



renew europe.

Valérie Hayer
Member of the European Parliament
President of the Renew Europe Group

Brussels, 17 February 2025

Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear President,

It is with great concern that we address this letter to you, following aggressive statements and actions from the new US administration against the Union and our values in the last weeks. The interference of billionaire-administrator Elon Musk in our electoral processes by sponsoring far-right parties that de-demonize the darkest times of our history, notably through his platform X, is not only unlawful, but cannot be left unanswered. The threats against Greenland, an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, go against anything one could expect from an ally and a NATO partner.

The provocative and inappropriate lessons on democracy and Western values from US Vice-President J.D. Vance at the Munich Security Council last week confirmed the great contempt shown by the new administration towards the US' most loyal historical partners.

It followed disclosed details of the recent phone call between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which dramatically increased our worries as Europeans, as it confirmed the new sheriff is friends with the criminal.

Therefore, we consider it is high time for the European Union to undertake concrete actions to determine and ensure our own security. As Europeans we must urgently engage in full confidence on our future and earn the respect we deserve. For too long, EU Member States shied away from bold decisions to make the EU a superpower that acts strategically and ensures its own sovereignty.

If Europe does not determine its own future, others will determine it for us. Ukraine and our Union, with the presence of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, must be at the heart of any negotiation about future European security. The Union must sit at the table.

We ask you to support and propose the following initiatives and do your utmost to get the Member States on board.

What we call for is not business as usual. It is a leap forward to give the EU the power it needs to protect its citizens, our democracies, and our values.

Ukraine

- Any negotiation must include the Ukrainians and the Europeans.
- The conditions must be agreed first and foremost by the Ukrainians, in concertation with the EU and the US.
- No “Minsk 3” or “Yalta”: Strong security guarantees must be provided to avoid another aggression from Russia.
- EU accession talks must be expedited.
- All EU and NATO allies should continue supporting Ukraine militarily with no less than 0.25% of their GDP annually.
- EU sanctions against Russia must remain in place as long as it is necessary, while better implementation must be ensured. Further sanctions packages, including sanctioning Putin’s shadow fleet of oil tankers, should be on the table.
- Russia’s frozen assets should be released for Ukraine. The EU must remain in favour of the accession of Ukraine to NATO in the future.
- If need be, the EU must stand with Ukraine without America.

Security and Defence

- An urgent plan to deliver a true Defence Union, with autonomous EU military capacities, should be put on the table by the European Commission.
- EU Member States should increase their defence spending well beyond 2% of their GDP, as fast as possible. EU members of The North Atlantic Alliance must build a strong European pillar within the latter, with the UK and Norway.
- Activate the escape clause for the investments in defence and decide rapidly on new, creative ways to finance defence efforts.
- The EU- UK “reset” currently being negotiated should secure an ambitious security and defence agreement, to formalise and expand our cooperation..
- The EU should apply the “Buy European First” principle in the field of defence.
- Joint purchase of military equipment.
- Make sure our civil protection mechanisms are ready to be deployed in case of severe crisis.
- All these decisions are urgent and could be included in an ambitious European Defence Act.

Economy

- Propose EU “enabling acts” dismantling all the remaining counterproductive internal barriers to trade in the EU single market to unleash its full power.
- Deliver a true single market for the defence sector.
- Implement the Draghi report. Simplify EU rules wherever we can for the sake of competitiveness, while avoiding deregulation.
- Massive investments in key strategic sectors, especially in energy independence and defence. They should take place now, as 2028 would be too late. The Energy and Savings Union must become a reality in this regard.

- Build a more robust European budget with new own resources, up to the challenges the EU is facing.
- Retaliate firmly against unfair US tariffs on EU goods and services.

Democracy

- Implement in full the DSA, including by imposing sanctions.
- Adopt a strong EU Democracy Shield to deter and respond to attacks on our democracies, wherever they come from.
- Establish a plan to reduce our dependency on big US tech industries and protect our key infrastructures.
- Keep the communication channels with the US authorities open, while strengthening our alliance with democratic forces in the country.
- Strengthen the EU Arctic Strategy and reinforce our presence in the region.
- Launch exploratory talks with Norway and Iceland for potential EU membership.

Governance

- Launch the internal reform of our governance, especially in view of future enlargements.
- Implement the recommendations from the Conference on the Future of Europe to make the EU quicker and bolder in a fast-changing world.
- No option should be left off the table, including the possibility to revise the Treaties to make the EU more efficient.

What we need now is not further Communications, but Actions. Through one executive order, US President Donald Trump can turn the world upside down. The extraordinary emergency meeting of leaders organised in Paris today goes in the right direction. It is now the responsibility and power of the leaders of EU Member States and EU institutions to act as quickly as the Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "V. Hayer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valérie Hayer

On behalf of the Renew Europe group in the European Parliament