Putting climate and environmental protection at the heart of European policy

The 20s are a crucial juncture for global climate protection. In this decade, we must set the course for climate neutrality. Germany and the European Union have decided to become climate neutral by the year 2050. The German government has taken important steps in this direction with its Climate Protection Programme 2030 and its plan to phase out coal. The international community will make a pledge at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November: in compliance with the Paris Agreement, all states must by then present improved national climate protection targets. More than 100 states have already announced concrete plans to do so.

The EU, too, will play its part. With the “European Green Deal”, the new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has presented a proposal to once again make Europe a role model for global climate protection.

The European Green Deal is a smart, resolute, comprehensive concept. The Commission has outlined a roadmap to guide all areas socially and ecologically:
The European Green Deal offers the opportunity for a social and ecological, economically powerful and democratic Europe that promotes digital innovation and protects its citizens – and thus sets global standards. We must seize this opportunity now.

It is clear in climate protection that national answers do not suffice for global issues.

Europe must define what sustainability means in the digital world. We urgently need a European approach that offers an alternative to unregulated monopolies, as in the US, and to total state control of data, as in China. Just as with climate protection, the standards set by the EU, the largest economic area on earth, can become a model for the rest of the world. One example of this is the Ecodesign Directive, which has advanced environmental protection worldwide. However, this directive – to somewhat overstate the point – is still preoccupied with refrigerators and is not yet fit for the digital age. What was once the television set is now the smartphone. That is why I will be working to develop new standards for durable, repairable and updatable digital devices – so national solutions become global solutions.