



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

INSPIRE, DEBATE, ENGAGE AND ACCELERATE ACTION

Management and Resources Unit

Brussels  
IDEA.01/SVN

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Dear Mr Van der Kooij,

Thankyou for your letter of 21 September 2024 addressed to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, where you shared your concerns about the challenges to the European way of life and the need for a renewed social contract. You are right in noting that many Europeans are still not sufficiently informed about their rights and obligations.

Europe has a unique quality of life, and Europe's social contract has always aimed at improving equality of opportunity and fair inclusion of all members of society. The digital and green transitions are bringing on new challenges, but also new opportunities for Europeans. Moreover, the crises of recent years have had a direct impact on the quality of life of many Europeans, from the cost of living, housing and energy, to increasing divisions and inequalities in our society.

In this context, on 18 July 2024, President von der Leyen presented her Political Guidelines for the next mandate of the European Commission

([https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/president-elect-ursula-vonder-leyen\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/president-elect-ursula-vonder-leyen_en)).

To ensure that the EU offers a path towards inclusive and fair transitions, peace and security, and social prosperity that are needed for Europe to play its part in the world and care for its citizens in the 21st century, the Commission has put forward a number of initiatives to support people, strengthen our societies and our social model. I would like to particularly highlight the following that will constitute priorities in the Commission's mandate ahead and that are relevant for the points you have raised in your letter: a new Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a

Quality Jobs Roadmap, a new Pact for European Social Dialogue, a first ever EU AntiPoverty Strategy, and a first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan. I would also like to highlight that the next mandate will ensure that decisions taken today do not harm future generations and that there is increased solidarity and engagement between people of different ages. Intergenerational fairness will be a guiding principle of the EU's work ahead.

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Your engagement for a renewed social contract is deeply appreciated, and a powerful reminder of the importance of the Union's work and the impact it has on the lives of citizens across Europe. Thank you for your valuable input. It is through the voices of engaged citizens like yourself that we can continue to make informed decisions and strengthen our collective European project. Please know that your voice is heard, and that great efforts are made by all colleagues in the Commission to ensure that no citizens' email remains unanswered. Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed  
Sonia VILA NUNEZ  
Head of Unit

# The European way of life

Afzender [Feeling Europe FNDN](#)

Ontvanger [ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu)

Datum 2024-09-20 22:44

Europe is a patchwork, a union of states, a centre where people sometimes are to each other's throats and where people have been searching for a shared identity for centuries.

Europe is also the continent of cultural, intellectual, social and artistic movements and where ways are sought to guarantee peace.

Europe is not, or better yet, never, finished. But in the current era, functioning and the idea of how to deal with each other do not meet modern requirements.

Without thinking about horizons, the future calls for a vision for Europe and for a role on the world stage. These are not new insights, but already old themes.

World developments are not all reassuring: the world is struggling with confusion and madness: rulers are fighting for territory and global hegemony and there are clashes between and within both cultural, political philosophies and ideologies as well as social and all kinds of other individual views.

On big issues, the EU is reactive and functions as well as the member states allow it. Only in times of crises does it make progress in the process of progress. But that is slow. Furthermore, citizens have the impression that the Commission wants to bend agreements made during and after the decision-making process, that monitoring compliance with and accountability for the consequences of agreements made is inadequate and that the stated priorities are not properly balanced with the EU strategic agenda of the Council.

The Commission must come up with (legislative) proposals, assess, adjusts and is transparent; functioning as the centre of power in Europe is not part of that.

To prevent ending up in a state of war of all against all, the Union itself and citizens have rights and duties to fulfill.

These rights and obligations are not well known. To create a more secure Europe, the Commission should immediately draw up and distribute all over Europe an up-to-date social contract that meets the spirit of the times. That contract does not exist now.

**Social contract theory**, nearly as old as philosophy itself, is the view that persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live.

A social contract can also serve well to teach newcomers what it means to live in Europe.

My experience, and that of many other citizens, is that emails are often not answered. It is precisely this kinds of things that frustrates citizens. It works against Europe and then an anti Europe attitude is initiated by yourself.