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The European Commission Work Programme 2022

The 19th of this October, the European Commission adopted its 2022 Work Program, designed to rebuild a post COVID-19 Europe, accelerate the Green and Digital transitions, and build a fairer and more resilient society.



The political strategy of the Commission is to set Europe on a path to successfully achieving climate neutrality by 2050, shaping our digital future, strengthening our unique social market economy, building a Union of prosperity, and making

Key figures



Europe stronger in the world. This Commission is taking action to address the challenges ahead and put the necessary building blocks in place for a better future for all Europeans. The work program sets out targeted action to complete delivery on the ambitions the Commission set at the start of the mandate and further steer the Union towards sustainable recovery. It also lists the key legislative proposals that should get priority in the legislative process to ensure swift implementation on the ground across **all six of the Commission's headline ambitions: a European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the Digital Age, an Economy that works for people, a stronger Europe in the world, Promoting our European way of life and A new push for European democracy.**

The 2022 Commission Work Programme is available [here](#)

The European Commission launches EU missions to tackle major challenges

The 29th of September, the European Commission launched five new [EU missions](#) constituting an innovative way to work together and improve the lives of people in Europe and beyond. EU missions aim to tackle big challenges in health, climate and the environment, and to achieve ambitious and inspiring goals in these areas.

This novelty of Horizon Europe, brings together several Commission services under the authority of nine College members. Missions will support research to deliver on the Commission's main priorities and find responses to **some of the greatest challenges we are facing today: fighting cancer, adapting to climate change, protecting the ocean, seas and waters, living in greener cities and ensuring healthy soil and food**. They are a new tool that includes a set of actions, such as research and innovation projects, policy measures and legislative initiatives, to achieve concrete goals with large societal impact and within a specified timeline. Five missions will aim to deliver solutions to key global challenges by 2030:

1. **Adaptation to Climate Change:** support at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030;
2. **Cancer:** working with Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and solutions to live longer and better;
3. Restore our **Ocean and Waters** by 2030;
4. 100 **Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities** by 2030;
5. **A Soil Deal for Europe:** 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age, said: *“Today, we have launched five new missions. A mission is a new and innovative tool - a new way to work together within Horizon Europe. They are also an original concept in EU policy. The missions are commitments to solve some of the greatest challenges we are facing today: fighting cancer, adapting to climate change, protecting the ocean, seas and waters, living in greener cities and ensuring healthy soil and food. It is a set of actions - research and innovation projects, policy measures and legislative initiatives, citizens' involvement - to achieve concrete goals with large societal impact. We want to deliver solutions to key global challenges by 2030!”*

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *“The response to the coronavirus pandemic has shown that we can only tackle our biggest problems with a collective effort rooted in research and innovation. This is also the starting point of the bold and ambitious EU missions. They will mobilise the enormous potential of the EU and rally instruments and policies to achieve important goals. And all this together with the citizens, who are involved from start to finish.”*

These missions are a **new collaborative approach** to tackle some of the main challenges of our times. They provide a mandate to achieve specific goals in a set timeframe. They will also deliver impact by putting research and innovation into a new role, combined with new forms of governance and collaboration, as well as with a new way of engaging with citizens, including young people.

For example, the Adaptation to Climate Change mission plans to make available €100 million for large-scale demonstrations to address major climate induced hazards, such as flooding, fitted to local circumstances. The Cancer mission plans to establish a novel joint governance model to ensure a systematic and effective integration of research, innovation and policy developments on cancer in Europe. The Ocean and Waters mission will create a network of lighthouses at sea and river basin scale to implement the mission and expand the networks of marine protected areas. In the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities mission, selected cities will involve their citizens in drawing up 'Climate City Contracts' to help reach climate neutrality by 2030. And with the Soil Deal mission people will be stimulated to participate in citizen science initiatives to collectively improve soil health.

Rooted in Horizon Europe, mission implementation will go far beyond research and innovation to develop new solutions and improve the lives of Europeans. Their novelty and added value is in operating as a portfolio of actions involving different instruments, business models and public and private investments at EU, national, regional and local levels. For missions to be successful, support from other European and national programs will be crucial. Each mission will have a specific timeframe and budget tailored to its challenge and implementation plan.

EU missions connect directly to citizens in order to support Commission priorities, engaging them in their design, implementation and monitoring. Member States, regions and a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders will get involved to help ensure lasting outcomes for all EU citizens.

You may read more specific information by clicking on [European Green Deal](#), [Europe fit for the Digital Age](#), [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#), [An economy that works for people](#) and [New European Bauhaus](#).

The full Communication on EU missions is available [here](#).

More information regarding this issue is available [here](#).

EU tactics contributed to UK's hardline stance, declared former May aide

The 20th of September, the newspaper *The Guardian* reported the declarations of Theresa May's former special adviser on Europe, Raoul Ruparel, saying that the EU is partly responsible for the Brexit minister David Frost's aggressive negotiation tactics on the Northern Ireland protocol.

Raoul Ruparel said Brussels' refusal to give Theresa May concessions on the protocol, only to subsequently agree a deal with Boris Johnson, "*feeds the perception*" in London that the hardline approach was the only one that would pay off.



Theresa May, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

For this reason he believes Lord Frost will carry out his repeated threat to trigger article 16, the controversial safeguard clause allowing either side to unilaterally suspend the application of the agreement – even if the consequences mean already damaged UK-EU relations take a further dive.

“Whether you agree with him or not, I think that he, and to some extent the prime minister and others, think that playing hardball ... has proven to be effective and is the only way to really get them to sit up,” said Ruparel, a respected former adviser now working for Deloitte. *“If you’re looking at it from his perspective ... it has to be a credible threat and [he must] be willing to follow through on it.”*

Frost has warned the EU on several occasions that the UK believes the conditions have been met to suspend part of the protocol in an effort to get the EU to renegotiate part of it.

Earlier this month, the European Commission vice-president, Maroš Šefčovič, warned that a renegotiation would merely lead to more instability for businesses and communities – which landed badly in Downing Street.

Two days later, Frost waded in again, hardening the language contained in the threat, before saying the EU would be making a *“significant mistake”* if it did not take the UK’s demands seriously.

The UK’s tough talk approach is mystifying for some. The German ambassador to the UK, Andreas Michaelis, tweeted on Thursday that it *“seems we are entering a new phase with regard to the Northern Ireland protocol”*.

He added: *“Just as the EU becomes more pragmatic and understanding, the UK adopts a less flexible approach.”*

The Conservative MP Roger Gale complained at a UK trade and business commission conference on Thursday that Frost seemed to be *“negotiating by megaphone”*, questioning what the effect of such public criticism would be.

Sam Lowe, a senior research fellow at the Centre for European Reform, said he was baffled as to why people in the government thought they were winning concessions through hardball tactics.

“I find that a really fascinating argument because I know that trade and cooperation agreement quite well, and the UK did not get much of what it wanted at all,” he said

He added: *“Yes, it got rid of the references to the court of justice, but then in terms of the offensive interests of the UK: the UK wanted more expansive rules of origin, better provisions on mutual recognition of professional qualifications, a deeper relationship when it came to the mutual recognition of products; the UK didn’t get any of that.”*

Ruparel suggested the further strain on UK-EU relations after invoking article 16 may be thought of as irrelevant by Frost. He said: *“He may think: what’s the point in having better relations if they [the EU] don’t actually allow us to have these conversations and achieve anything? “If it’s just better relations in of themselves and you’re not getting a better deal or these concerns are not being, he may be thinking then what’s the use?”*

The full article of the Guardian is available [here](#).

The systemic importance of professional organisations for European civil society

The 20th of October, **Rudolf Kolbe**, Vice-President of the EESC Diversity Europe Group, President of the Austrian Federal Conference of the Liberal Professions and President of Honour of CEPLIS, published an interesting article in the Diversity Europe Group Newsletter dedicated to the state of associations and associational life in Europe:

The pandemic has clearly shown that ensuring that the basic needs of European citizens are met is extremely important, particularly in times of crisis. The liberal professions play a particularly important role in this – from the doctors providing medical care and engineers managing our technical infrastructure through to the tax advisers, lawyers, therapists and social workers dealing with the economic, legal and psychological consequences of the crisis.



Rudolf Kolbe, Vice-President of the EESC Diversity Europe Group & President of Honour of CEPLIS



The fact that the systemic importance of the professions became so clearly visible during the crisis has also greatly boosted the role of professional organisations. Medical associations across Europe have worked together with governments to develop strategies to manage the pandemic from a medical perspective, and to ensure access to quality medical services at all times. Other professional organisations have, for example, provided extensive knowhow on implementing schemes to support entrepreneurs and workers during the crisis, as well as on adapting (technical) infrastructure.

All this has shown why it is so important to recognize professional organisations as equal social partners on a permanent basis, irrespective of crisis situations, and to give them, and the highly qualified professionals working across many different fields, a greater voice in society in the public interest. Best use should be made of the positive momentum that has emerged in the last two years with regard to the positioning of professional organisations. As social partners, professional organisations can feed the extensive expertise of their members into social processes and help to improve them. They can ensure access to services that meet the basic needs of European citizens and help guarantee the high quality of these services, including in upcoming social development processes. We need to work to ensure that these valuable resources are actually used by governments.

The original article is available [here](#)

The European Union and Morocco adopt pact to modernize trade & investment relations

On the 21st of September, a “**Pact for the modernization of trade and investment between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco**” has been adopted by Business Europe, the Moroccan Employers’ Association (CGEM) and EuroCham Morocco.

The document calls for a long-overdue modernization of the framework for EU-Morocco trade and investment relations, capable of unlocking the untapped economic potential of this partnership to support an effective and sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery.



“The EU-Morocco Association Agreement was signed in 2000: since then the world has changed and it is necessary to adapt our agreement to the commercial realities of the 21st century and the needs of companies in important areas such as the digital economy,” said on this occasion President of Business Europe, Pierre Gattaz.

“The EU is a natural and reliable trading partner of Morocco. It is important today to revive this relationship in order to benefit together from the opportunities presented, particularly related to food supply chains, as well as our priorities in terms of sustainability or digital,” said for his part President of the CGEM, Chakib Alj.

Edwin Sluismans, president of Eurocham, stressed *“the strong potential for development of bilateral trade that represents, for companies on both sides of the Mediterranean, this liberalization and simplification of trade provided in the future Modernization Pact”*.

For the three organizations, the modernization of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement should focus on eight pillars namely the facilitation of investment and improved market access for investors in priority sectors such as renewable energy, agribusiness or digital services; the reduction of non-tariff barriers for industrial products and the mutual recognition of relevant regulations and standards; the liberalization and facilitation of trade, services and transport; **the creation of a framework for the mutual recognition of certain professional qualifications**; facilitating trade and regional and continental integration; creating “administrative one-stop shops” for SMEs to promote their participation in trade between the EU and Morocco; promoting and facilitating trade in agri-food products and improving the business climate.

The Joint Statement on the Modernisation Pact on Trade and Investment between the Kingdom of Morocco & the European Union is available [here](#).

Statement by Commissioner Kyriakides on World Mental Health Day

Ahead of the World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2021, **Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety**, made the following statement:

"Citizens across the EU and the world have showed impressive resilience and strength in the face of an unprecedented public health crisis. But at the same time, after 18 months of living with COVID-19, a silent pandemic of mental health challenges is sweeping across the European Union and beyond, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. Already existing inequalities have become even more apparent.

That is why this year's theme, 'Mental Health in an Unequal World', is very apt. It is the opportunity to shine a light on the need to do everything in our power to ensure equal access to responsive mental health services, to support those who care for members of their families or friends with mental health issues, and to tackle any stigma and discrimination experienced by those affected by mental health difficulties.



Over the past 18 months, our front line workers have been facing endless, exhausting shifts. We saw careers and elderly citizens spending months living in isolation. Many have lost family members, other loved ones, homes or jobs. Children miss out on socialization and education, parents struggling, domestic violence reports increasing. Each wave of the virus undeniably poses new challenges to every individual's mental health. Furthermore, patients diagnosed with COVID-19 may risk psychiatric or even neurological issues. The mental impact of COVID-19 is cutting across our societies.

We must work to build more resilient health systems, support those in need, and address the stigma surrounding mental health. The Recovery and Resilience Facility, at the heart of [NextGenerationEU](#), will help the EU emerge stronger and more resilient from the pandemic.

I welcome the fact that several Member States will channel investment into mental health support and the modernisation of services as well as dedicated facilities as part of their recovery and resilience plans.

We will also support 21 Member States as part of a three-year action to help tackle inequalities in service access and support service responsiveness. €7 million will be invested in projects to prevent depression, suicide and a health system reform that will support transformation of mental health services towards more person-centered, community based service provision.

Let us remember, not only on World Mental Health Day, but indeed every day that mental health and well-being are interlinked. Mental health includes our emotional, social and psychological well-being. Mental health matters, now more than ever before."

News in Brief & Upcoming event

OECD Online Workshop on Regulatory Barriers to Competition in Professional Services: Measurement and Reform Experiences



The OECD Economics Department, jointly with the Competition Division of the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, is pleased to invite you to an online Workshop on Regulatory Barriers to Competition in Professional Services, which will take place on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 November 2021 between 12.30 and 15.30.

The aim of this workshop is to hold a fruitful discussion and sharing of experiences with the academic community, professional bodies, and other stakeholders on how to guarantee that the regulatory constraints imposed on professionals and professional firms strike the right balance between the need to ensure that competition is effective and can deliver its benefits, and the need to correct the market failures that characterise the provision of these services. The focus will be on reform experiences and how to measure their impact, and, more generally, on the relationship between specific regulatory constraints and the overall outcomes of professional services for consumers and for society as a whole. The professions on which the discussion will concentrate are lawyers, notaries, accountants, engineers, architects and estate agents.

This workshop will contribute to the revision and improvement of the OECD Product Market Regulation Indicators on professional services that, for the past twenty years, have measured barriers to competition arising from unnecessary or outdated regulation in these sectors

[Link for Registration](#)

[Webpage for more information](#)

Public Consultation on the liability rules for Artificial intelligence

On the 20th of October, the European Commission informed our Secretariat that they are collecting views on making liability rules fit for the Digital Age, Artificial Intelligence and Circular Economy.

This consultation concerns both EU rules on compensation for damage caused by defective products (PLD) and national rules on compensation for damage caused by the use of AI in products and services.

The consultation is available [here](#) and closes on the 10th January 2022.