

MISSION LETTER

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Wopke Hoekstra

Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth

Dear Wopke,

The Commission we will serve in together will be called upon to make choices that will shape our Continent and our Union for years and decades to come. In a time of great global instability and great expectations of Europeans, we must live up to that responsibility. **We must deliver and lead from the front**, working closely with the people and regions of Europe and the parliaments, governments and institutions that serve them.

This was the spirit of the Political Guidelines which I presented to the European Parliament in July 2024 – our common plan for European strength and unity. It focuses on ensuring our **security** in every sense in a more dangerous and turbulent world, on supporting people and citizens by strengthening our **prosperity**, our social market economy, green and digital transitions and sustaining our unique quality of life. We will strengthen our **democracy**, rally around our values and ensure that we are stronger at home. We will work with our partners and better assert our interests around the world.

Together, we will respond to the real and legitimate concerns and expectations that Europeans expressed at the last elections. We will be closer to people and businesses where it really matters with practical support and sustained investment. We will strive to **make Europe faster and simpler** in the way that we act – and in the way we interact

with people. And we will work towards European unity at every turn, starting from within our College.

I am convinced that your experience, motivation, and European commitment will be an essential part of this team. This letter sets out my expectations for our collective work, as well as for your own mission.

New Commission, new approach

The priorities that I have set out in the Political Guidelines are not standalone areas of work. They are all connected and they will all impact each other. The same will be true for the work of the College as a whole and for each of its Members working together in a spirit of **collegiality**. I expect every Member of College to take **full ownership** of what is agreed.

Every Member of College is equal and every Member of College will have an equal responsibility to deliver on our priorities. With this in mind, I expect cooperation at all levels and for you to take an active role across all priorities and to facilitate access to your services where other Commissioners' responsibilities require it.

You will work with myself and the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration for a **simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget** that reflects European strategic priorities and our ambition to be an **Investment Commission**.

Given the transformative nature of the next long-term budget – and in order to adapt to our modern approach and new spending priorities – **I will review the structure of the College and the missions** of each Member of College.

I would also like you all to play an active role in **supporting candidate countries to prepare for joining our Union** in your respective policy areas. I count on you when it comes to the pre-enlargement policy reviews and for our broader **ambitious reform agenda**.

I expect you to all contribute to achieving our agreed climate objectives, notably those set for 2030 and the climate neutrality goal for 2050.

As we head to 2030, each Member of College will ensure the delivery of the EU targets and objectives defined for that year, as well as of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy areas. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

Beyond what is listed in your individual mission below, I would like all Members of College to draw on recent or upcoming reports. This notably includes the **Draghi Report** on the

future of European competitiveness, the **Niinistö Report** on how to enhance Europe's civilian and defence preparedness and readiness, the report from the **Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture**, as well as the **Letta report** on the future of the Single Market.

Working together for Europe, working closer to Europeans

To ensure trust and confidence of Europeans, I also want the College to lead when it comes to openness, transparency and representation.

First, **this Commission will strengthen its relationship with EU institutions**. I expect all Commissioners to be present in the European Parliament, both in plenary debates, in Committee meetings and in trilogues. Equally, I expect all Commissioners to engage with Member States and participate in the relevant Council formations. This is essential for ensuring accountability and better communicating our work and our planning.

I will ask you to organise a **structured dialogue** with your respective Parliamentary Committee to chart a way forward for any Article 225 Resolutions adopted by the Parliament calling for legislative proposals. This will be part of our work in ensuring **transparency and information flow** with the Parliament and Council, notably before major events and at key stages about international negotiations.

Second, this Commission will be **more present on the ground, more often and in more regions**. I would like you to visit Member States regularly. I encourage you to go local, visit places and meet Europeans from across our Union, including in cities, rural and sparsely populated areas. Our network of Representations will support you in this. You should meet with representatives from regional or local areas, notably relying on our network of EU Local Councillors, and to give **more visibility to EU projects** making a difference to people's lives on the ground. When engaging with our international partners you will also be supported by our network of EU delegations around the world.

I expect you to **actively communicate** on the Commission's actions and decisions and explain the benefits and opportunities stemming from our work. You should also help **tackle disinformation**, notably by providing clear and accurate information at all times.

Third, this Commission will start **a new era of dialogue** with citizens and stakeholders. You should organise a first edition of the **annual Youth Policy Dialogues** within the first 100 days so that young people can be heard and can help shape your work.

This will be part of our work in embedding **citizen participation** in our work. We will build on the Conference on the Future of Europe to instil a true and **lasting culture of participative democracy**. We will choose policy areas and proposals where recommendations from a European Citizens' Panel would have the greatest value and follow up on their proposals.

Fourth, every Member of College must show a **true European commitment** beyond doubt and be fully independent in their action. I expect full adherence to all applicable integrity, impartiality and ethical rules from all, starting with the **Code of Conduct**. You will ensure that the rules on transparency and meetings with interest representatives are fully respected, including for your staff and services. We will **strengthen our transparency system** by extending the requirements of the Transparency Register to all managers.

Fifth, we will ensure that the Commission becomes **more representative** of the people we serve. We have made a lot of progress in terms of gender balance across management but there is clearly more to be done. Reflecting the EU's strength in diversity, your Cabinet should ensure **gender and geographical balance**.

While the Berlaymont will remain your primary headquarters, you will also have an office within your Directorate-General and be expected to be present on a regular basis to **work closely with your staff and services**. We will collectively ensure that the Commission is an inclusive, respectful and safe workplace.

Making Europe simpler and faster

The success of this new Commission will be measured against our ability to meet the targets and objectives we set, notably as part of the **European Green Deal**.

You will be responsible for the delivery of the policy objectives and targets within your portfolio. To achieve this, you should make full use of all instruments for implementation and enforcement, including infringement proceedings.

You will ensure that existing rules are fit-for-purpose and focus on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying legislation. You must contribute to reducing reporting obligations by at least 25% – and for SMEs at least 35%. You should leverage the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions. We must listen to all companies and stakeholders who work on a daily basis to comply with EU legislation. You will organise at least two **Implementation Dialogues** per year with stakeholders to align implementation with realities on the ground. You will prepare an **Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation** for your respective Parliamentary committees and Council formations.

You will also work to **stress test the EU acquis** and table proposals to eliminate any overlaps and contradictions and be fully digitally compatible, while maintaining high standards.

New legislation must ensure that our rules are simpler, more accessible to citizens and more targeted. You will ensure the principles of **proportionality, subsidiarity and Better Regulation** are respected, including through wide consultations, impact assessments, a review by the independent **Regulatory Scrutiny Board** and a new **SME and competitiveness check**. Proposals must be evidence-based and the Joint Research Centre, our internal scientific service, can support you in that work.

Your mission

I would like to entrust you with the role of Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth.

We have made historic progress in setting out our climate ambitions and have shown that we can successfully reduce our emissions while growing our economy. We must and will stay the course on the goals set out in the European Green Deal. As climate change speeds up – and its impact is felt ever more acutely – your role in the next five years will be vital to leading Europe to the 2030 targets and to net-zero by 2050 in a way that is fair, enables clean growth for our economy and is integral to our **industrial strategy**.

Making Europe climate-resilient – with net zero emissions and sufficiently **prepared for growing climate risks** – will remain an overarching objective for the next 30 years, both for internal and external EU action. Your task will be to ensure that the EU delivers on its commitments, ensuring high ambition, technological neutrality and a social and **fair transition for all**. I would also like you to focus on the international dimension, working with partners across the world and strengthening our **climate diplomacy**.

You will also be responsible for **taxation** and work to ensure our tax system plays a crucial role in supporting Europe's competitiveness, prosperity and social fairness.

- You will oversee and support the **implementation of the existing legal framework for 2030**. Upcoming reviews of legislation should support implementation in the simplest, fairest and most cost-efficient way, in partnership and **dialogue** with industry, social partners and all stakeholders. You should follow up on the assessment of the National Energy and Climate Plans.
- You will propose to enshrine the 90% emission-reduction **target for 2040 in our European Climate Law**. Following this, and in line with foreseen reviews, you will prepare a climate policy architecture beyond 2030. You will work on the necessary enabling conditions, supporting the competitiveness of European industry, ensuring a just transition and a level playing field. You will organise strategic dialogues on the **post-2030 framework** with all stakeholders.
- I would like you to develop, with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, the **Clean Industrial Deal**, notably with a focus on decarbonisation, clean technologies and incentivizing investment. You should also contribute to the **Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act**.
- You will work with other relevant Members of College to ensure investment is targeted towards **European net zero infrastructure**, industrial decarbonisation and a more circular economy, notably for energy intensive sectors, as well as EU value chains for clean tech manufacturing.

- As part of efforts to mobilise investment in industry, you will support the implementation of the **Innovation Fund** to invest in highly innovative clean technologies and flagship projects with European added value. You will ensure that the revenues from the **Emissions Trading Scheme** are used in an effective way to drive decarbonisation in key sectors. You will ensure the implementation of ETS2 and support the implementation of the Social Climate Fund.
- You will continue work on the Industrial Carbon Management Strategy, with the aim to accelerate the build-up of a **Single Market for CO2**. You will also focus on **enhancing carbon removals**, addressing the hard-to-abate sectors and to accelerate the work on carbon credits to develop new business models.
- You will work with other relevant Commissioners on **CO2 transport and storage**, notably looking at market and cost structure, third-party access, CO2 quality standards and investment incentives for new infrastructure.
- You will ensure that Europe strengthens its **climate diplomacy** and its leading role in international negotiations, including on carbon markets and building on the recent EU-led global initiatives. To support this work, you will contribute to the work on setting our **global climate and energy vision** for COP in Brazil and beyond and you will contribute to the new Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships.
- You will lead the work on a **European Climate Adaptation Plan** to support Member States, notably on preparedness and planning and ensure regular science-based risk assessments. This should, for example, cover the impact on infrastructure, energy, water, food and land in cities and rural areas. You should also look at incentives for nature-based solutions. Based on the first European Climate Risk Assessment, you will assess the need for future legislation on climate resilience and preparedness and present options.
- You will further strengthen the framework for a **social and just transition**. It will also be crucial that climate policy instruments continue to provide economic incentives for private decarbonisation investments.
- You will, jointly with the Commissioner for Energy and Housing, create a framework to further scale down and phase out the **use of fossil fuel subsidies** as part of our work to reduce Europe's dependencies.
- The 2035 climate neutrality for cars creates predictability for investors and manufacturers. You will ensure a **technology-neutral approach** in which e-fuels have a role to play through a targeted amendment of the regulation setting CO2 emission performance standards for cars and vans planned, as part of the foreseen review.
- I would like you to build on the European Climate Pact and other initiatives to engage with citizens and stakeholder. You should work to **counter the growing**

trend of climate disinformation with a combination of honest and science-based information and compelling storytelling about the threats of climate change and the opportunities EU climate policy provides to citizens and households, businesses and all other stakeholders.

Taxation

- I would like you to lead the work to level the **energy taxation** playing field and the strategic use of taxation measures to incentivise the uptake of clean technologies, as proposed in the Draghi report. You should help conclude negotiations on the **revision of the Energy Taxation Directive** and explore how to further green the VAT system.
- You will identify innovative solutions for a **coherent tax framework for the EU's financial sector** that helps further integrate the EU's financial sector, facilitate cross-border operations and foster digitalisation and innovation.
- You will continue the work on the **reform of corporate taxation**, including by concluding the negotiations on the corporate tax package.
- You will ensure Europe keeps the highest level of ambition in **fighting tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance** and lead the way in better collecting and sharing tax information, notably through the use of digital tools and AI.
- You will work with Member States on the implementation of the global agreement on **international tax reform**, which introduces a minimum effective tax rate for multinational enterprises active in the EU.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition. The Directorate General for Climate Action and the Directorate General for Taxation and Customs will support you in your work.

Way forward

The actions listed in this letter will shape your work. However, we will need to complete and adapt as we go along and I count on your ideas and expertise in this regard. In addition to College meetings and our continuous discussions, I will invite you every six months for a structured reporting meeting to discuss progress and challenges in delivering on your mission.

Reflecting the evolving nature of political priorities, the Commission must remain agile in allocating staff where most needed. I expect you to play a collegial role in this, by working with your services to identify efficiencies and contributing to corporate redeployment efforts across the Commission.

Given the scale of the challenges and the many issues in our in-tray, we must **hit the ground running on day one**. I invite you to take contact with your future services to prepare your hearing and the work ahead.

I look forward to working closely together for Europe.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

