Press release | 16.12.2014

EU Commission work programme

Deregulation the focus despite Timmermans' smoke and mirrors

The European Commission today presented its work programme for 2015. The programme lists legislation that could be proposed over the coming year but also legislative proposals already in the pipeline that could be withdrawn. The Greens have expressed concern about the mooted shelving of crucial legislative proposals on environment, health, social protection and the economy. Commenting on the work programme, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** said:

"Attention is rightly being focused on what is not on the EU Commission's work programme, rather than what is on there, with plans to scrap crucial draft EU rules. Commissioner Timmermans has seemingly interpreted his 'better regulation' brief as one of deregulation. Despite his smoke and mirrors in the European Parliament today, it is clear that the Commission is sharpening its knives to cut a number of important legislative proposals. Axing crucial social, environmental and health legislation is not 'better regulation' it is an ideologically-biased sop to polluting industry lobbies, which is totally at odds with the public interest but also with commissioner Timmermans' sustainability brief.

"It is welcome that the Commission has responded to pressure from the Greens and others and not given up on the crucial proposals on the 'circular economy. However, it is hard to believe this Commission will withdraw the draft law and replace it with something more ambitious, given the inauspicious start they have made. Far from damaging the economy, the proposals on the circular economy would stimulate innovation in resource efficiency and saving, which would create durable domestic jobs in Europe, according to the Commission's own research. Giving other important proposals - such as those on air pollution rules or maternity leave - a stay of execution will only encourage those who want the proposals scrapped to further filibuster. Instead, the Commission should be fighting tooth and nail to ensure these crucial laws are adopted. With air pollution still a major problem in Europe, accounting for 100,000s of premature deaths per year, EU rules are urgently in need of an update. Reducing air pollution would also seriously reduce costs borne by public health services.

"Withdrawing the new proposals on banking sector reform, as is being mooted, would also be a scandal. Introducing regulation to separate banking activities is long overdue to reduce the risk in the financial sector. While this may not suit some of the larger financial behemoths, and their lobbyists both outside and within the Commission, it is essential for the health of our economies and societies."

The European Parliament today debated the work programme with the Commission and will adopt a resolution at its January plenary session, following the insistence of the Greens/EFA group.

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Philippe Lamberts

Member

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