



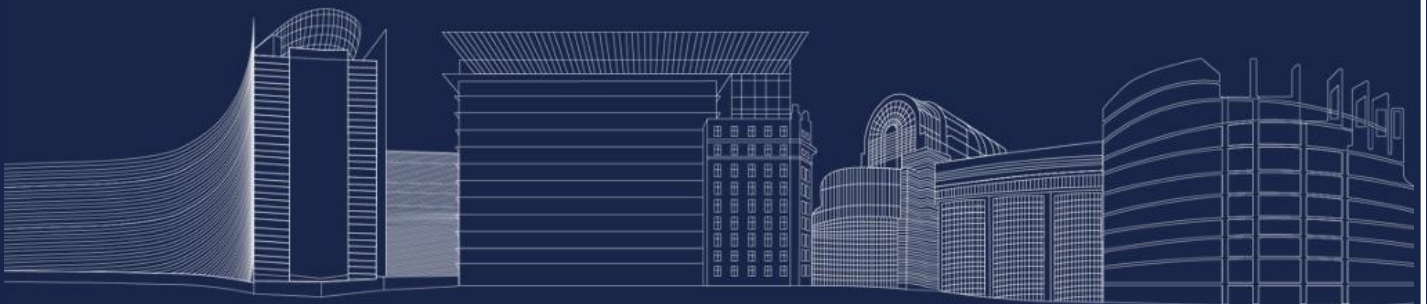
**UTOPIA**

Shaping Policy & Communication

**Political guidelines for the next  
European Commission  
2024-2029**

*Ursula von der Leyen*  
*Candidate for the European Commission President*

*18 July 2024*



## Ursula Von der Leyen



Ursula von der Leyen (born in Brussels, 1958) is a prominent figure in German and European politics, notable for being the first woman to hold the Presidency of the European Commission. She began her career in **medicine**, earning a degree from Hanover Medical School.

Her political career began when she joined the **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)** in 1990, eventually rising through the ranks to become a member of the CDU's leadership committee and later a federal minister. Von der Leyen's tenure in German federal politics included impactful roles such as **Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth**. She later served as **Minister of Labour and Social Affairs**.

In December 2013, von der Leyen made history by becoming Germany's first female **Minister of Defense**. During her mandate, she faced significant challenges such as modernizing the Bundeswehr, advocating for a **stronger European defense cooperation** and addressing readiness issues within Germany's armed forces.

In July 2019, von der Leyen was elected **President of the European Commission**, succeeding Jean-Claude Juncker. Her presidency began amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, where she led efforts to coordinate EU-wide responses, secure vaccine supplies, and mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis. She also played a pivotal role in negotiating the EU's recovery plan and pushing forward the ambitious European Green Deal aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

Moreover, von der Leyen has been a key figure in shaping the EU's response to the Russia-Ukraine war, advocating for sanctions against Russia and supporting Ukraine with financial and military aid. Her leadership has been marked by efforts to **strengthen European unity, resilience, and global influence**, while also promoting **gender equality and sustainability** as core principles of EU policy.

## A NEW PLAN FOR EUROPE'S SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *new EU wide legal status to help innovative companies grow*
- *new SME and competitiveness check*
- *new Interinstitutional agreement on simplification and better law making*
- *new Clean Industrial Deal*
- *90% emission-reduction target for 2040*
- *Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act*
- *activate and extend our aggregate demand mechanism to hydrogen and critical raw materials.*
- *new Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships*
- *Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation*
- *possible targeted amendment to the combustion engines ban regulation*
- *new Circular Economy Act*
- *new chemicals industry package*
- *Critical Medicines Act*
- *European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers*

### *Making business easier*

- **Complete the Single Market** in sectors like services, energy, defence, finance, electronic communications and digital.
- **Regular dialogues on implementation** with stakeholders to discuss.
- Simplify, consolidate and codify legislation.
- **New EU wide legal status to help innovative companies grow.** This will take the form of a so-called **28th regime** to allow companies to benefit from a simpler, harmonised set of rules in certain areas.
- Support firms which are targets of killer acquisitions from foreign companies.
- **New SME and competitiveness check** to help avoid unnecessary administrative burdens, maintaining high standards.
- **Renew** Interinstitutional agreement on **simplification and better law making.**

### *A Clean Industrial Deal*

- Focus on **implementing the existing legal framework for 2030.**
- **New Clean Industrial Deal** for competitive industries and quality jobs **in the first 100 days of the mandate.**
- Supporting and creating the right conditions for companies to reach our common goals: simplifying, investing and ensuring access to cheap, sustainable and secure energy supplies and raw materials.
- **90% emission-reduction target for 2040.**
- **Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act.**

- **Bring down energy prices** by moving further away from fossil fuels, reinforcing joint procurement for fuels, and developing the governance needed for a true Energy Union.
- **Scale-up and prioritise investment in clean energy infrastructure and technologies**, including renewables and low-carbon technologies, grid infrastructure, storage capacity and transport infrastructure for captured CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Invest in energy efficiency measures, the digitalisation of our energy system and the deployment of a hydrogen network.
- **Activate and extend our aggregate demand mechanism** to go beyond gas and include hydrogen and critical raw materials.
- **New Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships** to help secure supply of raw materials, clean energy and clean tech from across the world.
- Maintain Europe's leadership in international climate negotiations proposing a global climate and energy vision ahead of COP30 in Brazil.
- **Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation.**

### *A more circular and resilient economy*

- **New Circular Economy Act**, to create market demand for secondary materials and a single market for waste, notably in relation to critical raw materials.
- **New chemicals industry package**, aiming to simplify REACH and provide clarity on “forever chemicals”, or PFAS.
- **Critical Medicines Act** to reduce dependencies relating to critical medicines and ingredients.
- **Work on preventive health**, in particular for mental health, including at work, and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Protect the security of our health systems** with a **European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers** in the first 100 days of the mandate.

### *Boosting productivity with digital tech diffusion*

- Focusing on the implementation and enforcement of the digital laws adopted during the last mandate.
- Tech giants must assume responsibility for their enormous systemic power in our society and economy.
- Tackling challenges with e-commerce platforms, ensuring a level playing field.
- **Step up our investment in the next wave of frontier technologies**, in particular supercomputing, semiconductors, the Internet of Things, genomics, quantum computing, space tech and beyond.
- Europe is already leading the way on making AI safer, focus our efforts on becoming a global leader in AI innovation.
- In the first 100 days **ensure access to new, tailored supercomputing capacity for AI start-ups** and industry through an AI Factories initiative.
- **Apply AI Strategy** to boost new industrial uses of AI and to improve the delivery of a variety of public services, such as healthcare.

- **Set up a European AI Research Council** to pool resources, similar to the approach taken with CERN.
- **European Data Union Strategy** will draw on existing data rules to ensure a simplified, clear and coherent legal framework.

### *Putting research and innovation at the heart of our economy*

- Increase our research spending to focus more on strategic priorities.
- **Expand the European Research Council and the European Innovation Council.**
- **New European Biotech Act in 2025.** This will be part of a broader **Strategy for European Life Sciences** to look at how we can support our green and digital transitions and develop high-value technologies.
- Also develop ideas through **new public-private partnerships**, such as joint undertakings.

### *Turbo charging investment*

- **Investment Commission.** Maximise public investment and leverage and de-risk private capital working closely with the European Investment Bank.
- **Completing the Capital Markets Union** could attract an extra EUR 470 billion of investment per year.
- Put forward **risk-absorbing measures to make it easier** for commercial banks, investors and venture capital to finance fast-growing companies.
- **Review our regulatory framework to address barriers** that restrict the amount of European capital available to finance innovation.
- Tackle the **fragmentation of our financial markets** which sees EUR 300 billion of European families' savings transferred to foreign markets every year.
- Develop the proposal in the Enrico Letta report and **propose a European Savings and Investments Union.**
- **Public Procurement Directive** to make better use of public procurement – which accounts for 14% of EU GDP.
- **The Clean Industrial Deal** must enable us to invest more together in clean and strategic technologies and in energy-intensive industries. The future of the clean and cutting-edge tech industry must be made in Europe.
- **New European Competitiveness Fund** as part of our proposal for a new and reinforced budget in the next multiannual financial framework. It will support **Important Projects of Common Interest (IPCEIs)** so that Europe can use its collective strength to invest together in ambitious common projects. I will make IPCEIs simpler and faster.

### *Tackling the skills and labour gaps*

- **Union of Skills** focusing on investment, adult and lifelong learning, skill retention and the recognition of different types of training to enable people to

work across our Union. Central to this will be embedding lifelong learning into education and career.

- **STEM Education Strategic Plan** should also bring more girls and women into STEM education and careers.
- **European Strategy for Vocational Education and Training** to boost the number of people with a secondary VET degree.
- **Boost and refocus skills funding in the EU budget** to ensure it is better linked to labour markets.
- **A European Degree and a Skills Portability Initiative** to ensure a skill acquired in one country is recognised in another.

## A NEW ERA FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *Create a European Defence Union*
- *appoint a commissioner for Defence*
- *present a White Paper on the Future of European Defence*
- *build up the European Defence Fund*
- *develop a European Air Shield and cyber defence*
- *develop a Preparedness Union Strategy*
- *present a new strategy to support medical countermeasures against public health threats*
- *propose a new European Internal Security Strategy*
- *put forward a new European action plan against drug trafficking that will support a wider EU Port Strategy*
- *develop a new Counter-Terrorism Agenda*
- *create a new European Critical Communication System*
- *guarantee a fully functional European digital border management*
- *implement an EU Visa Policy Strategy*
- *implementing all parts of the Pact on Migration and Asylum*
- *propose a new common approach on returns*

### ***Bringing the European Defence Union to life***

- Create a **European Defence Union** with coordinated military effort
- Appoint a **commissioner for Defence**.
- Present a **White Paper on the Future of European Defence** in the first 100 days of the mandate.
- Strengthen **EU-NATO partnership** and cooperation.
- Build up the **European Defence Fund** to invest more, better and together.
- Reinforce the **European Defence Industry Programme** to incentivise common procurement.
- Create a true **Single Market for Defence products and services**.
- Create an **European Defence Union projects** that pools the resources and counter common threats.
- Develop an **European Air Shield and cyber defence**.
- Work together with the EIB to **finance and de-risk common defence projects**.

### ***A Preparedness Union***

- Develop a **Preparedness Union Strategy**.
- Enhance **cyber defence capabilities**.

- Present a new strategy to **support medical countermeasures** against public health threats.

### *A safer and more secure Europe*

- Propose a new **European Internal Security Strategy** to ensure that security is integrated in EU legislation.
- Make **Europol** a truly operational police agency and more than **double its staff over time**.
- Strengthen the **European Arrest Warrant**.
- Provide more power to the **European Public Prosecutors' Office**.
- Put forward a **new European action plan against drug trafficking** that will support a wider EU Port Strategy.
- Develop a new **Counter-Terrorism Agenda** to address new and emerging threats.
- Create a new **European Critical Communication System** used by public authorities in charge of security and safety.

### *Stronger Common borders*

- Guarantee a fully functional **European digital border management**.
- **strengthen Frontex** and triple the number of **European Border and Coast Guards** to 30 000.
- Implement an **EU Visa Policy Strategy** to better secure borders.
- Manage migration and ensure a complete and **fully functioning Schengen area**.

### *Standing fair and firm on migration*

- Implementing all parts of the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**.
- Develop a **European Migration and Asylum Strategy** to frame a forward-looking vision and adapt to future challenges.
- Propose a **new common approach on returns**.
- Strengthen the capacity of **Europol against smugglers and people traffickers**.



## SUPPORTING PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING OUR SOCIETIES AND OUR SOCIAL MODEL

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *Frame efforts in a new Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights*
- *develop a Quality Jobs Roadmap*
- *deliver a new Pact for European Social Dialogue by early 2025*
- *launch the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*
- *appoint a Commissioner responsible for housing*
- *put forward the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan*
- *Youth Policy Dialogues and a President's Youth Advisory Board*
- *launch an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on well-being*
- *task a Commissioner for Equality with proposing an updated strategy on LGBTIQ equality and developing a new anti-racism strategy for post-2025*
- *propose a new Gender Equality Strategy for post-2025*
- *present a Roadmap for Women's Rights on the next International Women's Day*

### *Social fairness in the modern economy*

- Frame efforts in a new **Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights**.
- **Address digitalization impacts on work**, including AI management, telework, and mental health.
- Introduce a **right to disconnect** to safeguard worker rights.
- Develop a **Quality Jobs Roadmap**, developed together with social partners, for fair wages, working conditions, training, and job transitions.
- Increase funding for a **just transition across the next long-term budget**
- Deliver a **new Pact for European Social Dialogue** by early 2025.
- **Launch the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** to address the root causes of poverty.
- Appoint a **commissioner responsible for housing** to address the housing crisis.
- Put forward the first-ever **European Affordable Housing Plan**: implement a pan-European investment platform for affordable and sustainable housing.
- Implement the **Social Climate Fund**, which will notably help with renovations and access to affordable and energy-efficient housing.
- **Expand the New European Bauhaus** initiative for sustainability, inclusion, and affordability.
- **Strengthened cohesion and growth policy** with regions at the centre.

### *Reuniting our societies, supporting our young people*

- Strengthen **Erasmus+** for vocational training and develop skills and shared experiences.

- Enhance youth participation in society and democracy through **Youth Policy Dialogues and a President's Youth Advisory Board**.
- Protect the **mental health of children and young people**.
- Launch an **EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media** on well-being: taking action on the addictive design of online services, combat abusive behaviour online with an action plan against cyberbullying.

### *A Union of equality*

- Task a **Commissioner for Equality** with proposing an updated strategy on LGBTIQ equality and developing a new anti-racism strategy for post-2025.
- Propose a **new Gender Equality Strategy** for post-2025, addressing gender-based violence and empowering women.
- Present a **Roadmap for Women's Rights** on the next International Women's Day.

## SUSTAINING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE: FOOD SECURITY, WATER AND NATURE

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *a new Vision for Agriculture and Food*
- *appointment of a Fisheries and Oceans Commissioner*
- *European Oceans Pact*
- *create a European Civil Defence Mechanism,*
- *map the risks and preparedness needs for infrastructure, energy, water, food and land in cities and rural areas*
- *strengthening Europe's water security through a new European Water Resilience Strategy*

- Farming is a core part of the European way of life - and it must always stay that way
- A **Vision for Agriculture and Food** will be presented in the first 100 days looking at how to ensure the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the farming sector within the planetary boundaries.
- **Ensure farmers a fair and sufficient income.** The EU budget and CAP must be targeted and reward farmers working with nature, preserving our biodiversity and natural ecosystems and helping to decarbonise our economy on the way to netzero by 2050.
- **Support the competitiveness of the entire food value chain** through investment and innovation on farms, cooperatives, in our agri-food businesses and in the many SMEs in the sector.
- **Protect food sovereignty.**
- appointment of a **Fisheries and Oceans Commissioner** tasked with ensuring the sector remains sustainable, competitive and resilient and with upholding a level playing field for the European fisheries chain.
- **European Oceans Pact** which will focus on boosting the blue economy and ensuring the good governance and sustainability of the oceans.
- **Protection of our natural world**, in particular forests and woodlands,
- Reach the international biodiversity commitments, such as those taken in the Kunming Montreal Agreement.

### *Climate adaptation, preparedness and solidarity*

- **Create a European Civil Defence Mechanism.**
- **Map the risks and preparedness needs** for infrastructure, energy, water, food and land in cities and rural areas, as well as the need for data and early warning systems.
- **European Climate Adaptation Plan**, to support Member States notably on preparedness and planning and ensure regular science-based risk assessments.
- **Strengthening Europe's water security** through a new **European Water Resilience Strategy** to ensure sources are properly managed, scarcity is addressed, and that the EU enhances the competitive innovative edge of its water industry and takes a circular economy approach.

## PROTECTING OUR DEMOCRACY, UPHOLDING OUR VALUES

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *propose a new European Democracy Shield*
- *create a European network of fact-checkers*
- *implementing transparency requirements in the AI Act and strengthening the approach to AI-produced content*
- *enhance the Rule of Law Report*
- *implement the European Media Freedom Act*
- *embed citizens' participation across the EU through the European Citizens' Panel*

### *Protecting our democracy*

- Propose a **new European Democracy Shield** to counter foreign information manipulation and interference online, to increase situational awareness, by detecting, analysing and proactively countering disinformation and information manipulation.
- Create a **European network of fact-checkers**.
- Step up **digital enforcement to detect, flag, and remove misleading information** in line with the Digital Services Act.
- Address the impact of deepfakes on elections by **implementing transparency requirements in the AI Act** and strengthening the approach to AI-produced content.

### *Strengthening the rule of law*

- **Enhance the Rule of Law Report** to address issues affecting companies, especially SMEs, and include accession countries when ready.
- **Invest in upholding the rule of law**.
- **Use enforcement mechanisms** effectively, including the Article 7 mechanism
- Ensure general regime of conditionality, applying to all EU funds.
- Implement **the European Media Freedom Act** and increase support for and protection of independent media and journalists.

### *Putting citizens at the heart of our democracy*

- Embed citizens' participation across the EU through the **European Citizens' Panel**.
- Enhance **engagement with civil society organizations** to defend societal issues and uphold human rights.
- **Work with local councillors** on citizen engagement to better understand Europe's impact on everyday life and strengthen the existing network of local councillors.

## A GLOBAL EUROPE: LEVERAGING OUR POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *A dedicated Commissioner for Enlargement*
- *Commissioner for the Mediterranean*
- *wider comprehensive EU-Middle East Strategy with a view to ‘the day after’ the war in Gaza.*
- *new range of Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships*
- *Propose a new Strategic EU-India Agenda*

- **Ukraine is fighting for our freedom** every day – and we must work for its freedom too.
- The war in **Gaza and the destabilisation of the Middle East** as a whole is leading to bloodshed and instability across the region.
- **Strengthen relations with the United Kingdom** on issues of shared interest, such as energy, security, resilience, and people-to-people contacts.

### *Enlargement as a geopolitical imperative*

- **A dedicated Commissioner for Enlargement as** accession to the EU will always be a merit-based process.

### *A more strategic approach to our neighbourhood*

- **Commissioner for the Mediterranean** to focus on investment and partnerships, economic stability, job creation, energy, security, migration, and other areas of mutual interest, respecting our values and principles.
- **The new Pact for the Mediterranean** will reshape this essential relationship.
- Ensure a **just and comprehensive resolution to the ongoing conflict in Gaza**. We need an enduring ceasefire and to look further ahead.
- Work on a **multi-year support package for an effective Palestinian Authority** and to help pave the way for a two-state solution. The two-state solution is the best way to ensure security for both Israelis and Palestinians.
- This will be part of a wider comprehensive EU-Middle East Strategy with a view to ‘the day after’ the war in Gaza.

### *A new economic foreign policy*

- **Economic security and statecraft:** more assertive in protecting our economy from key technology leakage and security concerns. This issue is particularly acute when dealing with those who are also strategic competitors and systemic rivals. Our principle of ‘**de-risking not decoupling**’.

- **Trade:** A new range of **Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships** and deepen our relationships on critical minerals and raw materials. To support this, we must sustain and improve rules-based trade, including through a reformed and strengthened World Trade Organization.
- **Take Global Gateway to the next level** by proposing an integrated offer to our partners.
- **Team Europe approach:** mobilising Member States, public development banks and development finance institutions, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, export credit agencies, and the private sector.
- **Propose a new Strategic EU-India Agenda** and strengthen our cooperation with **ASEAN**. Work with **Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Australia** with whom we face common challenges in cyber, space, and in the secure supply of critical minerals and technologies. This includes our collective efforts to deploy the full range of our combined statecraft to **deter China from unilaterally changing the status quo** by military means, particularly over Taiwan.
- New impetus in our **mutual partnership with Africa** ahead of the next EU-African Union Summit in 2025.  
**Deepen the cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean** through Global Gateway investment.

### *Reshaping multilateralism for today's world*

- **A leading role for Europe in reforming the international system**, starting with the upcoming UN Summit for the Future.
- Need to listen and respond better to the concerns of our partners impacted by European legislation, in particular those linked to the European Green Deal.

## DELIVERING TOGETHER AND PREPARING OUR UNION FOR THE FUTURE

### KEY INITIATIVES

- *Proposal for a new long-term budget: more policy based, targeted, simpler and impactful*
- *Ambitious reform agenda to ensure the functioning of a larger Union*
- *More cooperation with the European Parliament*

### *A new budget fit for our ambitions*

- Need for **simplicity and flexibility**, speed and strategic focus in our spending.
- Need for a new approach for a modern and **reinforced EU budget**. In 2025, **proposal for a new long-term budget**: more focused and targeted to where EU action is most needed in a flexible way, policy-based budget; simpler in the way it works – with fewer programmes and a plan for each country linking key reforms with investment, and focusing on our joint priorities, including promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion; more impactful, notably with a European Competitiveness Fund and better use of our budget to leverage further national, private and institutional financing.
- Respect of **the rule of law** is a must for EU funds.
- Revamp the **external action** financing.
- **Strengthened and modernized revenues** for the EU budget, new own resources.

### *An ambitious reform agenda for Europe*

- Ambitious **reform agenda** to ensure the proper functioning of a larger Union.
- Europe needs a **Treaty change** where it can improve the Union.
- **Enlargement as a catalyst for progress**: in the first 100 days, pre-enlargement policy reviews will be presented, focusing on individual sectors (e.g. Single Market, rule of law, climate and energy, etc.)
- **Proposals to enhance Europe's capacity to act**, looking at new formats and decision-making processes, including for a larger Union.

### *Delivering together with the European Parliament*

- Continue **support to the European Parliament's right of initiative**. Strengthen the cooperation on Article 225 by asking Commissioners to take part in structured dialogues with Parliamentary committees on these resolutions.
- **Revision of the Framework agreement with the European Parliament**, to strengthen our joint political responsibility, strengthen our dialogue, increase the flow of information and ensure greater transparency.
- Strengthen the dialogue among the Institutions and ensure that Commissioners will be more present in their respective EP committees.