# Resolution on the Commission's legislative and work programme for 2005

2004/2563(RSP) - 21/12/2005 - Follow-up document

In 2000, the European Commission launched a far reaching administrative reform initiative, the purpose of which was to reform and overhaul its working methods, financial management systems and personnel policy. Four “pillars” of reform were established. Firstly, creating a culture of service and efficiency. Secondly, examining strategic planning and programming. Thirdly, reviewing its personnel policy. Fourthly, reforming its auditing, financial management and control policies. Five key principles governed these measures namely, independence, responsibility, accountability, efficiency and transparency.

This report, which covers the period from February 2004 to the present, responds to a specific request from the European Parliament, on the Commission’s legislative work programme 2005, and for an account of the reform process launched in 2000. In preparing this report, the Commission has taken stock of progress thus far. Additionally, it has prepared an account of future developments in the field of strategic planning, financial and human resource management and new working methods. In summary, the report makes the following findings:

**Creating a culture of service and efficiency:** Reform has brought significant improvements to transparency within the Commission and has led to an efficiency drive in how it responds to public requests. A “Code of good administrative behaviour” has led to a set of rules which seek to offer the public an open and transparent service. A record number of people are seeking access to Commission documents – as witnessed by a 70% increase in requests between 2003-2004. The Commission has also strived to implement improvement to European governance, through measures such as the 2002 Action Plan on Better Regulation. In September 2005, the Commission presented the results of a screening programme under which the Commission announced it was withdrawing 68 pieces of pending legislation. In other areas the Commission has simplified its working methods and procedures in order to improve and help co-ordinate its internal workings. To guarantee that resources are spent as effectively as possible, the Commission is increasingly externalising a lot of its implementation of certain programmes to executive agencies.

**Strategic planning and programming:** The Commission’s “Strategic Planning and Programming Cycle” (SPP) requires managers to prepare policies by setting high-level objectives, which in turn feed through into resource allocation and operation planning. This is followed by a monitoring phase as well as ex-post reporting. ABM instruments are integrated into the Commission’s working methods and used for the purpose of communicating with the other EU institutions. Further, when presenting the Commission’s work programme for 2005, the Commission President Barroso expressed his wish to work even more closely with the other institutions to deliver common objectives. This was later boosted by the Framework Agreement between the Council and the European Parliament, in which regular bi-lateral dialogue at the highest level was stressed. Commission President Barroso has also placed a new emphasis on communication, listening to the citizens and working for and with them.

- *Personnel policy*: New staff regulations were adopted in March 2004. These were complemented by implementing rules relating to personal liability, professional incompetence and contracts relating to contract and temporary staff. The gradual phasing out of auxiliary staff began in 2004 and in June 2005 EPSO launched a competition for contract staff to set up its data base. In 2005 the third full exercise of the new staff appraisal system was completed. Training has played a significant role in the Commission’s

human resources policy, with the average number of training days per official in 2004 being 9.1. In addition, the Commission adopted the "Fourth Action Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men at the Commission."

**Audit, financial management and control:** The 2004 Annual Activity Reports (AAR's) drew a globally satisfactory picture of the management and control situation. In the same year preparations were undertaken for the transition to accrual accounting by 1 January 2005. The Internal Audit Service (IAS) concluded a series of in-depth audits throughout 2004 with the result that the IAS and IAC's now apply common minimum standards for audit reporting and in particular on the rating of audit observations /recommendations.

To conclude, the internal reforms undertaken by the Commission in 2000 amounted to a major modernisation exercise involving an overhaul of its working methods, procedures and regulations. This achievement was made possible through the efforts of its internal staff. Now that the reform process *per se* has been concluded, the Commission is determined to build upon its achievements and to ensure that its resources, both financial and human, are used to best effect. The Commission remains committed to delivering strategic objectives and to focusing attention on the formulation of effective policies. To achieve these ends, the Commission proposes to continue the process of consolidation and simplification of internal procedures, to enshrine a policy of continual learning, to build upon its successes in the field of accountability and transparency and lastly to enhance its management culture based on a policy of responsibility and improved external communication.