



Tithe an Oireachtais Houses of the Oireachtas

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

REPORT TO DÁIL ÉIREANN AND SEANAD ÉIREANN

OIREACHTAS COMMITTEES'
EU SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015

AGREED LIST OF PRIORITIES

AN COMHCHOISTE UM GHNÓTHAÍ AN AONTAIS EORPAIGH

TUARASCÁIL DO DHÁIL ÉIREANN AGUS DO SHEANAD ÉIREANN

CLÁR OIBRE 2015
CHOISTÍ AN OIREACHTAIS MAIDIR LE GRINNSCRÚDÚ AE

LIOSTA COMHAONTAITHE TOSAÍOCHTAÍ

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Oireachtas Committees' EU Scrutiny Work Programme 2014

1. Introduction

In its Annual Report on the Operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002¹, which was laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas (the Houses) on 20 July 2012, the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs recommended that:

- (a) sectoral committees² should identify on an annual basis those proposals, both legislative and non-legislative, from the European Commission's Annual Work Programme which they would subject to detailed scrutiny;
- (b) these should be forwarded to the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs for inclusion in an agreed list of priorities, which should then be reported to the Houses; and
- (c) the agreed list should be adopted by motion of both Houses as the Oireachtas EU Scrutiny Work Programme.

In 2013, the first Oireachtas Committees' EU Scrutiny Work Programme was prepared on foot of the above recommendations. In general terms, Joint Committees found the exercise to be worthwhile in that it assisted them to better target their EU scrutiny work in 2013 and 2014. They also considered that the process should be refined and improved upon in future years.

For 2015, each Joint Committee has again identified its own priorities based on Annex I of the European Commission's Work Programme 2015³. Annex I of the Work Programme sets out the new initiatives that the Commission expects to propose in 2015.

Section 2 of this report outlines the general remit of Joint Committees as regards EU scrutiny matters. Section 3 of the report sets out the priority proposals for scrutiny identified by each Joint Committee.

2. EU Scrutiny in Joint Committees

The current Dáil (31st) and Seanad (24th) have decentralised the consideration of certain EU matters by mainstreaming them across the sectoral committees. This model was introduced in October 2011.

This mainstreaming of EU scrutiny allows the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs to focus on matters concerning the strategic direction of the EU, as well as those of a cross-sectoral nature. The orders of reference for each of the sectoral committees require them inter alia to consider the following matters in respect of the relevant department/departments:

- (i) Draft EU legislative acts within a Joint Committee's remit, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity;
- (ii) Other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action;
- (iii) Non-legislative documents published by an EU institution in relation to EU policy matters; and
- (iv) Matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of Ministers in the relevant configuration of the Council of the European Union.

¹ http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/euaffairs/9th-Annual-Report_Operation-of-Scrutiny-Act-2002.pdf

² The term 'sectoral committee' is used to refer to those Oireachtas Joint Committees that shadow the work of a particular government department or departments: there are 9 such committees.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2015_en.pdf

In accordance with normal practise, each of the sectoral committees has identified its own priorities for EU scrutiny, based on Annex I of the European Commission's Work Programme 2015. The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs has also selected items from the Commission's Work Programme for inclusion in its own work programme, which it publishes separately.

The overall list of priorities does not preclude other proposals from being added and scrutinised in the course of the year. Notwithstanding this exercise, all proposals will continue to be put before Joint Committees for scrutiny in two lists - one containing priority proposals, and the other containing non-priority proposals. The priority list will include those proposals selected by the Joint Committee from the Commission Work Programme (in this report), those subject to the subsidiarity check, those identified by the relevant Department as being of major significance, and those considered by the relevant EU Policy Clerk of being of interest to the Joint Committee.

3. Priority proposals for 2015

The number indicated in the first column of each table relates to the number of the initiative in Annex I of the Commission's Work Programme 2015.

3.1 Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
23.	Review of the GMO decision-making process	Legislative	The review will look at how the rules could be changed to better ensure the majority view of Member States is taken into account.

3.2 Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
2.	Promoting integration and employability in the labour market	Legislative / Non-legislative	A package of measures to support Member States in getting people, especially the longer term unemployed and younger people, into work and developing a skilled workforce. This will include measures to follow up on the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, a proposal for a Council recommendation on integration of the longterm unemployed, as well as measures to promote skills development.
8.	Labour Mobility Package	Legislative / Non-legislative	The package aims at supporting labour mobility and tackling abuse by means of better coordination of social security systems, the targeted review of the Posting of Workers Directive and an enhanced EURES.

3.3 Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
1.	The Investment Plan for Europe: Legislative Follow-up	Legislative	The follow-up actions include setting up of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), promoting cooperation with National Promotional Banks and improving access to finance for SMEs.
5.	Strategic Framework for the Energy Union	Non-legislative/ Legislative	The Strategy Framework will focus on: energy supply security; integration of national energy markets; reduction in European energy demand; decarbonising the energy mix and promoting research and innovation in the energy field. It will include the revision of the EU Emissions Trading System as part of the legislative framework post-2020.
6.	Communication on the Road to Paris – multilateral response to climate change	Non-legislative	The objective is to outline the EU vision and expectations and explain partner ambition in the context of the 2015 Agreement and set out the EU contribution further to the European Council conclusions of 24 October 2014.

3.4 Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
3.	Mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy	Non-legislative	Improved and updated Europe 2020 strategy, drawing lessons from the first four years of the strategy and ensuring it acts as an effective post-crisis strategy for growth and jobs in Europe. Follows up on the recent public consultation.
12.	Deepening Economic and Monetary Union Package	Legislative / Non-legislative	The package will follow-up on the review of the most recent economic governance measures ('six-pack' and 'two-pack'), provide incentives for structural reforms and address the external representation of the Economic and Monetary Union.
18.	European Agenda on Migration	Legislative / Non-legislative	The objective is to develop a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talents and skills, as well as to improve the management of migration by intensifying cooperation with third countries, fostering burden sharing and solidarity and fighting against irregular migration and smuggling. The agenda includes the review of the Blue Card Directive, the EU-wide work permit for highly skilled workers.
19.	Communication on European Neighbourhood Policy	Non-legislative	The joint High Representative-Commission Communication will present the results of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) review with a

			view to new policy orientations following a consultation launched together with the annual ENP package.
21.	Proposal for an inter-institutional agreement on better law-making	Non-legislative	A proposal to update and strengthen the common understanding with the European Parliament and the Council in relation to better regulation.

3.5 Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
1.	The Investment Plan for Europe: Legislative Follow-up	Legislative	The follow-up actions include setting up of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), promoting cooperation with National Promotional Banks and improving access to finance for SMEs.
9.	Capital Markets Union	Legislative/ Non-legislative	An action plan for improving the financing of the economy through more efficient market-based financing instruments including work towards a framework for high quality securitisation.
10.	Framework for resolution of financial institutions other than banks	Legislative	Proposal to create a European framework for the recovery and resolution of systemically relevant financial institutions such as Central Clearing Counterparties.
12.	Deepening Economic and Monetary Union Package	Legislative/ Non-legislative	The package will follow-up on the review of the most recent economic governance measures ('six-pack' and 'two-pack'), provide incentives for structural reforms and address the external representation of the Economic and Monetary Union.
13.	Proposal for a Directive with a view to providing for compulsory exchange of information in respect of crossborder rulings	Legislative	The proposal will ensure the exchange of relevant information between tax authorities of different Member States on advance interpretations or applications of legal provisions in cross border situations of an individual taxpayer.
14.	Action Plan on efforts to combat tax evasion and tax fraud, including a Communication on a renewed approach for corporate taxation in the Single Market in the light of global developments	Non-legislative	The Action Plan will, starting from the work done on base erosion and profit sharing at OECD and G20 levels, include measures at EU level in order to move to a system on the basis of which the country where profits are generated is also the country of taxation, including in the digital economy. The Communication will aim at a stabilising corporate tax bases in the EU for a fair taxation environment, including relaunching work towards a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base.
22.	Proposal for an inter-institutional agreement on a mandatory Transparency	Non-legislative	The proposal for an inter-institutional agreement with the European Parliament and the Council will enhance openness and

	Register		accountability by making the transparency register mandatory for all interest representatives seeking to influence policy making in any of the three institutions.
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3.6 Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
17.	European Agenda on Security	Non-legislative	The Communication will propose a European Agenda on Security for the period 2015-2020 by reviewing the ongoing actions and identifying new actions taking into account emerging threats.
19.	Communication on European Neighbourhood Policy	Non-legislative	The joint High Representative-Commission Communication will present the results of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) review with a view to new policy orientations following a consultation launched together with the annual ENP package.
20.	Communication on the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals	Non-legislative	The Communication aims at establishing EU common position on the Global Partnership to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. It will cover both financial and non-financial implementation, domestic/international and public/private financing, different types of partnerships as well as monitoring, accountability arrangements and review.

3.7 Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
1.	The Investment Plan for Europe: Legislative Follow-up	Legislative	The follow-up actions include setting up of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), promoting cooperation with National Promotional Banks and improving access to finance for SMEs.
4.	Digital Single Market (DSM) Package	Legislative/ Non-legislative	The aim is to ensure that consumers enjoy cross-border access to digital services, create a level-playing field for companies and create the conditions for a vibrant digital economy and society. The package will include, among other legislative proposals, the modernisation of copyright.
7.	Internal Market Strategy for goods and services	Legislative /Non-legislative	A strategy for a renewed and integrated approach for the Single Market, to deliver further integration and improve mutual recognition and standardisation in key industrial and services sectors where the economic potential is greatest, eg business services, construction, retail, regulated professions, advanced manufacturing and combined services/goods provision. A

			particular focus will be on SMEs.
15.	Trade and Investment Strategy for Jobs and Growth	Non-legislative	A comprehensive review of the EU's trade policy strategy, and in particular its contribution to jobs, growth and investment. The review will cover all aspects of trade policy, including bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations as well as autonomous measures. It will include policy orientations in all these areas for the next five years.
18.	European Agenda on Migration	Legislative /Non-legislative	The objective is to develop a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talents and skills, as well as to improve the management of migration by intensifying cooperation with third countries, fostering burden sharing and solidarity and fighting against irregular migration and smuggling. The agenda includes the review of the Blue Card Directive, the EU-wide work permit for highly skilled workers.

3.8 Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
16.	Proposals to complete EU accession to the ECHR	Legislative	Proposals to allow for signature, conclusion and implementation of the accession agreement, in the light of the pending guidance from the Court.
17.	European Agenda on Security	Non-legislative	The Communication will propose a European Agenda on Security for the period 2015-2020 by reviewing the ongoing actions and identifying new actions taking into account emerging threats.
18.	European Agenda on Migration	Legislative/ Non-legislative	The objective is to develop a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talents and skills, as well as to improve the management of migration by intensifying cooperation with third countries, fostering burden sharing and solidarity and fighting against irregular migration and smuggling. The agenda includes the review of the Blue Card Directive, the EU-wide work permit for highly skilled workers.

3.9 Joint Committee on Transport and Communications

No	Title	Type of initiative	Description of scope of objectives
4.	Digital Single Market (DSM) Package	Legislative/ Non-legislative	The aim is to ensure that consumers enjoy cross-border access to digital services,

			create a level-playing field for companies and create the conditions for a vibrant digital economy and society. The package will include, among other legislative proposals, the modernisation of copyright.
5.	Strategic Framework for the Energy Union	Non-legislative/ Legislative	The Strategy Framework will focus on: energy supply security; integration of national energy markets; reduction in European energy demand; decarbonising the energy mix and promoting research and innovation in the energy field. It will include the revision of the EU Emissions Trading System as part of the legislative framework post-2020.
11.	Aviation Package	Legislative / Non-legislative	The package will include a Communication identifying challenges and measures for improving the competitiveness of the EU Aviation sector, the revision of the EASA Regulation 216/2008.