A proposal for an

Executive Vice-President for Future Generations

Because the long-term starts today.

zoe institute for future-fit economies

Imprint

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An Executive Vice-President for Future Generations

In 2024-29, with a new Commissioner mandated to enshrine intergenerational thinking horizontally across policy areas, the Commission would be able to:

- Integrate and embed intergenerational thinking in the policy cycle to build towards a positive future in line with EU values and goals;
- Safeguard future generations' wellbeing, and act as a conduit for their concerns, through scrutiny of policies, reforms, and investments;
- Review and monitor progress towards the EU's vision of the future of Europe in collaboration with citizens.

The unpredictability of future challenges necessitates a more systematic use of strategic foresight and long-term thinking in agenda-setting, policymaking, investments, budgetary allocation, and impact assessment across all policy areas to build a future-fit Europe.

Decisions made today will shape the EU's position and the lives of people in Europe for decades. While many issues require immediate responses, the Commission also needs to consistently consider the long-term in policymaking and how decisions will impact the future of the EU. This is the only way to ensure true strategic autonomy and future competitiveness of the Union and its Member States.

The next Commission will need to deliver the goals of the European Green Deal against a backdrop of complex challenges and polycrisis. Success will depend on its ability to balance long-term planning with crisis response, and for this leadership is needed.

The promotion of 'solidarity between generations', as set out in the EU Treaties, requires policymaking to plan for generations-yet-to-come, so that they can inherit a thriving, stable, future-fit Europe.

With the introduction of a political role dedicated to intergenerational solidarity and long-view decision-making, the EU can show global leadership on governance and future orientation and join a growing number of governments and bodies around the world formalising long-term thinking in decision-making.

The next Commission needs to centre a long-term, strategic perspective across Commissioners and directorates-general, and in policy, funding, and investment decisions. The appointment of a dedicated Executive Vice President can ensure just that.

An Executive Vice-President for Future Generations would:

Integrate and embed intergenerational, long-view thinking in the policy cycle to build towards a positive future in line with EU values and goals

Governance and new ways of working:

- **Formalise the integration of the assessment of long-term impacts into the impact assessment process** within the policy cycle.
- **Deepen and normalise the use of existing strategic foresight** work and methodologies of the Commission into the policy cycle so that it feeds into the annual work plan and budget, including learning from future models and scenarios for better long-term decision-making.
- **Develop and implement new processes** to enable closer coordination across policy areas to identify potential interactions and long-term impacts of policies on one another.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- The **European Semester process can include reporting against defined criteria and metrics for future-fitness**. This is used as input into country specific recommendations for future-fit economic policy of Member States. The Commissioner's office would define and enforce binding targets using **socio-economic and environmental** (in addition to economic) **metrics** for use in the Semester.
- **Monitor progress** towards the renewed vision of Europe using relevant indicators and ensure that resourcing aligns with the vision.
- **Use holistic Integrated Assessment Models in the impact assessment process to better** integrate long-term environmental and social impacts into current macroeconomic simulation models and policy assessment and evaluation so that long-term impacts can be better understood.

Safeguard future generations' wellbeing, and act as a conduit for their concerns, through scrutiny of policies, reforms, and investments

- **Regular horizontal scrutiny of policies and investments to ensure they are future-fit**
  - This could be inspired by the **model of the Lithuanian parliament's committee for the future**, where each piece of legislation is scrutinised for its long-term impact, or follow the model many countries used in embedding scrutiny for the SDGs.
  - Future-fitness could also be added to the remit of the **Regulatory Scrutiny Board**. Whilst the RSB sits outside of the remit of Commissioners, defining this and supporting the institutionalisation of this could be an early task of the Commissioner's team.

- **Ensure budgetary resources are allocated based on progress towards long-term targets** both within the EU institutions and among Member States, by assessing the MFF, annual EU budgets, and Member States' budgets through the Semester process, for whether they are future-fit.
- **Receive direct input from citizens** concerned about the long-term implication of EU actions and inactions, working in collaboration with the Ombudsperson through a new collaborative process to ensure scrutiny and safeguarding.

Review and monitor progress towards the EU's vision of the future of Europe in collaboration with citizens

- **Build bridges between the European institutions** and the public by maintaining regular dialogue for envisioning a Europe fit for the future.
- **Make ongoing use of citizen participation processes**, such as visioning processes and deliberative mechanisms like citizen assemblies or futuring techniques to ensure citizen engagement with, and support for, a planned transition towards that future.
- Build on the outcomes and learning of the **Conference on the Future of Europe** to establish more meaningful mechanisms for citizens to participate in the long-term vision of the EU.

To discuss this proposal please contact:

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