

## **Statement of the Committee on Foreign Affairs 2014/15:UU4 Commission Work Programme 2015**

### **Summary**

In this statement, the Committee considers the Commission Work Programme 2015 (COM (2014) 910), which was adopted on 16 December 2014. The Chamber has, in accordance with Chapter 9, Art. 20 of the Riksdag Act, referred the Work Programme to the Committee for examination and a written statement. The Committee on Finance, the Committee on Justice, the Committee on Civil Affairs, the Committee on Industry and Trade and the Committee on the Labour Market have submitted a statement of opinion on the Programme. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture has submitted its views in an extract from the record.

In its annual Work Programme, the Commission presents the political priorities for the coming year. The Work Programme for 2015 is the first work programme of the new Commission. The Commission's objective over the coming years is to make a difference in major issues such as employment and growth and to show more openly how the EU is working on these issues.

The Committee welcomes the Commission's Work Programme and considers, as does the Government, that several of the prioritised areas are of central importance. Examples that can be mentioned include measures to increase growth and employment, measures to strengthen the internal market, energy issues, a forward-looking climate policy and the EU's role as a strong global actor. At the same time, the Committee notes that gender equality, the enlargement process and research and innovation have been given limited scope in the Work Programme and stresses how important it is that these issues are highlighted more clearly in the work of the Commission. Furthermore, as in previous statements on the Commission Work Programme, the Committee wishes to underline the importance of an open Europe. Openness must be a guiding principle in all of the EU's areas of cooperation.

The Committee supports the Commission's orientation in the Work Programme towards an economic recovery in Europe. The Committee on Foreign Affairs supports the positions of the Committee on Finance on the Commission's investment plan, the half-yearly review of the Europe 2020 strategy, the capital market union, the review of the system for financial supervision and the

economic and monetary union. The Committee on Foreign Affairs also agrees with what the Committee on the Labour Market and the Committee on Industry and Trade say in the section on the internal market and initiatives to stimulate employment, growth and investments.

The Committee considers it extremely important to intensify the EU's and the international community's efforts to reach an agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015, which will keep the increase in the global average temperature to under two degrees Celsius. The Committee further emphasises that a long-term sustainable and safe energy supply is best achieved by means of long-term energy efficiency and greater access to renewable energy. In this context, the Committee also stresses the security policy aspect of energy issues.

As regards the free trade agreement with the USA, the Committee stresses the importance of achieving a free trade agreement that is as ambitious as possible in order to support growth and employment without negatively affecting the opportunity to strengthen the protection of the environment, the interests of wage-earners and the health of people and animals.

Regarding the EU's accession to the European Convention, the Committee would once again like to underline how important it is that the accession to the European Convention takes place as soon as possible to help strengthen both the position of the individual in the EU and the position of the European Convention. The Committee also supports the positions of the Committee on Justice on the question of a European security agenda, organised crime, efforts to counteract terrorism and a European Public Prosecutor's Office.

The Committee considers that developments in our eastern neighbourhood will be one of our greatest challenges. The Committee also emphasises that the EU's commitment to the enlargement process benefits both the Union and the countries that desire membership. A credible policy for enlargement expects that the EU stands by its commitments and established principles.

The Committee notes that several issues relating to development and development assistance policy are high on the global agenda during 2015. The Millennium Development Goals will be replaced with a new sustainability agenda. The UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015, and the meeting on development funding in Addis Ababa are other important key events during the year. The Committee underlines how important it is that the EU be a committed and ambitious partner when working on the new global sustainability goals if a good result is to be achieved.

Regarding migration, the Committee considers that the EU's overall goal must be to increase the EU's joint capacity to receive asylum seekers. The Committee

considers that it is important to create legal ways of seeking asylum in the Union and increasing the reception of quota refugees in other countries.

The Committee welcomes the fact that in the Work Programme the Commission states that the intention is to be as open as possible in its work and that work will be carried out with the other EU institutions to strengthen accountability and transparency in the activities of the EU. The Committee on Foreign Affairs also agrees with what the Committee on Finance says in its statement of opinion on highlighting the importance of public audits and transparency in the EU's administration.

Finally, the Committee supports what is put forward by the Committee on Civil Affairs, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture and the Committee on Justice on proposals that the Commission proposes be withdrawn or amended.

With what is put forward by the Committee in this statement the Committee proposes that the Riksdag file the Commission Work Programme 2015 (COM(2014) 910). The statement contains one explanatory reservation from the Sweden Democrats and one from the Left Party.