



Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas

An Comhchoiste
um
Fhorbairt Tuaithe agus Pobail

Clár Oibre Grinnscrúdú an Aontas Eorpaigh 2018

Joint Committee
on
Rural and Community Development

EU Scrutiny Work Programme 2018

A leagadh faoi bhráid dhá Theach an Oireachtais 10 Lúnasa 2018

Laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas 10 August 2018

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1. Role and Remit of the Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is required, in line with its Orders of Reference, to consider: draft EU legislative Acts; other proposals for EU (European Union)0 legislation and related policy issues; non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters; and matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.

The Joint Committee on Rural and Community Development shadows the Department of Rural and Community Development, 'the Department'.

The remit of the Department, in the European context, forms the basis of the Joint Committee's remit in terms of scrutiny of European matters. This remit extends to: rural development; rural infrastructure; national broadband rollout; administering EU funding programs for rural development; libraries development; community development; social inclusion; water safety; charities regulation.

The Department also services rural development aspects of the [Agriculture and Fisheries Council \(AGRIFISH\)](#)¹. The Joint Committee's remit extends, therefore, to the relevant agenda items of this Council configuration.

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/agrifish/>

2. Joint Committee Engagement on EU Matters

2.1. Scrutiny of EU Legislative Proposals

The scrutiny of draft EU legislative proposals will continue to be a standing agenda item of the Joint Committee. Draft proposals will be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee in line with the 2012 mainstreaming model as agreed by the Working Group of Committee Chairs (WGCC) by setting out priority (Schedule A) and non-priority (Schedule B) items (see section 3 [Scrutiny of draft EU Legislative Proposals](#) below).

2.2. Engagement with Ministers

The Joint Committee will engage with the Minister and Minister of State in the Department of Rural and Community Development, as appropriate, in advance of their attendance at EU Ministerial Council meetings. Engagement with the Minister provides the Joint Committee with a valuable opportunity to influence the Irish position on EU legislation, prior to negotiation at Ministerial Council and is therefore an essential element of Parliamentary Scrutiny of draft EU legislation and policy initiatives.

2.3. Engagement on the Statutory Departmental EU Scrutiny Report

There is a requirement under [S.2\(5\) of the European Union \(Scrutiny\) Act 2002](#)² for Ministers to report twice yearly to both Houses on the measures, proposed measures and other developments in relation to the European Communities and the European Union in relation to which the Minister performs functions.

The Joint Committee intends to consider such reports with the Secretary General of the Department.

² *Scrutiny of measures by Houses of Oireachtas, European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002*

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- (1) As soon as practicable after a proposed measure is presented by the Commission of the European Communities or initiated by a Member State, as the case may be, the Minister shall cause a copy of the text concerned to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas together with a statement of the Minister outlining the content, purpose and likely implications for Ireland of the proposed measure and including such other information as he or she considers appropriate.
- (2) The Minister shall have regard to any recommendations made to him or her from time to time by either or both Houses of the Oireachtas or by a committee of either or both such Houses in relation to a proposed measure.
- (3) Subsections (1) and (2) shall not apply, if in the opinion of the Minister, there is insufficient time for the carrying out of the procedures aforesaid and the performance of the functions of the Houses of the Oireachtas in relation to the text aforesaid.
- (4) Where, pursuant to subsection (3), a text of a proposed measure has not been laid before each House of the Oireachtas and the measure concerned is adopted by an institution of the European Communities, the Minister shall cause a copy of the text of the measure to be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas together with a statement outlining the implications for Ireland of the measure and the circumstances of its adoption and including such other information as he or she considers appropriate.
- (5) Every Minister of the Government shall make a report to each House of the Oireachtas not less than twice yearly in relation to measures, proposed measures and other developments in relation to the European Communities and the European Union in relation to which he or she performs functions.

2.4.Engagement with European Bodies

The Committee will engage during 2018 with European bodies such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, its committees, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and the European Council, as envisaged under the Lisbon Treaty. The Committee will seek to enhance this engagement in future.

2.4.1. Engagement with European Bodies 2018

The Committee met the European Court of Auditors (informally with the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine) on [24 January 2018](#).

The Committee (in joint session with the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine) met the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Phil Hogan, on [26 April 2018](#).

The Committee met the European Commission DG (Directorate-General) Budget (informally with the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs) on Tuesday [12 July 2018](#).

2.4.2. European Parliament Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

The [REGI Committee](#)³ is responsible within the European Parliament for the Union's regional development and cohesion policy, as set out in the Treaties.

Currently, there are no upcoming Interparliamentary Committee Meetings scheduled between the REGI Committee and National Parliaments, however, the Joint Committee will continue to monitor any proposed meetings.

2.4.3. European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

The [AGRI Committee](#)⁴ is responsible for scrutinising the European Commission's work related to agricultural policy. As such, Rural Development policy under pillar two of the CAP⁵ (Common Agricultural Policy) is within the remit of the AGRI Committee.

The Joint Committee's remit extends, therefore, to the relevant agenda items of the AGRI Committee.

³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/regi/home.html>

⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/agri/home.html>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy_en

3. Scrutiny of draft EU Legislative Proposals

3.1. EU Commission Work Programme 2018 – COM(2017) 650 final

On 24 October 2017, the European Commission published its Work Programme (CWP), setting out its priorities for the coming year: [The EU CWP 2018 – An agenda for a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe](#)⁶.

This work programme gives an indication of the legislative proposals, initiatives and communications that will be pursued in 2018. The CWP contains five annexes. These are outlined below.

Annex I: new initiatives

Annex I contains a list of 26 new legislative and non-legislative initiatives that the Commission intends to take forward in 2018. There are no initiatives within the scope of the Joint Committee.

Annex II: REFIT initiatives

Annex II lists 12 REFIT⁷ actions, where the Commission screens the EU's regulatory acquis and identifies necessary corrective action. These actions include legislative initiatives to simplify and reduce regulatory burden, the repealing of legislation no longer needed, the withdrawal of proposals without a realistic chance of adoption or where the initial objectives can no longer be achieved, evaluation and 'fitness checks' to assess relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and EU added value of EU legislation and identify further opportunities for simplification and burden reduction.

Annex III: priority pending proposals

Annex III lists 66 priority pending proposals.

Annex IV: withdrawals

Annex IV lists 15 pending proposals that are to be withdrawn or modified.

Annex V: repeals

Annex V lists 3 envisaged repeals.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-commission-work-programme-key-documents_en

⁷ "Refit – making EU law simpler and less costly"

"The Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT) programme ensures that EU legislation delivers results for citizens and businesses effectively, efficiently and at minimum cost. REFIT aims to keep EU law simple, remove unnecessary burdens and adapt existing legislation without compromising on policy objectives."

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-and-less-costly_en

3.2. Priority Items (Schedule A)

Schedule A will list priority items as they arise.

At present, there are no Schedule A items arising from the CWP 2018.

3.3. Non-Priority Items (Schedule B)

Schedule B will list non-priority items as they arise. However, the Joint Committee has the option of re-classifying any draft legislative or non-legislative proposal as a priority proposal at any time, taking account of the Department's information note regarding its significance.

Typical non-priority items will include technical modifications arising from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) - Articles 290 and 291 of that Treaty distinguish between acts delegated to the EU Commission and acts that confer implementation powers on it and which are, in general, procedural matters.