

# renew europe.

Dear President-Candidate von der Leyen,

Europe is at a crossroads. Confronted with the rise of populism, the return of war on the European continent, a geopolitical instability, intensified competition with third countries, and the climate upheaval, it is essential to put all necessary efforts in achieving the strategic autonomy of the European Union. Thus, we need to uphold our democratic values, succeed in the climate and digital transitions, strengthen our economy, increase our defense capabilities, reinforce our industries and enable our companies to grow. In this regard, any deal with extremists and populists is unconceivable.

To achieve a stronger, secure, protective, competitive and sustainable Europe, Renew Europe asks you to commit on the following actions.

## **1. Strengthened fight for Democracy, for the Rule of Law and for our values**

The EU is a community of values: human rights, liberal democracy, media freedom and pluralism, fight against corruption, fight against discrimination, protection of minorities, gender equality. These core values will continue to be our fight, because they are the precondition for the prosperity and the security of the Union. We call for:

- further developing the rule of law toolbox into a single, evidence-based and EU- wide mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights covering the full scope of Article 2 of TEU with effective sanctions mechanism;
- a rigorous and full implementation of all existing instruments on Rule of Law;
- extending the scope of the rule of law conditionality mechanism and speed- up its implementation;
- advancing on ongoing cases against Hungary, including under article 7 TEU;
- the inclusion of the right to abortion in the EU Charter of fundamental rights;
- defending LGBTIQ rights, including by banning “conversion therapies” and introducing the recognition of same- sex marriages and civil partnerships across the EU;
- strong anti- racism commitment to combat antisemitism, islamophobia and xenophobia;
- strengthening the protection of media freedom, media pluralism and accurate cross-ownership solutions consistent with EU values; swift and full implementation of the European Media Freedom Act;
- working intensively to make all MS ratify the Istanbul convention;
- making the EPPO a fully independent Union body with broadened competences and increased resources and strongly incentivising MS to join;
- introducing new legislation addressing social media risks for youth by establishing a digital majority at 15;
- Combating online harassment;

- Concluding the directive on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse material;
- Applying human rights clauses in a coherent manner to all EU international agreements with third countries and ensure that breaches have consequences;
- Proper follow-up of the conclusions of the Conference for the Future of Europe;
- Include corruption in the EU Human Rights sanction regime (EU Magnitsky Act);
- Monitor closely the strict implementation of the Asylum and Migration Pact and prevent abuses;
- No externalisation of asylum processing;
- Investment in strategic partnerships with third countries of origin or transit;
- Effective returns;
- Strengthening Frontex as a genuine border protection agency;
- Create safe and legal routes for legal migration by developing a European strategy and reforming the Blue Card;
- unequivocal support for EP's call for launching a convention as soon as possible to revise the Treaties, including the abolishment of unjustifiable vetoes and EP right to initiative;
- Fully functional Schengen area, including by removing the remaining land border controls vis-a-vis Bulgaria and Romania;
- Continue the work on the proper scrutiny role of the EP over the European Commission, including question time sessions with individual commissioners.

## **2. A secure and protective Europe**

Peace is the greatest achievement of the European Union and the cornerstone of our prosperity. Yet, Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine proved that it cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, it should be actively defended against external threats. The EU needs to be a credible security provider and strategic partner able to protect its citizens and allies. Our demands to achieve this are the following:

- Increased military, capacity- building, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine;
- Strengthen the EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus and implementation of sanctions regimes against third countries;
- Establish a legal regime for confiscating Russian state-owned assets;
- Complete phase out of imported fossil fuels from Russia as quickly as possible with a set deadline, as well as an import ban on Russian products;
- Actively support the Ukrainian reforms and its integration to the EU;
- Investing massively in our defence, notably by increasing the Defence Fund and mobilising 100 billion euros for joint procurement and development;
- Increased allocation of funds to defence initiatives in the next MFF;
- Improved coordination within the European Defence Industry and favouring European purchase in the field of defence;
- Work towards creating an internal market for defence by standardising ammunitions and interoperability of weapon systems;
- Develop a European Rapid Reaction Force and strengthen our cybersecurity capabilities, including by establishing a Union-wide cyber unit;

- Close cooperation with NATO;
- Clear enlargement policy with a strong focus on the integration of Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries.
- Tackle hybrid threats, foreign interference and disinformation;
- Securing the external borders is a joint task; Secure our digital infrastructure on land, at sea and in space;
- Extend the competences of the EPPO to the circumvention of EU sanctions;
- Support for the setting up of a special tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression committed against Ukraine by Russia's leaders and their allies;
- Enhancing police and judicial cooperation against transnational threats and networks such as terrorism, organised crime, radical Islamism, drug trafficking, smuggling and child exploitation.

### **3. A competitive Europe with increased focus on strategic autonomy**

Europe must not only be strong and protective, but it must also be the springboard that enables our companies to win the global competition, notably in the climate and digital transitions, and ensure the profitability required to maintain our strategic autonomy. Thus, our demands are:

- Making the Capital Markets Union a reality to unlock funding to tackle current and future challenges;
- Create a Savings and Investment Union, namely through the completion of the Capital Market Union, which should offer simple, easy-to-use products with long-term and sustainable options, to help finance green and digital transition, including through asset-backed securities;
- Create of genuine industrial strategy via a New European Industrial Deal and a Competitiveness Act;
- Create a business-friendly environment through cutting red tape, simplifying reporting obligations, avoiding overregulation, simplifying and codifying the EU corporate rules with a special focus on SMEs;
- Investigating the possibility of establishing a Sovereignty Fund to reduce our strategic dependencies, mobilising European savings in productive investments and public investments to de-risk private ones;
- Increase strategic autonomy by the diversification of supply chains of essential goods and raw material, health, energy, food and digital technologies.
- Complete the Single Market and develop a genuine capital, financial, banking, research, tech., telecoms (Digital Network Act) and energy market;
- Ensure proper follow-up of the recommendations of Letta report;
- Develop and fund a genuine zero carbon Energy Union Package to ensure the required investment to progressively phase out from fossil fuels and offering companies and households energy at affordable prices, step-up energy storage and grid;
- Set up an independent High-Level Report on strategic autonomy in order to propose in the short term, a legislative package that can take the form of a "Strategic Autonomy Omnibus Act" that include sectors such economy, health, energy, defense, agriculture;

- Create a single “European license”, allowing companies to operate in all MS;
- Tackle critical bottlenecks such as for granting permits (Permit Acceleration Act);
- Correct implementation of DSA, DMA, AI Act while promoting innovation and European intellectual property;
- Ensure horizontal and vertical impact assessments;
- Apply the “think small first” principle at the inception of the legislation;
- Protect the Single Market against unfair competition, notably by ensuring that third-country access to the Single Market requires reciprocal human rights, labour, sustainability/environmental and safety standards;
- Ensure monetary stability;
- Strengthen the EU budget and finances;
- Introduce new own resources;
- Make the MFF more result and strategic oriented, in particular through the revision of its funds like Horizon framework and ensure easier access to funding at national level;
- Promote public- private partnerships;
- Establish a European preference notably through the revision of the Directive on Public Procurement as proposed in Letta report;
- Active and increased support for SME’s and start-ups;
- Nominate a Commissioner for Enforcement ;
- Nominate a Commissioner for Trade and Investment Partnerships with the full focus on the EU’s trade and investment policy partnerships;
- Promote labour mobility through reinforced mutual recognition of education and training;

#### **4. Sustainable Europe**

Our journey towards a more sustainable Europe has no alternatives. We want to ensure a livable, secure and prosperous continent for all generations to come. We ask the future Commission to commit to deliver a climate- neutral energy transition and act to reverse biodiversity loss, while supporting our farmers and citizens. We want a Europe that:

Protects the Planet by:

- Continuing the Green Deal, without backtracking and by the correct implementation of all texts adopted;
- Setting ambitious targets for our collective reduction of emissions, including 90% reduction target for 2040 ahead of a full net zero target for 2050;
- Accelerated and simplified permitting for green technologies;
- Improved connectivity with new transport infrastructure;
- Significantly increasing the CEF budget, investments in electricity distribution and storage infrastructure;
- Phasing out of coal, oil and gas;
- Comprehensive and ambitious revision of the REACH regulation;
- Revising energy taxation and removing fossil fuel subsidies;
- Implementing a new comprehensive action plan for the circular economy;
- Proposing a Blue Deal including a moratorium on deep-seabed mining;

- Reducing the use of pesticides by half by 2030 by making sure that effective alternatives such as biocontrol, integrated pest management and NBT are available and allowed;
- Introducing a Climate Adaptation Law, including in particular a “Water Resilience Act” to deliver water smart and water resilient agriculture and industry;
- Extending ETS and CBAM;
- Accelerating electrification in the EU.

Protects its farmers by:

- Timely and efficient fight against unfair trade practice and dumping to ensure fair competition and a reciprocity throughout the supply chain;
- Ensure that regulatory constraints are shared among all the actors of the value chain, not only farmers;
- Reinforced and dedicated EU border control force to ensure compliance of imported goods with our health, environmental and social rules and standards;
- Establishing a new funding pillar, separate to CAP, to fund environmental and sustainability measures on farms through the full food value chain;
- Fair competition for our farmers by redressing the balance of power between producers and retailers;
- Forward-looking reformed CAP making sure that the prosperity of our farmers and the completion of our environmental goals do not conflict;
- Making the utmost to bring the agricultural sector towards the greenest possible solutions;

Protects its citizens by:

- Enhancing preparedness against climate change by introducing an EU climate adaptation legislation;
- Increase just transition fund and support of large-scale deployment of net zero technologies;
- Ensure that essential medicines are developed and available in Europe at affordable price (Critical Medicines Act);
- Increased EU competences in health policy;
- Establishing a permanent crisis preparedness facility;
- Ensuring a progressive upward alignment of social rights within the Union;
- Ensure the creation of quality jobs that promote better living and working conditions in line with the Social Pillar Action Plan;
- Give direct access to cohesion funds to regional and local authorities together with civil society based on their needs.