



Strategic plan 2025-2029

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INTRODUCTION

2024-2029 Political Guidelines

The results of the 2024 European elections have set the European Union on its path for the next five years and beyond, with the new Commission coming in at a **crucial juncture in Europe's history**. This moment is characterised by challenges and opportunities that are shaping the European agenda. The digital revolution and artificial intelligence; the climate and biodiversity crises; bolstering security in view of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, migration, and ensuring prosperity and competitiveness are among the areas to which the Commission will pay particular attention.

President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for 2024 to 2029 present **a vision of a stronger Europe that delivers prosperity, that protects people and that defends democracy**. A stronger Europe that delivers social fairness and supports people. A stronger Europe that implements what it agrees in a fair way and that adheres to the targets of the European Green Deal with pragmatism, technology-neutrality, and innovation. The **Commission will deliver and lead from the front**, working closely with the people and regions of Europe and the parliaments, governments and institutions that serve them. These priorities are not stand-alone areas of work but rather they **need the effort of all Commission departments** to make them a reality.

In the past five years, the Commission has weathered one of the fiercest storms in the EU's economic history. The Commission has been instrumental in the European response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and to the unprecedented energy crisis that resulted. Yet the challenges remain formidable. At a time of geopolitical instability and harsh global competition, Europe must remain united and determined. As Mario Draghi describes in his report, urgent action to **boost competitiveness** is needed to reignite productivity and sustain growth in a changing world. This means that Europe must do business in an easier and faster way. The Commission is working hard to ensure there will be less reporting, less bureaucracy, and more trust, better enforcement and faster permitting.

The **Competitiveness Compass** presents a roadmap to restore Europe's dynamism and boost our economic growth. The **new Clean Industrial Deal will channel investment into infrastructure and industry**, in particular for energy-intensive sectors, helping to bring down energy bills. For the younger generation of Europeans, 2030, 2040 and 2050 is just around the corner. They know that Europe has to **reconcile climate protection with a prosperous economy**. This is not just a question of competitiveness, but of intergenerational fairness.

Working together for Europe, working closer to Europeans

Over the next five years, the **Commission will work to get closer not just to the people of Europe, but also to the other EU institutions**. This is key to ensuring the trust and confidence of Europeans so that the Commission can lead in openness, transparency and representativeness by spreading the word about the work that is done by the Commission departments on behalf of all Europeans.

This **Commission will be more present on the ground** by visiting Member States more often and meeting with people of all ages while providing clear and accurate information at all times. For instance, through the annual Youth Policy Dialogues, the Commission will work with a younger generation that is actively shaping society and influencing EU policymaking. With this goal in mind, the Commission will build on the Conference on the Future of Europe to instil a true and lasting culture of participatory democracy. This Commission is also asked to play an active role in supporting candidate countries in all policy areas to help them join the European Union.

Ensuring a representative Commission is essential for the years to come. Much has been achieved in terms of gender balance across management but there is clearly more to be done. It is essential to ensure that **the Commission is an inclusive, respectful, and safe place to work**.

Making Europe simpler, faster and more digital

The success of this new Commission will be measured against our **ability to meet the targets and objectives we set**. Each department is responsible for the delivery of the policy objectives and targets within their portfolio. To that end, they must make full use of all the instruments available for implementation and enforcement, including infringement proceedings where necessary.

Existing rules need to be fit for purpose and focus on **reducing administrative burdens and simplifying legislation**. Administrative burdens should be reduced by at least 25% – and for SMEs by at least 35%. Departments should use the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions. The Commission will continue to listen to companies and stakeholders who work on a daily basis to comply with EU legislation, and Commissioners should prepare an Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation for their respective European Parliamentary committees and Council formations.

New legislation must **ensure that rules are simpler, more accessible to citizens** and more targeted. This means respecting the principles of proportionality, subsidiarity and Better Regulation, 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.

The **Commission needs to become a fully digital institution**, and act as an example of good practice that Member States should follow.

Stress testing of the body of existing EU rules and laws and tabling proposals for simplification and burden reduction are crucial. This is instrumental to eliminate any overlaps and contradictions and to be fully digitally compatible, while maintaining high standards.

A single strategic plan for 2025-2029

Strategic planning and programming is the cornerstone of the **Commission's performance management framework** ⁽¹⁾. It helps ensure that the Commission achieves its objectives in an efficient and effective manner, and provides a basis for annual planning and reporting by the departments on their main objectives and achievements.

2025 is the first year of the new strategic planning and programming cycle. In the spirit of simplification, the Commission is presenting **a single strategic plan for 2025-2029**. This reflects the fact that the Commission departments are united by a common purpose as set out in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines. This strategic plan highlights the objectives and areas of activity that are common to all departments, in particular in terms of **building a modern public administration** and pursuing **cross-cutting objectives** to make Europe simpler, faster and more digital.

This **strategic plan provides an umbrella** under which the departments present their strategic outlook for the five years of the second von der Leyen Commission.

⁽¹⁾ In line with the Commission's Communication on Governance, measuring the performance of the different financial programmes under the multiannual financial framework is done via the Programme Performance Statements, to which the responsible departments also provide their input each year. This presents an overview of the implementation and performance of all the EU spending programmes in a concise and uniform format under different headings. The Commission's Annual Management and Performance Report brings together a summary of the departments' annual activity reports and the programme performance statements.

General objectives

In order to build **a clear hierarchy of objectives and indicators** under the strategic planning and programming framework, the **seven main priority areas of President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines** are converted into seven General Objectives. An additional eighth General Objective reflects the work of the Commission's central departments in support of a modern, efficient and well-functioning administration:

General Objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

General Objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

General Objective 3: Supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models

General Objective 4: Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

General Objective 5: Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

General Objective 6: A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

General Objective 7: Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future

General Objective 8: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Management plan 2025 and strategic outlook 2025-2029

Under the umbrella of this strategic plan, and in line with the Commission's governance arrangements ⁽²⁾, **Commission departments will continue to prepare annual management plans** outlining the priorities and deliverables for the given year. These are linked to the concrete deliverables that are defined each year in the Commission work programme.

In their management plan for 2025, each Commission department outlines their mission statement and the context in which they operate, including the tools at their disposal (e.g. expenditure programmes) to deliver on their objectives.

As in the past, the main purpose of the management plan is for departments to describe their major planned deliverables for the year ahead, both for their specific objectives and the common administration-related objectives. In their planning documents, they also describe how they will contribute to several **cross-cutting Commission priorities**.

⁽²⁾ Governance in the European Commission, Communication to the Commission COM(2020) 4240 final of 24 June 2020.

Cross-cutting priorities – Implementation and simplification agenda

Better Regulation is an integral part of the policy process in the Commission. Departments will explain in their planning documents how better regulation will contribute to the achievement of their objectives and how they will deliver the potential for simplification and the reduction of the administrative burden. Departments will specifically indicate their contribution to the goal of reducing the administrative burden by 25%, and for small and medium-sized enterprises by at least 35%. For this purpose, they will indicate the most relevant measures and the stress-testing plans. The departments will also refer to key better regulation activities and outputs for the year ahead, such as fitness checks, significant evaluations, and their follow-up actions (such as decisions to undertake an impact assessment or improve guidance), significant REFIT (Regulatory Fitness) files, major public consultations and enforcement actions.

Each department is also responsible **for the delivery of the policy objectives and targets within their portfolio**. Departments will specifically indicate how their planned **implementation activities** (e.g. implementation dialogues, implementation strategies, compliance promotion tools such as implementation reports, workshops on the transposition of directives, interpretative guidance, scoreboards, etc.) will contribute to the delivery of the Commission's policy objectives, including where necessary planned enforcement actions.

Each Director-General will confirm that their department's overview of planned implementation dialogues and reality checks to reduce administrative burden and improve implementation of their policies is up to date.

In the first year of the cycle, on top of the elements described above, each department also provides **its strategic outlook for 2025-2029** (referring to President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029 and mission letters to the Commissioners). This part presents the **set of specific objectives and performance indicators** against which departments measure their progress over the next five years in terms of delivering on the Commission's General Objectives (as outlined in this strategic plan).

An essential part of performance management in the Commission is the continuous monitoring and measurement of the impacts and results of its activities. Each year, as part of the strategic planning and programming cycle, and as required under the Financial Regulation ⁽³⁾, **Commission departments produce annual activity reports** that describe the state of implementation and progress towards the achievement of policy and organisational management objectives as set out in the strategic and management plans, as well as achievements in relation to financial management and internal control.

⁽³⁾ Article 74.

Cross-cutting priorities - Communication

External communication is an important part of the decision-making process.

The Commission provides clear, consistent and transparent information to citizens, media and stakeholders, explaining the Commission's priorities, policies and initiatives and the concrete benefits that derive therefrom with the objective of engaging, inspiring and building trust, thus bringing the European Union closer to citizens.

Through their communication activities, under the steer of the Directorate-General for Communication, departments contribute to this goal, as well as to the achievement of the general objectives and the political priorities set out in the 2024-2029 Political Guidelines. In their respective communication plans, departments will detail their activities aimed at supporting such goals, linked to expected concrete outputs and results for the year ahead. **Strategic communication and countering information manipulation** will also represent a specific focus and objective in the external communication activities of the Commission's departments.

This **strategic plan and the specific objectives and performance indicators set by the departments remain valid throughout the planning period**, for subsequent management plans and the departments' performance sections of the annual activity reports.

The next section briefly describes each of the General Objectives and the priority areas and initiatives. It also includes a section on the long-term impact indicators that will measure, at a high level and over a longer period, the progress made towards the goals described in the Political Guidelines for 2024-2029. The last section describes the common objectives and indicators related to pursuing a modern and sustainable public administration.

Delivering on the Commission's priorities

The European Union has made extraordinary advances in the last five years, from the European Green Deal to NextGenerationEU, the Pact on Migration and Asylum and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Europe must stay the course on all of its goals, and its focus must be on implementing what has been agreed, working closely with all stakeholders and focusing on meeting together the challenges we face. The **Political Guidelines presented in July 2024 are the European Commission's plan for European strength and unity** and require cooperation from all Commission departments.

The priorities set out in the Political Guidelines, and consequently in this 2025-2029 strategic plan, together with the specific initiatives set out in the mission letters, draw on consultations and on the common ideas discussed with the democratic forces in the European Parliament, and also draw on the European Council's Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029. The next five years will define Europe's place in the world for the next five decades.



General Objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Europe has a rich history of industry, innovation, and adaptability, continually evolving through various industrial and technological revolutions. Central to this resilience is its unique social market economy, which provides distinct advantages over global competitors. Despite these strengths, **Europe faces significant structural challenges that hinder competitiveness**. Companies are grappling with unfair competition, high energy costs, labour shortages or difficulties in accessing capital. The vulnerabilities exposed during recent crises — such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions — highlight the risks of dependency on fragile supply chains and monopolies in critical resources. As the world aims to reach climate neutrality and the development of transformative technologies, Europe must not lag behind. **It is essential to address strategic vulnerabilities to maintain a competitive edge.**

Europe has substantial assets to leverage, among which are investment initiatives such as NextGenerationEU focusing on clean and digital technologies; its research excellence with world-class universities and researchers that contribute to innovation, and a supportive environment with a stable legal framework that promotes fair competition. To navigate the scale of current challenges and seize emerging opportunities, **Europe must accelerate its efforts to improve competitiveness**, boost prosperity, and ensure fairness. Insights from the Draghi Report ⁽⁴⁾ on competitiveness will inform the more than 140 initiatives that are proposed in the mission letters of the Executive Vice-Presidents and Commissioners.

The first major initiative of the new Commission was the presentation of a Competitiveness Compass for the EU, in January 2025 ⁽⁵⁾. The Compass builds on the recommendations of the Draghi report and translates them into actions. It identifies **three core areas for action**: innovation, decarbonisation and competitiveness, and increased security and resilience. It also points to **five cross-cutting activities to underpin these actions**: simplifying the administrative burden on businesses, lowering barriers to the Single Market, establishing a European Savings and Investment Union to finance competitiveness, promoting skills and quality jobs and introducing a Competitiveness Coordination Tool to better coordinate policies at EU and national level. This new framework, throughout this term, aims to rekindle economic productivity and secure the EU's competitive edge.

⁽⁴⁾ The future of European competitiveness, September 2024.

⁽⁵⁾ *A competitiveness compass for the EU*, COM(2025) 30 final of 29 January 2025.

Figure 1 - Overview of the main initiatives under *A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness* and contributing departments ⁽⁶⁾



⁽⁶⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.



General Objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, particularly the brutal attacks on civilians, is driving a strong desire for renewed peace in Europe. **Investing in Ukraine's security is crucial for European safety**, and the EU must maintain its financial, political, and military support for as long as necessary. The Commission will utilise all available resources, including the European Peace Facility, to address immediate needs and future reconstruction efforts.

Recent years have highlighted the fragility of peace in Europe, underscoring the need for the continent to **strengthen its ability to defend itself against potential threats**. As we face an increasingly uncertain global landscape, we must screen all policies through a security perspective and prepare for scenarios that could arise. The Niinistö ⁽⁷⁾ report will act as a guiding compass in this regard.

Beyond building up our capabilities, **Europe also needs new ambition on crisis and security preparedness**. As part of this, the Commission will focus on further strengthening our cyber defence capabilities, coordinating national cyber efforts, and securing our critical infrastructures – notably by developing a trusted European cyber-defence industry.

Other crucial areas in which this Commission will launch key initiatives are common borders, standing strong and fair on migration, and developing a new European internal security strategy to fight organised crime more effectively.

⁽⁷⁾ *Safer Together – Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness*, Report by Sauli Niinistö, former President of the Republic of Finland, in his capacity as Special Adviser to the President of the European Commission, 30 October 2024.

Figure 2 - Overview of main initiatives under *A new era for European defence and security* and contributing departments ⁽⁸⁾



⁽⁸⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.



General Objective 3: Supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models

Europe offers a distinctive quality of life, which not only strengthens its economy but also serves as a foundation of European society, ensuring that no one is left behind. However, the crises of recent years have directly affected the well-being of many Europeans, from rising costs of living, housing, and energy, to income inequality and growing societal divisions.

As European societies and economies evolve – and with that evolution accelerating – **it is crucial that we concentrate on maintaining and enhancing this unique quality of life**. The new Commission must reunify society, ensuring it benefits everyone by providing equal opportunities, affordable housing and quality jobs.

Europe’s way of life relies on the protections and opportunities provided by the social model and social market economy. A new Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights will address key challenges, including the impact of digitalisation on work. The goal is to achieve ambitious targets for employment, skills, social protection and poverty reduction by 2030.

Additionally, in order to address the housing crisis affecting millions of families and young people the Commission has a commissioner responsible for housing and will introduce the first-ever **European Affordable Housing Plan**.

Figure 3 - Overview of main initiatives under *Supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models* and contributing departments ⁽⁹⁾



⁽⁹⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.



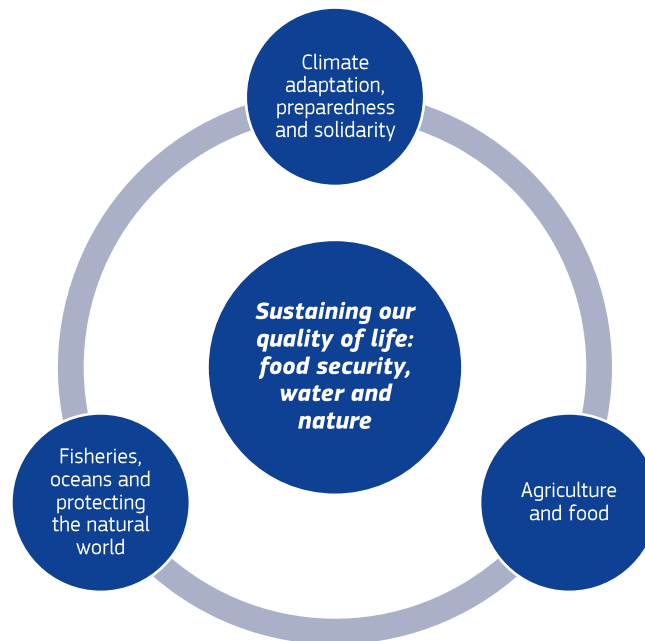
General Objective 4: Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

Europe's quality of life is directly linked to having a secure and affordable supply of quality local food, putting farming at the heart of the European way of life. Thanks to Europe's nine million farms, **Europe has the healthiest and highest-quality food in the world.**

Inevitably, farmers and rural areas are under increasing pressure – from the impact of climate change to unfair global competition, higher energy prices, generational divides and difficulties in accessing capital. The new Commission will drive the dialogue between farmers and policy makers, civil society, stakeholders and the public to **build a competitive and resilient agricultural and food system.**

The Commission will work to **continue protecting our natural world.** Our forests and woodlands, our wetlands and our grasslands are not only our home and the landscapes of the lives of Europeans, but are also essential to regulating our climate and ensuring food and water security. The Commission will put a stronger focus on climate adaptation, preparedness and solidarity.

Figure 4 - Overview of main initiatives under *Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature* and contributing departments ⁽¹⁰⁾



⁽¹⁰⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.

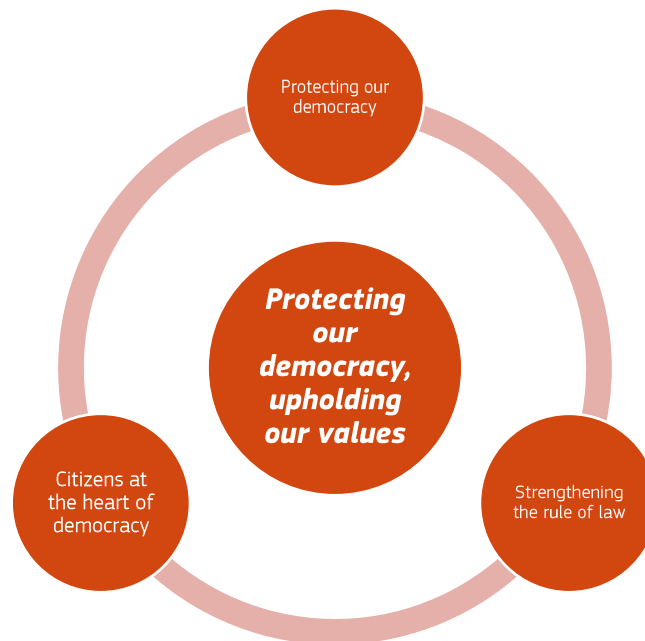


General Objective 5: Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Europe's road ahead in an increasingly fractured world will depend on its **commitment to a robust democratic foundation and the protection of values** that uphold its freedoms and rights. In the face of rising authoritarianism, complex global challenges, and evolving security threats, Europe must reaffirm its dedication to democracy, justice, and human dignity. This commitment will not only safeguard the liberties we hold dear but will also strengthen Europe's resilience, enabling it to stand as a beacon of hope and unity for those striving for a fair and open society.

By **fostering inclusivity, defending human rights, and promoting transparency**, Europe can remain a leader on the global stage, shaping a future that prioritises both security and the core principles of democracy.

Figure 5 - Overview of main objectives under *Protecting our democracy, upholding our values* and contributing departments ⁽¹¹⁾



⁽¹¹⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.



General Objective 6: A global Europe - leveraging our power and partnerships

Europe needs to be much more assertive in pursuing its strategic interests.

Europe's number one priority will continue to be rallying partners to support Ukraine with its short-term needs and long-term reconstruction efforts. This moment in history marks a global fracture characterised by geostrategic rivalry. Authoritarian regimes from Iran to North Korea to Russia as well as the war in Gaza and the destabilisation in the Middle East have caused widespread violence, with coups and conflicts on the rise globally.

China's assertiveness, its alliance with Russia, and growing competition with Europe highlight a shift from cooperation to conflict, weaponising policies from energy to migration. The current **rules-based order is weakening, and global institutions are less effective**. Europe's foreign and security policy must adapt, starting with strengthening ties with G7 partners. The Commission will work closely with the United Kingdom on shared priorities like energy, security, and resilience.

As a new cornerstone of the EU's economic foreign policy, the **Global Gateway strategy** provides the framework for Europe to build more resilient connections with the world. It will guide the Commission's external investment efforts and development cooperation partnerships to drive development and foster inclusive growth.

Figure 6 - Overview of main initiatives under *A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships* and contributing departments ⁽¹²⁾



⁽¹²⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.

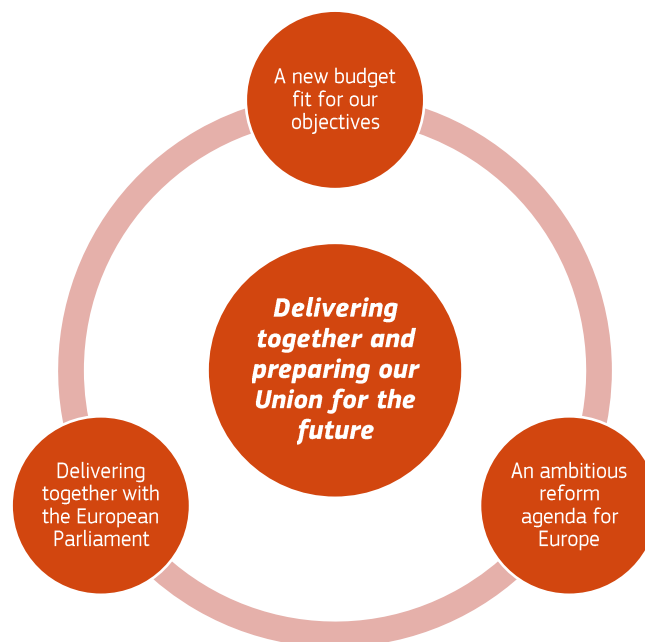


General Objective 7: Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future

An ambitious programme of modernisation characterised the last five years in the European Union and is now in its second stage, which must focus on implementation, simplification, investment and reform to prepare the future. The **European Union needs a new budget that is fit for investing in our ambitions**. It needs an incisive reform agenda, potentially involving Treaty change. The Commission will also invest in delivering together by further strengthening and intensifying its cooperation with the European Parliament and other institutions.

Early in 2025, the Commission published a Communication on 'The Road to the next Multiannual Financial Framework' ⁽¹³⁾. It outlined the key **policy and budgetary challenges that will shape the design of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, starting in 2028, and provided the basis for reflections on how to adapt the EU's long-term budget to evolving needs and priorities. New challenges and expectations for EU action require reconsidering the way the EU budget works to make it fit for the future. The objective of a free, democratic, strong, secure, prosperous and competitive Europe calls for a reformed and reinforced EU budget – simpler, more flexible, more targeted and impactful.

Figure 7 - Overview of main initiatives under *Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future* and contributing departments ⁽¹⁴⁾



⁽¹³⁾ The road to the next multiannual financial framework, COM(2025) 46 final of 11 February 2025.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.



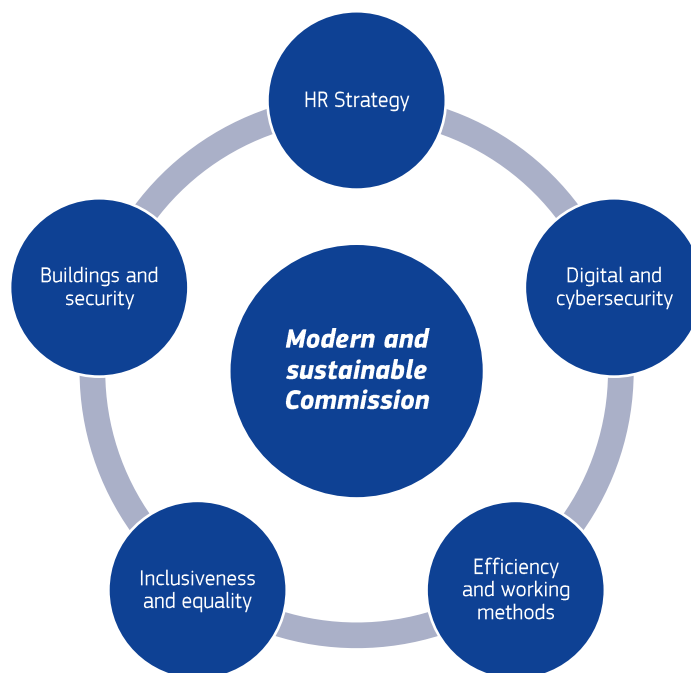
General Objective 8: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

The European Union needs to be able draw on **a modern, efficient public administration to deliver on its political priorities and make a difference for Europeans** in their everyday life.

The **Commission should be a truly inclusive and sustainable place to work**, with an appropriate geographical balance of its staff, consolidating the progress on gender balance achieved during the last mandate, and making its workforce better reflect European society. The revamped anti-harassment policy should contribute to a safe and respectful workplace. Proposals should be made to improve recruitment and talent management to attract and retain a skilled, diverse, versatile, and motivated workforce in all the places of employment.

The **Commission has to become ever more agile, by adapting its structures, working methods and resources** to evolving needs and priorities. This will be essential to make the most efficient use of scarce resources at a time when the Commission is expected to deliver European solutions in a wide array of priority areas. The Commission will lead on the twin digital and green transition, from reducing its carbon footprint to making use of new technologies. The move to more collaborative working should be continued, including by adopting digital and knowledge-management tools. HR policies and processes should be simplified, harmonised, and accelerated, including by making the modernisation of HR processes a priority. Increased cooperation and synergies with other EU institutions, agencies and bodies should also be pursued.

Figure 8 - Overview of priority areas under *A modern, high-performing and sustainable Commission* and contributing departments ⁽¹⁵⁾

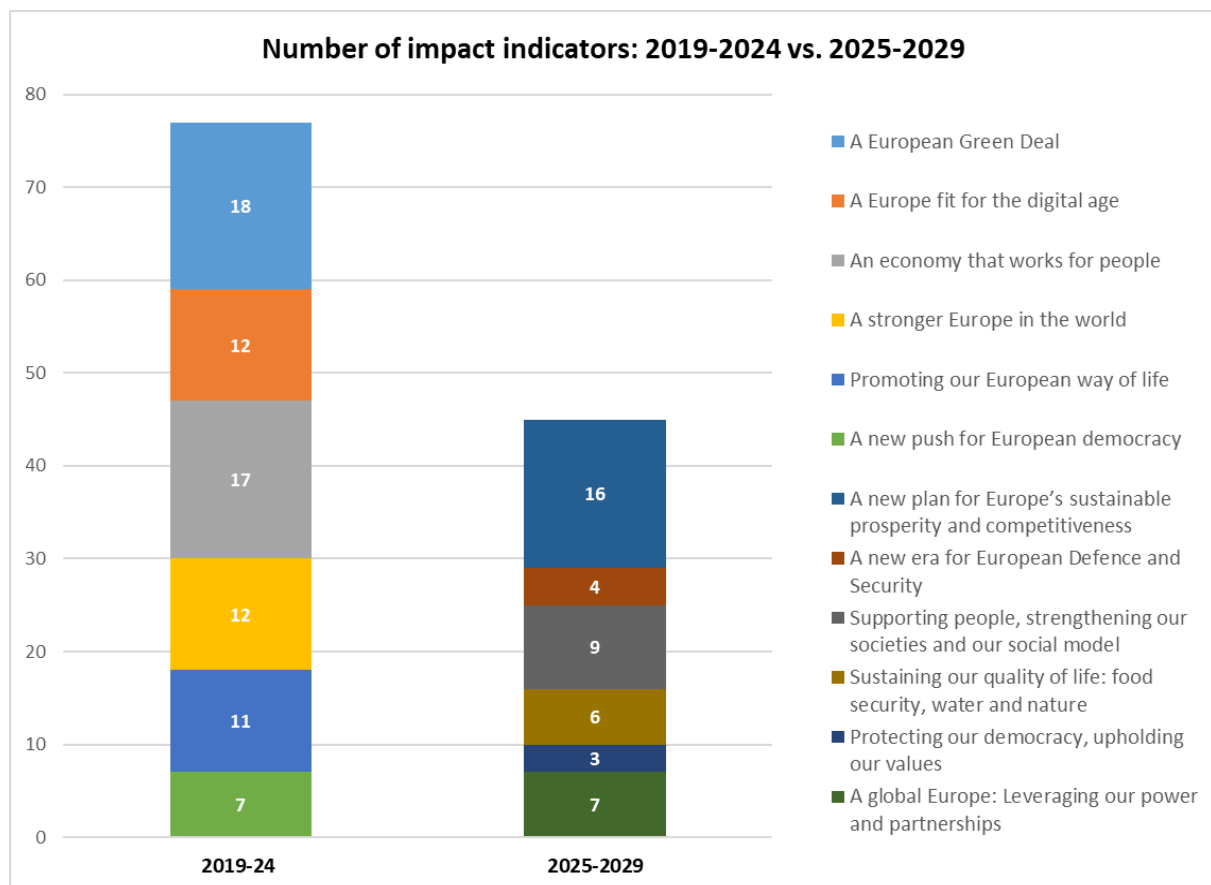


⁽¹⁵⁾ Their specific objectives and result indicators are presented in their management plans for 2025.

Long-term impact indicators

The Commission uses **high-level contextual indicators designed to track the longer-term and indirect impacts of EU action**. These are referred to as impact indicators. Most are official macro(-economic) statistics from Eurostat which give a long-term view on whether the EU is moving in the direction of the Commission’s general objectives. The evolution of these indicators is influenced by a variety of external factors; they are therefore quite different from the result and output indicators which departments use to measure their own performance against their specific objectives.

Compared to the 2019-2024 period, the Commission established a **new set of impact indicators** at the start of the 2025-2029 showcasing a **significant effort of simplification and optimisation on the number of indicators**. The number of indicators was reduced from 77 (for the six general objectives of the 2020-2024 period), to 45 for the Commission’s six general objectives for 2025-2029.



Priority is given to easily accessible, ready to use, and broad indicators (such as composite indexes) over too narrow ones. The Commission will refer to the updated list of indicators, including short explanations of the trends, in each year’s Annual Management and Performance Report, starting from reporting year 2025.

For General Objective 7, which is related to preparing the next multiannual financial framework and a reform agenda for the next five years, instead of using impact indicators, the Commission will provide updates alongside the impact indicators in the Annual

Management and Performance Report, which better suits the nature of the underlying objectives.

For General Objective 8, the Commission does not use impact indicators as the performance relates directly to the actions of the departments themselves and how they impact the Commission. They are therefore best measured with result and output indicators.

A complete overview of the **impact indicators 2025-2029** is presented in the box below.



General objective 1: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

1. Greenhouse gas emissions
2. Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption
3. Real GDP per capita *new*
4. Gross fixed capital formation (investment) as a % of GDP *new*
5. Labour productivity *new*
6. Gross domestic expenditure on research and development
7. European patent applications (PCT) in computer tech. & digital communication *new*
8. European patent applications (PCT) in medical tech. & pharmaceuticals & biotechnology *new*
9. Share of companies adopting AI *new*
10. Percentage of the ICT sector in Gross Value Added *new*
11. Digital skills
12. Self-sufficiency for Critical Raw Materials *new*
13. Circular material rate use *new*
14. NFC (non-financial corporations) market funding relative to GDP *new*
15. Life expectancy at birth (LE) *new*
16. Burden of Government Regulation *new*



General objective 2: A new era for European defence and security

17. Total defence expenditure as % of GDP *new*
18. Defence R&D expenditure (in constant prices) *new*
19. European collaborative equipment procurement *new*
20. Number of asylum applications in the border or accelerated procedures *new*



General objective 3: Supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models

21. Gross disposable income of households per capita *new*
22. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion

23. Employment rate of persons aged 20 to 64
24. GDP per capita in rural regions expressed in pp. of EU average *new*
25. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training
26. Gender inequality, Sustainable Development Goal 5 *new*
27. Women Graduates in STEM ⁽¹⁶⁾ per 1000 of population *new*
28. Housing cost overburden rate *new*
29. Governments debt as % of GDP



General objective 4: Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

30. Consumption footprint *new*
31. Farmers' income in agriculture compared to wages in the rest of the economy *new*
32. Self-sufficiency rates for meat, cereals and dairy *new*
33. Common bird index
34. Pesticide risk
35. Life below water Index, SDG 14 *new*



General objective 5: Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

36. Corruption perception index *new*
37. Citizens satisfied with how democracy works in the European Union
38. Perceived independence of the national justice systems in the European Union



General objective 6: A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

39. The European Union's voice counts in the world according to its citizens
40. Readiness of enlargement countries on political criteria
41. Readiness of enlargement countries on economic criteria
42. Integration in the Single Market and the rest of the world: trade over GDP *new*
43. Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) *new*
44. EU share of global humanitarian aid
45. Proportion of population below the international poverty line

⁽¹⁶⁾ Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

A modern and sustainable public administration

This section describes the objectives and indicators that the Commission will use in the next strategic planning cycle to measure our ongoing work to build a modern and sustainable public administration. The objectives, which are mandatory and identical for all Commission departments, cover several areas of activity that are managed locally by each department, based on common principles and Commission-wide strategies.

The main areas are:

- human resource management;
- digital transformation and data management;
- sound financial management;
- fraud risk management; and
- sound environmental management.

All Commission departments, on an annual basis, will define their main outputs and deliverables for each year against these objectives, and report on their delivery in the annual activity reports.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission's system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control – Integrated Framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information.

A. Human resource management

The European Union needs to be able to draw on a modern and efficient public administration to deliver on its political priorities and make a difference for people in the EU and across the world in their everyday lives.

While DG HR reports on the overall implementation of the Commission's HR strategy and priorities, each department, in their management plans and annual activity reports, makes their own plans and reports on their own progress towards the achievement of the objective.

The departments will aim at employing a skilled, diverse and motivated workforce to deliver on the Commission's priorities and report on indicators measuring the percentage of female middle managers and the staff engagement index.

B. Digital transformation and data management

Digital transformation and cybersecurity

Against an ever-evolving background of geopolitical tensions, the **Commission strives to become more resilient to cybersecurity threats**, notably by reinforcing the security culture, protecting people and sensitive information, and ensuring the Commission can react swiftly during a crisis. The **Commission intends to accelerate its own digitalisation**, by exploring how processes can be further automated, and how artificial intelligence can improve policymaking in a safe and secure way.

The departments will aim at using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policymaking, data management and administrative processes to build a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.

The corporate digital strategy and IT security strategy provide the framework to support **the digital transformation of the Commission**, in full compliance with state-of-the-art cybersecurity measures. All departments are responsible for the local implementation of the five strategic objectives⁽¹⁷⁾ of the corporate digital strategy⁽¹⁸⁾ as well as the objectives defined in the Commission's **IT security strategy**.

In their management plans and annual activity reports, departments report on their own progress in implementing key aspects of the corporate digital strategy, including with mandatory indicators for digital skills and the use of state-of-the-art technologies.

Data management

Data is a critical asset for the European Commission, alongside other types of resources such as staff, budget, and information technology. Effective data management strengthens evidence-based policymaking, improves administrative efficiency, and ensures accountability. Poor data management, on the other hand, can lead to inefficiencies, legal risks, and reputational damage.

To enhance transparency and responsibility in data management, **all departments** are required to plan and report on actions taken to **implement corporate data policies** at their level. These policies cover four key areas:

⁽¹⁷⁾ The 5 strategic objectives are (1) foster a digital culture, (2) enable digital-ready EU policymaking, (3) empower business-driven digital transformation, (4) ensure a seamless digital environment and (5) sustain a green, resilient and secure digital infrastructure.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The Digital Strategy sets a new vision, addressing digital transformation opportunities of a post-pandemic scenario, and supporting the delivery of the EU's strategic priorities by 2030:
https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-commission-digital-strategy_en

1. **Data Management** – Implement and document data management practices, including participating in the central data acquisition policy and reporting data assets in the EC Data Catalogue.
2. **Ownership and Responsibilities** – Assign, clarify and document the responsibilities of data owners and stewards for all data assets.
3. **Data Quality** – Applying the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) and adhering to corporate reference data management policies.
4. **Data Skills** – Developing data-related competencies within the DG, for example by participating in corporate data training programmes or local capacity-building initiatives.

This reporting will contribute to a more consistent and accountable approach to data management across the Commission. Departments will report on indicators measuring the maturity level in implementing corporate data policies across four key areas: data management, ownership and responsibilities, data quality, and data skills.

Data protection

The protection of personal data is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and by Article 16 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. Regulation 2018/1725 on the protection of personal data aligned the obligations of the European institutions with those applicable in the Member States. For the Commission, compliance is not only a legal obligation, but also a political commitment since our institution is determined to lead by example.

Commission departments are required to ensure and document compliance, including by reviewing public records of processing operations at least every two years and to ensure that all staff are aware of the data protection requirements. In their management plans, departments will explain the actions they intend to implement in this regard (record review, local awareness campaigns or participation in centrally organised training activities etc.), and report on progress in their annual activity reports. They will report using an indicator on data protection compliance.

C. Sound financial management

The EU budget is dedicated to improving the lives of people in the EU and across the world and delivering on the EU's priorities. It has shown its true worth in helping to overcome a pandemic and energy crisis, saving millions of jobs during lockdowns, and investing in our clean and digital future. The Commission strives to uphold accountability to the highest standards and protect the EU's financial interests, notably against fraud, conflict of interests and breaches of the principles of the rule of law.

Each department needs to contribute to the protection of the EU's financial interests by ensuring sound financial management. In their management plans and annual activity

reports, departments' authorising officer by delegation must plan and report that they have reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions. This will be measured inter alia via the estimated risk at payment for cost-based expenditure and the estimated share of low-risk level expenditure for performance-based expenditure.

D. Fraud risk management

Commission corporate anti-fraud strategy

For a sustained and coordinated approach to fraud prevention, detection and correction, in 2019 the Commission adopted its third anti-fraud strategy (CAFS). The strategy is accompanied by an action plan (updated in July 2023), which includes 44 actions that cover the Commission's priorities in fighting fraud.

Digitalisation is the first theme of the plan, with a quarter of the actions focusing on improving the Commission's and Member States' use of IT tools in preventing, detecting, investigating, and correcting fraud. The plan also provides for enhanced cooperation with key stakeholders such as the European Public Prosecutor's Office to combat fraud, and for strengthening the ethics and anti-fraud culture in the Commission via training and awareness-raising.

The implementation of the current action plan is on track⁽¹⁹⁾ and expected to run until 2026. The Commission will evaluate the results of the implementation of the action plan and assess the need for a new anti-fraud strategy or action plan, and for possible changes in the way the Commission and the EU deal with fraud risks. This reflection will take into account the results of the announced review of the EU anti-fraud architecture, if available⁽²⁰⁾.

Fraud risk management in Commission departments

In their management plans and annual activity reports, departments will indicate how they envisage minimising the risk of fraud through the application of decisive anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy. They will refer to the regular updating of their own anti-fraud strategy during the 2025-2029 period, as well as any anti-fraud actions, such as awareness-raising campaigns, that the department is planning. In their annual activity reports, departments will provide details on the follow up to OLAF's recommendations, and if applicable, the reasons for not following OLAF's

⁽¹⁹⁾ The Commission reports on the state-of-play of the implementation of the CAFS action plan in its annual report on the protection of the EU's financial interests (latest reporting: [Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy \(CAFS\) Action Plan implementation monitoring: state of play 31 May 2024](#))

⁽²⁰⁾ Mission letter of Commissioner Serafin, Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration.

recommendations. The departments will measure the achievement of the objective via the percentage of timely implementation of the actions included in the departmental strategies.

E. Sound environmental management

All Commission departments should take full account of their environmental impact in all their actions, and actively promote measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work.

In their management plans and annual activity reports, all departments will explain how they contribute to the common objective of reaching climate neutrality by 2030 and reduce the environmental footprint for the Commission. They will indicate the measures being taken in the department to increase sound environmental management in the Commission. Appropriate references are to be made to the Commission's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and to actions and objectives from the Communication on greening the European Commission. There should be a special focus on reducing emissions from staff professional travel given its significant impact on the Commission's carbon footprint.