

Resolution on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2008

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PURPOSE: to present the European Commission's 2008 work programme ([COM\(2007\)0640 final](#)).

CONTEXT: as in 2007, the Work Programme for 2008 is focused and concentrates on a limited number of new policy initiatives. It includes strategic initiatives that the Commission commits itself to deliver during the year, and priority initiatives to be delivered over a 12-18 month period. Recent research shows that the main concerns for EU citizens are the social dimension of the EU in the context of globalisation, in particular jobs and the fear of unemployment, as well as migration and issues related to citizens' security. Interest in energy and climate change is increasing, with widespread support for the energy /climate change package of proposals.

In accordance with the cross-cutting policy-making approach favoured by the Commission, challenges such as globalisation and achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) will have to be integrated in any communication priority. All strategic and priority initiatives announced in this Work Programme will be subject to the quality discipline of impact assessment. This Programme is also the first to include inter-institutional communication priorities for 2008.

CONTENT: the Commission's work programme sets out the following priorities for 2008:

Growth and Jobs: raising employment towards the target for the employment rate set under the Lisbon strategy provides a basis for growth, improved quality of life and facing the challenge of an ageing population. The EU needs to find new ways to promote access and opportunity in society, to address the risks and causes of social exclusion and poverty through policies for active inclusion, and to help to anticipate change. Adequate social protection should also be promoted. The Commission will continue to look at new ways to promote education, training, research and innovation as part of its Lisbon strategy.

In addition, the Single Market Review identified new initiatives, many of which will be presented in 2008, that will foster a Single Market. As small and medium size enterprises create most jobs and wealth in Europe, specific measures to improve their market performance will be prepared in a "Small Business Act".

Sustainable Europe: tackling **climate change** will be an integral part of the Commission's priorities in 2008. It will propose a White Paper on the "Adaptation to the impact of Climate Change". A wide range of EU policies – such as human and animal health, agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity, energy, industry, research and tourism – will need to be adjusted. Particular attention will be given to measures to encourage the greening of the transport sector. The implementation of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) will provide a powerful tool for this tuning of EU policies. The Commission will present a "2nd Strategic Energy Review", which will serve as the basis for the new Energy Action Plan from 2010 onwards, and will include a review of the Energy Taxation Directive to better combine fiscal and environmental goals. The reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will undergo a "Health Check", to see whether the 2003 reform regarding the single payment scheme and certain agricultural markets and its implementation in the Member States need to be fine-tuned; this will also help to pave the way for the future design and priorities of the CAP. The EU maritime policy is another example of how an integrated EU approach can draw together the threads of different policies for the sustainable development of all sea-based activities and coastal regions. The recast and strengthening of

the control framework of the Common Fisheries Policy will represent a decisive step towards ensuring sustainable fish stocks.

An integrated approach to migration: the Commission will propose further steps towards a common policy on migration. It requires effective action against illegal migration and human trafficking. In 2008 the work of the External Borders Agency will be evaluated and Member States will be supported in tackling illegal migration through a European surveillance system. The Commission will be shaping the future of a coherent and efficient Common European Asylum Policy. This will notably include adapting the European legislation on reception conditions and assessment criteria and will progress towards a single procedure for assessing applications for refugee status.

Citizen comes first: one of the main objectives of this Commission is to put the citizen at the centre of the European project. The **Social Reality Stocktaking** has been looking at the changes under way in Europe's societies, with a view to identifying how the well-being of Europe's citizens can be best advanced in a globalised world. The European dimension to health services will also be taken forward with concrete initiatives on patient safety and quality of health services.

Enlargement: the Commission will report on progress made in the countries involved in accession negotiations and in the stabilisation and association process, and make the appropriate recommendations to adjust the EU's enlargement strategy. Particular attention will be required to support the implementation of the future status of Kosovo. The **European neighbourhood policy** has become established as the central platform for deepening relationship with the countries it covers, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. The Commission will also examine any new avenues to be followed in its work to implement the **Millennium Development Goals**. It will present an ambitious package on Financing for Development and on Aid Effectiveness in view of the top-level international meetings in Accra (September 2008) and Doha (December 2008).

Implementing agreed policies: 2008 will be a crucial year for taking forward the Energy and Climate Change proposals presented by the Commission in 2007. The implementation of the RTD Framework programmes will continue in 2008 and initiatives will be taken to deepen the European Research Area. The European Institute of Technology should move ever closer to become operational during 2008.

As regards financial markets, a number of issues have been identified where further analysis is required, such as: transparency for investors, markets and regulators; valuation standards; prudential framework, risk management and supervision in the financial sector.

Work will also be continued in order to allow companies to choose an EU-wide tax base as set out in the 2008 Annual Policy Strategy.

On the international scene: accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia will continue. The expected completion of the network of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the Western Balkans will strengthen bilateral political and economic ties and accelerate reforms. A second set of progress reports will be submitted under the European neighbourhood policy. 2008 will also be the first year of the Economic Partnership Agreements and the **10th European Development Fund**.

Other agreements will also be negotiated and or concluded with, inter alia, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, ASEAN, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Andean Community, Central America and Mercosur. The Commission will take the first steps to establish formal relations with Libya.

Management of financial programmes: the EU budget is one of the key instruments to realise the EU's policy objectives. With the new generation of financial programmes largely in place, 2008 will be a year

of consolidation and implementation. The budget authority is shortly expected to take a decision on the Commission's proposals for the **2008 budget, amounting to around EUR 129 billion in commitments and EUR 122 billion in payments**. More than 44% of commitment appropriations will be reserved for activities supporting growth and jobs in Europe through investment in areas like research, competitiveness and innovation, transport and energy networks, lifelong learning and economic and social cohesion.

Managing the Community acquis: the Commission will continue to make great efforts to ensure compliance with EU legislation, with a special emphasis on transport, environment, food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health standards. It attaches great importance to the cooperation with Member States to facilitate the implementation and enforcement of EU law, establishing mechanisms for prior monitoring of new national legislation, promoting active participation in the SOLVIT network and working with informal networks like the Forum of Judges.

Future initiatives: the Commission is working in many different areas linked to an agenda for sustainable competitiveness as part of efforts to promote sustainable development. The conclusions of the social reality stocktaking will carry through into the modernisation of EU social policies, reflecting the challenges of globalisation and the need to anticipate and manage change. The Treaty of Lisbon will provide a new impetus to the area of freedom, security and justice. The Commission will present a Communication on the next multi-annual strategy to establish an area of freedom, security and justice. Finally the Commission will prepare the 2008-2009 Budget Review to optimise Europe's capacities to address the key challenges of the next decade.

Improved regulatory environment: the Commission's work programme highlights that improving the regulatory environment in Europe remains a core priority. In this context, a strategic review will present the progress made in 2007 under the different strands of the Better Regulation agenda, taking account of the views expressed by the other EU-institutions and stakeholders.

With a view to **simplifying legislation**, the Commission intends to **withdraw 30 pending proposals in 2008**. The simplification programme will continue in 2008 and new efforts will be made in the following areas (e.g. on waste electrical goods; biocides; the automotive sector; pharmaceutical products and General Block Exemption Regulation on State aid) to reduce administrative burdens.

Lastly, as stated above, this Programme is also the first to include **inter-institutional communication priorities for 2008**. These are as follows:

- **Inter-institutional communication priorities envisaged for 2008:** Reform Treaty; energy and climate change; European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.
- **Communication priorities envisaged for 2008:** Reform Treaty; the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and better regulation; energy and climate change; migration; EU's role in the World; the Budget Review.