



## Mixed response to Commission's "more focused" 2015 work programme

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**The European Commission's 2015 work programme, in which it outlines 23 new proposals and lists 80 items of pending legislation for withdrawal or amendment, drew a mixed response from MEPs in Tuesday's debate with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and first Vice-President Frans Timmermans. Parliament will vote a resolution in January on the "new start" promised by the Commission.**

This work programme is the Commission's "translation of the ten priorities, set out in [its] political guidelines, into concrete first deliverables", said Mr Juncker, adding that the Commission aims "to make a real difference for jobs, growth and investment and bring concrete benefits for citizens".

Commission first Vice-President Frans Timmermans added "we have looked through each of the 452 pending proposal currently on the table of the EU institutions and decided whether we want to maintain, amend or withdraw them".

EPP group vice-chair József Szájer (HU) welcomed the readiness to change and simplicity of the Commission proposals, aiming to reduce bureaucracy and simplify the lives of economic players. He praised its effort to "concentrate on implementation issues".

S&D vice-chair Enrique Guerrero Salom (ES) welcomed Mr Juncker's focus on subsidiarity but reiterated that "we also need a strong European Union". The social model, he said, "must also be upheld and defended". Referring to the Commission's "kill list" of proposals to be withdrawn, he agreed that "some changes are needed but not withdrawals", in particular regarding "maternity leave and the circular economy".

For the ECR, Vicky Ford (UK) said that "the economy must come first. Every EU initiative should face a simple test: will it make it easier or harder for our businesses to thrive?", she asked. "In 2015, we need economies fit for the 2050s, not the 1950s, vibrant digital markets, conditions that let industries succeed and increasing external trade too" she added.

ALDE vice-chair Sophia in 't Veld (NL) argued that better law-making also means transparency. "ALDE naturally supports efforts to slim down and simplify. But we believe in smart trimming, not in complete deforestation", she said. She criticised Commission plans to scrap a raft of measures to do with to "discrimination and transparency, the environment, and democratic values".

For GUE/NGL, Rina Ronja Kari (DK), said that "instead of concentrating on creating a better framework for workers, it does seem that the Commission is bent on making life easier for big companies at the expense of employees", adding that "we need a situation where the citizens are at the centre of our considerations".

Greens/EFA co-chair Philippe Lamberts (BE) insisted that "Europe should work for the majority, not just the minority" and "workers need to be put at forefront of our considerations". He also called for "environmental sustainability" and recalled that "better regulation does not mean no regulation or deregulation".

EFDD co-chair Nigel Farage (UK), said Mr Juncker had been "busy with a PR consultancy, spending a pretty penny to rebrand the European Commission". He also criticized the Commission's "new start" slogan – "we do that every five years", he said.

# Press release

Non-attached MEP Gerolf Annemans (BE) welcomed the Commission's "more focused" approach. "I think we need to avoid introducing too much legislation, things have gone too far already. We don't need more legislation, we should not overreach ourselves, then we will not achieve anything", he said.

## Next steps

Parliament will give its verdict on the Commission's 2015 Commission work programme in a resolution and put to the vote in January, at the next plenary session in Strasbourg.

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