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Thematic Paper Series

Simplification of administrative procedures- Reduction of administrative burdens (AB)

Thematic Paper

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1. Introduction

This thematic paper focuses on the third pillar theme of the Medium Term Plan, a "Public Administration connecting to the citizen (responsive)", examining the issue of the simplification of procedures (administrative simplification), namely the cutting of red tape and the resulting reduction of Administrative Burdens (AB).

The Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the EU conducted a survey so as to analyse EUPAN members' approach to simplifying administrative procedures, which can have a positive impact on the quality of services provided to citizens and businesses alike.

EUPAN members were asked to share their best practices on how they put simplification action plans in place, which body or entity is competent at national or sub-national level to initiate such projects and what factors in each country's framework may impede the adoption and implementation of further reduction of administrative burdens. In addition to these issues, member states were invited to elaborate on the legislative or other tools and methods they have at their disposal in order to simplify administrative procedures and fight against bureaucracy.

EUPAN members were also asked to share their experience as regards the different kinds of one-stop shops they have established and the tasks these structures are entitled to carry out. Special attention was paid to the main focus of EUPAN members' simplification action plans, in other words, whether the initiatives mainly aim at citizens, businesses or the public sector. It was also important to find out to what extent EUPAN members put an equal effort into simplifying licensing procedures (before a business operates) as well as into simplifying businesses' information obligations throughout their lifecycle.

2. Data analysis

The EUPAN Hellenic Presidency team prepared a questionnaire consisting of 7 main groups of questions as well as the Discussion Note which were circulated to the EUPAN members. Twenty five (25) responses have been received in total and analysed by the Presidency. Of the 25 answers received, 22 of them came

from EU member states (**Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Austria**) 1 from the **European Commission** and 2 from other EUPAN countries (**Norway, Turkey**). This thematic paper incorporates survey findings from the data analysis of the completed questionnaires and insights from the presentations and comments made during the IPSG/HRWG meeting in Athens on 7-8 April, 2014. As regards the completed questionnaires, it has to be clarified that a number of questions given to EUPAN members, were open-ended, therefore the selection of a variety of answers from the respondents was possible, according to the circumstances and the existing framework of every EUPAN country.

The questions forwarded to EUPAN members were the following:

- What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?
- What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?
- What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.
- Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?
- What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?
- As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

- Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

3. Theme presentation-Simplification of administrative procedures/ reduction of Administrative Burdens (AB)

The term "simplification of procedures" (administrative simplification) refers to the systematic and continuous review of legal acts and regulations (including ministerial acts, joint ministerial decisions, circulars etc) as well as to the restructuring of administrative practices/procedures in accordance with the principle of efficiency, effectiveness and provision of quality services to the citizens and businesses alike.

Administrative simplification is a regulatory quality tool to review and simplify administrative regulations. Administrative regulations are paperwork and formalities through which governments collect information and intervene in individual economic decisions. They are different from economic regulations, which intervene directly in market decisions, or from social regulations, which protect public interests[1].

During the last couple of decades, member states have been active in implementing administrative simplification projects with a view to cutting red tape, rationalising processes and consequently taking burden off citizens and businesses. This happens as the removal of unnecessary burdens by definition does not go against the policy objectives of regulations. These goals are only fulfilled more efficiently by improving the way a regulation is enforced and complied with. Removing obligations that are not necessary does not mean changing policy goals[2]. This is the main reason why administrative simplification itself tends to be very popular across the political spectrum. Such popularity of this policy initiative is due to the fact that, in theory, administrative simplification aims at reducing burdensome, obsolete and unnecessary formalities and paperwork. Almost all EUPAN member countries have witnessed the announcement, by their respective governments, of major simplification projects which have duly attracted the attention of the media.

However, once administrative simplification projects are made concrete, consensus among stakeholders and speedy decision-making seem to be less easy to achieve than previously envisaged. A lot of reasons for less bold and extensive steps are put forward from three major stakeholders: first, from the policy making bodies (Ministries) and the licensing bodies (competent public services-Municipal and Regional authorities), that are keen on preserving their role as gatekeepers of the existing regulatory framework in the name of a

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[1]OECD (2006), *Cutting Red Tape: National Strategies for Administrative Simplification* (p. 20), OECD Publishing, Paris

[2] OECD (2010), *Why is administrative Simplification so complicated?* (p. 17), OECD Publishing, Paris.

potential negative impact on public interest (environment, health of consumers, land planning, access to the seashore etc); second, from the entrepreneurs already having undergone successfully the burdensome, red tape procedures and who now seem to be sceptical of further liberalisation; and third, from parts (stakeholders) of the civil society (associations, interest groups etc) and the epistemic community who are supporters of the introduction of even stricter standards, thus of additional harder regulations and procedures, aiming at fulfilling their own policy agenda objectives.

As administrative simplification and reduction of Administrative Burdens are viewed as complex issues to deal with, requiring adequate coordination at all levels of the state bureaucracy, a number of member states have transferred the overall competency of simplification policy and AB reduction to a central governmental body usually the PM Office, the Ministry dealing with Public Administration Reform or the Ministry of Finance etc. Other member states, perceiving administrative simplification not as a single issue agenda itself but rather as one which permeates multiple policy fields, have assigned this task to multiple state agencies which are competent for specific fields. A few member states have also created *ad hoc* advisory commissions/bodies with the aim of providing expertise to the decision making bodies (measurement of AB, ex post impact assessment) and thus pushing forward the simplification agenda.

An illustrative example of such an advisory body is ACTAL, the Dutch Advisory Board on Regulatory Burden, an independent and external advisory body that advises government and Parliament on how to minimize regulatory burdens for firms, citizens, and professional workers in healthcare, education, safety and welfare. ACTAL was established by decree in 2000. In 2011, it was given the competency to scrutinise proposed legislation on all forms of regulatory costs. It aspires to contribute to a society in which government achieves its goals while minimizing the hindrance of regulation. ACTAL bases its opinions on signals from society. It thereby seeks new ways to reduce the regulatory burdens in the Netherlands. ACTAL challenges regulators to take up these opportunities[3].

Administrative simplification is not a one-off challenge; on the contrary, it is a long lasting, constant process with results that must be visible to the beneficiaries. That is why, nowadays, there is a tendency not to rely entirely on quantitative methods (i.e. Standard Cost Model-SCM) but to complement such techniques with qualitative ones (i.e. evaluating the usefulness of a regulation or a formality, assessing the "irritation" factor of an obligation etc).

The aforementioned Standard Cost Model SCM is a widely recognized method to calculate administrative burdens, which has been applied in many international projects from 2002 onwards. The model breaks down administrative costs imposed by legal acts into components that can be assessed with reasonable accuracy. The tool is characterised by the economic

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[3]http://www.actal.nl/english/about-actal/

approach to law-making and regulation. Its aim is to identify all obligations arising from specific legislation, which render the Law and procedures particularly aggravating to the functioning of the market and the economy[4]. As for the "irritation" factors/costs, this term refers to the costs that are subjectively felt by the regulated subject as annoyance caused to him by not being able to see and understand the rationale of the obligation or not being able to conform to the objectives of a given regulation[5].

A critical factor for the establishment of realistic objectives and the finding of effective ways to meeting these is the involvement of the stakeholders affected by administrative simplification in the creation and implementation of the strategy. Furthermore, once these stakeholders are motivated and involved, they can promote their work and, indirectly the administrative simplification strategy, to third parties thus multiplying the existing communication capacities. For example, business communities have often participated in cutting red tape programmes to fuel, monitor and act as 'ambassadors' for the work undertaken. This approach is one of the pillars to fighting against resistance to change. It is especially relevant to find 'ambassadors' that have access and credibility in spheres from where resistance is most likely to spring, or where public administration is less able to convey its messages. This active involvement in the general policy for administrative simplification promotes a sense of ownership that is disseminated to other members of the business community[6].

With regard to simplifying administrative procedures and cutting red tape, there is a wide range of available tools of legal or other nature, which are used by member states. Among these tools one can find the abolishment of a licensing system, the elimination of a number of required documents in a procedure, the shortening of maximum response time, a wider application of the "silent-is-consent" rule, the replacing of a required document with a written statement, the making use of ICT methods or of one-stop shops, the sharing of information among state agencies so that the applicant does not provide the corresponding documents, the setting of a threshold below which there is no obligation for a business to provide certain information to the authorities etc

Greece has recently taken the initiative to abolish 25 licensing systems that have to do with low risk business activities and to replace them with the applicant's notification to the public authorities. This notification system was presented in the IPSG meeting held in Athens on 7-8 April, 2014 as an innovative approach to cutting red tape that has a direct beneficial effect to the target group it concerns.

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[4]OECD (2014), *Overview Report, Measurement and Reduction of Administrative Burdens in 13 sectors in Greece* (p. 25-26), OECD
[5]OECD (2010), *Why is administrative Simplification so complicated?* (p. 43), OECD Publishing, Paris
[6] OECD (2009) *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies: Guidance to Policy Makers* (p. 44), OECD Publishing, Paris

As a by-pass to the red tape and the overlapping competencies among state agencies, several member states have also established, since the last decade, one-stop shops that initially acted as providers of reliable public information and gradually began issuing a number of administrative products (licenses, permits, certificates etc). Their rationale was that the client (citizen or business) is not supposed to know how the public administration works or how competencies are shared between state agencies but he/she should rather have to deal with a "single-window" representing public administration as a whole. At EU-level, such one-stop shops called Points of Single Contact (PSCs), have been set up by all member states, be them physical or electronic, in view of the implementation of the Directive 2006/123/EC[7].

Generally, the concept of One-Stop Shops is to enable clients a single access point to information and service transactions. Key elements which governments have sought to address in the design and delivery of a customer centric model include[8]:

- Speed – the time taken to deliver a service should be the shortest possible for both the customer and the agency while still ensuring outcomes are delivered right the first time.
- Engagement– the way in which services are delivered should be seen as citizen-centric.
- Responsive – there should be an intelligent mechanism in place to address any variation in meeting service levels and drive any changes required.
- Value – the customer needs to believe that the One-Stop Shop is cost effective, and value is driven by customer outcomes, not agency or department processes.
- Integration – a One-Stop Shop should be seamlessly integrated, there should be no 'wrong door' policy for the customer.

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[7] The Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market establishes a general legal framework promoting the exercise of the freedom of establishment for service providers and the free movement of services, while maintaining a high quality of services. It is based on the following four pillars: to ease freedom of establishment for providers and the freedom of provision of services in the EU; to strengthen rights of recipients of services as users of the latter; to promote the quality of services; to establish effective administrative cooperation among the Member States. The Directive covers a wide group of service activities which represent around 40 % of the EU's GDP and employment. It covers services such as: construction and craft industries; retail trade; the majority of regulated professions; business services; tourism; real estate services; private education. The Directive is to apply in the following two cases: during the permanent establishment of undertakings, specifically when a particular entrepreneur or undertaking wishes to set up a permanent establishment (a company or branch) in its own country or in another EU country; during cross-border service provision, specifically when an undertaking already established in an EU country wishes to provide services in another EU country, without creating a permanent establishment or when a consumer resident in an EU country wishes to be provided with a service from a supplier in another EU country.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/job_creation_measures/l33237_en.htm

[8] PWC (2012), *Transforming the citizen experience One stop shop for public services*, pwc.au.com

- Choice– there should be multiple channels for service delivery, so that customers can have 'channels of choice', depending on specific needs at specific times.
- Experience – personalisation of service is necessary to ensure that customers' experiences are on a par with what they are receiving in the private sector.

## 3.1 Which governmental body/entity is in charge of the simplification policy?

In the first question, we sought to find out which body/entity has overall competence for the simplification of administrative procedures in the member states, whether this body operates at national or sub-national level and what number of such bodies, if these are than one, are involved in that policy field.

Twelve (12) EUPAN members (**Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Austria**) have entrusted the task of the coordinator as far as the reduction of Administrative Burdens is concerned to their Ministries of Finance or their Ministries of Administration & Interior, that is, to Ministries that have a central and horizontal- leading role in the implementation of governmental policies. For the majority of the respondents, the Ministry of Finance was the one responsible for taking burden off businesses and for facilitating access to the market for potential competitors. On the contrary, the Ministry dealing with Administration or Interior issues seems to be more involved in the reduction of Administrative Burdens on citizens.

Seven (7) EUPAN members (**Germany, Turkey, France, Portugal, Latvia, Italy, Bulgaria**) have responded that they have entrusted the simplification policy to top level bodies close to the PM office, the State Chancellery or the Council of Ministers. It seems that administrative simplification is a priority issue requiring at the same time a lot of resources and a coordination that only such top level bodies can deliver. In addition to this, initiatives deriving from such top level bodies have the credentials of a previous common governmental agreement, thus facilitating their acceptance by stakeholders.

Nine (9) EUPAN members (**Germany, Belgium -federal level, Lithuania, Denmark, Cyprus, France, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria**) indicated that their simplification agenda is dealt with by multiple entities whereas three (3) **(Croatia, Denmark, Norway)** stated that each ministry is responsible for its own simplification proposals. Only a few EUPAN members responded that they have a single entity dealing with their simplification policy.
The data collected seems to suggest that EUPAN members tend to rely on leading Ministries or /and on top level bodies, resulting in the existence of multiple entities being competent for simplification policy.
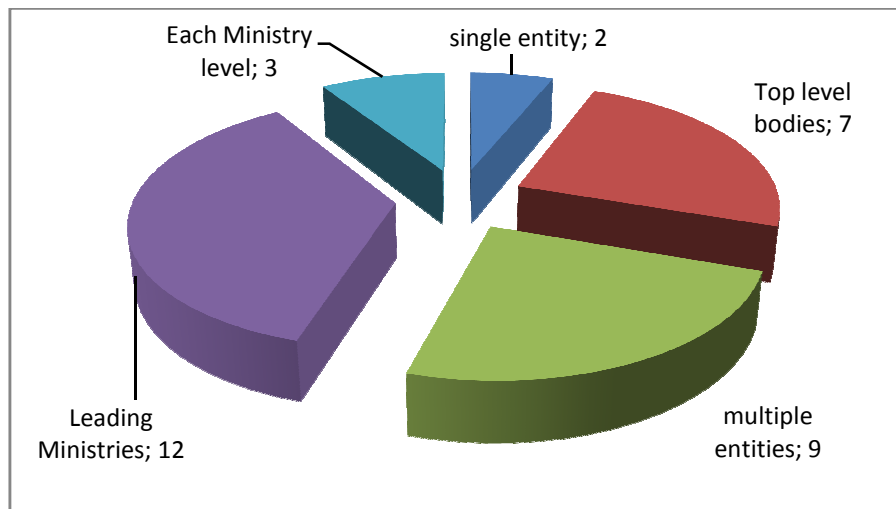
In **Germany** there are 3 main top level bodies that are competent for simplification: 1) The Better Regulation Unit (BRU) within the Federal Chancellery that coordinates the overall Bureaucracy Reduction policy of the Federal Government. 2) The State Minister to the Federal Chancellor who is assisted by the BRU and acts as a coordinator for Federal Government's policy on Better Regulation and Bureaucracy reduction, working in close cooperation with Federal Ministries, stakeholder associations and representatives of German Lander and municipalities 3) The Nationaler Normenkontrollrat (Regulatory Control Council-NKR) that was established to act as a "watchdog" over the assessment of the entire "compliance costs" of Federal Government's regulatory proposals. The NKR scrutinises whether the compliance costs to be incurred by citizens, business and the public administration as a result of new regulations are described in a comprehensive and methodically correct manner and whether the new proposals' political objectives are achieved at the least possible cost.

Similarly, **France** has entrusted the task of the simplification to top level bodies, more specifically to a) the Secretariat General for Government (SGG) within the Prime Minister's office, which monitors the "legal" aspect of the simplification and administrative burden reduction policy, to b) the Secretariat General for Government Modernization within the Prime minister's office which monitors the "procedural" side of simplification and administrative burden reduction policy (both bodies have set up common "team for simplification") and to c) the Board for administrative burden reduction and simplification for the businesses established in January 2014 and co-chaired by a Member of Parliament and a business head. Among the members of this Board are businesses' heads, experts and senior Government employees whereas its competence is to oversee the smooth implementation of streamlining measures, to check on policies' outcomes and to report results to the public.

On the contrary, in the **Netherlands,** each ministry is responsible for reducing administrative burdens in their domain (that is the legislation under their jurisdiction). Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is the co-ordinating Ministry for simplification for citizens and the Ministry of Economic Affairs is responsible for simplification in the business sector. In **Luxembourg,** the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reform is responsible for the coordination of AB reduction in cooperation with the whole of Government.

3.2 Factors impeding the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans

Taking as a fact that cutting red tape needs an arduous and long-lasting effort, and that various stakeholders, such as the licensing bodies or the Ministries (actors proposing legislation), are often reluctant to engage in the process, we tried to identify those factors/circumstances that play the role of the obstacles for the adoption and implementation of further simplification action plans.

Nine (9) EUPAN members (**Poland, Lithuania, Turkey, Italy, France, Greece, Netherlands, Cyprus, Luxembourg**) mention inertia and aversion to change as obstacles.
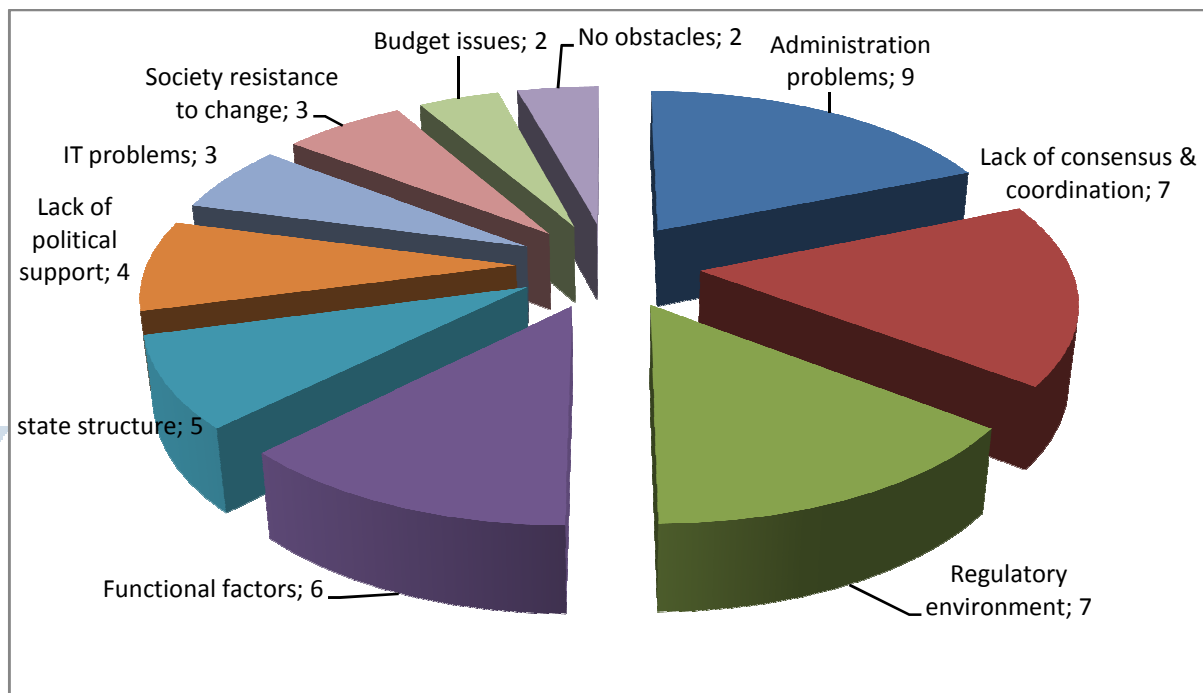
The lack of consensus and coordination among governmental bodies as regards what, if and how to simplify as well as the existence of silos were indicated by another seven (7) EUPAN members (**Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Norway, Turkey, Lithuania, France, Portugal**) as major obstacles.

For seven (7) EUPAN members (**Poland, Bulgaria, European Commission, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Bulgaria**) complexity of the legislative/regulatory framework (rigid and overlapping regulations, scattered requirements within the existing legislation etc) is another significant barrier that does not facilitate bold steps.

Functional factors, such as lack of adequate Human Resources, lack of strategic planning, poor service design as well as budget issues seem to be particularly significant obstacles to the way for further simplification by six (6) respondents (**Estonia, European Commission, Latvia, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg**).

Similarly, countries with a federal or a strong regional system (**Germany, Belgium, Spain, Bulgaria, Austria**) consider the state structure as a further barrier for simplification, as central government options and implementation action plans have to be negotiated further with sub-national actors. Political commitment, leadership, ownership and support seem also to be crucial elements.

As **Turkey** has clearly put it, political cycles do also impede the conception and implementation of a long term simplification strategy and goals. Instead, short term measures are more likely to gain political support.

Pie chart labels:
- Administration problems; 9
- Lack of consensus & coordination; 7
- Regulatory environment; 7
- Functional factors; 6
- state structure; 5
- Lack of political support; 4
- IT problems; 3
- Society resistance to change; 3
- Budget issues; 2
- No obstacles; 2

According to **Cyprus**, a factor that impedes the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans is the fact that procedures are not clearly recorded in many Ministries/ Departments of the Public Service; thus, the need to record procedures for simplification purposes may be perceived as time consuming. Another factor that impedes the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans is the culture in the public service, which is not so positive to changes in habits and in the way everyday work is carried out.

As far as **Italy** is concerned, its administrative environment is described as still suffering from a weakness in implementing simplification measures. Even when measures are adopted, results cannot be achieved if public administrations do not apply these measures and businesses are not interested to use them.

The **European Commission** summarised the main obstacles in: 1) lack of commitment of key actors (the success of the implementation of the BPR proposals depends on the "buy in" of the staff and management involved in the processes reviewed. Without the engagement of senior management, actions aiming at changing the management culture will encounter serious difficulties to be successfully implemented), 2) inadequate level of detail 3) dependence on consultants (all modelling and analyses are assigned to consultants) 4) nature of EU regulation (the regulatory framework of the Commission may be perceived in certain circumstances as an obstacle / a constraint for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Moreover, process of amending regulation may be perceived as too cumbersome).

Norway, in this respect, reported as a further obstacle the need to adapt laws and regulations to the modern digital way of living. Other legal barriers that contribute to unnecessary administrative burdens for citizens and government, is unclear language in laws and regulations that leads to unclear written language in various forms, manuals etc. The Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) survey from 2011 (Difi-rapport 2011:3) also showed that one of the barriers to digitizing public services had to do with the organizational and technological coordination between government agencies and the lack of collaboration across organizational boundaries (for example, using data from different public registers, like the national population register etc).

Greece regards inertia and aversion to change and reform to be an inherent characteristic of the Public Administration. Civil servants themselves are rather reluctant to get out of their 'Comfort Zone'. Instead, they prefer to preserve the existing status quo, while they seem to lack the administrative capacities needed for promoting simplification often pretending to safeguard public interest.

3.3 Simplification tools and methods

EUPAN members were invited to specify and describe the tools provided for in their legal framework, which they use when simplifying and restructuring processes. For instance, according to the Greek legal framework, a process can be simplified by eliminating a number of required documents, by shortening the maximum response time for service delivery, by replacing required documents with a solemn declaration (written statement) of the applicant[9], by using either ICT or one-stop shops, by establishing the sharing of information among public service so that the applicant does not have to submit a relevant document himself in the public services etc.

More specifically, ten (10) EUPAN members (**Norway, Slovak Republic, Greece, France, Portugal, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia**) replied that they make use of the shortening of the response time for service delivery, nine (9) (**Turkey, Slovak Republic, Italy, Greece, France, Portugal, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary**) eliminate some of the required documents for the carrying out of a procedure, eight (8) (**Spain, Italy, Estonia,**

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[9] The replacement of a required document with a solemn declaration (written statement) of the applicant is a sort of auto-certification. It means that whenever a citizen or business needs to give information –for instance, data on one's civil status or registration with different bodies, a simple declaration is sufficient. The burden of the evidence lies with the authority which has requested the information: if it has any reasons to suspect the truth or accuracy of the declaration, the authority should enquire with the relevant public office. In order to be successful this kind of reform needs good information and training of street-level officials and setting up appropriate systems of ex-post control in order to avoid fraud and/or perception that fraud is increasing to the detriment of honest citizens and businesses (Jaques Ziller, *Developing Administrative Simplification: selected experiences from recent administrative reforms in EU institutions and Member States*, Note to the Seminar on Administrative Simplification 2008 SIGMA)

Greece, France, Portugal, Poland, Bulgaria) have recently begun to abolish some licensing systems and replace them with simpler information or notification obligations.

The sharing of information among public services either electronically (email or access to the relevant database) or by fax seems to be one of the available options for six (6) members **(Croatia, Turkey, Greece, Slovenia, Latvia, Italy)**, whereas replacement of required documents in a procedure with written statements of the applicant is widely used by three (3) members **(Poland, Greece, Turkey)**. The "silence-is-consent" tool (or *Lex silencio positivo*) is used by two (2) members **(Portugal, Greece)**. According to this principle, a permit or an administrative product is deemed to be legally issued in those cases that the competent authority has not taken a timely decision upon an application.

The 'Only Once" principle is primarily followed by five (5) EUPAN members **(European Commission, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, France)** whereas the "One-in one out" rule has been introduced in three (3) EUPAN members **(Lithuania, France, Austria)**. The first principle has to do with the obligation of the applicant or of any interested party to notify the public administration of a change in his/her recorded data "only once", thus eliminating the need for citizens and businesses alike to provide public administration with the same information over and over again. The "One-in one-out" rule means that the introduction of a new legislative instrument has to be offset by the removal of an existing instrument of equal value of regulatory cost. Last but not least, two (2) EUPAN members **(Hungary, Bulgaria)** declared that they merge procedures integrating one into another.

Overall, tools such as the shortening of the response time, the elimination of paper formalities and required documents as well as the sharing of information are widely used by the majority of the EUPAN members. These aforementioned tools and methods can be referred to as the "classic" simplification tools/methods that aim at improving procedures and at easing the burden off citizens and businesses. Nevertheless, such techniques do not radically question the rationale of the existence of the procedures they are associated with.

Nowadays, more innovative simplification tools, aiming at radically restructuring a procedure or at paradigm shifting, seem to gain momentum. There is a clear indication, for example, that a lot of EUPAN member states have started to reconsider the necessity of their existing licensing systems for low to medium risk activities. In this respect, some of the EUPAN member states have indeed proceeded to the abolishment of some of licensing formalities and to their replacement with a mere notification or equally simple information obligations. Other innovative approaches such as the "Only once" as well as the "One in-One out" principles have started making inroads in several EUPAN members.
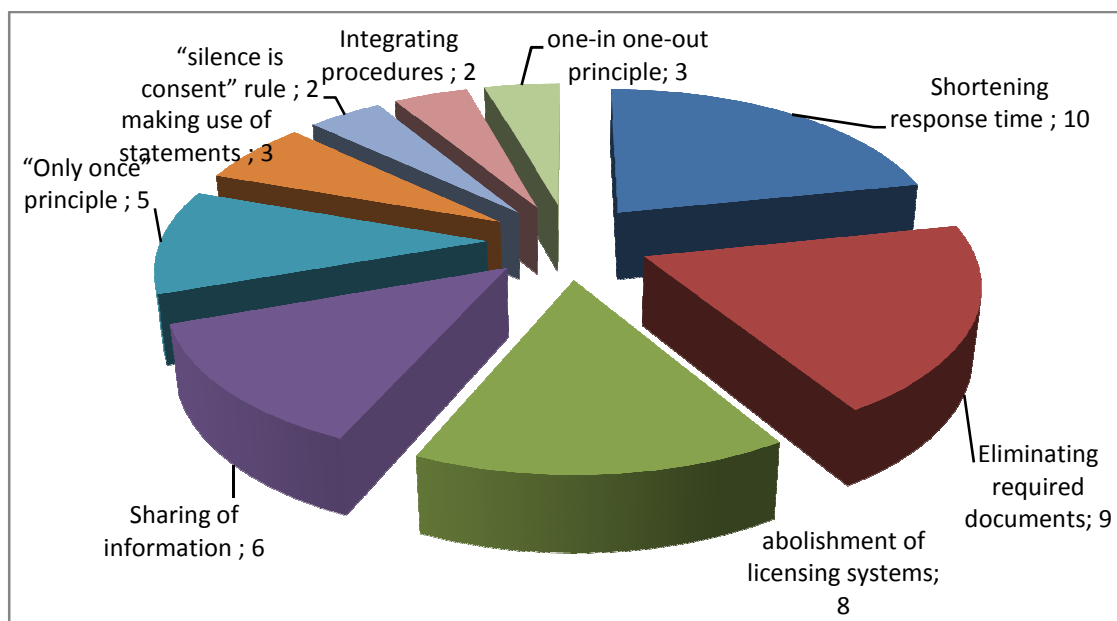
Beside the above simplification tools and methods which are primarily of administrative nature, some functional tools (ICT, Better Regulation, Measurement of AB etc) have been also reported to be very common among EUPAN members.

First, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as service provision through internet, semantics, e-signature, e-identification, fully electronic processing of procedures, interoperability, are of utmost importance for twenty (20) EUPAN members (**Turkey, Slovak Republic, Croatia, Greece, France, Denmark, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Belgium, Estonia, European Commission, Austria, Norway, Lithuania, Cyprus, Netherlands, Luxembourg**), as they definitely facilitate simplification as well as process re-engineering.

Second, Better Regulation principles seem to play an important role for twelve (12) EUPAN countries (**Germany, Poland, Belgium, Slovenia, Sweden, European Commission, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia, Estonia, Netherlands, Luxembourg**). According to their replies, Better Regulation methods such as ex ante –ex post Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), reduction or abrogation of useless regulations, improvement of the quality of laws, codification and merger of legal texts, also aim at simplifying and cutting red tape in an indirect way.

In addition to the above, the measurement of AB has proved to be another useful tool for seven (7) members (**Belgium, Lithuania, Slovenia, Norway, Estonia, Cyprus, Austria**), while the setting up of panels of end-users/stakeholders with a view to co-designing simplification measures (with the Public Administration) is another method used by four (4) members (**France, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden**). The panels of end users/stakeholders

are intended to consult the respective administrations on the utility and effectiveness of the proposed solutions as well as on their feasibility at the implementation stage. Eight (8) members (**European Commission, Slovak Republic, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, France, Luxembourg, Turkey**) stated that carrying out of administrative procedures through One-stop shops (OSSs) is another tool widely used for taking burden off citizens and businesses, while two (2) respondents (**Greece, Turkey**) also use the lowering of competence levels as a further simplification tool.
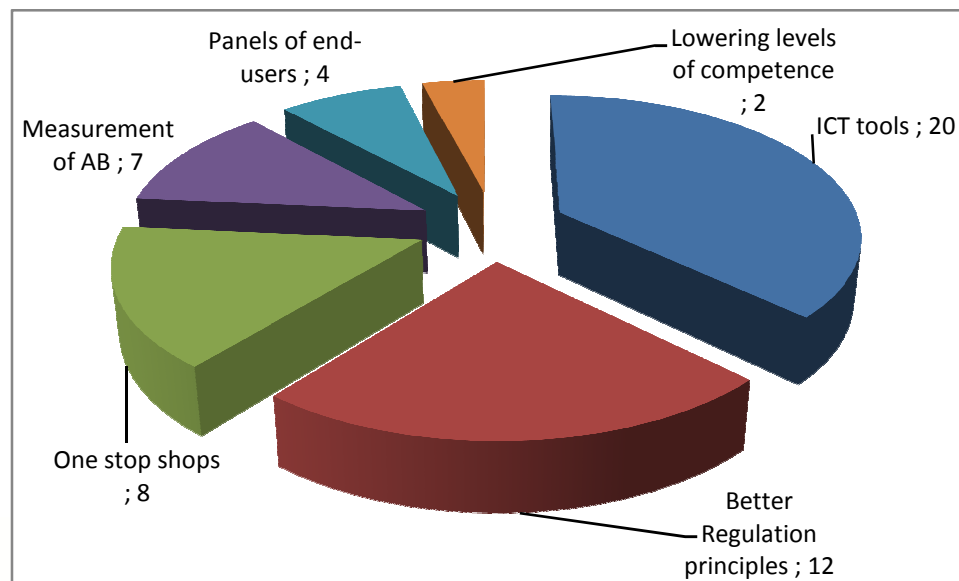
Slovenia considers reduction of the extent and complexity of individual steps of a procedure to be of importance. The acquisition of data available in public records reduces the documents the investor is required to submit, as data is acquired in electronic form and connected to databases on applications. **Slovenia** also favours the reduction of steps of a given procedure. Some steps may run in parallel. Such an example is the acquisition of opinions and review of an application's adequacy that are both needed for the environment protection consent; thus it is reasonable for them to run in parallel and to enable the payment of administrative procedures by payment order and electronic transfer – payment via the internet by credit card, special payment order by means of electronic banking.

In **Hungary**, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice issued instructions providing guidance on how to simplify 228 administrative procedures. The review teams had to choose one of the following outcomes (a-c): a. eliminate the procedure; b. integrate the procedure with another one; c. reduce its processing time; or achieve at least two of the following outcomes (d-h): d. enhanced and user-friendlier communication between the office and the clients; e. re-design of the process; f. reduction in the number of actors intervening in the process; g. increased use of IT solutions; h. reduced documentation and information requirement.

Sweden seems to widely use the Better regulation principles when simplifying. The Swedish Ordinance on Impact Analysis of Regulation stipulates the assessment of the financial impact and of other consequences of the regulations and provides stakeholders with an opportunity to express their own opinion on the issue and on the impact analysis. The Impact analysis basically consists of the following steps 1. Description of the problem and of the alternative solutions   2. Information on the parties that will be affected, on the financial and other consequences of the regulation 3. Comparison of impacts of alternative regulations being considered 4. Assessment of whether the regulation complies with, or goes beyond the obligations stemming from EU membership 5. Assessment of whether particular attention needs to be given with regard to the date of the regulation's entry into force and of whether there is a need for special informational measures.

Moreover, in **Lithuania** the Law on Administrative burden reduction defines the appropriate measures for the reduction of administrative burden namely improvement of legal regulation, simplification of the procedures in the public services delivery process, use of ICT tools in public governance, better cooperation and communication between public sector institutions, assessment of administrative burden. Lithuania also seeks to expand the provision of electronic services, improve the availability thereof, and to further promote the application of one-stop shop principle. It also seeks to reduce regulation and improve the quality of legal acts. The law-making process must be based on analysis and public consultations and it must reflect qualitatively the chosen solution to the problem and the purpose of regulation. New requirements of legal acts increasing administrative burdens on business must be established, and other requirements that impose administrative burden on business will have to be repealed (the requirements repealed must be no fewer than those newly established).

In **Italy** among a variety of tools and methods used in order to simplify administrative procedures, one can find a) the abolishment of licensing procedures, b) the complete elimination of the request for certificates in transactions between the public administration, citizens and businesses as well as c) organizational and technological interventions. Most of these tools and methods are provided by law and cross-level measures are adopted according to Regions and Local Authorities. Certain consensual tools are used as well, such as agreements among different levels of government on the use of unified forms or on the guidelines providing for the rationalisation and simplification of checks and inspections on businesses.

5 routes to simplification

Ways to simplify	Actions to take
1. Remove, reduce, merge or improve regulations	• Remove the regulation • Use alternatives to regulation, e.g. voluntary code of practice • Remove the information obligation from the regulation • Exempt groups or sectors of stakeholders from the obligation, e.g. small businesses • Consolidate/ merge secondary legislation and requirements • Simplify the terminology of the regulation and reduce its complexity
2. Simplify the process to comply with regulations	• Remove unnecessary forms, inspections or data requests • Reduce the time taken to fill out forms, e.g. by improving their design, clarity etc. • Prioritise resources, e.g. less inspection of stakeholders with a good record (risk based inspection. • Reduce the frequency of information requests • Harmonise requests for information with other information obligations
3. Data-sharing and joint up government	• Collect the data from other government bodies rather than from stakeholders • Collect the data directly from stakeholders' ICT-systems • Set up one-stop-shop systems for stakeholders • Develop standard definitions in legislation
4. Develop ICT-solutions and services	• Make forms and other data requests available on the internet • Pre-populate forms • Make forms interactive/"intelligent" so that they do not request irrelevant data • Make electronic one-stop-shop systems so that stakeholders can make use of joint Government web-portals
5. Provide better guidance and information	• Develop better and more accessible guidance, e.g. by making guidance available on the Internet. • Rewrite guidance in simpler language. • Separate compulsory from voluntary requirements in guidance • Make regulations available on-line, potentially through a joint public sector portal.

http://www.administrative-burdens.com/default.asp?page=172

3.4 One stop shops -OSSs

One-stop shops (OSSs) usually supply a high variety of services ranging from the provision of information on citizens' issues with public services as well as on business environment and its requirements, to issuing certificates, licenses and permits to enter specific business activities etc. In a perfect situation, there is only a "single window" to contact in order to access all services citizens or entrepreneurs might apply for[10].

The majority of member states have established a form of one-stop shop during the last decade so as to take burden off citizens and businesses. For the purpose of this EUPAN survey, within the scope of OSS, we include different OSSs types: the service centre which simply provides reliable public

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[10]OECD (2010), *Why is administrative Simplification so complicated?* (p. 25), OECD Publishing, Paris

information, the service centre which intermediates between the applicant and the public services by forwarding the file of documents to the competent authority as well as the 'true' OSS which replaces the public service and delivers the administrative product (certificate, licence, permit etc) to the applicant after processing itself the request. A very characteristic example of OSS at EU level is the Points of Single Contact (PSC) established in the framework of the Service Directive (2006/123/EC).

Member states were asked to indicate whether they have established one-stop shops, and if so, whether they have one or several one-stop shops specialised in different field of activity each. EUPAN partners were also asked to specify the nature of work the one-stop shop is entitled to do. According to the survey findings, there is not a single approach among EUPAN members when it comes to the structure and mission of their OSSs. Each EUPAN country has developed the service centre it deems appropriate depending on its e-government level of maturity, on its willingness to improve quality provision of services, on the interoperability of the data bases, on the uniformity of requirements and application forms at national level and on the disposition of its classic bureaucracy to work together with these new "single windows".

For instance, in many member states, one-stop shops intermediate between the applicant and the bureaucracy, in other words, they are not supposed to deliver administrative products (license, certificates etc). Other member states have opted for a different kind of one-stop shop that has the competence to grant licenses, permits etc, in practice replacing the public service. Similarly, some EUPAN members have established a single OSS dealing with citizens and business issues, while others have opted for OSSs that are specialised in specific policy field. However, a number of members do dispose of both a single OSS of general nature and a number of OSSs that fully cover specific areas.

As shows the data analysis of the completed questionnaires, nearly all respondents have established or are in the process of establishing an OSS, namely twenty four (24) out of twenty five (25) respondents. Nine (9) EUPAN partners (**Belgium, Poland, Bulgaria, Turkey, Slovenia, European Commission, Sweden, Austria, Netherlands**) stated that they have put in place specific single OSSs that are more inclined to be business rather than citizen oriented. Six (6) respondents (**Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Cyprus**) indicated that they have a single OSS for both business and citizen matters whereas another six (6) EUPAN members (**Norway, Portugal, Germany, France, Greece, Luxembourg**) have established an 'all purpose' OSS along with several specific ones.

Do not specify; 3

Single OSS ; 6

Specific OSS ; 9

One 'all-purpose" OSS + specific ones ; 6
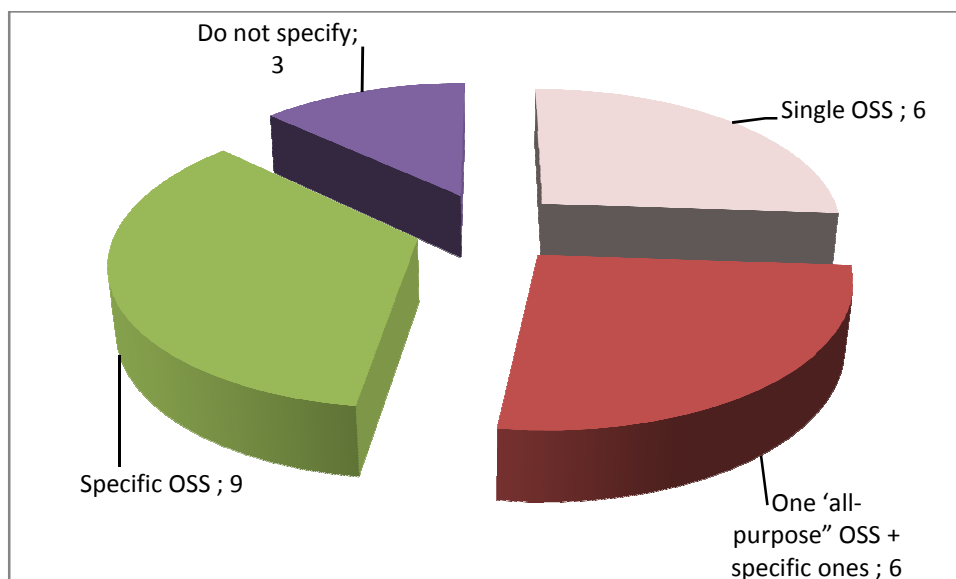
There seems to be a clear preference among respondents for electronic OSSs given the fact that eight (8) respondents (**Slovenia, Austria, European Commission, Denmark, Norway, Estonia, Spain, Netherlands**) have clearly indicated that their OSS is purely electronic. **Greece, Portugal, Poland, Luxembourg** and **France** have opted for an OSS which is both electronic and physical.

Do not specify ; 11

Electronic only OSS; 8

Electronic & physical; 5
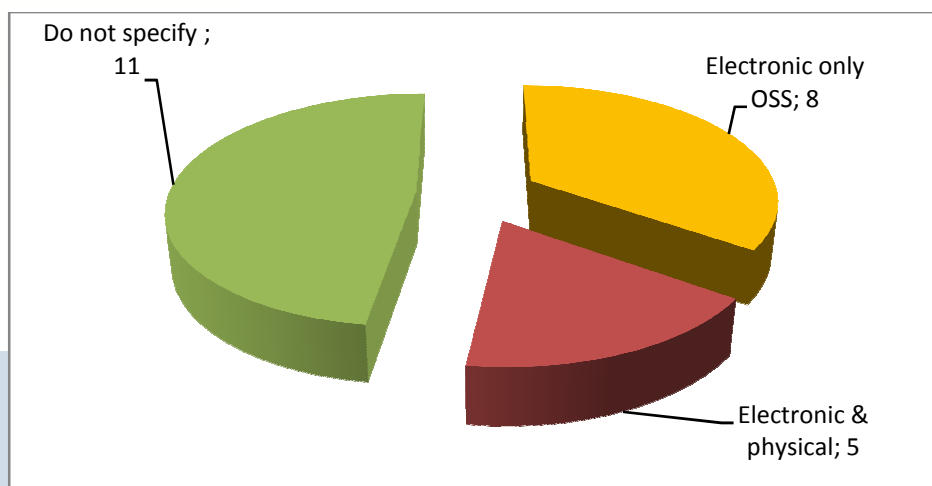
Regarding the nature of the OSSs' tasks, for the majority of EUPAN members (7 respondents-**Poland, Slovenia, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Italy, Luxembourg**) "single window" structures have totally or partially replaced the competent service (specific stages of the procedure), while in another five (5) EUPAN countries (**Greece, Belgium, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Turkey**) their "single window" structures are entrusted with the role of the intermediary. In spite of the fact that the total or partial replacement of the competent service by the OSSs seems to be favoured by many EUPAN members, further elaboration is

still needed on the extent and the nature of such replacement, since evidence suggests that a uniform understanding of the boundaries of such replacement and of the consequent taking over of the competences by OSSs is lacking.
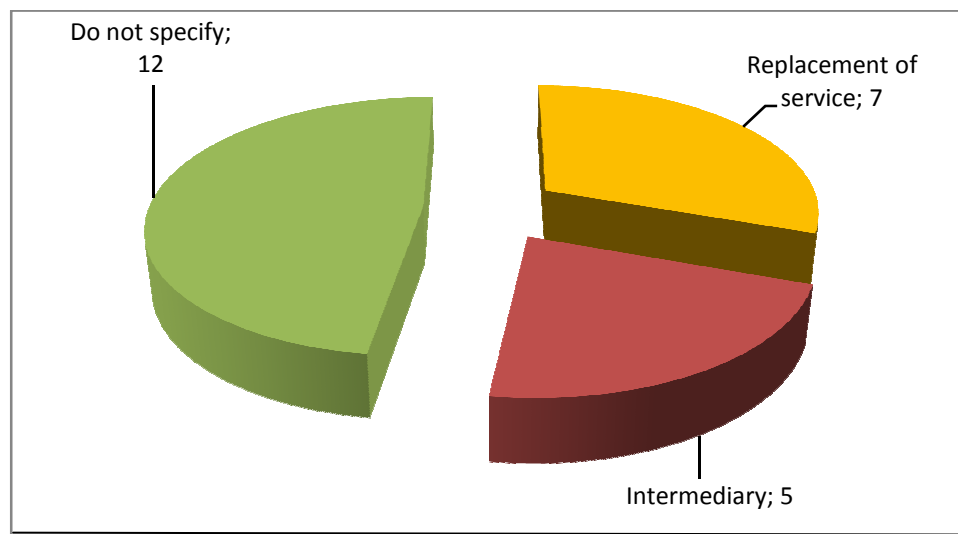
In **Greece**, the Citizens service Centres (CSCs-KEPs) do constitute a form of one-stop shop that plays the role of intermediary between the applicant and the public services. There are 1.060 CSCs spread across the country enabling citizens/businesses to apply for approximately 1.030 administrative procedures. The role of the CSCs is primarily to forward application forms along with their supporting documents to the competent authorities and, after applications are processed, to deliver the corresponding certificates, licenses etc to citizens either as a paper document or as a digitally signed electronic document. Greek CSCs behave as 'true' one-stop shops in 3 procedures, meaning that in these few cases, they replace the competent public services and are able to issue certificates, vouchers etc CSCs can also issue 30 simple certificates via an online system that gives them access to public data bases. Fifty-four (54) out of the 1.060 CSCs (located at major cities), constitute the physical PSCs (Points of Single Contact) under the provisions of the 2006/123/EC Services Directive. Apart from the CSCs that deal with a wide variety of procedures, Greece has recently established separate One-Stop-Shops (OSSs) for the founding and registration of those commercial companies that have the legal form of General Partnerships, Limited Partnerships, Private Companies, Limited Liability Companies and Societes Anonymes (Law 3853/2010). Chambers of Commerce operate as OSSs for the first three, while certified notaries operate as OSSs for LLCs and SAs.

Similarly, in **Portugal** there are 34 "Citizens Shops" (Portuguese designation for one-stop-shops) plus a mobile (car) one. In just one place, citizens can have access to a variety of services, in the field of social security, tax services, electricity or water supply, Citizens Card emission services etc. Portugal has also established the Multi-services Branches, which make available to citizens, in just one counter and with one public servant, a wide range of services. These

Multi-service Branches play the role of the competent authority for the services they provide rather than that of a simple intermediary. Along with these initiatives, a new model of one-stop-shops, the "Espaços Cidadão" (Citizen Spots), is under way. The Citizen Spots will capitalise the available electronic public services, as their employees will support users to access e-services in specific places/offices.

In **Estonia,** the "Gateway to eEstonia Eesti.ee" is an electronic one-stop shop which provides access to various public services for citizens and entrepreneurs. The **Slovak Republic** has established seven (7) one-stop shops with different agendas. These agendas primarily depend on personnel capacities and/or availability of spatial capacities. The main purpose of establishing one-stop shops was to bring state administration closer to citizens and enhance communication and cooperation between the citizen and the state.

Spain has introduced a) the PAG which is a general access point for citizens as well as b) another general access point for entrepreneurs (supporting entrepreneurs and their internationalisation) in accordance with Law 14/2013. In **Bulgaria**, there are multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each in the social sphere (i.e. social assistance and unemployment), in tax payment, company registration etc. However, these OSSs have limited competency and mostly intermediate between applicants and public authorities.

The **Austrian** one-stop shop business service portal 'Unternehmensserviceportal (USP)' (www.usp.gv.at) aims to serve as a single entry point to Government for businesses. By offering information and transaction services, it intends to help businesses to fulfil their information obligations and to reduce their administrative burdens. Businesses can use about twenty (20) e-government services such as e-billing to government, virtual tax office and environmental reporting.

3.5 Focus on specific categories of beneficiaries when implementing simplification action plans

EUPAN members were, next, invited to specify what has been the main target group of their simplification policies, out of the following broad categories of beneficiaries: citizens (C), businesses (B) and public sector (PA). Additionally, we sought to receive some feedback on whether the degree of beneficiaries' satisfaction is measured after a simplification action plan is put into effect.

The majority (nineteen-19) of the respondents (**Latvia, European Commission, Turkey, Portugal, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Lithuania, Belgium, Sweden, Greece,**

Netherlands[11], Luxembourg, Austria[12]) are particularly concerned with taking burden off citizens (C) and businesses (B) when simplifying. However, only ten (10) **(Latvia, European Commission, Turkey, Portugal, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus)** out of these nineteen (19) members attempt to alleviate the burden of Public Administration (PA) as well. This can be attributed to the fact that reduction of burdens on public sector has only recently become a matter of concern. Therefore, it is to be expected that in the immediate future, more EUPAN members' simplification action plans will have a particular and additional concern in addressing the issue of alleviating burden of Public Administration. Furthermore, two (2) EUPAN partners **(Slovak Republic, Italy)** have primarily focused on the improvement of their business environment, whereas one (1) **(Denmark)** seems to be concerned to a great extent with the citizens' target group and another one (1) **(Poland)** with business and public administration burden reduction.
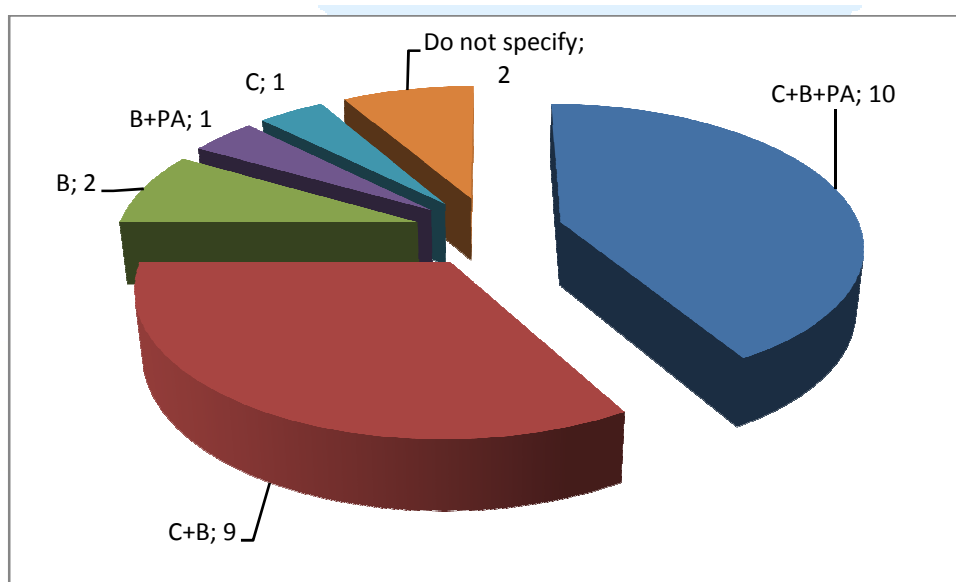
As regards the measurement of the degree of satisfaction of end-users, the overwhelming majority of respondents (**Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Germany, France, Estonia, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Austria**) have specified that they indeed conduct measurement surveys, monitoring, evaluations, enquiries etc

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[11] The **Netherlands** also focuses on the burden reduction for professionals in the public sector, in particular, policemen, teachers and nurse practitioners.

[12] **Austria** developed an adapted Standard Cost Model for measuring the administrative burdens of citizens. This model was applied during the measurement of the most burdensome information obligations for citizens and takes into account the quality of services.

Do not specify; 8

NO; 2

YES; 15
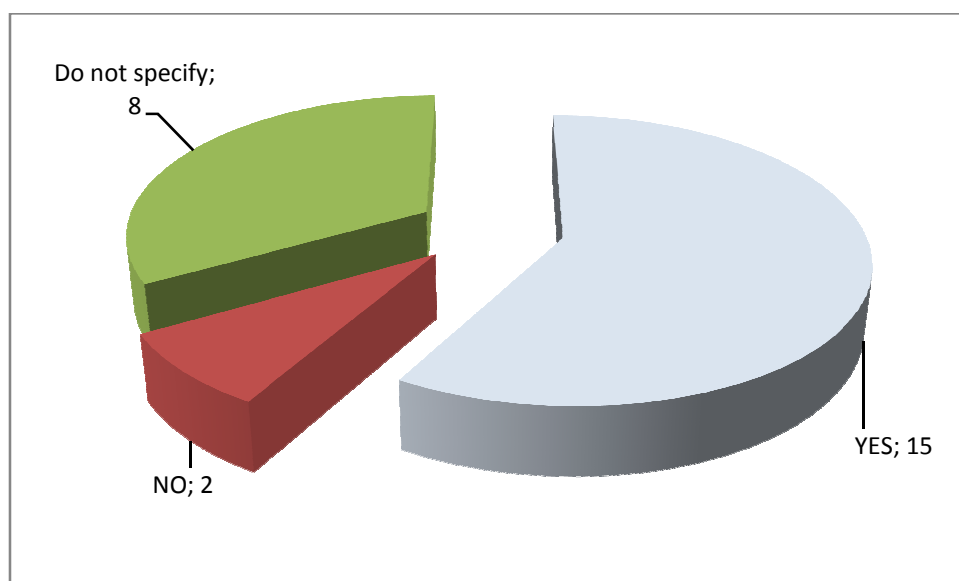
3.6 Focus of the simplification action plans viewing at improving the business environment

When restructuring processes and cutting red tape with the aim of improving business environment, a clear distinction has to be made between the procedures of licensing stage (before a business starts operating) and those of the subsequent stage, that is during the lifecycle of a business (after a business operates). Definition of the licensing stage (as a set of procedures) is quite clear, while further explanation should perhaps be provided as regards the subsequent stage and the resulting Information Obligations (IOs) of the business.

Information obligations[13] (IOs) are the obligations (arising from regulation) for businesses to provide information and data to the public sector and / or third parties (e.g. civilians). An information obligation does not necessarily mean that the information obligation has to be transferred to the public authority or private persons, but may include a duty to have information available for inspection or supply on request. A regulation may contain many information obligations. Some examples of information obligations are applications for subsidies or grants, reports about labour conditions, a pay roll, labelling provisions, an annual account, etc.

In this respect, EUPAN members were asked to give an insight on whether their main focus of simplification is put on the licensing stage, on the subsequent stage of Information Obligation (IOs) during the business lifecycle or equally on both. Data analysis shows that twelve (12) members (**Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Norway, Turkey, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Slovak Republic,**

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[13]SCM Network, http://www.administrative-burdens.com/default.asp?page=14

Bulgaria, Luxembourg and Austria) equally focus on the licensing stage as well as on the subsequent stage of IOs whereas another six (6) (**Portugal, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Estonia and Cyprus**) are keen on rather simplifying licensing procedures. Only three (3) respondents (**France, Hungary, Netherlands)** indicated that their main interest is the taking burden off the business after it commences its activities.

As the data suggests, it appears that IOs reduction is gradually becoming one of the main concerns among respondents. Needless to say, though, that simplification action plan of EUPAN countries have traditionally targeted and to a great extent still target licensing procedures.
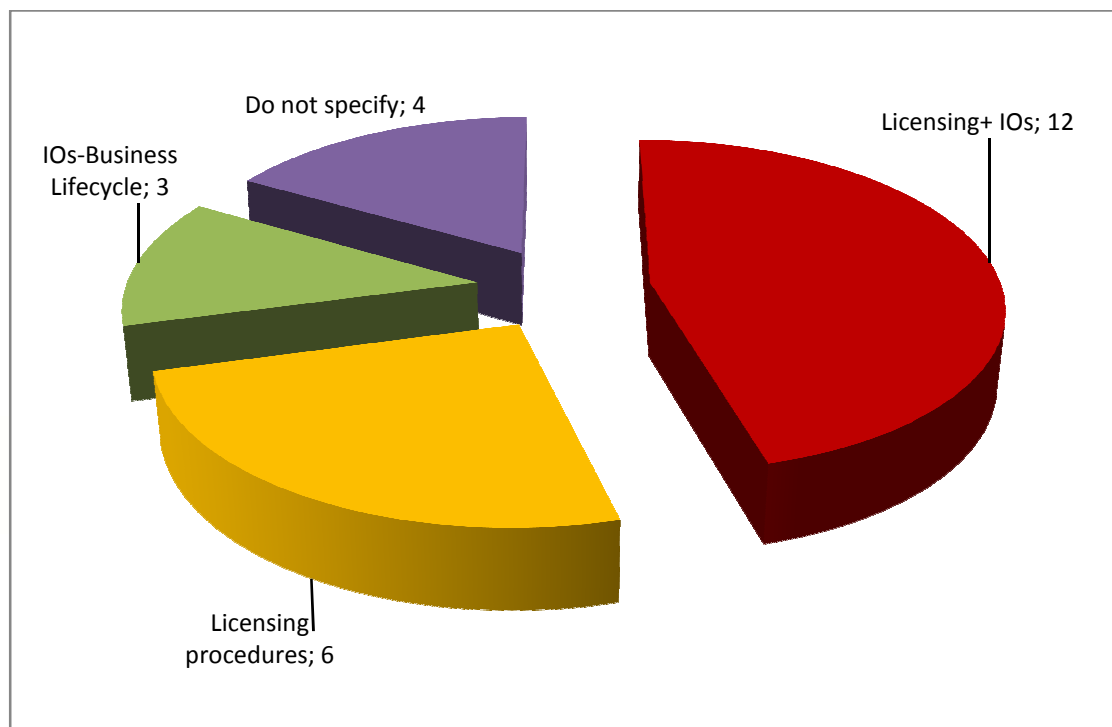
3.7 Best practices – Innovative simplification proposals

EUPAN member states were last invited to share with their partners an innovative simplification proposal they have put in place which may be used as a best practice. Out of the twenty five (25) responses collected, we will only mention a limited number of such proposals.

The **European Commission** indicated, inter alia, the following two as some of its innovative proposals: a) Machine translation MT@EC (this tool manages to dramatically reduce the response time, when it comes to requests for translations) and b) Internal Market Information (IMI), a single stop shop for the exchange of documents and information among public administrations, for a set of EU laws that cover the free movement of citizens and goods within the single market.

Greece has lately abolished twenty five (25) licensing procedures of low risk business activities (i.e. Health Regulated Establishments selling packaged food and beverages, hairdressers' salons, fitness centres etc) and has replaced them with the applicant's notification to the public administration. According to the aforementioned Notification System, natural or legal persons starting up a business submit a solemn declaration statement together with a compliance document to the competent public authority, taking full responsibility for abiding by the rules that are set by the existing legal framework and concern their business' operation. Ex ante inspections are thus replaced with, what is believed to be far more effective, ex post inspections, so that the businesses' lawful operation is better guaranteed on a continuous basis. Starting up a business becomes the entrepreneur's responsibility while the protection of public interest remains under state control. Once the administration is notified of a business' start up, the business can operate straight away. In summary, the main characteristics of the notification system are the following:

- no submission of required documents by the businessman (except for the written statement and the compliance document),
- no ex ante inspection by state authorities,
- no processing of documents by the public service,
- no issuance of any kind of license, and
- immediate business operation.

All businesses carry on being liable to extraordinary inspections at any time.

It has to be stressed that according to the OECD Final Report on Measurement and Reduction of Administrative Burdens in the Food Safety Sector, the aforementioned Greek government's action to change the requirements for Health Related Establishments, selling food and beverages has resulted in the reduction of administrative burdens by 6.255.120€ and of administrative costs by the same amount on a stand-alone basis[14].

Similarly, in **Portugal**, through the Zero Licensing initiative (Decree-Law nº 48/2011 of 1st April), a new and very simplified regime for setting up and modifying the establishment of commercial activities, such as restaurants and drink establishments, was approved. Licences have been abolished and substituted by a simple prior notification to the authorities. The notification to the authorities is done electronically in a Point of Single Contact (PSC). The State reduces, therefore, pre-control mechanisms, increasing the responsibility and accountability of economic agents, and reinforces ex post control mechanisms, through reinforced inspections and sanctions for noncompliance. The Zero Licensing initiative represents a total shift of paradigm, eliminating bureaucracy and enabling companies to finally focus on their core activity: doing business

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[14] (2014) OECD, *Measurement and Reduction of Administrative Burdens in 13 sectors in Greece* (p. 54), *Final Report Food Safety*, OECD

Estonia too has taken the bold step to abolish several licensing procedures and replace them with information requirements. Besides, through the Economic Activities Code Act, all regulations on licenses were consolidated, the proceeding practices were unified (e.g. maximum proceeding time was set to 1 month) and necessary developments of the registry of economic activities were implemented. **Estonia** has also created an electronic annual report system which has been developed by the Centre of Registers and Information Systems. This system allows companies to submit their annual reports electronically.

Italy has proceeded to simplifying its fire prevention sector (Decree of the President of the Republic n. 151/2011). In this regard, the "principle of proportionality", has been adopted, according to which the weight of administrative requirements varies depending on the type and complexity of risk (risk-based approach). There are now three categories of risk: 1) Category "A" (standardized and low risk activities); 2) Category "B" (moderate and average risk activities); 3) Category "C" (high risk activities). In particular, activities included in the Category "A" no longer require prior approval but they just require a simple notification to the public authority. Furthermore, technical paperwork has been streamlined and various redundant requirements have been cut, leading to an estimated 46% reduction in overall administrative costs.

EMPRENDE EN 3" is an innovative platform for the setting up of businesses by telematic means, set up in **Spain**. It intends to speed up the setting up and operation of companies by allowing the simultaneous carrying out of procedures at all three public administration levels: State, Autonomic Community and Local Administration, in one step and with a single registration form. On its webpage, one can find all the required documents to start up a company. Documents are automatically delivered to the competent authorities which will process their own part of the procedure. The entrepreneur can check the status of the processing online anytime he/she wishes. The Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, which has actively collaborated in the platform start-up, has carried out a pilot project in several towns.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice of **Hungary** has led a project of simplifying legal texts and improving their fluency, accessibility and linguistic correctness. Two pilot cases were initially selected for linguistic simplification in the social policy. The project concerned the simplification of 26 legal rules in the second quarter of 2013. The Ministry is also the one normally tasked with screening drafts of laws prepared by all other ministries as part of the law-making process. Approximately 100 officials, assisted by 6 supporting specialists, were involved in the linguistic simplification.

In 2014, **Poland** has introduced, a new approach, the Common Commencement Dates (CCD), in order to increase predictability and legislative certainty for business. According to this principle, all regulations that apply to business come into effect on known 'common dates". Consequently, businesses have

time to better prepare and adapt to legislative changes related to them. Polish regulations affecting businesses enter into force on the 1st January and 1st June (twice a year) so regulatory changes are dealt with at fixed and predictable points in the year.

The **Norwegian** digital platform for businesses Altinn is one of the most advanced digital communications platform for businesses in Europe. Nearly 100% of all reporting of payroll/salaries, payroll taxes, tax deduction, VAT and tax returns go through *https://www.altinn.no/no/*. Moreover, the establishment of new businesses as well as all events and changes in corporate status that require reporting to authorities are now fully electronic. The Register of citizens' digital addresses (Contact directory of citizens) provides all public agencies with easy access to citizens' e-mail addresses and mobile telephone numbers, in order to notify citizens when they receive important digital documents. In **Norway** also, Bank ID is used for authentication of access to digital public services and personal documents. The Coordinated register notification for businesses is a service where all relevant records concerning startup, merger or change of ownership are updated and used (Entity Register, Register of Business Enterprises, VAT register etc.). Another innovative proposal is the wide use of Electronic invoices to all public agencies (all Norwegian state agencies receive their invoices digitally). Moreover, the public server site *http://hotell.difi.no/* gives access to open data and allows advanced users or any user to easily access open data for any use (as development of new services, for purposes of analysis, or other purposes).

4. Conclusions

- Administrative simplification and reduction of Administrative Burdens (AB) are considered to be complex issues to deal with, requiring adequate coordination at all levels of the state bureaucracy. The survey findings corroborate this hypothesis as a number of EUPAN member states have transferred the overall competency of such policy initiatives to leading horizontal Ministries dealing with Public Administration/Reform or Finance or to top level bodies i.e. close to the PM Office etc.

- The most common factors that hinder bolder and more extensive simplification action plans are: 1. Complexity of the legislative/regulatory framework, 2. Lack of strategic planning, 3. PA's inherent characteristic of inertia and aversion to change and to reform, 4. Reluctance of Civil servants to get out of their 'Comfort Zone", 5. Fear to jeopardize the safeguarding of public interest, 6. Lack of consensus and coordination when it comes to what, if and how to simplify and 7. Existence of silos. What needs to be clear though is that the setting up and implementation of bold wide-ranging simplification proposals equals taking a risk, up to a certain degree, as stakeholders (citizens, businesses) may be tempted to take advantage of deregulation, withdrawal of ex ante inspections etc.

- Classic simplification tools such as a) shortening the response time, b) eliminating paper formalities and required documents as well as c) sharing of information are widely used by the majority of the EUPAN members and aim primarily at improving procedures and at easing the burden off citizens and business. Nevertheless, such techniques do not radically question the rationale of the mere existence of the procedures themselves as they do not put into doubt their necessity. Beside those traditional tools, nowadays, more innovative simplification tools, aiming at radically restructuring a procedure or at shifting the paradigm, seem to gain momentum. There is a clear indication that a lot of EUPAN member states start to reconsider the necessity of their existing licensing systems for low to medium risk activities and have even proceeded to the abolishment of some licensing formalities. Other innovative approaches such as the "Only once" and the "One in-One out" principles, or the Common Commencement Dates (CCD) have started to make inroads in several EUPAN members. Functional tools (ICT, Better Regulation, Measurement of AB etc) are also very commonly used among EUPAN members.

- In an attempt to bypass red tape and overlapping competencies among state agencies as well as to improve the quality of *front office* services, an overwhelming majority of the EUPAN members have established a type of One-stop shop (OSS). The idea was that the client (citizen or business) is not supposed to know how the public administration works or how competencies are shared between state agencies but he/she should have to deal with a "single-window" representing public administration as a whole. Some EUPAN partners have put in place specific single OSSs more inclined to be business rather than citizen oriented, whereas others have established one single OSS for both business and citizen issues. A considerable number of EUPAN countries dispose of 'all purpose' OSS along with several specific ones. Most OSSs tend to be electronic rather than physical and are designed to replace partially or totally the competent public service in many respects, by issuing licences, permits, certificates; a task previously (until recently) entrusted exclusively to the competent services (Municipal and Regional authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Social Security Funds etc). However, a lot of OSSs still operate as an intermediary between client and public authority.

- Assuming that there are three broad categories of beneficiaries as target groups of simplification policies, the survey provided evidence that the majority of the EUPAN partners are primarily concerned with taking burden off citizens (C) and businesses (B). However, roughly half of these EUPAN members also look at alleviating burden of Public Administration (PA). In the immediate future, more simplification action plans are expected to focus on alleviating the burden of Public Administration. As far as the measurement of the degree of satisfaction of end-users is concerned, the overwhelming majority of the respondents conduct indeed measurement

surveys, monitoring, evaluations, enquiries etc in order to find out whether the simplification action plans or the initiatives of AB reduction have had a positive impact on the target groups.

- When putting in place plans with the aim of improving the business environment, EUPAN members have primarily targeted and still target the simplification of the licensing stage (before a business commences its activities) rather than the subsequent stage of IOs (after a business commences its activities). Nevertheless, the data collected suggest that IOs reduction (during the business lifecycle) is gradually becoming one of the main concerns among EUPAN members.

5. Further Reflections for discussion

In the last part of this Thematic Paper, some additional issues concerning governmental simplification strategy could be raised with a view to highlighting both their significance and their contribution to a successful implementation. These issues might well constitute the basis for further reflection in the upcoming EUPAN Presidencies.

- **Marketing plan**: Governments setting up a specific simplification strategy and implementing proposals which alleviate the burden of citizens and businesses should elaborate, on a regular basis, a concrete marketing plan, if they wish their measures to have a positive impact on the target groups. Extensive media coverage, political support, visibility of the simplification plan 'owner' (leading Ministry or public agency), dissemination campaigns, advertising (TV spots, leaflets etc) and adequate training of civil servants could be some of the tools to be used. Such marketing tools are not intended just to make government agenda popular but also to facilitate implementation as both the client (citizen and business) and the civil servant will be well aware of the changes put into effect.

- **Problem solving mechanism**: The 'owner' of the simplification action plan, be it a Ministry or a public agency, should ideally be in charge of solving potential problems or dysfunctions which may occur, after its implementation, at least at an initial stage. It would be highly advisable that this problem solving task was not assigned to non-simplification minded actors, stakeholders or licensing bodies. Otherwise, the implementation of a reform measure might be jeopardised in practice (at the front office counter) as those who have something to lose, will be tempted to solve potential problems by resorting to old red tape solutions. This may result in simplification rolling back.

- **Simplification watchdog**: Sometimes, implementing simplification action plans may not be sufficient on its own. In order to achieve effective implementation, a watchdog mechanism with veto power should also be set up. Such an early warning mechanism, set at a high government level, should be able to prevent policy making bodies from adding administrative burdens to regulations and procedures. In other words, this watchdog will be intended to watch against the adding of complexity in those procedures which have been successfully simplified. Temptation among red tape-minded practitioners to "rectify" recently simplified and streamlined procedures could thus be averted.

- **Making use of the 2.0 web services**: Great administrative burdens originate at the requirements of information flowing from citizens and businesses to government. Data needs to be effectively and efficiently collected, managed and transmitted to meet the needs of public institutions in an efficient and non burdensome manner. Information is important for the design and implementation of simplification strategies. But, information is expensive and efforts need to be well oriented, aiming at obtaining relevant data that can guide the simplification process. Especially the information on administrative burdens, such as information on administrative requirements compliance and the time-cost associated with them[15].
  Said the above, Public Administration could make an extensive use of the possibilities offered by 2.0 web services (social media, wiki, blogs etc) in order to get an insight of what constitutes a barrier to citizens and businesses, of what those groups perceive as complicated or burdensome. Several EUPAN members have set up user friendly web pages where citizens and businesses are invited to post their simplification proposals or state the difficulties they have encountered when complying with complex regulations. That way, Public Administrations can have firsthand information from the end user concerning the most irritating and complex formalities. Setting up such 2.0 web services should necessarily be coupled with the government's commitment to deliver concrete results, on a regular basis. Reform measures that originate from users' proposals have to be duly communicated through the same channel of communication (the same 2.0 web page) so that it becomes clear that the public administration gives an ear to the complaints and responds to the needs of the end users. Parallel to this, the public body in charge of this web consultation should also make available to the public yearly reports that contain lists with the most burdensome and bureaucratic procedures indicated by the users as well as the way in which public administration handled those problematic areas. Among the most illustrative examples as regards web consultations, one can find the French web page www.faire-

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[15] OECD (2009) *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies: Guidance to Policy Makers* (p. 49), OECD Publishing, Paris

simple.gouv.fr of the Secretariat General for Government Modernisation (SGMAP) as well as the Italian recurrent public on line surveys of the Office for Administrative Simplification (USA) of the Department for Public Administration
http://www.magellanopa.it/semplificare/default.asp 'Semplifica PA Libera le risorse' (2012), 'Burocrazia, diamoci un taglio' (2009-2013), '100 procedure piu complicate da semplificare' (2013-2014).

Appendix 1: EUPAN members' responses to thematic paper on Simplification of administrative procedures and Reduction of Administrative Burdens (AB)

Austria (AT)

> 1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

In 2006 an administrative burden initiative was started, where all federal ministries were taking part. Representatives of the Austrian economy, trade unions and further interest groups were involved as well. The Federal Ministry of Finance was the main coordinator of the initiative and took care of the comparability of results and compliance to common standards. Every ministry had to present specific simplification plans before the end of February 2008. The 25 %-reduction target, more than 1 bn. €, was reached in 2012. Certain measures such as the business service portal (www.usp.gv.at) are ongoing and/or still in implementation. At the sub-national level certain Länder have also implemented a focused administrative burden measurement. The government working programme 2013-2018 foresees the set-up of the "Aufgabenreform- und Deregulierungskomission" (Task Reform and Deregulation Commission), which will deal amongst others with an ongoing cutting red tape process.

> 2. **What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

Austria is a federal state and competences are divided between the national and sub-national level (Länder). This requires good coordination mechanisms.

> 3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

Austria is following an integral approach, e.g. within the citizen programme it used the Standard Cost Model (SCM) on one hand and fast track measures on the other hand. The

reduction of administrative burdens is mentioned in the government working programme 2013-2018, where also the introduction of an "one-in one-out principle" is foreseen.

Different instruments are used and their application depends very much on the context. They range from e-government (better information/transactions/forms) to changes in the legal framework (e.g. threshold for businesses, change in frequency etc.). The specific list of measures implemented within the administrative burden reduction programme until 2012 is published online:

https://service.bmf.gv.at/BUDGET/budgets/2013/beilagen/Verwaltungskosten_senken_Beschluss_2013 (German only).

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

One key reduction measure is the 'Unternehmensserviceportal (USP)'. The one-stop-shop business service portal (www.usp.gv.at) aims to serve as a single entry point to Government for businesses. By offering information and transaction services it intends to help businesses to fulfil their information obligations and to reduce their administrative burdens. Businesses can use about 20 e-government services such as e-billing to government, virtual tax office and environmental reporting.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

The aim is to find measures which reduce the burden for citizens and business while at the same time avoiding additional burden for the public sector. Austria developed an adapted Standard Cost Model for measuring the administrative burdens of citizens. This model was applied during the measurement of the most burdensome information obligations for citizens and takes into account the quality of services. Furthermore, new proposals have to be assessed ex-ante with regard to their administrative costs/benefits within the framework of the outcome-oriented impact assessment. Hereby an internal evaluation is foreseen within five years so that the actual impacts on target groups are assessed. Further information can be found on www.wfa.gv.at

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Equally on both.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

In Austria public transport to school is free for pupils. They can apply for free transport from their home to school. For this purpose they have to submit a form and pay € 19.60 as own contribution. This process was regarded as very burdensome for both parents/pupils, transport business, government authorities and schools. Due to a change in the financing structure of free transport for pupils to a flat rate model administrative burdens could be reduced significantly. In the eastern region of Austria, for instance, pupils and their parents no longer have to submit a form. They only have to buy a "free transport"-ticket (€ 19.60). Eligibility is proofed with a pupil's ID card. Also it is possible to buy a € 60 ticket which entitles for free transport all over the year not only to school, but in the whole region. At the same time transport enterprises, the passenger transport executive and government authorities are faced with less paper work in administering the process.

Belgium (BE)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

At national level: Administrative Simplification Agency

At regional level:

- Flanders: DienstWetsmatiging
- Brussels: Cellule Simplification administrative et E-government
- Wallonia: EWBS

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

At federal level, every new government approves a Federal Action plan Administrative Simplification. Progress is monitored by the Administrative Simplification Agency.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

Impact assessment, measuring administrative burdens, BPR, integrating ICT-tools, Only Once-principle.

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Yes, multiple one-stop shops. They merely intermediate.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

Reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector. No, we don't.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Equally on both.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

1. The overall implementation and promotion of e-invoicing: business to consumer, business to business, business to government. This has a potential reduction of administrative burdens of several billions of euros.
2. Only Once-project: government can only ask once for the same information

Bulgaria (BG)

> **1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

The main body in Bulgaria having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens is the Council of Ministers, which is the principal body of executive power. It approves the secondary legislative acts related to the simplification of administrative procedures and reduction of administrative burdens proposed by the relevant institutions. It also proposes draft law amendments to the Parliament. The administration of the Council of Ministers, and more particularly the Modernization of the Administration Directorate proposes relevant measures and coordinates their implementation. The Ministry of Economy and Energy, and the Ministry of Finance also have competencies in this direction. At local level, the municipalities have the competency to reduce administrative burdens by amending the regulations issued by the municipal councils. The Government Decentralization Council deals with coordination issues regarding the general policy.

> **2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

A considerable part of the administrative procedures is regulated by a variety of special laws, so that the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans is impeded by the necessity to analyze and amend them separately. Part of the simplification action plans are related to the local communities, whose considerable level of self-government and use of different standards in their administrative procedures impede the implementation of simplification action plans.

> **3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

The most often used specific tools to simplify administrative procedures are the abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, and introduction of integrated service delivery. The tools used are purely legal.

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

There are multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity, in the social sphere such as social assistance and unemployment, in tax payment, company registration etc. They have limited competency and mostly intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

The main focus, in order of priority, is: (a) provision of quality services to the citizens;(b) improvement of business environment; and (c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector. There is a methodology used to measure and evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the target group once an action plan is implemented.

6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

The simplification action plans are focused both on the licensing procedure and on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs), but more so on the former.

7. **Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.**

An innovative simplification proposal implemented recently in Bulgaria is the integrated service delivery, which is a complex of administrative services where the applicant need not submit any information already collected and stored by some administrative structure (the information is transferred without the applicant's participation), and also the administrative service may be both requested and obtained in different ways such as internet, mail and phone.

Cyprus (CY)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?
The main body which has the competency to simplify administrative procedures is the **Public Administration and Personnel Department**. In addition, given that all MS have the obligation to promote Better Regulation, a National Action Plan (NAP), in line with the EU commitments regarding the reduction of administrative burden (AB) for businesses, has been developed and a **Central Specialised Unit** (CSU) was set up in the **Ministry of Finance**, which is responsible for coordinating, implementing and monitoring the NAP. Moreover, a **Steering Committee** was set up responsible for developing a long-term strategy and for providing the CSU with overall guidance.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?
One factor that impedes the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans is the fact that **the procedures are not recorded clearly** in many Ministries/ Departments of the Public Service thus, the need to record procedures for simplification purposes it may be perceived as time consuming. Another factor that impedes the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans is **the culture** in the public service, which is not so positive to changes in habits and in the way everyday work is carried out (not easy to get out of the comfort zone).

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.
• Cyprus set 20% as its national target for the **reduction of AB** in the national legislation relating to enterprises, with a time deadline until the end of 2012. For the achievement of this target, a sectoral base line measurement for the reduction of AB in all national legislation relating to enterprises, based on 7 national priority areas, had been carried out, aiming at the modernization and

simplification of procedures:

- A number of reduction proposals were implemented in each national priority area, which aimed at the following:

  - ✓ Reduction of the need for citizens' physical presence at governmental departments, through the promotion of electronic government.
  - ✓ Simplification of tax return forms.
  - ✓ Reduction of the obligatory period that businesses must maintain records for tax purposes.
  - ✓ Simplification of the procedures for the examination of applications.
  - ✓ Reduction of the frequency for submitting VAT returns.

  <u>Note:</u> some of the above proposals were promoted through legislative procedures. Some other proposals did not require legal changes.

- A horizontal reduction proposal was also carried out, concerning the promotion, though an advertising campaign, of the use of all existing electronic systems of the Public Service (e-governance).

The implementation of all reduction proposals, including the horizontal proposal on further promoting e-governance, was completed by June 2013, and led to an AB reduction of about 19% (around €150m.), which corresponds to about 1% of our national GDP.

- A law regarding **e-government** is currently under preparation. However, the law does not provide for any specific tool/ method for the simplification of procedures. In addition, the Government of Cyprus is now in the process of formulating its **e-Government Strategy** for the period 2014-2020 which will apply to all Ministries, Departments and Services focusing on technical, operational and organisational aspects of the provision of eServices to citizens and businesses. This Strategy will include an updated Information Systems Strategy for achieving the Cyprus Government objectives, whilst being in line with the EU e-Government Action Plan 2011-2015 and the Digital Agenda for Europe, it will define the **Strategic Application Systems** to be developed for the various Government Ministries/Departments/Services and their corresponding prioritisation within the overall revised Government Information Systems Strategy. In addition, for the Strategic Application Systems that will be identified, relevant action plans will be derived, with budgets and resource requirements taking into consideration all relevant constrains and risk factors. Measures and actions will be recommended for implementing initiatives falling under the EU e-Government Action Plan 2011-2015 and the Digital Agenda (e.g. develop User Centric Services, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government and the public services)
- In the framework of developing the **strategic application systems** for various Government Ministries/Departments/Services, **simplification/ re-engineering of procedures** is also undertaken as part of the activities of the whole project(usually undertaken by external experts, as part of their contract, in co-operation with the

user Ministry/ Department and the Department of Information Technology Services)

- **One-stop shops** also operate in Cyprus, which provide multiple services which fall under the competence of various Government Ministries/Departments/Services, from one point of contact/ location, thus offering citizens the convenience of meeting their requirements in one stop. There is a legal framework for the establishment and operation of one-stop-shops (Law 140(I)/2012).

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Yes, **7 one-stop-shops** or Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) have been established, dealing with a variety of procedures. The CSCs provide services:

(a) Directly to the public, since they have competency in issuing various certificates and other documents (e.g. issuing of birth certificates, Identity Cards, Driving licenses, road tax licenses, Social Insurance Contributions Records etc)
(b) Indirectly to the public, since they also act as an intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities for a series of other services i.e. CSCs receive applications for the issuing of passports, refugee identity cards, registration in the electoral register, grants, allowances, benefits and pensions (e.g. student grant, child allowance, maternity allowance, maternity grant, old age pension, social pension, invalidity pension).

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5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

All three factors are considered important when implementing simplification action plans.

With regards to the measurement of the degree of satisfaction, it should be mentioned that in the case of one-stop shops, a citizen satisfaction survey was carried out.

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6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its

lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Our simplification action plans focus more on the licensing procedure. However, Information Obligations are also taken into consideration.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

<u>eProcurement System</u>

The scope of this project was the introduction, application and deployment of a total solution for conducting public procurement competitions in Cyprus using electronic means.

In Cyprus, there is currently only one eProcurement system, serving all contracting authorities for free, for all types of competition and for all types of procedure; this must be used at least for publishing procurement opportunities. This system was designed, developed and deployed by the Treasury of the Republic with the assistance of the Department of Information Technology Services. The spark for the introduction of eProcurement was given by the EU Action Plan included in the Lisbon Strategy and the developments in the eGovernance and Better Regulation. This system is easily accessible for free from interested economic operators all over the world who can register and receive notifications every time a competition falling under their scope of operations is procured.

In forming the project implementation strategy we have avoided any strict policy or decision-making actions being transferred to the system in order to fit all contracting authority needs, allowing them to use the system in as much depth as they feel appropriate in order to work on change management. However, publication of notices is mandatory to secure at least the initial system utilisation and to concentrate all procurement opportunities in Cyprus in a single web page. In addition, the system functionalities were extended to include the eCatalogues and eOrdering modules, which are incorporated in the core eProcurement System. This enabled the Treasury of the Republic to utilise the potentials and currently there is an electronic shop where all contracting authorities in Cyprus (including local authorities and bodies governed by public law) can click and shop instantly for over 500 products of common needs.

Promotion and change management activities were emphasised via a dedicated promotion contract. The system functionalities cover all the procurement procedures covered by the directive on public procurement (i.e. open, restricted, negotiated, etc.) as well as Cyprus-specific procedures for low value items (simplified procedures). It also covers repetitive procurement through Framework Agreements with or without eCatalogues' support. Furthermore, specific orders can be concluded either by direct ordering (through eCatalogues or not) or by reopening competitions (through selecting specific products of

supplier catalogues and requesting better prices).

The system modules are:

- eRegistration: Free registration of economic operators – need to be verified by the Administrators; Controlled registration of contracting authorities by the administrators;
- eNotification: electronic preparation of CfTs and Notices; OJEU, aOG, publication of tender docs, define tender structure; Questions and Answers, Clarifications, Addenda, automated notifications; Upon Publication of a Tender, all EOs are notified if it is in their line of business;
- eTendering: electronic preparation and submission of tenders; online/offline tender preparation tools, tender verification with immediate EO feedback; tender encryption, tender time stamping; two-phased tender submission for large tenders;
- eEvaluation/ eAwarding: secure electronic tender opening, automated evaluation using lowest price or MEAT, contract-awarding process handling and communications, support for lots;
- eAuction: used as extension to the tender evaluation process; Support for three auction types, user's connection monitoring tool, chat-based communication for online support;
- eCatalogues / eOrdering: support under FAs or for below threshold procurements; UBL support, FA mini competitions (reopening), eAuction on eCatalogue products;
- eStatistics: statistical analysis and reporting; regulatory reporting on annual procurement activity, regulatory reporting per CfT and possibilities to extract specific customised information.

Germany (DE)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

The <u>Better Regulation Unit</u>(BRU) within the Federal Chancellery coordinates the overall Bureaucracy Reduction policy of the Federal Government. To this end, a Government Work Programme on Better Regulation was adopted in 2012 (follow-up of the Government Programme on Bureaucracy Reduction and Better Regulation adopted in 2006).The <u>State Minister to the Federal Chancellor</u> is also the coordinator for the Federal Government's policy on Better Regulation and Bureaucracy Reduction. He/she is assisted by the BRU within the Federal Chancellery, which works in close cooperation with Federal Ministries, stakeholder associations (business, civil society) and representatives of both the German Länder and municipalities. The <u>NationalerNormenkontrollrat</u> (Regulatory Control Council), short: NKR – was established as a "watchdog" over the assessment of the entire "compliance costs" of regulatory proposals by the Federal Government. The NKR scrutinizes whether the compliance costs incurred by citizens, business and public administration as a result of new regulations are described in a comprehensible and methodically correct manner and whether the political objectives set out in these proposals are realized at the least possible cost.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

In order to develop lean procedures, Germany aims to increase the <u>use of digital solutions</u>. Common bottlenecks that have been identified are <u>differing legal and factual procedures, as well as different IT-solutions</u>. These circumstances result -inter alia - out of the specific federal state structure in Germany.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

Better regulation principles are firmly established in German Federal law. For example, the Regulatory-Impact-Assessment-(RIA)-Requirements are laid down in the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries and must be observed in all regulatory proposals made by the Federal Government. The powers of the NKR are stipulated in a federal law. These legal safeguards are the basis for establishing better regulation in a sustainable manner. The establishment of the NKR as an independent institution, as well as that of the Coordinator for Better Regulation and Bureaucracy Reduction within the Federal Chancellery, organisationally safeguard the success of regulatory reform. The mandatory involvement of the NKR in RIA-processes, and the fact that RIA-results must be presented in all legislative drafts by the Federal Government, ensures that Parliament is made aware of the arising administrative procedures of every regulation it passes. Through their public relations work, the Federal Government and the NKR ensure that citizens and businesses are informed and can support regulatory reform issues (publications, conferences – e.g. the International Regulatory Reform Conference in 2013 -, participation in other Better Regulation/administrative simplification events, working groups on Better Regulation/Bureaucracy Reduction together with business and civil society organizations, providing information and expertise for Parliament Committee work on Better Regulation, etc.).

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

The federal level as well as the German Länder established a variety of ones-stop shops in fields of their respective competences. There a both kinds of one-stop-shops dealing with only one field of activity, e.g. start-ups, and a variety of fields such as the public administration customer service. By dialling telephone number 115 citizens, but also businesses and public administration have a direct connection to authorities in Germany – regardless of the government level concerned. Currently there are some 20,000 authorities throughout Germany at federal, state and local level with countless telephone numbers. 115 is the number to call for all questions concerning public administration. This number links up all participating services centres at federal, state and local level in a joint knowledge management system.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

The German action plan on the improvement of measuring compliance costs addresses all

three targets. Thereby the ministries must identify and describe the overall compliance costs for businesses, administration and citizens when submitting legislative drafts. Scientific accuracy is not necessary; it is more important to make a reasonable effort to provide the decision makers and the general public with a realistic picture of the anticipated burdens and burden reductions from the perspective of the addressees of the regulation. The main objective in quantifying the anticipated administrative burdens and benefits stemming from new, amended or cancelled obligations or combinations of such (processes)is to describe the concrete consequences of an obligation for all addressees. Besides the improvement of RIA procedures Germany promoted the use of Evaluation on federal level in order to measure the practical effects of regulation. Generally, the lead ministries decide themselves in which cases and how they will evaluate regulation they drafted. However, as of 1 March 2013, ministries agreed to systematically evaluate their laws and regulations after three to five years - provided that the compliance costs entailed with the respective proposals are estimated to exceed 1 mill. Euro. The NKR scrutinizes whether the grounds and parameters for evaluation (respectively intended non-evaluation) are comprehensible. Thus practical fields for simplification are identified and measures to promote lean procedures can be taken.

6.	As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Generally both before and after businesses operate, but recently Germany set a specific focus on IOs. The Federal Government committed itself to - compared to 2006 -reduce the costs arising from information obligations for business by a net total of 25% until the end of2011. In this context the improvements -outlined above - in regard to compliance cost become relevant again. In order to verify whether the mentioned target is attained, it is necessary to separately identify and display the costs arising from information obligations in legislative proposals. Compliance costs include administrative costs resulting from information obligations that are stipulated. However, they need to be reported separately for the addressee "business". In order to describe the facts as realistically as possible, the affected industrial sectors or groups of companies should also be specified in more detail. Above all, the extent to which small and medium-sized enterprises are particularly affected must be examined.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

Germany has created a series of studies to uncover unnecessary bureaucracy. In order to simplify processes and procedures that make life easier for those affected, Germany established so-called "simpler-to"-projects. So far, the NKR has published studies in close cooperation with partners in law enforcement agencies as well as local, state and federal government. Those studies contained specific measures to simplify the ways to family allowance, housing allowance, federal financial aid and the entry of foreign professionals and executives.

Denmark (DK)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?
There are no central administrative body responsible for the simplification of administrative procedures as this task is conducted by the ministries themselves - sometimes initiated by a central government initiative/decision. In some areas, the Agency for Modernisation of Public Administration comes up with recommendations and guidelines for administrative best-practices. In addition to the work of the Agency for the Modernisation of Public Administration, the Danish government and the social partners in the public sector has agreed upon seven principles for modernisation which among other thing includes a focus on the reduction of administrative processes' in the spirit of cooperation and trust.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?
It is always essential to ensure the balance between the positive effects of simplifications and the need for thorough administrative procedures to ensure the quality and legality of the administration.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.
One of the most common used ways to simplify administrative procedures in the Danish administration is the implementation of electronic case procedures and other digital tools. These types of tools can reduce the time spend on processing and allow the administration to focus on the core tasks.

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

One-stop shop is widely used in the Danish administration. An example of a one-stop shop is "www.borger.dk" which covers almost all contact between the public services and the citizens on for example taxes, pensions, et cetera.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

In most cases, simplification of the public administration is conducted to reduce the administrative burden and hereby improve the quality of the services provided to citizens. There are no general rules on the evaluation of reforms and simplification processes', and therefore, surveys on the effect of reforms and the satisfaction of users is conducted on an ad hoc basis.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

The Danish government and the employee organisations agreed in June 2013 upon seven principles for modernisation which among other thing includes a focus on the reduction of administrative processes' in the spirit of cooperation and trust. The implementation of the principles is an ongoing process.

European Commission (EC)

> 1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

The European Commission is one of the main institutions of the European Union, the responsibility for specific policy areas are shared among the different Directorate Generals. General policy guidelines, including the ones dealing with the administrative simplification are approved by the college and implemented by each Directorate General.

In the context of the administrative simplification, the Commission has decided to reduce its establishment plan by 5%between 2013 and 2017, spread equally over all Directorate Generals. In order to achieve this goal, the Directorate General for Human Resources and Security of the European Commission has launched a Business Process re-engineering exercise to review the added value of HR services, to rationalize and simplify internal workflow and to identify opportunities for savings. Another service, DIGIT, addresses the ICT supported solutions for the simplification of administrative processes. It is the service that is responsible for the ICT governance and chairs the high level meetings such as HLICT and ISPMB for the ICT rationalisation. DIGIT also addresses the ICT supported solutions for the simplification of administrative processes in the Member States. The coordination amongst different services is ensured through high level interservice groups for exchanging knowledge and building the required administrative capacity. Also through interservice working groups that will prepare the necessary toolbox for tackling the issue of administrative reform from the Commission side as a whole.

Business Process re-engineering exercise

The main obstacles identified for an adoption and implementation of simplification actions plan could be summarised as below:

- ✓ **Lack of commitment of key actors**: The success of the implementation of the BPR proposals depends on the "buy in" of the staff and management involved in the processes reviewed. Without the engagement of senior management actions aiming at changing the management culture will encounter serious difficulties to be successfully implemented.

- ✓ **Inadequate level of detail**: High level analysis providing insufficient level of detail leading to limited added value.BPR team dives into too much detail in terms of time and effort needed for modelling and measurement.

- ✓ **Dependence on consultants**: All modelling and analyses are assigned to consultants. Managers and staff become indifferent to the BPR exercise and there is no continuous improvement process in place.

- ✓ **Regulation**: the regulatory framework of the Commission may be perceive in certain circumstance as an obstacle / a constraint for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Process to amend the regulation may be perceived as to cumbersome.

ICT supported solutions for the simplification of administrative processes

- **Internally in the Commission**

DIGIT has already acknowledged the need for rationalisation of the ICT systems and applications inside the EC. In the EC IT governance review it is clearly mentioned that the proliferation of different systems and applications in EC is a key blocking factor. More than 650 different systems and applications with inconsistent data, different information held between systems, different look and feel, difficulty of combining information held in one system with that from another etc. has led to serious interoperability problems. Users face with huge challenges in having to cope with all these different ICT environments and they are calling for coherence.

Also on the infrastructure level the disperse locations of data centres and the connecting networks also was a point that needed intervention. Taking advantage of the available technologies at the time EC could achieve reductions in the time to service and time to connect the various EC infrastructures.

- **For member states (ISA)**

The oil to the modernisation engine that will make it run smoothly and deliver the

outmost of its benefits is interoperability (IOP). The latter refers to the capability of different entities, MSs public administrations in the specific case, to interact between each other and exchange information, preferably by electronic means, in a mutually agreed and structured manner.

The impact of applied interoperability is enormous. It helps that public services are delivered better, faster and at lower cost, thus supporting growth at times of financial austerity. Not to forget that the public sector is the biggest industry in Europe, generating half of the European GDP, employing 25% of the active population and spending 20% of the EU GDP for public procurement.

Thus the lack of interoperability is a key factor that prohibits the implementation of the simplification action plans. Interoperability is not only on the technical level, but also in the semantic, the organisational and the legal levels. Therefore the "silos" approach as an organisational structure impedes the application of interoperable solutions and consequently the delivery of the benefits mentioned above. The lack of supporting legislation plays also a crucial role in establishing the framework in which the reform can take place.

What we see as show-stoppers are also the following:

- ✓ **Lack of incentive due to the non-profit character of the public sector.** Resources and cost sharing, charge back services based on real costs are not really in the tradition of PAs;
- ✓ **Separation of powers,** the basis of democracy which inevitably creates a fragmentation of information flows. This resulted in a vertical organization in functional domains that act as stovepipes with minimum horizontal interaction and information sharing;
- ✓ **Data protection issues.** Not only linked with the data that is at stake but also, in a cross-border context, with the fact that different countries have different sensibilities in this matter;
- ✓ **Legal constraints** and, in a cross-border context, different legislations that produce fear of reusing solutions because of possible unexpected legal implications.

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3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competentbodies/entitiesinordertosimplifyadministrativeprocedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents,**

shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

The Directorate General responsible for the corporate management of Human resources (DG HR) in the European Commission launched in 2011 a **Business Process Re-engineering** exercise. This exercise consists in a review of all internal processes using BPR methodologies adapted to the nature and the size of processes. The main objectives of this exercise are:

–   The rationalization and simplification of internal workflows;

–   The increase of the value of HR services;

–   The identification of potential savings.

The IT governance plan, the ICT rationalisation plan is another tool. The Commission identified the problems mentioned in point 2 in 2002 and created an inter-service group to deal with them. This gave rise to an interoperability action plan and related communication. The interoperability communication examines the totality of the problems, proposes a vision for the future of IT and creates the conditions to reach it under the current organisation. On the infrastructures level a consolidation was deemed necessary. Through this consolidation of the IT infrastructure, as regards organisation and architecture, has the potential to bring gains both in terms of service (better disaster recovery and resilience) and in terms of resources (better use of staff and available infrastructure).

ISA program for Member States

In times of economic crisis, modernisation of public administrations (PAs) is a universally acknowledged request. It means the establishment of an environment that provides high quality services to citizens and businesses, with short response times and reasonable cost, in a transverse and seamless way throughout the whole of the administrations' policy and geographical areas and even across borders at European level. Principles such as "one single entry point to administration", "one time data submission only", openness of processes, exploitation of public data, security and data protection, are all necessary ingredients of the desired modernisation. ISA has developed a set of solutions which span over 5 different lines of actions. Three of these lines of actions directly focus on providing solutions for the PAs. These lines of actions are:

-       Key Interoperability Enablers

-       Support the effective implementation of EU legislations

-       Support Instruments to PA

Under each of the above there are specific actions that enable the simplification of administrative procedures through ICT. Solutions like:

S-Testa, Semantics, eSignature and eidentification, machine translation fall under the interoperability enablers.

The EU legislation is supported by actions such as eProcurement, ICT impact assessment, Internal Market Information system, European Citizens Initiative, etc.

And finally direct support to EU PAs are solutions like Assessment of standards, the European Interoperability cartography, the European interoperability architecture, the assessment of the maturity of services, etc.

A complete list of solutions can and will be provided in the context of collaboration under the interservice groups.

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialized in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

The Commission has decided to manage the ICT resources (infrastructure, systems, applications, support) with a corporate approach. In order to achieve the maximum benefit from newly available technology, it was proposed to re-structure the way in which IT services are managed in the Commission, and to adopt the structure of coordinating groups shown below. This reorganisation has two major objectives:

a) To strengthen coordination and knowledge sharing in the area of information systems. DIGIT should thus assure coordination of IT matters in the Commission in an analogous way to that in which other horizontal services co-ordinate human resources, budget, programming and document management matters.

b) To maintain the existing management of the common technical infrastructure and related services i.e. the Comité Technique Informatique for infrastructure and the product and service management.

The co-ordinating structure below is intended to ensure that all relevant DGs continue to have proper input into IT decisions led by DIGIT, and appropriate and timely information on IT resource requirements is fed into the Commission's resource allocation and budgetary processes. DG DIGIT has the duty to develop the EC IT strategy and to coordinate the IT inter-service collaboration in the Commission.

ISA PROGRAM

We provide the means to create the one-stop shop service delivery. With a variety of solutions we support the opening up of the base registries, the seamless interconnection of different background systems that allow the one stop shop implementation, the common vocabularies, data and metadata models for the services to exchange their information without burdening the citizens or the businesses, solutions based on standards and frameworks that support the interoperable operation of services.

ISA is based on the single market articles of the EU treaty, therefore is primarily concerned with actions that support the creation and smooth operation of the single market in particularly for the public administrations. Actions like the internal market information system (IMI) are best practices when it comes to establishing single stop shops. Also, our work done in the creation of unique catalogues of services for EU and the MSs as well as opening up and ensure access to business registries demonstrate our good position in the specific field.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

The results of the **BPR exercise** can be summarized as follows:

– Improvement of DG HR delivery models (value of services, operational workflows);

– Targeted identification of savings in a political context of staff reduction.

The simplification that is implemented throughout the **ICT** rationalisation and the governance model at place is being measured in all these three aspects. The benefits can be translated in investment savings, resources being better utilised and economies of scale achieved. More info is available in the reports on the ICT rationalisation. **For the ISA program**, our target aims mainly at (c) and by achieving this we ensure that both citizens and businesses benefit from the better quality service provided by the PAs. Currently, according to our mandate, we deal with the pan-European services which are cross border and cross sectors. We have identified the needs for specific actions that are cross border or cross sector and when implemented will deliver a great added value to the transformation of PAs. By providing a set of free and immediately available solutions to the MSs we expect to see implementations that address all a, b, c goals. We have specific tools for measuring the maturity of the solutions and we are in the process of defining a mechanism for measuring coherently the quantitative and qualitative benefits of our implementations.

6.	As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

The **BPR** focus on changes in the HR processes through an optimisation of the existing workflows and the delivery of additional options for further improvements. With a strong customer oriented perspective, the project assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of individual HR workflows and propose new models with an optimized Cost/Value ratio. The BPR is an opportunity to anticipate the inevitable changes resulting from the new political environment and the need to better demonstrate efficiency and quality in support activities. The BPR analyse the process as currently implemented to identify how it effectively and efficiently operates. The BPR identify also opportunities to design a new process (to be) before an action plan define the way the new process will be implemented. On **ICT**, we have developed the European Union Public License (EUPL) the first European Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS) licence. Thus in the domain of ICT, services and solutions could be issued fast and securely under EUPL in 22 different languages.

7.	Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

BPR EXERCISE

RECRUITMENT PROCESS:

Enhance efficiency

- Introduce Electronic workflow of document to support the decision making process replacing a paper based workflow
- Provide data & documents only once avoiding redundancy in the request and data entry
- Customers provide electronic data and scan document to save resources
- Rationalise redundancy in control by reinforcing ability to front line control, clarification of responsibilities of control, implementing risk based ex post control.

Enhance effectiveness & customer satisfaction

- Improve the ability to identify the best candidates
- Improve Key performance indicators
- On-line information on the recruitment status
- Recruitment formalised within**2 weeks** instead of 2 months

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Enhance efficiency

- Define a risk based policy for medical examination

- Externalise medical tests and examination

Enhance effectiveness & customer satisfaction

- More effective health prevention impacting positively the **level of presence of staff** -**Better monitoring** of staff health prevention limiting the risk of absence and invalidity due to health deficiencies, and the level for reimbursement of medical expenses

- **Highest attractiveness** due to the reduction of:

    - Waiting for appointment,
    - The number of venues during the working time (3 to 1)

<u>**ICT**</u>

- The consolidation of the help desks (itic) inside the EC

- The consolidation of data centers,

- the ICT rationalisation and, the governance bodies ISPMB and HLCIT, reviewing and assessing every year all ICT projects and expenditures for rationalization purposes.

<u>**ISA PROGRAM**</u>

- **Machinetranslation MT@EC.** This machine translation tool manage to dramatically reduce the response time in the requests of translations. https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/software/page/eupl

- **JOINUP.** Setting up a portal for dissemination of solutions/services/components could take long in the Member States. Through JOINUP platform the necessary environment and infrastructure is at place to host assets coming from EC services or Member States (https://joinup.ec.europa.eu)

- **Internal Market Information (IMI):** a single stop shop for public administrations to exchange documents and information for a set of EU laws that cover the free moving of citizens and goods within the single market. (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/index_en.htm)

And many others like ePrior adopted as the sole eProcurement environment from Belgium, etc.

Estonia (EE)

> **1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

According to the Estonian RIA methodology all ministries that initiate policy changes have the obligation to analyse the impact of each policy changeon administrative burden. The ministries have to analyse whether the policy change would affect expenses of businesses, non-profit organisations or natural person , in implementation of legislation or performance of information obligations or other burdens (i.e. expenses incurred for administration of information required by legislation and for submission thereof to the state or third parties). More precisely they have to ask at least the following questions:

1. Does the draft affect (increase or decrease) obligations of businesses, non-profit organisations or citizens to submit information to the state and the accompanying expenses, i.e. both the amount of information and the operational procedures or operations related to collection, entry and verification of information?

2. Does the draft affect the number of procedural acts accompanying the application for approvals required for business activities (e.g. permit or licence applications, an obligation to submit a management report or a registry entry) or the volume of currently required operations and the accompanying expenses, e.g. will direct (fees) or indirect (notary fees, expert assessment) expenses be added or reduced?

3. Does the draft affect requirements concerning the performance of some additional operational procedure or will there be a new obligation to obtain special equipment?

In the official coordination round (for the approval of the proposal by the ministries) it is for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications to control and for the Ministry of Justice to oversee that the impact on administrative burden has been adequately assessed.

> **2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

Sometimes service design is impeding factor. There is more potential to improve user-friendliness and simplify the operating systems of services (development of additional e-services).

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

- Economic Activities Code Act which will enter into force in July 2014, reduces substantially the list of areas of activities which have to have an activity licences prior to commencement of economic activities. Instead the requirement of informing is established and in practice the enterprise may start commencing its activity before informing procedure. In addition the new act prescribes that the applications of activity licences have to be proceeded within a month.
- Concerning e-solutions, in 2010 the system of electronic annual reports was launched, which reduced the administrative burdens of entrepreneurs by 29% (4.6 million euros).
- During coming years the licensing procedure shall further be simplified through the technical developments of register of economic activities. The same applies to licensing procedure of licence for construction.
- In order to analyse the administrative burdens within the framework of regulatory impact assessment, the electronic calculator has been created by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The tool is available at hkm.mkm.ee (in Estonian language).

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

"Gateway to eEstonia Eesti.ee" is a electronic one-stop shop which provides access to various public services for citizens and entrepreneurs. The electronic gateway presumes ID-card and possibility to provide digital signature, which is available to all citizens of Estonia.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

All three aspects mentioned in the question are equally important. The satisfaction surveys have been conducted occasionally and they cannot be considered as systematic

component in the policy-making process.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

For Estonia both directions are important. In practice and taking into account recent developments, we consider that Estonia has been more successful in simplifying the procedures before a business operates.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

1) Economic Activities Code Act – all regulations on licenses were consolidated, the proceeding practices were unified (e.g proceeding time up to 1 month) and necessary developments of the registry of economic activities were implemented. Several licensing procedures were abolished and substituted with informing requirement which is not a presumption for commencing the activities of an entrepreneur.

2) Creation of electronic annual report system – the system allows companies to submit their annual reports electronically. The system was developed by the Centre of Registers and Information Systems. And it has received a lot of positive recognition internationally (e.g it was nominated as the world's best e-services among more than 460 projects at the global initiative of e-solutions, the World Summit Award 2011). As the Company Registration Portal accepts not only the Estonian ID cards, but also some other countries (e-g Portugal, Belgium, Finland), the portal is usable for citizens of foreign countries as well.

Greece (EL)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

Greece lacks a single public body that has overall competency for planning and implementing administrative simplification. Competency for simplifying procedures in a specific policy field lies primarily with the Ministry where that policy field belongs to(i.e. the Ministry of Environment, Climatic Change & Energy for environment policies, the Ministry of Health for health policies, the Ministry of Finance for VAT issues etc). To a great extent, each Ministry disposes of its own simplification unit, advancing simplification proposals that are restricted to its own administrative procedures.

A central Ministerial body that has a general horizontal competency to simplify administrative procedures and reduce administrative burdens across all policy fields, in cooperation with line Ministries, is the **Directorate for Simplification of Administrative Procedures & Productivity at the Ministry of Administrative Reform and E-Government (MAREG)**. The Directorate has a horizontal, coordinating role that involves a)introduction of horizontal simplification measures (i.e. abolishment of required documents, sharing of information of supporting documents among public services etc), b) coordination of simplification interventions across all relevant Ministries in view of specific EU Directives and of Memorandum obligations etc (i.e. incorporation of the "Services' Directive into Greek Law), c) co-operation with its counterpart Directorates in other Ministries in order to locate burdensome administrative procedures and d) implementation of OECD proposals following a project on reduction of Administrative Burdens in 13 policy sectors.

Coordination between the MAREG Simplification Directorate which, as previously stated, has a horizontal competency over administrative simplification and its counterpart Directorates in other Ministries is at best poor and often leads to fragmentary and non-coherent simplification action plans.

Due to the centralised nature of the Greek state, sub-national public authorities (Prefectures, Municipalities etc) cannot propose legislation. They mainly implement the existing legal and regulatory framework. Their role is restricted to simplifying their internal procedures (back office etc) or to participating in consultation processes run by the competent Ministries.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

Although the Greek administrative structure is an asset for applying any governmental policy (be it a simplification or any other scheme), due to its centralized nature, there are a number of country-specific factors that often interfere with our simplification work. Such factors are:

a) A rigid, overlapping and complex legalistic environment that inevitably leads to further bureaucracy. All administrative procedures (licensing, audits etc) are provided for and amended by laws, presidential decrees, ministerial decisions and common ministerial decisions. Each procedure's regulatory framework is thus complicated and hard to modify. A first crucial step towards simplifying administrative procedures has been their standardisation (listing of their supporting documents) that has taken place since the founding of Greek Citizens' Service Centres (CSCs) and Points of Single Contact (PSCs) of the Services Directive.

b) Lack of strategic planning with the use of pre-existing measurement tools. Though simplification principles and tools are definitely used when deciding upon what to simplify and how to simplify it, implementation results are not properly evaluated, as measurement on the improvement of service delivery hardly ever occurs.

c) An administrative mindset that tends towards an overly patronising attitude towards the citizen and a misconception of what safeguarding public interest really means. Public servants' attitude towards change is often rather phobic or hesitant at best, because they see further simplification measures as an opportunity for illegality.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

Our simplification tools are of purely legal nature and mainly include:

1. Abolishment of a procedure (ie licensing system) if it no longer responds to the need of its legal introduction
2. Abolishment or drastic reduction of the required documents which are necessary for carrying out a procedure
3. Replacement of required documents for a given procedure with a solemn declaration (written statement) of the citizen
4. Shortening of maximum response time for service delivery.

5. Application of the 'silence-is-consent' rule
6. Sharing of information among public services regarding specific required documents so that the applicant does not have to submit them himself
7. Cutting down on or abolishment of joint competencies among Ministries for the issuance of regulatory or other executive acts
8. Carrying out of a given administrative procedure through the Citizens' Service Centres (CSCs) which play the role of the intermediary between the applicant and the Public Administration
9. Fully on line completion of a number of administrative procedures (submission of the application form and processing)

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Citizens Service Centres (CSCs) were established in 2002 as a way to bypass bureaucracy and overlapping competencies among public services with a view to providing quality services to citizens and businesses. CSCs do constitute a form of one-stop shop that play the role of intermediary between the applicant and the public services. In Greece, there are 1.060 CSCs spread across the country enabling citizens/businesses to apply for approximately 1.030 administrative procedures. The role of the CSCs is primarily to forward application forms along with their supporting documents to the competent authorities and after applications are processed, to deliver the corresponding certificates, licenses etc to citizens either as a paper document or as a digitally signed electronic document.

Greek CSCs behave as real one-stop shops in 3 procedures, meaning that in these cases, they replace the competent public services and are able to issue certificates, vouchers etc

In addition to these cases, CSCs can issue 30 simple certificates via an online system that gives them access to public data bases. Regarding the 100 procedures which do not require supporting documents, citizens can also apply to CSCs by calling the 1500 call-centre or by applying online through the ERMIS portal.

Fifty-four (54)out of the 1.060 CSCs, which are located at major cities, act also as physical entities of PSCs (Points of Single Contact) under the provisions of the 2006/123/EC Services Directive. Their role is to intermediate between the service provider (natural or legal persons) and the competent public services for procedures (licenses, permits etc) falling under the scope of the Services Directive through the EUGO portal.

Apart from the CSCs that deal with a wide variety of procedures, Greece has recently established separate One-Stop-Shops (OSSs)for the founding and registration of those commercial companies that have the legal form of General Partnerships, Limited Partnerships, Private Companies, Limited Liability Companies and Societes Anonymes (Law 3853/2010). Chambers of Commerce operate as OSSs for the first three,

while certified notaries operate as OSSs for LLCs and SAs.

As is mentioned in the benchmarking criteria set by the European Commission in the "COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Assessing Business Start-up Procedures in the context of the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs", one-stop-shops must be fully capable of a) handling both the entire registration process for any company irrespective of its societal form or size and guide, b) advising the entrepreneur on all administrative matters pertaining to the registration and pre-registration process, as well as c)being able (ideally) to furnish additional services to would-be entrepreneurs such as coaching, training and providing financial advice and business plan guidance. Besides handling the full registration process Chambers of Commerce, are by their very nature able to offer these additional services mentioned above. Similarly, notaries can offer advisory services in addition to their role as handlers of the registration process due to their legal training and background.

Nevertheless, the OSSs of Law 3853/2010 do not have the competency to grant permits, licences etc to businesses. Their role is limited to helping with the founding of a company. In other words, the result delivered by their actions is the legal founding of a company and its registration in both the commercial (legal) and the tax registries so that the company is able to commence its activities. Any specific licences (such as, for example, an operational licence for a big industrial compound) are granted by the respective authorities or through the CSCs and PSCs after the company's legal founding.

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5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

At first, when Greece started to set up and implement simplification action plans in the mid-1990s and 2000s, the main concern according to the government agenda of the time was the provision of quality services to citizens. Besides, this was the background for the establishment of the Citizens' Service Centres around the country in 2002.

However, since 2009 and due to the fiscal crisis Greece is going through, focus has considerably moved to a more pro-business attitude i.e. by improving business environment, reducing administrative burdens and eliminating restrictions to competition. Unfortunately, no established pattern of measurement of satisfaction exists at the moment as far as the impact of simplification action plans on the specified target groups (citizens, business, public sector)is concerned.

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6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its**

lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?
Greece's simplification policies have almost exclusively focused on licensing procedures, that is on the administrative procedure that allow a business to operate. In other words, the main focus of the simplification action plans since mid-1990s has been the reduction of prerequisites for entering the market. Less or no special effort has been made over the last years to dealing with Information Obligations (IOs) and administrative burdens during the lifecycle of a business's. However, the proposals made by OECD on the reduction of administrative burdens in 13 policy sectors which have been already submitted to the Greek government, in the form of 13 reports, will constitute the basis for turning our attention equally to this aspect as well.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.
In December 2013, Greece abolished 25 licensing systems which regard low risk small and medium sized enterprises, such as fitness centres, hairdresser's salons, butcher's shops, fruit retail outlets etc The licensing systems of those 25 activities have been replaced with a "notification", by which the interested party notifies the operation of his/her business to the competent public service (Region or Municipality).
According to the **<u>Notification System</u>**, natural or legal persons starting up a business submit a solemn declaration statement and a compliance document taking full responsibility for abiding by the rules that concern their business' operation and are set by the existing legal framework. *Ex ante* inspections are thus replaced with, what is believed to be more effective, *ex post* inspections that can better guarantee businesses' continuous lawful operation. Starting up a business becomes the entrepreneur's responsibility though protection of public interest remains under state control. Once administration is notified of a business' start up, that business can operate straight away.
In summary, the characteristics of the notification system are the following: no submission of required documents by the businessman (except for the written statement and the compliance document), no ex ante inspection by state authorities, no processing of documents on the part of the public service, no issuance of any kind of license, and immediate business operation. All businesses are liable to extraordinary inspections at any time.

Spain (ES)

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1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

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The competency to simplify administrative procedures/reduce administrative burdens is divided into different bodies, which are the following:

- The Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, through Directorate General of Modernization, Procedures and e-Administration, is the body responsible for horizontal coordination within General State Administration.

- The Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, through Directorate General of Economical Policy, has the competency in economical regulatory policy in General State Administration.

- The Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, through Directorate General of Industry and PYMEs*, is responsible for SMEs regulatory policy.

- The coordination among General State Administration, Autonomic Communities and Local Administration carries out through Sector Conferences, top-level cooperation on any matter.

*SME=PYME for its acronym in Spanish

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2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

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The main obstacle to adopt and implement simplification action plans is the autonomic Spanish system, where Autonomic Communities have legislative competence on matters which have been transferred by Spanish Constitution.

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3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

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- Deletion of administrative licenses in 90% of commercial activities, through Act 12/2012, December 26th, of urgent measures about liberalization of commerce and specific services.
- Principle "once only", a documentary simplification that consist in not requiring to the citizen information that Public Administration already has.
- E-Administration: interoperability, paperless Administration. Law 11/2007, June 22th, on the electronic access of citizens to public services.
- Administrative simplification.
- One-stop shops for relations between Administration and citizens: PAG - general access point.

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

It is been developing the PAG (general access point) in relation with citizens. Otherwise, Law 14/2013, September 27th, supporting entrepreneurs and their internationalization, establishes general access points to entrepreneurs.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

We focus on those three aspects at the same time: citizens, businesses and simplification in public administrations.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Since Law 12/2012, December 26th, of urgent measures about liberalization of commerce and specific services has entry into force, there have been deleted municipal licenses to start-up in 90% of businesses activities, and they have been replaced by

sworn statements which are a control system *a posteriori*.

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7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

EMPRENDE EN 3 – (UNDERTAKING IN 3)

"EMPRENDE EN 3" is a platform for the setting up of businesses by telematic means; it speeds up the creation and opening of companies by allowing procedures simultaneously with the three public administration levels: state, autonomic and local administration. State has the competence on setting up of businesses, while competence on business activity regulation is from autonomic and local administrations. Also, as it has been aforementioned, the Law 12/2012, December 26th, of urgent measures about liberalization of commerce and specific services have been deleted municipal licenses to start-up in 90% of businesses activities, and they have been replaced by sworn statements which are a control system a posteriori. Thus, EMPRENDE EN 3 platform allows setting up a company by telematic means, in one step and with a registration form. EMPRENDE EN 3 links the entrepreneur with State, Autonomic Community and Local Administration. In their webpage it can be consulted all the required documents to start up a company. Afterwards documents are automatically delivered to every responsible administration which will process their own part of the procedure. The entrepreneur could check online the status of the processing at any moment. Reduction and simplification administrative burdens. With his project administrative burdens are reduced and simplified, and processes in public administrations are made uniform. City councils which want to join the project could do it through web page. Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, who has actively collaborated in its starting up, has carried out a pilot project in several towns. The platform is ready to make easier the entrepreneurship initiative in Spain.

France (FR)

Within the Prime minister's office, two administrative entities are responsible for steering and monitoring the simplification and administrative burden reduction policy: the Secretariat-general of the Government (SGG) mainly for the "legal" side and the Secretariat-general for Government Modernisation (SGMAP) mainly for the "process" side. Both entities have just set up a common "team for simplification" in order to avoid any discrepancy. However, it must be stressed that each ministry has the initiative to determine what its priorities are in terms of simplification.

Furthermore, a "Board for administrative burden reduction and simplification for the businesses" was set up by decree in January 2014. It is co-chaired by a Member of Parliament and a business head. Members are business heads, experts and senior Government employees. The tasks of the Board are to oversee the smooth implementation of streamlining measures, to check on outcomes and to report to the public. SGMAP and SGG have to assist the Board in fulfilling its tasks.

The above mentioned bodies act only at national level.

To achieve success, simplification action plans appear to need a strong political support, possibly at the highest level. On the contrary, inertia and the persistence of a "silo" approach can impede the adoption and implementation of simplification measures.

All legal tools mentioned above are used, except codes of conduct. But before using legal tools, we strive to involve all stakeholders (first of all: end-users who will be affected by the possible change in regulations). To do so, we use permanent panels composed of individual citizens or business representatives (according to the case) not only to collect their opinions but possibly with a view to co-design simplification measures. As far as implementation is concerned, e-government is obviously a tool of utmost importance.

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

The "one-stop shop" approach has of course been adopted. Accordingly to the Services directive, we have a digital single point of contact for businesses.

For citizens, the individual on-line account (mon.service-public.fr) makes it easier for them to access online public services by providing a single, customised point of entry : it was launched at the end of 2009 and 5 million accounts have since then been created.Physical one-stop shops exist in rural areas and some remote suburban areas. They were created through joined up initiatives from public or semi-public bodies (agency for employment, Post, Electricity board, Social security and welfare bodies....) in order to maintain physical accessibility to major public services in these areas. About 400 one-stop shops operate in these areas.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

Improvement of business environment as well as provision of quality services are certainly most important. Enquiries about the perception of the complexity by the users (citizens or businesses) and subsequent satisfaction are fairly common.

6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

Simplification of the business environment has become the first priority. As far as simplification is concerned, operating a business now needs more attention than starting a business. The "Tell us once" principle is being developed as a main feature in our current simplification approach.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

For businesses, since 2011, common commencement dates (entry into force either on January 1st or on July 1st) have been the rule for any regulation concerning the business sector, except for laws. Since then, the European Commission has adopted the same rule.

Croatia (HR)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?
Each line ministry is responsible for simplifications in its respective field.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?
In Croatia there is no central body responsible for simplification of procedures. There are no simplification action plans.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.
General administrative procedure act (GAPA)   In the process of accession to the EU, Croatian PA introduced a number of structural, functional and personal adjustment measures. Public services have become more citizen-oriented, fulfilling their role of providing to the citizens fast service of a good quality while in the same time protecting their rights, for a citizen as a party in administrative procedure before the administrative body expects not only a decision to be legal but also to be issued as quickly as possible. GAPA came into force on 1 January 2010 and it defines the important component of the system of legal protection of the citizens, even if it is not the only legislation influencing the quality of the system.   The new **Bill on State Information Structure**, which has just underwent the process of consultation with the interested public, envisages legal premises for implementation of the E-citizens Project that aims at communication between citizens and the public sector

via a specialised portal created to unite the information about public services and the work of the Government and the ministries, as well as enable safe access to e-services by using an electronic identity. Furthermore, the aforementioned law assures the preconditions for making the state paperless, enabling citizens to avoid long queues, requesting the same document several times, or going from one counter to another.

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

By the end of 2014 we will have them functioning in state administration offices seats and in their branches.

Performance of tasks:

- parties may file all applications for the exercise of a right from the scope of a state administration office, receive information on the course of case resolution, receive decisions, receive prescribed forms, notifications, advice and other assistance from the scope of the office;
- parties may also file applications for the exercise of a right from the territorial jurisdiction of another state administration office or from the scope of central state administration offices, which are ex officio forwarded to the competent body without delay.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

We do not have simplification action plans. While tackling the issues of simplification, Draft Strategy for Public Administration Development 2014 – 2020 is made taking into consideration the KPIs connected with single objectives. The Draft Strategy focuses, among other things, on: improvement of quality and availability of services, efficiency and quality of PA, transparency of PA, high standards of ethical conduct, strengthening confidence in PA, etc.

6.	As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Law on Strategic Investment Projects of the Republic of Croatia aims at making the entire process of obtaining the documents needed for realisation of public and private projects of strategic interest for Croatia simpler and of shorter duration, with corresponding administrative burden lifting.

7.	Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

In 2012 Croatian Government established "Commission for coordination of computerization of public sector" whose task is to guide the development and coordination of all activities and projects applying information and communication technologies in the public sector, included a number of experts from government, academia and the association of ICT companies in analyzing the situation in the Government ICT sector and creating recommendations to improve in following areas:

- o computer networks (the goal is to engage electronic communication infrastructure build by public companies - highways, railways, electricity..)
- o basic registers (the goal is to connect all basic registers in one system),
- o electronic identity (the goal is to use-single-sign in e-government),
- o user access (the goal is to upgrade to the single government domain as well as to create digital mailbox for every citizen),
- o standardisation of procurement of ICT solutions (the goal to gather in one place all needs for hardware and software to get better pricing).

Hungary (HU)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

The body in our country to co-ordinate simplification of administrative procedures of citizens is the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. The main body having the competency to co-ordinate reducing administrative burdens of businesses is the Ministry of National Economy. These act at national level.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

The Zoltán Magyary Public Administration Development Program has been approved by Government Decision No. 1304/2011 (IX. 2.) – included certain measures in the Simplification Program and their implementation. The Simplification Program proposed the simplification of 228 administrative proceedings affecting citizens. Six Ministries took part in the implementation of the Program. The Ministry of Administration and Justice was responsible for the development, coordination and the central monitoring of the Program. The implementation of measures under the Program was the responsibility of other Ministries in charge of a given task. As result almost 100% of proceedings have been simplified. After deep analysis only nine procedures out of 228 could not have been simplified, in all other cases there hasn't been any obstacle of the simplification.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice issued guidance instructions on how to simplify the above mentioned 228 administrative procedures. The review teams had to **choose one of the following** outcomes (a-c):

a) eliminate the procedure;

b) integrate the procedure with another one;

c) reduce its processing time;

OR achieve to at least two of the following outcomes (d-h):

d) enhanced and user-friendlier communication between the office and the clients;

e) re-design of the process;

f) reduction in the number of actors intervening in the process;

g) increased use of IT solutions;

h) reduced documentation and information requirement.

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Since 2012, Hungary has significantly consolidated and streamlined its central and territorial administration. The reforms launched through the Magyary Programme are significant in depth and scope. The public administration has been profoundly re-designed and tasks re-allocated to better serve the needs of citizens and stakeholders. The government has fundamentally re-organised administrative institutions at various levels, through mergers, consolidations and the appointment of fixed-term commissioners with definite tasks and specific powers. The reforms undertaken appear to have significantly improved the situation. The restructuring of the territorial administration through the establishment of County (Capital) and District Government Offices has brought consistent, more coherent and transparent standards. The Government has also established closer linkages between administrative simplification, the reorganisation of the central administration and the reform of the territorial administration. In the process of consolidating administrative services at ministerial level and in the related background institutions, the Government has carried out an important mapping of the procedures and tasks deployed at the central level. A similar exercise has been carried out when restructuring the competences and functions of the Government and District Offices vis-à-vis the local governments. The creation of Points of Single Contact (One-Stop Shops, OSSs) has the potential of further streamlining public service delivery and making it more effective. The Magyary Programme contains 33 planned measures reforming some key elements of how government is organized and working in Hungary. These include - among others – changes to the division of responsibilities across levels of government; reorganization of local, regional and central government institutions and the introduction of One-Stop Shops (OSS) for improved service delivery. The Government hence conceived the deployment of a dense network of Points of Single Contacts (or "One-Stop

Shops (OSS) or, as they are commonly known in Hungary, "Government windows") with a threefold rationale:

- the OSS embody the presence of the State at the service of the citizens and stakeholders. Investing initially especially on the physical (and hence also symbolic) opening of new offices, the Government sought to allow customers to easily perform almost all their transactions with the public administration close to their place of residence. Accordingly, OSS should be located at district level (so that a common citizen should not travel more than 30 kilometres to each a OSS) and have particularly long opening hours (on weekdays from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm);

- the OSS implement simplified measures. The Simplification Programme should permanently ensure a renewed, streamlined background operation system ("back office") for OSS project, so as to guarantee increasingly efficient assistance to the clients. In turn, the OSS should serve as gate-keeping platform for channelling feedback insights about the performance of the public administration, customer satisfaction and the direct inputs from customers; and

- the OSS comply with the EU requirement to set up Points of Single Contact, as provided for by Directive 2006/123/EC (the so-called "Services Directive").

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5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

Compared to the pre-2010 situation, the reforms have brought greater consistency, coherence, standardisation and legal certainty to administrative service delivery. Citizens and increasingly businesses can address public administrations through OSSs; deadlines are clearer and processes more transparent (from within the administration, less for the users).Through the Implementation of the Simplification Program we wanted to achieve 3 main objectives:

1. to make administration perceivably simpler for citizens in respect of the concerned proceedings,
2. whilst not increasing the workload within public administration, and
3. to make the language of certain legal rules easier to understand.

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6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

The European Commission has launched a comprehensive programme to reduce administrative burdens stemming from EU legislation. For many EU member states, including Hungary, this was the most important single triggering factor for embarking on national equivalent initiatives. The Cutting red tape Programme primarily aims at streamlining the "chaotic" functioning of the bureaucratic machinery and strengthening entrepreneurship and competitiveness. It seeks to facilitate and consolidate Hungary's efforts to combat informality. The Government set out to achieve this by eliminating duplication of offices and practices that, besides hindering efficiency, trigger incentives to administrative mis-management. As a part of the programme, the Government identified 114 actions in the following 10 areas:

- Taxes

- sector regulations

- accounting regulations

- digital government

- regulatory activities

- business law

- employment

- planning and development

- investment

- system-wide measures.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

„Language simplification"

In the framework of the Simplification Programme, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice led a project on simplifying legal text and improve their fluency, accessibility and linguistic correctness. Two pilot cases were initially selected for linguistic simplification in the social policy. The project concerned the simplification of 26 legal rules in the second quarter of 2013, and was carried out with other four ministries, which contributed to the design of the project: the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry for National Economy and the Ministry of National Development. The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice coordinated the project and provided professional assistance to

the participants in the form of unified methodology, central training, and continuous linguistic assistance. The Ministry is also the one normally tasked with screening the draft legal texts prepared by the other ministries during the rule-making process. Some 100 officials were involved in the linguistic simplification, assisted by 6 supporting specialists. The latter participated in the work of the initial pilot working groups and delivered the necessary training on the unified project methodology. A further external expert advised on linguistic legal matters.

Italy (IT)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

The Office for Administrative Simplification (USA), within the Department for Public Administration of the Presidency of Council of Ministers, is the main body having competency to simplify administrative procedures and to reduce administrative burdens. USA carries out the administrative burdens measurements, and plays a coordinating role in simplifying administrative procedures and reducing administrative burdens, while each central administration has the responsibility to adopt the proper simplification measures.

USA acts both at national and sub-national level, although each level of government has the responsibility to implement simplified procedures. To ensure a close collaboration between different levels of government, a Joint Committee for the coordination of measurement methods and burdens reduction was established in 2012, bringing together State representatives, Regions and Local Authorities. This collaboration allowed us to carry out a comprehensive administrative burdens measurement in the building sector, whose jurisdiction is concurrent between State, Regions and Local Authorities. This new experience has led to significant simplification measures in the issuing of building licenses.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

The Italian administrative environment still suffers from a weakness in implementing simplification measures. Even if a measure is adopted, results are not achieved if public administrations don't apply them and businesses don't use simplification measures.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

Several tools and methods are used in order to simplify administrative procedures: liberalization policies through abolishment of licensing procedures; the complete

elimination of the request for certificates in the relationships between the public administration, citizens and businesses; organizational and technological interventions.

More generally, the Italian approach relies on the use of various tools, that insists on the principle of proportionality of the requirement according to the type of sector and size of enterprise as well as the safeguard of the public interest. Most of these tools and methods are provided by law and cross-level measures are adopted according to Regions and Local Authorities. Other consensual tools are used as well, such as agreements between different levels of government on the use of unified forms, or on the guidelines providing for the rationalization and simplification of checks and inspections on businesses.

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4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

We have established one-stop shops in Italy. More precisely, we have a single one-stop shop dealing with all procedures related to starting a business (Sportello Unico Attività Produttive - SUAP).It have competency in carrying out the procedure and guarantee to the applicant a single contact within the various government bodies for the issue of permits, licenses, etc.

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5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

Our main focus when implementing simplification measures is the improvement of business environment, with a specific attention paid to regulations that notably affect SMEs and micro-enterprises. Once a measure is implemented, we usually carry out monitoring and evaluations, consulting with main employers' organizations. Targeted analyses and checks are usually conducted as well.

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6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

Our simplification measures are focused equally both on the licensing procedure (licences, permits, authorizations and so forth) and on the reduction of administrative burdens

stemming from Information Obligations imposed by regulations.

| 7. | **Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.** |

Over the last 3 years, one of the implemented simplification measures is that in the sector of fire prevention (Decree of the President of the Republic n. 151/2011), that made us achieve important results in terms of administrative burden reduction and paperwork cut-back. For the first time in Italy, we actually adopted the "principle of proportionality", according to which the weight of administrative requirements varies depending on the type and complexity of risk (risk-based approach). There are now three categories of risk: 1) Category "A" (standardized and low risk activities); 2) Category "B" (moderate and average risk activities); 3) Category "C" (high risk activities). In particular, activities included in the Category "A" no longer require prior approval of the projects but they just require a simple notification to the public authority. There are also a number of activities (e.g. elevator shafts, freight elevators and so on) fully exempted from the fire prevention information obligations. Furthermore, technical paperwork was streamlined and various redundant requirements were cut, causing an estimated 46% reduction in overall administrative costs.

Lithuania (LT)

1.	What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

Better regulation comprises systematical measures that are created to ensure the efficiency of state policy, improve the drafting, adoption and implementation of legal acts as well as the quality of legal regulation, thus increasing its efficiency and consistency. **Reduction of administrative burden** – is one of the priorities in the field of better regulation. The activities of the reduction of administrative burden in Lithuania are developed separate to the citizens and business. The **Ministry of the Interior** is responsible for the issues of the reduction of administrative burden **for citizens**, and the **Ministry of Economy** coordinates the initiatives of the reduction of administrative burden **for business**.

In 2009, The **Commission for Improvement of the Business Environment** (the Sunrise Commission) was created. The purpose of the Commission and its working groups was to consider issues related to the improvement of the business environment and submit proposals on how legal regulation could be improved and administrative burdens could be reduced in those areas that cause the most problems for business. A special **Bureaucratic Burden For Business Reduction Working Group** was formed to address any issues related to administrative burdens. In 2009, this working group addressed 108 issues related to business environment improvement, burden reduction and regulation streamlining and submitted 80 proposals regarding them.

In 2013, the **Smart Regulation Supervision Commission** was established for the purpose to ensure the successful implementation of administrative burden action plan and provide report for the Government about the implementation results.

2.	What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

- the lack of administrative capacities;
- week political will;
- administrative burden for public administration institutions;
- insufficient cooperation between responsible institutions;

3.	What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for

service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

The **Law on Administrative burden reduction** defines these measures for the reduction of administrative burden:

1) improvement of legal regulation
2) simplification of the procedures in the public services delivery process;
3) use of ICT tools in public governance;
4) better cooperation and communication between public sector institutions;
5) assessment of administrative burden;
6) etc.

Separate Methodologies for the measurement and reduction of administrative burden for business and citizen are approved and successfully used.

Specific initiatives in the area of better regulation are provided in the Public Governance Improvement Programme for 2012-2020:

• it is planned to improve the legal regulation of public consultations – to establish the main principles, deadlines and standards of consultations;

• it is sought to expand the provision of electronic services and improve the availability thereof, and to further promote the application of one-stop-shop principle;

• it is sought to reduce regulation and improve the quality of legal acts. The law-making process must be based on analysis and public consultations; it must reflect qualitatively the chosen solution to the problem and the purpose of regulation;

• it is provided that a new regulatory initiative must be assessed in terms of administrative burdens on citizens and other persons, business and public administration institutions. If appropriate, new requirements of legal acts increasing administrative burdens on business must be established, and other requirements that impose administrative burden on business will have to be repealed (the requirements repealed must be no fewer than those newly established);

• in order to assess whether the regulation of a particular sector complies with the set targets, to identify implementation problems and to ensure optimal and sustainable legal regulation, regulatory fitness-checks encompassing not only individual legal acts but also entire sectors will be carried out; the burden caused by costs incurred due to the adaptation and implementation of legal acts and costs of the compliance with unreasonable requirements of legal acts, particularly on small and medium-sized economic entities, will be assessed and reduced; a lot of attention will be paid to the end-user (for example, the economic entity, citizen or other person) in order to facilitate compliance with the requirements of legal acts.

4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

The Law on Public administration defines the one-stop shop principle that has to be implemented in all public administration institutions. It means that the services have to be provided/the applications analysed/the answers provided for the citizen at the one working place without any requirements for the citizen to provide an information or documents from the other institutions.

The Ministry of the Interior monitor the implementation of this principle and coordinates the implementation of the measures needed for the efficient use of this principle. We don't have a single one-stop shop in Lithuania, but the web portals are created in order to provide e-services in centralised way.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

The Law on Administrative burden reduction is active since 1st July 2013. The action plan for the reduction of administrative burden is under the preparation. It will include very specific measures for the assessment and reduction of administrative burden for citizen and business. The surveys of citizen and business are foreseen in order to get their opinion about the regulations and Information obligations on them.

6. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

In 2010, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, the European Social Fund Agency and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania concluded the financing and administration agreement for the project "Assessment of Administrative Burdens, Improvement of the Quality and Efficiency of Legal Regulation and Strengthening of Administrative Capacities in the Context of Better Regulation". The works to assess administrative burdens in monetary terms and to reduce administrative burdens have started.

In 2010, when reviewing the applicable legal acts, state institutions prepared more than 150 draft legal acts eliminating administrative burdens on business.

In 2011, the following main works were carried out:

•   Administrative burdens were assessed in monetary terms in seven priority areas determined by the Government; administrative burdens on business were accounted for in the electronic database (calculator). The internationally recognised formula was used not only to estimate, in monetary terms, costs incurred by economic entities in order to comply with legal acts but also to assess the burden reduction since 1 January 2009. The most significant achievements related to administrative burden reduction were achieved in the priority areas of territorial planning and construction, statistics and transport.

•   Civil servants were trained to assess administrative burdens in monetary terms, to use the administrative burden database (calculator), to supplement it with new data and carry out a data analysis;

•   On the initiative of the Ministry of Economy, the proposals for reduction of the national administrative burden on business in the priority areas were drafted; upon implementation of these proposals to the fullest extent possible, the national administrative burden on business would be reduced by more than 30%;

•   Over 90 urgent measures to reduce administrative burdens in the priority areas were approved by decision of the Government; the majority of them have been implemented.

Luxembourg (LU)

> **1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

Luxembourg has a new Government since the 4th of November 2013. Before that, the "simplification of procedures" was dealt at the national level by the State Ministry:

www.simplification.lu

Since then, the Ministry of Civil service and Administrative reform is responsible for the coordination of the administrative burden reduction at the national level, in cooperation with the whole Government. The ministry acts mostly at the national level and additionally at the local level in the areas where it has its role to play.

www.fonction-publique.public.lu

In the domains where the communes are independent, the Government can only suggest to simplify local administrative procedures. Issues of coordination of the local procedures is dealt by the association of Commune's called Syvicol and by SIGI, the "Syndicat intercommunal de la gestion informatique", the central IT service for the local level which offers local e-government tools to the communes:

www.macommune.lu

> **2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

- A general lack of cooperation between administrations,
- the missing reflex for more innovative procedures within administrations,
- insufficient commitment of the leadership,
- insufficient quality control,
- scarce human resources within the administrations,
- no monitoring methods or tools.

> **3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing**

> **procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)?**
> **Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

- Ex ante Impact assessment evaluation for each new or modified legal text submitted to the Government. Helpdesk for existing administrative burden reduction at the Ministry of Civil service and Administrative reform as well as tools at the disposal of public administrations for organizational reform. http://www.simplification.public.lu/mieux-legiferer/index.html
- Ad hoc mediation groups to simplify specific subjects.

  http://www.fonction-publique.public.lu, www.ombudsman.lu

- Use of e-government tools like www.guichet.lu or www.Myguichet.lu
- Physical one-stop-shops for companies and citizens:

  www.cc.lu, www.cdm.lu,

  http://www.vdl.lu/Politique+et+Administration/Services+communaux/Services+communaux+de+A+%C3%A0+Z/Bierger_Center.html

- Use of CAF and guidelines for implantation of customer satisfaction management and citizen charters

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> **4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

The several existing One-stop-shops in Luxembourg are mainly specialised in informing either companies or citizens on public procedures and forms.

Citizens may be informed via Internet in using e-government tools like www.guichet.lu or www.Myguichet.luon a national level or www.macommune.lu on a local level, or by the way of passing by at the one-stop-shops of the communes like

http://www.vdl.lu/Politique+et+Administration/Services+communaux/Services+communaux+de+A+%C3%A0+Z/Bierger_Center.html

for example.

These tools allow also in the most often used areas to carry out permits, licenses and certificates by electronic means. Companies may be informed by the physical one-stop-shops at the Chamber of Commerce, or the Chamber of Trades and Crafts in Luxembourg City or by the Guichet-PME in Munshausen, or they can also get more details by the means of e-government tools like www.guichet.lu or www.Myguichet.lu.

Physical one-stop-shops for companies are the following:

www.cc.lu

www.cdm.lu

http://www.guichet.public.lu/entreprises/de/organismes/guichet-unique-pme/index.html

http://www.vdl.lu/Politique+et+Administration/Services+communaux/Services+communaux+de+A+%C3%A0+Z/Bierger_Center.html

At the Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Trades and Crafts, companies may also get, aside a broad offer of information on how to start and develop a business, their right of establishment after submitting the required information. The Ministry of Civil service and Administrative Reform offers also since 2013 an interdepartmental platform available to help reducing administrative burdens. First, this platform was meant to find solutions to urban and environmental contradictions linked to an important urban project. But in the meantime, other major administrative public reforms may also be treated in that platform.

> **5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

Luxembourg focuses mainly on the provision of quality services to companies and citizens with the help of e-government tools www.guichet.lu and www.myguichet.lu

This includes automatically the improvement of the business environment. By simplifying these national and local procedures for companies and citizens, Luxembourg always tries to take into account the administrative overload of its public administrations, even if it is not always an easy task. The degree of satisfaction was measured in 2005 by a broader marketing survey, first among the companies then among the citizens. The aim was to repeat the survey every five to seven years. The next survey will be held in 2014. On a regular basis, several methods are being used to measure the degree of satisfaction of the citizens as well as the companies. On the Internet tool www.guichet.lu, each user has the possibility to submit a request or a remark by the electronic helpdesk tool. This is also possible at the internet site of the ministry of Civil service and Public Reform by clicking on the "Vos idées nous intéressent" (your ideas are of interest to us) button: www.fonction-publique.public.lu

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Both!

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

The facilitation unit for urban planning and environment (*Cellule de facilitation en matièred'urbanisme et d'environnement*) is a department at the Ministry of Civil service and Administrative reform which aims to **facilitate administrative procedures** with regards to authorisations introduced by the main laws and regulations concerning urban planning and environment. Any company, private person or commune can address the unit if they believe to have been treated unfairly by the State's public services due to a lack of diligence, transparency or coordination concerning a **procedure for urban planning and environment**.The Unit will namely be responsible for handling matters with regards to:

- special development plans;
- water permits;
- operating permits for classified establishments;
- road permits;
- building permits.

In case of adverse technical conditions asked by several administrations, this platform is searching, together with the project leader, for a possible solution within the legal framework.

Latvia (LV)

1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**
Coordination of simplification of administrative procedures/ reduction of administrative burdens is in competency of State Chancellery and Ministry of Economics (at national level), at national and sub-national level in field of public services coordination is made by Ministry of Environmental protection and Regional development.In Latvia responsibility concerning Better regulation policy is divided among several institutions: State Chancellery is responsible for coordination of state policy drafting and national impact assessment system, Ministry of Economics - assessment and reduction of administrative costs on business as well as simplification of business related legislation. Ministry of Justice is responsible for systemizing and codifying legal acts, also for legislation simplification issues generally. Investment and Development agency of Latvia analyses business environment and draw up proposals for improvement of business environment.
Coordination issues regarding the general policy have been decided by Cabinet of ministers (Action Plan for Improvement of Business Environment) and Prime minister.

2. **What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**
The required amount of investments (period of return of investment vs. public key core capabilities), budget options, capacity of HR in field of change management.

3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**
1. **Home page:http://mazaksslogs.gov.lv** - website provides an opportunity for citizens to inform the country of their identified cases of administrative burdens and submit their proposals for simplification of administrative procedures; 2. **Customer service handbook** for public administration;

3. **Mobile phone aplication "Football"**, which makes possible to:
    - Rate the quality of institutions
    - Contact and find way to the institution;
    - Get all the contact information of public authorities

4. **Action Plan for Improvement of Business Environment.** Aim – to provide simple services in entrepreneurship and more e-services. Adopted annually by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Starting a business

- Enterprise can be registered with one application to Commercial Registry and State Revenue Service since June, 2011.
- Introduced on-line enterprise registration at Commercial Registry via portal www.latvija.lvsince November, 2012.
- Reduced start-up costs and facilitated registration process - within 2010-2013.
- Reduced time for VAT registration from 10 days to 5 days since January 1, 2013.

Construction and real estate registration

- Reduced procedures and time in construction process (15 procedures and 115 days) since May, 2011.
- Provided option for Land Registry department to verify the absence of debt online since 2010.
- Reduced time for announcement of municipalities' pre-emption rights from 20 working days to 5 working days since 2010.
- Adopted new Construction Law since 1 July, 2013, will be in force on February 1, 2014.
- Continued work on the implementation of real estate electronic registration– Amendments are adopted at1st reading by the Parliament on October 10, 2013.

Investor rights protection

- Adjusted a decision-taking process in case of a conflict of interest for shareholders– since July 1, 2012
- A new e - service «Rapporteur on changes applied at Commercial Registry' data» and is currently in trial mode - up to January 1, 2014 Regulations will be developed for the determination of cost of service

Tax area

- Adopted Regulation that will introduce electronic payroll tax book – June 1, 2014
- Improved EDS solution , making it possible to not only login to the e- signature smart card and electronic identification card, but the bank's ID through the portal www.latvija.lv – since September 2013

Enforcing Contracts

- Adopted Amendments to the Civil Law for special legal procedures on business-related matters – since May, 2013
- Improved framework for mediation – Mediation Law and amendments to the Civil Procedure Law are approved by CoM on November 12, 2014
- Continued implementation of electronic document circulation in the judiciary - the proceedings and decisions can be accessed online since September 7, 2013

- Notarial acts are set as execution document - since November 1, 2013
  So far, the reforms carried out in the court system is yielding positive results - in 2012, the courts have dealt with more administrative and civil cases than received, and the number of pending cases has started to decline – in 2012, civil cases have been examined by 17 4% more than received by the court, and the number of remaining cases (pending cases) has decreased by 18.6%. While the number of reviewed administrative cases has increased by 31.4% than received by the court, and the number of pending cases has decreased by 21.4%

Closing a Business

- Adopted new Insolvency Law – in force since 2010. Reduced time of procedures – from 3 years to 1,5 year

Informal adult education

- The Draft Law "Amendment to the Education Law"will cancel the condition to receive a license issued by the local government, which requires that institutions and individuals, who are not registered in the Educational Institution Register, can implement informal adult educational programs (handicrafts, floristry, computer training, language courses, etc.), reducing the administrative burden for both - implementers of informal adult educational programs, which need to have license, and local government officials, who need to issue license.

Carriage by passenger taxis

- The Draft Law "Amendment to the Law on Carriage by Road"defines that the special authorisation (license) issued by local government gives the right to not only perform carriage by the passenger taxis in the relevant administrative territory, as well as to transport a passenger to any place outside such a territory, but also to pick up passenger in the return journey.

Public events approvement

The proposal for amendment in The Public Entertainment and Special Events Security Law include:

- definition of public event criteria of civil insurance (differentiation of public events, which do not require civil insurance);
- the possibility of local government to issue authorisation for prolonged and continued public events;
- specification of examination process of applications by public events organizers in local governments (including reducing time limits).

Advertising materials, signs, notices and other information material placement in public places

- The purpose of Cabinet Regulation No.732 "Procedures for the Receipt of a Permit

for Placing Advertising in Public Places or in Places Facing a Public Place" (adopted 30 October 2012) determine <u>equal requirements[16] in Latvia</u> forplacing advertising, exploitation and graphic design changes that need to be approved by local government. Previously each local government had its own approvement procedure according to binding regulations.

5. E-government services

Emphasis on the use of e-services. The most popular e-services are:

- State Revenue service - 95% of transactions can be done electronically.
- Electronic procurement system – government procurements available also for SME.
- Rural Suport Service - online applications for EU and state support for agriculture.
- Commercial register - Registration of company; Changes to Commercial Register; Register as VAT applicable person.
- Permits and licenses – more than 100 - Food commerce; Veterinary supervision objects; Pollution permits; Beer retail, etc.

6. Framework for delivery of public services

Legal base - in 2013 elaborated and submitted (28.11.2013) to Cabinet of Ministers draft of Public Service law with an aim to have single legal base for provisioning of public services.

- ICT governance model approved by government in January 2013
- Concept for Improvement of the Public Service System approved by government in February 2013
- Guidelines for the development of Information Society (2014-2020), approved by government in October 2013
- ICT Architecture are in progress, to be developed by September 2014

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

One Stop Shop principle has implemented through The Concept for Improvement of the Public Service System approved by government in February 2013. The Concept consists of five layers:

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[16]For example advertising term (like sign) explanations, the placement of advertising, exploitation and graphic design changes need to be approved with local government primarily using an electronic service, local government can issue authorization without requiring for new advertising or promotional item projects if the submitted project contains spelling mistakes.

1. Unified legislative framework
2. ICT use in delivery of public services
3. Unified customer service network
4. Transparent financing system
5. Coordination

Since adoption of the Concept the following have been achieved:

- Elaborated Public Services Law – single legislative act which shall suit needs of citizens, business, government institutions and local governments. Providing single approach of use principles and obligations regarding delivery of public services.
- Principles of ICT use were included in elaborated draft of the Guidelines for the development of Information Society (2014-2020) and in ICT architecture.

The Concept for Improvement of the Public Service System sets to implement Unified customer service network through Pilot project realizing from January 2014. The main aim of the Pilot project is to test implementation of the "one stop shop" principle, as well as reducing duplications of resources and facilitating customer access to public services. The Pilot project includes several aspects:

- Multiple state institutions under one roof,
- Municipalities as agents of government,

The participation in this Pilot project is voluntary and the following ten institutions are taking part. Participating institutions are expected to provide services at one place, using one shared infrastructure from January 2014. The results of the Pilot project will provide information for the government to decide on a future scenario that covers the entire country and will serve as a modern-day major reform in public service organization in terms of on-site delivery of the public services. Based on results of the pilot, The Concept will be reviewed and submitted to Cabinet of Ministers by the end of 2014.

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5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

In implementation process of simplification action plans we take into account all above mentioned aspects.

Degree of satisfaction of target groups is measured during public participation tools and using midterm reviews, ex-post evaluation of documents of planning documents.

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6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business**

operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?
Equally on both.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

Over time many changes have taken place in the society, technology, and assumptions in delivery of public services, earlier approaches and techniques needed to be updated and revised. Determined activities regarding development of the Public Service System in Latvia have been established since 2010 by implementing the European Social Fund project – "Improvement of Public Service System". After a detailed analysis and research phase, in close collaboration with ministries, local governments, NGO's and society The Concept for Improvement of Public Service System has been elaborated and in 19th February 2013 adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers.

The main objective of the Concept is to provide citizens and business needs-based public service delivery with aims to:

- Reduce administrative burdens;
- Improve access to services;
- Promote efficiency of public administration;
- Promote government transparency.

The Concept consists of five pillars:

- Unified legislative framework;
- ICT use in delivery of public services;
- Unified customer service network;
- Transparent financing system;
- Coordination.

The Concept includes a Pilot project, aim – to test implementation of the "one stop shop" principle The participation in this Pilot project is voluntary and the following ten institutions are taking part:

- The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia;
- The State Environmental Service;
- Rural Support Service;
- The Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia;
- State Revenue service;
- The State Social Insurance Agency;
- The State Land Service;
- Municipality of Auce;

- Municipality of Riga;
- Municipality of Roja.

The Pilot project starts in 2 national development centers Roja and Auce with local government support and in 2 regional development centers Valmiera and Daugavpils with support of state agencies. Participating institutions provide services at one place, using one shared infrastructure from January 2014. The results of the Pilot project will provide information for the government to decide on a future scenario that covers the entire country and will serve as a modern-day major reform in public service organization in terms of on-site delivery of the public services.

The Netherlands (NL)

1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

The Rutte II government has set the ambition to further decrease the administrative burdens (including compliance costs) for businesses and citizens by € 2,5 bln in the timeframe 2013-2017. In April 2013 the government has informed Parliament about the measures to realise the reduction. Action lines include: measures to achieve the targets; better digital services, less and smarter inspections; reduction in regulation dense domains; cooperation between central and decentral governments; Each ministry is responsible for reducing the administrative burdens in their domain (legislation under their jurisdiction). The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is the co-ordinating ministry for simplification for citizens; In the business domain the ministry of Economic Affairs has the coordinating responsibility.

2. **What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

- The challenge is to optimize the objectives of the rules and to diminish the negative effects.

- dominant interests that compete with the argument of reduction of time/money citizens spend (e.g. issue of safety, political arguments)

- it's important to have a qualitative approach in addition to the quantitive approach. Measurable target are important for political steering. But in practice citizens and entrepreneurs also should see the effects and noticeable improvements. These improvements are felt rather in concrete situations and interactions with officials.

- The attitude of officials is an important factor, in particular imagining someone elses situation and giving trust. But too often officials act to the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law.

3.	What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

- change of regulations.

- business process redesign (including reuse of information)

- digital services

- inspection arrangements

- knowledge and support

4.	Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Rather than organising one stop shops the focus in NL is on digitising services. Municipalities are considered the most nearby government to citizens, and they provide most services to citizens. The municipal services are mostly concentrated in public counters. There is a pilot running between several national agencies and municipalities, to have municipalities act as front office of national agencies.

The government has portals for businesses (antwooordvoorbedrijven.nl) and citizens (overheid.nl) serving as reference portals. Transactional e-services are available on the websites of the responsible organisations. A common information infrastructure is (including authentication, base registers) is developed in order to enable the public service providers to deliver provide prefilled forms.

In the domain of environmental permits, a digital counter has been established where citizens and businesses can apply for a permit, and the application will automatically be transferred to the responsible(s) authorit(y)(ies)

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

The philosophy of the cabinet is to have a compact government that leaves more responsibility to society. Rules are necessary for safeguarding public interests and conditioning economic and social activities. But The Dutch government considers redundant regulations to be disadvantage to economic growth and to the initiatives of citizens and professions.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

The measures to achieve the reduction for businesses include: harmonisation of the definition of wage and simplified pay roll and fiscal pay roll taxes; e-invoicing (harmonising VAT-requirements); abolishment of the yearly fee of the Chamber of Commerce; modernised issuing of vehicle registration certificates; patent application; redesign of information exchange from pay roll administration; increase of age examination.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

As part of the bottom-up approach of innovation we invested in harvesting ideas of citizens and professionals (businesses, institutions or local authorities) how to make their work more effective with less red tape. Police professionals informed about the administrative burdens in the process of lost Dutch travel documents. We piloted with a few Dutch police units a new method for its feasibility, before arranging the new method in legislation.

Under the applicable law two separate reporting procedures apply if someone has lost his travel document (to the municipality and to the police). In the pilot the duty to report to the police lapses. The applicant shall only notify the municipality of his residence or domicile of his lost, and a new passport (or driving license) can be requested. Only in a well-founded suspicion of fraud the police will be tipped off by the municipality.

Poland (PL)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

Minister of Economy

Government Plenipotentiary for Economic Deregulation – State Secretary in the Ministry of Economy

Minister of Justice in the scope of deregulation of the access to professions

Extraordinary Committee of the Sejm (Lower House of Parliament) for red tape reduction

The Chancellery of the Prime Minister- Department of Regulation Programming and Impact Assessment.

Governmental Plenipotentiary of the Economic Deregulations has been appointed in 2011 in order to coordinate and monitor the process of simplifying administrative procedures and reducing administrative barriers for entrepreneurs. The Plenipotentiary twice a year prepares the information for the Council of Ministers on the actions maintained by the government as far as removal of administrative burden is concerned. It is to point out that all Ministries are engaged in the process of deregulation by proposing their own legislative acts and non- legislative actions in this regard as well as participating in process of adoption deregulation's act proposed by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Justice.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

The main factor hampering the implementation of simplification action plans to reduce cost for businesses and citizens are mostly connected with excessive deficit procedure initiated by European Commission.

Furthermore, the are still many problems with quality of law that remains unsolved. Regulatory Impact Assessment is perceived by many as an additional administrative burden and therefore usually conducted at the end of the legislation-making process to justify the solution that has been already chosen. A similar situation concerns public consultation. Finally, there is a problem with a large number of adopted or amended legal

acts, which results in unstable regulatory environment.

In case of the regulated professions reform, entry barriers limit competition in theses professions and result in monopoly rents for people who practice regulated professions. Lobbying by the incumbent professionals against deregulation is one of the factors which impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans in the area under reform.

Liberalisation of regulated professions is a horizontal reform, affecting professions from all branches of government administration, except of health. Thus, deregulation of professional services required co-operation of Ministry of Justice (co-ordinator of the reform) with line ministries. In some cases, opinions of the line ministries on necessity and proportionality of regulations tended to be biased by the excessive focus on the stability of the sector under their competences, while underestimating impacts on the economy. Some of the EU regulations were noted to be implemented with imposition of additional regulations at the national level (so-called *gold-plating*). Political support for professional services deregulation, announced by the Prime Minister in his expose, was certainly an important factor in streamlining the reform.

3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

1. The most important acts of legislation meant to facilitate running business in Poland over the last three years are the so-called deregulation acts. Three of them have already been enacted and most of their provisions have already come into effect.

The first deregulation act, whose provisions came into force on July 1, 2011, significantly reduced paperwork burden on companies by scrapping 217 statutory declarations or certificates and replacing them with statements. For instance, the act lifted the requirement that entrepreneurs present certificates of obtaining tax and statistical information numbers NIP and REGON while dealing with state administration bodies. Apart from the shift from certificates to statements, the act also included a number of other measures meant to lower the cost of running a business, e.g. halved the cost of registering the company at the national court register KRS and enabled transformation of a one-person business into a limited liability company. The second deregulation act, which in its greater part came into effect on January 1, 2012, further limited informative duties of Polish entrepreneurs. First of all, it provided for the liquidation – as of January 1, 2013 – of the Polish official journal Monitor B and exempting entrepreneurs from the costly duty of publishing their financial reports in that journal. It also reduced the frequency with which companies have to print and submit RMUA forms with information

about social insurance premiums paid to ZUS and national health care fund NFZ from once a month to once a year. Additionally, the act shortened the period for the required storage of past social insurance declarations and notices from 10 to 5 years. The legislation also included some changes beneficial for employees, e.g. extended the deadline for employees to take their unused paid leave by four months and gave the individual taxpayer the power to request general tax interpretations from the Finance Ministry (earlier, only officials could to it). What is also worth mentioning, the act eased some health and safety requirements accompanying the construction or adaptation of buildings. The third deregulation act focuses on VAT regulations and aims at helping businesses overcome payment bottlenecks and thus prevent liquidity problems. Companies using cash accounting (possible for firms with annual revenues not higher than EUR 1.2 mln) will not have to pay VAT on unpaid sales invoices. Before such firms was only allowed to postpone the VAT payment for a maximum of 90 days, even if they have not received their money from customers. Additionally, the firms that use accrual accounting can claim a VAT relief due to the so-called "bad debt" (occurring when a firm paid tax from receivables it did not get yet) already after 150 days instead of 180, with the appropriate procedure to be simplified. The act also continues to limit companies' paperwork by e.g. shortening the required period of storing fiscal cash registers printouts and reducing the statistical duties of micro companies. The Ministry of Economy is now working on the Fourth Deregulation Act. Which is similar to previous deregulation acts, this regulation aims at improving conditions of running a business by simplifying regulations, reduction of certain disclosure requirements, clarification of certain doubtful issues, investment support and enhancing work productivity. The following proposals were put forward in order to reach those goals:- "Ports package" – shortening the time of border inspections at seaports to 24 hours, extending the deadline for settling VAT for import purposes by authorized economic operators (AEO),- Repealing the obligation of getting a confirmation of application for registration for VAT purposes (reducing the costs of starting business),- Exempting the transport to the workplace organised by the employer from CIT (easing recording requirements, facilitating tax settlements),- Limiting statistical requirements for micro-entrepreneurs (releasing them from the obligation of providing data in the year of starting business),- Simplifying tax settlements if the receipt of advance payments is registered by electronic cash register (harmonizing the point at which CIT is accountable with the VAT point),- Developments in the area of excise duty (including the introduction of "binding excise duty information" allowing to obtain binding information from the tax authorities about tariff classification and type of excise goods).
Better Regulation Programme 2015   The programme determines the measures that the government plans to take up to 2015 to ensure high quality of regulation throughout the entire cycle of policy making, beginning from problem analysis and designing the assumptions of legal act, ending with the evaluation and monitoring. These tasks are to identify and remove the most burdensome barriers and the administrative burdens, with particular emphasis on situation and development of small and medium-sized enterprises. The programme supports the government's legislative works strengthening the legislative process in the economic analysis of the regulatory impact and improving the consultation process improving the social dialogue. These tools are intended to create the better/smart regulations, for which a key is focus on end-users. Better regulation policy puts more pressure than ever to evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the existing legislation.   The programme is the Polish equivalent of the initiative Better/Smart

Regulation, implemented in EU law by the European Commission and continued at the national level by all Member States of the European Union. The European Commission encourages Member States to create the system of better regulation. Besides focusing on the improvement of the existing regulatory environment, the programme also takes into account the quality control of newly developed regulations, especially through the implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment. Involvement of stakeholders and consultations with the public throughout the whole policy-making process also enjoy a sufficient attention in the programme. Poland is investing resources in the field of regulatory impact assessment. In its broadest sense, impact assessment is the process of identifying the anticipated or actual impacts of a development intervention, on those social, economic and environmental factors which the intervention is designed to affect or may inadvertently affect. It may take place before approval of an intervention (*ex ante*), after completion (*ex post*), or at any stage in between. *Ex ante* assessment forecasts potential impacts as part of the planning, design and approval of an intervention. *Ex post* assessment identifies actual impacts during and after implementation, to enable corrective action to be taken if necessary, and to provide information for improving the design of future interventions.

2. Liberalising professional regulations.

In 2011 Poland was among the EU member states with the highest number of regulated professions. Also, the OECD's indicator of the severity of professional services regulation for Poland was well above the OECD average in 2008. Thus in the late 2011representatives of all ministers were asked to review the regulations of the professions which were within their competences in order to simplify administrative procedures. They were supposed to justify regulations, indicating the important public interest secured by the existing regulations, and to give their opinion on the proportionality of regulatory provisions. The review criteria were based on the constitutional norms of the art. 22 (*Limitations upon the freedom of economic activity may be imposed only by means of statute and only for important public reasons*) and art. 31 par. 3 (*Any limitation upon the exercise of constitutional freedoms and rights may be imposed only by statute, and only when necessary in a democratic state for the protection of its security or public order, or to protect the natural environment, health or public morals, or the freedoms and rights of other persons. Such limitations shall not violate the essence of freedoms and rights*).

As a result of the review 242 professions, accounting for 6% of the labour force (more than 1 million people), were selected for a complete deregulation or abolishment of the part of existing barriers (lowering educational requirements, shortening the certified professional experience period, lifting a prior check of qualifications). Due to the broad scope of the reform it was divided into three legislative drafts (tranches)..

The first deregulation act concerned mostly legal professions, real estate brokers and managers, driving instructors, taxi drivers, sport instructors and coaches, physical protection and technical protection workers, tourist pilots and guides. The draft of the deregulation act was subject to the public opinion survey run by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) in June 2012. The poll included questions referring to general opinion on deregulation of professional services. Most of the respondents (55%) answered

that generally they prefer a situation when the access to profession is easy and the quality of service is verified by the market (clients themselves). The limited access to professions, regulated by professional self-government bodies controlling the knowledge and skills of candidates was chosen as preferable by much less respondents (29%). Even among professionals performing the regulated activity or their family members the opinion on the need of market based verification was dominant (56%). The opinions obtained during public consultations from representatives of professions included in the deregulation draft also tended to support the reform in general – although excluding the particular profession represented by the respondent.

The act received also substantial support in the Sejm (lower chamber of the Parliament) - 86%of affirmative votes, and was passed on 13th June, 2013.

The second tranche of deregulation concerns architects and engineers, accountants and tax advisors, car diagnostic technicians and technical experts of motor vehicles, commercial pilots, railway professionals, insurance agents and brokers, and customs agents. The act will also eliminate double examinations in selected professions: the related profession specific exams, which overlap to some degree with what is taught in the education system, will be removed and a university degree would henceforth be enough to enter these professions;. The law is expected to be adopted in the first half of 2014.The third tranche of deregulation was accepted by the Permanent Committee of the Council of Ministers in December 2013. It would concern stockbrokers, investment advisors and investment company agents, commodity exchange brokers, patent attorneys, sworn translators, geologists, conservators and museum professionals, and occupations in mining and fire-fighting. The act should be adopted by the end of 2014.Due to the significant respond from the public received during the work on deregulation, it was decided that the project will be extended by the additional tranche. Professions in this tranche will include e.g. medical and paramedical professions, and jobs concerned with safety at work. The project will also utilise results of the regulated professions review at the European level, which is foreseen by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internet Market Information System as well as Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on evaluating national regulations on access to professions (COM(2013) 676).

3. Electronic land and mortgage register.

The land and mortgage register was migrated from the traditional paper form to the electronic system within the last few years. Each entry in the register is now being done in electronic system and updated in real time. The system is open to the public in the sense that every interested person can view the register on-line, on the web page maintained by the Ministry of Justice:www.ekw.ms.gov.pl, for free. Migration of the register to the electronic system and procedural changes in working of common courts (new rules on justice clerks) allowed for substantial shortening of registration waiting period: in Warsaw

from 10 months (in 2001) to 1-2 weeks (in 2012). Further reduction in waiting period is expected this year due to an equalization of the online extract from the land registry with the documents drawn up by the Central Information of the Land Registry.

4. Introduction of S24 (system for on-line registration of a limited liability company).

The system S24 for on-line registration of a limited liability company was introduced in 2012. It allows to transfer all the documents necessary for registration of the limited liability company electronically (via an electronic mailbox, that can be created on S24 portal: https://ems.ms.gov.pl), as well as the payment of the registration fee. The reform resulted in decrease of the time spent on the verification of the statute (performed by a judge) of the limited liability company being set up on-line. Thus, the systemS24 saves time and allows for completion of registering the limited liability company on-line within 24 hours. It also eliminates some administrative burdens of the company founder and reduces the cost of notarization of the company agreement. Due to simplification of the duties of the judges registering companies with the use of the S24 system, the reform increases also efficiency of the National Court Register. The on-line system to register a limited liability company was used in more than 20% of all registrations in 2013.Apart from the introduction of the S24 system, the registration fee was reduced by half (from 1000 PLN to 500 PLN (approx. 240 EUR to approx. 120 EUR) in 2011, and the fee for publication of the registration in the official bulletin was cut from 500 PLN to 100 PLN (approx. 120 EUR to 25 EUR)in 2012.In 2012 the whole National Court Register was made available on-line and information from the register can be obtained free of charge.

5. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

One-stop shop for registering new companies

It was established in Poland in 2009. In order to set up a business in the form of:

- general partnership,
- professional partnership,
- limited partnership,
- partnership limited by shares,
- limited liability company,
- joint-stock company,

the founder has to go through the procedure run by the National Court Register (KRS). The founder, generally, has to submit to KRS all the documents required for setting up a company and then KRS transfers relevant information to other public authorities (tax

office, statistical office, social insurance institution). The procedure ends with writing the company in the Register and lasts on average for approx. 25 days. The draft of the act reforming the procedure, that will reduce time necessary to register a company to not more than 7 days, was approved by the government in January 2014. The changes to the act will limit the scope of information submitted by the founder of the company (thus reducing administrative burdens), assume information provided by the founder is correct (allowing for writing the company in register before information is formally confirmed by a competent authority) and introduce the electronic form of communication between KRS and other stakeholders. The law is scheduled to come into force in October 2014.

Central Registration and Information on Business (CEIDG)– business registration for natural persons

On 1 July 2011, the Ministry of Economy launched the system of Central Registration and Information on Business (CEIDG). The system operates on the basis of the amended Act on Freedom of Economic Activity and allows citizens to, *inter alia*, register a business online and find data on other entrepreneurs as well as gain information on the principles governing business registration.

Natural persons may complete all formalities related to business registration in the Central Registration and Information on Business (CEIDG) using a trusted profile or an electronic signature. After setting up an account at www.firma.gov.pl, the would-be entrepreneur has only to fill out a special form, which is accompanied by step-by-step instructions. It is also possible to fill out the form online at http://www.firma.gov.pl/ and sign it later in any office located in the municipality. Completing and submitting the form automatically generates a registration request to the tax office, GUS (Central Statistical Office) and ZUS/KRUS (Social Insurance Institution / Agricultural Social Insurance Fund). As a result, if an entrepreneur previously had no NIP (Taxpayer Identification Number) or REGON (Business Registration Number), filing the CEIDG-1 form will generate a request for assignment of these ID numbers. Entry into the business register follows the acceptance of the request by the system.

In addition to business registration, the CEIDG system allows for:

- suspending, resuming and closing economic activity,
- modifying the entry into business register,
- verifying counterparties – natural persons conducting business activities,
- checking proxies,
- receiving information on obtained, withheld, lost or expired rights arising from concessions, permits and licences,
- receiving information on entry in the register of regulated activity, ban on conducting activity specified in the entry and removal from the register.

Single Contact Point
On 28 December 2009, Ministry of Economy launched the Single Contact Point. The system operates on the basis of *Service Directive* and the *Act onfreedom of economic activity*.
Single Point of Contact was created primarily for people running or planning to start a

business, and therefore for the present and future entrepreneurs. Via the website people can find detailed information about their interest area of economic activity, such as:
- procedures and formalities relating to conducting business in Poland;

- contact details and competence of public institutions and offices;

- ways and conditions for access to public records and public databases concerning business and entrepreneurs;

- remedies in the event of a dispute between the competent authority and the entrepreneur or consumer, business to consumer and between businesses.

Electronic Platform of Public Administration Services (ePUAP)

ePUAP is a coherent and systematic action program designed and developed to allow public institutions make their electronic services available to the public. The website www.epuap.gov.pl enables defining citizen and businesses service processes, creates channels of access to different systems of public administration and extends the package of public services provided electronically.

The website www.epuap.gov.pl provides citizens, businesses and institutions with a number of services intended to ensure smooth and safe communication between:

- customer to administrations (C2A),

- business to administration (B2A),

- administration to administration (A2A)

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6. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

Our main focus is on improvement of business environment and reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector.

From this year polish government introduced Ex post Impact Assessment which is a specialized area of evaluation designed to identify and measure the consequences resulting from a program or project's earlier interventions.There are no general guidelines for simplification action plans in Poland. Each of the simplification activities mentioned above was implemented after an individual analysis of potential gains of all stakeholders. In case of the professional regulations reform, Minister of Justice is obliged to perform an *ex-post* evaluation, that will include analysis of potential customers' complaints. Also the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection will monitor the influence of deregulation on protection of collective interests of consumers (activity included in *Consumer Protection Policy for 2014-2018*).

| 7. | As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both? |

We are focusing on both: licensing procedures and simplification of business activity. Liberalisation of professional regulations and the business registration reform are certainly more focused on licensing procedures, but they include also actions lowering information obligations and administrative burdens. The deregulation acts, described in the answer to point 3. aim to facilitate running business in Poland.

| 8. | Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners. |

There are two proposals of simplifications in Poland that are worth being used as best practice for other EUPAN members:

1. On 18 February 2014 the Government adopted the resolution on Common Commencement Dates. It means that the law related to business enters into force twice a year (1 January and 1 June). The acts are published 30 day before entering into force. Common Commencement Dates are a response to businesses which prefer to deal with regulatory changes at fixed predictable points in the year. This helps small enterprises that do not have the resources to monitor constantly the business environment for new changes. Introducing new and updated regulations on the two days every year helps businesses plan ahead, save money and encourage greater compliance.

2. The innovative action in the area of simplification is the fourth tranche of professional services deregulation, which is being prepared with assistance of citizens and non-governmental organizations. Ministry of Justice published an on-line questionnaire on their web site and invited citizens and NGO's to report excessive regulations of professional services, not justified by the public interest or not proportional to their objectives. More than 600 notifications were received and they are now being analyzed by the governmental experts.

Portugal (PT)

The main body which has the competency to simplify administrative procedures /reduce administrative burdens is the Agency for the Administrative Modernization (AMA – Agência para a Modernização Administrativa, IP), from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

AMA is a public entity that acts at national level, having a cross-sector activity, which demands a great collaboration and communication with other national entities.

In fact, one of the main challenges is gathering different organizations, with distinct cultures and working procedures, towards a common goal of lowering the administrative burden within the whole public administration. To address that, AMA promotes the debate to generate consensual solutions, involves the relevant entities and representatives so that the advantages for all interveners are clear and aligned and tries to give all interveners from the public administration an active voice in proposing solutions and led them to share their perspective and vision to reach more simplified procedures.

Furthermore, being under the Presidency of Council of Ministers of Portugal probably eases AMA's cross-sector coordination role and allows the Agency to better reach other national public bodies and deal with general policy issues.

The main factors are "silos" in public administration and the implementation of simplification action plans that implies a culture change. Both factors do not impede, but make simplification more difficult.

In order to abolish licensing procedures, the Decree Law 48/2011 came into force. Also known as the "Zero Licensing" decree law, its objective is to abolish licensing procedures, reduction of required documents and shortening of the time for service delivery in certain commercial sectors. It's a legal framework, but it also has the consensus of the majority of the stakeholders, because the stakeholders were involved in the production of the decree law.

By the other hand, the Decree Law 169/2012 came into force. This decree law has the same objective as the "Licensing Zero" decree law, but applies to the industry sector.

Other tool is the "Tacit Consent" for licensing procedures and the "only once principle" as a recommendation.

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

AMA has launched the first "Citizens Shop" (Portuguese designation for one-stop-shops)in 1999, in Lisbon, and presents now 34 shops plus a mobile (car) one.

The citizens' access to public services is naturally at the centre of public authorities concerns, since it's a pre-condition for the success of any service provider at the public sphere. In this sense, the development of conditions that can boost the citizen's access and satisfaction with public services is a permanent objective of any administration. Portugal isn't an exception in this domain, and in the 90's several new models were tested to improve the delivery of public services. One of them was so successful and widely recognized by the Portuguese that it continues to be until our days one of the best examples of public administration adaptation to citizens needs and conveniences: the "Citizens Shops".

Portugal presents citizens with two options. There are one-stop-shops that comprise several public and private entities which contact directly with citizens. In just one place, citizens have access to a variety of services, from social security to taxes services, from electricity or water suppliers companies to Citizens Card emission services. Also, Portugal has the Multi-services Branches, which make available to citizens, in just one counter and one public servant, a wide range of services, being these Multi-service Branches more that an intermediate but playing a role of competent authority in those services.

Portugal is preparing the implementation of what one may call a new model of one-stop-shops, the "EspaçosCidadão" (Citizen Spots), which will capitalize the electronic public

services available, by having public servants supporting users to access those e-services in specific places/offices.

Also, it is important to mention that Portugal has defined as priorities a set of measures that intend to reinforce the administrative modernization and simplification. These include the implementation of the digital by default principle, the creation of a mobile digital key (mobile ID) to citizens and the launching of a mobile application for public services which will allow citizens to know where the several public services are located and simultaneously indicate how to perform them online.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

The main focus when we implement simplification action plans are reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector, the provision of quality services to the citizens and the improvement of business environment and the increase of Portugal competitiveness. It's also important to boost the trust between the public administration and the enterprises as well as the citizens. Some of the objectives are also: facilitate the citizens and the enterprises relations with the public administration; boost the public administration efficiency; reducing the costs of context for the enterprises; boosting the competitiveness of the enterprises and the country. In this sense, the main categories of the beneficiaries are: citizens, businesses and the public administration.

The Portuguese simplification program is based in public participation, so citizens, enterprises and the public administration can participate and give us their opinion in the design of the simplification measures through a public participation web platform.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

Concerning to the business environment, our simplification measures are also focused in the licensing procedures. The "Licensing Zero" and the "System of Responsible Industry" are precisely focused on the licensing procedures for opening a business, manage the business and to close the business. The focuses are essentially in the first two stages.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

The Zero Licensing initiative, approved by the Decree-Law n. º 48/2011 of 1st April, aims to make the exercise of commercial economics activities more simple, fast, transparent and cheaper, helping to increase the competitiveness of the municipalities, the country and the European Union. The Zero Licensing initiative is integrated in the Portuguese simplification program.

Under the Zero Licensing initiative:

- It was approved a new and very simplified regime for setting up and modifying the establishment of commercial activities, such as restaurants and drink establishments;
- Licenses were eliminated and substituted by a simple prior notification to the authorities;
- The notification to the authorities is done electronically in a Point of Single Contact (PSC)[17], totally dematerializing the licensing process, therefore reducing the administrative burden (paperwork) and the economic costs;
- Licenses related to the establishment of commercial activities were eliminated, namely the licensing for posting of advertising messages of a commercial nature in certain situations;
- Licenses related to the establishment of commercial activities were eliminated and substituted by prior communications in the PSC: the occupation of public space (e.g. licensing an esplanade or a sunblind for a new restaurant); the operating hours of the establishment.
- The State reduces, therefore, the pre-control mechanisms, increasing the responsibility and accountability of the economic agents, and reinforces de post-control mechanisms, through reinforced inspections and sanctions for noncompliance.

The commercial economic activities that benefit from these simplifications are trade establishments; establishments providing services; warehouses; retail trade establishments with accessory sections for the own manufacture of pastry, bakery and ice cream; industrial operations in specialized shops or accessory sections of butchers, fish shops and fruit and vegetables; restaurants and drinking establishments with facilities to manufacture own pastry, bakery, ice cream and similar products or selling food.

The initiative involves the 278 competent authorities – the municipalities - who have to review their rules for the occupation of the public space under this new paradigm and the fees applied to the prior notifications. These rules and fees will be available in the PSC.

The Zero Licensing initiative represents a totally shift of paradigm, eliminating bureaucracy and enabling companies to finally focus on their core activity: doing business.

This initiative is considered by the European Commission as a good practice and it received the European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration.

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[17] The PSC is the same used to comply with the Services Directive and the Professional Qualifications Directive. It also provides other electronic services relevant to firms (e.g. Taxes, Registers, Social Security) - the Portuguese Enterprise Portal.

Sweden (SE)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?

The Swedish Better Regulation Council is an independent government-appointed committee of inquiry. The Council has advisory standing in relation to the regulator's regular preparation and decision-making organisation. The Council examines the formulation of proposals for new and amended regulations that may have effects on the working conditions of enterprises, their competitiveness or other conditions affecting them. The Council also has to consider whether the Government and administrative agencies under the Government have carried out the statutory impact assessments and assess whether new and amended regulations have been formulated so as to achieve their purpose in a simple way and at a relatively low administrative cost for enterprises.The Council also has to assess the quality of the impact assessments and follow development in the area of better regulation, as well as provide information and advice that can promote cost-conscious and effective regulation. When proposals for new or amended regulations are drafted in the Government Offices, an impact assessment shall be carried out as soon as possible. One of the goals in the Councils work is to achieve a 25 per cent reduction in businesses' administrative costs related to laws, ordinances and regulations by the end of 2012. An evaluation done by the Swedish Audit Office (Riksrevisionen) concluded in a report from 2012 that it is a challenging goal to evaluate. However, their own evaluation showed that the full goal of reduction of administrative burdens by 25 percent had not been achieved. The Council also prepare an annual report (and has done so between 2008 and 2012 describing their work and future challenges.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?

One of the conclusions in the Councils annual report for 2012 was that much of the regulations that entail an administrative burden for businesses originated in EU law. The Council noted that they carefully follows the development in the EU in terms of administrative costs and impact assessments, and has over the years carried out a number of projects with an EU connection.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.

One of the most central tools is the Ordinance on Impact Analysis of Regulation. The ordinance includes a general provision on impact analyses. As early as possible, before an agency decides on regulations or general advice, the agency shall:

1. make an assessment of the financial impact and other consequences of the regulations or the general advice to the extent necessary in the individual case, and document this assessment in an impact analysis, and

2. provide central government agencies, municipalities, county councils, organisations, the business sector and other parties that will be significantly affected financially or otherwise with an opportunity to state their opinion on the issue and on the impact analysis.

If there will be a danger to the environment, life, personal safety or health or a risk of considerable financial damage if a regulation is not decided on, the measures laid down in

the first paragraph may be taken after the decision.

If an agency considers that there are no grounds for conducting an impact analysis,

the agency may approve regulations or general advice without taking the measures laid down in Section 4. Such an assessment shall be documented.

An impact analysis shall contain the following:

1. a description of the problem and the desired result,

2. a description of the alternative solutions that exist to achieve the desired result and the

consequences if no regulation takes place,

3. information on the parties that will be affected by the regulation,

4. information on the financial and other consequences of the regulation and a comparison of

the impacts of the alternative regulations being considered,

5. an assessment of whether the regulation complies with, or goes beyond the obligations

following from Sweden's membership of the European Union,

and

6. an assessment of whether particular account needs to be taken with regard to the date

of entry into force and of whether there is a need for special informational measures.

If the regulation could significantly affect the operational conditions of enterprises,

their competitiveness or other conditions, the impact analysis shall contain, beyond what is provided for in Section 6 and to the extent possible, a description of the following:

1. the number of enterprises affected, the industries that these enterprises represent

and the size of the enterprises,

2. the period of time required for the regulation to be implemented by the enterprises and

how the regulation would affect enterprises' administrative costs,

3. the other costs to enterprises entailed by the proposed regulation and the changes in their

activities that enterprises may need to make as a result of the proposed regulation,

4. the extent to which the regulation may affect the competitive conditions for the enterprises,

5. the way in which the regulation may affect the enterprises in other respects,

and

6. whether particular account needs to be taken of small enterprises when designing the

regulations.

In April 2013 the Swedish Government also presented a plan, outlining the continued work with reducing administrative burdens for enterprises.

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4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?

Yes. Such one-stop shops exist in Sweden on the state level. One such example is Verksamt.se. This is a joint venture between the Swedish Companies Registration Office, the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth that have brought together and structured information and services of value to businesses and enterprises. Such initiatives, i.e. one-stop shops and single points of entry can also exist on local level to some extent.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

All these aspects are present to some extent in the Swedish simplification work, but this has not been evaluated to our knowledge. However I think it is safe to say that A and B are the most relevant at the present.

6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

To my knowledge no evaluation or follow up has been made concerning this specific question. So it is hard to give a clear answer here.

7. **Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.**

The initiative mentioned in question 4 (i.e verksamt.se - https://www.verksamt.se/en/web/international/home)could probably be inspirational for other countries as well.

Slovenia (SI)

1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?
In the Republic of Slovenia there is no main body/entity with direct jurisdiction to simplify administrative procedures/reduce administrative burdens. The implementation of measures for simplification of business environment is an ongoing task of all ministries of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Directorate for the Quality of Public Administration at the Ministry of the Interior is the main body that oversees the activities regarding drafting legal acts and regulations and encourages the simplification of administrative procedures and reduction of administrative burdens. In 2013, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia assigned the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Ministry of the Interior to prepare a single document and conduct and coordinate the below mentioned projects and programmes for improvement of competitiveness and business environment.

2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?
There are no specific obstacles regarding legal/administrative/structural environment that impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans. The main problem is coordination and search of consensus among different stakeholders that often have negative attitude towards the adoption of major changes in legislation.

3. What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other (consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.
Basic tools for achievement of better regulations are: - Assessing the impacts of regulations and policies on the basis of well-performed

analyses of economic, environmental and social impacts is essential to the quality formation of proposals of regulations.

- Cooperation with the public is intended to assure the suitable inclusion of expert and other interested public at the earliest stage in the procedure for preparing proposals for regulations.
- The elimination of administrative barriers constitutes procedures for the reduction, elimination or prevention of administrative burdens, including measuring administrative costs imposed on business entities or citizens by legislation.
- The simplification of legislation includes methods of abrogation and codification, and the merger of various acts or unwritten legal provisions into a uniform (legal) text; the transformation of legislation on the basis of amendments and codification of a certain act, and the replacement of directives with decrees.

There are numerous ways to reduce unnecessary administrative and other legislative burdens, eliminate unnecessary barriers, and simplify individual procedures. We may address comprehensive system solutions in a systematic way (activities of line ministries) by:

- abrogating, reducing, and merging, thus improving regulations (the emphasis is primarily on older regulations, regulations which do not suit the purpose for which they were created, regulations of which only some provisions are in force, etc. – by merging or abrogating useless regulations, we may contribute to the rationalisation or simplification of legislation);
- simplifying processes (re-engineering);
- exchanging data within the administration ('data, not people, should travel');
- developing efficient information-communication solutions and services on the condition that processes have been previously simplified;
- making services more accessible to users – user's experience;
- assuring better, more accessible, simple and comprehensible instructions and information;
- performing necessary deregulations.

In addition to the above-mentioned methods, the following principles and steps should be considered and pursued: 'Think Small First', 'Everything in One Place' and 'Only Once'.

Reducing the extent and complexity of individual steps of a procedure

The acquisition of data available in public records would reduce the scope of documentation the investor is required to submit, as the data may be acquired in electronic form and connected to databases on applications. Only data important for decision making and not for e.g. administrative suitability regarding other procedures (e.g. for procedures according to spatial legislation) should be required, unless procedures are being merged, which is welcome.

Reducing the number of steps of an individual procedure

Some steps may run in parallel, e.g. the acquisition of opinions and review of adequacy of an application for the environment protection consent, thus it is reasonable for them to run in parallel in a process and to enable the payment of administrative procedures by payment order and electronic transfer – payment via the internet by credit card, special payment order by means of electronic banking.

Modified technique of procedures

The availability of forms for all applications on the internet and application over the internet. One practical option is a form on the website of a line ministry which may be completed either directly or converted to the Word format, completed and submitted to a special e-mail address. A direct entry of data in the field or on the portal. Clear instructions or support for users to comprehend and decide which procedure they require would improve the quality of applications and their submission in a correct manner and to the right address. Consequently, the burden of civil servants would be reduced due to the smaller number of applications which require rejection or supplementation, and processing time would be reduced.

Improving the quality of procedures

In addition to practical instructions for users on which forms to complete and how, a few examples of well and badly completed forms or applications should be published. It is recommended that they be based on real-life examples in order to reflect the most common problems. This approach also facilitates the regular improvement of forms and procedures, as errors are analysed more often and systematically for the preparation of examples of errors than they would be otherwise.

Shortening deadlines

Shortening deadlines is sensible in all procedures which are not complex, as they do not require in-depth analysis and decision-making but organisation of the work process which can be done by civil servants with less specialised knowledge.

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4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

The One-Stop-Shop portal (e-VEM in Slovene) began operating in 2005. Through the e-VEM portal companies or entrepreneurs may carry out electronic services which are linked to the establishment of a company and some other procedures that are carried out by a business entity upon or after its formation. Some services can be done by entrepreneurs or companies on their own online while in some other cases the VEM office or a Notary's Office need to be visited. The e-VEM portal offers various services: printing

out applications and orders in the form of standard forms or filling them in and sending them to the corresponding authorities electronically after having been downloaded to a user's computer. Companies can use the e-VEM access points to perform most procedures relating to registration and changes in company status, submitting notification of a job vacancy, application, change or de-registration of self or employees from insurance. Most of these formalities can be performed for EU citizens by an authorised person. Future sole traders may also complete all the registration procedures by making a personal visit to one of the access points, which are located at branches of the [Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services](#) , administrative units and local offices, at the [Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investmen](#)t, the [Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia,](#) the [Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) and the [Slovenian Tax Administration](#).

There is also the EUGO Slovenia, a state business point that helps foreign business entities from the EU, EEA Member Countries and the Swiss Confederation who want to do business in Slovenia. The site provides information about the conditions and procedures required for performing a certain activity or profession in the Republic of Slovenia. In this way, Slovenia meets the requirements of European directives and enables simpler and friendlier operations in the internal market.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

The main focus when implementing simplification action plans is on ensuring quality of services to the citizens and improvement of business environment. Reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector is also one of the main priorities, but never at the expense of citizens and business entities. The effects of the measures taken are monitored by constant consultation with the public. The Ministry of the Interior established a web portal called STOP the bureaucracy (www.stopbirokraciji.si/en/) with the purpose to provide current information on the implementation of Single document to enable better regulation and business environment and increase competitiveness and for all entrepreneurs and citizens who, either in the business process or everyday life, have contact with administrative procedures where they encounter obligations they have to fulfil to meet the requirements of legislation.

6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs) during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

Our simplification action plans focus on licensing procedures and subsequent information obligations. One of the major steps regarding licensing procedures was made by the establishment of e-VEM portal, which is constantly upgraded by new services.

The Single document to enable better regulation and business environment and increased competitiveness represent key measures and areas that are perceived as such by experts and other interested public. The measures that are included in the document are logically grouped according to 16 key areas, one of the most important is creating supportive environment and elimination of administrative barriers. The single document includes measures that will have strong effect on better legislative and business environment as well as on increase of competitiveness:

- simplification of entrance conditions to pursue activity on the market;
- establishment of a spatial information system;
- creating the Internet portal Business SOS - Solve a problem with the country! ;
- provision of more encouraging business environment for the investors;
- establishment of a single procedure for obtaining the residence permit and work permit of foreigners through a single issuing point;
- provide management information on business entities in one register;
- simplification of the application process for compulsory social insurance (e-filing),mandatory for all business entities;
- simplify the field of first aid training for private entrepreneurs - self-employed and micro-businesses;
- ensure the online tools that will be available free of charge, in particular to employers who employ a small number of employees to self-assess the risks in their organizations;
- adopt implementing regulation relating to the methodology for keeping records in the field of labour and employers.

7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

In the field of simplification of legal environment major progress has been done in recent years. Key information about realization of the simplification measures are obtained from the Single document of Government of the RS to improve business environment and increase competitiveness. From the set of measures from a single document we would like to highlight in particular:

- introduction of e-submission of application in social insurance – with the elimination of territorial jurisdiction and introduction of electronic submission of forms 80% administrative cost reduction was calculated (calculation was made based on Standard Cost Model).

- implementation of e-procurement – system of e-procurement comprises of: e-Purchases, e-Submission, e-Reverse Auction, e-File and e-Catalogue. Administrative

cost reduction of 70 eur per application has been estimated for the tenderers.

- simplified procedures for employment – Employers no longer need to register a vacancy, if the selection of employee was already made. Before implementation of the measure the recruitment procedure lasted 14 days, this period is now reduced to one day.

Slovak Republic (SK)

> 1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

The main body in our country responsible for the simplification of administrative procedures is the Ministry of Interior, which has recently (in 2012) launched a reform of public administration, known as the ESO Programme aiming at creating an effective, reliable and open structure of state administration. It coordinates the newly created District offices (from 1.10.2013) together with other respective ministries, and acts at the national level. The Slovak Republic also has other authorities, which play an important role during the simplification of administrative processes, as for example: the Government Office, other Ministries, which play a lead role in their respective areas of responsibility, set by the Competence Act. While the Ministry of Interior ensures the general processes, other ministries lead their respective areas of responsibility. At last, there is a number of permanent or ad hoc committees and bodies at the political and/or expert levels, which are expected to ensure the co-operation and exchange of information across ministries and other state administration bodies, for example the Accreditation Commission, Council of the Government for Science, Technology and Innovations, Legislative Council of the Government, Economic and Social Council, etc.

> 2. **What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

Part of the ongoing public administration reform is the creation of so-called one-stop shops as front offices supporting the work of district offices. The **structural impediments** observed by various ministries in case of one stop-shops in the currently ongoing public administration reform that cause problems during the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans are the following:

- Financial sustainability of the development and implementation of one-stop shops over the medium to long-term;

- Simplification and integration of existing deconcentrated state administration offices;

- Co-ordination across different central government institutions responsible for the services to be provided in the one-stop shops and linkages between different information systems;

- Participation and buy-in of front-office staff;

- Training of staff for customer service.

- The necessity to enhance public awareness on changes in preparation and under implementation, which are related to changes in the execution of state administration.

On the other hand, **legal impediments**, based on the observations of various ministries, include the following:

- Legislative barriers that might limit the use of one-stop shops (for example, territorial jurisdiction that obliges citizens to perform administrative procedures in the place of residence);

- Incorporating findings of the mapping process into the legislative process.

In general, as an obstacle may be regarded that the public administration reform is an immensely complex reform incorporating numerous and various bodies of central and local state administration. This often results in prolonged procedures when reaching decisions on the concrete processes, which affect both legislative and structural changes. Often it is cumbersome to reach a general approval on how these simplification plans be completed and who shall be involved.

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3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

One of the specific tools used in our country in order to simplify administrative procedures in the ongoing ESO programme is the creation of the afore-mentioned one-stop shops. Administrative simplification and one-stop shops both contribute to improving the daily interactions of citizens and businesses with state administration authorities. One-stop shops constitute front line workplaces, the aim of which is to bring citizens and businesses closer to public administration services, to reduce administrative burden by providing pro-client oriented services with the purpose of supporting a business-friendly environment. Other methods used in the simplification process during the currently ongoing reform include the reduction of required documents and shortening of the time for service delivery, based on the simplification of the contact between citizens and bodies of state administration. As for other tools, e-government has been introduced by the Ministry of Finance, which means delivering public administration services by means of information and communication technologies (ICTs). E-government will bring manifold benefits to citizens, businesses, the state administration and local authorities, as

it helps to reduce time wasted on administrative formalities, minimizes error rate and eliminates the multiple performances of identical actions. In line with the vision presented in the Programme Declaration of the Government, the Government has undertaken to modernize public administration through economization and the use of ICTs in order to make life easier for the citizens, as well as for legal persons. In these processes there is on-line communication: Government to Employee, Government to Government, Government to Citizen, Government to Business and Government to Administration.

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

By the end of February 2014, there have altogether been 7 one-stop shops created in the Slovak Republic in the following cities: Nitra, Galanta, Svidnik, Stropkov, Kezmarok, StaráLubovna a Snina. As for the future, depending on the accessibility to citizens further one-stop shops are planned to open up, which means that these centres should not be further than 50 km or 1 hour journey by public transportation for each and every citizen. The main purpose of establishing one-stop shops is to bring the state administration closer to citizens and enhance the communication and cooperation between the citizen and the state. The model of one-stop shops in the Slovak Republic cannot be generalized meaning that various one-stop shops have different agenda, which primarily depends on personnel capacities and/or availability of spatial capacities. Besides, a great amount of emphasis is put on the efficiency of each agenda. The aim of one-stop shops is not to be a communication channel between the citizen and bureau, but to provide assistance to the citizen on the spot. This target may only be achieved provided that all necessary legislative and personnel requirements are fulfilled and, therefore, currently the immediate assistance of citizens is only possible within certain agendas. Certainly, in the future, a broadening of such agendas is planned.

5. **What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic is responsible for creating and improving the business environment. In this regards simplification action plans and measures are focused on the business sector. In the future we plan to concentrate more on small and

medium – size enterprises, which represent more than 99 % of businesses in the Slovak Republic. We don´t measure the degree of satisfaction. However the majority of measures is suggested in cooperation with the target group (business sector) represented by the most important and biggest business associations and unions. Our aim is also a higher involvement of the business sector in the impact assessment procedure in order to ensure better stability of legislation and provide better impact assessment of legislation related to the business environment.

6. **As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?**

Simplification action plans and measures are usually focused on all stages of business lifecycle including the preparatory phase in order to make it easier to start a business. As it was mentioned above most of the measures are suggested in cooperation with business associations or based on their comments so that to solve their problems and satisfy their needs.

7. **Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.**

One of the tasks during the integration of specialized bodies of local state administration had been the mapping of agendas within these bodies from a process-oriented perspective. As a result of process-mapping, these integrated bodies of local state administration can issue licences for free sole traders without a waiting period. While legislation assumes 3 days of waiting period for the issuance of these licences, in cooperation with the licensing department of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, it has been agreed that licences may be issued regardless this waiting period. Process maps facilitate that the state administration in contact with the citizen shall become more efficient in the future, helps at cutting red tape and decreases the financial and time burden on citizens. The optimization of concrete processes is not only a challenge within the state administration reform, but also an essential part of it.

Norway (NO)

> **1. What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

Every ministry has a responsibility within in its own sector to make sure that governmental bodies are efficiently run and well organized. This responsibility follows from the rules for financial management in the central government administration, and the individual ministerial responsibility that we have.

*The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (KMD)*has the overall responsibility for administrative policy and making government more efficient. Their subordinate *Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi)* also has a number of key tasks in this area, e.g.   providing a knowledge-basis for administrative development, modernisation and reform. *The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries(NFD)*looks to enhancing efficiency and simplfying procedures for the business sector. An important government agency in this respect is *The Brønnøysund Register Centre/Altinn.no* which provides different tasks, and consists of different national computerised registers. *The Ministry of Finance* and its subordinate government bodies *The Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management (DFØ)* and *The Norwegian Tax Admnistration (Skatteetaten)* provides similar tasks in this area. In addition, the *Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)*(an employers association and interest organisation for municipalities, counties and local public enterprises),is also engaged in simplification, development and innovation in local government.

> **2. What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

Legal barriers: One barrier when it comes to digitizing in the Norwegian public sectoris to adapt the laws and regulations to the modern digital way of living. Recently, however, the e-Government regulations for electronic communication were revised. The changes now facilitate communication between citizens and government by legislating this communication to be digital by default/"silent-by consent", given that the digital communication is secure. Citizens may opt out of receiving communication form the authorities digitally, by actively entering a reservation system. This scheme will be

launched with the secure digital mailbox (November 2014).The *Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi)*is responsible for this. The provisions of the new e-Government regulations require that the contents of the digital communication between government and citizens have an adequate level of security and meet the requirements of the Personal Data Act.

Other *legal barriers* that contribute to unnecessary administrative burdens for citizens and government, is when unclear language in laws and regulations leads to unclear written language in different forms, manuals etc. that relate to the legal terminology used. As a part of the project *Plain language in Norway's Civil Service* established in 2008 by the *Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi*)and the *Language Council of Norway,* a project targeting plain language in the legal terminology is underway.

Other administrative barriers: In a study Dificonductedin2011 (Difi-rapport 2011:3),we found that one of the barriers to digitizing public services was to find well-functional cross-sectoral financing models. One of the conclusions from this study was that: "Good solutions for digitizing public services also requires that information, basic data or technology are coordinated with other government bodies' technological solutions, or developed in collaboration. This presents challenges in terms of finding good financing models across organizations and sectors. The government bodies also calls for improving methods for realizing benefits for transverse solutions. Models that take into account that investments made in one governmental body, may be gains for another governmental body."

Structural barriers: Difi's survey from 2011 (Difi-rapport 2011:3),also showed that one of the barriers to digitizing public services focused on *organizational and technological coordination between government agencies and collaboration across organizational boundaries* (for example using data from different public registers, like the national population register etc.). Ongoing work in this area concerns adaptation, facilitating and establishing national common components (such as national population register, different digital services like secure digital mailbox, electronic identification etc.), where the idea is to contribute to a good common digital infrastructure, and to be better able to share data between governmental bodies/organizations– including doing this within the framework of the Personal Data Act and requirements of information security. For users/citizens, this should also be a contribution to the thoughts of "one stop shop" and to the reduction of administrative burdens.

3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)? Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

Various projects, initiatives and measures that aim to simplifying administrative procedures and reducing bureaucracy, are usually continuous processes which are also part of the ministries agency management of their subsidiary agencies, like requirements for shorter case processing times etc. One of the most comprehensive initiatives in this area today, is the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (KMD)/government's ambitions for simplifying, improving and modernizing the public sector and the contribution to remove unnecessary regulations, and time-consuming and inefficient work methods. In 2014, all governmental bodies are required to report to their respective ministries on what they have done to reduce administrative burdens for citizens, businesses, other governmental agencies and/or in their own body. Other projects/tasks are also undertaken, e.g. an expert committee established to look into ways to make it easier for users of different services, to simplify certain law /regulations in selected areas that concern many people.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries' Simplification Project began in 2011 with the aim of reducing the administrative burden to comply with laws and regulations. The government that took office in October 2013has intensified these efforts and made stricter goals for this project. So far we have achieved more than 10 % savings for businesses and further developed Altinn as the most advanced digital communications platform for businesses in Europa. Nearly 100% of all reporting of payroll/salaries, payroll taxes, tax deduction, VAT, tax returns go through Altinn.no. Moreover, the formation/establishing of new businesses as well as all events and changes in corporates that requires reporting to authorities, are now fully electronic.

4. **Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

- MinID (My ID) is a common login solution for public services (for medium-level security).
- Different registers and digital services like the National Population Register, The Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities, the Cadastre/Land Register, ID-port(common login solution) and Altinn(please see section 3, 5 6 and 7) as a basis for service development.
- Shared contacts database with mobile telephone number and e-mail addresses for citizens, for sending secure, digital post.
- Digital Mailbox (from November 2014) in order to offer the citizens to receive mail from the public.
- Norge.no/Norway.no as a gateway to online public services from both central

government and local government.

- Electronic Public Records (OEP)is a collaborative tool which central government agencies use to publicise their public records online. Public record data is stored in a searchable database. Users can search this database to locate documents relevant to their field of interest. Having located relevant documents, users may submit requests to view these.
- Data.norge.no - sharing data sets from public bodies.
- Helsenorge.no as "one-stop-shop" in the health field.
- Workinnorway.no as a "one stop shop" for labor immigrants and businesses in and outside the Nordic countries/EU/EEA.
- Nyinorge.no (new in Norway) - public information for all immigrants.
- Nav.no, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, which is responsible for most public benefits.

5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?

There are different approaches and also several types of instruments used for this. As an example, one of the instruments used in 2014 is the letters of allocation to all state agencies with requirements on reducing administrative burdens (se question 3, above). Various initiatives for better regulations have also been used, as well as the management of subordinate agencies. Our digital platform for businesses Altinn, also acts as a "one-stop-shop" between central authorities as tax authorities, Statistics Norway (overall responsibility for official statistics in Norway) and other central registers etc. Another often used instrument is surveys among users and inhabitants, and especially in organizations with responsibilities for services directed toward the general public. In 2009*The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (KMD)* and *Difi* established a comprehensive national population survey that measures residents' and users' satisfaction with various public services. The survey is conducted every two years among a representative sample of the population.

6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

As mentioned in section 3 (about the digital platform for businesses Altinn), the formation/establishment of new businesses as well as life-cycle changes in business-enterprises, including the response from the authorities, has since 2013 become fully

digital.

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7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

- The digital platform for businesses Altinn (please see section 3 and 6 above).
- Bank ID for authentication for access to public services and distribution of high personal certificates – gives access to digital services and single sign-on via Difis ID-port.
- eResept (e-prescriptions) - GP-practices give electronic prescriptions that are available online, and can be accessed in any pharmacy the user would like to visit
- Automatic exemption cards for health consultations - when exceeding the deductible, the costs of consultations and treatment are covered automatically
- Electronic tax deduction card- automatically generated and made available to employers.
- Coordinated bankruptcy proceedings (bankruptcy service)
- Coordinated register notification for businesses - at startup, merger or change of ownership, a service where all relevant records are updated is used (including the Entity Register, Register of Business Enterprises, VAT register etc.).
- Electronic invoices to all public agencies - all Norwegian state agencies receive their invoices digitally. From July 2014 municipalities may also choose to implement the same system for electronic invoices.
- Access to open data through the public server site hotell.difi.no (can also be seen as a one stop shop) allows advanced users or any users to easily access open data for any use (as development of new services, for purposes of analysis, or other purposes).
- Register of citizens' digital addresses (Contact directory of citizens) - provides all public agencies with easy access to citizens' e-mail addresses and mobile telephone numbers, to notify citizens when they receive important digital documents.

Turkey (TR)

1. **What is the main body/entity (i.e. public, private or quasi-autonomous) in your country having the competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens? Does it act at national or sub-national level? If this body /entity is more than one at national level or acts at sub-national level, how are coordination issues regarding the general policy dealt with?**

There are different bodies like Ministry of Development, TODAIE, State Personnel Agency etc. However the main body in Turkey having the overall competency to simplify administrative procedures/ reduce administrative burdens is the **Department for Administrative Development** which is a public body residing in Prime Ministry Office. It is the single public entity which acts centrally at national level. Being the single entity dealing with simplification issues it takes the advantage of central coordination issues.

2. **What characteristics/factors, specific to your country's legal/administrative/ structural environment, do usually impede the adoption and implementation of simplification action plans?**

There are several factors impeding the adoption and implementation of administrative simplification action plans:

i)the problematic areas are generally cross-cutting issues that requires high level of coordination among different public bodies

ii) resistance to change or bureaucratic inertia and status quo bias at the level of the bureaucracy

iii) limited demand for reforms due to a limited development of civil society and lack of participation

iv) the solutions for AB requires long-lasting e-government solutions and this may be unattractive for the government to make the initial investment

v) lack of long-term plans for simplification

3. **What are the specific tools/methods, provided for in your legal framework, which are used by your country's competent bodies/entities in order to simplify administrative procedures (i.e. abolishment of licensing procedures, reduction of required documents, shortening of the time for service delivery, use of e-government means or of one-stop shops)? Are they**

> **purely legal or other(consensual) tools are used (i.e. code of conduct)?**
> **Name a few available simplification tools/methods.**

According to the Turkish legal framework, administrative simplification process can be realized through different ways such as;

i) delegation of powers to lower levels,
ii) eliminating a number of required documents,
iii) announcing the required documents from internet so that the citizen can prepare them beforehand.
iv) considering "citizens statement" as right instead of asking for official doc.
v) enabling exchange of information among different public bodies so that the citizen does not have to submit any document one by one personally
vi) making the data open to public who needs it.
vii) announcing the average time for each service delivery so that the citizen knows beforehand.
viii) making use of e-Government tools
ix)one-stop shops for certain public services

> **4. Have you established one-stop shops in your country? Do you have a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures or multiple one-stop shops specialised in one field of activity each? Does/do your one-stop shop/-s have competency in carrying out and granting permits, licenses etc or does/do it/they merely intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities?**

In Turkey there are one-stop shops for certain public services. For instance, in order to inform and guide the investors and suggest potential investment areas there are one stop shops in governor's offices. Another one is specific to customs. Customs services, technical controls, port services etc. are all given through one stop shops. It means there is not a single one-stop shop dealing with a variety of procedures but there are multiple one-stop shops specialized in one field of activity each. However one stop shops are limited with specific services and thus should be increased in number.

The one-stop shops in Turkey only intermediate between the applicant and the public authorities. They have no competency in carrying out and granting permits, licences etc.

> **5. What is your main focus when implementing simplification action plans, a) provision of quality services to the citizens b) improvement of business environment or c) reduction of the administrative overload of the public sector? Do you usually measure the degree of satisfaction of your target group once an action plan is implemented?**

When preparing and implementing action plans in order to simplify unnecessary procedures the citizens are the main target group for consideration. However there is no doubt that the three beneficiaries (citizens, businesses and public sector) generally take the advantage of any improvements in service delivery simultaneously. For example let's assume that the government removed certain fees on banking sector. It means the banks no more have to pay that fees, thus they will be able to provide the same service with less cost. The clients would probably receive the service with less expense and since the government is out of the process, government officials will no more have to deal with those fees. This simple example shows us that the government action considering the business also helped the citizens and the government itself.

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6. As far as the business environment is concerned, are your simplification action plans focused on the licensing procedure (before a business operates), on the subsequent Information Obligations (IOs)during its lifecycle (after a business operates), or equally on both?

While cutting red tape in administrative processes aiming at decreasing the burden of business, our government follows a balanced approach both before and after a business operates. However, the focus is generally on the licensing procedure before a business operates. For instance, as it is noted in Doing Business Report 2014:

- Turkey reduced the time required for dealing with construction permits by setting strict time limits for granting a lot plan and by reducing the documentation requirements for an occupancy permit.
- Turkey strengthened investor protections through a new commercial code that requires directors found liable in abusive related-party transactions to disgorge their profits and that allows shareholders to request the appointment of an auditor to investigate alleged prejudicial conflicts of interest.
- Turkey made getting electricity easier by eliminating external inspections and reducing some administrative costs.

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7. Please describe briefly an innovative simplification proposal you implemented in your country over the last 3 years, which could be used as a best practice for other EU partners.

Turkey reduced the time required for dealing with construction permits by setting strict time limits for granting a lot plan and by reducing the documentation requirements for an occupancy permit. (Detailed info can be given)