

European Week of Sport, 23-30 September

The news:

This year the fourth edition of the European Week of Sport will take place from 23-30 September 2018. This EU initiative is a Europe-wide campaign (#BeActive) to inspire people to practise sport and, more broadly, to be active in their everyday lives.

Starting with the official opening in Vienna on 22 September, people will be invited to join sport events and activities organised all over Europe. For the first time, countries from the Western Balkans will also be part of the European Week. Activities will range from small local sport gatherings to national tournaments and pan-European events. Different days will be dedicated to practising sport in a specific setting, such as at school or at the workplace, outdoors and in sport clubs or fitness centres. A network of partners supported by a team of well-known national and European sport ambassadors will promote the events around Europe.

The background:

The European Week of Sport is a response to encourage all Europeans to get up and #BeActive. It is a truly European movement that began in 2015 and has inspired millions of people in 32 countries to #BeActive in their everyday lives.

There is a real need to inspire Europeans to exercise more and make everyone aware of the importance of physical activity. Of all Europeans 59% never or seldom practice or play sport, while 37% sit more than 5.5 hours a day.

The event:

In the presence of Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, this year's opening ceremony will be held alongside Austria's Day of Sport in Vienna's Prater Park on 22 September 2018.

The sources:

[The European Week of Sports 2018 website](#)

[What is the EU doing for sport?](#)

[Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle](#)

[Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity](#)

Indicative programme – Competitiveness Council, 27 and 28 September 2018

Place:

Europa building, Brussels

Chairs:

Margarete Schramböck, Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs of Austria

Heinz Faßmann, Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research of Austria

All times are approximate and subject to change

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

+/- 09.00

Arrivals

+/- 09.30

Doorstep by Minister Schramböck

Internal Market and Industry

+/- 10.00

Roundtable

Adoption of the agenda

+/- 10.15

Competitiveness check-up

+/- 11.00

Artificial intelligence and robotics ([public session](#))

Any other business ([public session](#))

– Outcome of the informal competitiveness ministers meeting of 15-16 July 2018

+/- 13.00

Any other business (not in public session)

– Implementation of the DSM e-commerce initiatives

– Communication: a retail sector fit for the 21st century

– Outcome of a conference on EU single market

– Outcome of the Single Market Forum

Adoption of legislative A items ([public session](#))

Adoption of non-legislative A items

+/- 13.30

MFF in the light of competitiveness (informal lunch debate)

+/- 15.15

Press conference ([live streaming](#) from JL building press room)

FRIDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2018

+/- 08.30

Arrivals

+/- 08.45

Doorstep by Minister Faßmann

Research

+/- 10.00

Roundtable

+/- 10.00

Horizon Europe Package: ([public session](#))

– Framework programme

– Specific programme

+/- 13.00

Horizon Europe Package (lunch debate)

+/- 15.00

Strategic planning process ([public session](#))

+/- 16.30

Press conference ([live streaming](#) from JL building press room)

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[Enterprise and industry](#) [Single market](#) [Research & technological development](#)

Speech by Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete at the Global Wind Summit

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be with you here in Hamburg for what I consider one of

the most important events in the renewable energy calendar of the year.

Hamburg is a good place for your event, not only because Germany continues to be the biggest market for wind; but also because it is firmly anchored in the North Sea region which we consider to be the test bed for regional cooperation on renewables. And the presence of the Ministers of Denmark and Norway underline the relevance of this idea.

The timing of this year's event is particularly interesting – as we look to finalise new rules on the EU regulatory framework for energy policy and set the longer-term perspective for a low carbon and climate neutral economy in Europe.

Your sector, the wind industry, is without a doubt one of the main pillars of the clean energy transition today.

In recent years, as costs have come down, we have seen renewable generation capacity grow steadily by 8 or 9% every year. Wind power is making an impressive contribution to this growth. The installed wind capacity grew by 14.8 GigaWatts in 2017 bringing the EU installed capacity up to 169 GW by the end of 2017.

This has turned the industry into an important source of growth and job creation. We estimate that the renewables sector represented more than 1.4 million jobs in the EU in 2016 and that more than 300 000 out of these were in the wind sector. And this continues to rise.

In my speech today, I would like to cover three main issues relating to the future of the renewables sector and wind in particular.

Firstly, the state of play as regards the Clean Energy for All Europeans package, secondly, how do we ensure an investment framework that supports the energy transition and thirdly, how we intend to show the direction in the longer term through our Long-term strategy.

So let me start with an update on the Clean Energy for All Europeans package, which we proposed in November 2016. This package aims at adapting our regulatory framework to enable Europe to lead the clean energy transition and to deliver on our Paris Agreement commitments. Sustaining our ambition of being a world leader for Renewables is closely linked to that.

I am therefore very satisfied that just before the summer break we managed to get a political agreement on our proposals on renewables, efficiency and governance which, in my view, lives up to this ambition.

Allow me to draw your attention to a number of key points in the new rules that we have negotiated.

For Renewables, we agreed with Parliament and Council on a binding overall target of at least 32% at EU level for 2030. To put this into perspective for the power market, we expect that this would result in around 55% of electricity from renewables by 2030. This highlights that renewables technology will be *the* major player in the years ahead. However, the revised

rules aim to seize the potential for renewables also in other sectors, such as transport and heating and cooling.

But the revised Renewables Directive is much more than just a target. It contains a comprehensive set of measures across sectors in order to facilitate the deployment of renewable energy in a cost-effective way in the EU. Our objective is to further Europeanise renewable energy policy, including by clarifying conditions for support and encouraging cross-border renewables projects. I will revert to this point in a few minutes.

Administrative procedures have been simplified. We have made important steps for consumer empowerment by fixing for the first time at EU level a clear and stable regulatory framework on self-consumption. This will allow self-consumers, individually or as part of a renewable energy community, to fully participate in the market without being subject to disproportionate charges or procedures. There is also a clear requirement to remove regulatory barriers to long-term renewables power purchase agreements and to facilitate their uptake.

The ambition to see Europe as a world leader for renewables is also sustained through our new Governance Regulation. This will serve as the architecture for the Energy Union and mechanism for achieving the Union's 2030 objectives, with Member States being required to outline a national strategy and submit national plans on how to achieve these targets. And, in order to ensure that these plans reflect not just a national perspective, but also a more strategic view, the Commission will be able to recommend adjustments to these national plans in order to maximise consistency and coordination across the EU.

Our revised energy efficiency legislation also contains provisions aiming at further encouraging deployment of renewables, especially in the buildings sector, which has a very significant potential for decarbonisation.

Last but not least, the market design legislation. Achieving the clean energy transition will require important transformation of the energy system characterized by more variable renewable energies, greater decentralization and digitalization. The new electricity market design proposals will enable these developments and encourage the deployment of renewables.

Indeed, it will make the market fit for the growing share of renewable energy by providing greater flexibility of the power system and appropriate price signals.

Needless to say that the higher level of ambition that we have just agreed for renewables will make it all the more urgent to come to a rapid and ambitious agreement on modernised market rules.

And I remain optimistic that we can reach a political agreement on these files by the end of the year, under the Austrian^[1] Presidency.

At the same time we will only be able to reach the more ambitious targets agreed upon if we can attract the necessary investment – and most of it will

have to come from the private sector. Let me therefore turn to the second issue I wanted to cover today, which is what we are doing to promote investment more directly.

First, the revised Renewables Directive includes various elements, which, taken together, should ensure a more stable development of the investment framework for renewables than we have seen in the past.

In addition to the ambitious target of at least 32% itself, this concerns foremost the clear rules on support schemes. While being based on market mechanisms to avoid over-compensation, we have enshrined the key principle in legislation that support should be predictable and stable, with no retroactive changes.

This draws the lesson of past and sometimes painful experience with ill-designed support schemes and support scheme changes and ensures these aren't repeated. I would say that also with regard to support schemes, our learning curve has been steep.

With the same objective to increase predictability, we have introduced an obligation for Member States to publish and regularly update long-term schedules for auctions, including eligible technologies.

And these long-term schedules brings me to another key element for the 2030 framework, namely the National Energy and Climate Plans under the Governance. We want them to be specific and provide the necessary background for the industry to invest in new capacity. But they could also include plans for renewables assets that reach the end of life before 2030.

As a very important element, we have also requested that these national plans will be part of a public consultation with key stakeholders, such as yourselves. We need to see in the plans policies and measures to achieve the national contribution to the binding EU-level 2030 target for renewable energy and the related trajectories as well as measures for financial support.

But it is not only through Regulation that we seek to facilitate the necessary investment. We are also determined to support the energy transition more strongly through our own spending in the future. Our proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework- the new 7-year EU budget – underlines that ambition.

Horizontally, we have proposed to increase the climate mainstreaming target from 20% in the current period to 25 % in the next. That means that over the entire budget, one in four Euros is to be spent on climate change adaptation and mitigation, at the heart of which lies the clean energy transition.

In absolute terms, Cohesion Funding is likely to be the biggest contributor. Low Carbon Investments are kept as priority for Member States with a higher ring-fencing of 30%. Crucially, there is to be a strong link between future spending and the Clean Energy Package. Funding will be conditional on Member States meeting certain conditions, including that they do not fall below

their 2020 renewables targets throughout the programming period.

Of particular relevance to your industry, as the successor to the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the new Invest EU Fund will give 11.5 billion EURO into a Sustainable Infrastructure window to unlock private investment through financial instruments and tailor-made products. We can expect the wind sector to continue to be an important beneficiary of this.

I will not go through all other programs supporting the clean energy transition for lack of time, but just want to touch briefly upon the future Connecting Europe Facility in the Energy sector. Here our goal is to focus our means, which we have proposed to double compared to the current MFF, even more on enabling the clean energy transition. On the one hand by completing an electricity grid that can cope with 55%, or more, of renewables in 2030; and on the other hand by opening up the possibility to support directly cooperation in renewables deployment between Member States or at regional level with up to 865 million €. As proposed, this new instrument will provide technical assistance, grants for studies and grants for works for projects that are part of a Member States' cooperation mechanism.

All of this cannot replace private investment but can help to stimulate it, and we therefore hope for rapid progress in negotiations with co-legislators to finalise these files.

And this brings me to my third and final point. Ultimately, the best recipe for a positive investment climate is long-term visibility and clarity on the direction we are taking. This is the purpose of the Long-term strategy that we are currently working on.

Both the European Council and the European Parliament asked us to develop this strategy. A public consultation is currently ongoing until 9 October, and I would invite all of you who haven't done so yet to contribute. We are determined to put our strategy forward in November this year, ahead of COP24 in Katowice in December.

The strategy will take a holistic look at the transitions necessary in key sectors of the economy, with the energy system – which is responsible for around 75% of Greenhouse Gas emissions – playing a central role. It will look at power, buildings, transport, industry and agriculture sectors, including possibilities of sectoral integration to increase the overall efficiency. It will also provide useful insights for industries on technology and Research and Innovation needs, on economic and social aspects, security of supply issues, or co-benefits for health.

The Long Term Strategy has to be consistent with the Paris Agreement. This implies developing emission reduction scenarios limiting global average temperature rise to well below 2°C, but also exploring scenarios aiming at limiting warming to 1.5°C. Such objectives imply emission reductions in 2050 for the EU ranging from -80% to -100%.

The objective will not be to select a preferred scenario but rather to look at common trends and challenges.

Clearly, electrification is such a common trend and will play a fundamental role in decarbonisation. All projections show that the share of electricity from renewable origin will increase further in scenarios leading to carbon neutrality in 2050. The share of electricity in EU energy demand could go up to 27% in 2030 and close to 50% in 2050. Of this, at least 80% would come from renewable sources.

Other solutions than electricity will be needed in sectors such as freight transport or for certain industrial processes.

But it is entirely clear that a fully decarbonised, largely renewables-based power system, will be fundamental also for our decarbonisation efforts in a long-term 2050 perspective.

And this brings me back to the beginning, and the importance of this conference.

I see this importance not only in the dialogue between the wind industry and politics, but at least as importantly this dialogue needs to include civil society at large.

The energy transition will bring about a deep transformation of our economic model with societal impacts beyond the purely economic. This is why it needs to be inclusive and why we need to invest time and effort into continued broad public support.

In this regard the wind industry has valuable experience to share. Be it with models that allow citizens to share in the benefits of new developments. Or be it in finding ways how to reconcile sometimes competing but ultimately reconcilable objectives, such as renewable energy development and nature protection.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is in this sense that we chose the programmatic title “Clean Energy for AllEuropeans” for our policy proposals. I believe that this conference will contribute to making this happen.

Thank you.

[\[1\]](#) [NB The Director-General of the Austrian Energy Ministry is scheduled to be present]

[ESMA finds deterioration in liquidity](#)

in stressed financial markets for both sovereign and corporate bonds

The study, reporting on different aspects of market liquidity, shows that the situation differs significantly between sovereign and corporate bonds. ESMA has found that sovereign bond market liquidity has increased recently, potentially due to the effects of supportive monetary policy. However, in parallel, it has seen evidence of several episodes of deteriorating secondary market liquidity for corporate bonds, especially between 2014 and 2016.

In terms of drivers, the issuance size plays a crucial role in both categories, with market liquidity more abundant for bonds that have a benchmark status and are issued in larger volumes in the sovereign segment with outstanding amounts being the main bond-level drivers in the corporate segment.

For both sovereign and corporate bonds, ESMA sees a correlation between increased stress in financial markets and a deterioration in market liquidity.

Speech by Commissioner Jourová on values in times of rising nationalism opening the Fundamental Rights Forum

**** Key messages ****

On the Charter for Fundamental Rights

We have to translate the Charter into basic principles. These principles should become an anchor in this fast changing, confusing world – simply the bedrock of our society.

On the modern challenges:

The bad version of nationalism, the one promoting exclusion and hatred is on the rise. And so is racial abuse and discrimination. Hate online is on the rise.

And these dangerous trends are not only visible in the rising popularity of the extreme parties. Sadly, the mainstream parties accept some part of this rhetoric of division.

March in Chemnitz, anti-Soros campaign in Hungary or growing anti-Muslim or anti-Roma rhetoric are just a few examples that show we have a problem.

On bad version of nationalism:

The identity politics, based on exclusive nationalism, scare me. I lived in a totalitarian regime where there was only one right ideology, only one right government, and only one allowed discourse. Minorities didn't exist, diversity of views and opinions were not respected. People did not dare to speak up.

This exclusive nationalism tries to force people to define themselves against others and implies that being a part of majority makes us somehow better.

I would argue that the predominant source of this is fear. When we are afraid, we often switch off rational thinking and escape to our instincts, even the darker ones.

On potential solutions:

We should not respond to the fear of people by lecturing, by being ignorant or by ridiculing. This is not how we can build a relationship. This is the way we lose people and push them away from our core principles.

We have to offer a familiar alternative to the people. In my view, we should promote healthy patriotism, based on inclusion, but also about nurturing the feeling of familiar community.

On the role of politicians

Calling media 'the enemies of the people' or blaming an individual or a minority group for migration or economic misfortune are not examples from the 1930s, but from my recent memory.

I appeal to politicians to show responsibility for their words, and to show restraint. They have to realise that their words become justification for some people to act on their urges and their fears.

On the role of media:

Media can build the culture of dialogue or sow divisions, spread disinformation and encourage exclusion. The Brexit debate is the best example of that.

They have a powerful role to play and we should help them and defend their right to hold politicians into account.

In Europe, we need to keep up our support for public broadcasters and independent media more broadly than just following the laws of markets

On digital revolution:

I don't blame the digital or social media for invention of fake news or

disinformation, but often without any filters, they allow the massive spread of dubious sources and create the pretence of immunity.

The US presidential elections, Brexit referendum and the Cambridge Analytica case helped us realise that modern technology can be used by private or foreign interests to take advantage of our digital presence and to manipulate our elections.

We must ensure that what is illegal offline remains illegal online and that the anarchy of the online world comes to an end.

Conclusion

We must fight for open society. We must humbly ask the people to trust us again and promote the hope the Charter brings.

I understand this as embracing people's fears, showing empathy and going 'out there', out of our comfortable bubbles to try to show to people that fundamental rights belong to everyone and that they mean a lot in practice.

****Speech****

You here in the audience are the 'platinum members' of the Fundamental Rights club. It's largely thanks to your work and dedication that the European Union is probably the best place in the world when it comes to legislation and enforcement of fundamental rights.

The **Charter for Fundamental Rights** is an example of hard work where we identified together a common set of values; values to guide our actions and to enable us to live together in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice and equality prevail.

But we know the reality is much more difficult than that, diversified, if may use this euphemism.

Everyday, in the European Union, we can find examples that the Charter is not fully applied in real life. Stories that our host, the Fundamental Rights Agency has collected, like this one from Peter, a young German man, are just a reminder of this. He said: *"The antisemitic insults I have experienced were neither from neo-Nazis nor from leftists, but from ordinary people of the political centre."*

This is a scary confession, because it does unfortunately fit with the recent trends in Europe.

The bad version of nationalism, the one promoting exclusion and hatred is on the rise. And so is racial abuse and discrimination. According to the latest data we have, there are roughly 4 antisemitic incidents per day (!) in France, UK and Germany. Hate online is on the rise.

And these dangerous trends are not only visible in the rising popularity of the extreme parties. Sadly, the mainstream parties accept some part of this exclusive rhetoric.

It means that exclusion, discrimination and lack of respect for minorities have spilled over from the margins to the centre and don't meet enough resistance from the media, politicians or opinion leaders.

Nationalists marching in Chemnitz, anti-Soros campaign in Hungary or growing anti-Muslim or anti-Roma rhetoric are just a few examples that show that despite the Charter, despite a strong legal framework and dedicated people, like yourselves, we have a problem.

Even though I am sure that everyone here will be able to recite from the Charter even when woken up in the middle of the night, we shouldn't assume that everyone reads the charter as a bedtime story.

We have to translate the charter into basic principles that really matter, that are not negotiable, but that people in Europe can also relate to.

These principles should become an anchor in the fast changing, confusing world – simply the bedrock of our society.

For me, I understand the key elements as follows:

- Equality in front of law
- No tolerance for discrimination (but also not the fight against it that discriminates others)
- Freedom of speech, but with limits to exclude for instance speech calling for violence
- Freedom of religion, but within the limits of the legal order
- Access to justice for all, not only for the privileged or the rich
- Finally, the right of feeling secure, safe, but not at the expense of safety for others.

These principles can only work if they are applied and visible in everyday life of people.

For that to happen, the Charter rights and the bulk of EU legislation that directly promotes fundamental rights must be implemented. They must be translated into peoples' lives.

In this regard there have been a number of initiatives. For example, the Framework decision on Racism and Xenophobia, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the victim's rights directive, the fair trial package, the new EU data protection rules, the initiatives on work life balance and gender pay gap, the equality directives, the EU accession to the Istanbul convention on preventing and combating violence against women, the proposed directive on the protection of whistleblowers, the soon to be adopted Audio-Visual Media Service Directive.

Next to legislation and enforcement, we must also continue to develop policies that **foster and promote our fundamental rights and values.**

During my mandate I have witnessed the effectiveness of the "platforms" of EU, national and international experts and civil society, working together to combat hate crime, discrimination and intolerance and foster equality.

These joint efforts have led to good progress on some of the key challenges that we face. Let me just name three examples:

- First – a significant **curb to illegal hate speech online** thanks to the implementation of the Code of Conduct agreed with IT companies two years ago. IT companies are now removing on average 70 % of content notified to them and in more than 80% of the cases they do it in less than 24 hours. We decided this in 2016, if we allow jungle in the digital world, we can expect jungle in the real world. We knew we needed to act fast. If we had planned a regulation, it wouldn't be ready today;
- Second – an improvement of national systems for **recording and collecting equality data and data on hate crimes** – an area where FRA support has been decisive;
- Third – a **compilation of promising practices and guiding principles** on key issues such as hate crime training and hate crime victims' support. We will also present, in the coming months, a comprehensive guidance document on the practical application of the Framework Decision on combating racism. I consider these issues very important because they also send strong signals that hate crime and illegal hate speech are not acceptable and will be penalised.

But the work is not finished, including the legislative bit. In particular the digitalisation of our lives will call for new solutions. Think of **artificial intelligence**, for instance.

We are planning to present ethical guidelines on Artificial Intelligence development at the end of 2019. Our **European** approach to artificial intelligence relies on keeping the human being in the centre and ensuring that fundamental values are built in its design.

The development of Artificial Intelligence depends on the harvesting of personal data. We see China and the U.S. making progress in this area, and we seem to be lagging behind, but we want to do it the European way, with the human factor at the centre. It shouldn't rely on unscrupulous methods. History will tell us we were right.

Now I want to want to speak about the things that scare me, especially about what some call the identity politics, based on exclusive nationalism. I lived in a totalitarian regime where there was only one right ideology, only one right government, and only one allowed discourse. Minorities didn't exist, diversity of views and opinions were not respected. People did not dare speaking up.

This exclusive nationalism tries to force people to define themselves against others and implies that being a part of majority makes us somehow better.

This attitude gives rise to hatred, violence, discrimination and closes any space for dialogue.

We have to try to understand why people are turning to such a vision of the world, despite our tragic and not so distant history, especially in Europe. And why this discourse is no longer the exclusive rhetoric of fringe and

extreme parties. Therefore we are not addressing fringe voters but more and more the mainstream. This is a discussion in our living rooms.

The reasons are very complex, but I would argue that the predominant source of this is simply fear. When we are afraid, we often switch off rational thinking and escape to our instincts, even the darkest ones.

I don't think we should respond to this fear by lecturing, by being ignorant or by ridiculing. This is not how we can build a relationship. This is the way we lose people and push them away from our core principles.

We have to try to understand the reasons and offer a familiar alternative. In my view, we should promote healthy patriotism, based on inclusion, but also about nurturing the feeling of familiar community.

Vaclav Havel described what I mean when he talked about the relationship between the Czech Republic and Europe. He said: "If I feel European, it doesn't mean I have stopped being a Czech. It is the opposite – as a Czech I am also a European. Poetically said – Europe is motherland of our motherlands." This is how I feel as well, in my job as European Commissioner.

And here I would point out to the particular role that politicians, media and digitalisation have both in spreading the disease of exclusion as well as in fighting it.

Politicians

- We politicians are heard, our opinions influence the society. We have access to mass media and a large group of society is influenced by what they say. In democracy irresponsible politicians can easily take advantage of the freedom of speech by using fear for their political gains.
- Calling media 'the enemies of the people' or blaming an individual or a minority group for migration or economic misfortune are not the examples from the 1930s but from my recent memory.
- I appeal to politicians for showing responsibility for the word and restrain. We have to realise that our words become justification for some people to act on their urges.

Media – a powerful multiplier under pressure

Now, media have an equally important role to play, not only because it is thanks to the media that words of politicians can be heard or read by millions.

Media should build the culture of dialogue or, on the contrary, sow divisions, spread disinformation and encourage exclusion. The Brexit debate is the best example of that.

Again, do you remember the first page of a popular British daily calling the judges the 'enemy of the people'? Or just last week, the EU leaders were called 'Dirty Rats' on another first page.

Almost daily we could find examples of stories that are spiced up to point out the enemy; to paint the picture black and white.

Traditional media are under enormous pressure from the digital world. They lose readership and advertising revenue. They have to cut staff which means less fact-checking, less quality reporting.

I would advocate for a **European approach to media based on quality and smart regulation, if needed.**

In Europe, we have a “dual” system in the area of broadcasting – combining the presence of **public broadcasters** with commercial broadcasters. We need to keep up our support for public broadcasters and independent media more broadly than just following the laws of markets.

Fundamental rights must be a part of public discourse in the media. They have to belong to the media.

Media are also instrumental in holding politicians account and in defining the limits of what is ‘unacceptable’ in a society. The murder of two brave journalists in the EU reminded us that it is a hard job. I was in Malta, where I visited the grave of Daphne, in the presence of her parents, husband, sisters and son. I told her son that I wouldn’t be his mother’s friend, if she were alive. Because it is not our role to be friends with journalists. They do a job that is uncomfortable for us, but we have to respect the crucial role they play for democracy.

Digital revolution

Finally, the digital revolution we are witnessing. This is probably the biggest source of change in our lives.

I don’t blame the digital or social media for invention of fake news or disinformation, but often without any filters, they allow massive spread of dubious sources and create the pretence of immunity.

Look at the US presidential elections, Brexit referendum and the Cambridge Analytical case. These events helped us realise that modern technology can be used by private or foreign interests to take advantage of our digital presence and to manipulate our elections. This is why the European Commission adopted the package of measures to secure free and fair European elections.

That’s why the work we started with the code of conduct needs to continue. The work we are doing to fight with disinformation, including publication of the code of practice in a few weeks’ time needs to be effective.

We need to renew a societal contract that confirms basic principles and fundamental rights for the digital age. Only this can sustain people’s trust in it and avoid they lose faith.

Conclusion

Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

We are at an existential period for our societies and for the future of European integration.

But, as the Vienna-born Karl Popper said, *"An open society can only be maintained if we are willing to fight for it"*.

And fight we must, but we have to fight smart. We have to remember that the world is not black and white and we have to keep our both feet firmly on the ground.

We must humbly ask the people to trust us again and promote the hope the Charter brings.

I understand this as embracing people's fears, showing empathy and going 'out there', out of our comfortable bubbles to try to show to people that fundamental rights belong to everyone and that they mean a lot in practice.

We need to renew ownership for fundamental rights and values and renew our societal contract for what they mean and for what they stand for.