

Programme to cut red tape delivers results

The Commission's programme for the radical simplification of EU law is already delivering results: some 300 legal acts representing about 5,000 pages of the Official Journal have been removed from the roughly 95,000 pages of the Community acquis as a result of the legislative simplification process under way since October 2005. The 2007 Action Programme to cut administrative burdens is also bearing fruit.

Simplification of EU legislation aims at making rules clear, easy to understand and more user-friendly without watering down essential regulatory protection. The Commission's 'Second progress report on the strategy for the simplification of the regulatory environment' shows some concrete results directly affecting business and the general public and the elimination of 300 pieces of legislation with more to come.

Regularly updated since its launch in 2005, the simplification programme is now composed of about 164 initiatives covering all policy areas. The programme uses legislative techniques such as repeal, codification and recasting.

Progress so far:

- Since October 2005, the Commission has already put forward about 400 legal acts for repeal, modification or replacement.
- The Commission has adopted 80% of its 2007 simplification programme.
- More than half of the multi-annual rolling programme covering the 2005-2009 period has now been delivered. So far, the Commission has adopted 91 proposals composed of:
 - 24 so-called autonomous acts adopted via the comitology procedure;
 - 16 adopted by the co-legislators (Council and EP);

- 44 still pending before the co-legislators and
- 7 which are either reviews where there was no need for a legislative action, or merged initiatives.

The report which complements the Commission 'Strategic Review on Better Regulation' underlines that the Commission is effectively delivering on its commitments under the rolling programme.

2007 Action Programme

In January 2007, the Commission presented an ambitious Action Programme to achieve a 25% cut in administrative burdens in the EU by 2012. Substantial savings have been achieved during the first year of operation of the Action Programme.

Five fast track actions adopted in 2007 have resulted in savings for companies of an estimated 500 million euro by cutting red tape imposed on business. A further 800 million euro savings is expected to follow shortly.

For example, companies will no longer have to order costly expert reports concerning mergers or divisions of small enterprises unless there is a clear demand for them. Freight carriers will not have to carry separate transport documents and



statistical obligations will be simplified.

In the area of company law alone, 75 information obligations were identified that are particularly burdensome and seem outdated, excessive or duplicative. Company law is therefore the pilot priority area for cutting red tape and the Commission will table proposals in this field before the summer of 2008.

The Commission also announced its intention to come forward later in 2008 with a further wave of fast track proposals in areas such as easing information requirements in the transport, agriculture and maritime sectors.

The Commission also reported on how it is using impact assessments in the policy-making process.

All new Commission proposals undergo an impact assessment that provides a thorough analysis of all significant economic, social and environmental impacts.

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http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/key_issues/better_regulation/index_en.htm