

Health and Social Services Committee

HSS(2)-04-05(p.3)

Date: Wednesday 2 March 2005

Venue: Committee Rooms 3&4, National Assembly for Wales

Title: European Commission Work Programme

Purpose of Paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to identify proposals in the European Commission's (EC) Work Programme for 2005 that are relevant to the Health and Social Services Committee portfolio.

Background

2. You will be aware that proposals have been developed to improve the scrutiny of EU legislative proposals by Committees. These proposals are based around using the EC's annual work programme as the starting point for identifying priority policy issues for further monitoring and scrutiny over the course of the year. At its meeting on 11 November 2004, the European and External Affairs Committee agreed this new approach to the scrutiny of EU legislation, which was subsequently endorsed by the Panel of Chairs on 7 December 2004.

3. This paper therefore provides Members with an overview of the year ahead in the EU and a summary of the Commission's five year strategy.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/work_programme/index_en.htm

The EU 2005 context

4. 2005 will see a major review of the European Union's long-term objectives, the future of the "Lisbon Strategy" will be discussed by Member States at the Spring Council (March 2005). Already the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso has presented its contribution in the form of a new strategy for the EU "Growth and Jobs" (31 January 2005).

5. The negotiations over the future EU budget 2007-2013 will continue during this year and will decide the future shape and scope of EU funding programmes, including the structural funds programmes. The Luxembourg Presidency is aiming to reach an agreement at the June Council, although given the divergent views on the issue agreement may not come until the end of 2005 or even 2006.

6. The UK assumes the Presidency of the EU in the second half of the year, giving the UK the opportunity to steer the EU towards some of its own priorities. The Informal Competitiveness Council (10-12 July) and an informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers, referred to as the Gymnich (1-2 September) will be held in Wales. Wales will also host a Youth Event (25 – 27 October).

7. The European Commission's strategy for its five year mandate (2005-2009) and its work programme for 2005 were both adopted and presented to the European Parliament on 26 January 2005, by Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso. More general information about the Commission's strategy is contained in a paper prepared for the European and External Affairs Committee on 24 February 2005.

Suggested priorities for 2005 (See Annex A)

8. The following are suggested priority issues for the Committee:

- New programme on health and consumer policy
- Directive updating measures for the control of avian influenza
- Green Paper on a European programme on nutrition and health
- Regulation updating food additives legislation

It is also suggested that the Committee might wish to be kept up to date with progress on the following:

- Working Time Directive
- Services Directive
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use
- Negotiating Directives for MRA on professional qualifications

Influencing EU policy proposals: potential for Committee engagement

9. Each subject committee is receiving a paper prepared by Members' Research and Committee Services (MRCS) on the Commission's work programme. Once they have identified their priorities, it will be for the committees and clerks to decide how to pursue their interest as they would for any other item: commissioning papers from the Welsh Assembly Government or other sources, and, where appropriate, responding directly to the EU institutions.

10. In support of this, MRCS will provide Members with regular updates through various sources, following their progress through the Council and the European Parliament, with further suggestions on opportunities for influencing the process. One of the key roles of the Assembly Parliamentary Service Brussels officer will be to feed in intelligence and to provide members with an "early warning" of up-

coming issues.

11. For legislative proposals, it will be particularly important to focus on discussions in the Council and the European Parliament. Committees should consider adopting a more systematic approach to scrutiny of the Welsh Assembly Government's input into the UK negotiating line at Council discussions with feedback on the outcome of Council meetings. This would help make the decision-making process more transparent, in particular the impact on Welsh stakeholders.

12. Where proposals are subject to the co-decision procedure, (eg: working time directive), the European Parliament will have an equally strong voice in the adoption of the legislation. One element of the work of the Brussels office will be to keep Welsh MEPs informed of the Assembly Committee's European business and to facilitate the flow of information between the two institutions.

13. Other bodies and associations such as the Committee of the Regions, Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power (REGLEG), Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE) and Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) will be active on these issues as well. It is intended that MRCS will keep Members informed of their responses to EU proposals and their lobbying activities on these issues.

Action

14. The Committee is invited to:

- Identify any items from the EC Work Programme that it wishes to scrutinise.
- Agree the approach to influencing EU proposals outlined in paragraphs 9-13.

Members' Research and Committee Services

Contact Point: Carolyn Eason, Members' Research Service 029 2089 8943.

Annex A(i)

Health and Social Services Committee

EC Legislative and Work Programme 2005: Suggestions for adoption under the EC Work Programme

Title	Description of scope and objectives	Type of proposal or act

<p>Communication on a new programme on health and consumer policy and a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and the Council</p>	<p>New political approach for consumer policy and health, streamlining of instruments consistent with the new Commission Health strategy, which will take the form of a Commission Communication.</p> <p>If not done, this will leave consumer and public health policies without political and financial programme in the medium term. The following issues will be addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Perspectives 2007-2013 (Commission Communication 2004 – 487, heading 3 "citizenship"): health and consumer policy programme to replace the existing instruments in this area. 2. Current consumer policy strategy runs out at the end of 2006, financial instrument expires 2007, combined instrument is to be launched by then. 3. Current Public Health Programme expires at the end of 2008. 	<p>Legislative Proposal / Decision</p>
<p>Proposal for a Council directive on Community measures for the control of avian influenza.</p>	<p>To update Community measures for the control of avian influenza to the current scientific knowledge. To improve the control of this very important disease in the Community. Current legislation (Council Directive 92/40/EC) is obsolete and must be replaced by a new Directive, which takes into account the most updated scientific knowledge on disease control.</p>	<p>Legislative Proposal / Directive</p>
<p>Commission proposal for a regulation establishing a packet of measure on food additives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recast and simplify the existing food additives legislation and update the evaluation and authorisation procedures (EFSA, comitology). • To harmonise the area of food enzymes through the new proposed Community rules. • To modernise and adapt the existing legislation on flavourings to technological and scientific developments and to establish clear evaluation and authorisation procedures (EFSA, comitology). 	<p>Legislative Proposal / Regulation</p>
<p>The Working Time Directive</p>	<p>Negotiations on amendments to the WTD are ongoing.</p>	<p>Legislation/Directive</p>

The EU Services Directive	The draft directive forms part of the process of economic reform launched by the Lisbon European Council. Its objective is to establish a genuine internal market for services, including health, in order to exploit the considerable potential for economic growth and job creation afforded by the services sector.	Proposed Legislation/ Directive
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use	This proposal is also intended to amend Council Regulation (EEC) n° 1786/92, Directive 2001/83/EC and Regulation (EC) n° 726/2004 (2004/217/COD).	Proposed Legislation/ Regulation
Negotiating Directives for MRA on professional qualifications	Recommendation from the Commission to the Council in order to authorise the Commission to open, under certain conditions, negotiations with third countries towards mutual recognition agreements of qualifications of natural persons supplying professional services.	SEC(2004)133