

Commissioners and Single Market

Overview:

This document provides (where possible) a list of what can be expected from each of the 27 European Commissioners that have taken office since 1 December 2019 in relation to the EU Single/Internal Market. Primary sources include EP hearings, written statements and mission letters.

Frans Timmermans (NL)

Executive Vice-President: European Green Deal

Commitments in EP hearing

- Higher ambitions on 2030 Emission Reduction. Target: put forward new legislation aiming at a 50% reduction.
- Just Transition Fund, especially in industrial, coal and energy-intensive regions: “A mix of fresh money combined with co-financing nationally, also linking to the different funds we already have” to greatly expand access to funding for the transition to a green economy. “There is no future in coal”.
- Transport: “Not a car-free Europe, but emission-free cars in Europe and clean public transport”. Support to third-generation bio-fuels.
- A new Circular economy action plan, focusing on resource-use and sustainable products.
- Tax policies: Stop subsidies for fossil fuels projects; an EU carbon border tax if third parties do not step up their environmental plans.
- A tougher stance on enforcement of EU environmental laws, with infringements procedures if necessary.

Margrethe Vestager (DK)

Executive Vice-President: Europe Fit for the Digital Age

Commitments in EP hearing

- A new industrial strategy: Green and based on fair competition, and not just for big business.
- Making financing available to SMEs, following the positive example of the Juncker Investment Plan.
- European approach to Artificial Intelligence to be put forward in the first 100 days. Need to step up investments in AI and quantum computing.
- A Digital Services Act that includes upgrading liability and safety rules on digital platforms, services and products.
- A new push on legislation for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base and country-by-country reporting.
- A review of rules on antitrust, mergers and state aid, also looking into how digitisation affects competition.

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- High priority on addressing the issue of foreign state ownership and subsidies to EU companies.

Valdis Dombrovskis (LV)

Executive Vice-President: An Economy that Works for People

Commitments in EP hearing

- A legal initiative on fair minimum wages, to be presented in the first 100 days.
- A new European gender strategy, including measures on women's access to the labour market and gender pay gap.
- Commitment to tax fairness, especially addressing tax avoidance of multinationals so that citizens and SMEs do not have to bear an unfair tax burden.
- To mobilise sustainable investment by leveraging private money via the InvestEU programme in cooperation with the EIB.
- Plans for new legislation on fintech, cryptocurrencies.
- Together with competent Commissioners: To put forward a new dedicated public-private fund to support initial public offerings of SMEs.
- Stresses the need for more effective enforcement of anti-money laundering legislation.

Josep Borrell Fontelles (ES)

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / EU Commission Vice-President

Nothing specific on the Single Market.

Maroš Šefčovič (SK)

Vice-President-Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight

- Applying the “one-in one-out” principle: any new legislative proposal with a new burden for users should be offset by an equivalent reduction elsewhere.
- Engage more actively with Member States to ensure that they do not add unnecessary administrative burdens when transposing EU law into national law. A specific focus on alleviating over-regulation for SMEs
- In favour of enhancing the Commission's public consultations, to reach out to stakeholders and citizens

Vera JOUROVÁ (CZ)

Vice-President- Values and Transparency

Nothing specific on Single Market.

- Focus primarily falls on transparency of EU institutions, protection of Rule of Law, democratic values, free press and media pluralism, protection of fundamental rights.

Dubravka Šuica (HR)

Vice-President- Democracy and Demography

Nothing specific on the Single Market.

Margaritis SCHINAS (EL)

Vice-President- Promoting the European Way of Life

- Focus on skill development: Upskilling, re-skilling of labour force, lifelong learning to bridge the existing skill gap in many sectors.

Thierry Breton (FR)

Commissioner for the Internal Market

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Reinvest massively in key digital technologies: AI, 5G, internet of things, quantum technology, etc.
- A European framework of AI to be presented in the first 100 days, accompanied by a European strategy towards the establishment of a common data market.
- A Digital Services Act with the aim to regulate, in particular, big digital platforms.
- Step up cybersecurity measures to protect the Single Market.
- Modernisation of the Single Market: All sectors of our business are involved (economy, services in their multitude, industry) in the digital transformation. The Commission will help them in the required adaptations and evolution.
- Three points of modernisation: 1) Internal Market Protection, consumer and workers' protection and a shield against unfair competition coming from foreign countries, but fight against regional protectionism; 2) Internal Market Transformation, helping all those who need to qualify themselves or requalify or reskill for new jobs, and also addressing the environmental challenge.
- Strong investments into transitional technologies to bring about a solid circular economy.
- To protect SMEs, start-ups, and support new forms of employment by ensuring fair competition with giants from other continents.
- To help SME to adapt, but also simplify their lives, for example, by facilitating access to dedicated funding, public procurement or helping protect their knowledge.
- An SME strategy in five points: 1) removing regulatory and administrative barriers; 2) improve application of Late Payment Directive; 3) actively support SME financing; 4) adapt Single Market to specificities of SMEs; 5) develop skills, especially digital skills.

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- Services Directive is not going to be reopened.
- Ensuring that SMEs can benefit from funding available via the EU Defence Fund and investments planned for EU Space industry.

Phil Hogan (IE)

Commissioner for Trade

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Fight for preventing the collapse of WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.
- Advancing the e-commerce negotiations at WTO level, with a new initiative in the second half of 2020.
- Commitment to promote reciprocal trading conditions and fair conditions for EU businesses and SMEs by levelling the external (and internal) playing field.
- Further develop Foreign Direct Investments Screening, with a tool to correct distortive effects of foreign state ownership and subsidisation, to protect critical technologies and infrastructure.
- Commitment to better enforcement of provisions included in international trade agreements; and a monitoring system for the EU's GSP scheme.
- Looking for more dialogue and cooperation with US to solve ongoing trade tensions.
- China: Dialogue and engagement, including in areas of common interest, such as climate change, environmental protection, the reform of the WTO – e.g. discipline on industrial subsidies. These elements are requirements on which to define the future EU-China Investment Agreement (foreseen: end of 2020).
- Better implementation of sustainability chapters of FTAs and other trade agreements. For instance on EU-Mercosur FTA, a sustainability impact assessment and an economic analysis will be carried out.
- Carbon Border Tax is an option to be assessed with Timmermans and Gentiloni.

Mariya Gabriel (BG)

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- 70% the budget of the European Innovation Council dedicated to SMEs.
- Increase awareness of SMEs about the opportunity deriving from Horizon and other EU funding schemes, with a more active role of the European Institute for Innovation.
- Focus on commercialisation of research outputs and technology uptake to further innovation.
- Support to SMEs in the culture, creativity and innovation sectors, with dedicated access to creative innovation laboratories under the Creative Europe funding scheme.

Nicolas Schmit (LU)

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- A legal instrument to ensure every worker in the EU has a fair minimum wage.
- Ensuring thorough implementation of the EU legislation adopted over the past years and, on the other hand, proposing new initiatives where needed.
- Close attention to the transposition and implementation of the revised Posting of Workers Directive and the thorough application of the 2014 Enforcement Directive.
- European Labour Authority.
- Ensure that existing EU labour law is properly enforced for the protection of mobile workers.
- Ensuring transposition of the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive during the mandate.
- Explore ways to improve the labour conditions of platform workers.
- Effort towards achieving adequate access to social protection for all workers and the self-employed.
- Endeavour to scale up training and education efforts to address the need for re-and up-skilling, as well as focus on the quality of education and lifelong –learning.
- ESF+ to dedicate more money to skilling and upskilling of workers, especially in the digital field.
- Ensure that workers in SMEs enjoy the same working conditions and employment predictability as in bigger businesses.
- Ensuring good employment and working condition standards in the digital economy, especially for platform workers.

Johannes Hahn (AT)

Commissioner for Budget and Administration

- Strong priority is the approval of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.
- Plastic tax, extension of the Emission Trading System (ETS) as feasible ways to increase revenues to sustain the MFF.
- Digital tax and Common Corporate Tax Base should be added.
- Investing in digitalisation of administrative procedure at EU and Member State level, ensuring interoperability of systems.
- Ensuring sound financial management and fight against fund misuse.
- Supporting the Green Deal and Just transition fund is essential for the upcoming budgetary activities.

Paolo Gentiloni (IT)

Commissioner for Economy

From the mission letter

- “A review of the Energy Taxation Directive to align it with our ambitions and bring an end to fossil-fuel subsidies.”
- “A focus on making our tax systems simpler, clearer and easier to use. As part of this, you should lead efforts on making a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base a reality.”
- “Europe must step up the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance. You should work towards a fraud-proof VAT regime and look at how cooperation between national authorities can be improved.”

Further Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Launch of InvestEU and Europe Investment Plan as a key priority. Resources mobilised through these schemes will be distributed equally across the Union.
- Put forward a new environment taxation framework to steer the behaviour of users, consumers and producers towards a climate neutral economy.
- Move forward with an EU Digital Tax and Common Corporate Tax Base if negotiations with OECD partners have not made progress by third quarter of 2020.
- In light of the need for further collective efforts to advance on deepening the Economic and Monetary Union, a key priority is to make progress towards a Financial Union, by achieving the Banking Union and taking further steps towards the Capital Markets Union.

Janusz Wojciechowski (PL)

Commissioner for Agriculture

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Producer cooperation and competition law: Full support to specific rules applied to agriculture, acknowledging the specificities of the position of farmers in the food chain and the strategic importance of food security.
- Strong support to all action helpful to SMEs and family farming.
- Focus on geographic denomination and protection of local gastronomic products.
- Ensure strict enforcement of standards for imported agricultural goods and food.

Elisa Ferreira (PT)

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

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- Intervention tools tailored to the needs of each territory, helping the transition to a digital, green and gender-balanced economy.
- Focus of the just-transition fund on industrial, coal and energy intensive regions.
- Continuing the work for inclusion of a specific outermost region dimension.
- Cohesion policy funds are committed to a minimum spending share of 30% (for the European Regional Development Fund) and 37% (for the Cohesion Fund) to climate change objectives, including support to address the wider challenges linked to societal transformation, for instance support for SMEs, business incubators, innovation and for cooperation of industry and researchers, capacity building and skills.

Oliver Várhelyi (HU)

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Strong support remains to accelerate start of accession talks for Western Balkans.
- Support to creating a market economy in the Eastern Partnership countries, that will improve their chances of withstanding outside pressure but also to create a climate for investment, which will be for the prosperity of their nations.
- basic infrastructure, such as transport or energy, the Green Deal or digital are sectors with potential to engage partners.
- new proposals for partnership priorities in the framework of the Southern Neighbourhood.

Stella Kyriakides (CY)

Commissioner for Health

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Creation of a European Health Data Space, with full implementation of digital solutions into the health sector
- Focus on ensuring data protection in e-health.
- Need to consolidate EU standards for Health technology assessment, involving all stakeholders to deliver concrete results.
- Promote convergence towards agreed international standards and strengthen oversight over the supply chain to guarantee that imported active pharmaceutical substances are produced in line with good manufacturing practices.
- Acknowledgment of the need to reduce dependency on pesticides and to find alternatives, but no clear commitment to active anti-pesticide action.
- Improving consumer information, with common labelling standards.

Didier Reynders (BE)

Commissioner for Justice

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Legislation on a coordinated approach on the human and ethical implications of AI, to be put forward in the first 100 days. Rules on AI liability are also on the agenda but will take more time to be developed.
- Push for the ratification of the Hague Judgments Convention, which sets out a comprehensive global system for the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments in civil and commercial matters.
- Proposal to discuss new elements to be included into Company Law. However, further assessment is needed when considering the introduction of additional non-financial reporting covering environmental, social and human rights factors.
- GDPR: Proposal to work in order to remove, if possible, a number of unnecessary constraints on SMEs or start-ups.
- Continuation of financial support to national Data Protection Authorities, but also strict enforcement (including infringements procedures) of the legislation and duties of Member State to enable the respective authorities to effectively perform their tasks.
- Strong commitment to enforcement of Consumer Protection rules.

Kadri Simson (EE)

Commissioner for Energy

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Energy-efficiency and renewable-energy legislation.
- Ensuring that, when transposing the 'Clean Energy for all Europeans' legislation, Member States do not add unnecessary administrative burden.
- Implementation of new financial instruments under the next multi-annual financial framework, in particular through InvestEU. New financial instruments should also focus on SMEs, and aiming to facilitate the market for energy services companies.
- Strive to minimize regulatory burdens on businesses, citizens and public administrations, in particular for SMEs. Where required Commission's impact assessments will be supported by an SME test, which requires specific consultation of SME stakeholders to establish the nature and magnitude of the impacts an initiative might entail for SMEs.
- Ensuring energy security, have affordable prices and competitiveness of EU industry when aiming for Clean Energy and achieving the goal of a climate-neutral EU in 2050.
- Further developing the energy Single Market, enhancing regional cooperation and increased interconnectivity in the electricity market.
- Liquefied natural gas (LNG) to be sourced from different partners as a way of enhancing energy security.

- Addressing the issue of existing tax exemptions for fossil fuels and working towards a new Energy taxation framework in cooperation with Commissioner Gentiloni.
- Improving openness and interconnectedness of the energy market; keeping the consumers' interest at the centre.
- Careful consideration on energy pricing throughout the energy transition, especially in the energy-intensive industries.
- Use the Energy Poverty Observatory and rapidly implement the legislative provisions on energy poverty.

Virginijus Sinkevičius (LT)

Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Use REACH and the data there collected as one of the key pillar of a zero-toxicity Strategy.
- Full implementation of the strategy on endocrine-disruptors. It is important that they are prohibited from toys, cosmetics which we apply directly on our skins, food-contact materials.
- Collaboration with Commissioner for the Internal Market to have EURO 7 standard in place in five years from now.
- Implementation of a Clean-Air action plan, with a zero-tolerance policy on non-compliance with the current air quality standards.
- Address systemic causes of water pollution and mainstream water security and resilience in other EU policies.
- Focus on circular strategy will be the shift from recycling waste to minimising waste in the first place.
- Boosting markets for high-quality secondary materials is critical to bring about the transition from a linear to a circular economy. Focus to be put on hazardous materials in recycling processes and on strategies to develop non-toxic material cycles.
- Construction sector will be one of the main focus of the Circular Economy action plan.
- Bioeconomy must be based on sustainable primary production on land and at sea, and on an optimised use of biomass.
- Full implementation of EU plastic strategy, but next step must address the problem of micro-plastics.
- Establishing a clear regulatory framework for biodegradable plastics.
- Development of the sharing economy should also be supported to the extent that it contributes to environmental sustainability. For administrations, the potential of green public procurement should be explored.

Adina-Ioana Valean (RO)

Commissioner for Transport

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Strong support to greener and more sustainable forms of transports (strong focus on rail) and to reducing aviation emissions. Taxation is an option amongst many other measures.
- EU Emission Trading System (ETS) extended to aviation and maritime shipping. Need to use price incentives and apply the “polluter pays” principle, reducing the free-quotas in the ETS.
- For aviation: Work hard on achieving a fully functional Single European Sky; uptake of alternative fuels; need to further improve the current regime for air passenger rights.
- Digitalisation, automation and electrification as key drivers of the transformation of the transport sector.
- Push for digital innovations and technology uptake in transport sector, especially in logistic and freight transport, but also urban mobility.
- Important focus on enforcement on directives affecting EU transport and to enforce fair competition across the EU.
- Commitment to defend the budget of the Trans-European Transport Network and the Connecting Europe Facility in the next MFF.
- Investments in connectivity and multi-modality (road, rail, inland waterways and short sea shipping) of transport systems.
- Strong commitment into improvement of road safety standards in the EU.
- Commitment to be proactive in looking for the European interests in the fast-developing EU-Asia connections.
- Develop an efficient, digitally-based system (“U-space”) that keeps drone operations safe, secure, sustainable and respects privacy constraints, particularly in urban areas.

Helena Dalli (MT)

Commissioner for Gender Equality

Commitments in EP hearing and written Q&A

- Binding pay transparency measures as part of the EU Gender Strategy to be proposed in the first 100 days. Continued effort to tackle gender and pension pay gaps.
- Close monitoring of the transposition and implementation of the Work-Life Balance Directive in the Member States.

Ylva Johansson (SE)

Commissioner for Home Affairs

No specific focus on the Single Market.

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Janez Lenarčič (SI)

Commissioner for Crisis Management

No specific focus on the Single Market.

Jutta Urpilainen (FI)

Commissioner for International Partnerships

Nothing specific on the Single Market.