

Statement of the Committee on Foreign Affairs 2024/25:UU5 Commission Work Programme 2025

In its statement, the Committee on Foreign Affairs presents its examination of the Commission Work Programme for 2025. In connection with the examination of the Work Programme, comments have been submitted by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture, Committee on Justice, Committee on Industry and Trade, Committee on Civil Affairs, and Committee on Transport and Communications. A summary of the comments is contained in the appendix.

Summary

In its statement, the Committee on Foreign Affairs presents its examination of the Commission Work Programme for 2025. The Committee proposes that the Riksdag file the statement.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs notes that the Work Programme has been presented at a time of great geopolitical uncertainty, where the rules-based international order is being challenged and the EU faces a number of interrelated challenges that can only be dealt with by a strong, united Europe. The Committee furthermore underlines that a great deal has happened in the fields of foreign, security and trade policy since the programme was published.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs welcomes the fact that the Commission is clear in stating that the EU is unwavering in its solidarity with Ukraine and that the Work Programme raises measures to increase pressure on Russia, such as sanctions, by holding Russia legally accountable and demands for financial compensation.

The Committee shares the opinion that EU enlargement is a geostrategic investment for peace, security, stability and prosperity in Europe. It is in Sweden's interests to help candidate countries move closer to the Union. In the opinion of the Committee, competitiveness and growth are a condition for successful enlargement, and it therefore welcomes the fact that the Commission gives efforts to simplify rules a prominent position in the Work Programme.

The Committee notes that internal and external security, as well as defence, will be prominent areas during the current term of office. The Committee therefore welcomes both the White Paper on the Future of European Defence which will be drawn up together with the High Representative and the forthcoming Preparedness Union Strategy.

The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission intends to draw up a proposal within the framework of a Democracy Shield, which will serve to strengthen protection of the EU's democratic systems and counteract disinformation and foreign interference in democratic processes. At the same time it underlines that the EU's measures must be limited to those that give clear added value in relation to national competence and national solutions.

The Statement of the Committee on Foreign Affairs contains five separate statements of opinion (Social Democratic Party, Sweden Democrats, Left Party, Centre Party, Green Party).

The Statement also contains comments from five committees: the Committee on Environment and Agriculture, Committee on Justice, Committee on Industry and Trade, Committee on Civil Affairs and Committee on Transport and Communications.

The examined document

The Commission Work Programme 2025. Moving forward together: a bolder, simpler, faster Union (COM (2025) 45).

The position of the Committee

The Committee welcomes the Commission's Work Programme for 2025. Already in the introduction to the programme, the Commission states that the Work Programme is being presented at a time characterised by great geopolitical instability, where the rules-based international order is being challenged and the EU therefore faces a range of interrelated challenges that can only be dealt with by a strong and united EU. The Committee agrees with this and notes that a great deal has happened in the areas of foreign, security and trade policy since the programme was published. The programme, based on the priorities for 2024–2029, serves as a solid basis for the EU's work, even though some formulations and approaches are partly in need of updating in view of recent events. European cooperation faces a time of volatility, in terms of geopolitics, and security and trade policy. This particularly concerns the transatlantic link, the war in Ukraine, matters of democracy, rule of law and the Union's fundamental values. There is a before and an after political statements and decisions from the US Administration in February 2025. It is of utmost importance that the EU continues to join together in this unstable political situation.

The Committee wishes to stress that the EU is at a crossroads which will be decisive for the Union's position for a long time to come. With the Work Programme and the priorities for the Commission's 2024–2029 term of office, it is the Committee's opinion that the EU has some important work to do within the Commission's priority areas:

- prosperity and competitiveness
- defence and security
- people and society
- food safety, water and nature
- democracy and common values
- Europe in the world
- results and the future of the EU.

The Committee agrees with the Government that Sweden's priorities in the EU are clear. They concern the Union's major cross-border issues: the war, criminality, the climate and competitiveness. They are about prosperity and security in the EU. Sweden and the EU face a time when we need to have the ability to defend our interests and values for them to be respected. Together with Sweden's and the EU's allies and partners, we will counteract the authoritarian forces that seek to divide, rule and destabilise our open societies. Sweden will defend the cohesion of the democratic world (Statement of Foreign Policy 2025).

The Committee notes, as in Committee Report 2023/24:UU10, that the EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy platform, and that a strong and united EU can give Swedish positions on global issues an impact that would not otherwise have been possible. The Committee recalls that the goals for the EU's common foreign and security policy include promoting democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The goals also include participating in conflict prevention and for international security, inter alia in accordance with the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, as expressed in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.

The Committee notes that a coordinated strategy on foreign policy matters – from development assistance to the common foreign and security policy – guarantees a stronger, more unified voice for the EU in the world. The EU has long had an established practice of prioritising the use of instruments such as trade, diplomacy and preventive efforts in order to influence the international community.

As the Committee has noted on several occasions, most recently in Committee Report 2023/24:UU5, Russia's war in Ukraine is unprovoked, unlawful and indefensible. The warfare is causing enormous suffering among the people of Ukraine. The violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence challenges the foundations of multilateralism and the rules-based international order. As previously stated by the Committee, it is crucial that the EU continues to give Ukraine strong, predictable and long-term support, in military, political, economic, humanitarian and legal terms. Russia's actions must be condemned in the strongest terms and met with resolute countermeasures. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission, in its Work Programme for 2025, is clear that the Union is unwavering in its solidarity with Ukraine.

The Committee values the fact that the Union is promoting multilateralism and a rules-based international order by taking a more active role and speaking with a louder voice for the EU internationally. Furthermore the Committee considers, as in Committee Report 2024/25/UU6, that Swedish foreign and security policy should ultimately push for an international order that is based on the UN Charter and international law. This should be an overriding priority, both in the UN's work and in other multilateral organisations. A prerequisite is that Sweden acts to strengthen democratic development globally, safeguards the rule of law and promotes respect for human rights. The Committee on Foreign Affairs notes that the Commission intends to draw up a proposal within the framework of a European Democracy Shield and wishes in this context to recall that the Committee has previously (Committee Report 2023/24:UU5) stated that the EU should generally apply the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity more strictly, in order to limit the EU's legislative activities to areas in which there is clear added value with common EU rules. In this matter, national solutions can be better adapted to the member states' individual historical and legal conditions. Sweden has a long tradition of constitutionally based freedom of the press, expression and opinion, which all provide a robust foundation for the protection of our democracy. The Committee therefore welcomes the fact that the Commission intends to draw up proposals within the framework of a European Democracy Shield that can strengthen the protection of EU's democracies and counteract disinformation and foreign influence in democratic processes, but with reference to the above arguments that the EU's work should be limited to clear added value in relation to national competence and national solutions.

A powerful, just and open trade agenda makes EU an attractive place for companies. In the opinion of the Committee, it is important to strengthen the EU's role as a global leader, while ensuring high climate, environmental and employment standards. A leading role for the EU also means that the Union collaborates with its neighbours, is introducing an extensive strategy on Africa and confirms the European perspective on the countries in the Western Balkans.

The Committee shares the opinion that the EU's enlargement is a geostrategic investment for peace, security, stability and prosperity in Europe. It is in Sweden's interests to help the candidate countries to move closer to the Union. The Government is pushing for further steps towards EU membership for Ukraine and Moldova. The Committee also underlines, as in Committee Report 2023/24:UU5, that competitiveness and growth are a precondition for successful enlargement, and it therefore welcomes the fact that the Committee gives work with simplification of rules a prominent position in the Work Programme.

The Committee notes that internal and external security, as well as defence, will be priority areas during this term of office. The EU faces a time of increasing threats. The focus now is on strengthening the EU's common defence capabilities and that security, both online and offline, will be integrated into EU legislation and policies. The Committee therefore welcomes both the White Paper on the Future of European Defence that will be drawn up together with the High

Representative, and the forthcoming Preparedness Union Strategy. The White Paper on the Future of European Defence will clearly show where investments are needed and how the EU can progress in the process of strengthening its defence capabilities.

The Committee notes that the Prime Minister consulted the Committee on EU Affairs on the EU's strategic agenda on 25 June 2024. The Prime Minister then noted that Sweden has won support for Swedish priorities regarding Ukraine, enlargement, competitiveness, cross-border organised crime, the fight against terrorism, migration, the climate, the rule of law and defence and preparedness issues (Minutes 2023/24:45).

It warrants clarification that the Committee, this year too, has focused its examination of the Work Programme on the responsibility of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for overriding matters of significance for the Union's functioning and development, and on foreign and security matters connected with the EU's role internationally. However, this does not exclude the Committee, during its examination, from reasoning on other matters presented in the Work Programme. A primary purpose is, however, that the Statement, through the examination of the Work Programme that the Statement enables, offers an opportunity for all of the Riksdag committees by means of comments, to convey their assessments of the Work Programme, as well as any minority opinions. This is done without the Committee on Foreign Affairs in detailing assessing or in any other way adopting a position on what is said or not said in the comments. The Committee maintains that this is an appropriate way of dealing with the Work Programme. All of the comments from other committees are contained in the appendix. To the extent that the Committee on Foreign Affairs does not comment on the contents of these comments, it may be understood that there is support for what is stated in the comments. This also means that parts of the Work Programme may not be commented on, in cases where some of the committees have chosen not to submit any comments. In order, in part, to compensate for such omissions, the Committee on Foreign Affairs encloses a list of the Riksdag's examination of other strategic EU documents during the year in appendix 2.

With regard to what has been stated above, the Riksdag proposes that the Statement be put on file.

Separate statements of opinion

1. Separate statement of opinion from the Social Democratic Party

The rules-based international order, based on international law, is a precondition for sustainable, global peace and respect for human rights. For 80 years, ever since the end of World War II, this international order has served to maintain stability globally.

However, this international order is now being threatened and undermined. Partly by Russia, through its attack on Ukraine in 2022, claims on land in countries such as Moldova and Georgia and attempts to infiltrate politics in EU countries and in the Balkans.

Unfortunately, we now have to note that the rules-based international order is also being undermined by the new US Administration. We have, for example, witnessed unacceptable calls for the USA to take over Greenland and the Panama Canal, threats of violence against a NATO ally, and demands to take possession of parts of Ukraine's natural resources.

In this new situation, Sweden and the European Commission must take a clear stand against such claims, mobilise the EU in support of the UN Charter, the rules-based international order and international law, and cement broad global support for these principles.

It is important to state clearly that these principles must apply to all states, and that no one can put themselves above them. We must never accept double standards. This means, for example, that the same demands that Russia must leave Ukraine must also be made for Israel to leave occupied territory, suspend its settlement policy and evacuate the illegal settlements in Palestine.

In the current situation, the Commission must also give priority to developing relations with other countries that stand up for the rules-based international order, such as Canada and Australia. But it will also be important to develop cooperation between the EU and countries in the global south, for example in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

We Social Democrats have long pointed out that the Swedish Government's narrow focus on its immediate neighbourhood and Europe is a big mistake, and now we have been proven right. The Commission must not make this mistake again.

Now that the rules-based international order is in jeopardy, it is not enough to focus on Europe. To the contrary. We need to mobilise broad global support for the rules and institutions that have served to maintain stability around the world in the post-war period.

2. Separate statement of opinion from the Sweden Democrats

On the whole the Sweden Democrats share the Committee's assessment of the Work Programme, but we especially wish to highlight some important positions on our part.

In view of the current situation in the world we, like the Committee, attach great value to unity and coordination of the common foreign and security policy, especially as regards sanctions against Russia and support to Ukraine.

Europe finds itself in a new security policy era, and increased coordination and unity in foreign and security policy will be required, as will joint defence efforts.

At the same time, our fundamental view remains that the unanimity requirement in the Council within certain parts of our common foreign and security policy should be maintained, in as far as it is possible.

The Sweden Democrats support Ukraine's and Moldova's candidate procedures for EU membership, but wish to stress the importance of the continued progress of reforms and the fundamental requirement that a merit-based enlargement process should remain. This is fundamental to the legitimacy and sustainability of enlargement. In general, we consider that there must be very good reasons for EU enlargement beyond what is stated in the Work Programme.

Furthermore, we wish to underline the need for reform in the EU with the purpose of focusing cooperation on the fundamental cross-border areas of economic cooperation, trade, environmental issues and increased security and defence policy needs. In order to be able to optimise resources and streamline cooperation, we need to shrink the administrative organisation and reduce bureaucracy, as well as the number of strategies and areas of cooperation at EU level. This is required in order to establish a strong and effective Union that benefits in areas where cooperation is needed, restores decision-making rights to the member states, discards gesture politics and turns competitive disadvantages into competitive advantages by simplifying rules, at a time when the member states need to reduce their dependence on external players in the global market and strengthen Europe's economy.

3. Separate statement of opinion from the Left Party

A changed security policy situation requires international cooperation. We believe that the EU has a role to fill in coordinating and supporting member states in promoting peace and building a more secure Europe. However, we do not want even more decisions on security, defence and foreign policy to be transferred to the EU. Defence is essentially a national matter. The fact that a Defence Commissioner has now been appointed and a White Paper is to be drawn up on defence issues risks leading to a development that the Left Party warned of in connection with the referendum on EU membership. We want the EU's common defence and security policy to be based on broad commitment to democracy, human rights and international law, for women's liberation and global social justice.

4. Separate statement of opinion from the Centre Party

The rules-based international order that has developed over the last 80 years is being challenged to the core. The EU naturally needs to assert itself clearly, but also contribute in a constructive way to developing the multilateral order and the fundamental values upon which it is based. A precondition for this, as the Committee notes, is that the EU can speak with a stronger voice. The EU should not then be forced to become a coalition of the willing on account of current rules of consensus in decision-making.

In the new reality that is now unfolding, we see added value in developing a European Democracy Shield that can deal with disinformation campaigns, attempts to destabilise the EU, interference in elections etc. Well aware that borders do not protect us from disinformation or similar attacks, and that those who want to attack our democracy, rule of law and freedom choose weaknesses in different countries in order to circumvent national rules. The question of a strict application of the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity may be interpreted as a new form of veto against common protection in a new era. This is not our interpretation. Here need to be able to develop smart and effective abilities and actions. When proposals have been presented by the Commission, we will naturally examine and adopt a position on them in the same way as usual.

5. Separate statement of opinion from the Green Party

The Green Party welcomes the fact that the Commission is advancing its work with environmental and climate issues, but also sees clear risks of a watering down and of delay that can threaten the green transition. One of the most critical points of the Commission's Work Programme is the targeted revision of the REACH Regulation, where we have long been pushing for stricter chemicals legislation, but now see with great concern that the changes are being introduced under the guise of "simplification". We want EU legislation to cover the entire life cycle of hazardous chemicals – from production to waste management – and that stricter rules also apply to industry, not just to the consumer.

As regards the climate targets, the Commission has proposed a target of 90 per cent net emission reductions by 2040, which is a welcome improvement compared to the current course, but still far from enough. Furthermore, we see a great risk in the postponement of the decision on the EU 2035 targets, and that they are not being dealt with through the EU's ordinary legislative procedure. The EU's climate ambitions must not be undermined by delays and compromises.

Linked to the climate issue, water resilience is becoming increasingly important in times of extreme weather and loss of ecosystems. The Commission's strategy needs to result in concrete legislative proposals in order to strengthen water protection and enforce existing legislation such as the Water Directive. The Green Party would like the strategy to include stringent measures, and not just visions.

The Green Party sees with concern that the Omnibus proposal, which aims to reduce the regulatory burden, also includes legislation that is crucial to the green transition: the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). We oppose all changes that risk weakening these laws and demand that any simplification measures only focus on administrative easing, not amendments with a negative impact on the contents.

It is worrying that the Commission's Clean Industrial Deal Strategy risks unilaterally focusing on a simplification of the rules and subventions to fossil-dependent companies, instead of directing investments towards sustainable industries of the future. We would like the strategy to include clear incentives for industrial transition, and just social measures to secure support for workers and regions affected by the changes.

We are concerned that the simplification of the common agricultural policy (CAP) seems to further weaken environmental requirements. The rules were already watered down in 2024, and the protection of wet-and peatlands now looks like the next potential victim. Instead, the Commission should be working to ensure that the EU's agricultural policy is steered towards sustainability within the limits of the planet.

It is positive that marine policy is highlighted by the Commission, but regrettable that the Ocean Pact is presented as a competitive strategy

rather than a tool for ecosystem recovery. The Commission should work towards the introduction of marine legislation at EU level. A healthy marine environment is a prerequisite for all life.

The Green Party considers it a scandal that the Commission is withdrawing the proposal on a horizontal equal treatment directive, especially when a compromise was very close. Sweden has been one of the strongest proponents of this directive, and we now need to clearly mark our opposition to being let down by the Commission. We now want the Commission to revive the proposal and ensure that all EU citizens are protected against discrimination.

It is also deeply worrying that a new gender equality strategy is no longer included in the Work Programme. Work to promote gender equality must not be delayed or weakened. Sweden must demand that the Commission includes the strategy in its planning once again and ensures that gender equality continues to be a priority issue.

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APPENDIX 1

Summary of comments from the Committee on Environment and Agriculture

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes in its comments the fact that the Work Programme clearly prioritises continued efforts to strengthen the Union's competitiveness in order to give companies the best possible conditions for a transition to climate neutrality and circular non-toxic systems. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture notes in particular that the bioeconomy has been given a prominent position in these efforts and that better use is being made of the growth potential of bio-based products. Furthermore, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture appreciates the Commission's efforts to achieve clearer regulation of forever chemicals (PFAS), and assumes that the Commission also remains committed to its earlier pledge that the forthcoming revision of the REACH Regulation will focus on achieving an increased level of protection of the environment and human health.

In its comments, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture interprets the announced Ocean Pact to signal that the Commission wishes to give the ocean environment greater prominence, and in this context, compliance with existing legislation in the area needs to be strengthened. There is a crisis in many parts of the fisheries industry, especially in the Baltic Sea, and it is clear that changes to the management culture are needed. The Commission is a central actor in efforts to bring about such changes. In its comments, the Committee regrets that the Commission has not delivered this year either regarding its previous pledge to update the EU's animal welfare legislation.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture assumes that the Commission is not lowering the level of ambition in ongoing negotiations on amended rules for animal transport, and brings to mind the political will in many member states for such a development of the rules.

Dissenting opinion from the Left Party

In some respects, my party and I have a different view of the Commission Work Programme than that expressed by the Committee.

Firstly, the Left Party is positive to the Commission's efforts to give European companies, in particular small and medium-sized companies, the best possible conditions in which to continue the transition to climate neutrality. The Left Party considers that the Committee, in this context, should also stress the importance of tightening the EU's climate ambitions to zero emissions by 2040. At the same time, all relevant legislation needs to be updated in order to ensure that EU emissions are reduced in line with the Paris Agreement by 2030 and 2035, and reach zero by 2040 at the latest.

As regards the transition to circularity, the Left Party sees a need for a European bioeconomy strategy. Unlike the Committee, the Left Party considers that such a strategy needs to take into account the substitution potential in the EU's forestry industry, but also clarify the importance of ecologically sustainable forestry. My party and I see no

need to highlight right of ownership and use in this context. Furthermore, I and my party do not agree with the Committee as regards the question of always avoiding EU regulation of sustainable forestry.

My party and I are positive to the Commission's continued efforts to try to ease the burden of rules in the common agricultural policy. Unlike the Committee, my party and I consider that it should be clarified that a simplification of the rules may not occur at the expense of the environment or climate.

Dissenting opinion from the Green Party

In general, my party and I consider the statement is good, but would have liked to see a greater emphasis on climate and the environment, as well as biological diversity. Measures to promote competitiveness should not be at the expense of the climate and environment, and this should be made clearer.

As regards new genomic techniques, the Green Party does not share the Committee's opinion. My party and I recognise the need for and want to see new legislation, but my party has serious objections to the regulation proposed by the Commission on certain new genomic techniques (COM (2023) 411). The Green Party would therefore have liked to see another formulation that did not refer to that proposal.

Summary of comments from the Committee on Justice

In its comments, the Committee on Justice welcomes the overall approach of the Commission Work Programme 2025 and considers it to be in line with the Government's priorities in EU cooperation. In the opinion of the Committee on Justice, the initiatives presented by the Commission under heading 2 are a step in the right direction towards combating the complex problems currently facing the Union, in particular, the fight against trafficking in drugs and illicit firearms. This type of crime has clear cross-border dimensions and entails an increased need for cooperation across national borders. European cooperation is thus crucial to the success of efforts to combat and prevent cross-border crime. In the view of the Committee, it is of the utmost importance that the Commission also prioritises the initiatives it has announced.

At the same time, the Committee underlines that the Commission, in its continued work in the field of justice and home affairs, must take into account the member states' differing conditions and needs, as well as national competence.

The Committee also states in its comments that it is positive to the actions announced under heading 5. In this context, the Committee wishes to highlight the growing threats in the online environment, such as recruitment of children and young people to criminality, as well as radicalisation and recruitment to extremist and terrorist groups, which is occurring increasingly through digital services. This is a widespread problem that occurs in several EU member states. The Committee on Justice therefore urges the Commission to focus especially on matters related to radicalisation and recruitment of children and young people online in its continued work.

In the opinion of the Committee on Justice, it is important that the Commission strives for enhanced and developed information exchange and European cooperation in the area.

Summary of comments from the Committee on Industry and Trade

In its comments, the Committee on Industry and Trade welcomes the Commission's ambitions and announced initiatives to strengthen Europe's long-term competitiveness. The Committee on Industry and Trade notes the initiatives proposed in the Work Programme and considers that measures to strengthen competitiveness should take into account the needs of both industry and society. The predictability and legal certainty of regulatory frameworks are crucial factors for the business investment climate.

The Committee underlines in its comments the importance of an efficient and legally certain regulation procedure, where regulations do not create unnecessary administrative burdens for companies, and it therefore welcomes the fact that the Commission highlights a number of initiatives in its Work Programme to simplify rules and reduce administrative burdens.

Furthermore, the Committee on Industry and Trade notes the Commission's ambition to strengthen the single market by means of a new Single Market Strategy. In the opinion of the Committee, a smoothly functioning single market is central to the EU's competitiveness, and initiatives designed to eliminate barriers and harmonise regulations may play an important role in this context. The Committee considers that such measures should be taken with regard to the needs of both companies and member states.

The Committee on Industry and Trade notes that a strategic framework for competitiveness can be a valuable tool for analysing and monitoring economic developments in different sectors. The Committee is positive to the purpose of the Commission's Competitiveness Compass, which is to create a long-term strategy for economic development in the Union. At the same time, the Committee believes that such a strategy needs to take into account global factors and include measures to strengthen industry's competitiveness and innovative capacity.

In its comments, the Committee on Industry and Trade notes that industry that is competitive and sustainable in the long-term is best achieved through a well-functioning market, rather than through extensive state aid. Regulations and economic incentives should be designed to create good conditions for companies to invest in transition and innovation, without distorting the market balance.

The Committee is positive to measures that eliminate regulatory barriers and create conditions for companies to invest in new technologies and energy efficiency. Special attention should be given to simplifying permit procedures for investments in fossil-free technologies. The Committee on Industry and Trade welcomes the Commission's initiatives to reduce processing times and secure efficient government agency procedures to enable investments in new technologies.

In its comments, the Committee notes that energy supply and energy prices are central to European competitiveness and that stable energy systems may be a condition for a successful transition. The Committee therefore welcomes the Commission's announced action plan to strengthen energy security and reduce dependence on Russian energy imports.

The Committee on Industry and Trade welcomes the Commission's announced intention to update the analysis of the nuclear power sector within the framework of a new programme. The Committee on Industry and Trade states that nuclear power, together with renewable energy, will be decisive in achieving the climate targets and securing a stable energy supply.

1. Dissenting opinion from the Social Democratic Party

The Work Programme contains 45 initiatives containing newly announced actions. Several of the new initiatives that are presented consist, in turn of several different measures. Of these, about ten may affect the Committee on Industry and Trade, and these can be found under the first policy guidelines in the new Work Programme: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. In response to the Work Programme, we wish to say the following.

We welcome the Commission's ambition to strengthen the EU's competitiveness and secure a robust and resilient European economy. The functioning and development of the single market is of central importance and needs to be adapted to changing conditions. We especially wish to state that the work to simplify the rules should aim at streamlining and not lead to a lower level of ambition in the green transition of industry, which is a decisive factor for the competitiveness of both Swedish and European companies.

In our opinion, the proposed Competitiveness Compass should aim to promote more equal and competitive societies. A prerequisite for this is policies where trade, development cooperation and strong protection of workers' rights, and a high level of ambition as regards climate policy are cohesive and mutually supportive. A holistic approach of this kind enables long-term, sustainable and fair economic growth.

Furthermore, we wish to underline the importance of stable rules and conditions for long-term investments in order to accelerate climate change and strengthen innovative capacity. The lack of such conditions risks impairing the EU's competitiveness in relation to global developments in innovation and productivity, which calls for strong action. It is especially important not just to strengthen existing areas of strength, but also to promote new technologies with the potential to drive future prosperity and employment.

A stable and competitive energy supply is a fundamental precondition for Europe's industrial and economic development. We welcome the Commission's initiative to strengthen the EU's energy systems with the purpose of achieving a fossil-free and competitive economy. At the same time, we stress that measures in the energy sector should be technology neutral and designed to promote a wide range of fossil-free energy sources on equal terms. We also welcome the Commission's announced action plan to strengthen energy security.

As regards financial security, we believe that EU measures should be well-considered and should not lead to restrictions on trade that risk adversely affected Swedish jobs and economic interests. Critical dependencies should generally be addressed through diversification of

value chains and more in-depth partnerships, in order to limit the negative impact on the single market, as far as possible.

Finally, we especially wish to highlight the importance of Swedish forests for both the bioeconomy and climate efforts. It is essential that the Commission's work takes into account the climate benefits of forests and their central role in a sustainable and circular economy.

2. Dissenting opinion from the Sweden Democrats

The Work Programme contains 45 initiatives containing newly announced actions. In turn, several of the new initiatives that are presented consist of a number of different measures. Of these, about ten may affect the Committee on Industry and Trade, and these can be found under the first policy guideline in the new Work Programme: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.

We note that the Commission Work Programme 2025 contains several initiatives that aim to improve the EU's competitiveness and energy supply. While we believe that Europe's competitiveness needs to be improved and energy supply needs to be more robust, it is important that this is brought about without increasing the regulatory burden or restricting national decision-making competence.

Like the Commission, we consider that the EU's competitiveness is decisive for Europe's economic development, but in our opinion, the Commission's proposal focuses too much on regulation and central governance, rather than on creating good preconditions for the member states' business and industry.

As regards state aid, we consider that a well-functioning market and competitively neutral terms should be the point of departure. The EU's current rules on state aid risk putting countries like Sweden which have historically had a balanced and restrictive view of state aid, at a disadvantage. We therefore oppose a review of state aid rules at EU level, if this entails a relaxation of the rules. Instead, the point of departure should be a realistic and market-driven strategy in order to secure stable energy prices and a predictable investment climate, where sustainable solutions can be developed without undermining competitiveness.

The green transition cannot be brought about at the expense of competitiveness. In order to secure a sustainable, long-term transition, policies need to be designed so that companies can adapt without being affected by increased costs, poorer profitability or reduced competitiveness in relation to actors outside the EU. Regulatory frameworks and policy instruments should therefore be technology neutral and give industry the opportunity to choose the solutions that best suit their activities, rather than unilaterally steering them towards specific technologies or energy sources.

As regards the energy transition, we are positive to investments in fossil-free technologies, but in our opinion, the Commission's policies are still characterised by an excessively one-sided focus on weather-dependent energy sources. A secure and cost-efficient energy supply requires a technology-neutral strategy, where the role of nuclear power can be strengthened too. We are therefore pleased to see that the

Commission is announcing an update of its analysis of the nuclear power sector and a strategic plan for SMRs. At the same time, we wish to underline that the member states' energy mix should primarily be decided at the national level, without supranational demands from the EU.

3. Dissenting opinion from the Left Party

The Work Programme contains 45 initiatives containing newly announced actions. In turn, several of the new initiatives that are presented consist of a number of different measures. Of these, about ten may affect the Committee on Industry and Trade, and these can be found under the first policy guideline in the new Work Programme: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.

In my opinion, the Commission's Work Programme for 2025 has an excessive emphasis on economic competitiveness and conditions for companies, without paying sufficient attention to how these affect workers' rights, the climate and the environment. If the EU really wants to move forwards together, as it claims in the Work Programme, the social dimension and policies for a just transition should be a fundamental aspect of the Union's development. A just transition, where workers' rights are protected and climate change is accelerated, is in my opinion a precondition for long-term competitiveness in the EU.

I see with concern that the initiatives covered by the Commission Work Programme will primarily strengthen the position of large enterprises, at the same time as small companies, workers and small-scale producers risk having to stand back. Even though the Commission mentions small and medium-sized companies in the Work Programme, there are no concrete proposals for measures to ensure, for example, that trade agreements or other economic initiatives do not put them at a disadvantage, to the benefit of large groups. In my opinion, the EU needs to take greater account of how small companies and smallholders are affected by international trade policy. If trade policy is designed solely to benefit large companies, there is a risk that this will lead to greater inequality, distorted competition and greater climate impact.

Furthermore, I believe that competitiveness cannot be a goal in itself, if it is achieved at the expense of workers' rights or environmental considerations. The Commission should have placed greater emphasis on measures to drive competition through transition and sustainability. A green transition that is based on social justice and stringent environmental requirements is not a brake on the economy - on the contrary, it is a chance to create new job opportunities and strengthen innovative capacity. The EU should ensure that economic development goes hand in hand with social and ecological sustainability to a greater extent, rather than watering down regulatory frameworks in order to create simplifications for companies.

I would also like to comment on the Commission's initiative for a new framework for state aid, which may contribute to accelerating investments in fossil-free energy, green technologies and industrial

transition. In order to guarantee a just and sustainable transition, I believe that state aid should be strengthened within these areas. Public investments often play a central role in enabling the development of technologies and innovation, especially within sectors where the market alone does not drive the transition that is needed, such as within fossil-free energy, green technology and innovative solutions, which in my opinion should be promoted.

4. Dissenting opinion from the Centre Party

The Work Programme contains 45 initiatives containing newly announced actions. In turn, several of the new initiatives that are presented consist of a number of different measures. Of these, about ten may affect the Committee on Industry and Trade, and these can be found under the first policy guideline in the new Work Programme: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.

I welcome the Commission's Work Programme for 2025 and its ambition to create a bolder, simpler and faster Union. The EU needs a powerful strategy in order to ensure a strong single market that promotes innovation and drives the green transition. At the same time, I consider that the Work Programme leaves much to be desired and that there is a need for even clearer priorities regarding simplification of rules, trade policy and energy transition.

It is positive that the Commission emphasises the need for a simplification of the rules, even though its ambitions have historically been the subject of many promises, often without clear results. I therefore believe that more extensive efforts are needed to actually reduce the regulatory burden on companies. In this context, the underlying initiative from the Commission on implementation and simplification (COM (2025) 47) is especially relevant, as it highlights the need to adapt the EU's regulatory framework to the increasing global competition for natural resources and innovative capacity. However, simplifications must not undermine climate and sustainability ambitions, but need to be implemented in a way that ensures that the EU maintains its high standards. A clear example of this is the announced simplifications to sustainability reporting, due diligence and taxonomy. In my opinion, it is crucial that the EU maintains the demand that companies report both primary and secondary carbon dioxide emissions. Without this, there is a risk that competition will be distorted and EU climate policy weakened. It is also crucial that the simplifications within the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) do not lead to watered down political goals, something that the Commission warns of itself in the Work Programme.

Furthermore, I note that the Commission talks about adapted rules for small mid-caps in the Work Programme. This is a term for a group of companies that is not currently defined in EU documents in the same way as, for example, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In my opinion, the simplifications proposed for these group of companies may not undermine the political goals – including the target of a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050. In my opinion, it is also important that these changes do not create uncertainty for companies, but are

implemented in a way that secures continued competitive neutrality and clarity of regulatory frameworks.

Another central issue is the principle of a reverse burden of proof, where companies often need to prove that they are not causing damage or breaking the rules. I believe that the EU should consider moving away from this principle, as it involves high costs and risks delays to important investments in sustainable activities. Permit procedures in the EU are already slow today, and changing this principle could help to promote a more effective and predictable climate for companies wishing to invest in the transition.

5. Dissenting opinion from the Green Party

The Work Programme contains 45 initiatives containing newly announced actions. In turn, several of the new initiatives that are presented consist of a number of different measures. Of these, about ten will affect the Committee on Industry and Trade, and these can be found under the first policy guideline in the new Work Programme: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.

At a general level, I am positive to the Commission Work Programme for 2025, and welcome the ambition to strengthen competitiveness through a green industrial transition. At the same time, I wish to underline the importance of ensuring that the climate transition is not delayed or weakened by exaggerated simplifications of the rules or a lack of clear environmental targets.

In my opinion, a fast and legally secure development of renewable energy is decisive for Europe's industrial future and energy supply. The EU needs to take clear leadership in phasing out fossil fuels, and I am positive to initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the electricity grid and digitalisation of energy infrastructures. However, there is a risk that a technology-neutral approach will weaken measures to phase out fossil fuels, and that climate ambitions will be watered down.

The Commission Work Programme also includes a roadmap to reduce dependence on Russian energy, which I regard as an important step in strengthening Europe's energy security and reducing the vulnerability of the Union's energy supply. Efforts to break free from dependence on Russian fossil fuels are progressing far too slowly, however. I therefore consider that work to phase out Russian gas needs to be accelerated, at the same time as the Union should ensure that alternative solutions do not lead to increased imports of fossil fuels from other dubious countries.

In my opinion, the Commission's announced proposal on an action plan for clean industry is a step in the right direction, but it is crucial that the measures are primarily directed towards fossil-free production and energy efficiency. It is positive that various permit procedures are to be reviewed, but this must not lead to a weakening of environmental legislation or that environmental considerations are disregarded. Investments in sustainable solutions need to be long-term and support innovation that leads to genuine reductions in emissions.

As regards simplification of the rules, I am positive to measures that reduce unnecessary administration and make it easier for companies to operate in the single market. At the same time, simplifications need to be implemented with a clear environmental and social foundation. Work with the Omnibus proposals must not lead to recently introduced environmental legislation being eroded or to important rules for sustainability and labour law being weakened.

Summary of comments from the Committee on Civil Affairs

Regarding the Commission Work Programme 2025, the Committee on Civil Affairs wishes to start by welcoming the Commission's planned initiative for a new Consumer Agenda 2025–2030, and its action plan aimed at protecting consumers. Consumer protection is an important matter, where coordination at EU level is of value.

The Committee further notes that a Commissioner with responsibility for housing issues has been appointed in the new European Commission, which is new for this term of office, and that the Commission Work Programme mentions that housing costs have increased, which in turn has led to greater inequality. The Committee therefore wishes to underline that the EU lacks the competence to adopt legislation on housing issues. In the opinion of the Committee, national self-determination in areas in which the EU lacks competence and powers needs to be safeguarded. The Committee will continue to monitor the Commission's work closely and to examine its initiatives and proposals within all areas for which the Committee on Civil Affairs is responsible, in particular housing issues. If required, the Committee will return to the matter in the context of deliberations with the Government.

To summarise, the Committee welcomes a new Consumer Agenda 2025–2030, including an action plan. As regards the Commission's possible ambitions regarding housing policy, the Committee wishes to stress that the EU does not have the powers to adopt legislation on housing issues and that this is an area in which national self-determination should be safeguarded. The Committee on Foreign Affairs should highlight this in its examination.

1. Dissenting opinion from the Social Democratic Party, Left Party and Green Party

Like the Committee, we welcome the Commission's planned initiative for a new consumer strategy for 2025–2030 and its action plan aimed at protecting consumers.

As the Commission describes in the Work Programme, housing costs have increased, which in turn has led to greater inequality. In the new Commission, a Commissioner responsible for housing has been appointed.

As the problems of high housing costs and housing shortages exist throughout Europe, we are essentially positive to the appointment of a new Housing Commissioner. We believe that this is an area where coordination at EU level can give added value. At the same time we note that no concrete initiatives have been announced in the Work Programme, which we had been looking forward to. We also lack concrete information about the Housing Commissioner's tasks and what the new role will involve for the Commission's handling of housing issues. This is something that we will monitor closely, and we look forward to political initiatives of significance for housing supply in coming work programmes.

As the Commission has not announced any proposals of obvious relevance to housing supply in the Work Programme, or described the new Housing Commissioner's role in greater detail we would like, in this context, to underline the importance of safeguarding the Swedish model for setting of rents and of the municipal public housing sector. An important matter here is a deficiencies regarding competition in the construction materials industry, which contributes to high construction costs. Another important issue is energy efficiency. We want to urge the Government to take an active role in the EU in these matters.

What we have stated here should be highlighted by the Committee on Foreign Affairs in its examination.

Separate statement of opinion from the Sweden Democrats

We support what the Committee has stated, and wish to add the following on our part. We consider it deeply worrying that the EU has claimed greater powers in recent years, for example, in the field of housing policy. The same applies to family law. Family is a private matter, and in this area too, national self-determination needs to be protected.

We will follow these matters in the EU closely and will get back in other contexts, for example in the context of deliberations with the Government.

Summary of comments from the Committee on Transport and Communications

The Committee on Transport and Communications supports several aspects of the Commission's approach in the field of transport and digitalisation. The Committee considers it important that the EU's regulatory framework is effective, efficient and does not involve unnecessary regulatory burdens. The Committee therefore welcomes the ongoing review of the conditions for simplifying, consolidating or in certain cases repealing burdensome provisions.

The Committee further looks forward to receiving both new legislative initiatives and strategic documents, as well as the Commission's evaluations and checks of existing legislation. Each individual initiative must, however, be assessed once the proposal has been presented. The Committee will then have the opportunity to examine some of the initiatives according to a special procedure.