

MISSION LETTER

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Andrius Kubilius

Commissioner-designate for Defence and Space

Dear Andrius,

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 Defence and Space.

Defending Europe is a European task, with Member States and EU institutions working closely together. The rising and complex nature of threats facing Europe have pointed to the need for Europe to take the next step on defence. We need to reflect on the future

European security architecture, and we need to invest in our own security and defence, in close cooperation with our partners and with NATO.

Member States will always be responsible for their armed forces – from doctrine to deployment. This is the absolute foundation for every European nation. But there is a lot that Europe can do to support – in terms of investment, industry, procurement, research, innovation and much more. At the heart of this work must be one simple principle: Europe must spend more, spend better, spend European.

I would like you to bring all of this work together under a true **European Defence Union**, working closely with the High Representative/Vice-President. You will also be responsible for the space portfolio, reflecting the increasingly contested nature of space and the links with our overall security and defence.

- Working with the High Representative/Vice-President, you will present the **White Paper on the Future of European Defence** in the first 100 days of the mandate. It should frame a new approach to defence and identify investment needs to deliver full-spectrum European defence capabilities based on joint investments, readying the EU and Member States for the most extreme military contingencies.
- Through this process, I want you to contribute to a **shared vision and ambition** across Council, Parliament, the public and other stakeholders. You will notably draw on the work of the **Niinistö report** on how to enhance Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.
- I would like you to work with Member States on **strengthening military mobility**, by removing all remaining barriers. You should work with the Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism to further strengthen the **dual-use transport infrastructure corridors** across the Trans-European Network and promote a whole-of-government approach to the swift movement of military personnel and their materiel.
- I would like you to identify and **harness the EU's dual-use and civil-military potential** across all relevant domains, fully exploiting legal and regulatory margins.
- You will work on creating a true **Single Market for Defence** products and services, enhancing production capacity and fostering joint procurement of European equipment. You should propose action to lower the barriers to cross-border cooperation, reduce administrative burdens, and contribute to specialisation. You will make proposals to improve the **integration of SMEs in supply chains**.
- As proposed in the Draghi report, I would like you to work to **increase the aggregation of demand for defence assets** between groups of Member States and work with the Member States and NATO to pursue the further standardisation and harmonisation of defence equipment.
- Working with Member States and in close coordination with NATO, you will lead the work on proposing **Defence Projects of Common European Interest**. To that

end, I would like you to start working with Member States on the design and implementation of a **European Air Shield** and **cyber defence** common project, working closely with the High Representative/Vice-President.

- You will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the **European Defence Industrial Strategy**. You will support the swift conclusion of negotiations on the **European Defence Industry Programme** and then focus on its implementation, notably to promote and incentivise common procurement of European equipment.
- You will seek to reinforce of the **European Defence Fund** to further invest in high-end defence capabilities in critical areas such as naval, ground, air combat, space-based early warning and cyber.
- You will also rapidly implement the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (**EDIRPA**) and of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (**ASAP**). You should look for ways to scale up such short-term measures to pave the way for a more ambitious future defence programme.
- You will work to **incentivise public and private investment in defence**, notably working with the European Investment Bank, other financial institutions, and private banks to help finance and de-risk common defence projects and defence innovation.
- You will contribute to the work to **address our vulnerabilities to cyberattacks and hybrid attacks** and build up our resilience and capacity to counter them more robustly and effectively.
- You will contribute to strengthening the **EU-NATO partnership**, in close cooperation with the High Representative/Vice-President. You will help to ensure that our cooperation with NATO continues to cover all threats, including those linked to cyber, hybrid or space.
- You will ensure the continuous implementation of the **EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence**, working with the High Representative/Vice-President.
- You should foster a strong and innovative **space industry**, maintaining the EU's autonomous, reliable and cost-effective access to space. You will focus on the development, deployment and use of EU space assets, including the Earth observation programme **Copernicus**, the EU's global and regional satellite navigation systems **Galileo** and EGNOS, and communication satellites GOVSATCOM and IRIS².
- In all aspects, including your cooperation with the European Space Agency, you will seek to foster cost efficiency, innovation, merits-based competition and an effective internal market for space products and services.
- You will lead the work on a future proposal for an **EU Space Law**. In this context, as proposed in the Draghi report, you will work to introduce **common EU standards and rules for space activities** and harmonise licensing requirements.

- You will also propose a **Space Data Economy Strategy** to tap into the potential of space-derived data, products, and technology.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy. You will work closely with the High Representative/Vice-President. The Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space 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

