



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 10 December 2020
(OR. en)

13547/1/20
REV 1

INST 292
POLGEN 215
AG 63

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Legislative programming - Joint Conclusions on policy objectives and priorities for 2020-2024

**Joint Conclusions of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and
the European Commission on**

Policy Objectives and Priorities for 2020-2024

For the legislative term until 2024, the three Institutions agree to deliver an ambitious political and legislative agenda for recovery and renewed vitality. This is a positive agenda for a more resilient Union striving to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic while seizing the opportunities of the twin climate and digital transformations and enhancing Europe's open strategic autonomy. To set the Union and its partners on the road to recovery and prepare for these transitions, we will prioritise the following objectives over the next four years:

1. We will spare no effort to **ensure a full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic** that leaves no one behind. We will continue to protect lives and livelihoods, support medical staff and ensure the availability of medical goods within the EU and abroad, and prioritise the development and worldwide deployment of a vaccine. We will continue to concentrate our efforts on measures to alleviate the effects of the economic crisis. We will use our ambitious multiannual budget, reinforced by NextGenerationEU, to power the recovery and shape the economy of tomorrow while implementing the roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources. We will deepen the single market to underpin a strong recovery and forge a more competitive, more sustainable Europe. We will address the lessons from the health crisis and the vulnerabilities it exposed, with more ambitious cooperation on health and civil protection, building a **European Health Union**, while respecting national competences.
2. Beyond managing the pandemic in a coordinated way, we will step up our work to **build the Union of tomorrow**. For this, we will prioritise actions that accelerate transition to a fairer, healthier, greener and more digital society in the EU and on the global stage. We will boost our research and development as well as our innovation capacity to accelerate the green and digital transitions, particularly in key areas such as the energy sector, high-performance computing and trustworthy artificial intelligence.
3. The EU's **global leadership in fighting climate change** remains a key priority as drastic reductions in emissions and more efficient use of resources in all sectors of the economy have become an urgent imperative. At the same time, the green transition brings vast opportunities for economic growth and job creation, while improving our resilience to climate change. In the coming four years, we will pursue our goals of climate-neutrality by 2050, of a socially fair transition to a competitive, sustainable, circular economy, of protecting biodiversity, and of implementing the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated hyper-connectivity and the integration of new technologies that shape the way we live and transform how we learn, work, socialise and consume. The crisis also exposed the vulnerabilities Europe is facing - ranging from cyber security to capacity issues and insufficient broadband infrastructure in many regions. To bolster our place in the global economy and defend our values, we will **shape our own digital solutions and establish Europe's digital sovereignty**. Our efforts need to focus simultaneously on access to and protection of data, the development of innovative technology and upgrading our infrastructure. To use the current momentum and set Europe on an ambitious path towards further digitalisation, we will define clear digital targets for 2030 and work jointly towards their realisation. The **economic effects of the crisis and the speed of recovery will not be the same for all groups in society and every EU region**. The crisis has increased unemployment, particularly for young people and women working in vulnerable types of employment. This is why we will adopt measures to implement further the European Pillar of Social Rights, notably to safeguard workers' rights in the digital economy, provide equal opportunities for all, develop a framework for adequate minimum wages, and make pay more transparent.
5. To **make our economy more resilient and robust**, we will further strengthen its foundations. We will ensure free movement through the proper functioning of the Schengen Area, enforce, deepen and revitalise the single market, support national reform and investment programmes, and incentivise private investments to kick-start the economy. We will pursue an ambitious European industrial policy to make our industry more sustainable, green, globally competitive and more resilient. We need to strengthen our single currency, ensure greater financial stability and protect ourselves against financial crimes, tax fraud, evasion and avoidance, and money laundering. European businesses and people need to be protected against unfair competition from abroad. To achieve this, we will introduce an appropriate set of actions on taxation and address the distortive effects that certain foreign subsidies have on our single market. To avoid supply shortages and dependencies for goods that are crucial for the safety of our citizens or for the functioning of our economy, we will identify strategic dependencies and take action to reduce them. We will strengthen our open strategic autonomy and resilience and maintain our steadfast commitment to open and rules-based trade.

6. Attempts by authoritarian regimes to spread misleading narratives on the COVID-19 pandemic and undermine our democratic societies are on the rise. The future of our Union will depend on our capacity to **defend our common values and strengthen our democratic model**. We are firmly committed to the principle of the **rule of law** on which our democratic system is based. We will act decisively to **guarantee the security of Europeans**. We will also strengthen our common capacity to respond to terrorism and hybrid threats, emerging and existing cross-sectorial, cross-border and hybrid threats and crimes. People are the beating heart of our democracy. We will address the pressing societal issues related to demographic change. We will continue to defend the **respect for fundamental rights and non-discrimination** at home and abroad. We will fight racism and work for a Union of equality with equal rights and opportunities for all. We will finalise our work on a comprehensive reform of our **migration and asylum** system to ensure an efficient and humane approach and equip us with the tools to face future challenges.
7. We will **strengthen the EU's role as a global actor**: cooperation is essential to influence the global developments shaping our future and to sustain the health of our planet. This is why we will promote and reform the rules-based, multilateral global order. We will work closely with our strategic partners and like-minded countries, in particular with the new US administration, to achieve these objectives. We will pursue a reinvigorated enlargement policy, pay particular attention to our partners in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood and promote a vibrant partnership with Africa. We will improve our defence capabilities for a stronger Europe as part of a stronger transatlantic alliance. We will work for a strong WTO and a level playing field, while ensuring our capacity to react to unfair practices and a lack of reciprocity.

These policy objectives and priorities will inspire and guide our action in the coming years. We will embed strategic foresight in our policymaking to understand better the future effects of today's policy choices, to succeed with the green and digital transitions and to enhance our ability to influence global developments. We will work together so as to deliver for our citizens. In this regard, we will provide avenues to make their voices heard in EU policymaking, including through the Conference on the Future of Europe. We will be guided by the principles of European added-value, subsidiarity and proportionality and using the full potential that the Treaties offer.