THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2027:

A LIABILITY?

On 4 November 2026, as it does every year as the new year approaches, the European Commission presented its work programme for 2027 (LINK), comprising twenty-three proposed initiatives: ten of which are legislative, seven non-legislative, and six of which are of an uncertain nature as to whether they will be legislative or non-legislative.

The programme will be presented at the European Parliament's 'mini-session' plenary on 11 and 12 November in Brussels and, simultaneously, to the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, with the aim of securing from the legislative authority a joint declaration of theoretical commitment to adopt the legislative texts and to pave the way, given their political nature, for their transformation into legislative acts within a timeframe that remains uncertain for the time being.

The European Commission's work programme has adopted the cryptic title "*standing up for one another*", though it is difficult to discern from the announced proposals whether this mutual solidarity concerns the institutions, the European Union and its Member States, or also private entities such as businesses, intermediary bodies and citizens.

It is worth noting that the 2026 work programme was dedicated to the "*independence*" of the European Union, that thirty-eight initiatives were announced at the end of 2025 for the following year, and that, consequently, the number of legislative, non-legislative or otherwise ambiguous initiatives has fallen from thirty-eight to twenty-three as part of a drive for simplification – that is, a reduction in the legislative burden which, according to the European Commission, should yield savings of twenty-two billion euro – within, of course, unspecified timeframes – "*for businesses and consumers*":

What the European Commission omits, but which is apparent from the pre-announced content of the proposals, is the detrimental effect that the simplification of rules would have on environmental protection and the social dimension; this effect is amplified by the twelve "*omnibus*" packages, in line with the questionable logic of the second von der Leyen Commission.

In addition to the year-on-year decline in proposed initiatives, the European Commission has announced its intention to withdraw eighteen draft legislative acts (in this case, all legislative) from the legislative process; however, under the rules of the Treaties and the case law of the Court, such a withdrawal could only take place with the explicit or implicit agreement of the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission may withdraw its legislative proposals only if the legislative authority is preparing to radically alter them.

On this procedural aspect, however, there is a worrying omission: the annex to the programme refers to '*withdrawals*' of pending legislative proposals that the Commission intends to withdraw in the first six months of 2027.

Alongside the announced withdrawals, there is also the growing number, year on year, of pending proposals on which there is no agreement between the two branches of the legislative authority or on which the Council has not yet taken a decision at first reading.

Contrary to Article 38 of the 'Spinelli Draft Treaty", the Treaty of Lisbon do not, in fact, impose binding time limits on the Council and the European Parliament for adopting a common position.

Added to this is the fact that the Council Presidency rarely exercises its power to put legislative acts to a vote when it finds that there is no consensus amongst ministers or within Coreper, despite the principle of qualified majority voting; this renders meaningless the argument put forward by those who maintain that it would be sufficient to abolish the power of veto in the Council to speed up legislative decision-making.

Among the proposals pending in 2027 is the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034, on which the European Council of 15 and 16 October diplomatically opted for the wording "*in good time*", which replaced the initial "*by the end of 2026*". Added to this are twenty proposals for regulations on the funds, without which the European budget cannot be implemented from 2028 and no investments can be made.

We expect the European Parliament – or rather, the pro-European majority that voted in favour of the motion of confidence in November 2024 – to respond to the presentation in plenary of the European Commission's work programme for 2027

- by condemning its silence,
- by highlighting the disappearance of the level of supposed ambition from the State of the Union address of 16 September 2026 (accompanied by a '*letter of intent'* regarding the announced initiatives),
- demanding that the non-legislative initiatives (European Care Deal, University Alliance, Skills, Right to Stay, Climate Adaptation, Equality, Safety in Policies) be transformed into proposals for legislative acts,
- announcing its opposition to the withdrawal of certain essential proposals currently stalled in the Council (corporate taxation on digital services, the Green Claims Directive, Financial Data, the framework for income taxation, European Cross-Border Associations, transparency, the list of EU offences relating to hate speech and hate crime, etc.).

by placing on the agenda for the session from 23 to 25 November a resolution in which the House calls on the Commission to carry out a substantial review of its work programme for 2027 and announces plans for a draft joint declaration with the Council that is consistent with the political guidelines of the majority in the European Parliament.

In the same spirit, we believe that the members of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions should also express their views when the Commission's work programme for 2027 is submitted for their consideration.

Rome, 9 November 2026