

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000842/25
to the Commission
Li Andersson (The Left)
(25 February 2025)

Subject: The transparency and impact of the preparatory process for the European Commission's Omnibus Sustainability package on the EU's sustainability goals and businesses

According to the latest information, the European Commission will be publishing its Omnibus Sustainability package this week. It contains amendments to key acts in EU legislation, such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the directive on corporate sustainability reporting (CSRD). Leaked information suggests that the Commission is proposing measures that would significantly undermine companies' duty of diligence, such as opportunities for victims to seek justice, fines for those who break the law and the implementation of climate requirements. Furthermore, it is proposed that the requirements concerning reporting be limited to the biggest companies only, meaning that a large number of companies would not need to report on sustainability. This would compromise the EU's sustainability goals and would result in legal uncertainty, both for companies and the Member States, which have begun to implement the current legislation.

It is worth noting that, when the Omnibus project was being prepared, no proper assessment was undertaken of its impact and there was no public consultation on it. There were serious flaws in evidence in the selection of those to attend the 'Reality Check and Roundtable' organised by the Commission in February: participating in the talks were mainly representatives of large companies, including companies that are currently the subject of legal proceedings for human rights violations and environmental offences, while the voices of civil society, trade unions and responsible companies virtually went unheard. This is a breach of the Commission's own principle of 'better regulation' and jeopardises the EU's principles of the rule of law and democracy.

1. How can the Commission justify the preparation of the Omnibus project in the absence of any adequate assessment of its impact or any public consultation, especially given the fact that the changes may seriously undermine the EU's sustainability goals?
2. Does the Commission think that the preparatory process for the Omnibus package was transparent, democratic and in line with the Commission's own principle of 'better regulation'?
3. How will the Commission respond to those companies that have already invested substantially in implementing the current sustainability requirements?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 25.2.2025

Answer given by Ms Albuquerque on behalf of the European Commission
(24 April 2025)

The Commission has adopted on 26 February 2025 a package of proposals to simplify sustainability rules ⁽¹⁾, with the aim to better integrate competitiveness and climate goals, creating a more favourable business environment to help companies grow, innovate, and create jobs.

Quick action was needed to streamline processes and reduce administrative burdens due to urgent challenges faced by EU businesses. Therefore, in place of a full impact assessment, the Commission prepared a Staff Working Document assessing the impacts ⁽²⁾, in line with the Better Regulation rules applicable in urgent cases ⁽³⁾.

The legislation being modified has already undergone extensive consultations and impact assessments in recent years. The Commission further gathered extensive feedback from stakeholders to inform its proposed measures, including: a public Call for Evidence in 2023 with almost 200 responses, ⁽⁴⁾ a workshop on climate-neutral economy financing in 2024, a 'Stakeholder request mechanism' for EU Taxonomy delegated act changes, a 'reality check' and roundtable discussion in February 2025 with NGOs and stakeholders and position papers, open letters, and joint statements from stakeholders and groups.

The simplification proposals do not diminish the progress made by early adopters. These companies led the way, not only progressing in their transition but also gaining competitive advantages, fostering stakeholder trust, and driving innovation.

¹ This question is supported by Members other than the author: Jussi Saramo (The Left), Merja Kyllönen (The Left)

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/omnibus-i_en

⁽²⁾ See footnote 1.

⁽³⁾ COM/2021/219 final.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13990-Administrative-burden-rationalisation-of-reporting-requirements_en

The Commission encourages businesses to view the proposed package as an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in sustainability and to benefit from more efficient and effective due diligence and reporting processes.
