



The Belgian federal strategy for administrative burden reduction and better regulation

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**High Level Group of Independent
Stakeholders on Administrative Burdens
Brussels - July 8th, 2010**

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About ASA (1/2)

Administrative Simplification Agency (ASA)

- Created by Law 10 February 1998 for the promotion of entrepreneurship
- Competence: businesses,
in 2003 extended to citizens
- Means of action:
 - Right to be informed
 - Recommend – Stimulate – Coordinate
 - Report
- Branch of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister

About ASA (2/2)

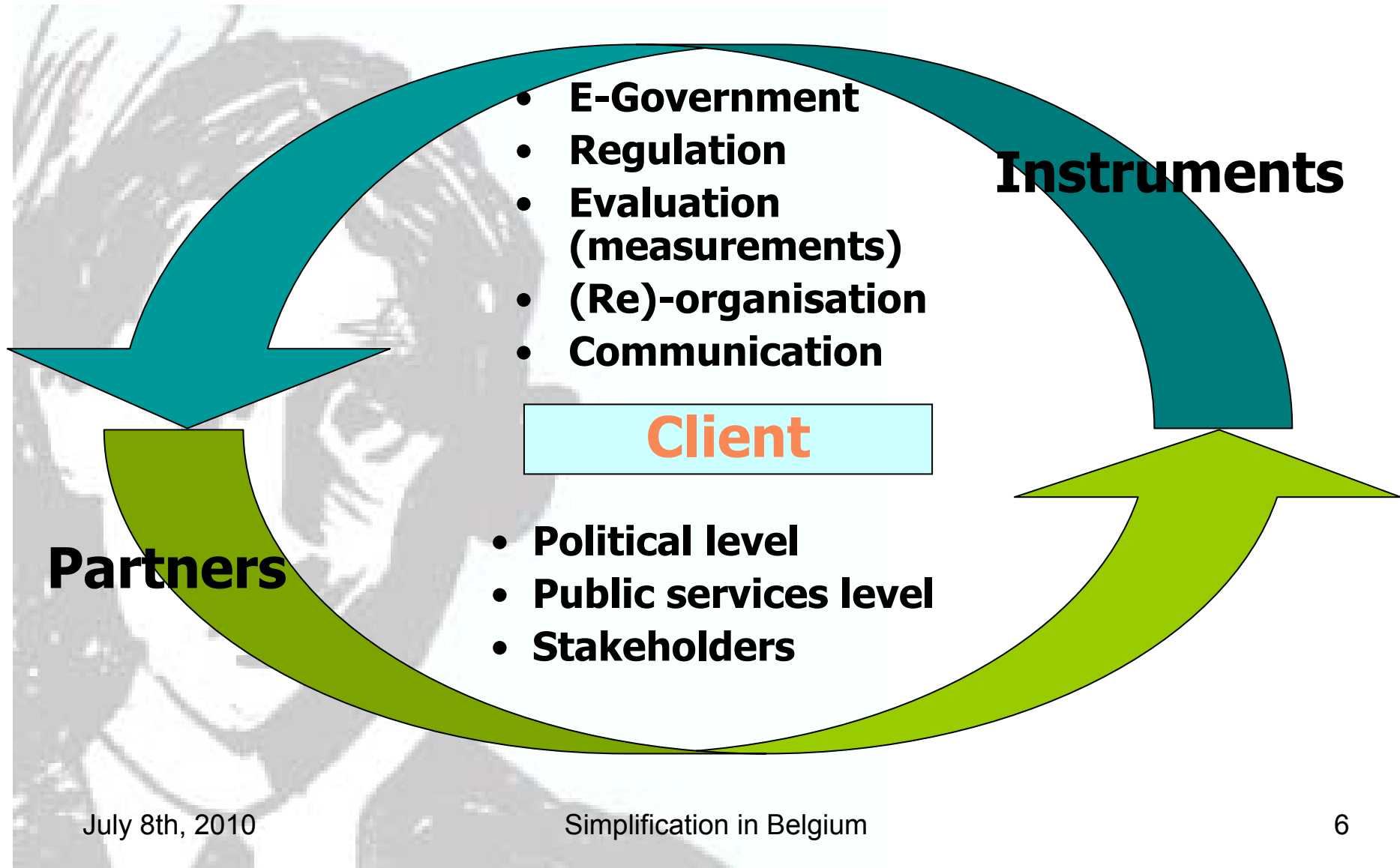
- “Light” administrative structure
 - ASA
 - Director general
 - Deputy Director general
 - 8 senior advisors
 - 4 management assistants
 - + citizen specific unit
 - Steering committee
 - Representatives of businesses and unions
 - Political level
 - Civil service level
- Network of simplification agents

Administrative simplification : a definition

- ≠ E-government
- ≠ Business Process Re-engineering
(reorganisation)
- ≠ deregulation or regulatory management
- ≠ plain language drafting or communication

= The realisation of political goals and strategies while minimizing the administrative burdens for citizens and enterprises

Belgian strategy: circle of simplification



1. E-government and simplification

- Principles
 - Maximize administrative simplification
 - Organize, then digitalize
 - “Only ask once”
- Elements
 - Unique numbers
 - Authentic sources
 - National Register / Crossroads bank for enterprises
 - Belgian Electronic identity card (eID)

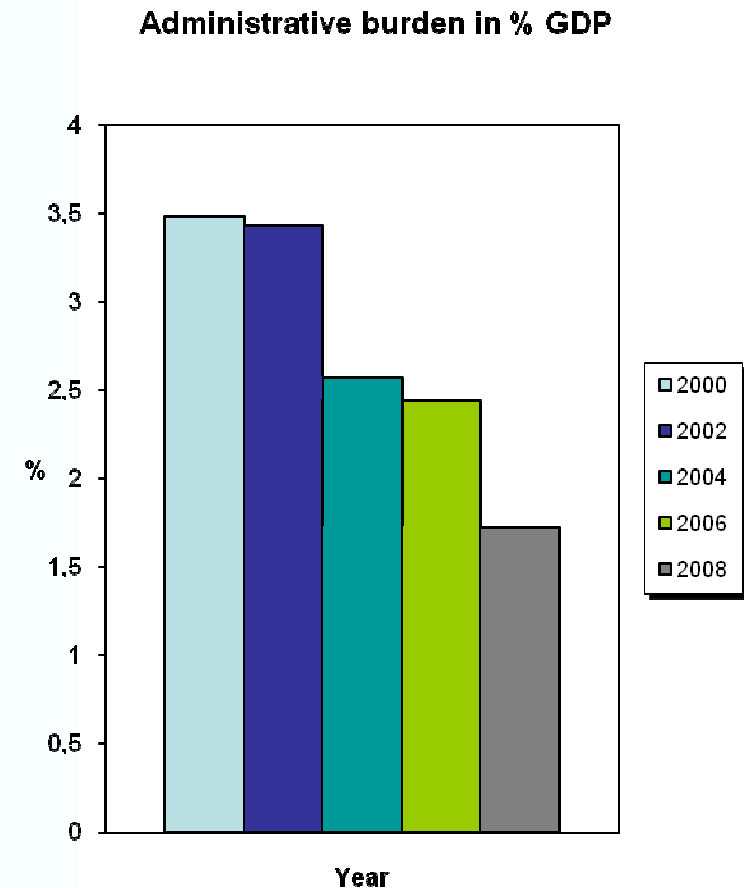
2. Regulation: slimmer and smarter

- Principles:
 1. Abrogate if possible
 2. Look for alternatives
 3. Simplify
- Means:
 1. Ex ante: Kafka-Test
= simplified RIA focusing on AB
 2. Ex post: simplification methodology

A long term investment

3. Evaluation

- Measurements
 - Biennial Survey (macroeconomic level)
 - 25 % reduction 2002 > 2006
 - 25 % reduction 2007 > 2012 ??
 - Kafka model = EU Standard Cost Model, but:
 - No extrapolation
 - Effective / potential
 - Net-measurement of all published regulation
 - No baseline measurement



Source: Federal Planning Bureau

4. (Re)-organisation

- BPR: business process reengineering
- Client-oriented approach
- Consultants as intermediates
- Principles:
 - Multi-channeling (no digital divide)
 - One stop shops (physical and electronic)
 - Pro-active intervention

5. Communication

- Inform about the objectives
- Communicate the new procedure (use a checklist, not a full text version)
- Use plain language and easy-to-understand forms
- Present global/integrated information (portal site)
- Also communication at programme level (brandname = KAFKA)



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SWOT analysis: Strengths

- An institutional body
- Political support at highest level (prime minister)
- Involvement of stakeholders
- In touch with problems in the field
- Brand name
- Tools
- Concrete projects
- Contact point – www.kafka.be
- Communication of success stories
- Pragmatism
- Multidisciplinary approach

SWOT analysis : Weaknesses

- Limited impact on ministries / agencies
- Not in charge of regulatory oversight
- Network of simplification agents

SWOT analysis : Opportunities

- Administrative simplification is hot
 - at all political levels
- Use of standardised tools such as Standard Cost Model will permit international benchmarking
- Brand name
- Reshape network of simplification agents into a broader community of believers

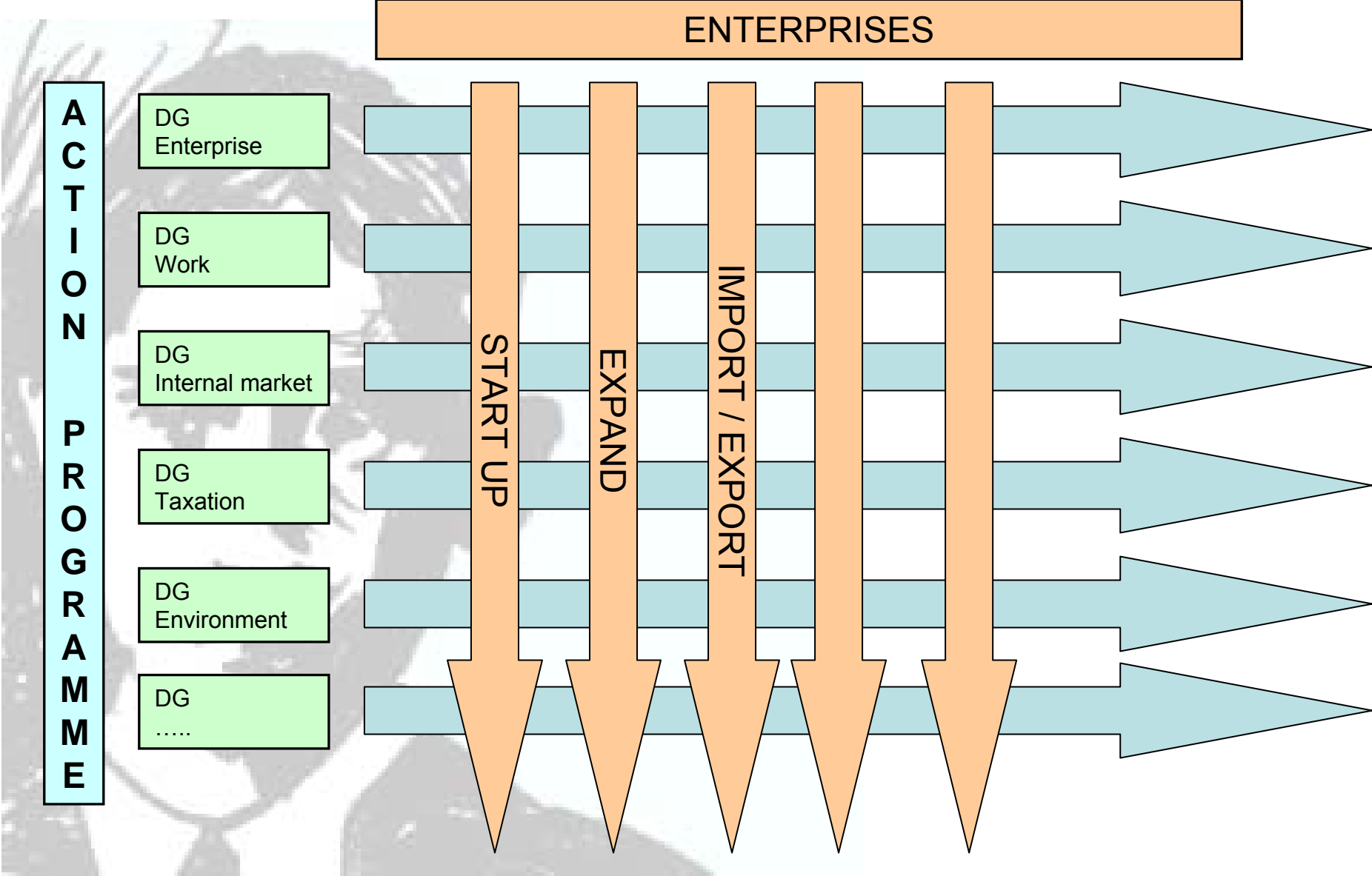
SWOT analysis : Threats

- Absorption into e-government programme
- Corporatism of stakeholders (defending vested interests)
- Abstract AB reduction target without concrete projects
- Academicism & bureaucracy
- Fear of change (fear of legal changes, fear to disturb balance rights/obligations, ...)
- Indistinct leadership and cost centre in horizontal projects
- Privacy debate

Better regulation: some personal remarks

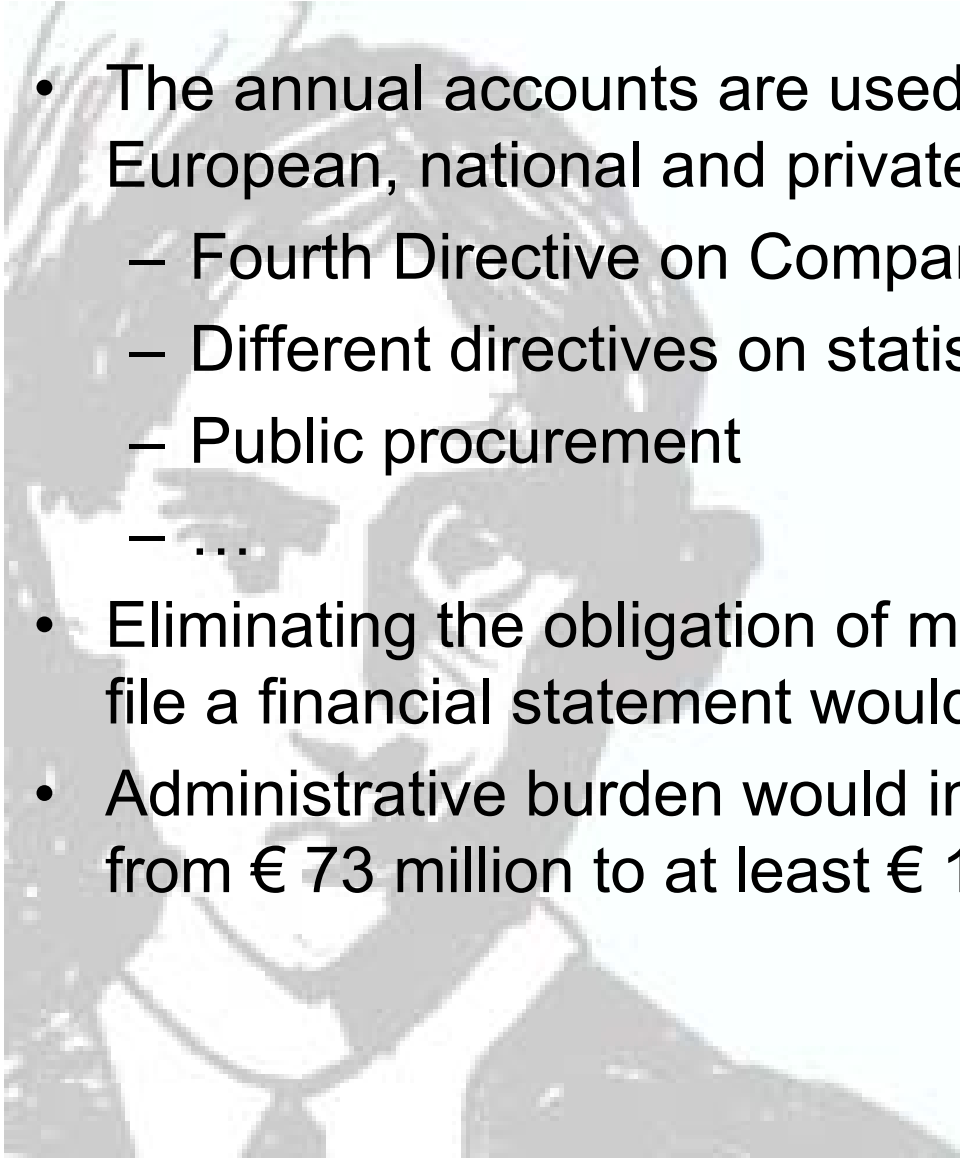
- Tools (RIA, SCM, ...) are becoming
 - to complicated
 - more important than results
 - very expensive (government spending)
- Irritation > administrative burden (statistics)
- Smart regulation = more creativity
- Need of a cross-over approach

Cross-over approach

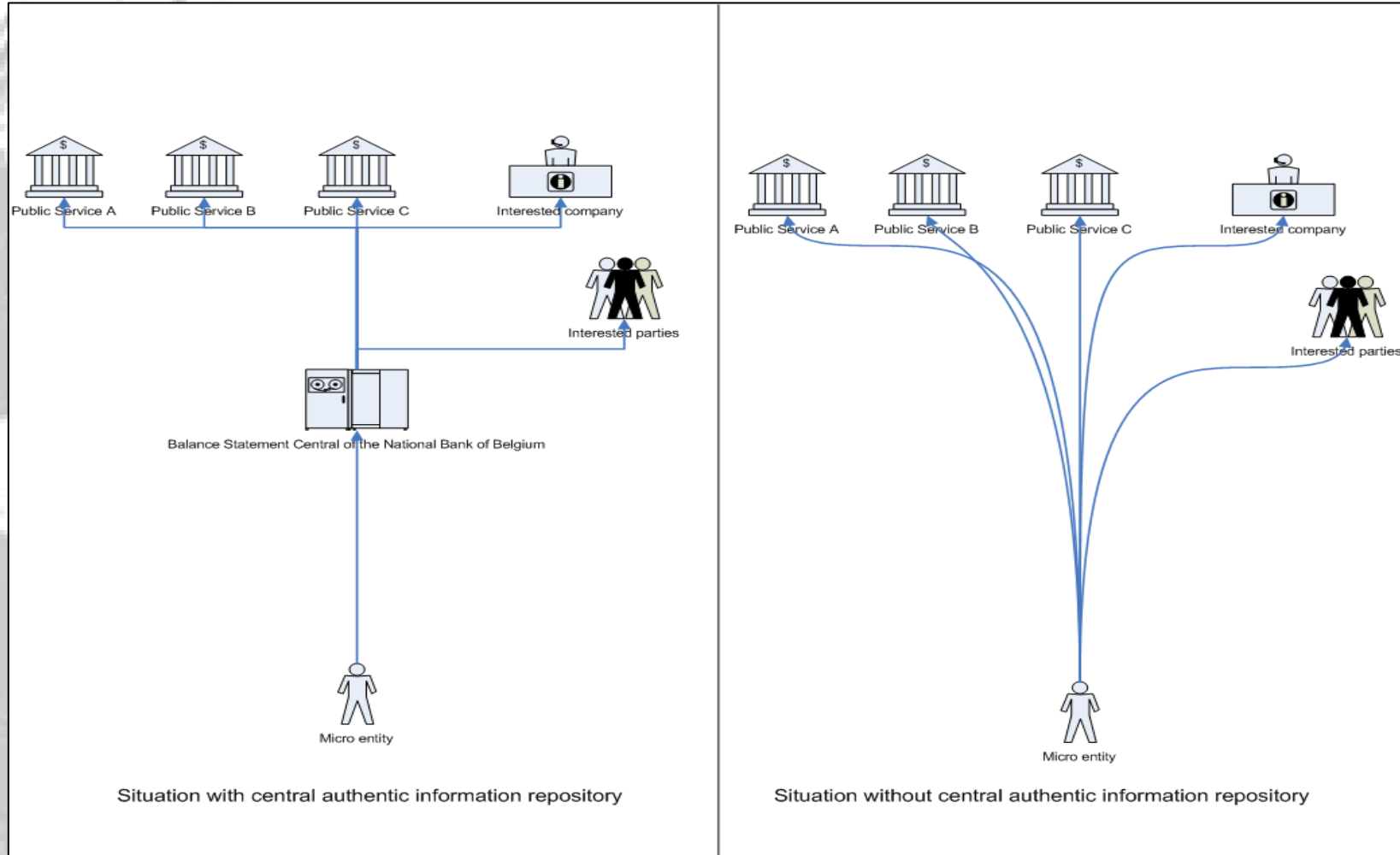


Example: EU-proposal - annual accounts

- The annual accounts are used in Belgium for different European, national and private obligations:
 - Fourth Directive on Company Law
 - Different directives on statistics
 - Public procurement
 - ...
- Eliminating the obligation of micro-entities (95 %) to annually file a financial statement would have the inverse effect !
- Administrative burden would increase from € 73 million to at least € 167 million !



Example: annual accounts (2)



Events during Belgian presidency

- DBER « Human rules », Ghent – 16/17 Juin 2010
- ICT 2010 « Digitally Driven », Brussels – 27/29 September 2010
- OECD « Regulatory Policy at the Crossroads », Paris – 28/29 October 2010
- SIMPLY 2010 « Administrative Simplification in Official Statistics », Ghent – 2/3 December 2010
- Communication (ASA, Bertelsmann St., FEB, ...), Brussels – 6 December 2010

**« SO BE GLAD
LIFE IS NOT A BUNDLE
OF PROBLEMS**

**ONLY IF WE DON'T PUT
TOO MANY RULES
IN TO IT »**



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Thank you

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