

*EU POLITICS*

European Green Deal Tops von der Leyden's 'To Do' List



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By **Newsroom**



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Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, detailed her ambition programme to place Europe at the global forefront of the combat against climate change and the promotion of digital innovation, data protection, and what she called ‘geopolitics of mutual interest’ during her tenure at the helm of the executive branch of the European Union.

Von der Leyen takes office as the multilateral institutions that have helped govern the world over the past 50 years “are being challenged every day”. She said: “It’s not a question of one country or one party or one president. It is a global phenomenon on sentiments.” Average people play by the rules but worry about the future of their businesses and families. “No matter how hard they try, they feel that the world is moving too fast.”

One response is increased nationalism and divisiveness. Another is to strive for greater inclusion. “We need to upgrade our international forums,” she said. “We need global leadership.”

Climate change is probably “the best example” of the need for new initiatives, she said. She proposes a European Green Deal, with projected investments of €1 trillion from public and private sources combined and with the backing of the European Investment Bank. The central goal is to make Europe carbon neutral by 2050. “This will create jobs, innovation and will create value,” she said. “And it will create jobs.”

Europe cannot reduce its own CO2 emissions just to turn around and “import” them abroad. To protect local businesses and workers from foreign firms operating under looser environmental regulations, she proposes what she called a “carbon border adjustment mechanism”.

Ultimately, the goal would be for Europe’s trading partners to implement similar carbon reduction programmes. She pointed to initiatives already under way in California.

To promote innovation and help scientists find new solutions to the world’s problems, she proposes the expansion of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), where researchers can upload and access vast amounts of data. “It is being developed in Europe and will be a European solution,” she said. Eventually the EC plans “to open this to the broader research sector and to businesses”.

She added that Europe will continue its efforts in the realm of data privacy and

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In terms of geopolitics, von der Leyen stressed the need to “invest in more long-term stability”. She added: “Hard power is an important tool, without question, but it is not the only one. It always comes with diplomacy and conflict prevention.”

She called this the “geopolitics of mutual interest. That’s what Europe stands for”.

Von der Leyen’s address was followed by another by David Maria Sassoli, President of the European Parliament. His body must approve her green deal and other projects they can be implemented. He reserved the right of legislators to review and “consider” proposals if they see fit. His primary concern is to link the green deal with social justice. “The environmental challenges we face will only be solved if we address poverty and inequality,” he said.

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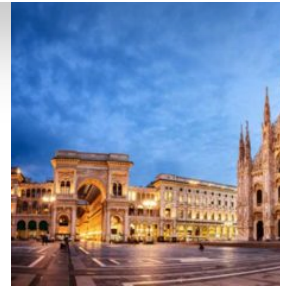
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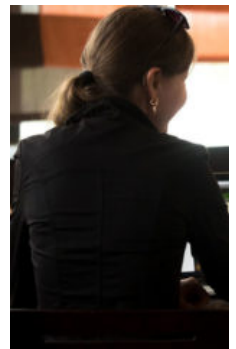
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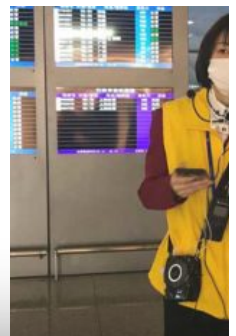
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