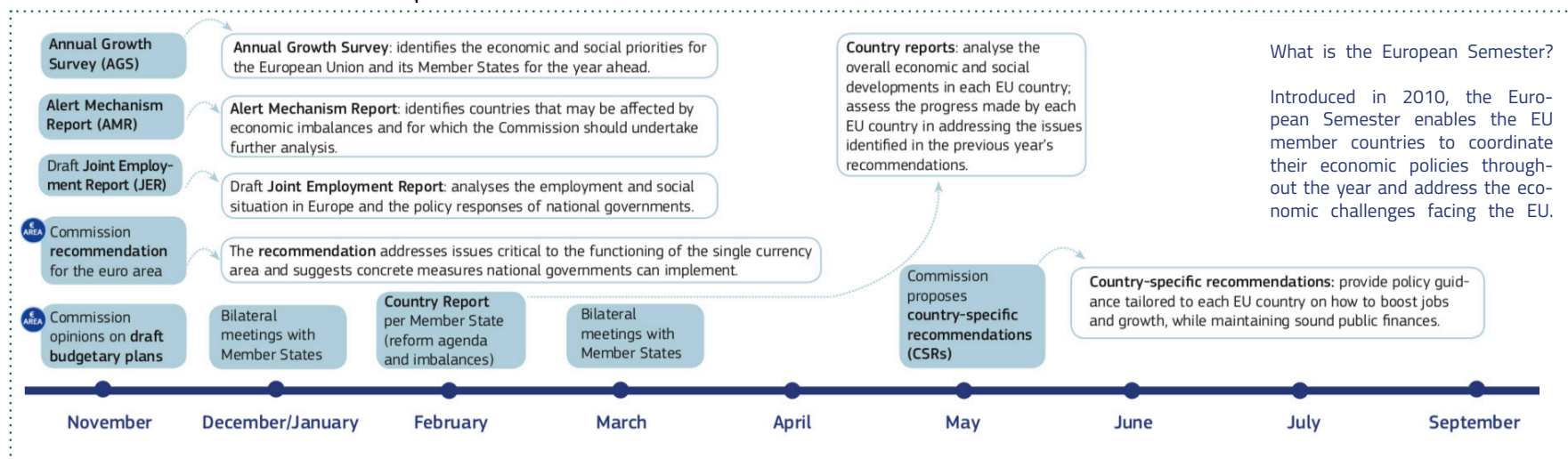


The Commission's role in the European Semester



Obstacles to integration

- 01** The European Semester mainly looks at economic policies for growth, jobs and investment, with an emphasis on achieving short-term improvement. However, the impacts of the circular transition are long term.
- 02** Lack of information on the growth, investment and employment impacts of the circular economy and related policies. This makes it difficult to include circular-economy issues in the Semester process.
- 03** Statistical offices publish resource-related data with a delay of several years. This hampers the formulation of practical and effective Country-Specific Recommendations.
- 04** The political priorities that originally guided the introduction of the European Semester have become outdated. The Semester was introduced in 2010 in the wake of the financial and economic crisis and as a way to monitor progress towards the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Suggestions for integration

- 01** Consider devoting more attention to the circular economy in the Annual Growth Survey, going beyond sustainable investment and short-term goals. There is also a need to take a more harmonised approach to include circular economy-related issues in the Country Reports and the Country-Specific Recommendations.
- 02** Increase the evidence base on the macroeconomic and societal impacts of the circular-economy transition. The CIRCULAR IMPACTS project team conducted four case studies on circular-economy processes and developed a methodology for this purpose. The project's Evidence Library provides additional reports and studies.
- 03** Publish resource-related data with shorter intervals. The European Resource Efficiency Scoreboard, the EU Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Set, and the Monitoring Framework for the Circular Economy can be used to foster increased data availability.
- 04** Review the political priorities of the Semester. The focus could partly shift to other pressing issues such as climate change. The circular-economy concept could be used as a policy framework to this end.

Checklist for successful integration

- Political commitment**
In the Annual Growth Surveys of 2016, 2017 and 2018, the Commission has expressed its political commitment to the circular economy.
- Long-term vision**
The circular-economy transition takes time, so expand the focus of the European Semester beyond achieving short-term impacts.
- Data availability**
Address the lack of macroeconomic data on the circular economy, and make resource indicators available in a timely fashion.