



## 2021 Commission work programme – from strategy to delivery

Brussels, 19 October 2020

Today, the Commission adopted its [2021 work programme](#), designed to make Europe healthier, fairer and more prosperous, while accelerating its long-term transformation into a greener economy, fit for the digital age. It contains new legislative initiatives across all six headline ambitions of President **von der Leyen's Political Guidelines** and follows her first [State of the Union Speech](#). While delivering on the priorities set out in this work programme, the Commission will continue to put all its efforts into managing the crisis, and into making Europe's economies and societies more resilient.

Ursula **von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission, said: *"Our utmost priority will continue being to save lives and livelihoods threatened by the coronavirus pandemic. We have already achieved a lot. But Europe is not out of the woods yet and the second wave is hitting hard across Europe. We must remain vigilant and step up, all of us. The European Commission will continue its efforts to secure a future vaccine for Europeans and to help our economies recover, through the green and digital transition."*

Maroš **Šefčovič**, Vice-President in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, said: *"Whilst ensuring Europe can manage the pandemic and its devastating impact, we also continue to draw lessons from the crisis. Therefore, the priorities set out in this work programme will not only help deliver Europe's recovery 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 law-making principles – evidence-based and transparent, efficient and fit for the future."*

### Delivering on EU priorities

The 2021 Commission work programme sees a shift from strategy to delivery across all six political priorities. It confirms the Commission's resolve to lead the twin green and digital transition – an unparalleled opportunity to move out of the fragility of the crisis and create a new vitality for the Union.

#### 1. **A European Green Deal**

To achieve a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, the Commission will table a **Fit for 55 package** to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030. This will cover wide-ranging policy areas – from renewables to energy efficiency first, energy performance of buildings, as well as land use, energy taxation, effort sharing and emissions trading. A **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** will help reduce the risk of carbon leakage and ensure a level-playing field by encouraging EU partners to raise their climate ambition. 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**.

#### 2. **A Europe fit for the digital age**

To make this Europe's digital decade, the Commission will put forward a roadmap of clearly defined **2030 digital targets**, related to connectivity, skills and digital public services. The focus will be on the right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, free flow of data and cybersecurity. The Commission will legislate in areas covering safety, liability, fundamental rights and data aspects of **artificial intelligence**. In the same spirit, it will propose a **European e-ID**. Initiatives will also include an **update of the new industrial strategy for Europe**, to take into account the impacts of the coronavirus, as well as a legislative proposal to improve the working conditions of **platform workers**.

#### 3. **An economy that works for people**

To ensure that the health and economic crisis does not turn into a social crisis, the Commission will put forward an ambitious **action plan to implement fully the European Pillar of Social Rights**, making sure that no one is left behind in Europe's recovery. The Commission will also come forward

with a new European **child guarantee**, ensuring access to basic services like health and education for all children. To support our economies and strengthen the **Economic and Monetary Union**, it will revise the framework for handling EU bank failures, take measures to boost cross-border investment in the EU, and step up the fight against money laundering.

#### 4. ***A stronger Europe in the world***

The Commission will ensure that Europe plays its vital role in this fragile world, including by leading the global response to **secure a safe and accessible vaccine for all**. It will propose a Joint Communication on **strengthening the EU's contribution to a rulesbased multilateralism**, a renewed partnership with our **Southern neighbourhood** and a Communication on **the Arctic**. A new strategic approach to support **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants** will also be presented. A Communication on the **EU's humanitarian aid** will explore new ways of working with our partners and other donors.

#### 5. ***Promoting our European way of life***

In the face of COVID-19, the Commission will propose to build a stronger **European Health Union**, notably by strengthening the role of existing agencies and establishing a new **agency for biomedical advanced research and development**. To preserve and improve its functioning, a **new strategy for the future of Schengen** will be tabled. The new pact on migration and asylum will be followed up with a number of proposed measures on **legal migration**, including a 'talent and skills' package. Other elements include an action plan against migrant smuggling, as well as a sustainable voluntary return and reintegration strategy. The Commission will continue to strengthen the **Security Union**, addressing terrorism, organised crime and hybrid threats. It will also present a comprehensive strategy on **combating antisemitism**.

#### 6. ***A new push for European democracy***

To build a union of equality, the Commission will present new strategies on **rights of the child and for persons with disabilities**, as well as a proposal to **combat gender-based violence**. It will also propose to extend the list of euro-crimes to include all forms of hate crime and hate speech. The Commission will propose clearer rules on the **financing of European political parties** and take action to **protect journalists and civil society against abusive litigation**. A **long-term vision for rural areas** will propose actions to harness the full potential of these regions.

Given the long-term and transformative nature of the initiatives planned, it is more important than ever to legislate in the most impactful way and with the future in mind. The upcoming **Communication on Better Regulation** will renew this emphasis. It will focus on simplification and burden reduction, notably by introducing a 'one-in-one-out' approach. The Fit for Future Platform will support the Commission in this ambition, particularly needed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. To deliver on the ground, the Commission will also step up its outreach, with the **Conference on the Future of Europe** playing a central role.

A full list of the 44 new policy objectives under the six headline ambitions are set out in [Annex 1](#) of the 2021 work programme.

### **Next Steps**

The Commission's 2021 work programme is the result of close cooperation with the European Parliament, Member States and the EU consultative bodies. The Commission will now start discussions with the Parliament and Council to establish a list of joint priorities on which co-legislators agree to take swift action.

### **Background**

Every year, the Commission adopts a work programme setting out the list of actions it will take in the coming twelve months. The work programme informs the public and the co-legislators of our political commitments to present new initiatives, withdraw pending proposals and review existing EU legislation. It does not cover the ongoing work of the Commission to implement its role as Guardian of the Treaties and enforce existing legislation or the regular initiatives that the Commission adopts every year.

The 2021 Commission work programme is closely linked to the [recovery plan for Europe](#), with the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument and a reinforced EU budget for 2021-2027. The Recovery and

Resilience Facility will channel an unprecedented €672.5 billion of grants and loans in the crucial first year of recovery. Meanwhile, Member States are drawing up recovery and resilience plans that set out reforms and investments aligned with the EU green and digital policy objectives: with a minimum 37% of green transition expenditure, and a minimum 20% related to digital. To repay the funds raised under NextGenerationEU, the Commission will put forward proposals for new own resources starting with a revised Emission Trading System, a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and a digital levy.

## **For more information**

[2021 Commission work programme, annexes and factsheets](#)

[Adjusted 2020 Commission work programme](#)

[Recovery plan for Europe](#)

[A European Green Deal](#)

[Shaping Europe's digital future](#)

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