



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT

Report of the Hellenic Parliament Special Standing Committee on European Affairs on the European Commission Work Programme for 2025

On 11 February 2025, the European Commission announced its Work Programme for 2025, titled “Moving forward together for a bolder, simpler and faster Union” (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2025) 45 final/11-2-2025). The programme includes new initiatives (legislative and non-legislative), a programme of evaluations and fitness checks of the current legislative framework, pending legislative proposals, as well as a list of legislative proposals to be withdrawn or repealed within six months.

The aforementioned initiatives correspond to the Commission’s seven “political guidelines», as announced by President Ursula von der Leyen on 18 July 2024 and specified in the mission letters of September 17, 2024, addressed to Commissioners-designate (College of Commissioners).

On Tuesday, March 26 2025, the Hellenic Parliament Special Standing Committee on European Affairs held a meeting under the chairmanship of the First Vice-President of the Hellenic Parliament and Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ioannis Plakiotakis, during which the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Alexandra Papadopoulou, briefed the members of the Committee on the European Commission’s annual Work Programme .

Within the frame of competence of the Hellenic Parliament European Affairs Committee to “examine the European Commission annual legislative work programme and draw up a report on Hellenic Parliament priorities regarding European Commission legislative planning ” (Article

32A of Hellenic Parliament Standing Orders – Part A' :Parliamentary Business), and based on the discussion that followed - considering the Deputy Minister's statement and the speeches by parliamentary groups' rapporteurs , emphasis was placed on the following legislative initiatives:

1. "Omnibus" proposals on sustainability and simplification of investments, (Proposals for Regulations COM(2025)80 final and COM(2025)84 final , as of 26-2-2025), aiming to alleviate administrative burden, especially for innovative small and mid-cap companies, as a key aspect of the "Competitiveness Compass".

This initiative is based on the finding that sustainable prosperity and competitiveness dictate proportionate timetables and financial measurements that do not discourage investments in smaller businesses. Furthermore, the administrative burden must be proportionate to the scale and scope of business activities. Within the "InvestEU" and "European Fund for Strategic Investments" programmes, priority should be given to national industries and financial instruments based on direct investments, not loans.

2. Proposal on returns (as of 11-3-2025, COM/2025/101 final, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council "establishing a common system for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the Union, and repealing Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, Council Directive 2001/40/EC and Council Decision 2004/191/EC "), with an emphasis on accelerating and simplifying return and readmission procedures for illegal immigrants. The proposed system seems to meet Greece's long-standing positions and needs, such as the mutual recognition of return decisions or the acceleration of returns of persons considered to be a threat to public order and security. The proposal also incorporates the much-discussed innovative solution of "return hubs"

in third countries, based on an agreement or arrangement concluded bilaterally or at EU level.

Effective returns are a prerequisite for Pact on Migration and Asylum implementation. In the case of Greece, if no returns are made to Turkey, then the basic idea of the Pact, that of screening at EU borders, is certain to fail.

Moreover, under conditions of geopolitical instability the EU must support and be able to rely on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), being a basic pillar of the European Union.

In this context, the “White Paper on the Future of European Defense” (1st quarter of 2025) and the creation of an EU Defense Union, with a competitive defense industry, the “Rearmament of Europe” programme and the related financial instrument “Security Action for Europe – SAFE”, in combination with the Stability and Growth Pact “escape clauses” on national defense expenditure, are also expected to be discussed. Furthermore, the increase in military investment for border protection should not affect the EU social model.

Concerns, however, arise from the bureaucratic fragmentation of the European defense industry, together with the issue of Turkey's participation in the security program, given that the neighboring country's stance, still failing to meet the Copenhagen criteria regarding security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, does not seem to be in line with the corresponding EU approach/ criteria.

In this regard, the following Commission's non-legislative initiatives are considered to be of interest:

1. A "Pact for the Mediterranean" (Q3 2025), aiming to strengthen cooperation in the region and promote mutually beneficial partnerships on both shores of the Mediterranean, focusing on people and sustainable investment, economic stability, job creation, energy,

sustainable resource management, connectivity, security, migration and mobility, based on shared interests and shared values.

2. An "EU Strategic Approach to the Black Sea/Black Sea Strategy" (Q2 2025), strengthening stability and resilience in the region.

3. "Joint Communication on a new EU-India Strategic Agenda (Q2 2025).

Additionally, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as the main axis of EU spending, must balance environmental requirements with economic sustainability. The "Farm to Fork" program contains excessive demands imposed on farmers, also increased bureaucracy and strict environmental standards, thus leading to decrease in productivity and increase in production costs, threatening Europe's food self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, water management calls for an integrated strategy, with an emphasis on sustainability and addressing climate crises. ("European Water Resilience Strategy" (Q2 2025).

The promotion of the "Competitiveness Compass" is considered positive, as aiming to strengthen start-ups and facilitate access to capitals. However, concerns are expressed on ways and methods to achieve decarbonization and its impact on European industry. The need for a balanced approach is highlighted, which will combine and conciliate environmental objectives with economic sustainability. It is imperative to support industry, control energy costs and ensure fair conditions of competition at a global level . In this context, the "Clean Industrial Deal: A joint roadmap for competitiveness and decarbonization" (EU Commission Communication COM(2025)85 final/26-2-2025) is expected to be discussed.

Finally, democratic institutions are threatened by third-country state actors and malicious non-state actors, through systematic disinformation and fake news. The non-legislative initiative "European Democracy Shield" is considered positive, as aiming to identify and

proactively address misinformation, as well as to protect institutions, which are a key element of societies' soft power .

ANNEX

Priorities of the Hellenic Parliament

on the European Commission Work Programme for 2025

LEGISLATIVE – NON-LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

1	Competitiveness	Competitiveness Compass (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
2	Simplification	First Omnibus package on sustainability (legislative, Q1 2025)
3	Simplification	Second Omnibus package on investment simplification (legislative, Q1 2025)
4	Simplification	Third Omnibus package, including on small mid-caps and removal of paper requirements (legislative, Q2 2025)
5	Competitiveness and Decarbonisation	Clean Industrial Deal (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
6	Competitiveness and Decarbonisation	Action plan on affordable energy (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
7	Competitiveness	Communication on a Savings and Investments Union (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
8	Security	White Paper on the Future of European Defence (non-legislative, Q1 2025)

9	Security	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the reinforcement of European defence industry Instrument
10	Security	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION Accommodating increased defence expenditure within the Stability and Growth Pact
11	Security	New European Internal Security Strategy (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
12	Migration	New common approach on returns (legislative, Article 79 (2) TFEU, Q1 2025)
13	Migration	European Migration and Asylum Strategy (non-legislative, Q4 2025)
14	Competitiveness and Decarbonisation	Vision for Agriculture and Food (non-legislative, Q1 2025)
15	Simplification	Common Agricultural Policy simplification package (legislative, Q2 2025)
16	Preparedness and Resilience	European Water Resilience Strategy (non-legislative, Q2 2025)
17	Democracy	European Democracy Shield (non-legislative, Q3 2025)
18	Geopolitics	Pact for the Mediterranean (non-legislative, Q3 2025)
19	Geopolitics	EU strategic approach to the Black Sea/ Black Sea Strategy (non-legislative, Q2 2025)
20	Geopolitics	Joint Communication on a new Strategic EU-India Agenda (non-legislative, Q2 2025)