

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 29 April 2022

Subject: Mid-term assessment of the six Commission priorities for 2019-2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

The first half of the 2019-2024 Commission's term has been massively impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine. Several of the priorities set out at the start of your term as President of the European Commission have inevitably had to be reappraised in response to these considerable social, economic, and geopolitical developments.

Eurochambres conducted in late March 2022 a flash survey among its members which reveals a high level of concern about energy costs and supply chains delaying businesses' post-pandemic recovery. This is further compounded by general uncertainty regarding the ongoing economic impact of the war in Ukraine.

During the second half of your mandate, the Commission must remain acutely aware of this and recalibrate its initiatives accordingly and in close communication with the business community. With this in mind, Eurochambres has assessed the state of play with respect to the six Commission priorities for 2022-2024, which you can find in annex.

Certain Commission initiatives – some pending, others under consideration by the co-legislators - merit particular reappraisal in light of risks to the nascent economic recovery:

- National governments should be given further flexibility in reviewing the Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) to address the increase in energy prices and difficulties linked to the supply of raw materials. Chambers must be involved in more collaborative and constructive dialogue to ensure the effective rollout of financial support and the efficient monitoring of the national RRP.
- The anticipated Single Market Emergency Instrument could bring relief to businesses in response to future crises, provided that its scope does not go beyond what is strictly necessary. Improved sharing of information and the introduction of mechanisms to safeguard the integrity of the single market should be the spearheads of this new initiative.
- The EU should carefully re-evaluate legislation such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the EU Emissions Trading System. The current system of free allowances needs to be maintained, as it creates a strong incentive for businesses to invest in cleaner technology and maintain the EU industrial base.

- It is essential that the legal framework for Corporate Due Diligence avoids disproportionate obligations and reporting burdens for EU businesses. This would be important even in normal times to preserve the competitiveness of European economy, but is more critical than ever in the current context.
- Several files integral to the 'Digital Decade' objectives and at differing stages in the legislative process, notably the Digital Markets Act, the Digital Services Act, the AI Act and the Chips Act, must progress swiftly.
- The New Pact on Migration and Asylum was published in September 2020, but the critical component - the Skills and Talent Package - is still pending despite growing skills mismatches experienced by businesses. We recommend the fast introduction of this pact, as it can be used to assist SMEs in making it easier to hire Ukrainian migrants under the current circumstances.
- More resilient supply chains can only succeed on the basis of resilient trade agreements. Crucial trade dossiers need to be actively followed in order to open new doors for European companies.

Please note that, as most of the dossiers addressed relate also to the European Parliament and European Council, I am also sharing this letter with your counterparts at these institutions. I would of course be very happy to meet you to exchange further on our input and to discuss ways in which Eurochambres and the chamber network can help the Commission chart a path towards a sustainable recovery in these most challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

Luc Frieden

Annex:

- ECH mid-term assessment of the 2019-2024 von der Leyen Commission