

**EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE EUR-02-01(p.2)**

Date: 4 April 2001  
Time: 9.00am  
Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

**Title: EUROPEAN COMMISSION: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2001**

This paper has been submitted for the Committee's information by Catherine Eva, Head of the European Commission Representation in Wales.

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The new economic and social agenda, the enlargement process, the White Paper on Governance and quality of life will be the priorities for the European Commission in 2001, as outlined in its annual working programme adopted today. These priorities follow the ‘Strategic Objectives 2000-2005’, which were adopted by the Commission last year, to identify a number of key elements for action for its term of office.

**Summary**

Improved governance, enlargement, economic and social reform, and the quality of life are the key themes of the 2001 Work Programme adopted by the Commission on 31 January. The first of these concentrates on bringing Europe closer to people and making institutions more open and democratic. This year should also see significant progress in accession talks to prepare for new Member States joining the EU. Economic and social policy centres on jobs and competitiveness and quality of life will address areas such as the environment, respect for individual rights, food quality and mobility. The priorities of the programme reflect the strategic objectives agreed last year for the Commission through to 2005 (its current term of office).

**Promoting new forms of governance** will dominate the programme, with the Commission pursuing the key process of administrative reform of the European Institutions. This will be the rationale for the White Paper on Governance which should be published by July. It will seek to bring together the various proposals with a view to ensuring that all the Institutions, not just the European Commission work in a transparent, accountable and more decentralised way. Attention will be given to aspects of communications, the quality of consultations and of the broader European legislative process, the conditions for executive delegation and for participating in policy-making. The White Paper will help clarify responsibilities and contribute to debate launched by the Nice European Council prior to the next

revision of the Treaties in 2004.

**Stabilising the European continent and strengthening Europe's role in the world**, this strand ranges from the accession strategy via reform of external aid to external trade and development policy. The Commission also intends to strengthen its politics towards neighbouring countries, pursuing the stabilisation and association strategy with the Balkans while paying particular attention to the unique case of Kaliningrad in the framework of the EU's Northern Dimension.

**Launching a new economic and social agenda** to modernise our economy and make it more competitive, while strengthening the European social model. This covers preparations for the new Spring European Council which will meet in Stockholm in March and the Commission's overall assessment of progress in promoting employment. Further areas include finalising preparations for introducing Euro notes and coins on 1 January 2002 and introducing legislation to regulate health and safety in the workplace.

**Agriculture** will come under increasing scrutiny against the backdrop of the continuing BSE crisis. The year 2001 will require attention to the review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which will start in the context of enlargement. Farm trade negotiations will also continue as part of the WTO talks and will be conducted independently of any new round of multilateral negotiations. 2001 will see new efforts to integrate CAP and Community policies on food safety and sustainable development, particularly with regard to the environment. Measures will be proposed in favour of biodiversity, genetic resources and the protection of forests. With regard to economic and social cohesion, the Commission will adopt a communication on the European Union's border region in the perspective of enlargement.

**Internal Market**; a priority will be to achieve the completion of the Single Market in financial services. The Commission will put forward proposals to boost customer confidence in online systems, particularly with regard to the security of networks.

**A better quality of life for all**; the Sixth Environment Action Programme will constitute the environmental component of the sustainable development strategy that the Commission will be presenting at the Gothenburg European Council. Internationally this strategy will represent a substantial contribution to the European involvement in the 'Rio' Conference in 2002. The Commission will prepare a Green Paper to stimulate debate on its proposal to create a European Public Prosecutor with a view to re-examining the proposal at the next Intergovernmental Conference. It will also assess progress in setting up the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, in line with the programme adopted by the Tampere European Council in October 1999. The Commission will also put into practice the multi-annual legislative reform programme laid down in the White Paper.

The text of the European Commission's work programme for 2001, including the annexes, is available at the following internet address:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/work\\_programme/index\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/work_programme/index_fr.htm)