

## **What is the Legislative Train?**

Imagine you are standing in a train station, looking for the timetable to find out when your train leaves. No matter the station, the departure board usually looks the same: a destination, a platform, a departure or arrival time ... and sometimes delays. Now picture the same board. But this time, instead of destinations, you see topics such as youth employment or reducing plastic pollution in the environment. The platforms are now budgets, and the timetables are implementation dates. There you have the European Parliament's Legislative Train Schedule in a nutshell.

Let's start by taking a look back to get a clearer picture of things. More than ten years ago, following the 2014 European elections and negotiations with Parliament's political groups, the then President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, set out ten priority areas for the European Union.

In the years that followed, the European Commission and Parliament's committees based their work programmes on these key policy areas and on working towards these priorities. To make it easier for all MEPs to keep track of these files, Parliament created a more detailed progress report in the form of a 'Legislative Train Schedule'.

In July 2017, six new 'trains' were added to represent legislative files which were not part of the ten core priorities.

Following the 2019 European elections, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the six new political priorities for her first term of office, running from 2019 to 2024.

So our legislative trains set off in a new direction.

At the end of the European Parliament's ninth legislative term, the longest train on the tracks was without a doubt the European Green Deal train, with no fewer than 168 carriages. In other words, 168 legislative proposals. Of these proposals, 87 were adopted, symbolised by 87 carriages which separated from the train and arrived at their destinations. On the other hand, the shortest train was the European Democracy train, with 65 legislative proposals, 39 of which were adopted.

Under each priority, some proposals were rejected, postponed or rewritten, while others are still in the process of being adopted. It's as if each train gains or loses carriages as the legislative work of the EU institutions moves forward. For example, the carriage representing the European Disability Card, attached to the European Democracy train, was about to arrive at its destination in October 2024. In other words, the proposal was close to being adopted. In November 2024 it arrived, and has now been adopted.

For the 2024 to 2029 period, there are seven political priorities:

- a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness;
- a new era for European defence and security;

- supporting people and strengthening our societies and our social model;
- sustaining our quality of life including food security, water and nature;
- protecting our democracy and upholding our values;
- a global Europe: leveraging our power and partnerships;
- and, finally, delivering together and preparing the EU for the future.

Think of these priorities as seven new trains heading to new destinations, picking up carriages along the way.

All of this imagery certainly paints a picture, but what does it really mean?

Well, you can find all the details on the official Legislative Term Schedule website. The link is in the description. Each legislative priority is presented as a train, with a timetable showing when the proposed legislation was submitted to Parliament. You can also follow, in real time, which proposals are currently blocked in the legislative process and at what stage.

By clicking on a carriage, you can find out more about the proposed law, the political priority to which it is linked and the MEPs taking part in the process through Parliament's committees. You can also subscribe and receive regular updates on each legislative priority.

One last thing to mention is that the Legislative Train is limited to projects included in the Commission Work Programme. Although it does not cover all of the legislative work which Parliament carries out, it still provides an excellent overview of the issues that are so important to the EU institutions. For more information, hop on board and visit the European Parliament website. Have a pleasant journey!

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