and EU Member States in the Council reach an agreement on Europe’s next long-term budget and NextGenerationEU, EUR 1.8 trillion package to help build greener, more digital and more resilient Europe.
The Commission approves a fourth contract with pharmaceutical companies BioNTech and Pfizer to ensure access to a potential vaccine.

First steps are taken towards building the European health union, to ensure stronger preparedness and response during the current and future health crises.

Commission approves contract with CureVac to ensure access to a potential vaccine.

The Commission presents its first-ever strategy on LGBTIQ equality in the EU.

A pharmaceutical strategy for Europe.

The Commission approves a sixth contract under the EU Vaccines Strategy, with the pharmaceutical company Moderna.
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS SINCE 1 DECEMBER 2019

The von der Leyen Commission inherited 174 pending proposals on its first day in office, of which it later confirmed support for 156. 18 were withdrawn via the first Work Programme.

- **94 agreed proposals**
- **189 pending proposals** (of which 5 announced for withdrawal)
- **37 pending proposals** related to the coronavirus response

**CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE**

- **1104 decisions**
- and other legislative or non-legislative acts using oral, written and empowerment procedures, including **510 State aid decisions**