



Brussels, 13 October 2020

Dear colleagues,

I look forward to welcoming you to our upcoming European Council meeting on 15-16 October. We will meet in a difficult context. We are seeing COVID infections rise and we have a number of pressing issues on our agenda, including our relations with the United Kingdom.

The European Council will start on Thursday afternoon at 3pm with our traditional exchange of views with European Parliament President, David Sassoli.

We will then move on to EU-UK negotiations together with Michel Barnier. It is in the interests of both sides to have an agreement in place before the end of the transition period. This cannot, however, happen at any price. The coming days are decisive. I will invite our negotiator to update us on the latest developments. Key issues include, in particular, the level playing field, fisheries and governance.

Over dinner, we will hold an orientation debate on how to achieve our climate ambition. Last December we agreed on the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050. We now need to increase our emissions reduction target for 2030 to make sure we can achieve that ambition. The Commission has proposed a new target of at least 55% by 2030. I would like us to have a constructive debate on the issue, so as to pave the way for an agreement by the end of the year.

On Friday, we will reconvene for a strategic discussion on our relations with Africa, with a view to our upcoming meeting with African Union Leaders. Our objective is to renew and deepen our political relations, taking them to a higher level, based on mutual respect and the willingness to accommodate each other's interests.

After our discussion on EU-Africa relations, we will address other foreign policy issues that require our attention.

Lastly, on COVID-19, we will address two issues. We will take stock of the coordination efforts undertaken at EU level, after the adoption of the Council recommendation on the restriction of free movement and receive an update from Commission President von der Leyen on vaccines. We will then discuss the next steps to take.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, overlapping loops and lines, positioned above the printed name.

C. MICHEL