



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 21.10.2004
SEC(2004)1377

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

Impact Assessment: Next Steps

In support of competitiveness and sustainable development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER.....	1
1. Table of contents.....	2
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Taking stock.....	4
4. Improving the Impact Assessment Framework.....	4
5. Next steps.....	6
 ANNEX 1.....	 7
 The Impact Assessment Framework.....	 7
 ANNEX 2.....	 12
 Revised list of impacts to be considered in an Impact Assessment.....	 12

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Commission introduced a new Impact Assessment procedure designed to contribute both to an effective and efficient regulatory environment and to a more coherent implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy. Covering economic, environmental and social impacts, in an integrated and balanced manner, the procedure was established as a direct response to calls for regulatory and sustainable Impact Assessment tools in the conclusions of the Laeken and Göteborg European Councils.

The Commission's new Impact Assessment procedure cuts across all sectors and has integrated and replaced all previous single-sector type Impact Assessments (business, gender, environmental, health, etc.). It provides policy-makers with a better and more coherent analysis of all relevant impacts across the various policy dimensions. It has been developed after examining established procedures in Member States and other OECD countries. As such, the new system aims to combine the best features of Impact Assessment systems in use elsewhere.

In addition to its positive contribution to increased transparency in the Community's regulatory process, the IA tool constitutes a pragmatic move towards well-documented Commission proposals. The latter are critical to demonstrate the advantages of enacting new or modernised Community legislation in a wide variety of interlinked domains and policies attached to both the Lisbon and the Sustainable Development strategies.

To assist the EU's decision making process, the Commission is committed to emphasising the preparatory phase of its proposals, in particular, by systematically assessing, on an equal basis, their likely economic, environmental and social implications and highlighting the main potential trade offs. These assessments are intended, above all, to help improve the quality of its proposals and identify balanced solutions that are consistent with the policy objectives pursued by the Community. Impact Assessment is an aid to the Commission, but not a substitute for political judgement. Ultimately, it should help the Commission to exercise its right of initiative and to promote the Community method by means of fully informed political decisions.

The Spring European Council 2004, the Competitiveness Council, the High Level Group on Competitiveness and Growth, and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council have urged the Commission to reflect in greater detail on how competitiveness and issues related to administrative burden may be considered in the Impact Assessment method.

This report summarises the Commission's assessment of how the Impact Assessment process is working and outlines the steps that the Commission intends to take in order to improve current practice. The Commission's internal reflections were carried out by an inter-service Impact Assessment Working Group, which was set up in April 2004 to examine the early experience and reflect on how further to refine the Impact Assessment method.

2. TAKING STOCK

Since the start of the Impact Assessment process in early 2003, more than 50 extended Impact Assessments of proposals have been completed by several different DGs or services. This represents coverage of approximately 50 percent of the major Work Programme proposals. These Impact Assessments cover areas ranging from the ‘Reforming the EU’s sugar policy’ to ‘Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism’, ‘Guidelines for trans-European energy and transport networks’, ‘Protection of groundwater against pollution’; ‘The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights’, ‘Services in the internal market’ and ‘Chemicals – REACH (Registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals)’.

An increasing number of staff is being trained by the central training services in the Impact Assessment method and in more advanced courses, on the conduct of specific Impact Assessments. Individual DGs have supplemented this by training their own staff. In addition, there are plans to integrate Impact Assessment as a standard element into the compulsory induction courses for new Commission officials. In a number of DGs, special support structures and centres of expertise have been put in place or are being set up. Finally, several DGs have set up framework contracts and/or expert lists dedicated to Impact Assessment and evaluation.

The Commission finds that the new Impact Assessment procedure is positively contributing to a new culture of transparency in regulatory design and management practices. Furthermore, fine-tuning proposals during the Impact Assessment process helps improve their cost-effectiveness. Such developments must now be actively pursued via enhanced exchanges of experience to promote best practice both within the Commission and between the institutions and the Member States.

While initial experience shows that the methodology used is sound, there needs to be a more systematic application of the current methodology across Commission services. When applied correctly, the current method addresses many of the points raised by Council and Parliament as needing more emphasis, including coverage of impacts in all three dimensions – economic, environmental and social.

The Commission notes, however, that the generalised use of Impact Assessments cannot be considered neutral either from the point of view of resource allocations or as regards the programming cycle of the EU’s legislative process. The complexity of a sizable number of Impact Assessments is therefore likely to require longer preparatory phases before their approval by the college.

Also, to be fully efficient, the Impact Assessment practice will need to be complemented, where necessary, by equivalent practices in the Member States and the other institutions with respect to their own shares of input into the Community’s legislative decision making process, in line with the Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Lawmaking.

In short, there is room for further improvement in implementation and in fostering a culture of assessment within the Commission. The current challenge is hence to refine the method and the procedures to allow more effective implementation.

3. IMPROVING THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

While confirming the overall method, the improved framework draws lessons from the experience gained during the first two years of implementation and responds to the calls for further refinement of the method as regards in particular competitiveness and administrative burden. The resulting updated framework is set out in Annex 1 and aims at improvements in the following areas:

- Sustainable Development (Göteborg) and Lisbon objectives are to be more firmly anchored in the assessments.
- Impact Assessment tools will be strengthened and the methodology will be refined further: the list of impacts used in screening to help identify the likely impact of a proposal has been refocused and improved (see Annex 2). For example, following the Council's calls for better assessment of competitiveness impacts¹, the list of economic impacts to be considered has been refocused to give greater attention to factors that are widely considered to be important to productivity and hence to the competitiveness of the EU. This list also includes a new section on administrative requirements for which clearer guidance is being drafted in a separate document. For example, this will promote early consideration of how information requirements could be met in the most effective way, in order to avoid excessive costs. Research projects are also underway to develop further tools in support of Impact Assessment.
- The principle of proportionate analysis is to be better applied in practice: the analysis has to focus on the most significant impacts and the most important distributive effects, and the depth of analysis has to match the significance of the impacts. Impact Assessments of proposals with no major impacts should, therefore, be avoided or at least kept short. Moreover, the scope of the analysis must be consistent with the nature of the proposal examined. The level of analysis needed will, for example, be easier to decide with increased transparency and better planning upstream of the impact assessment process (see simplified procedure below).
- Transparency is being further enhanced: for example, the Commission is now providing easy website access to its Impact Assessment work through a single access point². It contains information about the general procedure and lists both planned and completed Impact Assessments. It also contains the Commission's internal guidelines, including the list of impacts to be considered. Moreover, with the adoption of the Legislative and Work Programme 2005, it will include 'Roadmaps', outlining planned impact assessment work for individual proposals. The Commission is also improving practical guidance on minimum standards of consultation, for example, with regard to the planning and design of consultations involving stakeholders at earlier stages of the assessment process.
- Quality of Impact Assessments: continued efforts are being made to improve Impact Assessments, for example, through better assessment of trade-offs and inter-linkages between impacts; improved quantification and a possible further monetisation of impacts; improved guidance on estimating administrative requirements; and improved consideration

¹ For example, see Spring European Council conclusions, 25-26.3.2004; Council conclusions on better regulation, 17.05.2004; and Recommendations of the High Level Group on Competitiveness and Growth on assessing competitiveness impacts, 28.6.2004.

² http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/impact/index_en.htm.

of different time horizons (short, long term and dynamics) in the assessment. This will be achieved through simplified and improved guidelines as well as enhanced capacity and skills to carry out impact assessment in the Commission (see below). A more systematic consultation of available European statistical data will also enhance the quality of Impact Assessments.

- The process is to be simplified: Impact Assessments will be conducted on all major policy-defining documents and all legislative proposals listed in the Commission's legislative and work programme. The previous preliminary Impact Assessments will be replaced by Roadmaps. These will be presented at the early stages of these proposals and will set out the issue at hand, policy options, likely impacts, assessments and consultations to be undertaken, and their timing. They will better inform other services and the public (at the latest at the stage of the Legislative and Work Programme) about the proposal and will also provide the basis for assessing the level of analysis needed (cf. the principle of proportionate analysis).
- Involvement of other concerned services, by the lead service, is further encouraged in order to ensure an efficient use of expertise and data that are available within the Commission, across the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental).
- Sufficient resources are to be made available: the preparation of a proper Impact Assessment requires the provision of adequate financial and human resources at an early stage in the planning cycle. The Roadmap for the proposal will provide an effective tool to identify resource needs.
- Capacity and skills are to be enhanced: further efforts are currently underway to step up training on Impact Assessment in the Commission and to enhance the pooling and spreading of information and expertise between DGs and with external experts on how to assess impacts across the three dimensions.
- External expertise will be used, where necessary, to support the Commission's Impact Assessments (e.g. for data gathering, analytical studies, modelling, etc.).

4. NEXT STEPS

The Commission is currently working on implementing the actions outlined above. Many of these actions will be covered in the revision of the Impact Assessment guidelines expected for December 2004/ January 2005. Further implementation will take place during 2005.

To promote the exchange of practices at EU level, the Commission plans to organise a seminar in the first half of 2005 to present its experiences on Impact Assessment as well as its new guidelines. The other institutions, Member States and stakeholders will also be invited to share their experiences.

ANNEX 1

The Impact Assessment Framework

1. *An integrated approach: better regulation and sustainable development*

With its new Impact Assessment procedure, the Commission has adopted a cross-sectoral approach, covering – in a balanced manner – economic, environmental and social aspects. This procedure has integrated and replaced all previous single-sector type Impact Assessments (business, gender, environmental, etc.), which were previously applied.

There are two main political drivers behind the Commission's Impact Assessment procedure:

- *The Better Regulation agenda* and the corresponding Action Plan of 2002, setting out initiatives to promote effective and efficient regulation as part of the efforts of the European Institutions and Member States to fulfil the Lisbon objectives in 2010; and
- *The EU's sustainable development strategy*³ and its call for measures to increase policy coherence between the economic, environmental and social dimensions.

The overall purpose of the Impact Assessment process is to assess – in a systematic and organised way – the underlying issue, options for public intervention and their likely impacts across as wide a range of areas as possible. It is as such an integral part of the policy designing process and allows politicians to take their decisions in the light of the best available evidence. Impact Assessment is thus an aid to decision making, not a substitute for political judgement. This is important at a time when the EU is increasingly legislating on matters that cut across a large number of interlinked policy areas and/or that are highly connected with technological development and societal demands. Careful assessment of the possible trade-offs associated with policy implementation is, therefore, an important consideration for the EU's political decision making process.

2. *Guiding principles*

The following sets out the principles the Commission will follow in the Impact Assessment process:

- The principle of *transparency*: it will be clear to all stakeholders and to the general public how the Commission assesses the expected impacts of its legislation (what are the data and methodology that are used). *Stakeholders and experts will be consulted* throughout the process, following the Commission's minimum standards and guiding principles. The practical guidance on how to implement these standards in practice will be further developed, for example, with regard to the planning of consultations, how they should be designed, who to target and for which purpose, which instruments to use (e.g. Green or White Papers, internet consultations, workshops), etc. To enhance the transparency of the

³ http://europa.eu.int/comm/sustainable/index_en.htm.

Commission's Impact Assessment work to the public, a single access point has been established on the Europa web-site⁴.

- The *assessment* of impacts will concentrate on those that are likely to be the most significant and/or will lead to important distributive effects, and the scope of the analysis will be consistent with the nature of the proposal (i.e. the *principle of "proportionate analysis"*).
- The Impact Assessment will consider the *economic, social and environmental dimensions* in an integrated and balanced manner. In this context, the distributive effects and the time dimension (short, medium and long-term impacts) will be examined, for instance by weighing short-term negative against long-term positive impacts.

3. *Impact Assessment questions*

The following questions will be analysed in the Impact Assessment process:

(1) *What issue or problem is the policy/proposal expected to tackle?*

The first question in the Impact Assessment process relates to the identification and analysis of the issue(s) or problem(s) in one or more policy areas. This will be described in economic, social and environmental terms after taking into account the cumulative effect of legislation currently in force or in the pipeline. It will be expressed as concretely as possible in qualitative, quantitative and where possible monetary terms. It will also examine possible future trends should the problem not be addressed by EU action.

(2) *What main objective is the policy/proposal supposed to achieve?*

On the basis of the problem analysis, the policy objectives will be expressed in terms of expected results in a given timeframe (i.e. in terms of 'ends' not 'means'). The objectives will be consistent with sustainable development, with other policies and with key strategies of the EU such as Lisbon and the Sustainable Development Strategy.

(3) *What are the main policy options available to achieve the objective; what would be the Community added value?*

Alternative policy options to achieve the objective(s) will be considered at an early stage in the preparation of policy proposals. This includes the option of "no policy change", which will always be used as the point of reference against which the other options are assessed. When establishing the point of reference, account will be taken of existing EU policies in the field and, if relevant, proposals currently under discussion.

The options will be examined both with regard to the basic policy approach (in terms of content) and alternative instruments to implement the policy (in terms of regulatory and non-regulatory options). The revised guidelines will provide clearer guidance on this point.

Any possible difficulties in implementing the options will also be identified. Where relevant, Member States will be asked to give information about problems that they would face in implementing a certain option (e.g. implications for public administrations and enforcement authorities).

⁴ http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/impact/index_en.htm.

The subsidiarity and proportionality principles will be taken into account: it will be made clear why the problem has to be addressed at the European level and what the value-added of Community intervention is compared with no-regulatory action or action by Member States. These elements will also be further developed in the revised guidelines.

The most relevant options in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and consistency will be selected for further assessment.

(4) What are the impacts – positive and negative – expected from the different options identified?

For the policy options selected, all relevant positive and negative impacts will be examined and reported on with a specific emphasis on their environmental, economic and social dimensions.

The detailed list of economic, social and environmental impacts that will be used to screen the policy options in the Impact Assessment has been refocused and improved presentation-wise (see Annex 2). An example of impacts covered in the various dimensions is:

- Economic impact: positive and negative effects on markets, trade and investment flows, direct and indirect costs for businesses, impact on innovation, administrative requirements, effects on the labour market on the functioning of the Internal Market, consequences for households, impact on public authorities and budget expenditure, impacts on specific regions or sectors, effects on third countries and international relations, macro-economic impacts, etc.
- Social impact: impact on human capital, impact on fundamental/human rights, compatibility with Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, changes in employment levels or job quality, changes affecting gender equality, social exclusion and poverty, impact on health, safety, consumer rights, social capital, security (including crime and terrorism), education, training and culture, etc.
- Environmental impact: positive and negative impact associated with the changing status of the environment such as climate change, air, water and soil pollution, land-use change and bio-diversity loss, changes in public health, etc.

A good qualitative analysis will always be the first building block for the Impact Assessment. To complement the qualitative assessment, quantification and/or monetisation will be strived for where possible and appropriate. This will cover not only the costs associated with the proposal but also its expected benefits over time.

(5) Comparing the options and presenting the results

Following the assessment of the most relevant options, the results will be presented in a clear and transparent way in the Impact Assessment report, summarising the positive and negative impacts of the options, across the three dimensions, and comparing the options from the point of view of effectiveness, efficiency and consistency, including potential trade-offs between competing objectives. The analytical method used will also be stated, including underlying assumptions and uncertainties. By referring technical details to annexes, the report will be short and concise, focusing on the key results of the Impact Assessment and the consequent political conclusions in terms of the final policy choice.

(6) *Monitoring and evaluation*

Once the preferred option has been identified, the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation will be broadly analysed and described in the Impact Assessment report with a view to ensuring that the functioning and impact of the policy can be effectively evaluated after its initial implementation.

4. Process

- *Coverage:* The selection process for Impact Assessment was simplified with the Annual Policy Strategy 2005, which stated that, as of 2005, all proposals in the Commission's yearly Legislative and Work Programme will undergo Impact Assessment. The selection process has thus become more automatic.
- *A two-stage process:*
 - The preliminary Impact Assessment has been transformed into a "Roadmap" to better inform other services and the public (at the latest at the stage of the Commission Legislative and Work Programme) of the issue at hand, policy options, likely impacts, assessments and consultations to be undertaken, and their timing.
 - The term "Extended" Impact Assessment has been replaced in the second step by the simpler "Impact Assessment", in order to better reflect the principle of proportionate analysis and the fact that certain Impact Assessments may remain relatively limited also in the second stage.
- *Organisation:* the *lead Directorate-General* has overall responsibility for the Impact Assessment of its proposals, in cooperation with other services affected. For individual Impact Assessments that cut across several dimensions, *ad hoc* inter-departmental steering groups are created, headed by the lead DG.

The *Secretariat-General* coordinates the basic support structures through the Strategic Planning and Programming cycle. It also coordinates the issuance of guidance documents, organisation of training, exchange of good practice and monitors the final quality of the Impact Assessments carried out. In this work, it is supported by *inter-service networks*.

External expertise may be called for to provide certain input (e.g. to collect data, carry out specific analytical work, etc.) through service contracts. External input is also gathered through consulting with interested parties and experts, according to the minimum standards. Better guidance will be developed on the use of external expertise in the Impact Assessment process.

ANNEX 2

Revised list of impacts to be considered in an Impact Assessment⁵

1. Economic impact

(1) Impact on competitiveness, markets, trade and investment flows

Does the option have an impact on the competitive position of EU firms in comparison with their non-EU rivals? Does it provoke cross-border investment flows (including relocation of economic activity)? Are the proposed actions necessary to correct undesirable outcomes of market processes in European markets? Are they consistent with the principles of EU competition policy and the single market?

(2) Impact on direct and indirect costs imposed on businesses

Does the option affect the cost or availability of essential inputs (raw materials, machinery, labour, energy, etc.)? Will it impose additional adjustment, compliance or transaction costs on businesses? Does it affect access to finance? Does it have an impact on the investment cycle? Will it entail the withdrawal of certain products from the market? Will it directly lead to businesses closing down?

(3) Impact on the administrative requirements imposed on businesses

Does the option impose additional administrative requirements (e.g. in terms of information and reporting obligations) on businesses or increase administrative complexity? Do these costs weigh relatively heavily on SMEs?

(4) Impact on innovation and research

Does the option stimulate research and development? Does it facilitate the introduction and dissemination of new production methods, business practices and products?

(5) Impact on households

Does the option affect the prices consumers pay? Does it have an impact on the quality of the goods they buy, and on consumer choice? Does the proposal affect the confidence of consumers in the market? Does it have significant consequences for the financial situation of families, both immediately and in the long run?

(6) Impact on specific regions, sectors or workers

Does the option have significant effects on certain sectors? Will it have a specific impact on certain regions, for instance in terms of jobs created or lost? Will it have a differential urban/rural impact? Does it have specific negative consequences for SMEs? Does it have specific negative consequences for particular groups of workers?

(7) Impact on third countries and international relations

⁵ Please note that certain types of impacts are relevant for several dimensions. However, for reasons of simplification, they are only referred to under one heading.

Is the option consistent with EU trade policy and our international obligations, including in the WTO? Is it consistent with the objectives of EU foreign policy and EU/EC development policy? Does the option affect third countries with which we have preferential trade arrangements? Does it affect developing, least developed and middle income countries? Does it affect brain-drain/brain-gain or the mobility of researchers to and from third countries?

(8) *Impact on public authorities*

What are the budgetary consequences of the option for public authorities at different levels, of government both immediately and in the long run?

(9) *Impact on the macroeconomic environment*

What are the overall consequences of the option for economic growth and employment? Does it contribute to improving the conditions for investment and the proper functioning of markets? Does the option have direct or indirect inflationary consequences?

2. Environmental impact

(1) *Impact on air quality*

Does the option have an effect on emissions of acidifying, eutrophying, photochemical or harmful air pollutants? Does it affect unpleasant smells and odours?

(2) *Impact on water quality and resources*

Does the option decrease or increase the quality or quantity of surface and groundwater? Does it raise or lower the water quality in coastal and marine areas (e.g. through discharges of sewage, nutrients, oil, heavy metals and other pollutants)? Does it affect drinking water resources?

(3) *Impact on soil quality or resources*

Does the option affect the acidification, contamination or salinity of soil, or soil erosion rates? Does it lead to loss of available soil (e.g. through building or construction works) or increase the amount of usable soil (e.g. through land decontamination)?

(4) *Impact on the climate*

Does the option affect the emission of ozone-depleting substances (CFCs, HCFCs, etc.) or greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane etc) into the atmosphere?

(5) *Impact on renewable or non-renewable resources*

Does the option deplete renewable resources (freshwater, fish, biomass, etc.) more quickly than they can recover? Does it reduce or increase use of non-renewable resources (groundwater, minerals, oil, gas, etc.)?

(6) *Impact on biodiversity, flora, fauna and landscapes*

Does the option reduce the number of species in any area (i.e. reduce biological diversity) or increase the range of species (e.g. by promoting conservation)? Does it affect protected or

endangered species or their habitats or ecologically sensitive areas? Does it split the landscape into smaller areas or in other ways affect migration routes, ecological corridors, or buffer zones? Does the option affect the scenic value of protected landscape?

(7) Impact on land use

Does the option have the effect of bringing new areas of land ('greenfield sites') into use for the first time? Does it affect land designated as sensitive for ecological reasons? Does it lead to a change land use (for example changing the balance between rural and urban land, or the type of agriculture)?

(8) Impact on waste production/generation or recycling

Does the option affect waste production (solid, urban, agricultural, industrial, mining, radioactive or toxic waste) or how waste is treated, disposed of, or recycled?

(9) Impact on environmental risks

Does the option affect the likelihood or prevention of fire, explosions, breakdowns, accidents and accidental emissions? Does it affect the risk of unauthorised or unintentional dissemination of environmentally alien or genetically modified organisms? Does it increase or decrease the likelihood of natural disasters?

(10) Impact on mobility (transport modes) and the use of energy

Does the option increase or decrease energy consumption and heat production? Will it increase or decrease the demand for transport (passenger or freight), or influence its modal split? Does it increase or decrease vehicle emissions?

(11) Impact on the environmental consequences of business activities

Does the option lead to changes in natural resource inputs required per output? Will it lead to production becoming more or less energy intensive? Does the option make environmentally un/friendly goods and services cheaper or more expensive through changes in taxation, certification, product, design rules, procurement rules, etc? Does the option promote or restrict environmentally un/friendly goods and services through changes in rules for capital investments, loans, insurance services, etc., cheaper? Will it lead to businesses becoming more or less polluting through changes in the way in which they operate?

3. Social impact

(1) Impact on employment and labour market access

Does the option facilitate new job creation? Does it lead directly to a loss of jobs? Have measures to reduce the negative employment impact been considered for the proposed measures? Does it affect the demand for labour and its quality (in terms of skills and training needed)? Does it have an impact on the functioning of the labour market?

(2) Impact on job quality

Does the option impact on job quality? Will it affect workers' health and safety? Does the option directly or indirectly affect workers' existing rights and obligations? Does it directly or

indirectly affect employers' existing rights and obligations? Does it bring about minimum employment standards across the EU? Does the option bring about impacts on employment through facilitating restructuring, adaptation to change and the use of technological innovations?

(3) *Impact on social inclusion*

Does the option affect access to the labour market or transition in/out of the labour market? Does it lead directly or indirectly to a rise in inequality? Does it affect equal access to services and goods? Does the option affect specific groups of individuals, firms, localities, the most vulnerable, the most at risk of poverty, more than others?

(4) *Impact on equality of treatment and opportunities*

Does the option affect equal opportunities and equal treatment for all? Can the proposal lead to direct or indirect discrimination? Does the proposal affect gender equality? Does the option affect the social and economic conditions and rights of particular groups at risk of discrimination?

(5) *Impact on social rights and standards*

Does the option affect the recognition and/or implementation of fundamental social rights via social protection measures, services of general interest or the implementation of rights laid down in the Treaty/Constitution or the Charter of Fundamental Rights? Does the option affect minimum standards in a specific area? Does the option affect legal uncertainty in a specific area?

(6) *Impact on consumer rights*

Does the option affect the ability of consumers to make properly informed and considered decisions? Does the option affect consumers' legal protection from unscrupulous traders or other market failures?

(7) *Impact on governance and participation*

Does the option affect the involvement of stakeholders in issues of governance as foreseen in the Treaty/Constitution and the new governance approach? Are all actors and stakeholders treated on an equal footing, with due respect for their diversity? Does the option affect the autonomy of the social partners in the areas for which they are competent? Does the implementation of the option affect public institutions and administrations, for example in regard to their responsibilities? Does the option make the public better informed about a particular issue?

(8) *Impact on public health and safety*

Does the option affect the health and safety of individuals/consumers/populations, including life expectancy, mortality, and morbidity, through impacts on the *socio-economic environment* (e.g. working environment, income, education, occupation, nutrition)? Does the option affect the potential for bioterrorism? Does the option increase or decrease the likelihood of health risks due to substances harmful to the *natural environment*? Does it lead to health damage due to changes in the amount of noise or air quality in populated areas? Does the option affect *lifestyle-related determinants* of health such as use of tobacco, alcohol,

or physical activity? Are there specific effects on particular risk groups (determined by age, gender, social group, mobility, region, etc.)?

(9) Impacts on access to social protection, health and educational goods and services

Does the option have an impact on services in terms of their quality and access to them? Does it have an effect on the education and mobility of professionals (health, education, etc.)? Does it affect the cross-border provision of services, referrals across borders and cooperation in border regions? Does the option affect the financing and/or organisation of social, health and education systems?