COUNCIL OF
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INFORMATION NOTE
from : Presidency
to : Council
Subject : Better Regulation - presentation of practical exercise on sharing good examples

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Presidency on the above subject which will be dealt with under "Any other business", agenda item 14g, at the Competitiveness Council on 3-4 December 2009.
"Better Regulation -presentation of practical exercise on sharing good examples"

Initial remarks
The regulatory environment in which businesses operate influences, in one way or another, their possibilities to be competitive and their ability to grow and create new jobs. Businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, devote a considerable amount of time to dealing with administrative requirements. By reducing red tape and ensuring that regulations are simple, cost-efficient and well-adapted to their purpose, we can make it easier for entrepreneurs and businesses to focus more on their core business.

Bearing this in mind is probably more important than ever during the current difficult economic times and in our work towards economic recovery. We must, on both national and EU level, do our best to give the business community a chance to thrive and provide its contribution to recovery. Better Regulation can play an important role in tackling the downturn and providing important tools for recovery – and challenges well met can create new opportunities. By applying Better Regulation principles, we can design smart regulatory frameworks that bring benefits for businesses, simplify the lives of our citizens and make our public administrations more efficient.

Through sharing and promoting good examples of simplification and reduction of administrative burdens affecting businesses, each Member State can contribute with important input to our ongoing work for cutting red tape and creating a better regulatory environment at EU level as well as nationally.

The practical exercise
As announced by the Presidency at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 24 September 2009, a practical exercise has been carried out this autumn. The Member States were invited to provide, on a voluntary basis, good examples of better regulation measures (simplification/reduction of administrative burdens), aiming at facilitating conditions for businesses. The measures were supposed to be either recently implemented or currently in the process of implementation and they could be strictly national or related to EU legislation. It was up to each Member State to decide what types of measures to share as good examples.
All 27 Member States have shared two good examples each. The Presidency will separately send out a note in which the good examples are presented in the form in which they have been provided by the Member States, containing a short description, aim and effects of the better regulation measures.

The outcome of the exercise
The many good examples highlight concrete measures undertaken throughout the EU, aiming at facilitating conditions for enterprises in their day-to-day business. Several measures simplify the administrative processes and reduce the businesses’ costs for creating, storing or transmitting information prompted by regulatory requirements, for example through different kinds of e-Government solutions. Some measures shorten the handling processes or waiting times, while others focus on increased co-operation between authorities, improved service and availability of information for businesses, etc.

Invitation to continue to share good practices
Better Regulation requires cooperation between the EU institutions and the Member States. It is a joint responsibility and it can not be done without all parties being committed to do their best. In order to come up with new ideas and measures to tackle current and future challenges we need new inspiration. By sharing our experiences of the work on better regulation we can inspire each other. The Presidency therefore considers that the Member States should be invited to continue to share and promote their good examples on better regulation measures. This is needed in the ongoing work to reduce the administrative burdens at EU level as well as nationally in order to achieve a significant change for companies in their day-to-day business.