

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14: NEW INITIATIVES

The European Commission Work Programme 2013 was published on 23 October 2013. The following is the original text of the work programme, setting out intended new proposals for 2014 or early 2014

The EU list has been categorised to show:

“PRIORITY” (our short-list of proposals where we are recommending a pro-active lobby campaign)

“WATCHING BRIEF” (our long-list of proposals where we are proposing a watching brief)

“NON-PRIORITY” (indicating where there will be no pro-active LGA work).

PRIORITY

6. Common Strategic Framework Funds and EU economic governance

The Communication will analyse how the CSF Funds will contribute to EU economic governance, their role in fostering growth and the importance of a sound macroeconomic framework for the efficient use of the funds. It will examine the links of CSF Funds with the economic governance procedures and explain how macroeconomic conditionality will be implemented.

7. Country-specific negotiation mandates for the Common Strategic Framework Funds for the period 2014-2020

In view of the adoption of the partnership agreements, these documents will shape the priorities in Member States for public investment during the next seven years.

9. State aid Modernisation: General block exemption Regulation (800/2008)

The GBER set the most appropriate conditions for State aid, exempted from the notification requirement, to be compatible with the internal market. This will reduce administrative burden for national authorities. (Q4 2013)

10. State aid modernisation in key sectors

Reviews of the compatibility criteria included in the following guidelines for aid to Research & Development & Innovation; for aid to risk capital, for regional aid, for environmental aid, for industrial Rescue and Restructuring aid; and for aid to airports and airlines. These revisions aim at supporting the EU's strategy for economic growth, at giving a better focus to the Commission's enforcement work, and at taking Commission decisions quicker.

15. Initiative on E-invoicing in the field of public procurement [Legislative]

This initiative would eliminate the fragmentation of the Internal Market by promoting the use of B2G e-invoicing in the public sector and enhancing the interoperability of national e-invoicing systems. It would help to reduce the operating costs of enterprises and the procurement costs of public authorities by fostering the automation of procedures related to invoicing. (Q2 2013)

30. Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the ESF 2014-2020

Provide guidance on increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and adequacy of social protection systems; improving activating and enabling policies; social inclusion and adequate livelihoods. The Communication will contribute to implementing the Europe 2020 strategy/European Semester, support the design of social investment in the NRPs and assist Member States in making best use of EU funds, ESF in particular.

32. Effective Institutions for Occupational Retirement Pensions [Legislative]

A review of this Directive is required in view of the importance of ensuring that appropriate structures are in place to fund retirement.

39. Review of the Thematic Strategy on air pollution and associated legislation [Legislative]

The initiative will assess the implementation and achievements of current air pollution and air quality policies and will include legislative proposals to revise the NEC Directive and other air quality legislation as appropriate in order to deliver enhanced protection from the impacts of air pollution for human health and the natural environment whilst contributing to Europe 2020.

40. Review of Waste Policy and Legislation [Legislative]

This initiative will review key targets in EU waste legislation (in line with the review clauses in the Waste Framework Directive, the Landfill Directive and the Packaging Directive) and carry out an ex-post evaluation of waste stream directives, including ways to enhance coherence between them.

WATCHING BRIEF

1. Annual Growth Survey [Non-legislative]

The Commission will present an Annual Growth Survey which will be the main input for discussions at the Spring European Council. The survey will include both a review, reporting on progress, and a forward-looking part proposing strategic policy guidance horizontally across Member States. (Q4 2013)

17. Proposals for reinforced partnering in research and innovation under Horizon 2020 [Legislative]

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Leveraging investment and pooling efforts in key industrial sectors and in global development assistance through the renewal and creation of Public-Private Partnerships. These partnerships will leverage substantial private investment in key industrial sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, energy, transport, aeronautics, electronics, air traffic management and bio-based products. The initiative also includes Public-Public Partnerships for the joint implementation of national research programmes, to underpin industrial competitiveness by supporting R&D-performing SMEs, cutting-edge metrology, and ICT-based products and services for the elderly. Another will fight against poverty-related diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Q3 2013)

23. Reducing the costs of broadband infrastructure deployment [Legislative]

The draft regulation aims to substantially reduce the cost of deploying high-speed broadband networks across the EU. This would incentivise investment in line with Digital Agenda high speed internet targets. The Regulation would mainly set out rights and obligations directly applicable to telecom operators and other utilities. (Q1 2013)

28. Framework on the future EU ports' policy including a legislative proposal [Legislative/Non-legislative]

Enhancing the efficiency and overall quality of port services, addressing the obligations of Member States regarding the sound planning of ports and hinterland connections, transparency of public funding and port charges, and administrative simplification efforts in ports, and reviewing restrictions on the provision of services at ports.

31. Integration of the Roma [Soft law]

Commission Recommendation aimed at fostering implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies, based on the work of a Pilot Group of Member States representing a geographical balance and the diverse situations concerning Roma within the EU and identifying good practices and effective approaches to Roma Integration.

37. EU's Strategy on adaptation to climate change [Legislative/Non-legislative]

To contribute effectively to a more climate-resilient Europe. This means enhancing the preparedness and capacity to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change of the EU, its Member States and regions.

38. New climate & energy framework for the period up to 2030 [Legislative/Non-legislative]

To meet 80-95% GHG emission reduction objective in 2050 compared to 1990; foster long term competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability; provide a long-term perspective for investments until 2030.

NON PRIORITY

2. Addressing systemic risks related to shadow banking [Legislative]

Following the Green Paper of March 2012 and the international work coordinated by the FSB, the Commission will address the systemic problems related to shadow banking entities and practices e.g. money market funds, securitisation and activities such as securities lending and repurchase agreements performed by all types of financial entities. (Q3 2013)

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3. Common framework for the production of indices and benchmarks [Legislative]

The overall objective is to enhance the integrity of the production and use of benchmarks and indices which will enhance market confidence and efficiency and improve investor protection.

4. Review of the European System of Financial Supervision [Legislative/Non-legislative]

The regulations establishing the EFSF (the three European Supervisory Authorities and the Systemic Risk Board) require that the Commission carried out an in-depth review in 2013, in view of making proposals for changes.

5. Providing long-term finance through the effectiveness of financial institutions, markets and instruments [Legislative]

Following the Green Paper to be adopted by the Commission at the end of the year, and the ensuing debate, the Commission will propose policy actions to improve the conditions for long term finance in Europe. Some of the actions may be included in other proposals (like UCITS VI)

8. Reforming the framework for collective investment funds/UCITS VI [Legislative]

Recent international work on shadow banking has identified certain shortcomings in the field of investment funds that require closer scrutiny (for instance, money market funds and the use of securities lending or sale-and-repurchase arrangements (repos)). This initiative will address a number of concerns relating to systemic risks, the efficiency, competitiveness and integration of the market for UCITS funds in order to preserve the UCITS attractiveness. This will contribute to preserving financial stability and fostering a culture of long-term investment in Europe, thus underpinning growth and jobs.

11. Review of the Technology Transfer Block exemption Regulation and its Guidelines [Non-legislative]

The objective is to improve framework conditions for licensing of technology for production thereby stimulating innovation and growth while ensuring effective competition.

12. Energy Technologies and Innovation in a future European Energy Policy [Non-legislative]

To foster energy technologies development according to the energy roadmap 2050, to promote energy research, demonstration and market deployment actions at EU level and to remove market, regulatory and behavioural barriers to the market deployment of energy innovation (via the Intelligent Energy Europe III programme).

13. Reforming the internal market for industrial products [Legislative/Non-legislative]

The objective is to enhance the quality and efficiency of the internal market legislation for industrial products. This initiative will address the elimination of remaining trade barriers, in particular for products with high-growth potential, ensure more consistency in the application of the legislation, and simplify its management and implementation. (Q3 2013)

14. Review of standardisation *acquis* [Legislative/Non-legislative]

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- 1) *An initiative to establish strategic priorities and specific mandates to support EU policy for international competitiveness, innovation, digital interoperability and technological development.*
- 2) *An independent review will be launched in 2013 to assess progress against strategic objectives and evaluate the performance of the current governance in the European standardisation system.*

16. A Comprehensive Strategy for the Defence Sector [Non-legislative]

The Strategy will set out options to foster the competitiveness and the efficiency of the European defence sector through a consistent and integrated use of EU policies that have an impact on defence.

18. Making business easier through a standard VAT declaration [Legislative]

The aim is to make a standardised VAT declaration available in all EU languages and optional for businesses across the EU. The standard VAT declaration forms a key action point of the strategy for the future of VAT and of the Better Regulation Agenda, as it will help reducing burdens on business and enhance the digital single market. (Q3 2013)

19. Making the VAT system more efficient through a review of the rates structures [Legislative]

The aim is to readjust the scope of the reduced rates in order to increase the efficiency of the VAT system

20. Access for regulated professions [Non-legislative]

Take stock of recent developments in Member States in the area of regulated professions and to devise a methodology for facilitating the mutual evaluation exercise foreseen in the proposal modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive. The mutual evaluation foreseen in the proposal will focus on restrictions (qualifications and reserved activities).

21. Fighting misappropriation of trade secrets [Legislative/Non-legislative]

This initiative aims at providing effective protection against trade secret theft which can act as a significant disincentive for innovative companies who rely on trade secrets to expand their businesses through licensing deals with partners, notably given the protection existing in other jurisdictions harmonising existing rules on protection of trade secrets.

22. Bank account initiative [Non- legislative/Legislative]

An initiative aiming at increasing the transparency and comparability of bank account fees, as well as to render bank account switching easier for consumers. (Q1 2013)

24. Action Plan on Wireless Communications for a Connected Europe [Non-legislative]

The aim of the Communication is to lay down a policy action plan meeting the challenges the EU is facing in the next few years with regard to dynamic market developments and exponential traffic growth in wireless services. Policy objectives include accelerating the roll-out of wireless broadband networks, fostering shared spectrum use, exploitation of EU R&D results on wireless communications and enhancing global spectrum harmonisation.

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25. Follow up to Green Paper: Towards an integrated European market for card, internet and mobile payments [Legislative]

While card, internet and mobile payments are the retail payment methods with the highest growth potential, there is significant market fragmentation along national borders. The follow-up to the Green Paper addresses the main obstacles for market integration in these areas. (Q2 2013)

26. Single European Sky package - Single Sky II plus [Legislative/Non-legislative]

This package (Communication, SES Regulation, EASA Regulation) addresses a number of issues that were left unresolved during the SES development. These concern in particular the performance of air navigation service provision and the need to clarify the institutional landscape at EU level to ensure the roles and responsibilities of various organisations support each other, but do not overlap.

27. A Blue Belt for a single market for maritime transport [Legislative/Non-legislative]

To reduce the administrative burden for intra-EU maritime transport to a level that is comparable to that of other transport modes by avoiding multiple controls including customs. This will be supported by modern ICT technologies, which permit the reliable tracking of ships and cargo with a sufficient level of certainty when shipping operates within the Single Market.

29. Internal Market: Access to the road haulage market and access to occupation of road transport operator [Legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

The initiative will improve the economic and environmental efficiency of road freight transport by further lifting the restrictions to cabotage. It will create a more even playing field by including provisions to apply social rules of the host country in the case of long stay of drivers and provisions for a more uniform enforcement.

33. Internationalisation of Higher Education [Non-legislative]

Europeans need to be prepared for an increasingly global, open and competitive labour market. European universities are subject to growing global competition to attract talent and exchange knowledge. The Communication will review the different policies and programmes that can support them in furthering their internationalisation efforts. .

34. Modernisation of Public Employment Services [Legislative]

This package will cover all elements of the reform of EURES including the delivery of a European Employment Guarantee , and set up a formal European network of Public Employment Services, to help develop and implement a European Labour Mobility Action Plan for modernisation and strengthening of PES to help transitions on labour markets.

35. European platform to fight undeclared work [Legislative]

This draft decision establishes a European platform between labour inspectorates and other enforcement bodies. It aims for a more coherent approach by covering all the key areas influenced by undeclared work and supporting a more effective fight against undeclared work by way of improving cooperation, sharing best practice and identifying common principles.

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36. Review of EU political and legal framework for organic production [Legislative]

The policy objectives of the current framework for organic production are to establish a sustainable management system for agriculture and produce high quality products and a high variety of products responding to consumers demand for processes that do not harm the environment, health, or animal welfare. The review will verify whether they are still relevant and adapted to the future evolution of organic production.

41. Framework to enable safe and secure unconventional hydrocarbon extraction [Legislative/Non-legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

Options to ensure that opportunities to diversify energy supplies and improve competitiveness, including by production of unconventional gas, can be taken up. The framework would target full consideration of greenhouse gas emissions and management of climate and environmental risks.

42. Nuclear insurance and liability [Legislative]

Improvement of victim compensation in case of nuclear accident and creation of an internal market/level playing field for investors.

43. Initiative on firearms: reducing gun-crime in Europe [Non-legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

Trafficked firearms are being used by criminal networks and lone criminals. Legally-held firearms are also used illegally. The aim of the Communication will be to present: the nature/scale of the problem and current action including external dimension; new/increased EU actions (e.g. increased role of Europol; funding); law enforcement policy orientations in view of the 2015 review of the Firearms Directive 91/477

44. Freezing of funds, financial assets (etc) of persons and entities suspected of terrorist activities inside the EU [Legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

The EU legal framework on the freezing of funds, financial assets and economic gains of persons and entities suspected of terrorist activities only covers terrorists who represent an international, global threat. However, no such framework currently exists for the realisation of the objectives of the area of freedom, security and justice. This initiative aims at using the new legal basis of the Lisbon Treaty to set up a coherent and effective legal framework for administrative measures for the freezing of funds, financial assets and economic gains of such persons and entities.

45. Special safeguards in criminal procedures for Suspected or Accused Persons who are Vulnerable [Legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

A directive to ensure that special attention is shown in criminal procedures throughout the EU to suspected or accused persons who cannot understand or follow the content or the meaning of the proceedings, owing, for example, to their age, mental or physical condition.

46. Service in the Member States of judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil or commercial matters [Legislative] LGA NON-PRIORITY

The revision of regulation 1393/2007 will pay special attention to the effectiveness of the transmitting and receiving agencies and focus on the practical application of the execution of a request for forwarding a request for service. It could include the establishment of common minimum standards.

47. EU Citizenship Report 2013: Progress towards eliminating obstacles to EU citizens' rights [Non-legislative]

Report on progress made since the 2010 Citizenship Report and identify further actions towards completing the removal of obstacles to EU citizens' enjoyment of their rights under the Treaty. It will be one of the deliverables of the European Year of Citizens. (Q2 2013)

48. Establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's office (EPPO) to protect the financial interests of the Union [Legislative]

This initiative intends to set out the framework and conditions for establishing the European Public Prosecutor's office to focus on the protection of the financial interests of the Union. It will be accompanied by proposals on the reform of Eurojust and on protection of the financial interests of the EU. (Q2 2013)

49. Fighting money laundering [Legislative]

As one of the 'Eurocrimes', money laundering is a criminal offence in all EU Member States. However, EU Member States do not have the same definition of money laundering and also apply different sanctions. Because this hinders cross-border investigations and police cooperation, there is a need to harmonise the offence of money laundering at EU level.

51. Reviewing the Union's visa policy to facilitate life for legitimate travellers [Legislative/Non-legislative]

Since its entry into force, the Community Code on Visas ('Visa Code') has streamlined the rules and conditions for issuing visas and enhanced the harmonised applications of those common rules. Building on an evaluation report on its implementation, the Commission intends to propose amendments to improve the Visa Code. This will ensure that the EU Visa policy fosters economic growth and cultural exchanges by facilitating the travel to the EU of legitimate travellers such as businessmen, tourists, students and young people while ensuring a high level of security of the EU.

50. Fighting cigarette smuggling [Non-legislative]

This strategy would propose a comprehensive response at EU level to illicit trade in cigarettes, taking into account the losses caused to public revenue and its role as an outlet for organised crime. Better coordinated and more targeted action would include exchange of information, standard setting and international cooperation

52. Animal medicines [Legislative]

New framework for veterinary medicines and certain aspects of their use to establish a level playing field in the EU, and decrease administrative burden.

53. Use of cloning technique for food production [Legislative/Non-legislative]

Follow up Commission's report on cloning of animals for food production, in the context of the good functioning of the internal market.

54. Preparing an EU position on the post - 2015 development agenda [Non-legislative]

As part of a process to pursue a linked strategy for the MDGs, the follow-up to Rio+20 and the Sustainable Development Goals process, this Communication will pursue agreement on an ambitious post-2015 global development framework with a strong emphasis on shared responsibility and accountability.

55. Follow-up to Rio + 20 including the development of Sustainable Development Goals [Non-legislative]

As part of a process to pursue a linked strategy for the MDGs, the follow-up to Rio+20 and the Sustainable Development Goals process, this Communication will set out the EU follow-up to Rio+20 including sustainable development goals.

56. Enlargement package 2013 [Non-legislative]

The Commission has been invited by the Council to regularly report on the candidate and countries and potential candidates. The Commission Strategy Paper allows the European Council to define main strategic orientations on enlargement at the end of each year.

57. Negotiation for a comprehensive trade and investment agreement with the relevant partners. [Negotiating directives]

The main policy objective will be to realize the untapped potential and to generate new economic opportunities, particularly in sectors that have the highest potential to create jobs and growth. It also aims to be a strong signal that the two largest economies in the world remain committed to open markets

58. Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management outside the EU [Non-legislative]

The European Union has a unique array of tools at its disposal to promote the resolution of complex external crises. These tools need to be used coherently and in close cooperation with Member States addressing the whole crisis cycle, from crisis prevention to reconstruction.