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Less red-tape = more growth: Commission tables package for better regulation

Improving the quality of regulation can significantly spur growth in the EU economy and business. This is why “better regulation” is a centrepiece of the European Commission’s “partnership for growth and jobs”. It is essential for setting up the right conditions for growth and employment in Europe. The better regulation package the Commission tabled today is designed to cut red tape, tackle excessive regulation and help to strike the right balance between the costs and benefits of legislation. (For more concrete examples see [MEMO/05/93](#)).

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission said “Releasing our creativity from the restraints of red-tape is the best way to push forward our ambitious goals for the economy, for the society and the quality of life of our citizens. If we can improve the regulatory environment both at EU and national level, we will take a giant step towards unlocking Europe’s hidden potential.”

Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen said: “Less red tape means more growth. The Commission is ready to do its part, to clamp down on overregulation and promote simplification. But we cannot go it alone. Member States must also reduce bureaucracy. This is holding back businesses from creating jobs.”

The Commission proposes the following actions:

Improved impact assessments

As a rule, initiatives set out in the Commission’s 2005 Legislative and Work Programme, key legislative proposals as well as transversal policy defining non-legislative proposals will be the subject of integrated impact assessments, analysing economic, social and environmental aspects of the proposals.

The economic analysis of these impact assessments will be substantially improved. This will strengthen the quality of the assessment and thereby make a significant contribution to competitiveness.

Screening and possible modification or withdrawal of pending proposals

Currently, hundreds of Commission proposals are pending in the European Parliament and Council. The Commission will screen these proposals. This could lead the Commission to consider the possible modification, replacement or even withdrawal of such pending proposals, focusing in particular on proposals which have not made progress in the legislative process for significant time and/or for which impact assessments were not carried out.

More simplification

Simplification of the body of EU law is not only about improving readability, but also about boosting competitiveness. Where it turns out that the legislation is too burdensome for citizens and business, modification or repeal of the legislation will be considered.

Examples of simplification already under way are the Commission's initiatives to tackle overly complex EU rules on plant protection, medical devices and waste disposal. The Commission will table a communication on this matter in October 2005.

Pilot projects to reduce administrative burden

Excessive burden for administrations in Member States often arises from reporting and information obligations of EU legislation.

The Commission will launch pilot projects to measure and reduce administrative burden for construction products and statistics, two complex fields of EU law.

Alternatives to legislation

Sometimes, alternatives to legislation are a better way to tackle some issues. Consequently, the Commission intends to promote the use of European standards as technical support to European legislation, as well as the better use of co-regulation and self-regulation.

Consulting citizens

EU citizens, business, NGOs will have the possibility to have their say on how to achieve better regulation via the internet.

Member States have a role to play, too

Many measures which help to reduce red-tape are in the hands of the Member States. The Commission wants Better Regulation to become an integral part of the national "Lisbon action plans". It recommends that Member States set up national better regulation strategies, including impact assessment systems and simplification programmes.

The Commission also proposes to set up a group of high-level national regulatory experts, to develop a common Better Regulation agenda.