Basic information

2000/2217(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper **Subject** 8.40.03 European Commission	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	BUDG Budgets	GUY-QUINT Catherine (PSE)	23/02/2000
Council of the European Union			
European Commission	**Commission DG**	**Commissioner**	
	Human Resources and Security		

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
01/03/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0200	
20/09/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/10/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
17/10/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0327/2000	
29/11/2000	Debate in Parliament		
30/11/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0541/2000	Summary
30/11/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
13/08/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2000/2217(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	BUDG/5/13628

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0327/2000 OJ C 223 08.08.2001, p. 0007	17/10/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0541/2000 OJ C 228 13.08.2001, p. 0023-0196	30/11/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0010	18/01/2000	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0200	01/03/2000	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2001)0115	28/02/2001	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2003)0040	30/01/2003	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(2004)0079	27/01/2004	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2004)0093	10/02/2004	Summary

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 18/01/2000

This is a consultative paper presented by the Commission outlining its reform of the Commission. It is being published for consultation with the staff and their representatives, the European Parliament and Council, and for the information of the wider public. In compiling the White Paper for consideration by the College on 1 March, account will be taken of the responses made through those consultations. The objective of the Reform Strategy is clear. It is to make changes which will ensure that efficiency, accountability, transparency, responsibility and services are applied as working conventions everywhere in the Commission. The document details the actions needed to make provision for that, the timescales over which those actions will be taken, and the arrangements for monitoring and pursuing progress in what must be, inevitably, a sustained process of improved performance. The proposals made in this document consist of numerous proposals. First of all, it prescribes radical and urgent changes in financial manangement and control to secure better informed decisions, greater value for money, and a new level of accountability. The Commission recognises the urgency of progress and will, consequently, set up the key building blocks, including, crucially, an Internal Audit Service, by 1 May 2000 at the latest. Second, the proposals identify the ways to efficiently integrate decisions on positive and - crucially - negative priorities with an assessment of resources. And thirdly, the proposals outline a comprehensive Human Resources policy that will enable the people who work for the Commission to develop their careers through improvements in recruitment and promotion systems, training provision, management and social infrastructure. The comprehensive reform programme will start in March 2000 and run over the period up to the second half of 2002. By the end of 2002, the Commission

expects to have made significant progress with implementing many of the key priorities identified in this paper. This will continue in 2001, under existing legislative arrangements. Provided the Commission legislative proposals can be agreed quickly by Council and Parliament, by the middle of 2002 the Commission intends to have implemented a comprehensive strategy and planning process under which priorities and resources would be matched and the Commission could know how it will carry out existing and future tasks. In conclusion, the publication of this paper is only a start. THe hard work begins with the implementation of the 84 actions set out here. For this to be successful, everyone from Commissioners downwards will need to be fully involved in the greatest internal challenge for the organisation since its inception: delivering an international public service that is truely worthy of the current and future European Union.

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 10/02/2004

The present report focuses on the main progress achieved in implementing reform in 2003 and the outlook for 2004. It also shows that Reform can succeed only if its implementation continues with undiminished vigour. With the exception of the annexes to this report, the report does not repeat the specific information provided in previous progress reports, because virtually all of the 98 White Paper actions are implemented. It therefore deals in more detail with some of the issues highlighted in January 2003 and the lessons learned from the experience of implementing reform last year. In particular, due to the importance of the dossier and its relationship with the reform project, this report describes the measures that must be taken as a follow-up to events at Eurostat. This report also provides detail about the administrative preparations for the forthcoming enlargement. 1) Creation of a culture based on service : - Payment delays continue to decrease from 54 days in 1999 to 43.7 in 2002 and 42.9 in 2003; - Positive response rate to public enquires for access to documents remain stable at around two thirds despite increase in number of enquiries; - Impact assessments for policy proposals successfully introduced as a new procedure in the Commission; - The Commission's Manual of operating procedures completely updated and put on line in December 2003. 2) Strategic Planning and Programming and policy coordination : - The process of gradual introduction of Activity-Based Budgeting comes to an end providing a more transparent and easily comprehensible budget; - Consolidated Activity-Based Management tools for planning, monitoring and reporting are now used across Commission services; - Coordinating mechanisms in the Commission are streamlined and consolidated in four interservice coordination groups. 3) Personnel Policy : - Negotiations on the Staff Regulations have been finalised pending verification of the legal text in the Council. There are no further obstacles on substance to their timely adoption; - EPSO launched 32 enlargement competitions and completed the first phase, which should lead to sufficient numbers of available laureates by the end of 2004; - Officials dedicated on average 8.32 days to training; - The general training budget received an increase of 37%, and 99% of the general training budget and 100% of the language training budget were committed; - All 9 Commission Decisions adopted under the existing Staff Regulations to execute the personnel policy chapter of the White Paper have been implemented; - The first staff appraisal and promotion exercise based on the new system was carried out within the foreseen deadlines; - No Director General has been in their current post for more than 5 years. 4) Internal Control and Financial Management : - New Financial Regulation enters into force; - Accounting Reform project develops as planned; - Reform actions on financial liability of officials and the Financial Irregularities Panel are being finalised; - Commission adopts Action 13 decision and the 2002 SynthesisReport, strengthening internal control communication. 5) IMPLEMENTING REFORM IN 2004 : If the main challenge for 2003 was the need for robust implementation of major structural and procedural reforms, then 2004 will be the year when reform needs to become fully operational. The main emphasis of the Reform programme for 2004 will be on implementation of changes, in particular those contained in the new Staff Regulations, which should enter into force on 1 May 2004, once the European Parliament has provided an opinion and the Council has adopted the Commission proposal. In addition, the new Staff Regulations will be needed to ensure that the Commission and the other Institutions can successfully integrate personnel from the acceding countries. In addition to providing the next Commission with a strong programming and planning framework, it will be crucial to ensure that it inherits a coherent and stable personnel policy system. Guaranteeing stability during the enlargement phase and ensuring a smooth transition to the new Staff Regulations are clearly the main challenges in this area for 2004. Implementation in 2004 will, while maintaining the orientations already set by the personnel reform, focus on revising and fine-tuning the details on the basis of practical experience. It should also be noted that the accounting reform should be finalised for implementation at the start of 2005. After implementation of measures adopted in the wake of the Eurostat crisis, the internal control system will be stabilised. Lastly, the report also details - inter alia - the further reinforcing measures being taken in response to irregular practises detected in Eurostat; it incorporates new proposals relating to the work of the EU's anti-fraud office, OLAF; and it sets out guidelines to improve the use of existing rules to facilitate 'Whistleblowing'.

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 28/02/2001

This report reviews the progress made by the Commission, after one year, in developing and introducing measures aimed at implementing the White Paper. It describes the approach used in each of the main areas of reform included in the White Paper as well as reviewing work resulting from the Reform of Management of Community Programmes which is considered as part of the Commission's Reform initiative. It also assesses overall progress and looks at likely developments over the coming year. In its conclusions, it is stated that the Commission can be statisfied with the progress it made since 1 March 2000 when the 'Reforming the Commission' White Paper was adopted. The report concludes that the first year of implementation was a challenging one. Staff at all levels had to develop and embrace wide-ranging new systems, while sometimes also having to continue to live within the 'old' ones. Overall, progress on the ambitious Action Plan of 1 March 2000 has been substantial. One of the Reform's major objectives was a restructuring of the organisation in order to allow the Commission to fulfil the role bestowed on it by Member States through the treaties. In this respect, the first year of the Reform has been highly productive. In the first instance, the comprehensive assessment made by the Commission of its current activities provided a clear vision of its mission and core activities and an accurate picture of the resources it required. As a result of this Peer Group process, a strategy for the allocation of existing resources and the externalisation of certain activities was drawn up and the Budgetary Authority has allocated additional resources. Secondly, the structures and systems put in place for financial management, control and

internal audit have now been brought up to the highest international standards of modern and effective management. One year on, the Commission's lead services have fully taken over the ownership of the Reform both in terms of planning and implementation. Operational services also begun to take on board those aspects of the Reform which directly concern them. In the financial field, a tangible change of culture has been achieved in the way that the Community's budget is managed. This year has seen the first experiment in the development of the Annual Policy Strategy for 2002 in which the whole of the organisation has been involved. Staff are also immersed in a comprehesive review of the Commission's human resources strategy. This is not to say that the Commission has been able to implement every planned reform action without delay or modification. Some target dates have had to be re-assessed e.g. in the human resources field where timings were redefined in order to maintain the coherence of the process, i.e. the necessary conceptual 'grouping' of related activities such as appraisal and promotion. Nevertheless the general timetable has been respected and none of these delays have been caused by fundamental problems with the direction of the Reform. The White Paper also recognised that the ambitiopus timetable could not be achieved without the whole-hearted commitment of staff at all levels and the full participation of all theEuropean Institutions. If the milestones the first year of Reform have been globally met, it is not least because of the genuine commitment of the Commission's staff to the new agenda and the support and co-operation of other European Institutions. The Ultimate benefit of this unprecedented project will be the restoration of public confidence in a streamlined, professional public service which aspires to the highest international standards of best practice.

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 30/01/2003

The European Commission adopted a report in which is specifies that nearly all the necessary changes needed in order to achieve the majority of commitments made in the White Paper Action Plan have been made in less than three years. To be exact, 87 of the 98 actions have been implemented. The areas in which progress has already been achieved are as follows: 1) Creating a culture based on service : substantive progress in building up a service culture has been achieved. The Commission must ensure that the remaining scope for increased performance is fully used. By May 2004 the Commission will have: - improved its document management system; - improved the efficiency and quality of information provided to the public by having implemented a new editorial approach for its internet site (Europa 2nd generation.) This site better reflects the priorities and daily activities of the Commission, increases visibility and access to the President and other Commissioners and is arranged thematically. Furthermore, the Commission will sustain its vigorous efforts further to increase the speed of payments. The average in 2002 was 43.7 days, compared with 54 days in 1999. 2) Priority setting and the efficient use of resources : the Commission has significantly increased the efficiency, transparency and accountability of its operations. These changes will continue to bear fruit over the coming years. By 2004 the Commission will have realised the following through reform: - through the implementation of Activity Based Management, the Commission will have ensured transparency of its tasks and resources. Activity Based Management enables the Commission to ensure that political priorities are sufficiently resourced and to determine the degree to which resources have been used for their intended purpose. - through Annual Activity Reports, following their fine-tuning during 2003, the Commission will have implemented a system where the administration - and in particular senior managers - are accountable for ensuring the use of resources at their disposal for the intended purpose. - a new generation of Executive Offices will have been established and the Commission will have all the necessary legal and practical means to realise further efficiency gains and focus resources on core activities. The Offices will allow for potential savings through reinforced inter-institutional co-operation and increased use of contract staff once the new Staff Regulations are agreed, and will enable the Commission further to focus its resources on its core activities. 3) Towards a modernised human resources policy : the Commission considers the successful implementation of the reforms to staff policy that have already been agreed, to be of paramount importance during 2003 and the years to come. Further progress on the reform of personnel policy depends greatly on the conclusion of negotiations on the Staff Regulations in the Council in mid-2003 - the key milestone remaining for the reform of personnel policy, and an important landmark for Commission reform as a whole. A priority for the Commission in 2003 is the successful conclusion of these negotiations. It will be for the Commission to secure an outcome which ensures that staff support this reform of staff policy. As a result of the reform of personnel policy, by May 2004: - provided the necessary support from the other institutions is forthcoming, new officials will be recruited from the new Member States into a new career system with 2 function groups and a more linear pay structure. In this system, strong incentives will be available for high performing officials through the annual appraisal system. - the Commission will have implemented a policy of mobility and life-long learning for officials to ensure a motivated, highly capable and flexible staff where excellence is standard throughout an official's career. - all senior officials will be covered by a system of appraisal as well as structured mobility to ensure that posts are not occupied by a single individual for longer than 5 years apart from exceptional cases. 4) The overhaul of financial management, control and audit : with the entering into force of the recast Financial Regulation in January 2003, the remaining major milestone of reform in the financial field has been attained. The further implementation of reform will consist of fine-tuning and improving the working level functionality of the systems already in place, as well as ensuring a high level of training for the financial actors. - the major project that the Commission must implement by 2005 in the financial field concerns the modernisation of the accounting system. On 17 December 2002 the Commission mapped out the major tasks to be fulfilled, and called for Commission-wide co-ordination and resource mobilisation. - as was made clear in the readiness assessment the Commission adopted on 17 December 2002, while internal control has improved and become fully transparent, further and continuing efforts, in particular training, will be needed throughout 2003. - at the end of 2003, a full cycle of in-depth audits will have been carried out to provide the Commission with reasonable assurance regarding its internal control systems. Further fine-tuning of the system will take place through the Annual Activity Report process which itself serves to identify and correct any shortcomings in financial and resource management within Directorates General.

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 30/11/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution tabled by Mrs Catherine GUY-QUINT (PES, Fr). The European Parliament expressed their support for Commission plans to modernise their bureaucracy with the emphasis on decentralisation and delegation of decision-making. The resolution supports phasing out the external technical assistance offices (TAOs). Parliament also takes the view that only those tasks not of a public service

nature should be contracted out. It also wants to see administrative reforms based on performance objectives and supports the Commission's request for extra staff, in conjunction with the early retirement scheme. The Commission is requested to explain the reasons behind any intention to reduce certain activities. In future, financial control should be based on an ex-ante system, coupled with financial responsibility for the directorates general. (Please refer to the previous document for further recommendations made by the committee responsible and which were mirrored by House).

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 01/03/2000

PURPOSE: To present a White Paper on the reform of the Commission. CONTENT: The European Commission has approved an ambitious modernisation strategy. This master plan for the reform of the Commission is laid out in an action plan comprising 101 measures, published with a calendar identifying the main deadlines for each of the changes to be implemented. The aim of the White Paper is to supply a general framework to support holders of public office and officials in dealing with the more complex ethical issues involved in new ways of delivering public services and new management approach, and to prevent corruption. Consultation has been broad and fruitful in drawing up this White Paper: consultation has been carried out, particularly with the Commission's staff and their representatives, and the Council, Parliament and the Member States have also been closely engaged in the process. The reform strategy is built on three related themes: comprehensive reform of personnel policy, thorough modernisation of financial management and control, and a new system of strategic planning. Key developments include: 1) A culture based on service - A European Committee on Standards in Public Life to advise on appropriate ethical standards for all EU institutions. - A Code of Good Administrative Behaviour for Commission officials to be adopted at the conclusion of current consultations in April. - Cutting Red Tape: a top level progress chaser to streamline procedures will be appointed. Applications for this post will be invited next week. - New rules on Whistleblowing: A clear right - and duty - for members of staff to responsibly report concerns related to suspected wrongdoing at any level, and to get relevant action in response. 2) A new personnel policy - Comprehensive reform of all elements of personnel policy from recruitment to retirement. - Substantial and increasing provision for training for all staff. - More professional disciplinary procedures. - Radical improvements in the selection, training and evaluation of managers. - New practical measures to promote equal opportunities for women and men. - Strong emphasis on promotion by merit, in keeping with the Staff Regulations. 3) Modernisation of financial management - An end to the system of "rubber stamp" financial control. - Decentralisation of decision-making with explicit responsibilities. - A new independent Internal Audit Service led and staffed by qualified specialists. - An early warning system to increase protection of the Community's financial interests. - A comprehensive new policy on use of external resources that strengthens management and accountability. 4) A new system of strategic planning - Matching priorities with resources through Activity Based Management. - Integrating decisions on core activities with allocation of financial and human resources (Activity based budgeting) - An objective needs assessment by September 2000 to establish the facts relating to any proven needs for additional resources that may be necessary to enable the Commission to fulfil its given tasks, and to provide a firm basis for deciding what activities could or should be reduced or ended. 5) The pay and pensions regime The current regime for calculating adjustments to the pay and pension of the staff of the European Institutions - the 'Method' - is due to end in June 2001 and, conventionally, negotiations relating to that system would begin this Summer. Meanwhile, the Reform Timetable specifies that the Commission's broad proposals for revisions to the Staff Regulations, including a new career structure, will be produced in December 2001 following consultations with staff, Council, Parliament and Member States. These events offer the prospect of two or more successive years of necessary negotiations. Taking account of that, in the White Paper the Commission clearly sets out its view that the best approach for the Council, the Commission and the staff of the European Public Service would be to facilitate a single, consolidated negotiation process on pay, pensions and revisions to the Staff Regulations on the basis of a proposal put by the Commission by December 2001. This would involve prolonging the existing "Method" of salary adjustments for a period of up to two years, but that extension would not impose additional burdens on the Community budget.

Reforming the Commission: action plan, aspects concerning the Committee on budgets. White Paper

2000/2217(COS) - 27/01/2004 - Follow-up document

PURPOSE: the presentation of a Commission Action Plan to follow up the recommendations of the Court of Auditors in its Annual Report relating to the 2002 budgetary year.

CONTENT: The White Paper on Reform highlighted the need to make financial actors accountable and responsible in order to increase the effectiveness of Commission activities. The Commission announced that it would present an Action Plan as part of the 2001 discharge. The purpose of this document is to indicate the corrective measures required to follow up the recommendations of the Court of Auditors as well as the impact expected from these measures.

This Action Plan is based on the Commission's replies to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors relating to the 2002 financial year, with updates and additional information provided by the Commission's departments. It examines the measures to be implemented sector by sector to improve the Commission's financial management and thus obtain a satisfactory statement of assurance (DAS).

- As regards improvement of the **reliability of the accounts,** the Commission has established an Accounting Standards Committee which is examining, among other things, the issues of defining the generating event giving rise to accounting entries in a way which allows it to maintain control over the process and of defining without ambiguity a recording base which remains comparable over the years. The Commission is also improving its mechanism for the identification and recovery of debts and has undertaken a review of all commitment balances which have remained open for an extended period in order to identify overdue payments.

- As regards **budget implementation,** the Commission is endeavouring to ensure realistic budgeting of payment appropriations. By continuing to put the emphasis on the budget implementation plan relating to the current financial year, including followup, review and revision in the course of the budgetary decisionmaking procedure, it expects a gradual improvement of the budget forecasts for the PDB. This also includes an assessment of whether low spending in the past should lead to lower budgeting (or the reverse).

- As regards **the common agricultural policy,** on export refunds, the Commission has already taken several measures. Five regulations were adopted to address the main weaknesses concerning the pre-financing regime. Concerning the way it sets export refunds, the Commission has introduced a comprehensive action plan covering horizontal issues. The improvements concern the Commission's decisionmaking procedures. The Commission will also assess the market organisation for **beef** in 2004/2005 and will analyse the impact of the various instruments available in this sector.

- For **structural operations,** the systems of fundamental importance in ensuring the supervision and control over the implementation of the Community budget for structural actions are those governing the areas of shared management with the Member States. For the closure of 199499 interventions the Commission is obtaining assurance on the regularity of expenditure from its already completed audit work and from the desk checks being undertaken on closure statements. It will verify the reliability of the closure process in Member States by audits of a sample of programmes and will draw the necessary financial consequences where appropriate by making recoveries from Member States. Concerning the current 20002006 period, from the work the Commission has carried out it has been able to conclude that Member States have in general made significant steps in improving their systems. However, further improvements are necessary, and the effective functioning of the systems should be regularly verified.

- In the area of **internal policy**in general and more particularly in the area of research, the Commission welcomes the Court's recommendations. These are the subject of action plans drawn up on the basis of its own observations. The implementation of internal control systems as part of the reform is being followed up particularly closely, and the strengthening of checks on beneficiaries is continuing within the framework of a coordinated action for research consecutive on Action 1 of the 2001 summary report of the annual activity reports.

- As regards **external actions**, the establishment of a methodological framework and of an audit strategy will be continued in 2004 within the 2004 annual audit plan. Priority will be given to finetuning a risk assessment model, setting up a clear organisational framework for auditrelated tasks at headquarters and in delegations, completing the auditrelated information system, and training. Moreover, instructions are being drafted in order to improve the quality and content of reports by Delegations and Directorates on the management of external assistance.

- For **administrative expenditure,** the Commission has analysed the risks and weaknesses of the internal control system and adopted an action plan for its further improvement. The recommendations of the Court regarding surveillance systems have been taken on board. An evaluation report on the management of leave and absence already produced will be discussed by management so as to identify the necessary measures to be taken.

- For the **EDF**, the Commission continues its efforts to meet the recommendations regarding the reinforcement of internal controls, the various aspects of financial management of the EDF highlighted in the Court’s Annual Report, such as the speed of closure of dormant commitments, the better identification of budgetary support measures in EDF accounts, and the inclusion of the EDF in the modernisation of the Accounting System of the Commission.

- Regarding the **ECSC**, the Commission will study the possibility of setting up in the field of revenue from research, an inventory of patents filed by firms and research institutes which have received ECSC funding.