

Statement of the Committee on Foreign Affairs 2018/19:UU4

The Commission Work Programme 2019

Summary

In this statement, the Committee considers the Commission Work Programme for 2019. The Commission adopted the Work Programme on 23 October 2018. The Chamber has, in accordance with Chapter 9, Art. 20 of the Riksdag Act, referred the Commission's Work Programme to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for examination and a statement. The Committee proposes that the Riksdag file the statement.

In its annual Work Programme, the Commission presents the political priorities for the coming year. Since there will be elections to the European Parliament in May 2019, and it is the final year of the Commission's present term of office, the Work Programme this time contains fewer new initiatives.

The Committee is positive that the Commission is presenting a Work Programme with specific initiatives, as this will facilitate member states' planning of EU work and will contribute to openness surrounding the Commission's priorities. The Committee is positive that the Commission in its final Work Programme is focusing on meeting its commitments for the term of office, on ensuring that current negotiations will be completed and on ensuring that the decisions that have been taken are implemented.

As regards the future of the EU, the Committee would like to point out the importance of safeguarding broad democratic support, which includes ensuring broad support at the parliamentary level. The Committee also takes a positive view of various initiatives designed to increase information and knowledge about the EU and to enable citizens, civil society and the business sector to channel their points of view in the right way. The Committee believes that one point of departure should be that the EU exists to serve its citizens so that confidence in EU cooperation can be strengthened, where, for example, it should be made clear that there is added value to be gained from cooperation within the EU in the areas in which there is cooperation and by showing that the EU makes a difference in specific issues that are important for its citizens.

As regards Brexit, the Committee considers it of great importance the UK's withdrawal from the EU is orderly and creates legal clarity and predictability. The Committee notes that the agreement at the European Council on 25 November regarding a withdrawal agreement is a step in the right direction, but that the UK Parliament and the European Parliament need to approve the agreement before it can come into force. The Committee welcomes the fact that the political declaration that was adopted by the heads of state and government on 25 November contains formulations stating that the EU is striving for as close relations as possible with the UK in the future and that the EU's continued approach should be based on the principles the European Council has laid down.

In its statement, the Committee comments on some of the particular areas and proposals raised by the Commission in its Work Programme. Comments have been submitted by the Committee on the Constitution, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Taxation and the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

The statement contains two explanatory reservations (from the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party), and two special statements of opinion (from the Left Party and the Liberal Party).