



# STATE OF THE UNION

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## LETTER OF INTENT

**TO PRESIDENT ROBERTA METSOLA  
AND TO PRIME MINISTER PETR FIALA**

**#SOTEU**

Brussels, 14 September 2022

Dear President Metsola,

Dear Prime Minister Fiala,

*It is just over 200 days since Russia's brutal and cruel war of aggression against Ukraine started. 200 days in which the people of Ukraine have suffered so much – yet shown so much courage and resolve. 200 days of united, unstinting and unwavering support from the people, nations and institutions that make up our European Union.*

**What is at stake here is about Ukraine. But it is also about what the European Union stands for: freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and all the values that constitute our foundations.**

*So as we gather for this year's State of the Union debate, we jointly reaffirm our commitment to supporting Ukraine in every way possible. And we double down on our **support to all Europeans who are facing difficulties** as people and companies look to make ends meet as the cost of living becomes more expensive, having so recently faced the impact of the pandemic and the lockdowns.*

*This is why supporting Europeans through these testing times will be the Commission's first priority in the year ahead. In this spirit, the Commission is putting forward a series of proposals to alleviate the impact of the energy crisis on those households and businesses most in need and help them to adapt. This is the latest in a number of measures to reinforce our resilience since the start of the war, in particular in ridding ourselves of our energy dependencies. Through **REPowerEU**, we accelerated the work for diversifying supply away from Russian fossil fuels, accelerating the roll-out of renewables, promoting energy savings and increasing our storage capacities.*

*Since the onset of Russia's aggression, the European Union has shown how swiftly and how strongly it can respond when it acts together. We adopted rapid and hard-hitting sanctions with many of our global partners, which are now biting hard for Russia's economy and industry. As Team Europe we have provided more than 19 billion euros in financial assistance to **Ukraine**, without counting military support. We activated the Temporary Protection Directive granting Ukrainian refugees' access to jobs, housing, education and healthcare across the EU. We took action to facilitate trade and established Solidarity Lanes to help Ukrainian exports and safeguard global food security. And, historically, we also granted candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova to open up their path to our Union. Europe has shown in the last year that is a geopolitical Union – and we must continue to show leadership, working with our partners across*

the world. This also includes strengthening our resilience and security by strengthening our cybersecurity and stepping up our work on defence.

In the year ahead the best way to deal with these pressing challenges is also to **stay the course** on the plan we commonly set out for this mandate. The major digital and green transformations we embarked on together have only taken on additional importance as we have grappled with pandemics, lockdowns and now a war on our border. This is about building a better future for the next generation and making ourselves more resilient and more prepared for challenges to come.

This starts with implementing what has already been agreed. This includes implementing the landmark agreements on the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act which saw the EU take global leadership in regulating the digital space to make it safer and more open. We will continue looking at new digital opportunities and trends, such as the metaverse. It also means continuing the work on investment and reforms through **NextGenerationEU**, of which 700bn EUR remains to be invested in the years ahead. Similarly, we must continue to use the power of the EU budget to ensure it best supports people and the economy. Looking ahead, we must also assess how COVID, the war and their spill-over effects is affecting our long-term budget. To this end, we will put forward a **mid-term review of the long-term budget** in the year ahead.

It is essential we continue our work to **find agreement on legislative proposals the Commission has already presented**. We want to thank the European Parliament and Council for their cooperation and efforts to agree so many urgent proposals with such speed – whether on COVID-19 certificate, digital rules or the minimum wage. We must speed up this approach, notably on files key to the European Green Deal and to reaching our climate neutrality goals.

We will also put forward a number of targeted new proposals that are essential to responding to short term challenges or our long-term objectives. Given the need for the co-legislators to prioritise the adoption of proposals in the year ahead, the list focuses on action where it is most needed. The list below highlights key initiatives for 2023. It is based on our discussions with the European Parliament and Council and will be complemented by the upcoming **Commission Work Programme** and continued interinstitutional dialogue.

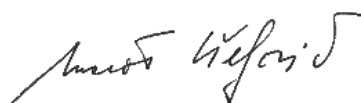
The 2023 Commission Work Programme will be also largely inspired by the outcome of the **Conference on the Future of Europe**. This reflects not only our shared commitment to better listening to the expectations of citizens but also the resounding success of the Conference, both as an exercise in participative democracy, and as a way to improve our policy making. The list below includes proposals stemming directly from the citizens' recommendations, such as an initiative on mental health – one of the new areas which the Conference asked us to work on. We will include Citizens' Panels in our policy making toolbox so that they can make

*recommendations before certain key policy proposals, starting with the upcoming work on food waste. Building on the success of the European Year of Youth, one third of participants will be young people.*

**For Europe – now more than ever – solidarity is destiny.** *The more we stand together, the more unity we show, the more we can emerge from the year ahead as a stronger Union and the better we can prepare the world of tomorrow. This will be our collective mission in the year and you can count on the Commission to work with you every step of the way.*



**Ursula von der Leyen**



**Maroš Šefčovič**

## KEY NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2023

Initiatives that directly follow up or indirectly contribute to a proposal of the Conference of the Future of Europe are marked with an asterisk (\*).

### A European Green Deal

- *Revision of EU's internal electricity market rules*
- *Proposal to create EU Hydrogen Bank*
- *Revision of waste framework to reduce waste, including food waste, and the environmental impact of waste management \**
- *Legislative proposal on plants produced by certain new genomic techniques \**
- *Revision of animal welfare EU legislation \**

### A Europe fit for the digital age

- *European critical raw materials act \**
- *SME Relief Package, including Late Payment Directive*
- *Initiative on virtual worlds, such as metaverse*
- *Patent Licensing package*
- *Legislative proposal on the screening and registration of asbestos in buildings \**
- *Proposal for European Year of Skills*

### An Economy that Works for People

- *Mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 \**
- *Economic Governance Review*
- *Legislative proposal on a second set of new own resources \**

- *Legislative proposal on Business in Europe: a framework for income taxation 'BEFIT' \**
- *Data Access in financial services \**
- *Legislative proposals on establishing the digital euro \**

## A Stronger Europe in the world

- *EU space strategy for security and defence \**
- *New Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean*
- *Update of the EU maritime security strategy*
- *Updating the human rights sanctions regime*

## Promoting our European Way of Life

- *A comprehensive approach to mental health \**
- *Recognition of qualifications of third country nationals*
- *Legislative proposal on the digitalisation of travel documents and the facilitation of travel*
- *Revision of the combating child sexual abuse Directive*
- *Initiative on Cybersecurity Skills Academy*

## A New Push for European Democracy

- *Defence of democracy package, including an initiative on the protection of the EU democratic sphere from covert foreign influence*
- *Anti-corruption package*
- *Legislative proposal on a European disability card \**