UPDATED GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND FORMAT OF THE NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES 2020

April 2020

Introduction

The National Reform Programmes (NRPs) are policy documents prepared by the Member States in accordance with their national traditions and reflecting national priorities. They play a central role at EU level, alongside the Stability or Convergence Programmes (SCPs), in enabling the collective monitoring and multilateral discussion of policy challenges and reforms.

Guidance for the preparation of the 2020 NRPs was circulated on 11 October 2019 by Secretariat-General of the Commission to all Member States. In light of the COVID-19 outbreak and related containment measures and impacts on the Member States’ economies, it is appropriate to update and adapt that guidance.

Taking into account pressing priorities and difficult working conditions in the national administrations, the 2020 NRPs should focus on the minimum essential elements outlined in the Appendix. Member States may decide to supplement this minimum information with additional content, as foreseen in previous guidance. If considered more appropriate, Member States may continue using the usual, more detailed, templates, for example if they correspond to their domestic requirements. To the extent possible, given the current circumstances, Member States should compile their NRPs following a process that ensures ownership at national level.

The NRPs should be forward-looking, providing the overall strategy and the main policy initiatives taken or planned aimed at overcoming the main socio-economic challenges and imbalances, as emerging in light of the pandemic and/or identified in the Country Report, taking into account the state of play of implementation of the country-specific recommendations. This should include available evidence on possible impacts and financial estimates consistent with the SCP. To the extent possible, all Member States under MIP surveillance should include a description of the policies aimed at tackling the imbalances.

Practical arrangements and timetable

Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 sets the deadline for submission of SCPs in April, preferably by mid-April. Member States are encouraged to present their NRPs at the latest by 30 April 2020.

NRPs may be transmitted either in paper form or electronically. Paper copies of the documents should be sent to the Commission, marked for the attention of the Secretary-General. Electronic copies should be sent to the functional mailbox:
EC-EUROPEAN-SEMESTER@ec.europa.eu

The Commission will continue to post NRPs on the Europa website upon receipt at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
APPENDIX: TEMPLATE FOR THE 2020 NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

This section should contain information on:

- The overall strategy at national level and the main policy initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and, when relevant, to the main structural challenges identified in the Country Report.
- The relationship between the measures presented in the NRP and the orientations provided by the Commission in its Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy.

2. Macroeconomic outlook for the period covered by the NRP

This section should provide a summary of the main elements of, and appropriate cross-references to, the macroeconomic scenario described in the SCP (in order to avoid repetitions and overlaps), including an outlook for employment, labour force participation and the social situation, including inequality.

3. Key policy response to major socio-economic challenges

This section should give an overview of the Member States' policy response to the main socio-economic challenges and investment gaps, as emerging in light of the pandemic and/or identified in the Country Report, taking into account the state of play of implementation of the country-specific recommendations. It shall include:

- A subsection for each of those challenges, specifying the list of measures that are being taken or planned, focussing on information about the next (legal, administrative, budgetary and operational) steps in their elaboration and/or implementation and providing the foreseen impact of measures.
- If evidence is available, details of concrete evolution in the situation in the corresponding areas

For measures related to fiscal policy, taxation, pension and health systems, it is also suggested to introduce cross-references to the information provided in the SCP, to reduce the burden on national administrations and to avoid repetitions and overlaps.

4. Institutional issues

This section should explain the national institutional process for the approval of the NRP as well as the involvement of the national institutional actors (national parliament, regional/local authorities, social partners and civil society stakeholders). The comments and/or contributions of social partners and other stakeholders should be summarised here and/or provided in an annex.