



Questions and Answers on the Communication on 'A simpler, clearer and better enforced EU rulebook'

Strasbourg, 28 April 2026

What is this initiative and what are you seeking to achieve?

The European Commission is proposing a comprehensive plan to strengthen how EU laws are made, applied and enforced, while also addressing the existing stock of legislation.

The Communication sets out **strategic improvements to how the Union designs its policies to create simpler, more efficient and more enforceable rules**. Our goal is to ensure EU rules are simple to understand, efficient in design, effective in practice, and consistently applied across all Member States.

The Communication focuses on **five key topics**: designing simpler laws from the start, strengthening the EU's inclusive and evidence-based approach to policy making, cleaning up outdated or overlapping provisions, preventing unnecessary national add-ons (gold-plating), and enforcing EU rules more effectively.

The Commission has also identified **12 priority areas** where we will carry out a regulatory cleaning to remove outdated rules and eliminate contradictions that slow down our economy, and we have pinpointed several Single Market focus areas where we will take targeted action to step up enforcement.

This is about making sure our laws work as intended, deliver their benefits efficiently and support a highly competitive, innovative and sustainable social market economy, in line with the Union's priorities.

What do you mean by simplicity and enforcement 'by design'?

Simplicity by design means building **clarity and ease of implementation** into laws from the very beginning, while enforcement by design ensures rules are **easy to apply and hard to circumvent**. Together, this helps to ensure regulatory framework that works smoothly for businesses and citizens while maintaining strong compliance. This includes for example:

- **focusing efforts and resources** on areas where EU-level action is necessary, proportionate, and brings the most added value;
- **improving standards** for drafting legislation and providing more clarity on who is affected, rights and obligations;
- setting more realistic timelines for implementing EU laws, giving sufficient time for Member States and businesses to prepare and adapt;
- systematically **considering transition measures** such as grandfathering existing arrangements and gradually phasing in major new obligations;
- tapping into **technological progress to streamline legislation**, with new IT tools that will help to manage EU laws and implement rules more easily, including by identifying overlaps, gaps and unnecessary complexity.

Which changes are you introducing to the better regulation system?

The improvements outlined in the Communication to the Commission's better regulation system will strengthen best practices, including in instances when the Commission needs to act urgently.

More initiatives will be accompanied by an impact assessment. Impact assessments will focus on key economic, social and environmental impacts by identifying them early in the process. At the same time, a more tailored approach will differentiate between major new legislative initiatives or revisions on the one hand, and more targeted initiatives on the other. In sum, the necessary evidence and analysis will be proportionate to the nature of each initiative and its expected impacts. Consideration of costs and benefits will remain a key part of this **more focused and pertinent analysis**. The Regulatory Scrutiny Board will extend its review to a broader set of proposals, while a new pathway for urgent initiatives will improve how the Commission reacts to urgent needs.

The Commission will also better **integrate consultation instruments**, avoiding duplication and continuing to ensure maximum accessibility to all citizens and stakeholders. We will strive to consult the public only once on the same initiative, either through a call for evidence or using a questionnaire, complemented with targeted consultations as necessary. A streamlined call for evidence document will focus the information requested on key aspects so that stakeholders can more easily provide meaningful contributions.

The overall **timing of consultations will be optimised**. The Commission will, whenever possible, avoid counting main holiday periods as part of the overall consultation time. When other public and/or targeted consultations are carried out for the same initiative, the 12-week long standard timeframe for public consultation questionnaires may be reduced by up to six weeks.

Regulatory deep cleaning: what is the purpose of the Action Plan?

Each Member of the College is responsible for carrying out a comprehensive **screening of the legislative stock** under their responsibility, to assess whether it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The screening of legislation looks at all policy areas and includes delegated and implementing acts.

To ramp up these efforts, the Commission is launching an Action Plan for Regulatory Deep Cleaning. It focuses on **12 areas**. They will be examined as a matter of priority in **2026 and 2027**, with the aim of reducing complexity and fragmentation to improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

The 12 priority areas – free movement of goods and services, financial services, customs, taxation, health and food safety, agriculture, transport, energy, climate, environment, digital, housing and permitting – have been selected based on internal **analysis of implementation challenges** and on stakeholder input, including in [implementation dialogues](#) and reality checks.

The deep cleaning is expected to result in legislative or other measures that address **outdated provisions, overlaps, inconsistencies** or requirements creating unnecessary burden. It will also **foster consolidation** in areas characterised by high regulatory fragmentation, and it may lead to the withdrawal of individual Commission proposals, for example in cases where these might no longer reflect current realities or where legislative negotiations have stalled.

Gold-plating: why does it matter and how will it be addressed?

When Member States, including regional or local authorities, introduce top-up obligations that are additional to the already high standards set in EU law, they can sometimes undermine the integrity of the Single Market.

Reducing gold-plating is only possible in partnership with Member States. With this in mind, the Commission will deliver a toolkit of best practices and criteria to help Member States identify and avoid gold-plating in the national transposition and implementation of EU legislation.

Consultations, implementation dialogues and reality checks will be used to identify and examine gold-plating. Under its 'focus areas for enforcement', the Commission will also seek to identify instances of gold-plating.

The European Semester will identify key barriers and gold-plating issues in each Member State and point to specific priorities. The collaborative approach under the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce will continue to play its role.

Finally, the Commission will take into consideration the risk of gold-plating when making legislative proposals.

How does the Commission intend to step up enforcement of EU rules?

The Commission will accelerate enforcement **when directives are not being transposed**. For instance, if a Member State fails to notify a transposition measure or provides no additional notification once the infringement procedure has been launched, the Commission will issue a reasoned opinion within six months after adoption of the letter of formal notice.

The Commission will also take a **stricter approach to requests from Member States** to extend the two-month deadline for replying to a letter of formal notice. In the future, extensions will generally only be granted at the reasoned opinion stage, provided that Member States acknowledge the breach and meet established cumulative conditions, which will be assessed strictly.

By the end of its mandate, the Commission aims to have reduced **long-standing infringement cases**. To achieve this, it will focus on cases open for over five years that have not yet been referred to the Court of Justice. Member States' efforts and cooperation will be key to resolving such cases.

Why are you setting out focused enforcement on the Single Market?

The Single Market is Europe's economic backbone and a **source of prosperity for citizens and businesses**, but its full potential remains untapped. Our focused enforcement strategy targets key areas where better implementation can make the biggest difference for businesses and citizens, be it on product standards, energy markets, digital services or labour mobility.

Identifying the most relevant enforcement areas for the Single Market helps prioritise actions under this heading. However, the Commission remains **equally committed to enforcing the entire EU rulebook**, from fundamental freedoms to environmental protections and consumer rights. Our goal is simple: we want to have rules that work in practice, creating a level playing field where citizens can thrive and businesses can compete fairly and grow confidently across Europe.

For more information

[Press release](#)

[Factsheet](#) listing key actions under the Communication

[Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox](#)

[Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region](#)

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