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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Delivering on simplification, implementation and enforcement in the employment and social fields - <i>Exchange of views</i>

Delegations will find attached a Presidency steering note on the above subject, with a view to the exchange of views at the Council (EPSCO) on 1 December 2025.

Steering Note**Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council****Brussels, 1 December 2025***Delivering on simplification, implementation and enforcement in the employment and social fields*

Since Mario Draghi and Enrico Letta's reports in 2024, there has been a growing recognition of the need to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, including by reducing administrative burdens and regulatory complexities to help the EU to remain competitive in an increasingly complex and contested global order.

In the Budapest Declaration of 8 November 2024, the Heads of State and Government called for "*a simplification revolution ensuring a clear, simple and smart regulatory framework for businesses and drastically reduce administrative, regulatory and reporting burdens, in particular for SMEs*". The Competitiveness Compass¹ affirms that the foundation of Europe's competitiveness is its people and emphasizes that the next years' top priority must be the renewal of Europe's competitive strength.

More than half of the SMEs in Europe flag regulatory obstacles and the administrative burden as their greatest challenge. The Commission has set itself a target of reducing administrative burdens by at least 25% for all companies and 35% for SMEs².

To deliver on this target by way of simplifying legislation and reducing administrative burdens for businesses, as of November 2025, the Commission has put forward six omnibus packages – and announced further six packages. On 23 October, EU leaders reaffirmed the need for urgency on this agenda and called on the Commission and the co-legislators to accelerate their work, as a matter of utmost priority, on all files with a simplification or competitiveness dimension³.

¹ A Competitiveness Compass for the EU (2025).

² A simpler and faster Europe: Communication on implementation and simplification, pp. 6-7 (doc 6198/25).

³ European Council Conclusions, 23 October 2025

Delivering on the simplification, better regulation, implementation and enforcement agendas is important for the EU's businesses and workers alike. Indeed, as President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen expressed in her keynote speech at the 'One Year After the Draghi Report' Conference: *“When we talk about competitiveness we talk about jobs. It is about good salaries for people and good profits for companies. It is about our European way of life”*.

The realisation of this simplification agenda requires an even more careful assessment *whether* the EU should regulate, by the Commission, and *how* the EU should regulate, by the co-legislators and the Commission. When regulation is proposed, negotiated and adopted it needs to be ensured at all stages that the expected benefits justify the additional administrative costs. In addition, the existing *acquis* must – as part of the simplification process – constantly be screened to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Efforts to regulate, simplify, and improve enforcement should be made with a view to safeguarding high standards and ensuring that all workers have quality jobs and decent working conditions that contribute to growth, welfare, and prosperity in the EU and with a view to upholding our social standards and a strong social dialogue.

With these premises in mind, the Executive Vice President of the European Commission for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness has published her Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement for 2025⁴, which she will present to the Council (EPSCO) in its meeting of December 2025. Particular emphasis is placed on implementation and enforcement, in addition to a comprehensive stress test of the EU social *acquis* by the end of the mandate.

⁴ [2025 Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu - European Commission](#)

Questions for discussion

The delegations are kindly invited to present their views on one or more of the following questions. Each delegation will be allocated a maximum speaking time of 3 minutes:

- 1. In your view, which measures should the European Commission take, vis-à-vis new proposals and existing regulation, in order to reach its aim to reduce administrative burdens by 25 % by 2030 and ensure that the social acquis remains relevant, proportionate and fit for purpose?*
 - 2. As co-legislator, what can Member States do within the EPSCO Council to ensure that new rules and other EU instruments are appropriate and proportionate to their objectives and deliver where it matters most for citizens?*
 - 3. What national or EU measures for implementation and enforcement of EU legislation can contribute to delivering on their objectives, and ultimately to advance a more competitive Union?*
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