

Brussels, 24 October 2006

Consolidating 50 years of delivery. The Commission work programme for 2007

The European Commission has today adopted its work programme for 2007. As the European Union prepares to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the Commission has mapped out the concrete action it will take to meet its strategic objectives for 2007. For the first time, the Commission identifies a series of 21 strategic initiatives that will be the main focus of its work in 2007. In addition, the Commission sets out a further series of priority actions to be adopted over the next 12 to 18 months. The work programme takes the better regulation initiative to a new phase, by identifying simplification initiatives and withdrawals of pending legislation, and includes a list of priorities for communicating with citizens for the first time.

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, said: *"This document is our political programme for 2007. It sets out our strategic initiatives and builds on our commitment to provide value added to Europe's citizens. We have sought to strengthen both the policy content and the process. Consultations with the other institutions will be more extensive than before and we are determined to strengthen our commitment to better regulation with a guarantee to deliver what we promise"*.

Margot Wallström, Vice-President for institutional relations and communication strategy, added, *"2007 will be a crucial year for the search of a institutional reform. The Commission will fully participate in this process and will cooperate with the Presidency, and all the European institutions, with the aim of contributing to a comprehensive institutional settlement. I am also happy that the Work Programme contains a strong message on Communication. We have to communicate on our political priorities, and explain to citizens the added value of our activities"*.

The 2007 strategic priorities build on the four overall priorities for the Barroso Commission: prosperity, solidarity, security, and a stronger voice in the world, and the "Citizen's Agenda: Delivering Results for Europe" document adopted on 10 May 2006.

The priorities for concrete action in 2007 are to modernise the European economy and equip Europe with the capacity to respond to the challenge of globalisation. This will include a new phase in the action at EU level on the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, a Single Market review and a comprehensive stocktaking of European society. The 2007 work programme also responds to the need for a better management of migration flows with specific proposals on economic immigrants and minimum sanctions for employers of illegally staying third-country nationals.

Energy will be at the top of the policy agenda in 2007 and the Commission will present the first Strategic Energy review for Europe. In parallel the Commission will put forward a Green Paper on options for EU climate change and the perspectives for international co-operation post-2012.

The Commission will also seek to provide value added by helping to make Europe a better place to live. A White Paper on health strategy will set out how the European level can contribute to health and a strategy will also be proposed in the field of social services and the contribution that can be made to better urban transport.

In the external field, the annual enlargement strategy paper will allow the Union to take stock of the progress made by countries in the enlargement process. A renewed market access strategy will help to address barriers to trading relationships while the Commission continues to seek agreement on the Doha Development Round. The Commission will also reinforce European Neighbourhood Policy and seek to make progress in negotiations with major strategic partners such as Russia, China and Ukraine.

The Work Programme for 2007 is conceived and presented in a significantly different way than in previous years. The Work Programme sets out the concrete actions at the core of the Commission's political delivery during 2007 – the Commission's strategic initiatives. In addition, the Commission commits to develop a series of priority initiatives, to be adopted over the next 12 to 18 months depending on the depth and intensity of preparation needed to meet the quality standards of Better Regulation.

In 2007, full compliance with better regulation principles will become still more important. Impact assessment will be carried out on initiatives with the potential for significant economic, social and environmental impacts. The proposals put forward have been or are the subject of wide public consultation, to ensure that citizens and all interested parties are fully involved in the decision-making process. In line with the commitment taken vis-à-vis the European Parliament, the 2007 Commission Legislative and Work Programme for the first time fully integrates simplification initiatives and withdrawals of pending proposals. A list of priorities for communicating with citizens is also included for the first time.

The work programme is only one part of the work of the Commission. Throughout the year, the Commission remains responsible for managing financial and operational programmes, within Europe and throughout the world. It has direct responsibility for managing a series of complex common policies and for ensuring the *acquis* is properly applied. It has a special role as guardian of the common European interest. This is also reflected for the first time in the Commission Legislative and Work Programme for 2007.

The work programme for 2007 can be found on:

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm