



**Ursula von der Leyen**

*President of the European Commission*

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## Mission letter

Brussels, 1 December 2019

**Ylva Johansson**

### **Commissioner for Home Affairs**

Dear Ylva,

Earlier this year, the people of Europe made their voices heard in record numbers at the European elections. They presented us with a mission to be decisive and ambitious on the big issues of our time that are shaping the future of our society, economy and planet.

Changes in climate, digital technologies and geopolitics are already having a profound effect on the lives of Europeans. We are witnessing major shifts all the way from global power structures to local politics. While these transformations may be different in nature, we must show the same ambition and determination in our response. What we do now will determine what kind of world our children live in and will define Europe's place in the world.

Our job as the European Commission will be to lead, to grasp the opportunities and to tackle the challenges that these changes present, working hand in hand with people from across Europe and with the governments, parliaments and institutions that serve them.

This is the guiding principle behind my Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024, which I presented to the European Parliament on 16 July 2019. I outlined six headline ambitions on which I want the European Commission's work to focus. These priorities are interlocking and are part of the same picture. In this spirit, I have put together a College in which we will all work, decide and deliver together.

## An open and inclusive way of working

This approach reflects the open, inclusive and cooperative way of working that I will instil throughout the Commission, as well as in our relationships with others.

### *The College: One team*

The European Commission functions on the **principle of collegiality**. This means we are one team: we all work together following a whole-of-government approach, we all have our say, we all decide collectively and we all take ownership of what is agreed.

To help us deliver on our ambitions and commitments, **I will empower eight Vice-Presidents** to steer and coordinate thematic Commissioners' Groups on each of the Commission's priorities. They will be supported in this role by the Secretariat-General. All Commissioners will be in one or more Groups. The Commissioner for Budget and Administration will report directly to me.

Of the eight Vice-Presidents, the **three Executive Vice-Presidents** will have a dual function. As Vice-Presidents, they will lead a Commissioners' Group and be supported by the Secretariat-General. In addition, they will also manage a policy area and have a Directorate-General under their authority for this part of their job. One of the three Executives, First Vice-President Timmermans, will chair the College in my absence.

The High Representative/Vice-President will support me in coordinating the external dimension of all Commissioners' work. To ensure our external action becomes more strategic and coherent, it will be systematically discussed and decided on by the College. To support this, all services and Cabinets will prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis, mirroring the process already in place for interinstitutional relations. This should also better align the internal and external aspects of our work. This will be a **'Geopolitical Commission'**.

I believe that we need to **speak and listen more to one another**, starting from within the Commission. College meetings will be places of open and honest discussion. As President I will set the agenda, but all College decisions will be taken collectively. In line with our commitment to fully digitalise the Commission and the need to use resources conscientiously, College meetings will be paperless and digital.

Each Commissioner will ensure the delivery of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy area. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

### *Interinstitutional relations and better policy making*

Along with our close relations with the Council, I want to strengthen the Commission's **special partnership with the European Parliament**. This priority must cut through the work of each Member of the College, starting with myself.

I will expect you to ensure the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations. In light of my support for a right of initiative for the Parliament, you should work closely with the relevant Committees, and be active and present during the preparation of resolutions requesting that the Commission legislate.

The more we build a consensus when designing policy, the quicker it can become law and make a difference to people's lives. This is why we need an **open and cooperative approach throughout the legislative process**, from policy design to final agreement. I will expect you to attend all political negotiations, known as trilogue meetings, with the other institutions.

We need to ensure that regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. The Commission must always have the leeway to act where needed. At the same time, we must send a clear signal to citizens that **our policies and proposals deliver and make life easier** for people and for businesses.

In this spirit, the Commission will develop a new instrument to deliver on a '**One In, One Out**' principle. Every legislative proposal creating new burdens should relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. We will also work with Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add unnecessary administrative burdens.

Proposals must be evidence based, widely consulted upon and subject to an impact assessment reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board. You will ensure that they respect the principles of **proportionality and subsidiarity** and show the clear benefit of European action.

Given that any legislation is only as good as its implementation, I want you to **focus on the application and enforcement of EU law** within your field. You should provide support and continuous guidance to Member States on implementation, and be ready to take swift action if EU law is breached.

### *Bringing Europe closer to home*

I want to **strengthen the links between people and the institutions that serve them**, to narrow the gap between expectation and reality and to communicate about what Europe is doing.

We must engage with all Europeans, not just those who live in the capitals or are knowledgeable about the European Union. I will expect you to **visit every Member State within the first half of our mandate** at the latest. You should meet regularly with national parliaments and take part in Citizens' Dialogues across our Union, notably as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

A stronger relationship with citizens starts with building trust and confidence. I will insist on the **highest levels of transparency and ethics** for the College as a whole. There can be no room for doubt about our behaviour or our integrity. The Code of Conduct for Commissioners sets out the standards and the rules to follow.

You will ensure budgetary spending represents value for taxpayers and follows the principles of sound financial management.

### *Making the most of our potential*

The College which takes office today is the **most gender-balanced to date**. It makes good on my pledge to put together a Commission that is more representative and draws on all of our potential. This is a good start, but there is plenty more work to be done.

I expect you to **draw on all of Europe's talents** when it comes to setting up your own Cabinets. That means striking an appropriate balance in terms of gender, experience and geography.

The Commission should also lead by example when it comes to ensuring better representation and a diversity of voices in our public life. With this in mind, all public events organised by the Commission should aim to feature gender-balanced panels and a broad range of perspectives from across Europe.

## Your mission

### **I would like to entrust you with the role of Commissioner for Home Affairs.**

Asylum and migration are amongst the most significant challenges the EU has faced in recent years. Along with security, they rank high among the priorities and concerns of many Europeans. They will inevitably remain at the centre of our politics during the next mandate.

Your task during the next mandate will be to help find the common ground and the fresh start we need on migration and asylum. We should aim to unite around our common values and humanitarian responsibilities, and seek to make our communities and our society more cohesive and integrated.

You will have an important role in showing that our Union can protect and give peace of mind to Europeans by filling in the gaps in our approach to security and the new threats we face.

### *A fresh start on migration*

I want you to develop a **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**. This should involve a comprehensive approach looking at external borders, systems for asylum and return, the Schengen Area of Free movement and working with our partners outside the EU.

- As part of this, I want you to **relaunch the reform of asylum rules**. This should include finding new forms of solidarity and should ensure that all Member States make meaningful contributions to support those countries under the most pressure.
- You should look at ways to **close loopholes between asylum and return rules**. We must honour our values and our responsibilities to those fleeing persecution or conflict, while at the same time ensuring that those not eligible to stay go back.

- You should also work on a new, more sustainable, reliable and permanent approach to **search and rescue**, replacing existing ad hoc solutions.
- You should focus on ensuring there are genuine **legal pathways** to the European Union, both through the resettlement of those in need of international protection and through employment opportunities for skilled workers.
- I want you to work closely with the High Representative/Vice-President and other Commissioners to develop stronger cooperation with **countries of origin and transit**. You should work closely with Member States to step up efforts to develop a more robust system of readmission and return.
- You should look at ways to establish humanitarian corridors, in order to help refugees and offer decent and humane conditions. We must also step up the **fight against human traffickers and smugglers** so as to break their business models and close the gaps in which they operate.
- You should focus on the implementation of the **reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency**, which should play a central role in ensuring we have strong external borders. We should aim to have 10,000 Frontex border guards able to act at the EU's external borders by 2024.
- This will help us return to a **fully functioning Schengen Area** of free movement. You should focus on implementing current Schengen rules, look at how we can improve the way they work and pave the way for further enlargement.

### *Internal security*

Terrorist attacks that have struck at the heart of our Union in recent years and the ever evolving nature of organised crime have brought into sharp focus the need to improve cooperation on internal security issues and build an effective Security Union.

- You should step up efforts to **prevent, prosecute and respond to terrorism**. We must ensure that we deny terrorists the means and space to plan, finance and carry out attacks. You should focus on enforcing and implementing legislation and assess whether there are gaps in our approach.
- You should ensure that the architecture of **law enforcement cooperation** is fit to deal with new and emerging threats. In this respect, you should look at Europol's mandate.
- I want you to focus on ensuring the implementation of the recently agreed legislation on the **interoperability of EU information systems**. We must also improve cross-border cooperation between law enforcement authorities to ensure that the information needed to investigate organised crime and terrorism is available.
- Our approach to security and protection must be as uncompromising online as it is offline. I want you to continue efforts to **prevent and remove terrorist content online**.

- You should continue to drive forward the EU Internet Forum to bring together internet platforms and authorities to counter hate speech and terrorist content online. This will be an important part of the continued **fight against radicalisation**.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life. The Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs will support you in your work.

## The way forward

The mission outlined above is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Other opportunities and challenges will no doubt appear over the course of the next five years. On all of these issues, I will ask you to work closely with me, and with other Members of the College.

Once there is more clarity, we should be ready to pave the way for an ambitious and strategic partnership with the United Kingdom.

I look forward to working closely together at what is an exciting and testing time for our Union. You can of course count on my full personal and political support throughout our mandate.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

