

MISSION LETTER

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Roxana Mînzatu

Executive Vice-President-designate for People, Skills and Preparedness

Dear Roxana,

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 Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness.

You will also be responsible for the portfolio of **skills and education, quality jobs and social rights**.

People, Skills and Preparedness

In your role as Executive Vice-President, I would like you to guide the overall work on **strengthening Europe's human capital**, from skills and education to building up knowledge and experiences throughout our lives, whether through studying abroad or making the most of culture and sport. Your role will be to work with Commissioners on **supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model**.

Europe's way of life is defined by the protections and opportunities of our social market economy. As our economy, industry and demography all evolve, we must ensure our society works for all. Our social model, education, skills and rights must keep pace with the speed of change, ensuring that no one is left behind. This is essential for our overall **prosperity and productivity**, as well as the success of the twin green and digital transitions.

Working with other Commissioners, you will guide the work on the European Pillar of Social Rights and help tackle the **skills and labour gaps** that hold back our productivity and competitiveness, while ensuring that we strengthen Europe's social pillar and support people where they need it the most. You will also focus on **training and education** and the impact and the opportunities of technology and innovation in the world of work.

We must reunite our society through education, supporting young people and building on the things we have in common. This is why our continued work on building a **Union of equality** and break down the barriers and the discrimination that too many people encounter on a daily basis. I would like you to guide the work on this to create a fairer society and social model and ensure that Europe can draw on all of its talent and potential.

As part of this, you should also guide the work on supporting young people and ensuring **fairness between generations**. We need to give young people a greater freedom and responsibility within our societies and democracies, notably through **Erasmus+**, Youth Policy Dialogues and better supporting the **mental health** of our children and young people. I would also like you to focus on the things that define and make up our European way of life, such as strengthening our **European Sport Model** or promoting our **culture** and creative sectors and heritage.

You will also guide the work embed a **new culture of preparedness** that can help people adapt to change and to risks that exist in our society, for instance through health or

security crises or other emerging threats that may affect our economy and security. You should ensure that this is linked into the work on future-oriented policy making and on **strategic foresight**.

The European Pillar of Social Rights

In your responsibilities linked to the **social rights and jobs, skills and education** portfolio, your task will be to ensure that our social market economy continues to support the transformation of our industries and societies and the completion of the Single market, delivering quality jobs, more equality and lifting more people out of poverty. And in doing so, we must ensure that our social market economy effectively delivers opportunities, stability and wellbeing for everyone.

- I want you to steer work to reach our 2030 social headline targets. You should frame this work in a new Action Plan on the Implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** to be presented in 2025.
- You will develop a **Quality Jobs Roadmap** together with the social partners to ensure a **just transition for all**. It will support fair wages, high standards for health and safety, good working conditions, training and fair job transitions for workers and self-employed, notably by increasing collective bargaining coverage.
- To support this, I want you to steer our renewed commitment to strengthening European social dialogue in a time of economic and social change. Together with European trade unions and employers, you will deliver a **new Pact for European Social Dialogue** in early 2025.
- As part of this, you will lead the work on the first-ever **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**, aimed at helping people to access the essential protections and services they need and addressing the root causes of poverty. You will also contribute to the **European Affordable Housing Plan**.
- I would also like you to focus on the **impact of digitalisation in the world of work**. This should notably include an initiative on algorithmic management. You will also propose to introduce a **right to disconnect**.
- You should work on improving Europe's approach to **occupational health and safety**, ensuring healthier workplaces and mental health at work.
- I would like you to work on creating a more coherent framework for **addressing long-term care workforce challenges**, including facilitating the recognition of skills and qualifications, supporting skilling and career progression and improving working conditions.

- I want you to ensure implementation of European funds that support social rights and a fair transition, notably **European Social Fund Plus**. You will support the implementation of the **Social Climate Fund** to support those struggling with energy or transport poverty.
- You will strengthen the **Child Guarantee** to prevent and fight social exclusion through education, healthcare and other essential public services.
- I want you to explore ways to further **facilitate labour mobility**, whilst ensuring that rules are properly enforced with the support of a strong and empowered European Labour Authority. You will work on the modernisation, simplification and digitalisation of social security coordination.
- You will contribute to the **European Semester** as regards social, education and employment policies.

A Union of Skills

You will be responsible for developing and building up a **Union of Skills**. You should design an overarching strategy, focusing on investment, adult and lifelong learning, vocational education and training, skill retention and recognition and **enhancing skills intelligence**. You will ensure this is a collective and inclusive project, including all stakeholders across government, education and business.

- You will work on the **European Education Area** to drive a common approach to skills development, learning mobility, quality and inclusiveness. You will make the most of the tools at our disposal, including by **strengthening Erasmus+**.
- You should continue work on the **European Degree** as a flagship for quality learning mobility. You should continue work to incentivise its use, as well as stimulating skills academies and partnerships and supporting **European Universities Alliances**.
- You will prepare a **Skills Portability Initiative** to ensure skills and qualifications acquired in one country are recognised in another. This includes scaling up the work on **recognition of qualifications**.
- You will contribute to the efforts on legal migration to help attract people with the right skills to match EU labour market needs, starting with the **Talent Pool**.
- You should develop a **European Strategy for Vocational Education and Training**, including boosting the number of people with a secondary VET degree including apprenticeships.
- You will develop **an Action Plan on Basic Skills and a STEM Education Strategic Plan** to address two of the most striking shortfalls. This should be

backed up by the review of the Digital Education Action Plan together with the adoption of a Roadmap on the future of digital education and training.

- You will build on the work in the **Pact for Skills** to develop large-scale partnerships to upskill and reskill more workers in key industrial ecosystems.
- I would like you to develop an **EU Teachers Agenda** to help improve their working conditions, training and career prospects. As part of this, you will look into launching a **European Schools Alliance** to encourage better cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe.

You will work under my guidance on all of the above issues. You will be supported by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion for your work linked to skills, social rights, jobs and education.

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