

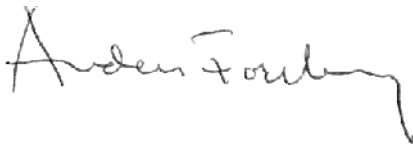
6 May 2010

To the European Commission
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The Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) has referred the Commission Communication *Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act*, COM(2010) 135, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for review.

The Committee has presented its review of the Communication in Statement 2009/10:UU17 to the Chamber. A decision on the statement was taken on 5 May 2010.

The statement is attached.



Anders Forsberg
Secretary-General of the Riksdag



Commission Work Programme 2010

Summary

In this statement, the Committee presents its review of Commission Communication COM(2010) 135, Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has consulted other parliamentary committees for their opinions on the Work Programme with regard to their respective areas of responsibility. No opinions have been received.

In its statement, the Committee has especially emphasised the importance of safeguarding an open Europe and of this principle forming the basis for all initiatives and programmes that the Commission intends to launch during its term of office.

The Committee proposes that the statement be placed on file. Two dissenting opinions have been attached to the statement.

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The Committee's proposal for a decision by the Riksdag

Commission Communication COM(2010) 135 Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act

The Riksdag places the statement on file.

Dissenting opinion 1 (Social Democratic Party) – reasoning

Dissenting opinion 2 (Left Party, Green Party) – reasoning

Stockholm, 22 April 2010

On behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Göran Lennmarker

The following members have taken part in the decision: Göran Lennmarker (Moderate Party), Urban Ahlin (Social Democratic Party), Gustav Blix (Moderate Party), Anne-Marie Pålsson (Moderate Party), Kerstin Lundgren (Centre Party), Kent Härstedt (Social Democratic Party), Fredrik Malm (Liberal Party), Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Moderate Party), Kerstin Engle (Social Democratic Party), Holger Gustafsson (Christian Democratic Party), Hans Linde (Left Party), Carin Runeson (Social Democratic Party), Rosita Runegrund (Christian Democratic Party), Mats Sander (Moderate Party), Olle Thorell (Social Democratic Party), Ameer Sachet (Social Democratic Party) and Max Andersson (Green Party).

Account of the matter

The matter and its preparation

On 31 March 2010, the European Commission adopted its Work Programme 2010 COM(2010) 135 – Time to act. An English version of the Work Programme was presented to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for information with copies to other committees on 6 April 2010. The Swedish version of the main document was received on 13 April and was handed over to the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 15 April with copies for other committees. The Chamber referred the document to the Committee on Foreign Affairs on 16 April for review under Chapter 10, Section 5 of the Riksdag Act.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs asked the other committees for their opinions on the Work Programme with regard to their respective areas of responsibility. No opinions have been received.

In connection with the preparation of this statement, the Committee has studied Commission Communication COM(2010) 2020: Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Committee chooses to base its statement on the four main strands highlighted by the Commission in its Work Programme:

- Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe’s social market economy;
- Building a citizen’s agenda which puts people at the heart of European action;
- Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach;
- Modernising EU instruments and ways of working.

Principal contents of the document

The Commission Work Programme 2010 is the result of the Commission’s efforts to translate the political guidelines presented by Commission President Barroso in September 2009 into practical actions. This is the first Work Programme of the new Commission and summarises commitments and ambitions both for 2010 and beyond. The Work Programme addresses problems that need to be solved in the short term and defines general political guidelines on how future challenges should be tackled. It thus lays a foundation for the remainder of the Commission’s term of office. Annexed to the Work Programme are a list of strategic initiatives on which the Commission commits to deliver in 2010 (Annex I), major proposals under consideration during 2010 and beyond which are tentative prospects for the rest of the mandate (Annex II) and a list of simplification proposals and withdrawals (Annexes III and IV). The Work Programme is an important document with regard to early identification of issues arising on the EU agenda. The Commission will set new strategic initiatives and make adjustments to the multiannual priorities through annual updates.

The Committee's review (SG D1, EMPL, ELARG)

The Committee has dual tasks with regard to the European Union. It is responsible, for example, where necessary, for preparation by the Riksdag of overarching issues relating to the European Union. In addition, under the Riksdag Act, the Committee is responsible for following EU issues within its remit as a specialised committee. Pursuant to Chapter 10, Section 5 of the Riksdag Act, the Chamber has referred the Commission Work Programme 2010 to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for review and a written statement. The purpose of a statement is to create a debate on an issue at an early stage and to present different points of view which may be of value in the continued discussion of the issue. These statements are to be regarded as preliminary expressions of opinion which reflect the prevailing views in the Riksdag at the time of consideration of the statement. The statements are not legally binding either for the position of the Riksdag or for the later position of the Government. However, a statement gives the Government an opportunity to establish, at an early stage, whether its stances on EU cooperation are endorsed in the Riksdag.

The Commission Work Programme is based on the vision for the European Union presented by the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, on 3 September 2009 and which has served as political guidelines for the Commission that took office on 10 February 2010.

The Commission introduces its Work Programme for the term of office by noting that 2010 marks the beginning of a new era for the European Union. The challenges facing the Union require joint action and political will if they are to be surmounted. The Commission Work Programme focuses on strategic initiatives to be presented in 2010 and beyond. The Work Programme is intended both to meet challenges in the short term and provide fast results and to contribute to the future of Europe to the benefit of its citizens in a longer perspective in accordance with the Commission's future strategy: Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (COM(2010) 2020). The Work Programme also constitutes a basis for the EU's future budget.

The Work Programme 2010 should be viewed in the light of the ongoing work on the future EU 2020 strategy. This future strategy, like the Work Programme, is based on Mr Barroso's political guidelines from September 2009. The strategy is based on how the EU should recover after the economic and financial crisis and is intended to replace the current Lisbon Strategy after 2010. Development of the new strategy comprises a thorough consultation process with the Member States, the European Parliament and all affected players. The Riksdag considered and approved the statement by the Committee on Finance on the future EU 2020 strategy on 24 March 2010 (2009/10:FiU29). In its statement, the Committee

on Finance reviewed the Europe 2020 strategy and emphasised the importance of a clearer gender equality perspective which gives women and men the same financial incentives, conditions and opportunities to increase their participation in

the labour market. The strategy's employment objective, according to the Committee on Finance, should explicitly apply to both women and men. The Committee on Finance otherwise notes that Sweden is well placed with regard to the established objectives regarding employment, research, climate and the environment, education and poverty reduction. The Committee on European Union Affairs has also actively followed the issue with consultation ahead of, and reporting following, the discussions in the European Council. The European Council met most recently on 25 and 26 March 2010 and agreed on the principal features of the strategy. The Swedish Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, emphasised in his reporting to the Committee on European Union Affairs on 30 March that Sweden had successfully pursued gender equality issues and that one of the goals of EU employment policy set out in the future 2020 strategy is that the employment rate should be the same for women and men in Europe and reach at least 75%. The process of developing the Europe 2020 strategy is to lead to a decision by the European Council in June 2010 on priority strands and goals for the EU and the Member States over the period 2010–2020.

The Committee notes that the European Union faces a number of opportunities and challenges over the next few years which, with the right instruments and political will, can create entirely new prospects of the Union building an open, modern and democratic Europe and a Union which is a strong player on international issues and can actively promote peace, the values of the Union and the welfare of nations. The Committee notes that the Commission is ready to take up the challenges facing the Union. Among the challenges, the Committee wishes to highlight, in particular, the importance of safeguarding an open Europe. Openness should, according to the Committee, be a continuing thread through the Union's activities and strategies. Europe and the Union must be open to the outside world. The European Union must keep its doors open in its contacts with other countries in the enlargement process, in the Eastern Partnership and in Mediterranean cooperation. Openness must be a guiding principle in all areas such as migration, free trade and development cooperation. According to the Committee, the principle of safeguarding an open Europe should, therefore, be fundamental to all initiatives and programmes that the Commission intends to launch during its term of office.

In its continued consideration of the Commission Work Programme 2010, the Committee has chosen to base itself on four main areas in accordance with the Commission's priority strands:

- Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe's social market economy;
- Building a citizen's agenda which puts people at the heart of European action;
- Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach;
- Modernising EU instruments and ways of working.

Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe's social market economy (ECFIN, SG D1, EMPL)

The economic crisis in recent years has exposed structural shortcomings in the European economies and underlined the importance of funding and long-term reforms for a long-term sustainable recovery and increased employment. The formulation of the new future 2020 strategy is of key significance in equipping the EU better to take up future challenges and clear the way for long-term sustainable growth potential in Europe. The Committee notes that the Commission, in its 2010 Work Programme, intends to take a number of positive steps to put the strategy into practice. Among other things, the Commission intends to take a number of specific actions to deal with the current economic and financial situation, including strengthening economic surveillance and coordination and improving governance within the euro area, so as to help return public finances to a more sustainable path and ensure stable, responsible financial markets at the service of the wider economy. In addition, the Commission intends to drive the main initiatives in the Europe 2020 strategy forward and tackle Europe's bottlenecks and missing links.

The Committee stresses the importance of the initiatives contributing to the long-term goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, such as ensuring sustainable public finances, preserving investment and social welfare, creating effective labour markets for all and an effective internal market, promoting foreign trade and openness, contributing to the transition to a greener economy, promoting a better business climate and developing an increased knowledge base including research and innovation. In the view of the Committee, it is time to take the step from short-term crisis management to medium and long-term reform policy. The Committee therefore considers that the Commission should be encouraged to continue to focus on measures that produce long-term sustainable growth and employment and are also adapted to the challenges of tomorrow. The EU needs to make vigorous efforts to change over to a green and resource-efficient economy, strengthen the EU in the global market and take on challenges such as an ageing population and reduced labour supply. The participation of women in the labour market is a key issue. The Committee welcomes, in particular, the measures of which the Commission has given notice aimed at increased external and internal openness, healthy competition and an internal market that operates smoothly, sustainable public finances for future investment and welfare, increased labour supply, gender equality and reduced social exclusion for full employment, a greener economy with an innovative business community and knowledge-based growth through investments in human capital, research and innovation.

Building a citizen's agenda which puts people at the heart of European action (JLS)

The Lisbon Treaty, which the Riksdag approved through the consideration of Report 2008/09:UU8 (Parliamentary Communication 2008/09:64), puts the interests of citizens at the heart of EU activities and makes European citizenship more tangible.

The Committee notes that the 'Stockholm Programme', which was adopted during the Swedish Presidency, will form the basis for the Commission's work during 2010. The Stockholm Programme stands for a more secure and more open Europe in which the rights and needs of individuals are safeguarded. An important starting point for the programme is the individual and the individual's rights. At the same time as vigorous efforts will be made to tackle crime, measures are to be taken to strengthen the rights of the individual. The Committee notes that, on 20 April 2010, the Commission presented an action plan for implementation of the Stockholm Programme in accordance with the Work Programme. The Committee appreciates that the Commission prioritises the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Committee further welcomes the open attitude described by the Commission in the Work Programme with regard to launching public debates so as to discuss and seek common solutions with other players in relation to a number of long-term challenges, for example, new technologies, immigration, demographic change (the increasing average age of the population) and the consequences of climate change and environmental threats that affect the daily lives of citizens.

Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach (RELEX, ELARG, TRADE, DEV)

The EU is a heavyweight economic player and trading partner. To enable the EU to speak with one voice and be heard, the Commission notes that there is a need for ambition, coordination and discipline. According to the Commission, the Lisbon Treaty gives the EU new instruments that can be used to promote the interests of Europe internationally, and it is important that the EU utilises these as effectively as possible.

The Committee also notes that the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty represents a milestone for the Union's foreign-policy cooperation and a crucial step towards a genuine European foreign policy. The Treaty redistributes previous functions and mandates in particular between the Commission, the High Representative and the rotating Presidency to a completely new player, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as well as the Vice-President of the Commission. The High Representative is assisted by a European External Action Service (EAS), consisting of existing structures in the Commission, the Council Secretariat and the approximately 130 EU delegations in third countries and at international organisations. Decisions on foreign policy and security issues will continue to be taken by consensus. On the other hand, there is

now scope to improve the implementation of common foreign policy and convey policy more clearly. The Committee reiterates, however, that it is practical implementation and the establishment of practices that will determine the outcome of the reform. The Committee urges that a transparent process be established during the development of the new structure, including the new External Action Service, and that this should be clearly endorsed among the Member States. The Committee emphasises the importance of orderly and rapid transition for those tasks which, under the Lisbon Treaty, are to be transferred to the new High Representative and the new External Action Service, in order to minimise the risk of the EU being weakened as a player during the transitional period. The Committee also emphasises that this requires the High Representative and the new External Action Service to receive the necessary resources to fulfil their remit. The Committee on Foreign Affairs is continuing to monitor the emergence of the new External Action Service closely, and this was also a principal item on the agenda of the Committee's annual meeting with the security policy players in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 14 April 2010.

The Committee welcomes the Commission's intention to work closely with the new External Action Service to promote freedom, stability and prosperity in the neighbourhood of the EU. The Committee reiterates that the European Neighbourhood Policy should not be regarded as a substitute for membership for those countries which are affected and which are gradually able and willing to apply for membership of the EU. The enlargement of the EU, according to the Committee, is one of the greatest successes of EU cooperation and is of strategic importance to the Union as a whole. Enlargement signifies a unique opportunity to build stability, peace and security in Europe and brings with it political, economic and environmental benefits for all the countries involved. There is broad political support in Sweden for the process of enlargement and for keeping the doors of the EU open.

The Committee considers that enlargement has proved to be a model of peaceful cooperation and integration that inspires other regions around the world and one where the EU has been able to show the way in international cooperation. It is important to the credibility of the EU as an international player that the principles of the enlargement process are upheld and that the commitments given and decisions taken in the area of enlargement are respected. In the Committee's view, the dynamism of the enlargement process must be maintained. The Committee emphasises that the enlargement negotiations with candidate countries must continue at the pace permitted by the countries' preparations. Sweden and the EU should, through continued political dialogue and meeting activity and through development cooperation, support the candidate countries, including potential candidate countries, in their EU integration processes. The Committee therefore welcomes the Commission's continued strong commitment to the enlargement process in accordance with the Work Programme.

The Committee also appreciates the work done by the Commission to develop a new trade strategy for Europe 2020 (strategic initiative 30) and an EU action plan ahead of the 2015 summit on the millennium development goals (strategic initiative 31).

Modernising EU instruments and ways of working (SG C1, C2, C3, SG B1, BUDG)

In order to take on the challenges facing the European Union, implementation of Union policy needs to be improved through greater political commitment and ownership. In addition, there is a need for existing instruments to be made more effective and to be modernised to adapt them to the challenges of today and tomorrow. The Committee therefore welcomes the Commission's plans to press for better follow-up and evaluation of existing legislation, implementation and results.

With regard to the simplification of legislation, the Committee recalls the position of the Committee on the Constitution in Report 2005/06:KU10 (pages 37–48). The Committee on the Constitution notes there that a large proportion of the legislation which is of significance to citizens in Sweden and for economic life in the country now consists of EU law. The Committee additionally states that the cooperation established between many EU countries has, from the point of view of Sweden, brought with it certain difficulties in fulfilling the requirements of simplicity and clarity in regulations. There is also a risk, according to the Committee on the Constitution, that implementation of EU rules will lead to more extensive regulation in Sweden than is necessary. However, significant work is being undertaken within the European Union to simplify current rules and improve new legislation. The Committee on the Constitution considers it particularly crucial that the requirements of simplicity and clarity are strongly asserted. The Committee on Foreign Affairs therefore supports the Commission's ambition to continue to prioritise the simplification of legislation, the reduction of administrative burdens and the withdrawal of proposals.

The Committee shares the Commission's view that it is of the utmost importance that knowledge of the EU is conveyed in an open and accessible way. The Committee notes the progress made with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty with regard to rules in order to increase openness and transparency in the EU. The Commission wishes to emphasise, in this context, the importance of promoting an openness-friendly interpretation of the Treaty and also of other rules and regulations.

With regard to the EU budget, the Committee supports an overhaul which produces a real breakthrough in EU budget policy, as noted previously by the Committee in Report 2008/09:UU10 (Parliamentary Communication 2008/09:229) and in the Committee's Comments 2007/08:UU2y in response to the Committee on Finance's Statement 2007/08:FiU14 – Overhaul of the EU budget. The Committee further shares the judgment of the Committee on Finance in Report 2009/10:FiU29 – Statement on the future EU 2020 strategy that there is a need for a radical change of priorities in EU budget expenditure and that the changes should be made without an increase in total budget expenditure. The following principles should guide the budget: subsidiarity,

European added value, proportionality, healthy economic administration and restrictiveness.

The Commission Work Programme has not otherwise given rise to any special treatment or any particular observations.

Dissenting opinions

The Committee's proposal for a Riksdag decision and statements of position have brought forth the following dissenting opinions.

1. Commission Communication COM(2010) 135 Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act – reasoning (Social Democratic Party)

by Urban Ahlin (Social Democratic Party), Kent Härstedt (Social Democratic Party), Kerstin Engle (Social Democratic Party), Carin Runeson (Social Democratic Party), Olle Thorell (Social Democratic Party) and Ameer Sachet (Social Democratic Party).

Statement of position (CLIMA, EMPL)

The Commission Work Programme 2010 shows a remarkably low level of ambition with regard to the EU's prospects of tackling the threat of climate change and with regard to initiatives to tackle the jobs crisis which has arisen as a consequence of the economic downturn and financial crisis. Following the failure in Copenhagen, the Commission's efforts to bring about an international climate agreement should be stepped up, which ought to be clearly apparent in the Work Programme. The importance of investment to reduce unemployment and bring the EU's Member States out of the economic crisis ought also to be highlighted in the Work Programme. In several previous statements of position, the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party have clearly highlighted the importance of an active business policy and high climate policy ambitions at EU level as well. We stand by these earlier statements of position and consider that the work plan which is now to be established should be adjusted in accordance with our previous arguments.

2. Commission Communication COM(2010) 135 Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act – reasoning (Left Party, Green Party)

by Hans Linde (Left Party) and Max Andersson (Green Party).

Statement of position (SG BI, BUDG, AGRI)

The Commission has presented its Work Programme for 2010. The Commission Work Programme is an important document, and we wish to highlight a few areas.

The Commission Work Programme has been given the title 'Time to act', and is written in a self-congratulatory and, in parts, somewhat turgid tone. This tone has partly infected the text of the Committee majority. The Left Party and the Green Party do not support either the

lauding of the Lisbon Treaty or the one-sided and uncritical assessments of EU policy that occur in the document.

We wish, however, to emphasise by way of introduction that we agree with the Committee majority with regard to the importance of openness. It is important that the EU does not shut itself off against the wider world or against its citizens. We are also in agreement with the Committee majority that it is very important that enlargement should continue.

The Commission Work Programme also represents a basis for the EU's future budget. It should be viewed in the light of the 'future Europe 2020 strategy', which is a continuation of the Lisbon Strategy. The question of the EU's future budget has been discussed in the Riksdag in other contexts, and the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party produced a joint red/green dissenting opinion on EU 2020 in the Committee on Finance Report 2009/10:FiU29.

With regard to budget reform, we wish here to emphasise the question of the importance of reduced expenditure on agricultural policy. EU agricultural subsidies and parts of the regional and structural funds for the more prosperous countries must be phased out and a commitment made instead to education and research. This phase-out also needs to take place in order to reduce the total EU budget.

The issue of climate change (CLIMA, ENV, BUDG, MOVE)

With regard to economic instruments in environmental policy, we firmly believe that there is a great need for an international climate agreement. The failed UN summit in Copenhagen emphasises the need to make a fresh effort in this area. The EU showed a lack of leadership in the run-up to Copenhagen, but a great deal is also left to be desired with regard to the EU's own ambitions. Above all, the objective for emissions within the EU should be for a substantial reduction.

The threat of climate change requires vigorous efforts and clear economic instruments. There is a need for strong commitments to and investment in energy efficiency, sustainable transport and renewable energy – sometimes called a Green New Deal.

The fight against climate change is what is known as a win-win situation, an opportunity that produces gains at several levels. The choice we face is either to create a climate-friendly green economy which generates new jobs, drives development forward and makes us a world leader, or to crouch down in the face of the threat of climate change and hope that the stagnating business community will survive. The country or region which is the leader in climate and energy issues will lead the world into the future. A commitment to the technology of tomorrow generates the jobs of tomorrow.

Despite there having been a focus on environmental issues for a prolonged period of time, this is not yet satisfactorily reflected in the EU budget. Climate policy has not, for instance, received sufficient resources in budget frameworks to date. The proportion accounted for by the new challenges in the budget is small and has also started from a very low level. It should, however, be added that large parts of climate and environmental policy obviously have to be implemented nationally

on the basis that different countries have different circumstances and that a great deal is concerned more with legislation than pure budget items. At the same time, it is important that the EU budget does not contain parts which have the effect of counteracting policy on climate change, which both the structural funds and agricultural policy do.

Both the Left Party and the Green Party consider it crucial to take initiatives to adapt the EU budget so that future issues such as climate and environmental policy are prioritised and receive an increased share of the EU budget and that the EU budget is climate-proofed. Climate-proofing the EU budget means that it must not be used to fund activities that wreck the climate. This means, for example, fewer economic resources for motorways and airports and more money for railways. With regard to railway policy, there is clear added value for the EU: if people are to be able to replace air travel (which wrecks the climate) with rail journeys (which are better for the environment), there is also a need for railway networks across borders to be improved and for a massive expansion of high-speed trains within and across national borders.

EMU (ECFIN)

With regard to the Stability and Growth Pact, the Committee majority avoids any mention of the negative impact of EMU and what effect this is having on several of the EU Member States which have introduced the euro. In a situation where needs and circumstances differ between countries, those which are members of EMU are forced, for example, to have the same interest rate, despite their needs being entirely different. The Left Party and the Green Party consider this to be particularly serious in view of the economic situation. There are clear benefits in Sweden not being a member of EMU and, therefore, retaining the possibility of acting on the basis of the circumstances of its economy, for instance, having a large proportion of companies dependent on exports.

Respect for developing countries (TRADE/DEV)

The EU has pursued tough negotiating tactics in its efforts to open markets in developing countries, and has almost engaged in extortion. The negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements have not been managed well. We consider that the EU should respect the attitudes of developing countries to agreements on trade in services, intellectual rights and the 'Singapore issues' (investments, public procurement and competition legislation) and refrain from exerting pressure for these to be brought into the negotiations.

The Stockholm Programme (JLS)

The Left Party and the Green Party are deeply critical of the construction of 'Fortress Europe'. The militarisation of the EU's external borders,

carrier liability, visa requirements and the Dublin rules prevent people in need of protection against war and persecution from seeking

asylum in the EU and instead force them into the hands of refugee smugglers. We oppose increased supranational authority in asylum and immigration policy and believe that this will lead to an even more restrictive policy, an increased militarisation of the EU's external borders and an undermining of the right to asylum.

Union rights (EMPL)

The Left Party and the Green Party are concerned about the consequences of recent judgments, such as in the Laval Case, and legislation on union rights. We want the EU to adopt a legally binding social protocol which clarifies that union rights such as the right of negotiation and the right to take industrial action as well as the right to sign collective agreements apply within the European Union. The right to take industrial action across borders must be made a statutory right in the EU.

ANNEX

List of proposals considered

Commission Communication COM(2010) 135

Commission Work Programme 2010 – Time to act

The Commission Work Programme 2010 summarises the Commission's commitments and ambitions for 2010 and beyond. The Work Programme addresses problems that need to be solved in the short term, defines general political guidelines on how future challenges should be tackled and lays a foundation for the Commission's term of office.