



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE YEAR 2015

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On 16 December 2014, the newly formed European Commission presented its work programme for the year 2015. Entitled “A new start”, the document presents the ten main EU priorities for 2015 and is accompanied by four annexes, detailing the proposed actions as follows:

- a list of 23 new initiatives to be proposed before the end of 2015 (Annex I)
- a list of 80 withdrawals or modifications of pending proposals (Annex II)
- a list of 79 Commission actions related to the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) (Annex III)
- a list of 78 Directives and Regulations that become applicable in 2015 (Annex IV)

### A new approach

The 2015 work programme of the new Commission marks a clear break with the past. Indeed, it comprises only 23 new initiatives (Annex I), whereas the Barroso Commission proposed 130 new initiatives per year on average. Moreover, the number of proposals up for withdrawal or modification is of 80 proposals (Annex II) (the Barroso Commission never exceeded 30 withdrawals). The document also contains a list of 79 actions (Annex III) under the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) initiated by the Commission in 2012 in order to streamline EU legislation and to reduce the burden on businesses (see the Secretariat note of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013).

The EFCI Secretariat welcomes this new approach, as it shows the intention of the new Commission to focus both on the big economic and social challenges (fighting unemployment and improving competitiveness) and on a better regulation agenda.

### **I. Overview of new initiatives that might be of interest for our industry (Annex I)**

#### 1.) A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment, **Promoting integration and employability in the labour market** (page 2, n°2, legislative and non-legislative initiative)

According to the Commission, the Member States have strong difficulties to get more people into work and to ensure that workers and unemployed have the skills needed to progress and adapt to jobs of the future. The Commission therefore aims to present a package of measures to boost integration and employability in the EU labour market. The initiatives of this package will include: the follow-up of the Youth Employment Initiative's implementation, a proposal for a Council recommendation on integration of the long-term unemployed, as well as measures to promote skills development.

#### 2.) A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base (page 3, n°7 and 8)

##### **a.) Internal Market Strategy for goods and services** (page 3, n°7, legislative and non-legislative initiative)

The Commission aims to deliver a strategy on a renewed and integrated approach for the Single Market in order to create growth and jobs in Europe. The objective is to improve integration, mutual recognition and standardisation in key industrial and services sectors having a big economic potential untapped, such as business services, construction, retail, regulated professions, advanced manufacturing and combined services/goods provision. According to the Commission, this strategy will also put a specific focus on SME's.

##### **b.) Labour Mobility Package** (page 3, n°8, legislative and non-legislative initiative)

The Commission aims to foster labour mobility (particularly in cases of long-term vacancies and skills mismatches) including across borders and to support the role of national authorities in fighting abuses and frauds. The initiatives of this package include: a better coordination of national social security systems, the carrying out of a targeted review of the Posting of Workers Directive (1996/71/EC) and an enhanced European Job Mobility Portal (EURES - <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage>).

## II. Overview of withdrawals of interest about pending proposals (Annex II)

- Justice, Consumers & Gender Equality, Maternity leave (page 12, n°58)

In October 2008, the Commission proposed to amend the Council Directive 92/85/EEC on improving the Safety and Health of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding by increasing the minimum length of maternity leave from 14 to 18 weeks for all pregnant workers in the EU. On 20 October 2010, the Parliament not only agreed to the proposal but decided to exceed the minimum length to 20 weeks paid maternity leave. Following the strong resistance of a majority of Member States, the whole dossier is blocked for more than four years and no agreement could yet be found between the Council and the Parliament.

As a consequence, the Commission decided to withdraw and replace the original proposal by a new initiative, in case no agreement is found between the Council and the Parliament by the end of June 2015. Given the high impact that such a directive would had for our industry, members will be informed as soon as new developments occur.

## III. Overview of actions of interest for our industry related to the REFIT programme (Annex III)

1.) Employment, Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility (pages 5 and 6, n° 21, 24, 25 and 26)

**a.) Consolidation of 3 Directives on information and consultation of workers** (page 5, n°21, legislative initiative)

The Commission aims to consolidate and simplify the following three Directives: 2002/14/EC establishing a general frame related to information and consultation of workers in the EU, 1998/59/EC on collective redundancies and 2001/23/EC safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfers of undertakings. The overall aim is to enhance awareness and compliance in order to assure a better application of these directives.

Actually, it is not at all sure how the Commission wishes to concretely improve the practical application of these three directives. However, any new initiative will be based on a previous consultation of EU social partners and EFCD members will be therefore informed on new developments.

**b.) Occupational Health and Safety** (page 6, n°24, evaluation)

The Commission is actually evaluating the 24 Occupational Safety and Health Directives (Framework Directive 89/391/EEC of 12<sup>th</sup> June 1989 to encourage improvements in the Safety and Health of Workers at Work and the 23 related Directives). The EU social partners are involved in this assessment and the EFCD participated in a dedicated seminar on 9 December 2014. The final results of this assessment are expected at the end of 2015.

**c.) Part-Time Work and Fixed Term Work** (page 6, n°25, evaluation)

The Commission is actually evaluating the Directive 1997/81/EC of 15<sup>th</sup> December 1997 regarding the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by the European cross-industry social partners (BusinessEurope, CEEP and the ETUC), as well as the Directive 1999/70/EC of 28<sup>th</sup> June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed term work that was also concluded by BusinessEurope, CEEP and ETUC. The results of this evaluation are expected in 2015.

**d.) Information Obligations** (page 6, n°26, evaluation)

The Commission intends to evaluate the Directive 91/533/EC concerning the employer's obligation to inform employees about the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship. This evaluation is expected to start in 2015 but should be finished in 2016.

2.) Environment, Maritime Affairs & Fisheries, **Ecolabel and Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) Regulations** (page 7, n°29, fitness check)

The Commission will carry out a fitness check of Regulation EC/1221/2009 of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) and of Regulation 66/2010 on the EU Ecolabel. A fitness check is an example of joint evaluation work between the Commission and Member States.

The objective is to assess the contribution of both EU Regulations to competitiveness, sustainable consumption and production. The results of this fitness check are expected for 2015.

3.) Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SME's, **Late Payment Directive** (page 11, n°57, evaluation)

In 2015, the Commission will evaluate the Directive 2011/7/EU on combating late payments in commercial transactions. The aim is to help improving its implementation at Member States' level, where many problems for companies still persist.

EFCI members will find herewith the Commission work programme 2015 and its annexes in English and German languages. Further information can be obtained on the dedicated website of the European Commission through this link: [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/work-programme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/work-programme/index_en.htm)

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