

For the attention of
Mr Jean-Claude Juncker

Dear Mr Juncker,

Later this week your nomination as President of the European Commission is likely to be approved by the European Parliament.

The fact that you are the candidate of the largest political party following the European elections is a small step forward for European democracy.

I am looking forward to building on the fruitful cooperation we had in the past, and to seeing you – in your new role – at our Tripartite Social Summit meetings.

You take up a key leadership role in the European Union at a time when a new path is desperately needed. As a result of the crisis and the austerity policies that have been subsequently pursued, Europe risks a lost generation. There are 26 million unemployed in Europe. 7.5 million young people are neither in work, nor education, nor training. Wages have gone down in 18 out of 28 member states in the last 5 years.

The UN agency, the International Labour Organisation, recently published a report that stated “The cost of adjustment has been passed on to populations, who have been coping with fewer jobs and lower income for more than five years. Depressed household income levels are leading to lower domestic consumption and lower demand, slowing recovery. The achievements of the European social model, which dramatically reduced poverty in the period following the Second World War, have been eroded by short-term adjustment reforms.”

The European Council Summit which nominated you also adopted a strategic agenda in which EU Heads of Government agreed that “unemployment is still our greatest concern”.

That strategic agenda committed to “addressing overdue investment needs in transport, energy and telecom infrastructure of EU significance as well as in energy efficiency, innovation and research, skill and innovation”, to “mobilizing to that end the right mix of private and public funding” and “the immediate mobilization of existing financial instruments and the development of new financial capacities”.

I cannot stress enough to you the importance of pursuing and implementing these commitments. Mainstream political parties were punished by voters in the European elections precisely because voters are fed up with unemployment, austerity, and rising poverty and inequality.

Cutting Government spending, deregulation, liberalization and keeping down wages – the principle agenda of European Commission economic recommendations – do nothing to stimulate demand and promote growth. New initiatives are needed, investment above all, to drive demand and generate jobs.

I look forward to discussing with you your proposals for putting into practice the strategic agenda of the Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Ségol', written over a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Bernadette Ségol
General Secretary