

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** February 18,2020

**Report Number:** E42020-0005

**Report Name:** EU Commission Presents its 2020 Work Program

**Country:** European Union

**Post:** Brussels USEU

**Report Category:** Policy and Program Announcements

**Prepared By:** Sophie Bolla

**Approved By:** Jennifer Lappin

**Report Highlights:**

On January 29, 2020, the European Commission adopted its Work Program setting out the actions the Commission aims to take in 2020. The Work Program lists 43 new policy objectives including the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy. The von der Leyen Commission also plans to continue or launch review of existing EU legislation to make sure they are still fit for purpose and up to date.

On January 29, 2020, the European Commission adopted its [Work Program](#) setting out the actions the Commission aims to take in 2020. The Work Program, listing 43 new policy objectives, is based on the six headline ambitions of President Ursula von der Leyen:

- A European Green Deal
- A Europe fit for the digital age
- An economy that works for people
- A stronger Europe in the world
- Promoting our European way of life
- A new push for European democracy

Presenting the Work Program to the press, Ursula von der Leyen said that the EU is “committed to deliver on the European Green Deal and to improve chances for European citizens and businesses in the digital transformation.”

### **Commission Defines its “Better Regulation” Priorities**

Following on the commitment from the Juncker Commission (2014-2020), the von der Leyen Commission wants to keep the “Better Regulation principle” at the core of its policy making. This means that the Commission commits to design and implement policies “delivering maximum benefits to businesses and citizens while avoiding unnecessary burdens.” To do so, the Commission will prepare its first Foresight Report to identify major trends and their potential policy implications. The Work Program also foresees that all new initiatives will live up to a “green oath to do no harm.”

As part of the Better Regulation process, the von der Leyen Commission will continue or launch new REFIT exercises for EU legislation. The Regulatory Fitness and Performance program (REFIT) is a program designed to keep the entire stock of EU legislation under review and ensure that it is 'fit for purpose;' that regulatory burdens are minimized; and that all simplification options are identified and applied.<sup>1</sup>

Below is a non-exhaustive list of legislation that are being or will be evaluated. The full list is available [here](#).

- Evaluation of Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed protected in the EU (NEW)
- Fitness Check of EU rules against illegal logging (NEW)
- Fitness Check on the relevant EU legislation on endocrine disruptors
- Evaluation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides
- Evaluation of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy (2012-2015)

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the REFIT website: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-and-less-costly\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-and-less-costly_en)

- Evaluation on authorization of plant protection products and maximum residue levels for pesticides
- Evaluation of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on food with regards to nutrient profiles and health claims made on plants and their preparations and of the general regulatory framework for their use in foods
- Evaluation of Food Contact Materials

REFIT exercises are broad in scope. A few comments on the impetus for the REFITs or a key component of the REFITs are included here. The REFIT for the EU legislation on plant protection products and pesticides residues will look into the setting processes for Maximum Residue Levels legislation, which is risk based, and those in the EU's active substance legislation, which is hazard based. The fitness check on illegal logging will assess the effectiveness of EU regulations in contributing to the fight against illegal logging globally. The evaluation of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy will look at possible simplification and streamlining of EU regulations on animal welfare. The Animal Welfare Strategy brings together EU Member States and stakeholders to discuss good practices and needs to be addressed. Any changes in legislation are expected to be done through the Green Deal. It is difficult to predict which, if any, U.S. food or agricultural products will be impacted by the REFIT for food contact materials, but regulatory changes are a likely eventual outcome. The REFIT for endocrine disruptors will seek greater harmonization across EU law. Currently, specific provisions on how to address endocrine disruptors are included in the Regulations on pesticides and biocides, chemicals in general (REACH), medical devices, and water. Other Regulations, such as those for cosmetics or food contact materials, consider endocrine disruptors like other substances that can negatively affect human health without mentioning endocrine disruptors specifically; for these Regulations, endocrine disruptors are subject to case-by-case assessment, which could lead to different regulatory consequences for substances identified as endocrine disruptors depending on the policy area in which they are regulated. The Commission is taking a cross-cutting look at endocrine disruptors and how different regulatory provisions interact and assess their impact on human health and the environment, as well as the competitiveness of EU farmers and industry internationally in light of these regulations. The main goal will be to develop a horizontal approach for the identification of endocrine disruptors across EU legislation, building on the criteria developed for pesticides and biocides. Finally, the evaluation of nutrition and health claims will be finalized for the release of the Farm to Fork Strategy (see below). The European Commission is expected to take a decision on the establishment of compulsory nutrient profiles on food packages.

### **The European Green Deal**

After the publication of the EU Communication on the Green Deal in December 2019, the Commission will propose a European climate law to enshrine the 2050 carbon neutrality objective into legislation. A European Climate Pact will also be proposed to bring together all of these efforts, involving regions,

local communities, civil society, schools, industry and individuals. The Commission will also present initiatives to tackle the loss of biodiversity and publish its Farm to Fork Strategy to support farmers in providing food in a more sustainable way.

The European Commission 2020 Work Program is very ambitious, especially for proposals related to the European Green Deal. It foresees tight deadlines for proposals that will require heavy lifting from the Commission. With regards to the Farm to Fork Strategy, DG SANTE confirmed it intends to release the Strategy on March 25, 2020. A leaked draft is circulating and can be found [here](#). Several measures have already been announced, including:

- Reduce the use of chemical pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics;
- Legislate new food labeling rules including country of origin labeling for additional products, environmental footprint labeling and/or additional nutritional labeling;
- Support deforestation-free value chains;

Below is a list of Green Deal initiatives foreseen in 2020:

Policy objective	Initiatives
The European Green Deal	<p><b>Communication on the European Green Deal</b> (non-legislative, Q4 2019);</p> <p><b>European Climate Law enshrining the 2050 climate neutrality objective</b> (legislative, Q1 2020);</p> <p><b>The European Climate Pact</b> (non-legislative, Q3 2020)</p>
Sustainability of food systems	<p><b>'Farm to Fork' Strategy</b> (March 25, 2020)</p>
Sustainable production and consumption	<p><b>New Circular Economy Action Plan</b> (non-legislative, Q1 2020)</p>
Protecting our environment	<p><b>EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</b> (March 25, 2020);</p> <p><b>8th Environmental Action Programme</b> (legislative, Q2 2020);</p>
	<p><b>Strategy for sustainable and smart mobility</b> (non-legislative, Q4 2020);</p>

**Sustainable and smart mobility****ReFuelEU Aviation - Sustainable Aviation Fuels** (legislative, Q4 2020);

Many details on implementation, funding, and specific objectives of the Green Deal are under development and will be presented in Spring 2020. Some action items that could impact U.S. exports have already been announced, including measures to reduce the use of chemical pesticides and antibiotics; legislate new food labeling rules; promote organic agriculture; and initiate deforestation-free value chains. Also of note, the Commission pledged it would re-reopen the recently passed Renewable Energy Directive II (RED II). RED II mandates levels of renewable energy use and, for agriculture, RED II proposes rules for the production and use of biofuels and forestry biomass, including sustainability certification for feedstocks. The Commission is likely to revise these certification criteria during its term.

**Repeals**

In preparing the Work Program, the Commission also examined all proposals that currently are awaiting decision by the European Parliament and the Council and is proposing to withdraw and repeal 34 of them.

This includes the proposal on the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes and the proposal on the placing on the market of food from animal clones.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.