

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 1/11/2016

GAIN Report Number: E16003

EU-28

Post: Brussels USEU

EU Institutions - Priorities and Work Plans for 2016

Report Categories:

Trade Policy Monitoring

Approved By:

Karisha Kuypers

Prepared By:

Hilde Brans

Report Highlights:

This report provides an overview of the priorities and work plans for 2016 of the different EU institutions (European Commission, Council of the European Union, European Parliament).

EU INSTITUTIONS - PRIORITIES AND WORK PLANS FOR 2016

COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM

On October 27, 2015, the European Commission adopted its 2016 Work Program entitled “No Time for Business as Usual.” This is the second work program of the Juncker Commission focusing again on the ten political priorities set out in Juncker’s Political Guidelines. While last year’s program was presented by Commission President Juncker as a radical change in how the Commission works, the presentation of the 2016 Work Program by First Vice-President Timmermans was low-key. In a press release he stated that, while last year the Commission committed to focus on the big things where the public expects the EU to make a difference, they are now “taking the next steps to deliver on these political priorities.” The Commission 2016 Work Program consists of a [Communication](#) and six annexes: [Annex I](#) lists new initiatives; [Annex II](#) lists REFIT initiatives; [Annex III](#) sets out a list of priority pending proposals; [Annex IV](#) sets out the so-called “kill list” which is a list of proposals the Commission intends to withdraw by April 2016; [Annex V](#) sets out a list of envisaged repeals; and [Annex VI](#) sets out a list of legislative acts that will become applicable in 2016. For a summary of the Commission’s initiatives, see [Commission President Juncker’s letter of intent](#) addressed to the European Parliament and the Council.

New Initiatives

Annex I sets out a list of 23 new key initiatives which the Commission will deliver in 2016 including:

- **Circular Economy Package:** the aim is to address economic and environmental concerns by maximizing efficiency in the use of resources and through innovation in order to enable the development of new markets and business models. The Package consists of an Action Plan and a waste proposal with long-term targets. The Action Plan includes an initiative that would explore options for more effective use and understanding of date marking on food in order to prevent food waste (2017).
- **Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020:** the mid-term review of the MFF will focus on how to target funding of EU priorities including simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- Next steps for a **Sustainable European Future:** this initiative will set out a new approach to ensure Europe’s economic growth and social and environmental sustainability beyond the 2020 timeframe.
- **Energy Union Package:** the Package is composed of legislative proposals including a renewable energy package setting out sustainability criteria for biomass.

REFIT Initiatives

“REFIT” is a Commission program that evaluates whether EU legislation is still fit for purpose and delivering the results intended. Annex II sets out a list of 27 REFIT initiatives including:

- A follow-up to the fitness check of the **General Food Law**
- An evaluation of the **Nutrition and Health Claims** regulation
- The launch of an evaluation of the **pesticides legislation** covering Maximum Residue Limits and the placing on the market of plant protection products.

Priority Pending Proposals

Under the heading “A Union of Democratic Change,” the proposal giving Member States the possibility to restrict or prohibit the use of **genetically-modified food and feed** on their territory is one of the 17 priority pending proposals listed in Annex III.

Legislation Becoming Applicable in 2016

Annex VI lists the legislative acts that will become applicable in 2016 including:

- Regulation 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs: applicable as of January 4, 2016.
- Regulation 609/2013 on dietetic foods: applicable as of July 20, 2016.
- Regulation 1169/2011 on Food Information to Consumers: provisions on nutrition labeling will become applicable on December 13, 2016.

Further information on delegated and implementing acts that will become applicable in the course of 2016 will be published on http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm.

ROADMAPS

New Commission initiatives likely to have a significant economic, environmental or social impact require an impact assessment. “Roadmaps” describing the problem to be tackled and analyzing several policy options are published on the [European Commission’s “Better Regulation” website](#). Roadmaps also provide information on planned stakeholder consultation.

Roadmaps currently listed on the Better Regulation website include:

- Conclusion and signature of the [EU-Canada CETA](#)
- Conclusion and signature of the [EU-Iceland agreement on protection of geographical indications](#)
- Conclusion and signature of the [EU-Morocco agreement on protection of geographical indications](#)

- Conclusion and signature of the [EU-Norway agreement on protection of geographical indications](#)
- Conclusion and signature of the [EU-China agreement on protection of geographical indications](#)
- Evaluation of the [Nutrition and Health Claims regulation](#)
- Evaluation of the structure of excise duties on [alcoholic beverages](#)
- Evaluation of the [pre-packaging legal framework](#)
- New measures for [Bisphenol A \(BPA\) in food contact materials](#)

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – PRESIDENCY

In December 2015, the Council published [the new Trio Presidency program](#) prepared by the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta, covering the period January 2016 to June 2017. The program is presented in a new format seeking to provide a framework for organizing and programming the work of the Council over the next 18 months. Its structure follows Commission President Juncker’s Strategic Agenda and lists the key files and issues the Council will need to address.

During the first half of 2016, the Netherlands will chair the Council meetings. For detailed information see [GAIN report “Dutch Priorities for their Chair of the Council of the EU.”](#) The [provisional agenda of Council meetings](#) is published on the Dutch Presidency’s website. The following issues will be discussed in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council:

February 15, 2016 – Brussels

- Presidency Work Program
- Long-term strategy for agricultural research
- Trade issues and agriculture
- Establishment of an EU-platform in animal welfare
- Conference on antimicrobial resistance
- Conference on plant breeders’ rights and patent rights

March 14, 2016 – Brussels

- Simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- Use of financial instruments in the agriculture sector
- Fisheries

April 11-12, 2016 – Luxembourg

- Market developments and support measures
- Conference on food waste and food loss
- Fisheries

May 10, 2016 – Brussels

- Plant breeders' rights and patent rights
- Forestry: FLEGT and timber regulations evaluation
- Fisheries

June 27-28, 2016 – Luxembourg

- Organic agriculture regulation
- Simplification of the CAP
- Fairness and transparency in the food chain
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Food waste and food loss

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The [“Work in Progress” lists on the European Parliament’s \(EP\) website](#) show the legislative procedures currently in progress in each committee.

Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) Committee:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/agri/work-in-progress.html>

The AGRI Committee’s work in progress list includes:

- Animal Health
- Enhancing innovation and economic development in future European farm management
- Technological solutions to sustain agriculture in the EU

- Organic farming
- Zootechnical and genealogical conditions for trade in and imports into the EU of breeding animals and their germinal products
- Placing on the market of food from animal clones

Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/agri/work-in-progress.html>

The ENVI Committee's work in progress list includes:

- Packaging and packaging waste
- Implementation of the food contact materials regulation
- Mid-term review of the EU's biodiversity strategy
- Veterinary medicinal products
- Placing on the market of food from animal clones

RELATED REPORTS

- [How the European Union Works – A Guide to EU Decision-Making](#)
- <http://www.usda-eu.org/eu-basics-questions/>