

Berlin, Vienna, Brussels, Sofia, Zagreb, Nicosia, Prague, Tallinn, Helsinki,
Paris, Athens, Rome, Riga, Vilnius, Luxembourg, The Hague, Warsaw, Lisbon, Stockholm,

20th October 2025

***His Excellency
António Costa
President of the European Council***

Dear Mr. President,

It has now been a year since Mario Draghi opened our eyes with unsparing clarity: If we don't change course Europe will lose competitiveness compared to other economic regions of the world. We are living in a world of upheaval and new uncertainties, where geopolitics and geoeconomics are increasingly intertwined. In this world, maintaining our competitiveness is the foundation of our sovereignty.

Simplification is key for competitiveness as Mario Draghi highlights in his report. Many people in Europe today have doubts when they deal with our rules and laws: that they slow us down rather than guiding us, that they block the way rather than opening up freedom and opportunities. Such dissatisfaction and the challenges that come with it cannot be argued away. The challenges posed to our citizens and companies in their daily lives are real. They require robust responses.

One thing is clear: we want to preserve the European Union for what it stands for – freedom, security and prosperity. To do this, we must change its course. Not just a little but substantially. Mario Draghi's report is the compass for our course to competitiveness, including the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-34. And it surely is the compass for our strive to make our rules simpler, more efficient, and more effective.

Cc:

Her Excellency, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Her Excellency, Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament

Her Excellency, Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark

Three steps are now necessary: review, reduce, restrain.

We call for a systematic review of all EU regulations to identify rules that are superfluous, excessive, or unbalanced and we must examine the entire acquis of EU rules to determine whether they are still fit for purpose.

We call for the reduction of the rulebook and the dismantling of outdated rules, while maintaining policy goals, relevant standards and the integrity of the single market. This requires a constant stream of Omnibus proposals from the European Commission throughout its term of office. It requires to exploit the full potential of digitalisation to enhance efficiency. It also requires the courage to withdraw superfluous legislation altogether.

And we call for self-restraint when it comes to new legislation, which should anyway come with strengthened impact assessments. Beyond directives and regulations, this needs also to be applied to the proliferation of delegated and implementing acts. Nothing less than a cultural change is needed. Europe must limit itself to the bare minimum of new regulation in full compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

To be specific: Launching a new product, building a factory, or expanding energy networks - the European Commission must quickly present new initiatives to speed up planning and approval procedures at the EU level.

Investing in or buying a company - we call for the modernisation of EU competition law and the acceleration of merger control and state aid procedures at the EU level.

Focussing on business and growing as Small or Medium Enterprise? Let's ease access to finance, support scaling up and reduce and reform reporting and information obligations, inter alia under the General Data Protection Regulation.

Reducing bureaucracy is a matter of utmost priority and it is urgent. At our next meeting of the European Council at the end of October we should distribute specific work assignments to set the new course.

By the end of the year the European Commission should systematically review the EU regulatory framework and submit a proposal on how outdated and excessive rules can be dismantled and which existing or planned rules can be dispensed with altogether.

Also, the co-legislators, Council and European Parliament must also act more decisively and speed up the pace of adoption of all legal acts contributing to delivering on our shared simplification and competitiveness agenda. We particularly expect swift adoption on CSRD and CSDDD simplification. Modernizing the European Union is a shared responsibility of all European institutions.

We owe another fundamental report by Enrico Letta for providing insight into how Europe can tap into new sources of growth: Completing our Single Market and fostering potential of its digitalisation.

Let us be very clear: Our EU acquis is the key to unlock the advantages of Single Market, including for services, energy, telecommunications, financial services, savings and investments. Single Market integration equals growth and the European Commission should just as firmly pursue its Single Market Strategy as it should reduce bureaucracy.

For example, the European Council already in March called on the European Commission to present a proposal for a 28th regime for companies, including start-ups and scale-ups, to unlock the Single Market for new and innovative businesses. We can only stress that we need this proposal urgently!

We call for a special meeting of the European Council on competitiveness in February 2026 to review the work done and to provide political guidance on all competitiveness fronts identified in the Draghi report: reducing bureaucracy, completing the Single Market in all its dimensions, strengthening European innovation and industry, ensuring economic safety and a level playing field, delivering on the Capital Markets Union.

Also, the President of the Commission should update the European Council regularly by means of a letter to the EU Leaders ahead of each European Council meeting starting from December 2025.

Now let's get to work. Let's accelerate. Slowing down is not an option.

Best regards,

Christian Stocker
Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria

Bart De Wever
Prime Minister of Belgium

Rossen Jeliaskov
Prime Minister Bulgaria

Andrej Plenković
Prime Minister of Croatia

Nikos Christodoulides
President of Cyprus

Petr Fiala
Prime Minister of Czechia

Kristen Michal
Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia

Petteri Orpo
Prime Minister of Finland

Emmanuel Macron
President of the Republic of France

Friedrich Merz
Federal Chancellor of Germany

Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Prime Minister of Greece

Giorgia Meloni
President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic

Evika Siliņa
Prime Minister of Latvia

Gitanas Nausėda
President of the Republic of Lithuania

Luc Frieden
Prime Minister of Luxembourg

Dick Schoof
Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Donald Tusk
Prime Minister of Poland

Luís Montenegro
Prime Minister of Portugal

Ulf Kristersson
Prime Minister of Sweden