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Report Name: EU Commission Presents its 2021 Work Program

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Report Highlights:

On October 20, 2020, the European Commission adopted its 2021 Work Program setting out the actions the Commission aims to take in 2021. The Work Program lists new policy objectives under the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy such as the action plan on organic production and the proposal on deforestation-free supply chains.

On October 20, 2020 the European Commission adopted its [2021 Work Program](#), which sets out the actions the Commission aims to take in 2021. The Work Program lists policy objectives and new legislative proposals based on the six headline ambitions of President 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, Maroš Šefčovič, Commission Vice-President in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, said that *“the priorities set out in this work programme will not only help deliver Europe's recovery [from the pandemic] but also our long-term resilience – through future-proof solutions across all policy areas. For that, we will make the best use of strategic foresight as well as our better lawmaking principles – evidence-based and transparent, efficient and fit for the future.”*

More Transparency and Better Enforcement

The von der Leyen Commission states that it is committed to evidence-based policies that are easier to comply with and less likely to create unnecessary burden for business and people. To that end, the Work Program foresees the creation of the ‘Fit-for-Future’ platform, a high-level expert group that will support the Commission to identify simplification and burden reduction potential. The Commission also highlights the need for impact assessments, which take into account the views of all those impacted. Therefore, the Commission commits to make consultations more efficient and more accessible to facilitate stakeholders’ participation

One of the priorities of the Commission this year is also to increase efforts to improve the effective application, implementation and enforcement of EU law. The Work Program stresses that the Commission will work with Member States to ensure the “swift and correct implementation of new and existing EU rules”. The Commission clearly states that it will not hesitate to uphold EU law through infringement proceedings where needed.

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 applied¹.

¹ 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

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

- Revision of geographical indications
- Revision of Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive in order to reinforce the essential requirements for packaging to be placed on the EU market (NEW)
- Revision of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Statistics on Agricultural Input and Output (SAIO) (NEW)
- Revision of Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 on additives for use in animal nutrition (NEW)
- Evaluation of the Sewage Sludge Directive 86/278/EEC (NEW)
- Evaluation of State aid rules for broadband infrastructure deployment (NEW)

The European Green Deal

After the publication of the EU Communication on the Green Deal in December 2019, the European Commission has published sectorial strategies over the course of 2020 including the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy. More information about the Green Deal initiatives can be found in GAIN Report ‘[EU Green Deal - September 2020 Update](#)’.

To achieve the Green Deal objective of climate neutrality by 2050, the Commission announced that it will table a “Fit for 55 package” to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030. This will cover wide-ranging policy areas including renewable energy, land use, effort sharing and emissions trading. The Commission will also publish a proposal for a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on the risk of carbon leakage. In addition, the Commission will propose measures to implement Europe's circular economy action plan, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Farm to Fork Strategy. Among these measures are the action plan on organic production, the proposal to reduce the risk of products associated with deforestation on the EU market and the communication on rural areas.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of new initiatives foreseen to be published in 2021. Once a legislative proposal is published by the European Commission, the text is then sent to the two co-legislators, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The legislative process takes around 1 to 2 years before the final adoption of the legislation. The full list is available [here \(Annex I\)](#).

Policy objective	Initiatives
Fit for 55 package	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and a proposal for CBAM as own resource (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q2 2021)
	Amendment to the Renewable Energy Directive to implement the ambition of the new 2030 climate target (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q2 2021)

	Revision of the Regulation on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q2 2021)
Circular economy package	Sustainable products policy initiative, including a revision of the Ecodesign Directive (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q4 2021)
Biodiversity and toxic-free environment package	Action plan for the development of organic production: on the way to 2030 (non-legislative, Q1 2021)
	Minimising the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the EU market (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q2 2021)
	Zero pollution action plan for water, air and soil (non-legislative, Q2 2021)
	New legal framework on the restoration of healthy ecosystems (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q4 2021)
Long-term vision for rural areas	Communication on the long-term vision for rural areas (non-legislative, Q2 2021)

Attachments:

No Attachments.