



# STATE OF THE UNION 2023

## LETTER OF INTENT

TO PRESIDENT **ROBERTA METSOLA**  
AND TO PRIME MINISTER **PEDRO SÁNCHEZ**

Brussels, 13 September 2023

Dear President Metsola,

Dear Prime Minister Sánchez,

*History is on the move. The events we have lived through, in these four years, will shape the world for decades to come: from a global pandemic to the return of war on our continent, from the rise of extreme weather events to that of artificial intelligence.*

***This turning point in global history has also been a turning point for Europe.*** A geopolitical Union has arisen – with our response to the war against Ukraine and to great power competition. NextGenerationEU has restarted our economic engine and fast-forwarded our clean and digital transitions. The European Green Deal – our growth strategy – has put Europe on a steady path towards climate neutrality, while driving our response to Russian aggression. We have started building a Health Union and making ourselves more independent in crucial sectors like energy, chips and raw materials. We have become global pioneers of digital rights and put social rights at the heart of our recovery, saving 40 million jobs thanks to our short-time work initiative. And we have done pioneering work on gender equality, from the Women on Boards Directive to the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention.

*Thanks to the common work of the EU institutions, **we have delivered on more than 90% of the 2019 Political Guidelines** – despite all crises. We found agreement on **63 %** of the **633** legislative proposals this Commission has put on the table. But our work is far from over. The time until the European elections will be crucial to completing the work we have begun, but also to planting seeds for the years ahead.*

***This is the time to deliver for today and prepare for tomorrow.*** It is therefore crucial that we finalise agreement on the legislative proposals already presented. As the European Parliament and the Council have shown time and again during this mandate – most recently with the approval in record time of our Act in Support of Ammunition Production – where there is a will, there is a way. In the coming months, we must show that same shared sense of purpose on key legislation, such as getting the New Pact for Migration and Asylum over the line, delivering on the Economic Governance Review or approving the Artificial Intelligence Act. Let us also push forward our proposal for a mid-term revision of the EU's budget, which includes essential funding for our immediate priorities.

*In order to prioritise this ongoing legislative work, the Commission will present only a **limited number of new initiatives, which reflect our existing commitments or respond to emerging challenges** – such as the 2040 climate target, or tackling organised crime, like human smuggling or drugs trafficking. The list below highlights our key priorities in relation to which we duly considered the political dialogue with the European Parliament, the Council and the consultative bodies. These actions will be detailed and complemented in our work programme for 2024.*

*In parallel, we will continue our work to ensure a fair transition for people, industry and farmers. We will work to further reduce administrative burdens and boost our industrial competitiveness and the strength of the single market. We will keep working to make Europe fairer and to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights, notably with the **Val Duchesse Summit** with social partners, to be held with the Belgian Presidency – almost 40 years after the historic meeting in the same place*

that helped launch the European Social Dialogue. And we will hold a series of **Clean Transition Dialogues with industry** and a **strategic dialogue with the farming community** to ensure that the implementation of the transition is done in a fair, smart, and inclusive way. Mario Draghi will prepare a report on the future of European competitiveness, looking at the challenges facing industry and companies in our Single Market.

We will also keep working to **make our own institutions more representative of the people we serve**. Today women hold more than 47 % of the Commission's senior management positions. We are squarely within what is recognised as gender balanced situation. For the first time in history women hold more of the Director-General functions in the Commission than men do.

As we head towards the second full year of war, Europe will remain steadfast and unflinching in its support for Ukraine. We will do so for as long as it takes. The Union and its Member States have already provided a total of **EUR 76 billion** in support to Ukraine's economy, society and military efforts. And I am proud that we will propose the **extension of our temporary protection to Ukrainians in the EU**. This means that our Ukrainian friends will continue to enjoy access to our labour market, our schools and our health system. We will also keep working to bring Ukraine's economy closer to us as it continues along its path to its rightful place in our Union. At the same time, we are further tightening and extending the sanctions, and aiming to increase our military assistance through the European Peace Facility, as well as training Ukrainian soldiers.

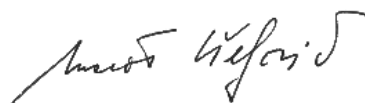
The task that we are called to is nothing less than historic. **While candidate countries prepare for accession, our Union must also get ready**. This next enlargement must be a catalyst for progress, just as all previous enlargements were prepared by and coupled with deep institutional reforms. The Commission will put forward its ideas in this regard.

In the early months of this mandate, I said that Europe is a story of generations. As a new generation of Europeans heads to the polls, we must deliver on their aspirations and address their anxieties. We must chart the way ahead towards **completing our Union and preparing the next generation of the European project**

This is our common task at hand. You can count on the Commission to work with you every step of the way.



**Ursula von der Leyen**



**Maroš Šefčovič**

# KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2024

## A European Green Deal

- *European Wind Power Package*
- *2040 climate target*
- *Initiative for water resilience*

## A Europe fit for the digital age

- *EU Space Law*
- *Strategy on Space Data Economy*
- *Initiative to open up European supercomputer capacity to ethical and responsible AI start-ups*

## An Economy that Works for People

- *EU Biotech and Biomanufacturing Initiative*
- *Follow up to the Val Duchesse Summit*
- *Advanced Materials for industrial leadership*
- *Initiative on rules on the European Works Council*

## A Stronger Europe in the world

- *Strengthen partnership with Africa*
- *European Defence industrial strategy*

## Promoting our European Way of Life

- *Extension of Temporary Protection for people fleeing Ukraine*
- *Action Plan on anti-drug trafficking, including European Ports Alliance*
- *Update the legal framework and strengthen cooperation to fight the smuggling of migrants*
- *Joint European degree*

## A New Push for European Democracy

- *Communication on pre-enlargement reforms and policy reviews*
- *Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems*

