

Completing the Better Regulation Agenda

Today's review analyses the reforms put in place to ensure that policy-making is priority-driven, evidence-based, transparent and effective and details the next steps to be taken. Better Regulation underpins the Commission's work to deliver on President Juncker's 10 political priorities, ensuring that the Commission acts only where the EU brings added value, and does so in the least burdensome way possible.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Today's world is fraught with complex policy challenges. More than ever before, we must be sure that our policies are rooted in facts and evidence, developed in maximum transparency and decided with full accountability. The European Commission's Better Regulation Agenda is about giving ourselves and our stakeholders the tools to do this."*

The Commission's review of its Better Regulation Agenda finds that the new tools put in place provide a solid basis for timely and sound policy decisions. More **extensive engagement with the public, systematic evaluation, high quality impact assessments, and a strengthened 'REFIT' approach** have allowed for improved appraisal of new proposals and existing legislation. This approach forces policy-makers as well as stakeholders to argue on the basis of evidence and expected impacts. It is further complemented by a new approach to enforcement to ensure swift and effective compliance with adopted laws.

- In 2017, the Commission completed a major **update of the internal guidelines and tools** for better regulation. These new tools, in force since July 2017, guide Commission staff across the entire policy cycle.
- The Commission is investing significantly in a range of **new tools to engage better with citizens and stakeholders** and inform them about its ongoing work. By the end of this year, the "contribute to law-making" website will be fully operational, allowing stakeholders to participate at every stage of the Commission's work, and giving a boost to transparency. Since the website's (partial) launch in July 2016, a total of 643 initiatives have been posted for consultation, at different stages of the policy-making process. Traffic to the website has already reached almost 50,000 users per month.
- The **Regulatory Scrutiny Board is now operating at full capacity**, with three members from outside the EU institutions. The Board is an independent body of the Commission that examines and issues opinions and recommendations on all the Commission's draft impact assessments and major evaluations and fitness checks of existing legislation.
- Before revising or introducing legislation, the Commission has committed to the **"evaluate first" principle**. In 2016, evaluations were carried out for just under 50% of impact assessments, and in 2017 this number rose to almost 70%.

- Through its regulatory fitness and performance programme (REFIT) the Commission aims to keep EU law simple, remove unnecessary burdens and adapt existing legislation without compromising on policy objectives. The REFIT Platform of experts and national representatives has so far issued **58 opinions on possible simplification exercises**, which the Commission follows up in its annual Work Programmes. The Commission is also carrying out an extensive regulatory fitness programme, and has launched **137 simplification initiatives** since 2015.

Reducing unnecessary costs without compromising on policy objectives

While reaching any policy objective entails costs, these should of course be kept to a minimum. The Commission continuously proposes the elimination of unnecessary regulatory costs on the basis of case-by-case evaluations in consultation with those carrying the burdens and benefitting from EU legislation.

In line with the commitment in the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, the Commission has assessed alternative approaches to burden reduction, including fixing burden reduction objectives in specific sectors. Based on its analysis the Commission will present information on simplification costs and benefits more consistently in its evaluations and impact assessments, **step up its efforts to quantify** such effects and present a burden reduction objective for each proposal to revise legislation wherever possible.

Embedding Better Regulation in the Commission's DNA

The Better Regulation Agenda adopted in 2015 was a comprehensive set of reforms covering the entire policy cycle, intended to boost openness and transparency in the EU decision-making process, improve the quality of new laws through better impact assessments of draft legislation and amendments, and promote constant and consistent review of existing EU laws so that they achieve their objectives in the most effective and efficient way.

Much has been achieved, and the Commission will continue to improve its better regulation policy and embed it in the Commission's DNA. This will include an overall assessment of how the Better Regulation Agenda has been implemented before the end of this Commission mandate.

Background

The Political Guidelines of President Juncker, on the basis of which the Parliament elected this Commission, made a clear commitment to better regulation. In addition to internal reforms, the Commission presented and successfully negotiated a new Interinstitutional Agreement with the European Parliament and the Council to update and strengthen the common understanding in relation to better regulation.

For more information

[Completing the Better Regulation Agenda: Better solutions for better results](#)

[Flash Eurobarometer on business perceptions of regulation](#)

[Better Regulation Factsheet \(13 September, 2017\)](#)

[The REFIT Programme](#)

[The REFIT Platform](#)

[IIA on Better Law-Making](#)

[Lighten the Load Portal](#)

[Press release on the Better Regulation Agenda](#)

[Memo on the Better Regulation Agenda](#)