

**Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk
Committee for OFMDFM
Room 346
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX**

26 January 2016

Dear Kathy

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2016

Thank you for your letter of 4 December 2015.

We remain supportive of the Commission's continued focus on jobs and growth, including the progression of the European Fund for Strategic Investment. We welcome the withdrawal of proposals in this work plan that are no longer relevant and the modification of others to enhance value, including the continued use of REFIT as a means of reviewing the stock of existing EU legislation.

The Department welcomes the priority given to the following policy initiatives, which have the potential to benefit our citizens and businesses:

- The Circular Economy Package;
- The Digital Single Market Strategy;
- The Internal Market Strategy;
- The European Fund for Strategic Investment;
- Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T);
- Youth Employment Initiative;
- Women on Boards Directive;
- Energy Union Package;
- European Agenda on Security;
- Better Regulation; and
- Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

Although the New Skills Agenda for Europe and the Labour Mobility Package do not come within the remit of OFMDFM, the Department will monitor developments in the context of the Racial Equality Strategy and the forthcoming Refugee Integration Strategy.

The UK Government may decide to opt into the Better Migration Management initiative. Should this happen, OFMDFM will liaise with the Home Office to ensure our interests are taken on board.

The New Start for Working Parents and Caregivers and the Women on Boards Directive will be considered as part of the ongoing work to develop a new Gender Equality Strategy. This will replace the current Gender Equality Strategy which will remain in place in the interim.

Yours sincerely

Signed Colette Kerr

Colette Kerr
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer