

Part II: EU Elections Series

The new European Commission

Why it **matters.**



WHY BUSINESS SHOULD CARE

The political priorities of the new European Commission will shape all new EU legislative initiatives for the next five years. As the EU's executive body, the European Commission is the sole European Union institution that presents laws for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council.

Today, in certain areas like environment, agriculture and economics policy, as much as 50% of legislation applied across the bloc is initiated in Brussels by the Commission.

Despite the region's relative economic decline, EU laws still play an important role in shaping the international business environment. European regulations frequently set the global standards in areas like data privacy, consumer protection, environmental standards, antitrust and online hate speech.

The EU has historically been the most open economy in terms of global trade, but this new Commission looks poised to take a more protectionist approach – potentially increasing market access barriers and threatening international supply chains.

In numbers

In certain areas such as environmental policy, 50% of the legislation applied in EU countries is made by the Commission in Brussels.

“Being ahead of, and aligned with, what Brussels does is the foundation of any successful business activity and guarantees one’s license to operate for the years to come.”



OLIVER DREWES

Senior Executive Director,
Public Affairs

The **priorities** of the new Commission



On September 17, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced the structure of the new Commission and assigned a specific policy mandate to each nominee Commissioner in a 'mission letter'.



In the context of growing geopolitical risks and the war in Ukraine, Defense & Security are key priorities for the new Commission. However, the 'north star' is improving the bloc's competitiveness. Driving economic growth and productivity, making up lost ground to China & the US and securing critical supply chains are priorities across most of the Commissioner mandates, from industrial policy to tech sovereignty.



The structure of the commission and policy mandates have been heavily shaped by the analysis and recommendations in a recent report on "[The Future of European Competitiveness](#)" by former Italian Prime Minister & President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi. His report finds the EU to be hobbled by a fragmented Single Market, slow growth, lack of investments in key areas such as R&D and connectivity, increasing tech & supply chain dependencies, massive regulatory burdens for businesses and high energy prices.



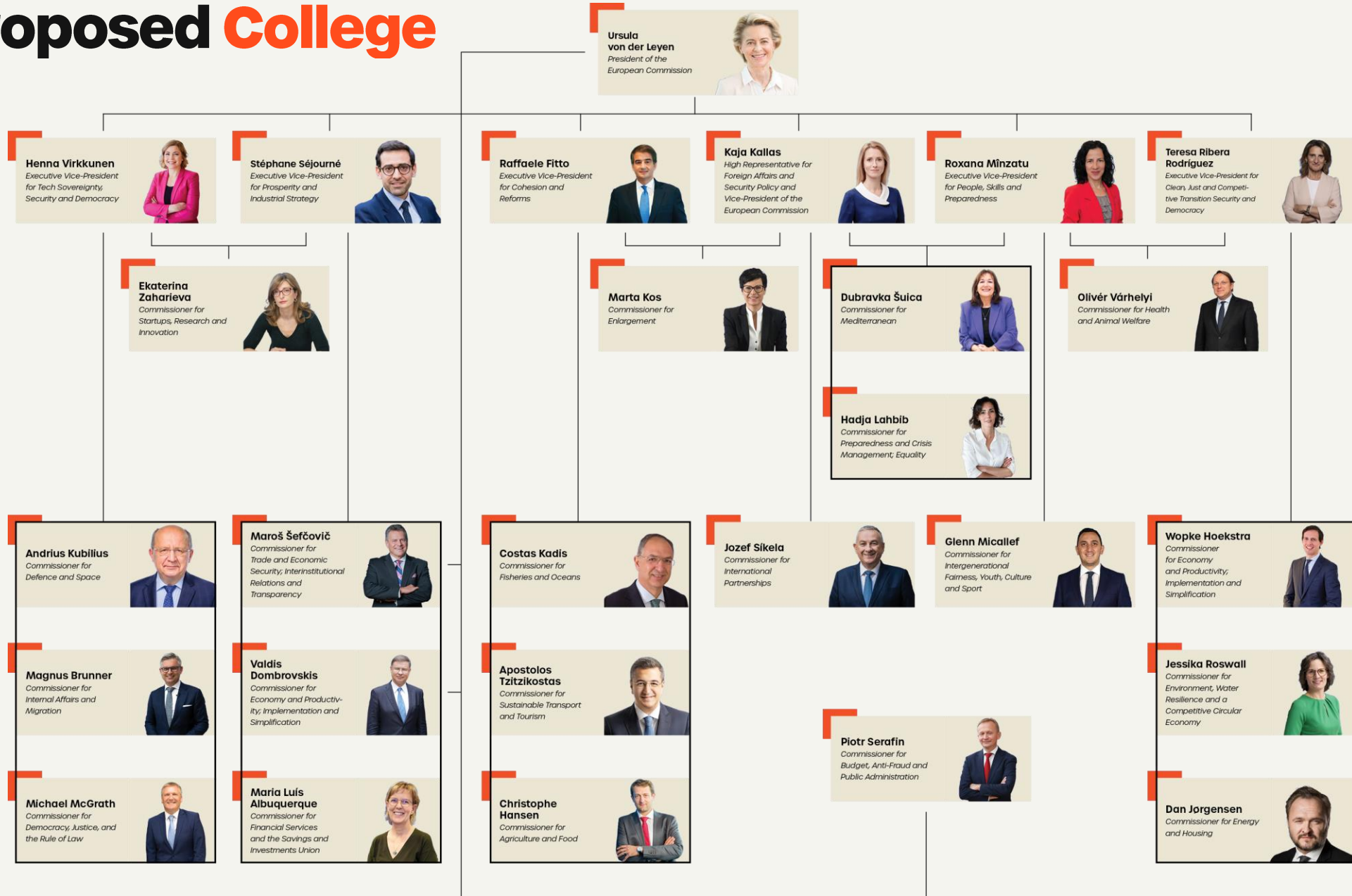
While some of Draghi's more ambitious recommendations, like the regular issuance of common EU bonds, are likely to fall by the wayside, the structure and mandates of the new College reflect the priorities he identified. Signals of change include a dedicated Commissioner for Industrial Policy and a new emphasis on the clean transition also being competitive. Furthermore, the cross-cutting and overlapping nature of many of the Commissioner portfolios are designed to ensure that they can work together more closely to break down siloes on sustainability, industrial and digital policy.

The proposed **College of Commissioners:** Key structural changes



- **A more top-down Commission** – a marked change in the new Commission from the previous one is the number of Commissioners who report directly to President von der Leyen. While it will help prevent the backtracking on unapproved statements that happened in the last mandate, it could also lead to bottlenecks and a less responsive Commission.
- **Defense and Security given prominence** – there will be a newly created Commissioner for Defense and Space tasked with finalising the European Defense Industry Programme (EDIP), which is a €1.5 billion fund for defense contractors. **Security & Democracy** is also a key priority for the Tech Commissioner in her plan to counter disinformation and foreign influence.
- **Antitrust switch** – the competition brief, previously tied closely to digital policy, switches to Teresa Ribera (who oversees policy on the clean transition), raising concerns that EU competition authorities could favor the creation of European industrial champions over consumers.
- **Health priorities spread across portfolios** – the responsibility of cybersecurity for hospitals and HERA (Health Emergency Preparedness and Response), will be split between the Commissioner for Health & Animal Welfare and the Commissioner for Crisis & Preparedness, potentially impacting overall coordination.
- **Sustainability scatters through portfolios** – with clear allocations on energy, climate and environment, but streamlined under the Just, Clean and Competitive Transition theme.

The proposed College



What comes next?

4-23 NOVEMBER: THE HEARINGS

What are they? With portfolios and mission letters now published, the Commissioners-designate must face questions from Members of the European Parliament during hearings.

How do they work? Parliamentary committees will issue opinions on the suitability of each candidate based on competence, European commitment, political & strategic vision, ethics & integrity, communication & dialogue skills and teamwork & leadership abilities.

What's the likely outcome? Historically, the Parliament has sought to assert its power by rejecting at least one Commissioner candidate. The portfolios could be reshuffled if one or more candidates are replaced, so the current structure and titles are not guaranteed.

16-19 DECEMBER: APPROVAL BY THE PARLIAMENT

Officially, the Parliament cannot veto an individual candidate, but a negative opinion effectively forces von der Leyen to ask the EU country to withdraw and replace their nominee. This is because the Parliament ultimately approves or rejects the College of Commissioners as a whole.

The vote is expected to take place between the 16th and 19th of December but is subject to change based on the outcome of the hearings.

JANUARY 2025: THE COMMISSION TAKES OFFICE

The Commission is expected to take office in January 2025. Amongst their first actions will be approving and publishing the Commission's annual work programme and specifying new proposals (including their expected timing).

Timeline for the new College of Commissioners to take office



June

With the centre-right European People's Party coming out on top in the European Parliamentary elections (6-9 June), Ursula von der Leyen was cemented as the frontrunner for her own succession.

July

EU Member States nominated Ursula von der Leyen as Commission President for a second term, a decision which was then formally approved by the European Parliament.

August

The 27 EU Member States put forward their nominees for Commissioner posts.

September

After negotiations with the national Heads of Government, the President presents the proposed College of Commissioners and their respective portfolios. Each Commissioner receives a 'mission letter' containing guidelines for their mandate.

Oct - Nov

The Commissioners-designate are subject to hearings (4-12 November), where the relevant European Parliament Committees have an opportunity to scrutinise the candidates. In some circumstances, they may request a replacement and hold another hearing. A vote on the full College is then held in the European Parliament Plenary.

January

Following the vote in the European Parliament, the College of Commissioners takes office. Their first actions are to approve and publish the European Commission's work programme for 2025, laying out all planned policy initiatives for the year.

Three key policy areas



Our EU policy experts analysed what the Commission appointments mean for policy in the sustainability, health and technology fields.

01. Sustainability policy

02. Health policy

03. Tech policy

01. Impact on sustainability policy

“Von der Leyen’s proposed setup will ensure continuity for energy and climate policies, while giving a new push for the circularity and sustainable products agendas.”



LUIS CERVILLA
Vice President,
Sustainability

Who should you be paying attention to?



Teresa Ribera Rodríguez (ES, S&D)
Executive Vice-President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition

As Minister for the Ecological Transition of Spain, Teresa Ribera successfully achieved the reform of her national electricity and gas markets, even though they were largely opposed by industry.

As a Spanish Minister she was central to steer climate policies and regulations within the Council of the EU, especially during the recent Spanish Presidency.

Ribera will use her experience in national politics to ensure the continuity of the EU Green Deal, while safeguarding Europe's competitiveness. She will combine her responsibilities with the mandate to lead on Europe's competition rules, one of the portfolios with the most impact on businesses and markets.



Wopke Hoekstra (NL, EPP)
Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth

Wopke Hoekstra, the Netherlands' designated Commissioner, joined the European Commission towards the end of the previous term, taking over the climate portfolio from Frans Timmermans. His nomination was somewhat unexpected given that his party, the Christian Democrats, is not part of the governing coalition and the Netherlands is said to have preferred a finance-related portfolio.

Hoekstra has previously served as Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, and before entering politics to join the Dutch Senate he spent a decade at McKinsey & Company – holding positions at Shell – a background that sparked controversies given his responsibilities for climate action.



Dan Jørgensen (DK, S&D),
Commissioner for Energy and Housing

Dan Jørgensen was designated by Denmark as its commissioner. He has previously served as Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities, as well as more recently as Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. He is set to become the first Commissioner for energy and housing, focusing on energy efficiency and construction.

As climate minister, he led Denmark in setting a 70% emission reduction target by 2030, transitioning from oil and gas jobs to wind energy. He also co-founded the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance to end fossil fuel exploration and previously served in the European Parliament, focusing on climate policies.



Jessika Roswall (SWE, EPP)
Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

Jessika Rosswall is not new to EU politics, since she is the current Swedish Minister for EU Affairs.

Previously, as a parliamentarian experience in Stockholm she worked on environmental issues, making her a non-controversial pick for the portfolio she has been assigned.

Her biggest challenges will be navigating critical reforms for industry such as packaging and chemicals, while leading the charge through uncharted waters on sustainable products, water or biodiversity policies.

Other relevant commissioners



Apostolos Tzitzikostas (GR, EPP)
Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism



Stéphane Séjourné, (FR, Renew)
Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

Sustainability political priorities



JUST, CLEAN AND COMPETITIVE TRANSITION

- Deliver a Clean Industrial Act that encompasses policy and regulatory initiatives to protect Europe's industrial competitiveness while ensuring the continuity of the EU Green Deal.
- Develop the social aspects of the transition, alongside protecting competitiveness in a globalised economy, to mitigate the effects – and costs – on exposed sectors and vulnerable citizens.
- Set up a Decarbonisation Accelerator Act to leverage investments into sectors contributing to climate neutrality and industrial competitiveness.
- Enhance investments for the European net zero infrastructure, with a focus on energy-intensive sectors.



ENERGY

- Continue the implementation of the recently adopted energy regulations for 2030.
- Combat energy poverty, bring down energy prices and eliminate the EU of dependence on fossil fuels through an Action Plan for Affordable Energy Prices.
- Boost the roles beyond renewable energy and energy storage.
- Propose an Electrification Action Plan, to ensure that Europe's industrial transition is powered by European clean electricity.
- Deliver on a dedicated clean energy investment strategy for Europe, prioritising investment in clean energy infrastructure, including grids, storage and transport infrastructure, cross-border energy infrastructure and the digitalisation of the energy system.
- Set-up dedicated strategies for specific technological pathways where Europe could become a global leader, including carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and new nuclear technologies (SMRs).
- Work on a plan for price-containment, including Plans on Affordable Energy and Affordable Housing.

Political priorities



CLIMATE ACTION

- Integrate the 90% reduction target by 2040 into European Climate Law as a milestone to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Streamline climate commitments, targets and milestones in the Clean Industrial Deal.
- Propose an EU Net Zero Infrastructure initiative.
- Set the regulatory conditions for the development of European Carbon Removals and Carbon Markets.
- Support implementation of the Innovation Fund, and the use of ETS revenues to drive decarbonization.
- Revise some transport related regulations to allow for new fuels (including e-fuels) as part of the decarbonization pathway.



ENVIRONMENT & CIRCULARITY

- Develop a new Circular Economy Act, focusing on creating demand for secondary materials and establishing a single market for waste with respect to critical raw materials.
- Develop a new European Bioeconomy Strategy.
- Create a single market for sustainable products.
- Propose a new Chemicals Industry Package, aiming at sustainable competitiveness of the European chemicals sector. The package will simplify REACH and provide clarity on PFAS with sustainability, competitiveness, security and safety in mind.
- Create a European Water Resilience Strategy to strengthen water security in Europe, addressing efficiency, scarcity, pollution and water-related risk.
- Contribute to an ambitious Global Plastic Treaty.
- Revise a Climate Adaptation Plan.

What can business **expect?**



- The EU is clearly looking to support, invest in and enable key technologies (carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS); new nuclear technologies (SMRs)); electrification; batteries) that will help re-establish Europe's global leadership from an industrial standpoint, while delivering on its decarbonisation commitments.
- However, despite this increased focus on investment in clean technologies, businesses will likely have to navigate an increasingly complex funding landscape.
- While the energy and climate agenda remain stable and ensure continuity, a renewed focus on circularity and sustainable consumption will open new opportunities for manufacturers to embed sustainability in design and production.
- The development of a new Circular Economy Act will create demand for secondary materials and establish a single market for waste, particularly critical raw materials. Businesses will be required to design products for longevity, recyclability and reuse.
- Water and biodiversity are 'newer' areas where the Commission aims to take action which could lead to further operational costs for many resource-intensive businesses.
- When it comes to specific files and policy fronts, the review and update of chemical legislation REACH – and its consequences on a potential PFAS ban – is likely to attract the interests of many sectors.
- Coming out of a Commission mandate that was particularly prolific on corporate sustainability rules and regulations (like CSRD and CSDDD), it is expected that the Sustainable Corporate and Finance Agendas will somehow drop in the institutions' priority lists.

02. Impact on health policy

“A weak Commissioner for health will struggle to prevent Member States claiming back their competence on health matters, at a time when Europe should be focusing on contributing to make health systems resilient and the sector competitive again.”



CAMILLA RANDAZZO

Vice President,
Health

Who should you be paying attention to?



Hadja Lahbib (BE, Renew)
Commissioner for Preparedness and Crisis Management, and Equality

- Hadja Lahbib is Belgium's nominee, overtaking Didier Reynders, the initial favourite.
- Her nomination stirred controversy within her party (Reformist Movement) and the national coalition due to criticism of her performance as Foreign Minister, a role she assumed in July 2022 after transitioning from a career as a TV anchor.
- As European Commissioner, she will focus on preparedness and crisis management, developing a new strategy to support medical countermeasures through a wider EU stockpiling strategy.



Olivér Várhelyi (HU, Ind.)
Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare

- Oliver Várhelyi, Hungary's nominee, previously served as the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement.
- A lawyer by profession, Várhelyi began his career in Hungary's trade and foreign ministries. He later worked at Hungary's Permanent Representation to the EU.
- His nomination surprised many health advocates, who stressed the importance of having a commissioner with health experience to keep health issues on the political agenda. However, from 2008, he spent three years as Head of Unit for Industrial Property Rights at the Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services of the European Commission, which is seen as beneficial for the life-science sector.



Roxana Mînzatu (RO, S&D)
Executive Vice-President, People, Skills and Preparedness

- Roxana Mînzatu, Romania's nominee for European Commissioner, has extensive experience managing European funds in the private sector, non-governmental organisations and public offices, including roles in the Romanian Parliament and as Minister of European Funds.
- Romania has secured the Vice-President position in the European Commission for the first time since joining the EU. Mînzatu will manage 20% of the EU's budget (€235 billion) and oversee occupational health and safety, youth mental health, the education sector and social policies. She will also lead efforts to create a culture of preparedness, helping society adapt to change and manage risks through health strategies.



Stéphane Séjourné (FR, Renew)
Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

- Stéphane Séjourné, French nominee, was a last-minute pick following the surprise resignation of Commissioner Breton.
- He is a close ally of French President Emmanuel Macron, serving as Foreign Minister for a short period of time after resigning from the European Parliament in January 2024.
- He is believed to be more collaborative than his predecessor and will need to deliver on this expectation if his mission to improve coordination at all levels of the Commission is to be successful.



Teresa Ribera Rodríguez (ES, S&D)
Executive Vice-President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition

- As Minister for the Ecological Transition of the Spanish Government, Teresa Ribera successfully achieved the reform of her national electricity and gas markets, even though her reforms were largely opposed by industry.
- As a Spanish Minister she was central to steering climate policies and regulations within the Council of the EU, especially during the recent Spanish Presidency.
- Ribera will use her experience in national politics to ensure the continuity of the EU Green Deal, while safeguarding Europe's competitiveness. She will combine her responsibilities with the mandate to lead on Europe's competition rules, one of the portfolios with the most impact on businesses and markets.

Health policy priorities

The incoming European Commission has put a strong focus on health and the life sciences industry, proposing changes to strengthen the sector and improve healthcare.



COMPETITIVENESS

To maintain a strong and competitive life science industry, the Commission will work on a European Life Sciences Strategy examining how high-value technologies can be created and the European Biotech Act. Scheduled for 2025, it is intended to put Europe at the forefront in biotechnology and manufacturing, including creating the necessary conditions for researchers to thrive.

To provide a regulatory framework that fosters innovation and strengthens the competitiveness of the life sciences sector, the work on the finalisation of the General Pharmaceutical Legislation will continue.



PREPAREDNESS

Building upon the key learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission will propose a Critical Medicines Act to address severe medicine shortages and reduce dependencies relating to critical medicine and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs). This will contribute to the completion of the European Health Union, which is the Commission's initiative to enhance health protection, bolster pandemic preparedness and strengthen healthcare systems.

This is a key issue for Europe on which a close eye must be kept to understand the impact that a legal and policy framework will have on companies' supply chains.

The Commission will also focus on joint procurement and stockpiling of health products to be able to address public health emergencies.

Health policy priorities



HEALTH

Action to step up preventive health - in particular, mental health, cardiovascular disease and degenerative illnesses - will be given. Action will build on the model of the European cancer plan (i.e. the Beating Cancer Plan). In line with preparedness, the Commission reiterated its commitment to continuing efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Furthermore, the future Commissioner for Health will be called to continue the work on cancer and preventive health.

At this stage, more clarity is required on the form in which these political commitments will materialise, as well as how a coherent approach to AMR that addresses human health, animal welfare and the role of the environment (the so-called One Health approach) will be pursued.

Key opportunities for businesses to shape the policy agenda at the European level, which consequently will shape the national agendas.



GREEN DEAL

In February 2023 the European Chemicals Agency published a comprehensive dossier concerning a ban on roughly 10,000 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). While the Agency is examining the potential impacts of the restriction proposal and the EU has already started restricting the use of PFAS, the Commission will propose a new chemicals industry package that aims to simplify REACH and provides clarity on PFAS.

The ambitions of the Green Deal may appear sidelined, which would raise concerns about where environmental and climate priorities fit into the broader European project, so PFAS developments need to be followed closely to assess the impact on business.

Health policy **priorities**



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the top of the Commission's agenda and has been a clear ambition since the launch of the EU AI Innovation package in January 2024, a selection of initiatives to facilitate AI uptake for startups and the scientific community, including the funding and creation of AI factories.

The EU wants to create open ecosystems around the 9 EuroHPC supercomputers and bring together the key material and human resources needed for the development of AI models and applications. The basic idea is for AI startups and the wider scientific community to have easier access to the facilities and talent needed to train, test and run their algorithms. Health is specifically referenced as one of the ecosystems to be built, and the Commission wants to link it to European Data Spaces, including the European Health Data Space, when it comes to fruition.

Building on that, with the aim of boosting productivity with digital tech diffusion, the Commission will launch the AI Factories initiative to ensure access to new, tailored supercomputing capacity for AI start-ups and industry.

Also, the Apply AI Strategy will be developed in collaboration with the Member States, the industry and civil society to push for new industrial uses of AI, with the aim to improve services in the (public) healthcare sector. In addition, the creation of a European AI Research Council to support the efforts has been proposed.

The ambitious agenda of the Commission, and the potential impact it could have, represent an opportunity for companies at the European and national level to shape the future of AI while making sure that they are part of the conversation - given that the quick development of AI will require continuous assessment and refinement of the policy and regulatory frameworks.

What can business **expect?**



- **More fractured policymaking:** Given that health policy will be split among five Commissioners, there are concerns that the requirement of multiple sign-offs could hinder coherent policymaking.
- **A complex and slowed down process:** A new approach to health policy and decision-making is expected, moving from the need to re-establish and boost the competitiveness of the sector to guaranteeing supply chain security and health of citizens - but with health policy split among five different Commissioners the process could become significantly more complex and thus slower.
- **Competitiveness for a prosperous society:** It's not given that policymakers can see that (on paper) the creation of an ecosystem for innovation is the main condition to make the European life science industry competitive again. If stakeholders are unable to find common ground, then the European life science sector risks shrinking dramatically - investments going to other geographies and having a consequent impact on our health systems and society.
- **A heavy bill for the green agenda:** With the new chemical package, companies will need to prepare for the potential restrictions of PFAS and adapt to new compliance requirements regarding substances of concern. This could lead to increased costs for compliance, as well as increased investment into the adoption of compliant alternatives.

03. Impact on tech policy

“The new Commission’s tech priorities reflect the course correction towards a more pro-innovation EU policy. The question now is, 'Can the Commission embrace a lower regulation approach, or default back to old ways?’”



ROBERT LANGMUIR
Vice President,
Tech

Who should you be paying attention to?



Henna Virkkunen (FI, EPP)
Executive Vice-President for
Tech Sovereignty, Security and
Democracy

- Trusted with the lead role on tech and a senior VP position, Henna Virkkunen is a Brussels veteran and is expected to work well with President von der Leyen, hailing from the same centre-right political family.
- She spent ten years as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and showed increasing in tech dossiers during that period, particularly on online platforms and cybersecurity.



Stéphane Séjourné (FR, Renew)
Executive Vice-President for
Prosperity and Industrial
Strategy

- Parliament in JaStéphane Séjourné, the French nominee, was a last-minute pick following the surprise resignation of Commissioner Breton.
- He is a close ally of French President Emmanuel Macron, serving as Foreign Minister for a short period after resigning from the European in January 2024.
- He is believed to be more collaborative than his predecessor and will need to deliver on this expectation if his mission to improve coordination at all levels of the Commission is to be successful.



Maroš Šefčovič (SK, NI)
Commissioner for Trade and
Economic Security;
Interinstitutional Relations and
Transparency

- Maroš Šefčovič is the longest-serving Commissioner, entering a record-breaking 4th term.
- He will report to Séjourné on the trade and economic aspect of his posting.
- Respected in Brussels as a discreet and effective operator, he is seen as a safe pair of hands, able to deliver on EU objectives without making waves.
- His previous roles as Commissioner included education & culture, energy and the green deal, as well as caretaker roles on tech policy and Brexit.



Michael McGrath (IE, EPP)
Commissioner for Democracy,
Justice and the Rule of Law

- McGrath gained a reputation for hard work and rigour following successful tenures as Ireland's Minister for Public Expenditure during covid and later as Finance Minister where he ran budget surpluses and cut the national debt.
- But, as a member of Ireland's centrist Fianna Fáil party which did not back von der Leyen, and a newcomer to Brussels, McGrath will have to build relationships quickly to be effective.



Ekaterina Zaharieva (BG, EPP) -
Commissioner for Startups,
Research and Innovation

- Former Bulgarian Deputy PM and Foreign Affairs Minister, **Ekaterina Zaharieva** is an experienced politician, however, she lacks experience in the field of science and innovation.
- Coupled with questions about her role in a major national corruption scandal, Zaharieva is set to face tough inquiries from MEPs during the confirmation hearings - and is one of the Commissioners most at risk of not making the cut.

Tech policy priorities

Despite talks of a regulatory slowdown, the Commission President has outlined as many as thirty new tech policy acts and initiatives to take forward, with priority areas including:



AI & COMPUTING

There is a marked shift from the strict regulatory approach described in the AI Act to a more pro-innovation agenda. Following the Draghi report's finding that AI offers digital sectors in Europe that are on the verge of being lost an opportunity to capitalise on the "the future waves of digital innovation", the Commission plans to boost new industrial uses of AI; adopt an EU Cloud & AI Development Act to increase high-performance computing and quantum capacity; and propose a European AI Research Council modelled on CERN to pool resources.



FRONTIER TECH

In order not to miss out on the coming wave of groundbreaking technology, the Commission will intensify efforts and increase investments in the fields of supercomputing, semiconductors, IoT, genomics, quantum computing and space tech. In particular, the Commission will develop follow-up initiatives to the EU Chips Act: a long-term EU-Quantum Chips Plan, as well as an extended strategy to boost European research infrastructure and an Advanced Materials Act.



ACCESS TO DATA

Recognising the complexity of existing rules on data sharing, the Commission has promised a new EU Data Union Strategy. The Commission hopes a clearer and more coherent legal framework will improve SMEs' access to data, as well as spur data sharing between businesses and administrations at scale. This Strategy will be one of the key tests for the new Commission, as it looks to balance the reduction of administrative burdens while maintaining high privacy and security standards.

Tech policy priorities



ECONOMIC SECURITY

Von der Leyen labeled her first Commission (2019-2024) as 'geopolitical.' The second one is expected to be more assertive, with regards to protecting key supply chains and using its new trade defense tools. Building on the Economic Security Strategy launched in 2023, ensuring resilience against emerging risks is now a core part of Trade Commissioner Šefčovič's mandate. Ensuring security of supply for vital technologies will also feed into the planned reform of EU public procurement rules, to which the Commission will consider introducing a 'Made in Europe' preference.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

While the new Commission will focus efforts on the enforcement of the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, new legislation to protect users online is foreseen. The EU executive will review whether consumer rules need to be updated for the digital era and is considering a Digital Fairness Act, addressing the impact of digital product designs like dark patterns, influencer marketing on social media and online profiling. In addition, they will launch an EU-wide inquiry into the impact of social media on wellbeing and plan to address cyberbullying, which could lead to further regulation later in the mandate. Linked to this, the Commission will also focus on the impact of digitalisation in the world of work and consider a right to disconnect.



START-UPS

Building on the Draghi report, which highlights the lack of access to capital for European start-ups and scale-ups as a major issue for the EU lagging behind the US and China on innovation, the Commission President has created a specific start-ups portfolio under Commissioner Zaharieva. She is tasked with creating a European Innovation Act, to smooth regulations that apply to start-ups, and on a separate start-up and scale-up strategy.

Tech policy **priorities**



CYBERSECURITY

Following the adoption of the wide-ranging NIS2 and Cyber Resilience Act in the last mandate, new cybersecurity rules are set to be precisely targeted. The Commission aims to draft an Action plan on cybersecurity for hospitals and healthcare providers, as well as focus on improving the adoption process of EU cybersecurity certification schemes.



CONNECTIVITY

One of the Commission's first priorities is moving forward with a Digital Networks Act to boost high-speed connectivity by incentivising investments in digital infrastructure. Work on the file was delayed last year over the inclusion of a "fair-share" option, which would see large tech companies pay for telecom infrastructure.



SPACE

The role of space in security and defense has received recognition from a dedicated Commissioner in the new College. That said, space policy looks set to continue as a secondary priority with no new funds and only two new proposals foreseen: a Space Data Economy Strategy to unlock the potential of space-derived data and products and an EU Space Law, which has already been delayed several times.



SKILLS

Aiming to tackle the skills needed to deliver digital transformation, the Commission will look to facilitate labor mobility and develop a plan on basic skills and a STEM Education strategic plan.



DISINFORMATION & FOREIGN INFLUENCE

The Commission will propose a new European Democracy Shield initiative to counter foreign information manipulation and interference online. The aim is to improve detection and analysis at EU level, as well as prevention through de-bunking.

What can business **expect?**



- **A more diffuse digital policy:** Tech policy is split among seven different Commissioners and several initiatives need contributions from different Commissioners, raising concerns that fragmentation could become an obstacle for a strong and coherent digital policy.
- **Innovation, innovation, innovation:** The Commission will generally be less focused on risk, in favour of promoting innovation, namely on AI and start-ups. In addition, where new rules are needed to address risks, the Commission will look to prioritise precisely targeted initiatives, such as a new cybersecurity action plan for hospitals and health providers.
- **A – slightly – less active Commission:** While the pace of new regulation will slow, businesses should not expect the Commission to focus only on the enforcement of landmark legislation from the last mandate, such as the AI Act, Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act, given that as many as 30 new tech policy initiatives are foreseen. Also, the Commission always reacts to crises with policies that are not currently foreseen.
- **Market access risks:** Business should prepare for risks linked to the EU's less open approach to trade & technology. New market access barriers can be expected from policies to ensure economic security and tech sovereignty, from cybersecurity certifications to export controls for strategic technologies. In addition, a European preference is being considered in the review of public procurement rules.
- **A better environment for start-ups and scale-ups:** the new College has a dedicated Commissioner for start-ups - for the first time. In addition, a new European Innovation Act will aim to improve access to venture capital, ramp up the use of sandboxes and simplify EU rules applicable projects. Beyond tech policy, the Commission's work on a Savings and Investments Union, including banking and capital markets, aims to leverage the wealth of private savings in Europe to invest in innovation.

Planned European Commission initiatives with cross sector impact



Initiative	Sustainability	Health	Tech
Chemicals Industry Package (REACH, PFAS)	✓	✓	✓
Economic Security Strategy	✓	✓	✓
Revision of the Public Procurement Directive	✓	✓	✓
EU Innovation Act	✓	✓	✓
EU Data Union Strategy		✓	✓
Advanced Materials Act	✓	✓	✓
AI Research Council	✓	✓	✓
EU Cloud and AI Development Act	✓	✓	✓
Cybersecurity Action Plan for hospitals and health providers		✓	✓

How we can help



INTELLIGENCE

- Post-election outcomes: **scenario presentations** on EU top jobs allocations and impact.
- **In-depth political and technical landscape analysis**, supported by analytics.
- **Detailed stakeholder mapping** of EU officials and legislators.



STRATEGIC COUNSEL

- **Policy analysis and insights** into regulatory risks and opportunities for all major business sectors.
- How to **plan for "Day 1"** of the new European Commission.



ENGAGEMENT

- Detailed **stakeholder engagement programmes**.
- **Development of campaigns** and engagement programs with political groups.
- **Organisation of webinars and events** with EU officials and stakeholders.

Contributors

Get In touch



Luis Cervilla

Vice President,
Public Affairs, Sustainability

M: +32 472 57 05 11
lcervilla@webershandwick.com



Robert Langmuir

Vice President,
Public Affairs, Tech

M: +32 472 19 74 91
rlangmuir@webershandwick.com



Camilla Randazzo

Vice President,
Public Affairs, Health

M: +32 496 26 51 72
crandazzo@webershandwick.com



Oliver Drewes

Senior Executive Director,
Public Affairs

M: +1 202 585 2740
odrewes@webershandwick.com