

European Commission Work Programme 2026

October 2025

EU Commission Work Programme 2026:

Special focus on Tech | Financial Services | Industrial Policy

The 2026 Commission Work Programme marks the start of a new policy cycle focused on competitiveness, innovation, and strategic autonomy. Brussels continues to focus on regulatory simplification, industrial capacity, and capital market integration.

For businesses, 2026 will be a pivotal year: one of regulatory resets, new funding frameworks, and the consolidation of Europe’s innovation ecosystem. Below, we explore three key policy fronts shaping the year ahead — Tech, Financial Services, and Industrial Policy — and what industry can expect as legislative proposals unfold.

1. Technology

The Commission’s 2026 tech agenda signals a shift from regulatory oversight towards enabling innovation and industrial scale-up. After years of rulemaking in digital markets, data, and AI, the focus now turns to supporting Europe’s tech sovereignty and R&D leadership.

Expected proposals	What it means for industry	Timing
Cloud and AI Development Act	Establishes a framework for European AI and cloud infrastructure, focusing on interoperability, compute capacity, and trusted data environments. Will shape compliance obligations for digital service providers and AI developers. <u>Who should care:</u> Cloud providers, AI developers, data centres, digital infrastructure operators, large corporates using AI at scale.	Q1 2026
European Innovation Act	Creates a comprehensive innovation strategy, integrating funding tools, IP rules, and tech transfer mechanisms. <u>Who should care:</u> Start-ups, universities, R&D-intensive firms, IP consultancies, innovation funds.	Q1 2026
28th Regime for Innovative Companies	Offers a voluntary, harmonised legal regime for innovative start-ups and scale-ups, simplifying cross-border operations. <u>Who should care:</u> Start-ups, scale-ups, VC-backed tech firms, legal service providers.	Q1 2026
Quantum Act	A new EU framework for quantum computing R&D, supporting industrial applications and research infrastructure. <u>Who should care:</u> Quantum start-ups, HPC providers, semiconductor manufacturers, research consortia.	Q2 2026
Digital Fairness Act	Updates consumer and platform fairness rules for the digital age, addressing AI-driven consumer interfaces and targeted advertising. <u>Who should care:</u> Consumer tech firms, online retailers, UX designers, consumer associations, regulators.	Q4 2026

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2. Financial Services

The Commission will use 2026 to deepen capital market integration and modernise financial regulation. The emphasis is on unlocking investment in innovation and clean industry while maintaining financial stability.

Expected proposals	What it means for industry	Timing
Omnibus on Taxation	A broad update of EU tax directives aimed at simplification and harmonisation, possibly addressing digital and environmental taxation. <u>Who should care:</u> Financial institutions, multinationals, digital service companies, tax advisors.	Q2 2026
Update of the European Venture Capital Funds Regulation (EuVECA)	Modernises fund structures to attract private investment into early-stage tech and industrial innovation. <u>Who should care:</u> VC funds, fintechs, start-ups, institutional investors.	Q3 2026
Update of Antitrust Procedural Rules	Streamlines competition enforcement, with implications for mergers, fintech, and digital ecosystems. <u>Who should care:</u> Financial conglomerates, fintechs, competition lawyers, industry associations.	Q3 2026
Update of Shareholders' Rights Directive	Strengthens shareholder engagement and cross-border voting, aligning with sustainability reporting rules. <u>Who should care:</u> Listed companies, asset managers, proxy advisors, corporate governance teams.	Q4 2026

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3. Industrial Policy

Under the banner of “A New Plan for Europe’s Sustainable Prosperity and Competitiveness,” the 2026 Work Programme outlines an ambitious set of measures to strengthen industrial resilience and strategic autonomy.

Expected proposals	What it means for industry	Timing
Update of Public Procurement Rules	Simplifies EU procurement to accelerate innovation uptake and SME participation. <u>Who should care:</u> Public authorities, SMEs, infrastructure operators, tech suppliers.	Q2 2026
European Biotech Act	Creates a single market framework for biotech innovation, including bio-manufacturing standards and state aid coordination. <u>Who should care:</u> Biotech start-ups, pharma, agri-bio, industrial bioeconomy players.	Q2–Q3 2026
European Research Area (ERA) Act	Codifies the ERA into a legislative framework, ensuring coordination of research funding and mobility. <u>Who should care:</u> Universities, RTOs , research councils, consortia participants.	Q3 2026
Circular Economy Act	Updates product and waste legislation to enable industrial circularity, recycling innovation, and product passports. <u>Who should care:</u> Manufacturing, packaging, recycling, retail, logistics sectors.	Q3 2026
Advanced Materials Act	Establishes EU standards and investment support for critical materials used in clean tech, defence, and digital industries. <u>Who should care:</u> Chemical, battery, clean-tech, aerospace and defence industries.	Q4 2026

Conclusion: 2026 – The Year of Integration and Scale

The 2026 Work Programme sets the stage for Europe’s next growth phase: integrating digital, financial, and industrial policies into a coherent competitiveness agenda.

For industry, the message is clear: engage early, align compliance strategies, and leverage the new European frameworks to scale innovation.

If 2025 was about reflection, 2026 will be about acceleration - a year where the EU turns its policy ambition into practical frameworks for growth.

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Thank you