



STATE OF THE UNION

2020

*By Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission*

Brussels | 16 September

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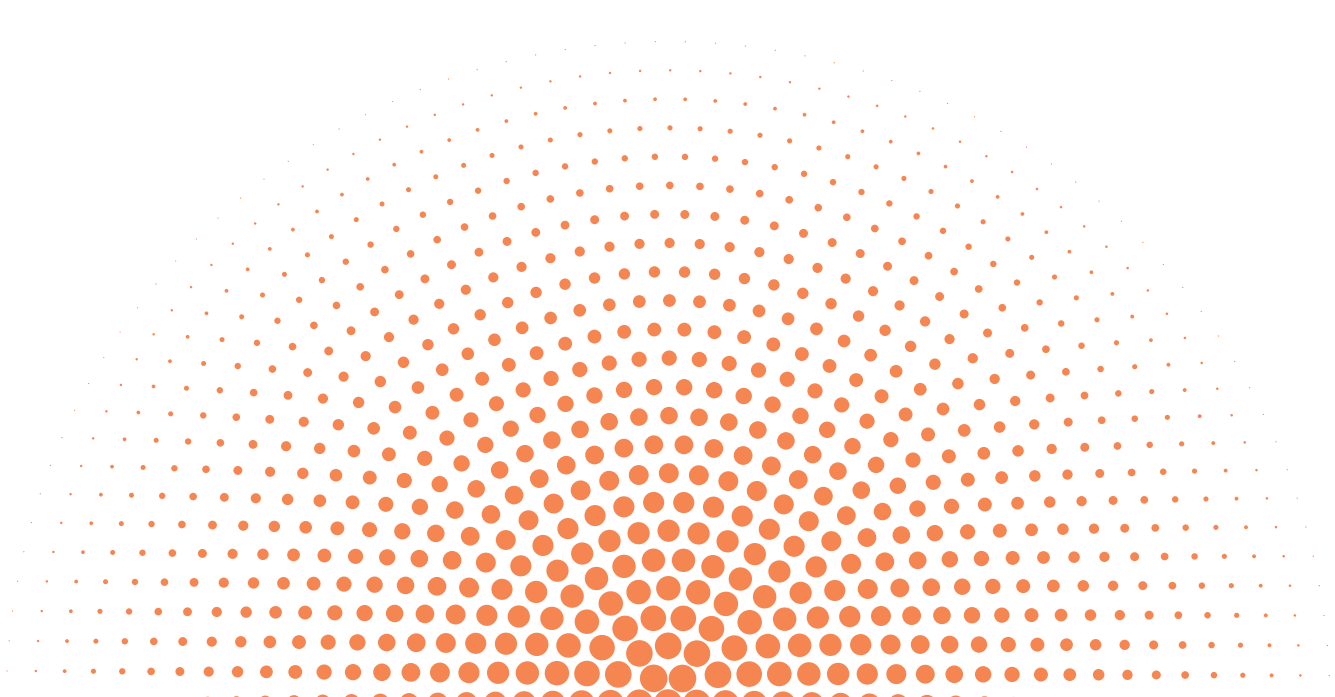
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Every year in September, the President of the European Commission delivers a State of the Union Address before the European Parliament, taking stock of achievements of the past year and presenting priorities for the year ahead. The President also sets out how the European Commission will address the most pressing challenges the European Union is facing. The speech is followed by a plenary debate. This kick-starts the dialogue with the European Parliament and the Council to prepare the Commission Work Programme for the following year.

Anchored in the Treaty of Lisbon, the State of the Union Address is set out in the 2010 Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission, which also requires the President to send a Letter of Intent to the President of the European Parliament and the Presidency of the Council detailing the actions the European Commission intends to take by means of legislation and other initiatives until the end of the following year.

Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, delivered her first State of the Union Address on 16 September 2020.

All material is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/soteu2020>.



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STATE OF THE UNION 2020

State of the Union Address
2020



BUILDING THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN: A UNION OF VITALITY IN A WORLD OF FRAGILITY

Dear President,

Honourable Members,

One of the most courageous minds of our times, Andrei Sakharov – a man so admired by this House – always spoke of his **unshakeable belief in the hidden strength of the human spirit**.

In these last six months, Europeans have shown how strong that human spirit really is.

We saw it in the care workers who moved into nursing homes to look after the ill and the elderly.

In the doctors and nurses who became family members for those in their last breath.

In the front line workers who worked day after night, week after week, who took risks so most of us didn't have to.

We are inspired by their empathy, bravery and sense of duty – and I want to start this speech by paying tribute to them all.

Their stories also reveal a lot about the state of our world and the state of our Union.

They show the power of humanity and the sense of mourning which will live long in our society.

And they **expose to us the fragility all around us**.

A virus a thousand times smaller than a grain of sand exposed how delicate life can be.

It laid bare the strains on our health systems and the limits of a model that values wealth above wellbeing.

It brought into sharper focus the planetary fragility that we see every day through melting glaciers, burning forests and now through global pandemics.

It changed the very way we behave and communicate – keeping our arms at length, our faces behind masks.

It showed us just **how fragile our community of values really is** – and how quickly it can be called into question around the world and even here in our Union.

But people want to move out of this corona world, out of this fragility, out of uncertainty. They are ready for change and they are ready to move on.

And this is the moment for Europe.

The moment for Europe to lead the way from this fragility towards a new vitality. And this is what I want to talk about today.

.....

“ **This is the moment for Europe. The moment for Europe to lead the way from this fragility towards a new vitality.**

.....





Honourable Members,

I say this because in the last months we have rediscovered the **value of what we hold in common**.

As individuals, we have all **sacrificed** a piece of our personal liberty for the safety of others.

And as a Union, we all **shared** a part of our sovereignty for the common good.

We turned fear and division between Member States into **confidence** in our Union.

We showed what is possible when we **trust** each other and **trust** our European institutions.

And with all of that, we choose to not only repair and recover for the here and now, but to shape a better way of living for the world of tomorrow.

This is NextGenerationEU.

This is our opportunity to **make change happen by design – not by disaster or by diktat from others in the world.**

.....
“ **This is NextGenerationEU. This is our opportunity to make change happen by design – not by disaster or by diktat from others in the world.**

To emerge stronger by **creating opportunities** for the world of tomorrow and **not just building contingencies** for the world of yesterday.

We have everything we need to make this happen. We have shaken off the old excuses and home comforts that have always held us back. We have the **vision**, we have the **plan**, we have the **investment**.

It is **now time to get to work**.

This morning, I have sent a Letter of Intent to President Sassoli and Chancellor Merkel –

on behalf of the German Presidency - outlining the Commission's plans for the year ahead.

I will not present every initiative today but I want to touch on what our Union must focus on in the next twelve months.

PULLING THROUGH TOGETHER: MAKING GOOD ON EUROPE'S PROMISE

Honourable members,

The people of Europe are still suffering.

It is a period of profound anxiety for millions who are concerned about the health of their families, the future of their jobs or simply just getting through until the end of the month.

The pandemic – and the uncertainty that goes with it – is not over. And the recovery is still in its early stage.

So our first priority is to pull each other through this. To be there for those that need it.

And thanks to our unique social market economy, Europe can do just that.

It is above all a **human economy** that **protects us** against the great risks of life - illness, ill-fortune, unemployment or poverty. It **offers stability** and helps us better absorb shocks. It **creates opportunity and prosperity** by promoting innovation, growth and fair competition.

Never before has that **enduring promise of protection, stability and opportunity** been more important than it is today.

Allow me to explain why.

First, Europe must continue to protect lives and livelihoods.

This is all the more important in the middle of a pandemic that shows no signs of running out of steam or intensity.

We know how quickly numbers can spiral out of control. So we **must continue to handle this pandemic with extreme care, responsibility and unity.**

In the last six months, our health systems and workers have produced miracles.

Every country has worked to do its best for its citizens.

And Europe has done more together than ever before.

When Member States closed borders, we created green lanes for goods.

When more than 600,000 European citizens were stranded all over the world, the EU brought them home.

When some countries introduced export bans for critical medical goods, we stopped that and ensured that critical medical supply could go where it was needed.

We worked with European industry to increase the production of masks, gloves, tests and ventilators.

Our Civil Protection Mechanism ensured that doctors from Romania could treat patients in Italy or that Latvia could send masks to its Baltic neighbours.

And we achieved this without having full competences.

For me, it is crystal clear – we need to build a stronger European Health Union.

“ **For me, it is crystal clear – we need to build a stronger European Health Union.**

And to start making this a reality, we must now draw the first lessons from the health crisis.

We need to make our new EU4Health programme future proof. This is why I had proposed to increase funding and I am grateful that this Parliament is ready to fight for more funding and remedy the cuts made by the European Council.

“ **This will show Europeans that our Union is there to protect all.**

And we need to **strengthen our crisis preparedness and management** of cross-border health threats.

As a first step, we will propose to reinforce and empower the European Medicines Agency and ECDC – our centre for disease prevention and control.

As a second step, **we will build a European BARDA** – an agency for biomedical advanced research and development. This new agency will support our capacity and readiness to respond to cross-border threats and emergencies – whether of natural or deliberate origin. We need strategic stockpiling to address supply chain dependencies, notably for pharmaceutical products.

As a third step, it is clearer than ever that we must discuss the question of health competences. And I think this is a noble and urgent task for the Conference on the Future of Europe.

And because this was a global crisis we need



to learn the global lessons. This is why, along with Prime Minister Conte and the Italian G20 Presidency, I will convene a Global Health Summit next year in Italy.

This will show Europeans that **our Union is there to protect all**.

And this is exactly what we have done when it comes to workers.

When I took office, I vowed to create an instrument to protect workers and businesses from external shocks.

Because I knew from my experience as a Minister for Labour and Social Affairs that these schemes work. They keep people in jobs, skills in companies and SMEs in business. These SMEs are the motor of our economy and will be the engine of our recovery.

This is why the Commission created the SURE programme. And I want to thank this House for working on it in record time.

If Europe has so far avoided mass unemployment seen elsewhere, it is thanks in large part to the fact that around 40 million people applied for short-time work schemes.

This speed and unity of purpose means that 16 countries will soon receive almost 90 billion euros from SURE to support workers and companies.

From Lithuania to Spain, it will give peace of mind to families who need that income to put food on the table or to pay the rent.

And it will help protect millions of jobs, incomes and companies right across our Union.

This is real European solidarity in action. And it reflects the fact that **in our Union the dignity of work must be sacred**.

But the truth is that for too many people, work no longer pays.

Dumping wages destroys the dignity of work,

penalises the entrepreneur who pays decent wages and distorts fair competition in the Single Market.

This is why the Commission will put forward a legal proposal to support Member States **to set up a framework for minimum wages**. Everyone must have access to minimum wages either through collective agreements or through statutory minimum wages.

I am a strong advocate of collective bargaining and the proposal will fully respect national competencies and traditions.

We have seen in many Member States how a well-negotiated minimum wage secures jobs and creates fairness – both for workers and for the companies who really value them.

Minimum wages work – and it is time that work paid.

The second promise of the social market economy is that of stability.

The European Union and its Member States responded to an unprecedented crisis with an unprecedented response.

.....
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The Commission immediately triggered the **general escape clause for the first time in our history**.

We flexibilised our European funds and State aid rules.



Authorising more than **3 trillion euro** in support to companies and industry: From fishermen in Croatia and farmers in Greece, to SMEs in Italy and freelancers in Denmark.

The European Central Bank took decisive action through its PEPP programme.

The Commission proposed NextGenerationEU and a revamped budget in record time.

It combines investment with much needed reforms.

The Council endorsed it in record time.

This House is working towards voting on it with maximum speed.

For the first time – and for exceptional times – Europe has put in place its own common tools to complement national fiscal stabilisers.

This is a remarkable moment of unity for our Union. This is an achievement that we should take collective pride in.

Now is the time to hold our course. We have all seen the forecasts. We can expect our economies to start moving again after a 12% drop in GDP in the second quarter.

But as the virus lingers so does the uncertainty – here in Europe and around the world.

So this is definitely **not** the time to withdraw support.

Our economies need continued policy support and a delicate balance will need to be struck between providing financial support and ensuring fiscal sustainability.

In the longer-term there is no greater way to stability and competitiveness than through a stronger Economic and Monetary Union.

Confidence in the euro has never been stronger.

The historic agreement on NextGenerationEU shows the political backing that it has.

We must now use this opportunity to make structural reforms in our economies and complete the Capital Markets Union and the Banking Union.

Deep and liquid capital markets are essential to give businesses access to the finance they need to grow and invest in recovery and in the future.

And they are also a pre-requisite to further strengthen the international role of the euro. So let's get to work and finally complete this generational project.

Honourable Members, the third enduring promise is the promise of opportunity.

The pandemic reminded us of many things we may have forgotten or taken for granted.

We were reminded how linked our economies are and how crucial a fully functioning Single Market is to our prosperity and the way we do things.

.....
“ **We must tear down the barriers of the Single Market. We must cut red tape. We must step up implementation and enforcement. And we must restore the four freedoms – in full and as fast as possible.**
.....

The Single Market is all about opportunity – for a consumer to get value for money, a company to sell anywhere in Europe and for industry to drive its global competitiveness.



And for all of us, it is about the opportunity to make the most of the freedoms we cherish as Europeans. It gives our companies the scale they need to prosper and is a safe haven for them in times of trouble. We rely on it every day to make our lives easier – and it is critical for managing the crisis and recovering our strength.

Let's give it a boost.

We must tear down the barriers of the Single Market. We must cut red tape. We must step up implementation and enforcement. **And we must restore the four freedoms – in full and as fast as possible.**

The linchpin of this is a fully functioning Schengen area of free movement. We will work with Parliament and Member States to bring this high up our political agenda and we will propose a **new strategy for the future of Schengen.**

Based on this strong internal market, the European industry has long powered our economy, providing a stable living for millions and creating the social hubs around which our communities are built.

We presented our new industry strategy in March to ensure industry could lead the twin green and digital transition. The last six months have only accelerated that transformation – at a time when the global competitive landscape is fundamentally changing. This is why we will update our industry strategy in the first half of next year and adapt our competition framework which should also keep pace.

PROPELLING EUROPE FORWARD: BUILDING THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN

Honourable Members,

All of this will ensure Europe gets back to its feet. But as we pull through together, we must also propel ourselves forwards to the world of tomorrow.

There is no more urgent need for acceleration than when it comes to the future of our fragile planet.

While much of the world's activity froze during lockdowns and shutdowns, the planet continued to get dangerously hotter.

We see it all around us: from homes evacuated due to glacier collapse on the Mont Blanc, to fires burning through Oregon, to crops destroyed in Romania by the most severe drought in decades.

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“ **We know change is needed – and we also know it is possible. The European Green Deal is our blueprint to make that transformation.**

.....

But we also saw nature come back into our lives.

We longed for green spaces and cleaner air for our mental health and our physical wellbeing.

We know change is needed – and we also know it is possible.

The European Green Deal is our blueprint to make that transformation.

At the heart of it is our mission to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

But we will not get there with the status quo – we need to go faster and do things better.



We looked in-depth at every sector to see how fast we could go and how to do it in a responsible, evidence-based way.

We held a wide public consultation and conducted an extensive impact assessment.

On this basis, the European Commission is proposing to increase the 2030 target for emission reduction to at least 55%.

I recognise that this increase from 40 to 55 is too much for some, and not enough for others.

But our impact assessment clearly shows that our economy and industry can manage this

And they want it too. Just yesterday, 170 business leaders and investors – from SME's to some of the world's biggest companies – wrote to me calling on Europe to set a target of at least 55%.

Our impact assessment clearly shows that meeting this target would put the EU firmly on track for climate neutrality by 2050 and for meeting our Paris Agreement obligations.

And if others follow our lead, the world will be able to keep warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

I am fully aware that many of our partners are far away from that – and I will come back to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism later.

But for us, the **2030 target is ambitious, achievable, and beneficial for Europe.**

We can do it. We have already shown we can do it.

While emissions dropped 25% since 1990, our economy grew by more than 60%.

The difference is we now have more technology, more expertise and more investment. And we are already embarking towards a circular economy with carbon neutral production.

We have more young people pushing for change. We have more proof that what is good for the climate is good for business and is good for us all.

And we have a solemn promise to leave no one behind in this transformation. With our Just Transition Fund we will support the regions that have a bigger and more costly change to make.

We have it all. Now it's our responsibility to implement it all and make it happen.

Honourable Members,

Meeting this new target will reduce our energy import dependency, create millions of extra jobs and more than halve air pollution.

To get there, we must start now.

By next summer, we will revise all of our climate and energy legislation to make it "fit for 55".



“ **By next summer, we will revise all of our climate and energy legislation to make it “fit for 55”.** ”



We will enhance emission trading, boost renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, reform energy taxation.

But the mission of the European Green Deal involves much more than cutting emissions.

It is about making systemic modernisation across our economy, society and industry. **It is about building a stronger world to live in.**

Our current levels of consumption of raw materials, energy, water, food and land use are not sustainable.



We need to change how we treat nature, how we produce and consume, live and work, eat and heat, travel and transport.

So we will tackle everything from hazardous chemicals to deforestation to pollution.

This is a plan for a true recovery. It is an investment plan for Europe.

And this is where NextGenerationEU will make a real difference.

Firstly, 37% of NextGenerationEU will be spent directly on our European Green Deal objectives.

And I will ensure that it also takes green financing to the next level.

We are world leaders in green finance and the largest issuer of green bonds worldwide. We are leading the way in developing a reliable EU Green Bond Standard.

And I can today announce that we will set a target of **30% of NextGenerationEU's 750 billion euro to be raised through green bonds**.

Secondly, NextGenerationEU should invest in lighthouse European projects with the biggest impact: hydrogen, renovation and 1 million electric charging points.

Allow me to explain how this could work:

Two weeks ago in Sweden, a unique fossil-free steel pilot began test operations. It will replace coal with hydrogen to produce clean steel.

This shows the potential of hydrogen to support our industry with a new, clean, licence to operate.

I want NextGenerationEU to create new European Hydrogen Valleys to modernise our industries, power our vehicles and bring new life to rural areas.

The second example are the buildings we live and work in.

Our buildings generate 40% of our emissions. They need to become less wasteful, less expensive

and more sustainable.

And we know that the construction sector can even be turned from a carbon source into a carbon sink, if organic building materials like wood and smart technologies like AI are applied.

I want NextGenerationEU to kickstart a European renovation wave and make our Union a leader in the circular economy.

But this is not just an environmental or economic project: it needs to be a new cultural project for Europe. Every movement has its own look and feel. And we need to give our systemic change its own distinct aesthetic – to match style with sustainability.

This is why we will set up a new European Bauhaus – a co-creation space where architects, artists, students, engineers, designers work together to make that happen.

This is NextGenerationEU. This is shaping the world we want to live in.

A world served by an economy that cuts emissions, boosts competitiveness, reduces energy poverty, creates rewarding jobs and improves quality of life.

A world where we use digital technologies to build a healthier, greener society.

This can only be achieved if we all do it together and I will insist that recovery plans don't just bring us out the crisis but also help us propel Europe forward to the world of tomorrow.

Honourable Members,

Imagine for a moment life in this pandemic without digital in our lives. From staying in quarantine



– isolated from family and community and cut off from the world of work – to major supply problems. It is in fact not so hard to imagine that this was the case 100 years ago during the last major pandemic.

“ **We must make this Europe’s Digital Decade.**

A century later, modern technology has allowed young people to learn remotely and millions to work from home. They enabled companies to sell their products, factories to keep running and government to deliver crucial public services from afar. We saw years’ worth of digital innovation and transformation in the space of a few weeks.

We are reaching the limits of the things we can do in an analogue way. And this great acceleration is just beginning.

We must make this Europe’s Digital Decade.

We need a common plan for digital Europe with clearly defined goals for 2030, such as for connectivity, skills and digital public services. And we need to follow clear principles: the right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, free flow of data and cybersecurity.

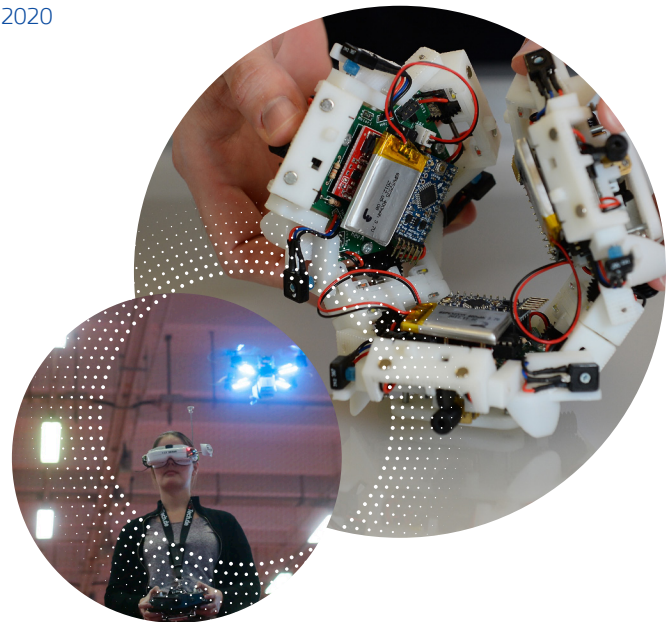
But Europe must now lead the way on digital – or it will have to follow the way of others, who are setting these standards for us. This is why we must move fast.

There are three areas on which I believe we need to focus.

First, data.

On personalized data – business to consumer – Europe has been too slow and is now dependent on others.

This cannot happen with industrial data. And here the good news is that Europe is in the lead – we have the technology, and crucially we have the industry.



But the race is not yet won. The amount of industrial data in the world will quadruple in the next five years – and so will the opportunities that come with it. We have to give our companies, SMEs, start-ups and researchers the opportunity to draw on their full potential. And industrial data is worth its weight in gold when it comes to developing new products and services.

But the reality is that 80% of industrial data is still collected and never used. This is pure waste.

A real data economy, on the other hand, would be a powerful engine for innovation and new jobs. And this is why we need to secure this data for Europe and make it widely accessible. We need common data spaces – for example, in the energy or healthcare sectors. This will support innovation ecosystems in which universities, companies and researchers can access and collaborate on data.

And it is why we will build a European cloud as part of NextGenerationEU – based on GaiaX.

The second area we need to focus on is technology – and in particular artificial intelligence.

Whether it's precision farming in agriculture, more accurate medical diagnosis or safe autonomous driving – artificial intelligence will open up new worlds for us. But this world also needs rules.

We want a set of rules that puts people at the centre. Algorithms must not be a black box and there must be clear rules if something goes wrong. The Commission will propose a law to this effect next year.

This includes control over our personal data which still have far too rarely today. Every time an App or website asks us to create a new digital identity or to easily log on via a big platform, we have no idea what happens to our data in reality.

That is why the Commission will soon propose a secure European e-identity.

One that we trust and that any citizen can use anywhere in Europe to do anything from paying your taxes to renting a bicycle. A technology where we can control ourselves what data and how data is used.

The third point is the infrastructure.

Data connections must keep pace with the rapid speed of change.

If we are striving for a Europe of equal opportunities, it is unacceptable that 40% of people in rural areas still do not have access to fast broadband connections.

These connections are now the prerequisite for home working, home learning, online shopping and, increasingly by the day, for new important services. Without broadband connections, it is now barely possible to build or run a business effectively.

This is a huge opportunity and the prerequisite for revitalising rural areas. Only then can they fully exploit their potential and attract more people and investment.

The investment boost through NextGenerationEU is a unique chance to drive expansion to every village. This is why we want to focus our investments on secure connectivity, on the expansion of 5G, 6G and fiber.

NextGenerationEU is also a unique opportunity to develop a more coherent European approach to connectivity and digital infrastructure deployment.

None of this is an end in itself - it is about Europe's digital sovereignty, on a small and large scale.

In this spirit, I am pleased to announce an

investment of 8 billion euros in the next generation of supercomputers - cutting-edge technology made in Europe.

And we want the European industry to develop our own next-generation microprocessor that will allow us to use the increasing data volumes energy-efficient and securely.

This is what Europe's Digital Decade is all about!

Honourable Members,

If Europe is to move forward and move fast, we must let go of our hesitations.

This is about giving Europe more control over its future.

We have everything it takes to bring it to life. And the private sector is desperately waiting for this too.

There has never been a better time to invest in European tech companies with new digital hubs growing everywhere from Sofia to Lisbon to Katowice. We have the people, the ideas and the strength as a Union to succeed.

And this is why we will invest 20% of NextGenerationEU on digital.

We want to lead the way, the European way, to the Digital Age: based on our values, our strength, our global ambitions.

A VITAL EUROPE IN A FRAGILE WORLD

Honourable Members,

Europe is determined to use this transition to build the world we want to live in. And that of course extends well beyond our borders.

The pandemic has simultaneously shown both the fragility of the global system and the importance of cooperation to tackle collective challenges.



In the face of the crisis, some around the world choose to retreat into isolation. Others actively destabilise the system.

Europe chooses to reach out.

Our leadership is not about self-serving propaganda. It is not about Europe First. It is about being the first to seriously answer the call when it matters.

“ **In the pandemic, European planes delivering thousands of tonnes of protective equipment landed everywhere from Sudan to Afghanistan, Somalia to Venezuela.**

In the pandemic, European planes delivering thousands of tonnes of protective equipment landed everywhere from Sudan to Afghanistan, Somalia to Venezuela.

None of us will be safe until all of us are safe – wherever we live, whatever we have.

An accessible, affordable and safe vaccine is the world’s most promising way to do that.

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was no funding, no global framework for a COVID vaccine – just the rush to be the first to get one.

This is the moment the **EU stepped up to lead the global response**. With civil society, the G20, WHO and others we brought more than 40 countries together to raise 16 billion euro to finance research on vaccines, tests and treatments for the whole world. This is the EU’s unmatched convening power in action.

But it is not enough to find a vaccine. We need to make sure that European citizens and those around the world have access to it.

Just this month, the EU joined the COVAX global facility and contributed 400 million euro to help ensure that safe vaccines are available not only for those who can afford it – but for everyone who needs it.

Vaccine nationalism puts lives at risk. Vaccine cooperation saves them.

Honourable Members,

We are firm believers in the strength and value of cooperating in international bodies

It is with a strong United Nations that we can find long-term solutions for crises like Libya or Syria.

It is with a strong World Health Organisation that we can better prepare and respond to global pandemics or local outbreaks – be it Corona or Ebola.

And it is with a strong World Trade Organisation that we can ensure fair competition for all.

But the truth is also that the **need to revitalise and reform the multilateral system has never been so urgent**. Our global system has grown into a creeping paralysis. Major powers are either pulling out of institutions or taking them hostage for their own interests.

Neither road will lead us anywhere. Yes, we want change. But change by design – not by destruction.

And this is why I want the EU to lead reforms of the WTO and WHO so they are fit for today’s world.

But we know that multilateral reforms take time and in the meantime the world will not stop.

Without any doubt, there is a clear need for Europe to take clear positions and quick actions on global affairs.



Two days ago, the latest EU-China leaders meeting took place.

The relationship between the European Union and China is simultaneously one of the most strategically important and one of the most challenging we have.

From the outset I have said China is a negotiating partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival.

We have interests in common on issues such as climate change – and China has shown it is willing to engage through a high-level dialogue. But we expect China to live up to its commitments in the Paris Agreement and lead by example.

There is still hard work to do on fair market access for European companies, reciprocity and overcapacity. We continue to have an unbalanced trade and investment partnership.

And there is no doubt that we promote very different systems of governance and society. We believe in the universal value of democracy and the rights of the individual.

Europe is not without issues – think for example of anti-semitism. But we discuss them publicly. Criticism and opposition are not only accepted but are legally protected.

So we must always call out human rights abuses whenever and wherever they occur – be it on Hong Kong or with the Uyghurs.

But what holds us back? Why are even simple statements on EU values delayed, watered down or held hostage for other motives?

When Member States say Europe is too slow, I say to them be courageous and finally move to qualified majority voting – at least on human rights and sanctions implementation.

This House has called many times for a European Magnitsky Act – and I can announce that we will now come forward with a proposal.

We need to complete our toolbox.

Honourable Members,

Be it in Hong Kong, Moscow or Minsk: Europe must take a clear and swift position.

I want to say it loud and clear: the European Union is on the side of the people of Belarus.

We have all been moved by the immense courage of those peacefully gathering in Independence Square or taking part in the fearless women's march.

The elections that brought them into the street were neither free nor fair. And the brutal response by the government ever since has been shameful.

The people of Belarus must be free to decide their own future for themselves. They are not pieces on someone else's chess board.

To those that advocate closer ties with Russia, I say that the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with an advanced chemical agent is not a one off. **We have seen the pattern in Georgia and Ukraine, Syria and Salisbury – and in election meddling around the world.** This pattern is not changing – and no pipeline will change that.

Turkey is and will always be an important neighbour. But while we are close together on the map, the distance between us appears to be growing. Yes, Turkey is in a troubled neighbourhood. And yes, it is hosting millions of refugees, for which we support them with considerable . But none of this is justification for attempts to intimidate its neighbours.

Our Member States, Cyprus and Greece, can always count on Europe's full solidarity on protecting their legitimate sovereignty rights.

De-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean is in our mutual interest. The return of exploratory vessels to Turkish ports in the past few days is a positive step in this direction. This is necessary to create the much needed space for dialogue.

Refraining from unilateral actions and resuming talks in genuine good faith is the only path forward. The only path to stability and lasting solutions.

Honourable Members,

As well as responding more assertively to global events, Europe must deepen and refine its partnerships with its friends and allies.

And this starts with revitalising our most enduring of partnerships.

We might not always agree with recent decisions by the White House. But we will always **cherish the transatlantic alliance** – based on shared values and history, and an unbreakable bond between our people.

So whatever may happen later this year, we are ready to build a new transatlantic agenda. To strengthen our bilateral partnership – be it on trade, tech or taxation.

And we are ready to work together on reforming the international system we built together, jointly with like-minded partners. For our own interests and the interest of the common good.

We need new beginnings with old friends – on both of sides of the Atlantic and on both sides of the Channel.

The scenes in this very room when we held hands and said goodbye with Auld Lang Syne spoke a thousand words. They showed an affection for the British people that will never fade.

But with every day that passes the chances of a timely agreement do start to fade.

Negotiations are always difficult. We are used to that.

And the Commission has the best and most experienced negotiator, Michel Barnier, to navigate us through.

But talks have not progressed as we would have wished. And that leaves us very little time.

As ever, this House will be the first to know and will have the last say. And I can assure you we will continue to update you throughout, just as we did with the Withdrawal Agreement.

That agreement took three years to negotiate and we worked relentlessly on it. Line by line, word by word.

And together we succeeded. The result guarantees our citizens' rights, financial interests, the integrity of the Single Market – and crucially the Good Friday Agreement.

The EU and the UK jointly agreed it was the best and only way for ensuring peace on the island of Ireland.

And we will never backtrack on that. This agreement has been ratified by this House and the House of Commons.

It cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or dis-applied. This a matter of law, trust and good faith.

And that is not just me saying it – I remind you of the words of Margaret Thatcher:

“Britain does not break Treaties. It would be bad for Britain, bad for relations with the rest of the world, and bad for any future Treaty on trade”.

This was true then, and it is true today.

Trust is the foundation of any strong partnership.

And Europe will always be ready to build strong partnerships with our closest neighbours.

That starts with the Western Balkans.

The decision six months ago to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia was truly historic.

Indeed, the future of the whole region lies in the EU. We share the same history, we share the same destiny.

The Western Balkans are part of Europe - and not just a stopover on the Silk Road.

We will soon present an economic recovery package for the **Western Balkans** focusing on a number of regional investment initiatives.

“ **The Western Balkans are part of Europe - and not just a stopover on the Silk Road.**

And we will also be there for the **Eastern Partnership** countries and our partners in the southern neighbourhood- to help create jobs and kickstart their economies.

When I came into office, I chose for the very first trip outside the European Union, to visit the African Union, and it was a natural choice. It was a natural choice and it was a clear message, because we are not just neighbours, we are natural partners.

Three months later, I returned with my entire College to set our priorities for our new strategy with Africa. It is a partnership of equals, where both sides share opportunities and responsibilities.

Africa will be a key partner in building the world we want to live in – whether on climate, digital or trade.

Honourable Members,

We will continue to believe in open and fair trade across the world. Not as an end in itself – but as a way to deliver prosperity at home and promote our values and standards. More than 600,000 jobs in Europe are tied to trade with Japan. And our recent agreement with Vietnam alone helped secure historic labour rights for millions of workers in the country.

We will use our diplomatic strength and economic clout to broker agreements that make a difference – such as designating maritime protected areas in the Antarctica. This would be one of the biggest acts of environmental

protection in history.

We will form high ambition coalitions on issues such as digital ethics or fighting deforestation – and develop partnerships with all like-minded partners – from Asian democracies to Australia, Africa, the Americas and anyone else who wants to join.

We will work for just globalisation. But we cannot take this for granted. We must insist on fairness and a level playing field. And Europe will move forward – alone or with partners that want to join.

We are for example working on a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

“ **Carbon must have its price – because nature cannot pay the price anymore.**

Carbon must have its price – because nature cannot pay the price anymore.

This **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** should motivate foreign producers and EU importers to reduce their carbon emissions, while ensuring that we level the playing field in a WTO-compatible way.

The same principle applies to **digital taxation**. We will spare no effort to reach agreement in the framework of OECD and G20. But let there be no doubt: should an agreement fall short of a fair tax system that provides long-term sustainable revenues, Europe will come forward with a proposal early next year.

I want Europe to be a global advocate for fairness.



A NEW VITALITY FOR EUROPE

Honourable Members,

If Europe is to play this vital role in the world – it must also create a new vitality internally.

And to move forward we must now overcome the differences that have held us back.

The historic agreement on NextGenerationEU shows that it can be done. The speed with which we took decisions on fiscal rules, state aid or for SURE – all this shows it can be done.

So let's do it.

Migration is an issue that has been discussed long enough.

Migration has always been a fact for Europe – and it will always be. Throughout centuries, it has defined our societies, enriched our cultures and shaped many of our lives. And this will always be the case.

As we all know, the 2015 migration crisis caused many deep divisions between Member States – with some of those scars still healing today.

A lot has been done since. But a lot is still missing.

.....
“ We will take a human and humane approach. Saving lives at sea is not optional.

.....
If we are all ready to make compromises – without compromising on our principles – we can find that solution.

Next week, the Commission will put forward its New Pact on Migration.

We will take a **human and humane approach**. Saving lives at sea is not optional. And those countries who fulfil their legal and moral duties or are more exposed than others, must be able to rely on the solidarity of our whole European Union.

We will ensure a closer link between asylum and return. We have to make a clear distinction between those who have the right to stay and those who do not.

We will take action to fight smugglers, strengthen external borders, deepen external partnerships and create legal pathways.

And we will make sure that people who have the right to stay are integrated and made to feel welcome.

They have a future to build – and skills, energy and talent.

I think of Suadd, the teenage Syrian refugee who arrived in Europe dreaming of being a doctor. Within three years she was awarded a prestigious scholarship from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

I think of the Libyan and Somalian refugee doctors who offered their medical skills the moment the pandemic struck in France.

Honourable Members, if we think about what they have overcome and what they have achieved, then we **simply must be able to manage the question of migration together**.

The images of the Moria camp are a painful reminder of the need for Europe to come together.

Everybody has to step up here and take responsibility – and the Commission will do just that. The Commission is now working on a plan for a joint pilot with the Greek authorities for a new camp on Lesbos. We can assist with asylum and return processes and significantly improve the conditions for the refugees.

But I want to be clear: if we step up, then I expect all Member States to step up too.

Migration is a European challenge and all of Europe must do its part.

We must rebuild the trust amongst us and move forward together.

.....

“ Migration is a European challenge and all of Europe must do its part.

.....

And this trust is at the very heart of our Union and the way we do things together.

It is anchored in our founding values, our democracies and in our Community of Law – as Walter Hallstein used to call it.

This is not an abstract term. The rule of law helps protect people from the rule of the powerful. It is the guarantor of our most basic of every day rights and freedoms. It allows us to give our opinion and be informed by a free press.

Before the end of the month, the Commission will adopt the first annual rule of law report covering all Member States.

It is a preventive tool for early detection of challenges and for finding solutions.

I want this to be a starting point for Commission, Parliament and Member States to ensure there is no backsliding.

The Commission attaches the highest importance to the rule of law. This is why we will ensure that money from our budget and NextGenerationEU is protected against any kind of fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. This is non-negotiable.

But the last months have also reminded us how fragile it can be. We have a duty to always be vigilant to care and nurture for the rule of law.

.....

“ We will ensure that money from our budget and NextGenerationEU is protected against any kind of fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. This is non-negotiable.

.....

Breaches of the rule of law cannot be tolerated. I will continue to defend it and the integrity of our European institutions. Be it about the primacy of European law, the freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary or the sale of golden passports. European values are not for sale.

Honourable Members,

These values are more important than ever. I say that because when I think about the state of our Union, I am reminded of the words of John Hume – one of the great Europeans who sadly passed away this year.

If so many people live in peace today on the island of Ireland, it is in large part because of his unwavering belief in humanity and conflict resolution.



He used to say that conflict was about difference and that peace was about respect for difference.

And as he so rightly reminded this House in 1998: *“The European visionaries decided that difference is not a threat, difference is natural. **Difference is the essence of humanity**”.*

These words are just as important today as they ever have been.

Because when we look around, we ask ourselves, where is the essence of humanity when three children in Wisconsin watch their father shot by police while they sit in the car?

We ask where is the essence of humanity when anti-semitic carnival costumes openly parade on our streets?

Where is the essence of humanity when every single day Roma people are excluded from society and others are held back simply because of the colour of their skin or their religious belief?

I am proud to live in Europe, in this open society of values and diversity.

But even here in this Union – these stories are a daily reality for so many people.

And this reminds us that **progress on fighting racism and hate is fragile – it is hard won but very easily lost.**

So now is the moment to make change.

To build a truly anti-racist Union – that goes from condemnation to action.

And the Commission is putting forward an action plan to start making that happen.

As part of this, we will propose to extend the list of EU crimes to all forms of hate crime and hate speech – whether because of race, religion, gender or sexuality.

Hate is hate – and no one should have to put up with it.

We will strengthen our racial equality laws where there are gaps.

We will use our budget to address discrimination in areas such as employment, housing or healthcare.

We will get tougher on enforcement when implementation lags behind.

Because in this Union, fighting racism will never be optional.

“ **A Union where you can be who you are and love who you want – without fear of recrimination or discrimination.**

We will **improve education and knowledge** on the historical, cultural causes of racism.

We will **tackle unconscious bias** that exists in people, institutions and even in algorithms.

And we will **appoint the Commission’s first-ever anti-racism coordinator** to keep this at the top of our agenda and to work directly with people, civil society and institutions.

Honourable Members,

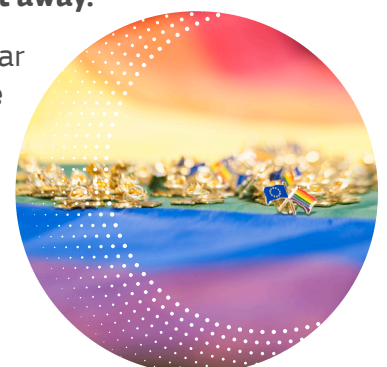
I will not rest when it comes to building a Union of equality.

A Union where you can be who you are and love who you want – without fear of recrimination or discrimination.

Because **being yourself is not your ideology. It’s your identity.**

And no one can ever take it away.

So I want to be crystal clear – **LGBTQI-free zones are humanity free zones. And they have no place in our Union.**



And to make sure that we support the whole community, the Commission will soon put forward a strategy to strengthen LGBTQI rights.

As part of this, I will also push for mutual recognition of family relations in the EU. **If you are parent in one country, you are parent in every country.**

CONCLUSION

Honourable Members,

This is the world we want to live in.

Where we are united in diversity and adversity. Where we work together to overcome our differences – and pull each other through when times are hard.

Where we build today the healthier, stronger and more respectful world we want our children to live in tomorrow.

But while we try to teach our children about life, our children are busy teaching us what life is about.

The last year has shown us just how true this really is.

We could speak of the millions of young people asking for change for a better planet.

Or of the hundreds of thousands of beautiful rainbows of solidarity posted in the windows of Europe by our children.

But there is one image that stuck in my mind from the last six difficult months. An image that captures the world through the eyes of our children.

It is the image of Carola and Vittoria. The two young girls playing tennis between the rooftops of Liguria, Italy.

It is not just the courage and talent of the girls that sticks out.

It is the lesson behind it. About not allowing obstacles stand in your way, about not letting conventions hold you back, about seizing the moment.

This is what Carola, Vittoria and all the young people of Europe teach us about life every day. It is what Europe's next generation is all about. This is NextGenerationEU.

This year, Europe took a leaf out of their book and took a leap forward together.

When we had to find a way forward for our future, we did not allow old conventions hold us back.

When we felt fragility around us, we seized the moment to breathe new vitality into our Union.

When we had a choice to go it alone like we have done in the past, we used the combined strength of the 27 to give all 27 a chance for the future.

We showed that we are in this together and we will get out of this together.

Honourable Members,

The future will be what we make it. And Europe will be what we want it to be.

So let's stop talking it down. And let's get to work for it. Let's make it strong. And let's build the world we want to live in.

Long live Europe!



Ursula von der Leyen



STATE OF THE UNION 2020

Letter of Intent to President
David Maria Sassoli and to
Chancellor Angela Merkel



Brussels, 16 September 2020

Dear President Sassoli,

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

Almost 500 days ago, the people of Europe made their voice heard loud and clear. Through the European Parliament elections, they gave the EU institutions an emphatic mandate to be bold, and ambitious and to lead change to a healthier, stronger and fairer world. The political guidelines presented to the European Parliament in July 2019 reflected this ambition. They have framed our common work ever since and we would like to thank both the Parliament and the Council for their support and cooperation over the last year.

Since the very beginning, our Commission has been guided by the following commitment made last year in the political guidelines: **“We will adapt and update as challenges and opportunities inevitably emerge, but we will always stick to the principles and the aspirations”**. This sums up both our first 10 months in office and our work for the year ahead.

In the Commission's first 100 days in office, we laid the foundations for the systemic change Europe needs. We presented the European Green Deal – our new growth strategy – and set out our plans for Europe's digital decade. And because the twin green and digital transitions must go hand in hand with our competitiveness, we presented a new industrial strategy to strengthen our single market, support small businesses and boost our competitive edge.

Our work was well under way when the world was shaken by a virus that had tragic consequences for hundreds of thousands of families. It exposed us to the fragility all around us, locked down our communities and slowed down our economies. In response, we took urgent and decisive action – from using the flexibility in our fiscal and State aid rules, to creating the SURE instrument and putting every available euro in our EU funds towards protecting lives and livelihoods. We brought home more than 600,000 EU citizens stranded abroad and took over 790 measures to manage the health and economic crisis – from supporting farmers and fishermen to opening up green lanes.

Our message from the outset has been that **Europe is in this together and must pull through this together**. This is why the Commission proposed NextGenerationEU and a revamped long-term budget – a historic proposal and the most ambitious stimulus package in the history of the Union. It will help kick-start our economies focusing on investment and reforms. I want to thank the co-legislators for working towards an agreement at maximum speed so it can start making a difference on the ground as soon as possible.

While many things have changed around us, our ambitions have not. In fact, we are witnessing a great acceleration in the changes that had already started and there is even greater urgency for Europe to lead that transformation. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We have the vision, we have the plan, we have the will. And with NextGenerationEU we now have the investment. In the next year, we will work hard with Member States on preparing recovery plans and on implementation. This will help ensure that Europe not only recovers for the here and now but also shapes the economy of tomorrow.

*Of course, the work for the year ahead starts with **continuing to manage the pandemic in a coordinated way**. With the number of cases again on the up, this is now more important than ever. The people of Europe have made sacrifices to protect each other and we must protect the progress we have made. Similarly, at this still early and uncertain stage of the economic recovery, we must hold our course and protect the progress that has been made. This is not the time to withdraw support from our economies and as the year goes on we will have to find a balance between providing financial support and ensuring fiscal sustainability.*

In parallel with managing the current situation, we will start work on building the Union of tomorrow, with major initiatives planned across all six of our headline ambitions. These reflect the need to learn lessons from the crisis and to get ahead of the great acceleration of change in order to shape a fairer, healthier, greener and more digital society. Our work will focus on strengthening our competitiveness and making our economies and industries more resilient. This Commission will ensure that Europe plays its ever more vital role in this fragile world – whether that be leading global efforts to secure a safe and accessible vaccine, building partnerships or strengthening the rules-based multilateral system. We will be open wherever we can but more assertive wherever we must.

Listed below you will see some of the major initiatives the Commission intends to propose in the coming year – initiatives that also reflect the input received from the Parliament and the Council. This is not an exhaustive list, and it will be followed in October by the Commission's work programme for 2021, on which I look forward to working closely with you.

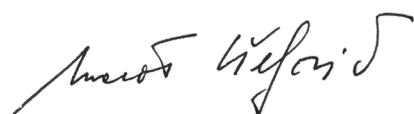
In addition to the actions listed below, the Commission will continue to carry out its work programme for 2020, with a number of major initiatives still to be adopted before the end of this year. These include the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the first annual rule of law report and the 2030 Climate Target Plan – all due to be adopted in the coming days and weeks.

This letter also marks the start of the interinstitutional dialogue on our priorities for the next year, on which I look forward to engaging with you. We are strongly committed to strengthening dialogue with the European Parliament and the Council.

This is the moment for Europe to lead the way from fragility towards a new vitality.



Ursula von der Leyen



Maroš Šefčovič

KEY NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2021

A European Green Deal

- *Legislative proposal on revision of the EU emission trading system (ETS)*
- *Legislative proposal on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism*

Fit for 55 Package (Climate and energy)

- *Effort-Sharing Regulation*
- *Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings*
- *Revision of the Regulation on Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals from Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry*
- *Legislative proposal to address methane emissions in the energy sector, revision of the regulatory framework for competitive decarbonised gas markets and revision of the Energy Taxation Directive*
- *Revision of the Directive on Intelligent Transport Systems and the Directive on Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure*
- *Revision of the Regulation setting CO₂ emission performance standards for cars and light commercial vehicles and legislative proposal on development of post-Euro6/VI emission standards for cars, vans, lorries and buses*
- *Legislative proposal for a sustainable product policy initiative*

A Europe fit for the Digital Age

- *Communication on Europe's Digital Decade: 2030 Digital Targets*
- *Legislative proposal for a Data Act*
- *Legislative proposal for a digital levy*
- *Legislative proposal for a trusted and secure European e-ID*
- *Initiative on improving the working conditions of platform workers*
- *Communication on updating the new industrial strategy for Europe*
- *Review of the competition policy*
- *Legislative proposal on levelling the playing field for foreign subsidies*
- *Action plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries*

An Economy that Works for People

- *Legislative proposal on an investment protection and facilitation framework*
- *Revision of the prudential rules for insurance and reinsurance companies (Solvency II)*
- *Revision of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive and Regulation*
- *Legislative proposal on sustainable corporate governance*
- *Establishment of an EU Green Bond Standard*
- *Proposal for a legislative package on anti-money laundering*
- *Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, European Child Guarantee, New Occupational Safety and Health Strategy, Action Plan for the Social Economy*
- *Towards the future Generalised Scheme of Preferences legal framework granting trade advantages to developing countries*
- *Instrument to deter and counteract coercive actions by third countries*

A stronger Europe in the world

- *Joint communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism*
- *Joint communication on the Arctic and northern dimension policy*
- *Joint communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood*
- *Joint communication on a strategic approach to support the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants*

Promoting our European Way of Life

- *Legislative proposal to establish a new European Biomedical Research and Development Agency*
- *Legislative proposal to extend the mandate of the European Medicines Agency*
- *Legislative proposal to extend the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*
- *Legislative proposal on European health data space*
- *Follow up initiatives under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum*
- *Strategy on the future of Schengen*
- *Communications on an EU agenda to tackle organised crime and on counter-terrorism*

A new push for European Democracy

- *Strategy on the rights of the child*
- *Legislative proposal to prevent and combat specific forms of gender-based violence*
- *Proposals to extend the list of EU crimes to all forms of hate crime and hate speech*
- *Legislative proposal on the digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation*
- *Revision of the Regulation on the Statute and Funding of the European Political Parties and European Political Foundations*
- *Communication on a long-term vision for rural areas*

STATE OF THE UNION 2020

The von der Leyen Commission: One year on



ACHIEVEMENTS

A NEW COURSE FOR EUROPE

One year ago, the von der Leyen Commission made Europe a promise: we promised to be bold and daring, whenever we saw the need for action at European level. In the early days of the mandate, the new Commission set a **new and ambitious course** for the European Union.

We presented the **European Green Deal** and its first building blocks, putting our Union on the path towards climate neutrality. We came up with a package to make Europe a global leader in **digital innovation**. We presented an **industrial strategy** to define a new way forward for industry in Europe during the green and digital transition. In a fast-changing geopolitical context, Europe needs to transform its economy towards a green and digital future, and to strengthen its competitiveness on the global stage. We therefore created the most ambitious roadmap possible towards these goals.

Then came the **coronavirus pandemic** – with the human tragedy, the lockdowns and the economic backlash. This crisis called for a truly European response, and we have responded with the greatest collective mobilisation in our Union's history. At first, the Commission worked to organise a **concerted and coordinated European response** to the emergency – procuring and distributing protective equipment, repatriating stranded Europeans and securing doses of a future vaccine. This was uncharted territory for the European Union: we reacted boldly when our citizens' health and safety called for EU action.

The next step was to act swiftly and kick off the recovery of our economy. **NextGenerationEU** – the recovery plan proposed by the Commission, agreed by the European Council and submitted to the European Parliament and all Member States – breaks new ground in the EU's history. It is the centrepiece of the most powerful **long-term EU budget** ever designed, and together they are worth EUR 1.8 trillion of firepower.

We have adapted to unforeseen and dramatic circumstances while sticking to the principles and aspirations outlined in our political guidelines 1 year ago.

In putting this plan together, we have adapted to unforeseen and dramatic circumstances while sticking to the principles and aspirations outlined in our **political guidelines** 1 year ago. The twin green and digital transitions are now even more firmly at the core of our programme, with new resources to accelerate the transformation. We are not just repairing the damage to our economy; we are building better for the **next generation**.



Frontline workers have performed their duties heroically, citizens have accepted sacrifices to their fundamental freedoms and unprecedented measures have been taken to stem the spread of the virus.



1. The first 100 days

During the first 100 days, the von der Leyen Commission laid out a unique set of aspirations to address the great challenges of this generation. Sixty-four proposals have been agreed by and with the other EU institutions since 1 December 2019. These include the building blocks of a **new growth strategy for Europe**, structured around three pillars: the European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age and an economy that works for people.

for how to make Europe the **first climate-neutral continent by 2050** while at the same time enhancing growth, providing new and better jobs and improving people's well-being. Climate change and environmental degradation are existential threats to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, Europe needs a new growth strategy that transforms the Union into a **modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy** that works for people.

Our generational challenges – the twin green and digital transitions – have become even more urgent now than they were before the crisis began. The time for the green transition is now. The investment wave that we are about to unleash will have the **European Green Deal** as its compass. Likewise, the coronavirus crisis and subsequent lockdowns have shown that access to **digital solutions** is essential for people and businesses alike – and that the lack thereof can turn into a source of new inequalities.

LEADING THE GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITIONS

Eleven days into its mandate, the von der Leyen Commission presented **the European Green Deal**. With this initiative, the EU has embarked on the greatest transition by design in history, setting out a roadmap

A new growth strategy, structured around three pillars





On 14 January, the Commission announced the **European Green Deal investment plan**, to mobilise private money in support of the green transition. The investment plan also includes the **Just Transition Mechanism**, which will ensure an inclusive and prosperous road ahead. The transition towards climate neutrality will provide opportunities and challenges for regions and sectors. While some will reap the benefits immediately, for others it will take longer.

To ensure a more even distribution of opportunities, the Commission has proposed to mobilise at least **EUR 100 billion through the Just Transition Mechanism** to help **those regions, industries and workers** that will face the greatest challenges relating to the green transition. We will succeed only if citizens and communities are empowered to become agents of the transition.

We will succeed only if citizens and communities are empowered to become agents of the transition.

On 4 March, the von der Leyen Commission proposed a **European climate law**, to transform political promises into legal obligations. We set a legal commitment to achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050 and a mechanism to keep everybody on track.

On the same day, we launched a public consultation on the **future climate pact** for regions, local communities, civil society, industry and schools. Together, they will design and commit to a set of pledges to bring about a change in

behaviour, from the individual to the largest multinational.

On 11 March the European Commission adopted a new **circular economy action plan**, with a view to making our economy fit for a green future, strengthening our competitiveness while protecting the environment, and giving new rights to consumers.

The second pillar of our new growth strategy is a new push to make Europe a global leader in digital innovation. On day 81, the Commission announced its agenda for **shaping Europe's digital future**, opening up new opportunities for businesses while focusing on trustworthy technology for citizens. This second pillar encompasses everything from cybersecurity to digital education, and from supercomputing to global competitiveness, with two specific strategies on **data and artificial intelligence**.

The Commission and the Member States have also defined a common approach to ensure the secure **deployment and functioning of 5G networks** in the EU, thereby broadening connectivity while creating jobs and opportunities. According to estimates¹, artificial intelligence and robotics alone could create almost 60 million new jobs worldwide in the next 5 years.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G networks and super- and quantum computers have the potential to revolutionise our way of life, and to create **new and exciting opportunities** for all European industries (such as artificial intelligence to help analyse medical symptoms), increasing job opportunities while also enhancing the EU's global competitiveness.

On 20 May, we presented a comprehensive new biodiversity strategy to bring nature back into our lives and a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. The two strategies are mutually reinforcing, bringing together nature, farmers, businesses and consumers to work towards a competitively sustainable future.

¹ <http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2018>



Technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G networks and super- and quantum computers have the potential to revolutionise our way of life and to create new and exciting opportunities for all European industries, increasing job opportunities, while also enhancing Europe's global competitiveness.

Around a quarter of industrial and service robots are produced by companies headquartered in Europe. **A European approach to the digital transformation** deepens our democratic foundations, respects fundamental rights and contributes to a sustainable, climate-neutral and resource-efficient economy. Citizens can only feel confident and empowered in a trustworthy environment where they know their privacy is respected.

European industry can lead the way in the transition towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. On day 101, the von der Leyen Commission presented a new **industrial strategy** to empower European businesses to achieve their ambitions while strengthening their global competitiveness.

20 %

of the total EU economy relates to European industries

35

million jobs in industry

99 %

of all European firms are small and medium-sized enterprises

80 %

of all exporting small businesses sell to other Member States

No one will be left behind, whether women or men, whether from the east, west, south or north, whether young or old.

A more integrated and fully functional single market would provide European businesses with opportunities, and would generate additional annual growth of EUR 183–269 billion for manufacturing and EUR 338 billion for services. This represents a rise of approximately 12 % in the EU's gross domestic product. The single market is a success story that continues to provide prosperity and opportunities for EU citizens and businesses alike.

The foundation of Europe's economy is the ability to reconcile the market with the social aspect, growth with fairness and disruptive innovation with age-old values. On day 45, the Commission launched a first-phase consultation of social partners – businesses and trade unions – on the issue of **a fair minimum wage for workers** in the EU, which will act as a stepping stone towards a strong social Europe for just transition. No one will be left behind, whether women or men, whether from the east, west, south or north, whether young or old.



© Wikipedia

BECOMING THE GEOPOLITICAL COMMISSION



The European Union has a unique asset in global affairs, beyond its economic and financial strength: we are an unparalleled '**convening power**'; we are at the centre of a global network of alliances; we are a pillar of the **multilateral system**; we can rally broad coalitions in support of a common cause; and we know how to bring regional powers and rival nations around the same table.

We have put this convening power at the service of our friends in need and of the common good – during the first 100 days of our mandate and beyond. When a devastating earthquake ravaged **Albania**, we mobilised the entire international community to raise funds for the emergency and the reconstruction. Countries that usually do not even talk to one another joined forces for a common cause.

With the start of the pandemic, the need for a coordinated global response became obvious – and the von der Leyen Commission explored new ways of putting the EU's convening power to use.

We worked closely with multilateral institutions, national governments and non-governmental organisations to raise resources for a cure and a vaccine. Together with this diverse international coalition, we launched the **Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator**, a global cooperation platform to accelerate research, development and the equitable distribution of medicines and, eventually, a vaccine. We worked hand in hand

not only with the **World Health Organization** and nations from across the planet, but also with global health actors such as **GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance** and **CEPI**, and with civil society organisations such as Global Citizen. It was a marathon of global solidarity, and we were proud to have been a leading force in making this possible.

Throughout this work, we have made sure that treatments and a future vaccine are also **accessible to low-income countries**, which could not otherwise afford to pay for it. It is in this spirit that we joined the COVAX Facility, which aims to guarantee fair and equitable access to a vaccine for every country in the world. Caring for others makes Europe strong too.

Since day 1, the von der Leyen Commission has defended European interests and values on the international stage – working to strengthen climate action, to defuse trade disputes, to address crises in our neighbourhood and to reform the multilateral system.

President von der Leyen chose Africa and the African Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa as the destination for her first foreign visit. On day 100, we presented a new '**strategy with Africa**' to bring our partnership to the next level. The strategy proposes to boost cooperation in the areas of sustainable growth and jobs; the green transition; the digital transformation; peace, security and governance; and migration and mobility.

On day 67, the Commission adopted a **new methodology for EU accession negotiations**, to make them more credible, predictable and dynamic, all with a stronger political steer. This cleared the way for the European Council to open a c c e s s i o n negotiations with **Albania**



and **North Macedonia**, the draft negotiating frameworks for which have already been submitted to the Council by the Commission. The European Commission stood in full solidarity with our friends in the **Western Balkans** during the coronavirus crisis, providing immediate and long-term support and including them in many initiatives normally reserved for the Member States.

Together with the leaders of our six **Eastern partners**, we have agreed on a new set of priorities to shape the Eastern Partnership's second decade. This agenda can make the entire European continent more resilient to all sorts of shocks, from economic crises to climate change.

Globalisation is not a one-way street. The EU is sponsoring a root-and-branch reform of the **World Trade Organization**, precisely to enable our Union to continue reaping the opportunities of global openness and integration, while addressing the vulnerabilities of our economic and political systems.

We want to find an agreement that fixes the **Organization's dispute settlement system**. Yet, as the system is currently not working, the Commission has decided to strengthen its trade enforcement rules: in the event of a trade dispute, we are ready to use countermeasures that protect European

interests, in full compliance with international law.

PROTECTING EU CITIZENS

Still within its first 100 days, the European Commission presented its **strategy for equality between women and men** in Europe, notably to address persistent gender-based violence and stereotypes. This strategy sets out key actions for 2020–2025 and commits to including an equality perspective in all EU policy areas.

Protecting EU citizens means **protecting their health**. Before the pandemic hit Europe, and as announced in the political guidelines, the European Commission launched an EU-wide public consultation on **Europe's beating cancer plan** as early as 4 February. Every year, 3.5 million people are diagnosed with cancer in the European Union. 1.3 million people die of the disease annually, yet evidence indicates that over 40 % of cancers are preventable.

The focus moved dramatically when in the following weeks, the coronavirus virus spread in Europe and was characterised as a pandemic. The mandate took a different turn, calling for leadership to face a public health crisis, and what would soon become an economic crisis.



Europe's role in the world as a credible leading development and humanitarian partner continues. Our **'Team Europe' approach** – combining the resources and expertise from the European Commission, the Member States and the EU financial institutions – has already yielded more than **EUR 36 billion** to address the emergency response and consequent humanitarian needs, strengthen health, water/sanitation and nutrition systems and mitigate the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic worldwide.

2. Europe's unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis



The **coronavirus pandemic** has shaken Europe and the world to the core. What began with isolated cases quickly turned into an emergency that affects every country, region and person. Since the beginning of the year, nearly 150 000 lives have been lost in the EU because of COVID-19; many more have lost their lives in other parts of the world.

And yet hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved. If the European Union and its Member States had not acted swiftly and decisively to **protect EU lives and livelihoods**, the tragedy would have been much greater. Frontline workers have performed their duties heroically, citizens have accepted sacrifices to their fundamental freedoms and unprecedented measures have been taken to stem the spread of the virus.

Europe has become the beating heart of world solidarity.

Europe has become the beating heart of world solidarity. Hospitals have welcomed and treated patients from across borders; Member

States have teamed up to purchase medical equipment; mobile health teams have been despatched to answer the most urgent needs; more than 600 000 stranded EU citizens have been repatriated from beyond the borders of the European Union; and public and private investment, at European and national levels, has been mobilised to find a vaccine for everyone across the world. This crisis has shown **European solidarity** at its best.

The great majority of public health, mobility, tourism and economic measures were designed to address the immediate public health crisis directly.

The Commission has pulled out all the stops to fight the pandemic and its economic fallout: **828 measures** have been adopted since March, including 373 State aid decisions giving European companies a lifeline. The great majority of public health, mobility, tourism and economic measures have been designed to address the immediate public health crisis directly. Meanwhile, the Commission has worked to make our economies, our societies and our Union more resilient to the challenges of tomorrow.

FIGHTING A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS

Saving lives was our first priority. We delivered urgently needed aid through numerous **humanitarian air bridges** organised by the Commission. We brought Member States together to jointly procure medical equipment. Strategic rescEU stockpiles and distribution hubs were established to serve as a common European reserve for vital medical equipment. Equipment such as life-saving ventilators, masks and disinfectants was channelled through the **European Emergency Response Coordination Centre** to those Member States most in need.

In addition, under the newly created **Emergency Support Instrument**, some 10 million masks to protect healthcare workers were purchased and delivered in batches over the summer to countries that requested them. We sent medical teams from across the continent to hospitals in Milan and Bergamo in Italy. We made **medical imports** cheaper by waiving customs duties. We helped **scientists** gather and share their data. We gave additional resources to the most promising **research projects**. And, through the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** and its **Emergency Response Coordination Centre**, we organised and coordinated 369 flights to repatriate close to 82 000 EU citizens and 10 000 non-EU citizens stranded abroad.

In the area of **public health**, the EU achieved what no Member State could have done alone. Guidelines on testing methodologies and free movement of healthcare professionals, medical devices and protective equipment, along with voluntary contact tracing applications, guaranteed that best practices were shared and scaled up. The **'European roadmap towards lifting coronavirus**

containment measures' set out common principles and accompanying measures for exiting lockdown in a coordinated way.

In line with the EU's **vaccine strategy**, the Commission and some Member States are conducting intensive negotiations with several vaccine developers to build a diversified portfolio of vaccines for EU citizens at fair prices. And the Commission's **communication on short-term EU health preparedness for COVID-19 outbreaks** outlines key measures to be taken in the coming months.

The Commission has safeguarded the integrity of the **single market**. As long queues of trucks started to form at border crossings inside the EU, the Commission created the **'green lanes' system** to ensure that essential goods could be transported swiftly across borders, and acted against disproportionate internal restrictions that were creating new shortages.

All the while, the EU has provided as much information as possible to its citizens. The EU has developed a new online tool – **'Re-open EU'** – that brings together information on travel, transportation and tourism restrictions across all Member States. 'Re-open EU' has been used by tens of millions of people in Europe and beyond.

The EU has also led the global response to the crisis. Throughout the pandemic, President von der Leyen has kept in constant contact with G20 leaders and other international partners. Together with the **World Health Organization** and many other partners, we have set up a new collaborative framework – the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator – to accelerate the **development and deployment of vaccines, treatments and tests**.



Thanks to the Coronavirus Global Response, led by the Commission, a total of EUR 15.9 billion in pledges has been raised.

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On 4 May, the European Commission kick-started a global pledging effort that by the end of the month had raised **EUR 9.8 billion** for universal access to affordable coronavirus vaccination, treatment and testing, and support for health systems worldwide.

Later, on 27 June, on the initiative of President von der Leyen with Global Citizen, in a landmark moment for global solidarity, the **'Global Goal: Unite for our Future'** pledging summit and concert brought together artists, scientists and world leaders to ensure universal access to coronavirus medicines.

This helped to mobilise an additional EUR 6.15 billion to provide **universal access to affordable coronavirus vaccination**, treatment and testing, strengthen health systems and support the economic recovery of vulnerable countries.

The European Commission has so far concluded talks with six pharmaceutical groups to secure doses of a **future vaccine for Europeans**.

In our external action against the coronavirus, we have always acted as **'Team Europe'**. This means that the European Commission, the EU financial institutions and the Member States have joined forces to achieve a shared set of goals, as

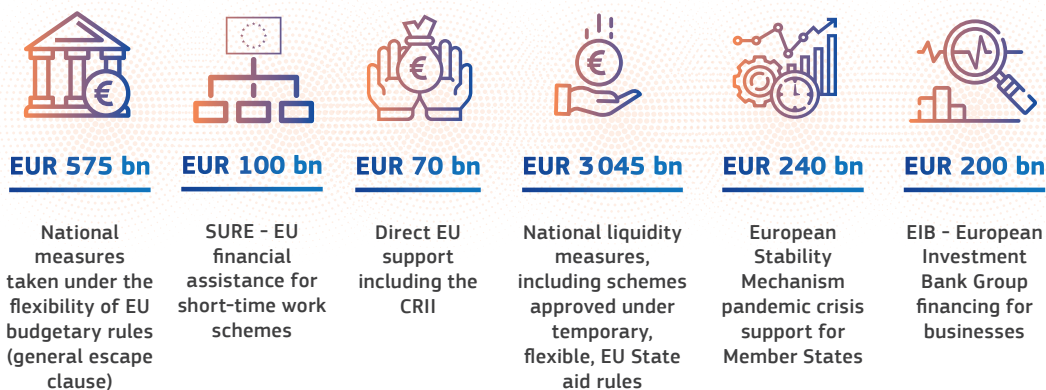
outlined in the communication on the global EU response to COVID-19, presented in early April. One team for a stronger EU in global affairs.

REPAIRING THE ECONOMY AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

What began as a public health crisis has morphed into a major economic shock. To prevent mass lay-offs, the Commission set up a EUR 100 billion European instrument to support short-time work – **Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)**.

To further cushion the blow, the Commission applied – as promised in its political guidelines – the full flexibility of the EU's State aid rules, and activated for the first time ever the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact. The **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives (CRII)** – worth up to EUR 54 billion – were set up in record time to provide liquidity to businesses and support to the healthcare sector.

The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives – worth up to EUR 54 billion – were set up in record time to provide liquidity to businesses and the healthcare sector.



Total: EUR 4.2 trillion

The European Union and its Member States have acted resolutely to **support workers and businesses**. The Commission triggered the general escape clause of the **Stability and Growth Pact** to leave Member States maximum flexibility, which will allow them to support everybody - their healthcare systems and staff, as well as the people so severely affected by the crisis. The total firepower mobilised so far has reached **EUR 4.2 trillion**, which represents more than 30 % of the EU's gross domestic product.

The magnitude of the crisis has been such that, despite a swift and decisive public response, the EU economy will experience a **recession** this year. The necessary measures to contain the spread of the virus have slowed down social and economic life – almost to a standstill in some cases. In 2020, the EU economy is expected to contract by 8.3 %. All Member States have been hit differently, and this risks creating divergences between our economies. At the same time, the impact of this crisis will be felt by all.

Unemployment is set to rise to 9 % in the EU in 2020, disproportionately hitting women, young people, low-skilled workers and those in temporary work. Poverty, social exclusion and inequalities are likely to rise, underlining the importance of an **inclusive and fair recovery** for all. The economy is expected to rebound to positive growth in 2021, but the outlook is uncertain and how the public health situation evolves will prove crucial. The EU is taking no chances: the recovery plan proposed by the Commission is unprecedented in its design and ambition.

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The Commission's **recovery plan for Europe** will repair the damage and secure the future for the next generation. At the July European

Council, EU leaders – on the basis of the Commission's proposal – reached agreement on a major recovery package. It is made up of the **EU's long-term budget** worth EUR 1 074 billion – agreed by the European Council, subject to the European Parliament's consent – topped up with an additional EUR 750 billion recovery instrument, **NextGenerationEU**. It will support Member States in kick-starting the recovery, facilitate public and private investment with a special focus on the twin transition, and help learn from the crisis.

The Commission will borrow **EUR 750 billion** on financial markets, channelling the funds to Member States via the EU budget, as grants and loans. According to a model simulation, it is estimated that the investment mobilised will **raise real EU gross domestic product levels** by around 1.75 % in 2021 and 2022, rising to 2.25 % by 2024. This investment wave will create up to 2 million jobs by 2022. A EUR 672.5 billion **Recovery and Resilience Facility** will support essential investment and reforms in the Member States through grants and loans.

By reinventing the way it works, the European Union is rediscovering its true vocation. We have given **unprecedented firepower to the EU budget**. We have agreed to use the European Commission's very strong credit rating to raise resources that will be used by all Member States, including those in greatest need and with limited spending capacity. By doing so, the European Union is reviving the founders' original idea: prosperity in each European country depends on prosperity in all other European countries. **Our unity is our strength.**

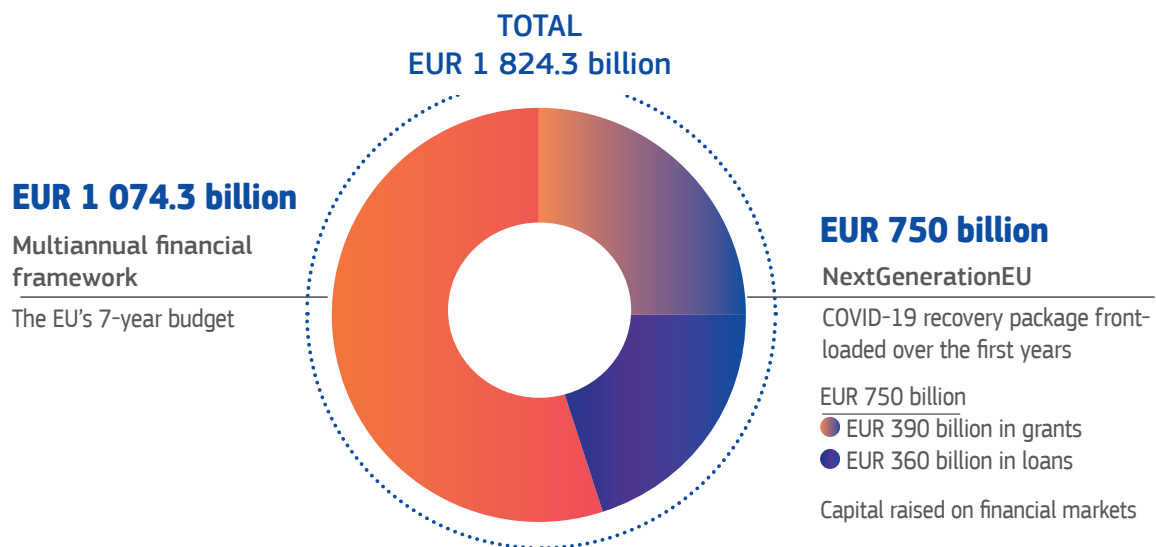


The reinforced **budget for 2021–2027** will drive the green and digital transitions, building a fairer and more resilient economy. More than half of the overall budget will be invested in **modernising the European economy**, to make it fit for our 2050 climate-neutrality goal and for the digital age.

In addition, the Commission has adjusted its **2020 work programme** in response to the crisis. While focusing on initiatives that deliver an immediate and impactful response to the crisis, the Commission is also delivering on its strategic priorities.

Prosperity in each European country depends on prosperity in all other European countries. Our unity is our strength.

OVERALL BUDGET 2021-2027



3. A better Europe after the pandemic

Our generational challenges – the twin green and digital transitions – have become even more urgent now than they were before the crisis began. The time for the **green transition** is now. The investment wave that we are about to unleash will have the European Green Deal as its compass. Likewise, the coronavirus crisis and subsequent lockdowns have shown that **access to digital solutions** is essential for people and businesses alike – and that the lack thereof can turn into a source of new inequalities.

The work on the Commission's strategic priorities has never stopped, in spite of the pandemic. On 20 May, the Commission presented a comprehensive new **biodiversity strategy** to bring nature back into our lives, and a **farm to fork strategy** for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. The two strategies are mutually reinforcing, bringing together nature, farmers, businesses and consumers to work towards a competitively sustainable future.

On 8 July, the Commission adopted the **EU's strategies for energy system integration and hydrogen**. The latter addresses how to transform the potential of the decarbonisation of industry, transport, power generation and buildings across Europe into reality, through investments, regulation, market creation and research and innovation. The work to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 continues.

The vision of the von der Leyen Commission was to become **geopolitical**. The pandemic has highlighted to a greater degree than ever the necessity of doing so: the EU will only successfully recover if our partners around the world also recover. The Commission has worked closely with multilateral institutions, national governments and non-governmental organisations to fight the pandemic. We have led the **global cooperation** to secure resources for a cure and a vaccine. We have been driven by the belief that good healthcare must be a universal right, not a privilege for those who can afford it.

The Commission has worked closely with multilateral institutions, national governments and non-governmental organisations to fight the pandemic.

We have sought cooperative solutions whenever possible, and we have not refrained from speaking the language of firmness when it was necessary. We have worked to place our relationship with **China** on a more solid footing, with more reciprocity and a level playing field in trade, investment and beyond. The **EU–China Summit** was an opportunity to deepen our cooperation – from the coronavirus crisis to climate action – and to discuss our disagreements, including on human rights and the situation in **Hong Kong**.

We have supported the UN Secretary-General's call for a **global ceasefire**, and we continue to take a leading role in mobilising the international community in situations of concern, co-organising major conferences on **Venezuela, Sudan** or **Syria**.

The von der Leyen Commission has worked non-stop to reach an agreement on a new partnership with the **United Kingdom**. We have engaged constructively in negotiations to achieve a mutually beneficial result and protecting the **European interests**. In parallel, the full and timely implementation of the **Withdrawal Agreement** remains our priority.

The EU's role in the world as a credible leading development and humanitarian partner continues. Our **'Team Europe' approach** – combining the resources and expertise of the European Commission, the Member States and the EU financial institutions – has already yielded more than **EUR 36 billion** to address the emergency response and consequent humanitarian needs, strengthen health, water/sanitation and nutrition systems and mitigate the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic worldwide.

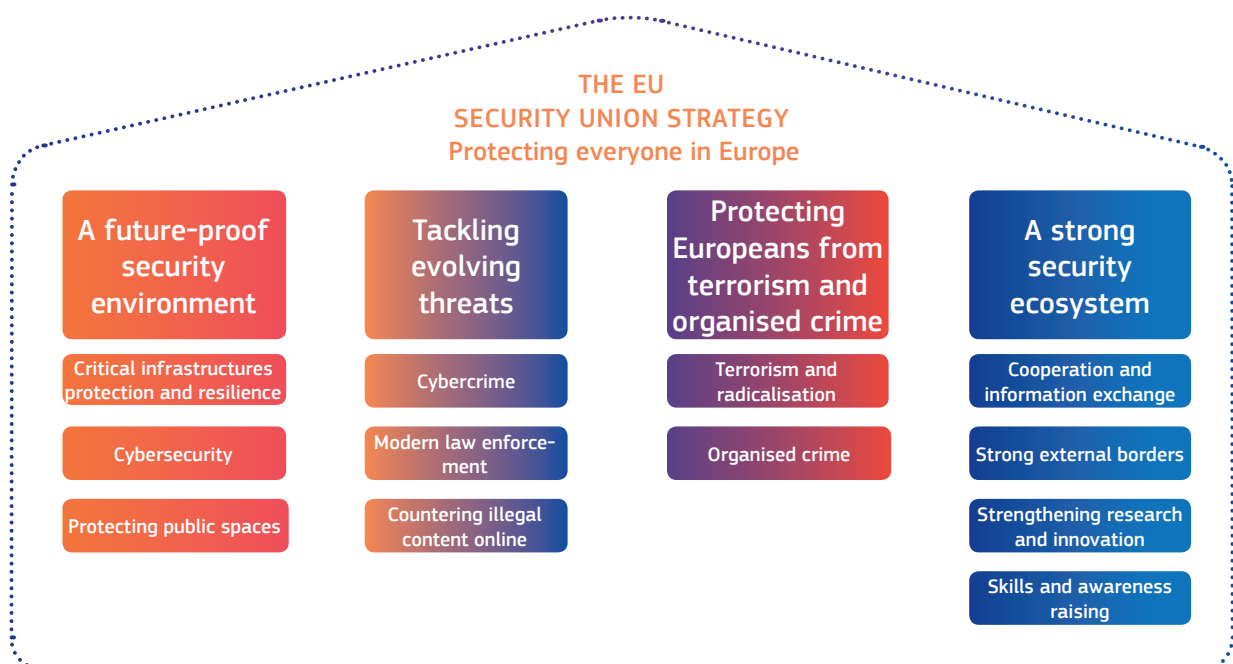
The European Commission has kept **EU citizens** at the heart of its decision-making and has looked after their interests in a whole variety of different ways, notably in the following areas.

It adopted its **first-ever EU strategy on victims' rights** on 24 June, with the overall objective of ensuring that all victims of crime can rely fully on their rights, no matter where in the EU the crime took place. The strategy focuses firstly on empowering victims to report crime, claim compensation and ultimately recover from the consequences of the crime; and secondly on working together with all relevant actors on victims' rights.

On 1 July, the European Commission launched the **youth employment support**, a bridge to jobs for the next generation, focused on vocational training and education, apprenticeships, support for youth employment and funding.

Security ranks as the highest priority for and concern of people in the EU. From combating terrorism and organised crime to cybersecurity, from preventing hybrid threats to increasing the resilience of our critical infrastructure, the **EU security union strategy** unveiled on 24 July will help strengthen security in our physical and digital environment over the next 5 years. The Commission has also presented a new **action plan on preventing money laundering and terrorist financing**.

The Commission has put forward the first **EU strategy to protect children from sexual abuse**, a crime that has demonstrably been exacerbated during the coronavirus crisis by physical isolation and increased online activity, along with new strategies to combat the illegal drugs and firearms that fuel organised crime.



The Commission has stepped up the **fight against misinformation, disinformation and foreign interference** by working with online platforms, civil society, academia and researchers. Together with the European External Action Service, it outlined all of these efforts and the next steps in a joint communication. This will not only reinforce public trust in the Union, but also protect people living in the EU from potential economic and bodily harm due to scams and fake coronavirus cures.

The work of the European Commission in the next 12 months will be crucial for the years and decades to come. The coronavirus pandemic has once again shown that **Europe's strength lies in its unity**, and that the great challenges that we face are bigger than any single country can deal with.

The investments through our strategic priorities will **kick-start our recovery and build a stronger Union** for the next generation. The Commission will double down on the priorities

set in the first 100 days, particularly the green and digital transitions. **NextGenerationEU** and the **new long-term EU budget** will give us the means to meet the expectations of citizens. The coming months and years represent a pivotal moment in European history and for future generations.

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At the beginning of its mandate, the Commission envisioned a green, prosperous and healthy future. Now is Europe's moment to power on, to realise that future and to deliver on its citizens' expectations.

TIMELINE



Legend

| Political priorities

| Response to the coronavirus crisis

| Negotiations with the United Kingdom

2019

DECEMBER



11.12

Launch of the **European Green Deal**, setting out a roadmap for how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050

2020

JANUARY

8.1

Meeting between President **Ursula von der Leyen** and British Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**



14.1

The European Green Deal investment plan to mobilise EU funding and stimulate public and private investments needed for the transition to a climate-neutral, green and inclusive economy

The Just Transition Mechanism, a key tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind

First-phase consultation of social partners – businesses and trade unions – on a **fair minimum wage** for workers in the EU

19.1

Berlin International Conference on **Libya**



21.1

Meeting between President **Ursula von der Leyen** and US President **Donald Trump**



31.1

The **United Kingdom** leaves the European Union



29.1

Secure 5G networks: the Commission endorses the EU toolbox agreed by Member States

FEBRUARY

The EU starts facilitating the repatriation of citizens to Europe, as part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic

4.2

Public consultations to shape Europe's **'beating cancer'** action plan

3.2

Presentation of the Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on directives for the **negotiation of a new partnership with the United Kingdom**



5.2

New methodology for **EU accession negotiations** – to make them more credible, predictable and dynamic, as the first element in the Commission's renewed enlargement strategy

17.2

EU and international donors pledge EUR 1.15 billion for reconstruction after the **earthquake in Albania**



19.2

Publication of the agenda to **shape Europe's digital future**, a strategy on data and a White Paper on artificial intelligence, opening up new opportunities for businesses, while focusing on trustworthy technology for citizens



25.2

The European Commission receives a mandate to begin **negotiations with the United Kingdom**



MARCH

4.3

With the **European climate law**, the Commission proposes a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050



5.3

A new **gender equality strategy** for 2020-2025 sets out key actions to ensure equality between women and men in Europe

9.3

A new EU strategy paves the way for a stronger, more ambitious **partnership with Africa**



10.3

A new **industrial strategy** prepares the green and digital transformations of European industry



11.3

A new **circular economy action plan** aims to create a cleaner and more competitive Europe



13.3

The Commission calls for a decisive coordinated economic response to **the coronavirus crisis**

The new **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative** (CRII) to help Member States fund their individual responses

16.3

An **advisory panel on coronavirus** brings together epidemiologists and virologists from different Member States



18.3

A temporary restriction is introduced on non-essential travel **to the EU** (until 30 June)



The Commission proposes new **policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership**

19.3

A **temporary framework** enables Member States to use the full flexibility under State aid rules to support the economy in the context of the coronavirus outbreak

20.3

The general escape clause of the **Stability and Growth Pact** is activated

23.3

'**Green lanes**' are implemented to ensure the availability of goods and essential services



26.3

European Council members give the green light to **accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia**

30.3

First meeting of the **EU-UK Joint Committee** on the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement

APRIL

2.4

Launch of the new instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (**SURE**) worth EUR 100 billion

15.4

A European roadmap sets out the path towards **common lifting of containment measures**



20.4

The **global EU response** to coronavirus, to help partner countries' efforts in tackling the pandemic, with the EU contribution reaching EUR 15.6 billion

24.4

Round 2 of negotiations on the future relationship with the United Kingdom

29.4

Package to support the **transport sector**



30.4

Measures to support the **agricultural sector**



MAY

4.5

During the **Coronavirus Global Response** pledging event, EUR 7.4 billion in pledges is raised from donors worldwide for universal access to vaccines



6.5

A videoconference takes place between EU and **Western Balkans** leaders



7.5

Action plan for a comprehensive Union policy on **preventing money laundering and terrorist financing**



8.5

The **EU humanitarian air bridge** is set up to transport humanitarian workers and emergency supplies to some of most critical areas around the world

13.5

The Commission presents guidance on how to safely resume travel and **reboot Europe's tourism** in 2020 and beyond

15.5

Round 3 of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

20.5

The **EU biodiversity strategy for 2030** addresses the five main drivers of biodiversity loss, and ensures the full implementation of EU legislation

The **farm to fork strategy** to enable the transition to a sustainable EU food system that safeguards food security and ensures access to healthy diets



26.5

Videoconference meeting takes place between leaders of the **EU and Japan**



27.5

The Commission presents a new recovery instrument, **NextGenerationEU**, embedded within a powerful, modern and revamped long-term EU budget

JUNE

5.6

Round 4 of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

15.6

High-level meeting between **President von der Leyen**, President **Michel** and President **Sassoli** and the British Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**

17.6

EU vaccine strategy

White Paper on **levelling the playing field as regards foreign subsidies**

The **'Re-open EU'** web platform is established, containing essential information allowing a safe relaunch of free movement and tourism across Europe



18.6

Eastern Partnership leaders' videoconference

22.6

The 22nd **EU-China Summit** takes place via videoconference



24.6

Launch of the **EU strategy on victims' rights** (2020-2025)

27.6

The '**Global Goal: Unite for our Future**' pledging summit organised by the European Commission and Global Citizen mobilises EUR 6.15 billion in additional funding to help develop and ensure equitable access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments



30.6

EU and Republic of Korea leaders discuss how to foster global cooperation in the recovery phase



The **repatriation of close to 78 000 EU citizens and 10 000 non-EU citizens** to Europe is facilitated by the European Civil Protection Mechanism.

JULY

2.7

Restricted round of negotiations with the United Kingdom



1.7

The **youth employment support** package is based on 4 building blocks: reinforcing the Youth Guarantee, training policy, apprenticeships and additional measures

The **European skills agenda** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience sets out objectives for upskilling and reskilling for the next 5 years

9.7

The Commission adopts a communication to help national authorities, businesses and citizens prepare for the inevitable changes that will arise at the **end of the transition period with the UK**



8.7

Powering a climate-neutral economy: **an EU strategy for energy system integration** is published

A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe is published

The first interinstitutional meeting takes place on **NextGenerationEU** and the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework

15.7

The **EU-India Summit** takes place via videoconference



21.7

EU leaders agree on the **recovery plan and multiannual financial framework** for 2021-2027

23.7

Round 6 of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

AUGUST

4.8

Within hours of the deadly **explosion in Beirut**, the **EU's Civil Protection Mechanism** is activated. Twenty EU Member States and participating countries respond with in-kind emergency assistance, including nearly 300 search-and-rescue experts



21.8

Round 7 of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

27.8

The Commission signs its **first contract with a pharmaceutical company**, AstraZeneca, which will allow the purchase of a vaccine against COVID-19 for all EU Member States



31.8

The Commission confirms its interest in participating in the **COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX)** for equitable access to affordable COVID-19 vaccines and, as part of a Team Europe effort, announces a contribution of EUR 400 million in guarantees to support COVAX

SEPTEMBER

10.9

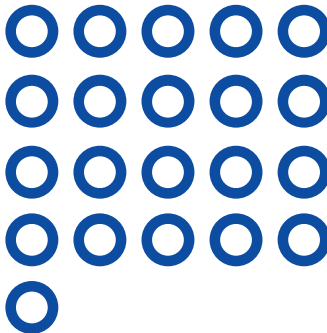
Round 8 of the negotiations with the United Kingdom

| LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS SINCE 1 DECEMBER 2019

64 agreed proposals



210 pending proposals
(of which 19 announced for withdrawal)



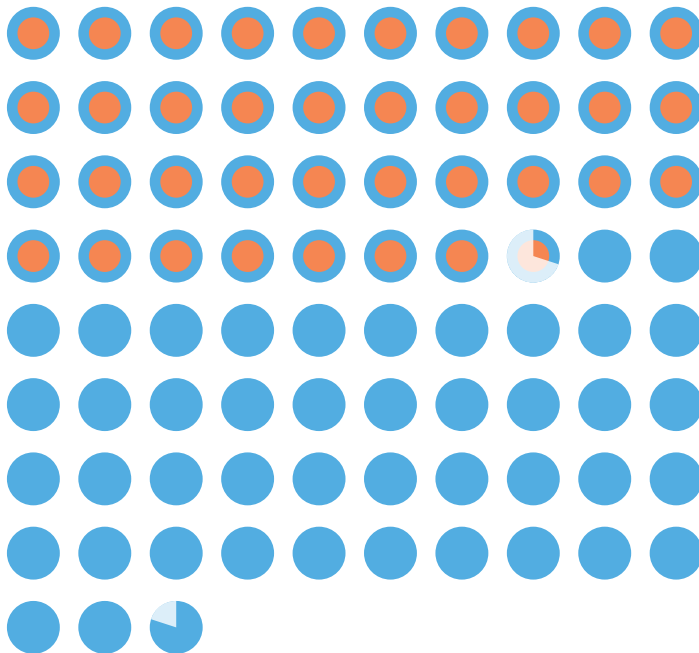
36 pending proposals related to the coronavirus response

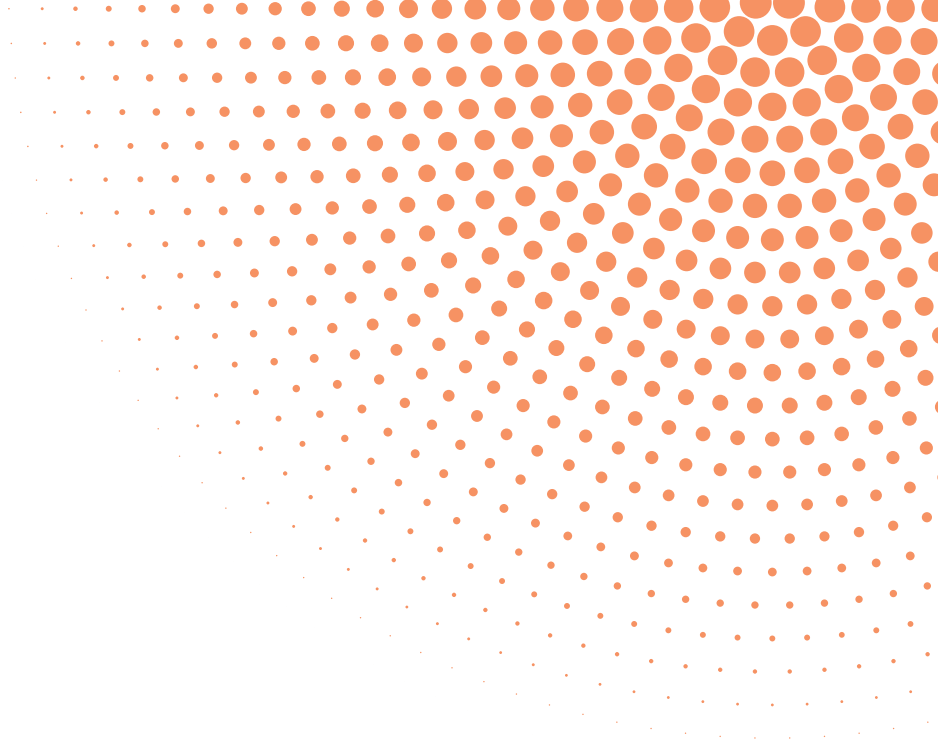


CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

828 decisions

and other legislative or non-legislative acts using oral, written and empowerment procedures, including **373 State aid decisions**





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