



European Commission Work Programme 2021

Introduction

On 19 October 2020, the European Commission presented its [Work Programme](#) (including [Annex](#)) for 2021, titled “**A Union of vitality in a world of fragility**”. On the one hand, the programme focuses on managing the global COVID-19 pandemic while on the other hand, it sets out how Europe can seize the opportunity ahead to deliver on its ambitions and lead the great acceleration thanks to NextGenerationEU (NGEU).

The NGEU will focus on **sustainable investment and reforms**, with 37% of expenditure of the Recovery and Resilience Facility earmarked for green transition spending and a minimum 20% to be invested in **digital**.

The 2021 Commission Work Programme sees a **shift from strategy to delivery** with an emphasis on new legislative initiatives and revisions of existing legislation, following up to the plans outlined across all [six of the headline ambitions](#) in the last year:

1. European Green Deal;
2. A Europe fit for the digital age;
3. An economy that works for people;
4. A stronger Europe in the world;
5. Promoting our European way of life;
6. A new push for European democracy.

The 2021 Work Programme notes that the work on all previous initiatives, delayed by the COVID-19 crisis, will continue in 2021 even if not explicitly mentioned in the Programme or the Annex.

Digital

The Commission presents a timeline of the following upcoming initiatives related to the digital sector:

Artificial intelligence:

The Commission will propose a **roadmap** with clearly defined goals for 2030 in **Q1 2021** with regards to connectivity, skills, and digital public services, following the principles of right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, free flow of data and cybersecurity. Additionally, it will propose legislation covering the safety, liability, fundamental rights, and data aspects of **artificial intelligence** **yet no specific act is planned for adoption in the new initiatives calendar**. Here, we can refer to the Commission’s pledge in the 2021 Work Programme to continue the work on all initiatives previously delayed by the COVID-19 crisis. According to the Commission’s [2020 Work Programme](#), a legislative initiative **Follow-up to the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, including on safety, liability, fundamental rights and data is to be expected in Q1 2021**. The omission of all AI initiatives from the 2021 programme, however, remains surprising given the emphasis on AI we have observed from the Commission’s side so far.

Data:

The Commission will put forward a **Data Act** to set the right conditions for better control and conditions for data sharing for citizens and businesses and **review the Database Directive, both in Q3 2021**. Furthermore, it will propose a **new European digital identity in Q1 2021** to make access to services online across Europe easier, and ensure people have greater control over what data they share and how it is used. Linked to the COVID-19 crisis, the Commission will propose the creation of a **European Health Data Space in Q4 2021**.

Taxation:

The Commission pledges to continue working for an international agreement for a fair tax system on an OECD level. However, in case the negotiations, now set to end in mid-2021, will fail to deliver an agreement, the Commission will propose an **EU digital levy in Q2 2021**. Additionally, it will propose a **legal instrument to level the playing field as regards foreign subsidies in Q2 2021**.

Competition:

The Commission will continue **reviewing competition rules** to ensure they are fit for the accelerating digitalisation of the economy. Furthermore, it will update the **New Industrial Strategy for Europe in Q2 2021** to take into account, amongst others, the acceleration of the twin digital and green transitions.

Sustainability:

The Commission will continue with the implementation of the Circular economy action plan, specifically focusing on a Sustainable Products policy initiative, that will include a **revision of the Ecodesign Directive in Q4 2021**. Additionally, it will release a **communication on circular electronics in Q4 2021**, to improve the collection, reuse and repair of mobile phones, laptops and other devices. A legislative initiative introducing **New design requirements and consumer rights for electronics will be published in Q4 2021**.

Consumers:

The Commission does not explicitly mention the three initiatives part of the **New Consumer Agenda**, namely the **review of the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD)**, the **review of the Consumer Credit Directive**, as well as the **initiative on Empowering the consumer for the green transition**. From a meeting Ecommerce Europe arranged with the Commission's DG JUST on 21 October, we learned that the communication on the New Consumer Agenda will be published on 11 November 2020. **The other three initiatives are all planned for May 2021.**

Workers' rights:

The Commission will put forward a legislative proposal to **improve the working conditions of people providing services through platforms**, to ensure fair working conditions and adequate social protections. The legislative initiative is planned for **Q1 and Q4 2021**, thus separating platform worker provisions from the rest of the Digital Services Package, which is planned to be released on 2 December 2020.

Timeline new initiatives



Annex I. REFIT initiatives

DG	Title	Objective	Timing
ECFIN	Revision of Risk Finance Guidelines	The current rules are applicable until 31 December 2020 (and will be prolonged until 31 December 2021). The ongoing Fitness Check has shown that the current rules have worked well, but should be updated to reflect regulatory, technological and market developments and accompany adequately the current Commission priorities and the economic recovery.	Q4 2021
GROW	Revision of the Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC	The initiative aims to: (i) address the risks stemming from new technologies while allowing for technical progress (ii) simplify the requirements for documentation, by allowing digital formats, hence reducing administrative burden for economic operators, with an additional positive impact on environmental costs (iii) improve the legal clarity of some major concepts and definitions in the current text of the Directive (iv) ensure coherence with other Directives and Regulations for products and improve enforcement of the legislation through the alignment to the New Legislative Framework (v) reduce costs of transposition by converting the Directive into a Regulation.	Q2 2021
MOVE	Revision - Computer reservation system	The Regulation on a CRS Code of Conduct establishes a regulatory framework for Computerised Reservation Systems (CRS) for air transport products. The overall general objectives of the Regulation were to prevent abuse of market power and ensure market efficiency and the protection of consumer interests.	Q4 2021
COMP	Evaluation of State aid rules for broadband infrastructure deployment	The State aid rules applicable to the broadband sector aim at the deployment of pro-competitive broadband networks, ensuring that the public funds are steered into areas that need it most (mainly rural areas), while preventing the crowding out of private investment. The evaluation of these rules aims at verifying how they have functioned, whether they respond to the technological and socio-economic developments and are appropriate to meet the new EU objectives.	Q2 2021
GROW	Evaluation of the 'New Legislative Framework for Products' (Decision No 768/2008/EC on a common framework for the marketing of products and the accreditation and CE marking provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008).	The objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of Decision No 768/2008/EC on a common framework for the marketing of products and the accreditation and CE marking provisions of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008. It should also assess if these instruments are fit for the digital age and a greener economy and if they accelerate our green and digital transition and our economic resilience.	TBA

Annex II. Priority pending proposals

Title	Reference number
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on a pilot regime for market infrastructures based on distributed ledger technology	COM(2020)594 final 2020/0267 (COD) 24.09.2020
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on Markets in Crypto-assets, and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 (MICA)	COM(2020)593 final 2020/0265 (COD) 24.09.2020
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulation (EC) No 715/2007 on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6) and on access to vehicle repair and maintenance information	COM(2019)208 final 2019/0101 (COD) 14.06.2019
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres	COM(2018)630 final 2018/0328 (COD) 12.09.2019
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL concerning the respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications and repealing Directive 2002/58/EC (Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications)	COM(2017)10 final 2017/0003 (COD) 10.1.2017
Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/16/EU on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation	COM(2020)314 final 2020/0148 (CNS) 15.07.2020
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the conditions for accessing the other EU information systems and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1862	COM(2019)3 final 2019/0001 (COD) 07.01.2020
Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online	COM(2018)640 final 2018/0331 (COD) 12.09.2018



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