



## **STATE OF THE UNION 2020**

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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.

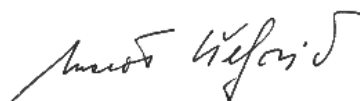
In addition to the actions listed below, the Commission will continue to carry out its work programme for 2020, with a number of major initiatives still to be adopted before the end of this year. These include the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the first annual rule of law report and the 2030 Climate 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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*