



EU REGULATORY QUALITY INDEX

Benchmarking EU legislation
against regulatory quality
standards

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Summary

- EU legislation is marked by significant linguistic density and its limited accessibility to the general public. A good illustration of this is the EU directives from 2022 to 2024, which exhibit increasingly complex sentence structures, with an overall average of 38.6 words and 250 characters per sentence and 1.9 commas per sentence. These figures are in stark contrast to the UK Plain English Campaign's recommendation of no more than 20 words per sentence. 'Right of establishment and freedom to provide services' and 'law relating to undertakings' are the policy areas with the most complex sentence structures, while 'general, financial and institutional matters' and 'transport policy' are the least complex.
- If we assume that the average adult reading speed is approximately 200–250 words per minute for general, non-technical content, this rate often drops significantly when reading complex legal or regulatory texts, falling to approximately 100–150 words per minute due to the need for deeper comprehension. Given that many EU directives exceed 30,000 words and feature long, intricate sentences averaging nearly 39 words, a single directive could realistically require four to six hours of focused reading time for a non-expert. 'Energy' (in terms of average number of pages per directive) and 'common foreign and security policy' (in terms of average number of articles per directive) acts have the longest directives. In contrast, directives relating to 'freedom, security, and justice' as well as 'general, financial, and institutional matters' are the shortest.
- On average, legal acts cover 24.4 pages and contain 11.7 articles, though their length fluctuates considerably year to year. The longest average length was in 2023 (33.3 pages), while the shortest was in 2024 (19.2 pages). The energy sector produced the longest acts (68.7 pages; 17.3 articles), followed by the 'environment, consumers,

and health protection’ domain (40 pages; 14.4 articles). Conversely, ‘freedom, security, and justice’ (8.4 pages, 7.9 articles) and ‘general, financial, and institutional matters’ (9 pages, 4 articles) contained the most concise acts.

- Nearly two-thirds of the impact assessments (IAs) (62.3%) described economic impacts, and 60.7% assessed financial or administrative costs, with inclusion peaking in 2023 (82.4%). The lowest values appeared in 2022 and 2024, when only just over half of the IAs included these elements. The strongest performance was in ‘common foreign and security policy’ and ‘economic and monetary policy’, wherein 100% of the IAs described economic impacts small and medium sized enterprises (SME) effects, and financial and administrative costs. The weakest results were in the ‘agriculture’ and ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ domains, wherein 0% of the IAs included such elements.
- Between 2022 and 2024, nearly two-thirds of the IAs (63.9%) reported consultation strategies and results, with the highest inclusion in 2023 (82.4%). Consultation duration averaged 13.6 weeks, rising slightly from 12 weeks in 2022 to almost 14 weeks in 2024. ‘Agriculture’, ‘common foreign and security policy’, and ‘economic and monetary policy’ had the most comprehensive consultation practices, wherein 100% of the IAs described consultation strategies. The lowest levels were recorded in ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ (0%) and ‘freedom, security and justice’ (37.5%). Consultation length varied widely from twenty weeks in the ‘agriculture’, ‘taxation’, and ‘law relating to undertakings’ domains, to just four weeks in ‘common foreign and security policy’.
- The overall score of regulatory quality (EU-RQI) in EU directives averaged 66.9, with consistently strong results in initiative (always 100) and a high score in subsidiarity (78.4), but persistent weaknesses in drafting, impact assessment, consultation (49.9), and implementation (47.4). Performance peaked in 2023 (72.6) before declining in 2024. Across policy areas, the strongest overall scores were recorded in ‘transport policy’ (74.0) and ‘common foreign and security policy’ (73.7). At the same time, the weakest results were observed in ‘general, financial, and institutional matters’ (52.2) and ‘law relating to undertakings’ (55.3), reflecting wide variation in quality across domains.
- The most significant shortcoming of the current regulation process is that only 6.6% of the directives studied included a roadmap, indicating poor strategic planning and limited transparency in the early stages of lawmaking. Less than half (42.6%) had an inception impact assessment,

reducing stakeholder engagement at the preparatory stage. Territorial impacts were assessed in just 36.1% of the IAs – the weakest score among IA dimensions. Key IA elements remain uneven: environmental impacts (57.4%), SME impacts (59.0%), competitiveness (60.7%), and financial and administrative costs (60.7%) were often missing. Only 19.7% of legislative proposals included a financial statement, signalling limited fiscal transparency. A mere 23.0% of laws were accompanied by an implementation plan, raising concerns about effective application. Transposition performance was weak: only 44.3% of directives respected deadlines, and, on average, only 12.3 member states adopted at least one measure.

Chapter 1.

Introduction: The current trend of better regulation in the EU

Better regulation has become a central theme in the evolution of EU lawmaking over the past thirty years. The fundamental concepts of what we call 'better regulation' refer to efforts aimed at ensuring that laws are not only effective and necessary but also transparent, proportionate, evidence-based, and easy to implement. These principles are crucial for maintaining public trust, fostering competitiveness, and enhancing the overall quality and legitimacy of EU governance. The EU, in particular, has been committed to improving the quality of its legislation since the 1990s, when early calls for a better regulation strategy began to shape its governance agenda (Dunlop & Radaelli 2022).

The increase in better regulation in lawmaking processes reflects the growing role the EU plays in regulating the daily lives of its citizens – from consumer protection to competition law and workplace safety – combined with the increasing complexity of its legal framework (Karkatsoulis et al. 2021). Key institutional developments, such as the Mandelkern Group on Better Regulation and its *European Governance: A White Paper* (2001), aimed to promote the systematic use of impact assessments (IAs) and stakeholder consultations to achieve a smarter lawmaking process. Further supported by the creation of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), which monitors the quality of IAs, and the REFIT programme,¹ which aims to simplify outdated or inefficient laws (Meyers 2024), these reforms have improved the regulatory output of the EU institutions.

1 'REFIT – Making EU law simpler, more efficient and future-proof', *European Commission*, n.d. (https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-more-efficient-and-future-proof_en).

Although significant progress has been made, challenges persist. European businesses still believe that regulation is a barrier to growth, more so than their US counterparts (Meyers 2024).² This matter is particularly concerning, as the EU seeks to boost its global competitiveness and stimulate innovation, with recent discussions focusing on these parameters in particular (Draghi 2024; Letta 2024). Yet, the EU's commitment to better regulation is not about deregulating or weakening standards. As highlighted by the European Parliamentary Research Service, the EU's most powerful economic asset, the Single Market (SM), has contributed 6–8% to the EU's GDP, and deeper integration could yield up to €2.8 trillion in annual gains (EPRS, 2023).

However, better regulation is not only about how laws are made. It also concerns their substance, implementation, and enforcement. Laws must be clear, targeted, and proportionate, and their application must be consistent across member states. Yet, both the European Parliament and Council often fail to apply IAs when proposing substantial amendments, and the secretive nature of trilogue negotiations continues to undermine transparency and consultation processes (Meyers 2024). Consequently, experts have recommended extending IAs to delegated acts, increasing the independence and resources of the RSB, and exploring non-legislative approaches – such as self-regulation and co-regulation – to reduce unnecessary burdens (European Commission 2018; Meyers 2024).

Today, the Better Regulation Agenda has evolved as a counterbalance to growing complexity, political influence, and stakeholder demands. As Karkatsoulis et al. (2021) emphasise, simplification plays a key role in ensuring laws remain clear and usable without compromising their function. The future of EU regulation depends not only on fewer laws, but on better ones, crafted with evidence, implemented fairly, and regularly evaluated for their real-world impact.

Our study seeks to shed light on the extent to which the EU institutions produce regulation in accordance with the better regulation principles, ensuring regulatory quality and effectiveness. To that end, we first set the conceptual foundation by reviewing the core principles of regulatory quality and outlining the lawmaking process in the EU, focusing on what constitutes

2 For example, regulation and legal protection often appear as a problem rather than a solution for businesses. Confidence in the effectiveness of investment protection by law and courts varies widely across the EU: Luxembourg reports the highest level at 84%, compared with an EU average of 57%, while Greece shows only 28%. This highlights sharp disparities in business trust in national legal frameworks for investment protection (Archontas & Saravakos 2024).

a good law and how the ordinary legislative procedure functions in practice. Thereafter, we present the key figures of our empirical analysis of 61 EU directives adopted between 2022 and 2024, examining language metrics, legislative length, and the application of key better regulation principles, such as impact assessments and consultation. Next, we build on this analysis by introducing the EU Regulatory Quality Index (EU-RQI), a composite indicator based on fifty indicators across five components, which estimates the degree to which the directives studied adhere to the core principles of the better regulation agenda. Based on the results, we also examine the systemic shortcomings in drafting, assessment, consultation, and implementation. We conclude our study with the main findings, offering policy recommendations that emphasise practical, evidence-based reforms to address the weaknesses identified and improve the overall quality of EU legislation.

Chapter 2.

The basic concepts of regulatory quality and the lawmaking process in the EU: What makes a good law

The basic concepts of regulatory quality: What we will measure and why

Understanding what constitutes a good law requires examining the core concepts of regulatory quality and the procedural dynamics of lawmaking in academic literature and best practices. First, a legal act should be effective; that is, it should link legislative purpose, structure, and outcomes to ensure coherence and clarity in drafting (Mousmouti 2012). Clarity and unambiguity in legal acts are essential for effective governance and compliance. Institutionally, the EU's *Joint Practical Guide* outlines rigorous drafting principles to promote precision and accessibility in its legislation (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and European Commission 2013). Researchers have observed that clearer, less complex EU directives lead to significantly higher compliance rates among member states.³ Furthermore, legislative scholars, such as Xanthaki (2024), emphasise that accessible communication directly supports the usability and sustainability of laws across diverse audiences.

3 'Research finds clarity is key to ensuring legislation is implemented', *King's College London News*, 16 August 2024 (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/research-finds-clarity-is-key-to-ensuring-legislation-is-implemented>).

A simple and concise legal act avoids superfluous language and ensures that all new terms are defined and used consistently throughout the text.⁴ Short, active voice phrasing and well-structured articles and paragraphs enhance clarity and reader comprehension (Zakarin n.d.).⁵ Avoiding redundant expressions and preferentially using positive constructions simplifies interpretation and improves legibility. These practices foster efficiency and accessibility, which are crucial principles underscored in both plain-language legal writing and the EU's legislative drafting guidance.

Furthermore, the sentence length – quantified as average words per sentence – can function as a proxy of the so-called syntactic complexity and cognitive load during reading. Readability models, such as the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch–Kincaid, rely heavily on this metric, in combination with the average number of syllables per word. More specifically, the EU's clear-writing guidance explicitly urges authors to maintain an average of approximately twenty words per sentence to preserve clarity and reader comprehension (European Commission & Field 2012). Any (or potential) deviations towards longer sentence structures are recognised as obstacles to clarity and engagement. Therefore, shorter sentences are a hallmark of effective legal drafting.

The number of pages in a legal act, excluding annexes, provides a rough measure of its complexity and information density. Although length alone is not a definitive indicator of quality, excessive length often correlates with structural and cognitive burdens, including greater potential for redundancy and interpretative difficulty (Xanthaki 2014). In line with this, the European Commission's drafting principles stress economy and necessity, advising that legislative texts should be no longer than necessary and tightly scoped in content (European Commission n.d.a). Consequently, shorter and more focused legislative-oriented texts enhance transparency and ease of implementation.

The number of articles in a legal act mainly serves as a proxy for its granularity and normative density. Each article introduces and structures distinct legal obligations, while higher counts often correspond to broader regulatory reach or more complex implementation pathways (Xanthaki

4 'Enhancing legal clarity through conciseness in legal drafting', *Sphere of Law*, 9 November 2024 (https://sphereoflaw.com/conciseness-in-legal-drafting/?utm_).

5 'Clear and active legal writing', *Columbia Law School Writing Center*, n.d. (https://www.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/WC%20Handout%20Clear%20Active%20Legal%20Writing.revised%205.22.pdf?utm_).

2014). The EU's legislative drafting guidance emphasises the importance of organising content into coherent and digestible articles, allowing for clarity and systematic interpretation (European Commission n.d.c; European Parliament 2016). In support of the above, counting all numerically distinct elements, including sub-articles, captures the effective volume of regulatory content for analytical purposes.

As far as the average number of characters per sentence is concerned, it combines indicators of sentence length and word complexity, making it a coarse measure of textual density. Classic readability models, such as the Automated Readability Index (ARI) and the Coleman–Liau Index, use characters per word rather than characters per sentence, thus reflecting the need to separate syntactic structure from lexical complexity (Kincaid et al. 1975; Coleman & Liau 1975). When sentence-level character averages are the only available metric, they should be interpreted cautiously and, when possible, decomposed into more granular indicators – such as words per sentence and characters per word – which offer better diagnostic power (DuBay 2004).

As outlined in the *Joint Practical Guide*, which mandates that identical concepts be expressed using consistent terms to preserve clarity and avoid ambiguity, the consistent use of terminology is a foundational drafting principle of high essence in EU legislation (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and European Commission 2013). As a consequence, any kind of inconsistency in terminology, even minor, can disrupt the internal logic of a document and reduce legal certainty by creating interpretative discrepancies (Aljanati 2017). Recent tools, such as LexDrafter, aim to support legislators by encouraging harmonised legal definitions across documents, thereby reinforcing the importance of terminological consistency for drafting coherence (Chouhan & Gertz 2024).

Another significant aspect of our theoretical framework is the average sentences per paragraph. This concept serves as an important structural quality indicator, particularly for improving 'scannability' and reader engagement. Usability research, especially by the Nielsen Norman Group, shows that long blocks of text significantly reduce readers' ability to scan and retain information effectively (Pernice et al. 2001).

Therefore, breaking content into shorter paragraphs helps users navigate, process, and understand text more efficiently, aligning with best practices for web writing and policy communication.⁶

Finally, commas per sentence serve as an indirect measure of syntactic density, marking embedded structures that elevate the integration cost when reading. As the dependency locality theory posits, longer dependencies increase processing difficulty (Gibson 2000). Thus, higher densities of commas often correlate with harder sentences, even though some commas enhance clarity (Bartek et al. 2011). As such, comma count is best interpreted in conjunction with other readability metrics, such as sentence length, for diagnosing overly complex drafting.

The structure of a law is also a significant element of its understanding. First and foremost, a dedicated opening article that outlines the subject matter and scope helps set clear boundaries and supports reader orientation. Legislative drafting guidelines underscore that such an article should go beyond merely reiterating the title by offering added clarity about the act's coverage. By distinguishing between the subject matter and the specific factual or legal categories, as well as the persons to which the act applies, this opening article helps prevent misinterpretation. This ensures that only intended entities and situations fall within its remit (European Commission Legal Service 2015).

In particular, the EU's legislative drafting principles require that laws being repealed or amended be explicitly named in the title or operative clause of the amending or repealing article, thereby guiding readers through legal changes and upholding clarity (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and European Commission 2013: Guidelines 20–22; European Commission Legal Service 2015). This explicit declaration calls for legal transparency and minimises interpretative ambiguity. Similarly, legislative drafting standards specify that sentences should encapsulate a single idea and logically unite related ideas in digestible subdivisions. This structure supports clarity and retention, ensuring that legal texts are accessible and coherent (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and European Commission 2013: Guideline 4.4; European Commission Legal Service 2015).

6 Goldstein, D. (2015, June 8). 'Scannability: Principle and practice', *UXmatters*, 8 June 2015 (https://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/06/scannability-principle-and-practice.php?utm_).

The rationale and evidence-based approach of the regulation are also key concepts in better regulation and quality lawmaking. The political rationale and strategic coherence of the EU's legal instruments are expected to reflect the Commission's multiannual political priorities, which are grounded in the European Council's strategic agenda for the term 2019–2024. This ensures that legislation is aligned with the overarching political context and institutional direction (European Commission n.d.a).⁷In particular, in EU legislative practice, the title of a legal act must clearly reflect whether the act introduces new normative rules or amends existing ones. The *Joint Practical Guide* designates distinct language, such as 'amending' or 'recasting', to signal amendments in the title, facilitating straightforward identification of the act's nature (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and European Commission 2013; ; European Union 2016). This practice aligns with the broader principles of clarity and transparency in legislative drafting. By embedding priorities – such as green transition, digital strategy, or rule-of-law reinforcement – legal acts reinforce coherence between policymaking and strategic planning cycles.

Every year, the European Commission adopts a work programme that translates its strategic agenda into concrete policy actions (European Commission n.d.a). These work programmes are designed to deliver on the broader political guidelines and priorities of the Commission through focused initiatives.⁸ These legislative acts, which align with the annual priorities, reflect institutional consistency and demonstrate policy delivery that matches the Commission's declared objectives.

The EU's legislative proposals are also mandated to include a robust statement of reasons justifying how the initiative aligns with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. This includes demonstrating that member states cannot sufficiently achieve the objectives, and that the EU can do so more effectively, using qualitative rationale and, where possible, quantitative indicators to substantiate the added EU value (European Parliament 2025). Drafts should weigh the financial and administrative burdens across governance levels, ensuring the initiative remains

7 'A new strategic agenda for the EU 2019–2024', *European Council*, 21 June 2019 (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/eu-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/>).

8 'Commission work programme 2020 – A union that strives for more', *European Commission*, 29 January 2020 (https://www.europeansources.info/record/commission-work-programme-2020-a-union-that-strives-for-more/?utm_).

proportionate (European Parliament 2025: PE 773.579).⁹ The Commission further reinforces this approach by recommending the use of a standardised subsidiarity assessment grid, as part of its better regulation toolbox, to harmonise analyses across institutions (European Commission 2018; European Union 2016; Publications Office of the European Union 2015).

According to the EU's *Better Regulation Guidelines*, IAs must incorporate a structured analysis of subsidiarity and proportionality, often using the standardised 'subsidiarity grid' developed by the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and 'Doing less more efficiently'¹⁰ to assess necessity and EU added value (European Commission 2021a, 2021b; European Commission 2019). The Commission's explanatory memoranda and IAs typically include dedicated sections justifying subsidiarity, providing qualitative reasoning and, where available, quantitative evidence, demonstrating that the action is more effective at the Union level (e.g., staff working document (SWD) sections on subsidiarity in medicines directives, climate law, and waste shipment reviews) (European Commission 2018). Furthermore, the EU's Impact Assessment Board (IAB) includes scrutiny of subsidiarity justifications as part of its quality control process (European Commission 2003).

The IAs are expected to examine whether issues have transnational or cross-border implications that cannot be effectively resolved by member states acting alone. A good illustration of this is an IA for cross-border associations that explicitly identifies challenges arising from cross-border mobility, governance discrepancies, diverse national rules, and administrative burdens – a problem affecting approximately 8% of associations active across member states SWD 2023a European Commission 2017). Such

9 'Principles of EU environmental law: Subsidiarity and proportionality', *ERA-Comm*, n.d. (https://www.era-comm.eu/Introduction_EU_Environmental_Law/EN/module_2/module_2_6.html).

10 The Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently" was established on 14 November 2017 by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to make recommendations on how to better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, identify policy areas that could be re-delegated or returned to the member states, and improve the involvement of regional and local authorities in EU policymaking. The Task Force, which met between January and July 2018, issued a report containing concrete actions for national parliaments, regional and local authorities, the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Commission. On 23 October 2018, the Commission announced the changes it would introduce in its policymaking process following these recommendations. Task force on subsidiarity, proportionality and doing less more efficiently, *European Commission* (https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en)

findings justify EU-level intervention, highlighting the necessity of harmonised rules and procedures to unlock socioeconomic potential and remove fragmentation.

The Commission's integrated impact assessments require a clear definition of the problem, including information on who is affected and the problem's geographic reach, all of which are essential for evaluating whether EU-level action is justified.¹¹ The IA must determine whether the underlying issue has an EU-wide dimension, impacts multiple member states, or is confined to a limited geographic scope, thereby informing decisions on proportionality and subsidiarity.¹²

Under Protocol No. 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon, national parliaments can issue reasoned opinions when they believe a legislative proposal breaches the principle of subsidiarity. This forms part of the early warning mechanism, allowing up to 27 parliaments to participate (European Union 2012b). If one-third of the parliaments submit opinions, a 'yellow card' is triggered, which prompts a review of the proposal (Fabbrini & Granat 2013). Therefore, the number of reasoned opinions acts as a barometer for subsidiarity compliance and inter-parliamentary concern regarding EU overreach.

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly 'co-decision') became the default method for adopting EU legislation, ensuring that the European Parliament and the Council share equal legislative power (Article 294 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [TFEU]).¹³ More specifically, legislative acts adopted under this procedure are suffixed with '(COD)' in their identifier (e.g., 2020/0231(COD)), which signifies full legislative involvement of both institutions. Conversely, under special legislative procedures such as the consultation procedure (CNS), the Parliament's role is limited to providing an opinion, and the Council retains the final decision-making power; such acts are tagged with '(CNS)' (e.g., 2020/0263(CNS)) (EUR-Lex 2009).

11 'Inception impact assessments', Parliamentary question (E005393/2017), *European Parliament*, 30 August 2017 (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-005393_EN.html?utm_).

12 Impact assessments', *European Commission*, 2025 (https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/impact-assessments_en?utm_).

13 'The ordinary legislative procedure', *Council of the European Union*, 6 August 2025. (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/ordinary-legislative-procedure/?utm_).

Under the ordinary legislative procedure (Article 294 (4) TFEU), once the European Parliament adopts its first reading position and communicates it to the Council, the Council may accept it. If the Council approves the Parliament's position, the act is adopted in that exact wording without needing a second reading or further readings in both institutions (European Parliament n.d.c.;). This mechanism favours legislative efficiency and denotes clear interinstitutional consensus.

If the Council rejects the Parliament's first reading and adopts its own position, the proposal returns to the Parliament for a second reading. The Parliament has three options to choose from within a set timeframe: it may approve the Council's position with amendments, thus advancing the text to the next stage; it may propose a new amended text; or, in rare cases, not act, which typically results in the proposal being adopted or failing (depending on procedural rules) (European Parliament n.d.b). These options play a pivotal role in shaping the final legislative outcome and define the extent of interinstitutional negotiation and compromise.

When the Parliament submits amendments to the Council in the second reading, the Council can either approve all of them, leading to the immediate adoption of the act, or decline to accept any amendments. In the latter case, the president of the Council, together with the president of the European Parliament, must convene the Conciliation Committee¹⁴ within six weeks to seek agreement on a joint text. If such an agreement is reached, the text proceeds to a third reading. If not, the legislative act fails (European Parliament n.d.a; European Union 2011; European Commission 2013). Similarly, under the same ordinary legislative procedure (Article 294 TFEU), a Conciliation Committee is convened if the Council does not accept all amendments proposed by the Parliament at the second reading. This mechanism includes representatives from both institutions, in equal numbers, and aims to negotiate a joint text within six weeks; failure to do so ends the procedure without the law being adopted.^{15,16}

14 EUR-Lex. (2024). 'Conciliation committee', Publications Office of the European Union, n.d. (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/conciliation-committee.html>). European Commission. (2003). *Impact assessment internal guidelines and reporting requirements*. (Historic reference to the requirement of attaching IA, including financial implications to legislative proposals).

15 'The ordinary legislative procedure', *Council of the European Union*, 2025. (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/ordinary-legislative-procedure/?utm_).

16 EUR-Lex. (2024). 'Conciliation committee', *Publications Office of the European Union*, n.d. (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/conciliation-committee.html>).

Historically, inception impact assessments (IIAs), sometimes referred to as roadmaps, constituted the initial analytical phase in the EU's better regulation framework, presenting the problem definition, policy objectives, and possible solutions for stakeholder feedback (European Parliament 2017).^{17,18} Since 2021, IIAs, roadmaps, and separate public consultations have been replaced by a unified call for evidence, streamlining early-stage IAs.

Roadmaps, as part of the European Commission's better regulation framework, serve as initial planning tools that summarise the purpose of proposed legislative or non-legislative initiatives, provide background context, and identify possible options and impacts. Historically, these documents were published at the start of policy development to facilitate early public and institutional input (EPRS 2017).¹⁹ As of 2021, traditional roadmaps have been consolidated into a unified 'call for evidence' document, combining their function with that of IIAs to streamline early-stage feedback and enhance transparency (European Commission 2021a).

The European Commission requires an IA for major legislative and policy initiatives to support informed decision-making and ensure proportionality and subsidiarity are respected (European Commission 2021b). In particular, IAs examine problem definitions, policy objectives, options, and expected impacts, including costs and benefits. In line with that, the presence of an IA also indicates that the proposal was subject to quality control by the RSB, which reviews and issues opinions on draft assessments (European Commission 2021b)

According to the EU's *Better Regulation Guidelines*, all IAs must assess the likely economic, social, and environmental impacts of legislative initiatives, including their effects on SMEs and competitiveness (European Commission 2021b). The IA should also identify who is affected and how, assess the territorial distribution of impacts (if relevant), and summarise the consultation strategy and key stakeholder feedback. Thus, if certain impacts are deemed not significant, the IA must explicitly state this, ensuring transparency and supporting quality control by the RSB (European Commission 2021b). These standards align with the EU's commitment to

17 'Inception impact assessment', *Practical Law*, n.d. ([https://content.next.westlaw.com/Glossary/PracticalLaw/I3d1f59a8784111e79bef99c0ee06c731?contextData=\(sc.Default\)&utm_&transitionType=Default](https://content.next.westlaw.com/Glossary/PracticalLaw/I3d1f59a8784111e79bef99c0ee06c731?contextData=(sc.Default)&utm_&transitionType=Default)).

18 'Roadmaps / Inception impact assessments', *European Commission*, n.d. (https://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/index_en.htm?utm_).

19 'Roadmaps / Inception impact assessments', *European Commission*, n.d. (https://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/index_en.htm?utm_).

coherent, inclusive, and proportionate policymaking, as outlined in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union and the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-making. (European Union 2012; European Parliament, Council & European Commission (2016)

Under the European Commission's better regulation framework, major legislative proposals are accompanied not only by general IAs but also by financial statements detailing the expected costs or a specific declaration when there are no financial implications (European Commission 2021a). This alignment with financial reporting and budgetary control processes ensures that both the Commission and EU lawmakers understand and assess the proposal's budgetary implications early in the decision-making process (European Commission 2003; European Commission 2021;).

Similarly, the Commission integrates consultation into the preparatory stages of policy development. Early inputs are solicited through calls for evidence documents, followed by formal public consultations when an IA is prepared (European Commission 2021a). These consultations, via the 'Have Your Say' portal, are essential for collecting diverse perspectives and ensuring inclusive, evidence-based policy formulation (European Commission 2021b).

The aforementioned regulatory framework recommends a standard consultation period of twelve weeks to ensure adequate time for stakeholder participation (European Commission 2021). This duration supports legitimacy, participatory governance, and quality control. Any potential deviations from this standard must be justified, particularly for proposals that may have significant economic, social, or environmental impacts (European Commission 2021a; EPRS 2020).

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) plays an advisory role under Article 304 TFEU, providing opinions that inform the Commission's legislative proposals. Monitoring the time between the closure of EESC proceedings and the adoption of the act provides insight into procedural efficiency and responsiveness (European Union 2012a). Timely integration of EESC advice into legislative outcomes is a marker of good governance and effective consultation practices (European Commission 2021a).

Comitology procedures were formally established under Council Decision 1999/468/EC and reformed under Regulation (EU) No. 182/2011 to enhance transparency and accountability (European Union 2011). Comitology

committees, composed of representatives from each member state and chaired by the Commission, examine drafts of acts and deliver opinions before adoption. They ensure that member states exercise control over the Commission's use of implementing powers, preserving the institutional balance outlined in the EU foundational treaties (Brandsma & Blom-Hansen 2017). Information on committee involvement can be found in the Comitology Register, which publishes agendas, draft acts, and meeting outcomes (European Commission n.d.b).

The number of meetings held on a given proposal reflects the depth of scrutiny and negotiation required before consensus is reached (Brandsma & Blom-Hansen 2017). This metric is valuable in evaluating both the transparency of the comitology process and the degree of intergovernmental engagement in the shaping of secondary EU law (European Commission n.d.b; European Parliament. 2024a). Tracking the interval between proposal and final adoption highlights the efficiency of EU legislative procedures under Article 294 TFEU. Several studies of EU lawmaking have postulated significant variation in legislative duration, shaped by political salience, complexity, and interinstitutional dynamics (Toshkov & Rasmussen 2012). Monitoring this time span provides insight into both procedural efficiency and the institutional balance between the Parliament, the Council, and the Commission (Golub 2007). The European Parliament's Legislative Observatory offers reliable data on these timelines through its 'Key Events' section.²⁰

Per the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, committees other than the one responsible are allowed to issue opinions on legislative proposals (European Parliament 2024b). These opinion-giving committees provide specialised input on aspects within their policy remit and contribute to a more comprehensive review of proposals (Judge & Earnshaw 2008). Their participation reflects inter-committee collaboration and ensures that complex legislative files are considered from multiple perspectives, thus reinforcing deliberative quality in Parliament's legislative role (Kreppel 2002; European Commission 2003).

The European Commission introduced implementation plans as part of its Better Regulation Agenda to improve the practical application of EU law (European Commission 2017). These plans outline how the Commission will support member states in transposing and applying EU law, often

20 'Legislative observatory', *Legislative Observatory*, n.d. (<https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/en>).

including compliance monitoring, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms. They serve as an important governance tool, linking legislation to its operational outcomes and reinforcing trust in EU lawmaking (European Commission 2017; OECD 2018).

Monitoring and evaluation provisions are a central feature of the EU's Better Regulation Agenda, which emphasises systematic review of laws to assess whether objectives are being met effectively and efficiently (European Commission 2017). Sunset clauses or review provisions create legal obligations to revisit legislation after a specified period, enhancing accountability and adaptability (OECD 2018). Scholars have highlighted these clauses as important instruments of dynamic governance, allowing for iterative lawmaking in response to social, economic, and technological changes (Mousmouti 2021).

Lastly, established in 2015, the RSB replaced the Impact Assessment Board and operates independently to scrutinise draft impact assessments, fitness checks, and evaluations before legislative proposals are adopted (European Commission 2017). Its opinions – positive, positive with reservations, or negative – assess the methodological soundness, clarity, and completeness of the evidence (European Commission 2020). By issuing opinions, the RSB strengthens accountability and transparency, ensuring that EU legislation is supported by rigorous policy analysis (OECD 2018).

Under Article 288 TFEU, directives are binding vis-à-vis the result to be achieved but require national transposition within a prescribed timeframe. The transposition deadline is a crucial legal safeguard, ensuring the timely and uniform application of EU law across the Union (European Union 2012a; European Court of Auditors. (2012)). Failure to transpose by the deadline constitutes a breach of EU law and may lead the Commission to launch infringement procedures under Articles 258–260 of the TFEU (Craig & de Búrca 2020). Monitoring the expiry of the deadline thus provides a clear benchmark for assessing member state compliance and legal certainty.

Directives establish binding results for member states but allow flexibility in how they are implemented and transposed (Article 288 TFEU). Monitoring the number of member states that have enacted transposition measures is an important compliance indicator that is tracked a national transposition mechanism. Academic and institutional studies show that delays or partial transposition undermine legal certainty and can distort the level playing

field in the internal market (Craig & de Búrca 2020). By contrast, early adoption of at least one measure signals a proactive approach to aligning national law with EU requirements.

The fundamentals of the lawmaking process in the EU

After the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the EU introduced the ‘ordinary legislative procedure’. This procedure can involve one, two, or three readings before a regulation is adopted, though most cases are settled after the first reading. Another option is the ‘general approach’ considered by the Council, wherein representatives of the member states (Coreper)²¹ may reach an agreement without adopting a binding decision.

The Lisbon Treaty also extended the procedure to 40 new policy areas, including justice, freedom, and security, bringing the total to 85 legal bases where the European Parliament shares equal decision-making powers with the Council. Decision-making relies on qualified majority voting in the Council, combined with joint powers of the Parliament, except in sensitive areas such as taxation, where unanimity is still required.

The Commission plays a central role in planning, drafting, and proposing legislation, guided by its annual work programme. Proposals are preceded by IAs that examine expected effects. Directives are particularly important, since they establish general policies across nearly all EU fields. Some set out broad principles – termed ‘framework directives’ – that aim to balance harmonisation with the flexibility of national systems. Their goal is not to impose uniform rules but to achieve common results among member states.

‘Implementing directives’, by contrast, are rare. They operate within strict limits and serve only to enforce existing legal acts. Implementation measures are typically outlined through regulations or decisions, and such acts generally cannot be appealed in court. In preparing directives, the Commission increasingly relies on strategic foresight reports to design future-proof policies, particularly in areas such as the green transition, digitalisation, geopolitics, and socioeconomic shifts. The outlined long-term global trends such as climate change, digital transformation, pressure on democratic values, demographic change,

21 The Permanent Representatives Committee or Coreper (Article 16[7] of the Treaty on European Union and Article 240[1] of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) is responsible for preparing the work of the Council of the European Union.

and a shifting global order. It stressed that the EU's ability to respond to these trends depended on making ambitious policy choices. (European Commission 2021b; SWD 2023b).

To strengthen its legislative capacity, the Commission has introduced reforms aimed at efficiency. These include reducing regulatory obstacles and administrative burdens, which is a longstanding policy priority. In 2007, the EU pledged to cut business administrative costs by 25% within five years. . A notable case was the consultation on the EU's financial services framework, which fed into the Better Regulation Agenda and the REFIT programme. In response to the financial crisis, the EU adopted over 40 legislative measures covering banks, insurance, and markets. These were all designed to restore stability and consumer confidence. Alongside, impact assessments now receive attention early in the legislative process, with both the European Parliament and the European Council reviewing them, alongside stakeholder feedback collected during consultation periods.

Finally, the Commission has embraced the 'one in, one out' (OIOO) principle to limit new regulatory burdens. Under this rule, any new obligation must be offset by removing an equivalent burden in the same policy field. This approach, inspired by practices in the UK and US, is particularly focused on easing costs for SMEs. The OIOO principle is seen as a key tool in controlling regulatory expansion, with Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič overseeing its implementation in the Commission's better regulation efforts.

Chapter 3. A statistical assessment of EU regulations: Language, length, and fundamental better regulation principles

Since the Maastricht Treaty, EU legislation has expanded by over 700%, with a particularly sharp rise under the von der Leyen Commission, which oversaw a 14% increase in legislative acts despite promises of simplification (Herby 2024). Much of this regulatory growth stems from EU regulations and directives, which now account for more than 60% of rules in force in Denmark. Between 1989 and 2024, the total volume of Danish regulations increased by over 300%, with EU legislation accounting for the majority of that growth. Notably, this surge has not replaced national regulation, suggesting that in the absence of EU-level intervention, domestic lawmakers would likely have filled the gap themselves.

In this chapter, we analyse some key raw data collected from 61 directives issued between 2022 and 2024,²² to capture the current trends in language complexity, length, and adherence to the fundamental better regulation principles of the European Union. Table 1 shows the directives analysed in the study, classified per policy area.²³

22 The complete list of the regulations analysed in this study is presented in the Annexure (See Table 2).

23 We use the classification system used within EU legislation to categorise different policy areas (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/directories/legislation.html?classification=in-force&displayProfile=allRelAllConsDocProfile&root_default=CC_1_CODED%3D03).

Table 1. Directives issued between 2022 and 2024 were analysed in the study, per policy area

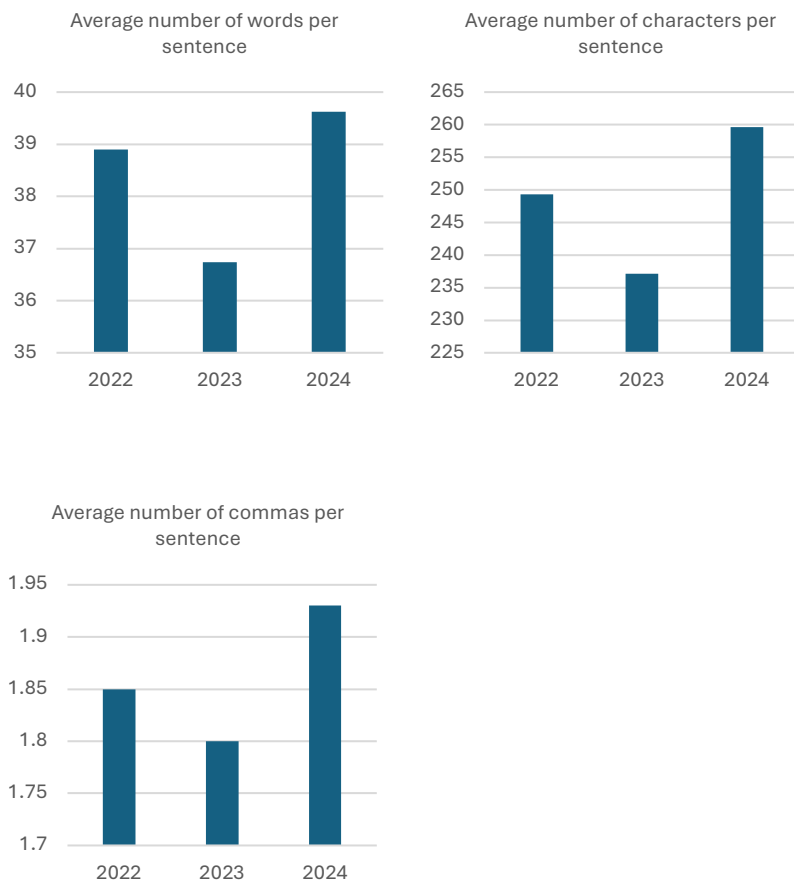
Policy area	2022	2023	2024	Grand total
Agriculture	0	0	1	1
Area of freedom, security and justice	2	3	3	8
Common foreign and security policy	1	0	0	1
Economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital	0	1	0	1
Energy	0	2	1	3
Environment, consumers and health protection	0	3	5	8
Freedom of movement for workers and social policy	4	2	3	9
General, financial and institutional matters	0	0	1	1
Industrial policy and internal market	3	2	2	7
Law relating to undertakings	1	0	1	2
Right of establishment and freedom to provide services	1	0	6	7
Taxation	4	1	0	5
Transport policy	4	3	1	8
Grand total	20	17	24	61

Source: Authors' analysis.

Language metrics

Along with the overall inflation, the regulatory text has become even longer and more complicated. Figure 1a presents some language metrics of EU directives. In 2022, the average sentence contained 38.9 words and 249.35 characters, and 1.85 commas per sentence. The following year, there was a slight reduction in complexity: sentences averaged 36.74 words and 237.12 characters. The number of commas per sentence dropped to 1.80.

By 2024, the metrics shifted again. Sentences became longer, reaching an average of 39.62 words and 259.63 characters. However, the average number of commas per sentence rose to 1.93 – the highest in the three-year period. Overall, across the three years, sentences averaged 38.6 words and 250 characters, with roughly 0.7 sentences per paragraph and 1.9 commas per sentence. These figures suggest a trend toward longer and more complex sentences, while paragraphs remain notably short, often containing just a single sentence.

Figure 1a. Language metrics of EU directives, 2022–2024

Source: Authors' analysis.

A comparison with established guidelines from the UK Plain English Campaign²⁴ reveals that the sentence structure in EU legislative texts is significantly more complex. The Campaign recommends an average sentence length of no more than 20 words to ensure clarity and accessibility in public documents. In contrast, the EU directives data we analysed from 2022 to 2024 shows an average of 38.6 words per sentence, nearly double the recommended maximum. Similarly, the recommended use of shorter, simpler sentences stands in stark contrast to the 250-character average found over the course of three years.

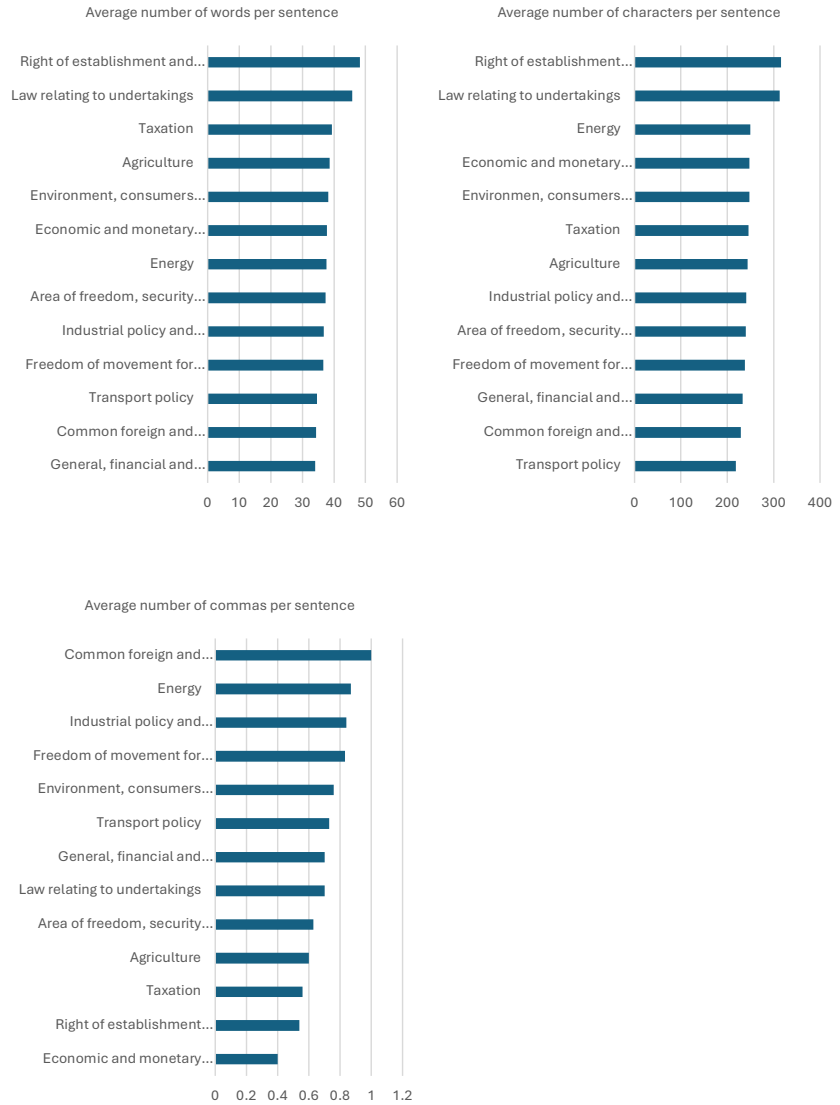
These findings highlight the linguistic density and formal structure typical of EU legislation, which, while legally precise, deviates substantially from the principles of plain language. Considering this complexity and density of EU legislative texts, it is possible to estimate the time required for an average layperson to read and comprehend such material. Assuming the average adult reading speed is around 200–250 words per minute for general, non-technical content, this rate often drops significantly when reading complex legal or regulatory texts, decreasing to approximately 100–150 words per minute due to the need for deeper comprehension (Brysbaert 2019; Carver 1992). Given that many EU directives exceed 30,000 words and feature long, intricate sentences averaging nearly 39 words, a single directive could realistically require four to six hours of focused reading time for a non-expert. This estimate does not consider rereading, note-taking, or interpretation, all of which are typically necessary when engaging with legal language of this complexity. As a result, the practical accessibility of EU legislation remains limited for most citizens, despite its direct legal applicability.

Figure 1b provides a breakdown of sentence complexity across various EU policy areas, measured by the average number of words and characters per sentence, the number of sentences per paragraph, and the number of commas per sentence. The policy areas of ‘law relating to undertakings’ and ‘right of establishment and freedom to provide services’ stand out

24 ‘How to write in plain English’, *Plain English Campaign*, n.d. (https://cdn.website-editor.net/s/08adc49f98924cb8b7dddec4cafb071e/files/uploaded/howto.pdf?Expires=1760025111&Signature=LYcTL8Bslzm2D2Dfz5qu9-veH-KYwQ-jeGn2Fde1aR~V4GaYm2eyRTSSU2eLOyqj9VkdDdpAX~jxX6u6DKfN24S-V9XWArrY~GJGGxK7XGuaSFWpvs8MLmxpWvSYFheB~1Xwt5eA7eNV4qGg-Fy8AnxgGGUp6FJoaMEGkejXxFj00RuQrTJaY3bEmNj4gNhm5d1KPKfrfjKjbsyGIK-WBiVai6E3Q7AlwNGhVBoA98TvetiuvVZIOkM6XhxnWl0G~KmaJGbmQY829JgZ-POnNGRJGu6-QFP49TIQdlwU4dwzSJPTanGa1g1qNskkrA4wAhMo5oTamO1wflLu-tOQNSarwEQ_&Key-Pair-Id=K2NXBXLf010TJWJ).

with the most complex sentence structures, averaging 45.8 and 48.26 words per sentence, and 312.95 and 315.66 characters per sentence, respectively—both well above the overall average of 38.58 words and 249.99 characters. These policy areas also feature high comma usage, suggesting dense sentence construction. Conversely, areas such as ‘common foreign and security policy’ and ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ use noticeably shorter sentences, averaging 34.4 and 34.0 words per sentence, respectively. The ‘economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital’ directives feature one of the lowest sentence-per-paragraph averages (0.4) but the highest number of commas per sentence (2.8), indicating long, complex clauses within single-sentence paragraphs.

Figure 1b. Language metrics of EU directives per policy area, 2022–2024

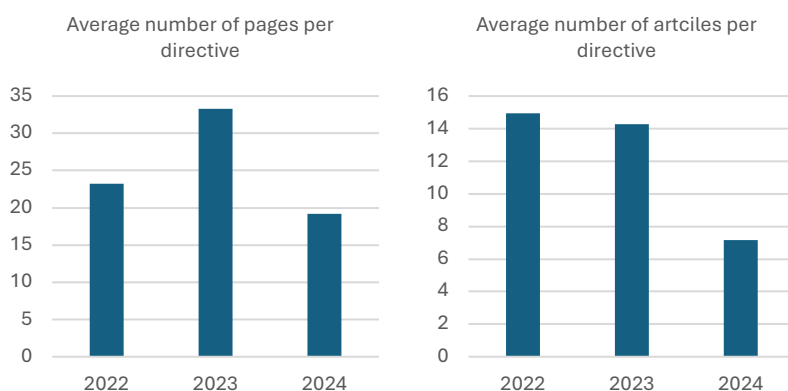


Source: Authors' analysis.

Metrics on length

Figure 2a shows the average length and structure of legal acts, measured by the number of pages (excluding annexes) and the number of articles. In 2022, legal acts averaged 23.25 pages and contained approximately 14.95 articles. This increased significantly in 2023, with an average of 33.29 pages, although the number of articles remained relatively stable at 14.29. In contrast, 2024 saw a sharp decline in both dimensions: acts averaged just 19.17 pages and 7.17 articles – the lowest across the three years. The overall average of 24.4 pages and 11.7 articles per legal act in this period, and the fluctuations suggest variability not only in the scope and structure of legislation but also potentially in the level of legal granularity and complexity year to year.

Figure 2a. Metrics of the length of EU directives, 2022–2024



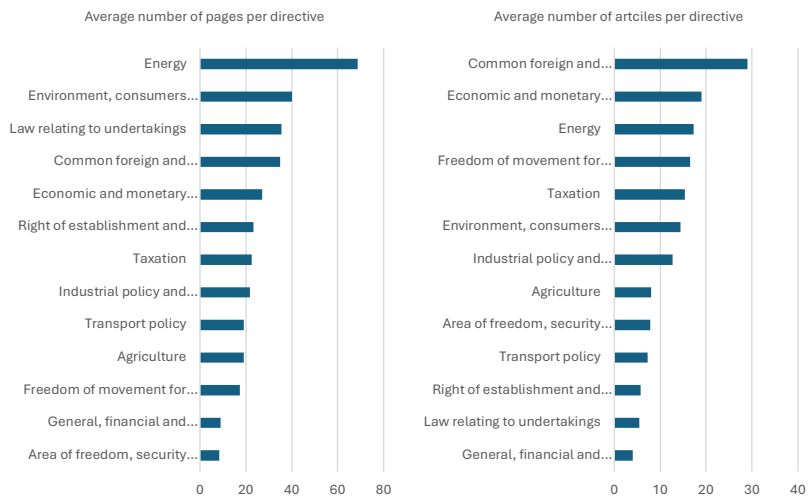
Source: Authors' analysis.

Figure 2b illustrates the variation in the length and structure of legal acts across different policy areas, based on the average number of pages (excluding annexes) and the number of articles. The 'energy' policy area stands out as the most extensive, with acts averaging 68.67 pages and 17.33 articles, followed by 'environment, consumers and health protection' at 40 pages and 14.38 articles. Similarly, the areas of 'common foreign and security policy' and 'economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital' show substantial lengths, with 35–35.5 pages and 29 and 19 articles, respectively. Legislative literature in these areas suggests a high degree of legislative detail and broad regulatory scope. In contrast, the

‘area of freedom, security and justice’ (8.38 pages, 7.88 articles) and ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ (9 pages, 4 articles) had shorter directives pointing to more concise legislative instruments in these fields.

Interestingly, ‘law relating to undertakings’ and ‘right of establishment and freedom to provide services’ show moderate page counts (approximately 23–35 pages) but very few articles (approximately 5–6), suggesting denser articles or broader textual content within each provision.

Figure 2b. Metrics of the length of EU directives per policy area, 2022–2024



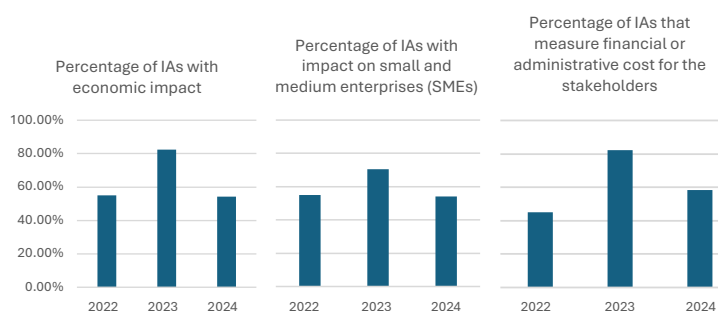
Source: Authors' analysis.

Metrics of impact assessment and consultation

Regarding the two fundamental concepts of better regulation – impact assessment and consultation – EU institutions manage to achieve most of the typical conditions applied. Figure 3a presents data on the inclusion of economic considerations in IAs. In 2022, just over half of IAs (55%) included a description of the economic impact, and a similar share (45%) measured financial or administrative costs for the EU, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators, or citizens. The proportion of IAs addressing these aspects rose sharply in 2023, with 82.35% covering both dimensions, representing the highest level of integration observed

in the three-year period. In 2024, the share of IAs that described economic impacts declined to 54.17%, while 58.33% measured financial or administrative costs – lower than in 2023 but still representing a majority. Across the three years, nearly two-thirds of IAs (62.3%) provided an explicit description of economic impacts, while 60.66% assessed financial or administrative costs. This indicates that, although there is significant year-to-year variation, a clear majority of IAs incorporated some form of economic analysis, with 2023 marking the peak of systematic inclusion.

Figure 3a. Metrics on the inclusion of economic considerations in impact assessments, 2022–2024



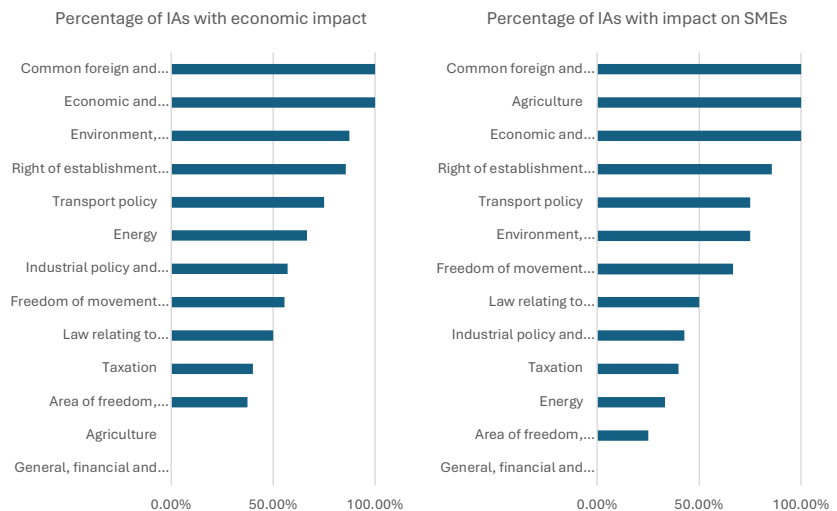
Note: In cases where an assessment was not required because the directive did not relate to economic aspects, we looked for an explicit statement that the impact was not considered significant. Such instances are included in these percentages. Stakeholders are the EU, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators, or citizens.

Source: Authors' analysis.

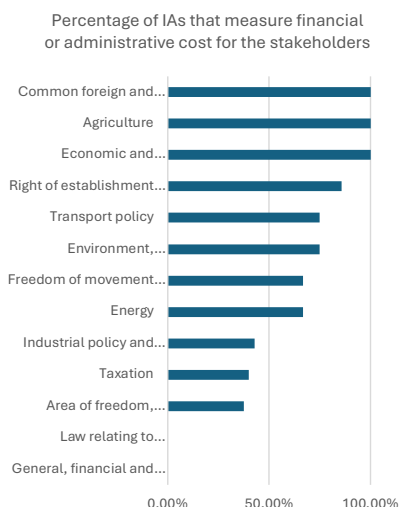
The inclusion of economic considerations in IAs per policy area also reveals high variations (Figure 3b). The highest shares of IAs including an explicit description of the economic impact are found in the 'common foreign and security policy' and 'economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital', where 100% of assessments provided such

information.²⁵ By contrast, in ‘agriculture’ (0%) and ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ (0%), no economic impact descriptions were included. Regarding impact on small and medium-sized enterprises, IAs in ‘agriculture’ and ‘common foreign and security policy’ performed strongly, with 100% including an explicit description of the impact on SMEs. In contrast, ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ included none (0%), while the ‘area of freedom, security and justice’ was also low, with only 25% addressing SMEs. In the ‘financial and administrative costs’ policy area, the most consistent inclusion of financial or administrative cost assessments was again found in ‘agriculture’ and ‘common foreign and security policy’, both at 100%. On the other hand, ‘law relating to undertakings’ (0%) and ‘general, financial and institutional matters’ (0%) included no such measures.

Figure 3b. Metrics on the inclusion of economic considerations in impact assessments per policy area, 2022–2024



²⁵ Percentages per policy area are heavily influenced by the number of directives studied, as presented in Table 1. Outliers, such as 100% or 0%, may indicate that only a single directive was adopted during the period and that it did (or did not) contain the requested element.



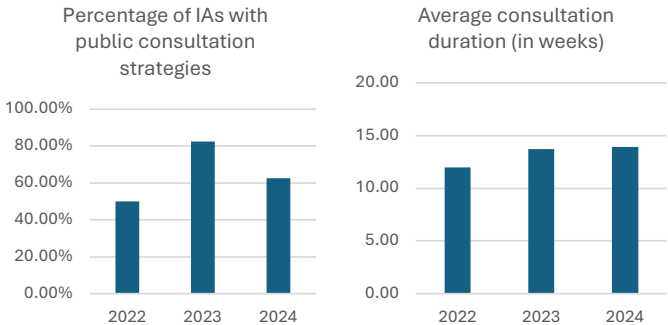
Note: In cases where an assessment was not required because the directive did not relate to economic aspects, we looked for an explicit statement that the impact was not considered significant. Such instances are included in these numerators. Stakeholders are the EU, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators, or citizens.

Source: Authors' analysis.

As a key principle of better regulation, public consultation is extensive but not wide. Figure 4a presents information on the inclusion of public consultation strategies in IAs and the average consultation duration. In 2022, half of the IAs (50%) included a description of the consultation strategy and results, and this share rose substantially to 82.35% in 2023. By 2024, the proportion had declined somewhat but remained above half, with 62.5% of IAs providing such information.

Overall, across the three years, nearly two-thirds of IAs (63.93%) described their consultation approach and outcomes, indicating that this element is more consistently integrated than some other aspects of the IA process. In terms of duration, consultations lasted on average 12 weeks in 2022, increasing to 13.71 weeks in 2023 and 13.93 weeks in 2024. The general trend moves towards both more frequent and slightly longer consultation processes, with an overall average of 13.6 weeks across the period studied.

Figures 4a. Metrics on public consultation process, 2022–2024



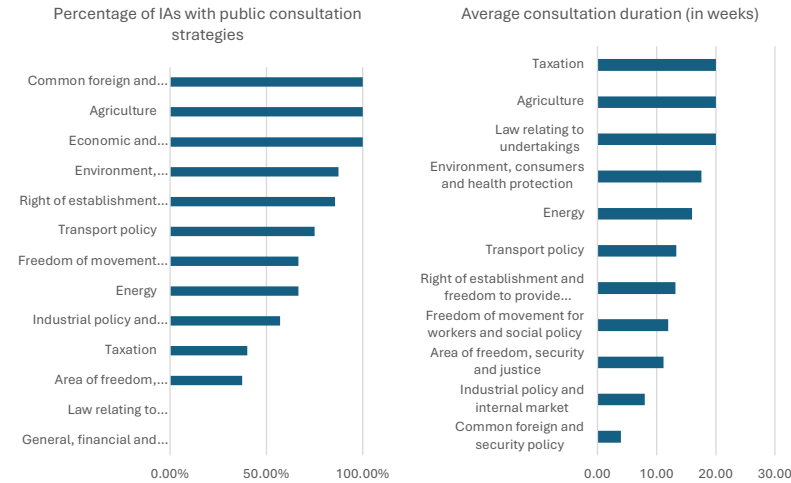
Note: In cases where an assessment was not required because the directive did not relate to economic aspects, we looked for an explicit statement that the impact was not considered significant. Such instances are included in these numerators. Stakeholders are the EU, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators, or citizens.

Source: Authors’ analysis.

Figure 4b provides an overview of consultation strategies across policy areas. The highest levels of inclusion were found in ‘agriculture’, ‘common foreign and security policy’, and ‘economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital’, where 100% of IAs described the consultation strategy and its results. High values were also recorded in ‘environment, consumers and health protection’ (87.5%) and ‘right of establishment and freedom to provide services’ (85.71%). At the other end of the spectrum, consultation strategies were least frequently reported in the ‘area of freedom, security, and justice’ (37.5%) and ‘taxation’ (40%), while ‘general, financial, and institutional matters’ contained none (0%).

In terms of consultation duration, the longest processes were observed in ‘agriculture’, ‘law relating to undertakings’, and ‘taxation’, each averaging 20 weeks, followed by ‘environment, consumers and health protection’ with 17.6 weeks. Consultations were noticeably shorter in the ‘common foreign and security policy’ (4 weeks) and the ‘industrial policy and internal market’ (8 weeks).

Figures 4b. Metrics on public consultation process per policy area, 2022–2024



Source: Authors' analysis.

Chapter 4. Creating a composite index for assessing better regulation principles in EU directives

In the previous chapter, we examined key principles of better regulation, such as the language used in EU legal drafting, the length of legal acts, the content and frequency of impact assessments, and the extent of public consultations. Several other indicators can be measured to assess the overall quality of regulation. However, assessing individual indicators does not provide a unique comprehensive measure of regulatory quality. Although this is a challenging task because of its complex nature, such attempts have already been made in the literature. For instance, the 2021 European Union Regulatory Quality Index provides a comparative framework for assessing regulatory quality across EU member states (Karkatsoulis et al. 2021). The methodology and conceptual foundations were first laid out in the *Regulatory Quality Index: Methodology and Implementation Guide*, which formalised the quantitative approach for evaluating both primary and subordinate legislation (Karkatsoulis et al. 2019). Building on this, Saravakos et al. (2022) propose a process-oriented approach that refined the Index with 48 indicators, focusing on both the form and content of legislative acts to assess the quality of primary legislation in the Greek regulatory framework. Most recently, the *Regulatory Quality Index 2024* (Karkatsoulis et al. 2024) has adapted the framework in Greek, further demonstrating its flexibility and applicability in different national contexts.

In this chapter, we develop a unique and comprehensive measurement of regulatory quality in EU directives from the 2022–2024 period, as presented in Table 1. To do so, we build further on the methodological

framework in Karkatsoulis et al. (2021) based on the conceptual criteria analysed in chapter two. In particular, we collected data and assessed 61 EU directives using 50 indicators that proxy the fundamental concepts of better regulation and the prerequisites of lawmaking processes in the EU. Thereafter, we normalised the data collected into a unique scale and aggregated the scores of each component to a common measurement.²⁶

The structure of the index

Our composite indicator, the EU Regulatory Quality Index (EU-RQI), comprises five components, each reflecting both the principles of regulatory quality identified in the literature and the lawmaking process of the European Parliament. Therefore, it represents a combination of established academic knowledge and the guidelines set by EU official bodies. A brief analysis of each component is provided below. Figure 5 presents a concept tree of the EU-RQI.

1. Quality of the regulatory text: This component measures whether the main message of a directive can be identified easily. It also considers whether unnecessary details on EU procedures and institutional formalities are omitted, since these often appear irrelevant to most readers and reinforce perceptions of excessive bureaucracy. It evaluates if the act is simple and concise in terms of language complexity, its length, whether terms are explained when first introduced, and whether terminology is applied consistently throughout. Simplicity is also supported through short phrases, active voice, and well-structured paragraphs and articles.

2. Initiative: Here, the focus is on whether the regulation reflects the EU's declared priorities. These priorities, set jointly by the European Council and the European Commission, guide policymaking within each five-year legislative cycle and serve as a framework for the institutions' actions.

3. Subsidiarity: This section examines how EU institutions apply the principle of subsidiarity when drafting laws and whether they explain their reasoning. Much of the information collected comes from IAs, which indicate whether the problem has a cross-border dimension and whether local solutions can serve as alternatives. It also examines whether national parliaments have activated the subsidiarity control mechanism.

26 For the methodological note on conceptual and empirical methodological limitations see Annexure.

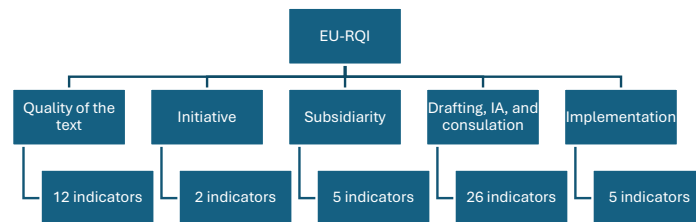
4a. Drafting: This part explores how a proposal moves through negotiations between the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament. Depending on how agreement is reached, a proposal may go through one or several readings.

4b. Impact assessment: This section looks at the quality of the impact assessment accompanying a legislative proposal, including its analysis of economic, social, environmental, competition-related, and SME impacts.

4c. Consultation: Here, the focus is on whether consultations were sought and whether they met established quality standards. The duration of the consultation and the involvement are viewed as essential to gathering evidence and validating information for stronger legislative proposals.

5. Implementation: This component examines whether an implementation plan exists, if sunset clauses are included, whether secondary legislation is required, if deadlines for transposition are respected, and if the opinion of the regulatory scrutiny board has been obtained.

Figure 5. The basic concept tree of the EU-RQI



Source: Author's compilation.

Estimation method

The data collected from the directives covers 50 indicators of the index, which include binary variables (yes/no),²⁷ ordinal variables (Likert-type), and continuous scale variables.²⁸ To make these data comparable across indicators, we applied the min–max normalisation method, using the interquartile range (IQR) to reduce the influence of extreme values and outliers. This approach transformed all variables into a standardised scale ranging from 0 to 1, while maintaining the relative distribution of the original data. Each indicator was then rescaled to a 0–100 scale, where 0 represents the lowest possible alignment with the principles of better regulation and 100 represents full compliance. After normalisation, we computed the score of each component by combining the values of the respective indicators. The final EU-RQI score for each directive was then calculated as the simple average of its five component scores, assigning equal weight to each dimension of regulatory quality.²⁹

27 Because the evaluation of binary indicators relies heavily on unstructured material, we also took steps to ensure consistency between raters. In these indicators we applied Cohen's Kappa reliability coefficient, which measures the degree of agreement among coders assessing the same content. This method ensures that the same concepts are interpreted in the same way across evaluators. To strengthen reliability, two independent coders were used in the process. In a random sample of 40% of the directives, the results showed a Cohen's Kappa coefficient of 0.77, which indicates substantial agreement between the two independent coders.

28 The full list of indicators in each component, along with their rationale, links to the theoretical framework, and details on the measurement and scoring method is provided in the Annexure, Table 3.

29 For the methodological note on statistical robustness and validity see Annexure.

Normalisation

For each indicator i , the raw value x_i was normalised as follows:

$$x_i^* = \frac{x_i - \min(x_i)}{\max(x_i) - \min(x_i)}, \quad 0 \leq x_i^* \leq 1$$

where $\min(x_i)$ and $\max(x_i)$ are calculated within the interquartile range (IQR).

Rescaling

Each normalised indicator was then rescaled to a 0–100 scale:

$$s_i = 100 \times x_i^*$$

with $s_i = 0$ representing the lowest possible alignment with the principles of better regulation and $s_i = 100$ representing full compliance.

Component Scores

For each component c , the score was computed as the arithmetic mean of its n_c indicators:

$$C_c = \frac{1}{n_c} \sum_{i=1}^{n_c} s_i$$

Final EU-RQI Score

The final EU-RQI score for directive d was calculated as the simple average of the five component scores, giving equal weight to each dimension:

$$EU-RQI_d = \frac{1}{5} \sum_{c=1}^5 C_c$$

Results: The EU-RQI scores

Figure 6a presents the EU-RQI scores in total and across each component from 2022 to 2024. In 2022, the overall score averaged 65.4, with strong performance in ‘initiative’ (100) and ‘subsidiarity’ (84.0). The ‘quality of the regulatory text’ component also scored relatively high (64.5), while weaker results were recorded for ‘drafting, impact assessment, consultation’ (43.1) and ‘implementation’ (35.2). In 2023, the overall performance reached its peak, with an average score of 72.6. Again, ‘initiative’ reached the maximum value (100), while ‘subsidiarity’ increased further to 92.9. Notably, ‘drafting, impact assessment, and consultation’ improved significantly to 60.0, and ‘implementation’ also rose to 54.2, both representing clear progress compared to 2022. However, the quality of the regulatory text Component fell to 55.8, suggesting uneven improvements across dimensions. In 2024, the total score receded to 64.2, slightly below 2022 levels. While ‘initiative’ remained at 100, ‘subsidiarity’ declined sharply to 63.3. The ‘quality of the regulatory text’ component received a score of 56.3, similar to the previous year, while ‘drafting, impact assessment, consultation’ (48.5) and ‘implementation’ (52.7) recorded moderate values.

Across the three-year period, the average EU-RQI score was 66.9. The strongest and most consistent performance was observed in 'initiative' (always 100), followed by relatively high scores in 'subsidiarity' (78.4 on average). By contrast, the weakest results were systematically found in 'drafting, impact assessment, consultation' (49.9) and 'implementation' (47.4), indicating persistent challenges in these stages of the regulatory process.

Figure 6a. EU-RQI and component scores for 2022–2024



Source: Authors' analysis.

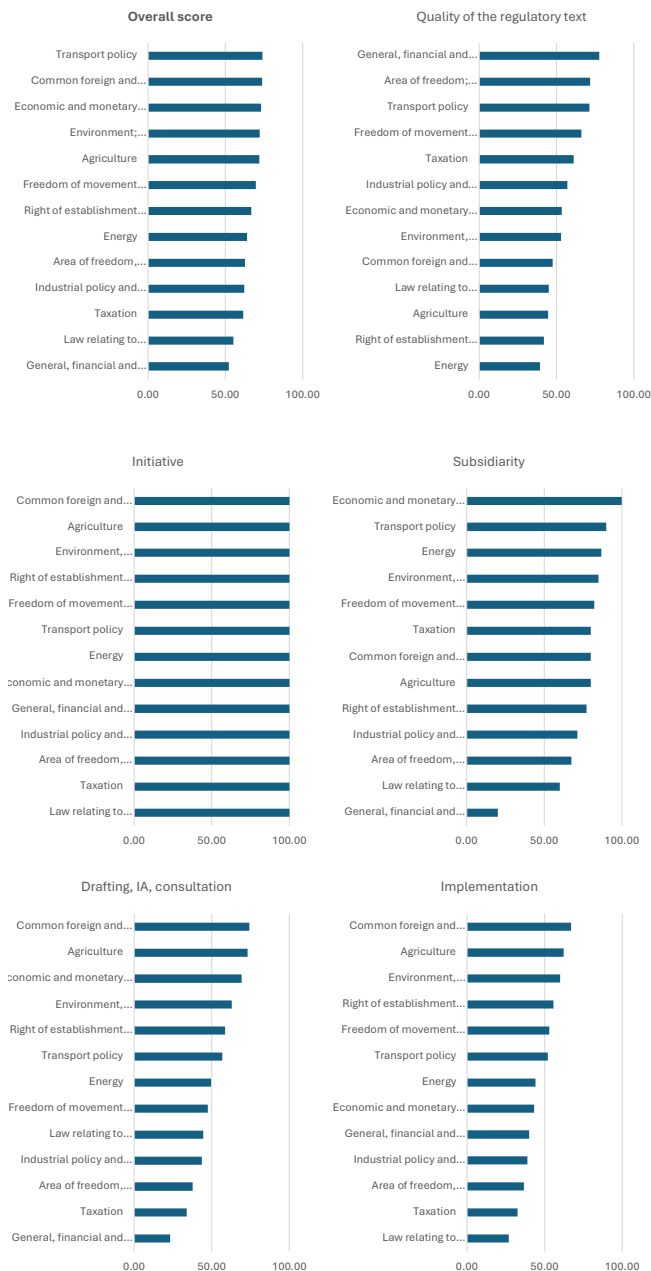
Figure 6b presents the EU-RQI average scores across policy areas, disaggregated by component. The lowest overall performance is observed in 'general, financial and institutional matters', with a total score of 52.2. While the 'quality of the regulatory text' component scored relatively well (77.7), 'subsidiarity' (20.0) and 'drafting, impact assessment, consultation' (23.1) recorded weak results, pulling the overall score down. Similarly, 'law relating to undertakings' performed poorly (55.3 overall), with modest values in 'subsidiarity' (60.0) and 'Drafting, IA, consultation' (44.5) but particularly weak 'implementation' scores (26.9). Intermediate results were found in 'taxation' (61.5) and 'industrial policy and internal market' (62.2). Both areas benefited from strong 'subsidiarity' scores (80.0 and 71.4,

respectively), though they were offset by weak 'drafting' (33.8 and 43.5) and 'implementation' scores (32.6 and 38.9). The 'area of freedom, security and justice' performed similarly with a total score of 62.7, combining a strong 'quality of the regulatory text' (71.8) but low 'implementation' scores (36.6).

Higher scores were achieved in the areas of 'energy' (63.9) and 'right of establishment and freedom to provide services' (66.6). Energy had an excellent 'subsidiarity' score (86.7) but weak 'quality of the regulatory text' (39.4) performance; the 'right of establishment' area showed more balanced performance, particularly in 'drafting' (58.7) and 'implementation' (55.7). 'Freedom of movement for workers and social policy' performed even better (69.8), due to its strong performance in 'subsidiarity' (82.2) and 'implementation' (53.0).

At the top, 'agriculture' (72.0) and 'environment, consumers and health protection' (72.2) stand out, combining high 'subsidiarity' (80.0 and 85.0) and drafting scores (73.1 and 62.9) and an equally high 'implementation' score (62.3 and 60.0). The area of 'economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital' performed similarly (73.1), benefiting from a maximum 'subsidiarity' score (100.0) and solid 'drafting' (69.2), although 'implementation' remained weaker (43.1). Finally, the best-performing areas were 'common foreign and security policy' (73.7) and 'transport policy' (74.0). Both are characterised by excellent 'subsidiarity' scores (80.0 and 90.0, respectively) and strong 'drafting' performance (74.1 and 56.7). 'Implementation' is also robust, particularly in 'common foreign and security policy' (66.9). These results highlight considerable variation across policy domains, with certain fields systematically outperforming others in the EU-RQI assessment.

Figures 6b. EU-RQI and component scores per policy area 2022–2024



Source: Authors' analysis.

A closer look at shortcomings in the drafting, IA, consultation, and implementation components

To understand the shortcomings identified in the previous section, we further analysed the raw data from the indicators to reveal several systemic weaknesses in EU legislative processes. Some of the lowest-performing indicators point to gaps in early planning, transparency, and follow-up.

In the drafting phase, very few legislative files involve a Conciliation Committee between the Council and Parliament (3.3%), which reflects limited recourse to formal interinstitutional negotiations to resolve divergences. Similarly, only 6.6% of Directives include a roadmap, despite its role in outlining problem definitions, objectives, and preliminary options. The absence of roadmaps suggests weak strategic planning and limited transparency at the earliest stage of lawmaking.

With regard to impact assessment, an inception IA was performed in less than half of cases (42.6%), reducing opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the Commission's preparatory thinking. While full IAs are conducted more often (62.3%), important dimensions remain inconsistently addressed. Descriptions of environmental impacts (57.4%), SME impacts (59.0%), competitiveness (60.7%), and financial/administrative costs (60.7%) are all below two-thirds, reflecting uneven application of comprehensive evaluation standards. The weakest element in this category is the consideration of territorial impacts, included in only 36.1% of IAs, despite their importance for understanding cross-border effects and subsidiarity.

In terms of consultation, just over half of proposals (55.7%) involve public consultations prior to adoption, with an average consultation length of 13.6 weeks. While broadly aligned with EU guidelines, this duration suggests a tendency toward the minimum threshold, potentially limiting inclusiveness. Additionally, consultation strategies and results are explicitly reported in only 63.9% of cases, leaving a significant share without transparent documentation of stakeholder input.

Implementation-related indicators highlight further shortcomings. Only 19.7% of legislative drafts include a financial statement, limiting clarity on fiscal consequences. Similarly, just 23.0% of acts are accompanied by an implementation plan, raising concerns about how effectively new laws are translated into practice. Mechanisms to ensure accountability over time are also uneven; while 63.9% of laws contain sunset or evaluation clauses, this leaves a significant share without systematic provisions for review.

Monitoring transposition reveals additional weaknesses, as only 44.3% of directives meet their transposition deadline, and the average number of member states implementing at least one transposition measure is strikingly low at 12.3 out of 27.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This study aimed to capture, primarily using a quantitative approach, the highly complex concept of regulatory quality in EU directives. Although EU institutions have adopted several measures and strategies for better regulation and have managed to meet many procedural requirements, numerous challenges remain.

To begin with, the linguistic inflation described in the preceding chapters reflects a long shift in legal principles and rules from the essential to the incidental. This trend is often interpreted as the inevitable result of increasing complexity. However, earlier attempts to reduce both linguistic and regulatory volume have shown that such growth is anything but inevitable. The simplification achieved in past directives did not create substantial gaps or legal uncertainty. Therefore, continuing and intensifying simplification programmes is strongly recommended.

Constant vigilance continues to be essential for ensuring adherence to the principles of linguistic and regulatory simplicity. This can only be achieved if drafters are upgraded to become active co-producers of regulatory material. Modern tools, including AI, can assist by providing information on the completeness of regulations, but they cannot distinguish the essential from the incidental. This challenge will continue to exist as long as Europeanisation progresses slowly, or worse, if tendencies towards linguistic correctness and isolationism become entrenched, moving in the opposite direction of those supporting European integration.

The scope of European regulatory rules has been, is, and will remain broad in the foreseeable future. A key reason is the ongoing crisis of confidence in European institutions and their legislative bodies. Even if

one accepts that the scope of regulation fluctuates according to policy tensions, the year-to-year variation observed suggests a circumstantial character that contradicts the principles of good regulation. Regulations must respond to economic and social developments, but without compromising coherence and quality. Consequently, the scope of regulation should be determined by a balance between adherence to the principles of good regulation and responsiveness to social realities.

Restoring and strengthening citizens' trust in the EU's legislative bodies, while improving the legitimacy of procedures, is crucial for the Union's future. There is a clear link between the length of legal texts and the effectiveness of public policy; the longer the rules, the lower the level of trust and, in turn, the weaker their implementation. Conversely, shorter and more comprehensible texts foster trust in EU policies and improve compliance.

The economic rationalisation required for cost–benefit analysis, one of the core principles of better regulation, must not become an end in itself. The EU's incorporation of economic rationality into its regulatory policy has been a success of globalised better regulation theory and practice. In certain policy areas shaped by geostrategic pressures and fiscal risks, conducting a thorough IA is not only appropriate but necessary. For this reason, systematic exchanges of views and practices on impact assessment between member states and EU institutions should be promoted. This would help redefine the role of IAs and ensure that they move beyond being a mere formality in the legislative process.

It is also imperative to ensure that economic IAs are applied consistently, not only during drafting but also during implementation. More extensive and detailed analysis of criteria and indicators is needed to evaluate the costs, benefits, and risks of legislation, especially in sensitive areas. Better networking of public policies could improve information quality and enable more accurate cost–benefit determinations.

Consultation plays a dual role of correcting errors and omissions on the one hand and legitimising regulatory rules on the other. Consultation, therefore, remains one of the most important tools for producing good laws. In times of uncertainty and blurred boundaries, both at the EU and national levels, consultation becomes even more vital. Although it is already a feature of EU regulatory practice, much remains to be done to strengthen its role. As a corrective mechanism, consultation should be expanded in both quantity and variety, allowing for the inclusion of diverse views in an

ongoing process. Consultation is not a one-off exercise but a continuous activity aimed at cultivating active citizenship. It lies at the core of democratic traditions, and no better alternative has yet been found. Its legitimising function is equally crucial. In this context, social media can complement traditional methods, broadening participation despite their shortcomings, and should therefore be more systematically utilised.

More than two decades have passed since the Lisbon Strategy and the first Mandelkern Group on Better Regulation report (2001). During this time, better regulation has become embedded in EU policymaking, setting a global standard. While many challenges have arisen, persistent efforts by EU leadership and member states have delivered results that vindicate those who believed better regulation would promote convergence. Although expectations of forging a common European identity through the *acquis*³⁰ have not been fully realised, the broader integration project continues. The Achilles heel of better regulation remains enforcement. Addressing this requires stronger preventive mechanisms alongside reinforcement of existing punitive tools.

The following recommendations can improve regulation in the EU by addressing the challenges and specific gaps identified in this study, focusing on practical, evidence-based policies rather than purely procedural or theoretical measures.

- **Make early planning mandatory (roadmaps and inception IAs):** Request a roadmap for every initiative (only 6.6% had one) and an inception IA (42.6%) to establish the problem, objectives, options, and data needs upfront. Publish the roadmap and the IA at launch to anchor scope, evidence plans, and consultation design. This will strengthen transparency and reduce mid-process drift.
- **Standardise IA coverage and justify omissions (including territorial impacts):** Our study found that a single IA template most frequently covered social (65.6%), economic (62.3%), competitiveness (60.7%), cost (60.7%) environmental (57.4%), SME (59.0%), , territorial impacts

30 The *European Union acquis* refers to the entire body of common rights and obligations forming EU law, which is binding on all Member States. It encompasses all the EU Treaties, secondary legislation, case law of the Court of Justice, policy declarations and resolutions, measures under the common foreign and security policy and justice and home affairs, as well as international agreements concluded by the EU or among Member States. Candidate countries must fully adopt and implement the *acquis* upon accession, with derogations granted only exceptionally and on a limited basis.

(36.1%, the weakest). If any dimension is not significant, demand an explicit statement and evidence. Mandate the RSB to flag missing justifications.

- **Upgrade consultation practices from sufficient to robust:** Increase consultancy frequency from 'often' to 'always' by planning and reporting consultation strategies and results. Retain the standard at ≥ 12 weeks but set longer minimums for complex files and publish raw feedback data sets, along with Commission responses. This will improve legitimacy and the quality of options.
- **Embed fiscal clarity and delivery planning:** Make a financial statement compulsory and require a formal implementation plan for every act. Plans should specify milestones, owners, data sources, and monitoring. This may be paired with sunset and evaluation clauses to ensure ex-post checks happen on schedule.
- **Tighten transposition discipline and feedback loops:** Strengthen enforcement, given that only 44.3% met deadlines, and the average is 12.3 out of 27 member states with at least one measure. Use public dashboards, early pre-deadline planning with MS, and automatic follow-ups/infringement escalations tied to missed milestones to protect uniform application.
- **Reduce linguistic complexity to enhance compliance and trust:** Establish drafting targets (e.g., ≤ 25 words per sentence, compared to the current average of 38.6), discourage single-sentence paragraphs, and limit the use of nested clauses. Provide editorial support and checklists in interservice consultations. Clearer texts reduce interpretation costs and help implementation actors deliver on time.

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Appendix

Methodological note on conceptual and empirical methodological limitations

It should be noted that similar to all composite indicators, our EU Regulatory Quality Index (EU-RQI) also faces certain conceptual and empirical methodological limitations (Nardo et al 2005). In theory, the construction of such indices has been widely criticised for the risk of oversimplifying complex, multidimensional concepts into a single number, for the arbitrariness of indicator selection and weighting, and for the sensitivity of results to normalisation techniques. In practice, our approach faces similar challenges. The decision to use equal weights across the five components may overlook the possibility that some dimensions of regulatory quality carry greater importance than others. While min–max normalisation within the interquartile range helps reduce the effect of outliers, it can still influence the distribution of scores and exaggerate variation at the extremes. Reliability is strengthened through intercoder checks on binary indicators, yet the reliance on human judgement means that coder bias cannot be entirely excluded, even with a Cohen's Kappa of 0.77 (substantial agreement). Similarly, although the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.857 indicates strong internal consistency, it does not guarantee conceptual validity as some indicators may correlate statistically but capture different underlying aspects of regulation. Finally, the results show that while components such as initiative remain constant across all cases, others including drafting, impact assessment, consultation (mean 49.9, SD 23.9), and implementation (mean 47.4, SD 23.1) display wide dispersion. This uneven distribution raises the question of whether the composite score masks important heterogeneity across policy areas. These limitations are common to most composite indicators but must be kept in mind when interpreting the EU-RQI as both a measurement tool and a comparative benchmark.

Methodological note on statistical robustness and validity

The composite indicator demonstrates strong statistical robustness and validity. To assess the internal consistency of the composite indicator, a Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the full set of 50 underlying indicators. The resulting coefficient was $\alpha = 0.857$, which is well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for exploratory research (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994), and even exceeds the stricter 0.80 benchmark often used in applied social science. Collinearity diagnostics from the regression of the total score against the five components show acceptable tolerance levels (minimum 0.239) and variance inflation factors (maximum 4.19), indicating that while some predictors are interrelated, multicollinearity does not threaten the stability of the model. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.94) suggests that residuals are independent, with no serious autocorrelation. Residuals are tightly centred around zero (mean = 0.000, SD = 0.0099, range -0.0196 to 0.0223), confirming that the model fits the data exceptionally well without systematic bias. The predicted values span a wide and interpretable range (42.6 to 83.3), with a mean of 66.9 and a standard deviation of 11.4, closely reflecting the distribution of the total scores. Moreover, Pearson correlations between the total score and individual components are consistently high (0.82–0.89), supporting strong internal validity and coherence of the index. The total score ranges from 42.6 to 83.3, with a mean of 66.9 and a standard deviation of 11.4, suggesting a moderate spread across cases. The predicted values closely match this distribution (mean = 66.9, SD = 11.4), while the residuals are extremely small (mean = 0.000, SD = 0.0099), demonstrating that the composite index reproduces the observed scores with almost perfect precision. Among the components, initiative is constant (mean = 100, SD = 0), reflecting its full compliance across all observations. Other dimensions display substantial variability: quality of the regulatory text ranges from 22.2 to 98.2 (mean = 58.9, SD = 18.0). Subsidiarity scores are generally high (mean = 78.4) but vary widely between 20.0 and 100.0. Drafting, impact assessment, and consultation (mean = 49.9, SD = 23.9) and implementation (mean = 47.4, SD = 23.1) are lower on average and show considerable dispersion, pointing to uneven performance across cases. The statistical analysis of the validity and robustness of the composite indicator is provided in the Annexure, tables 4 and 5.

Table 2. List of Directives analysed in the study

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2024/3101	27/11/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/3101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 amending Directive 2005/35/EC as regards ship-source pollution and on the introduction of administrative penalties for infringements (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/3017	27/11/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/3017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 amending Directive 2009/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector and repealing Commission Regulation (EU) No 1286/2011 (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/2881	20/11/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast)
2024/2994	45630	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2994 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 amending Directives 2009/65/EC 2013/36/EU and (EU) 2019/2034 as regards the treatment of concentration risk arising from exposures towards central counterparties and of counterparty risk in centrally cleared derivative transactions (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/2749	45515	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2749 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2024 amending Directives 2000/14/EC 2006/42/EC 2010/35/EU 2014/29/EU 2014/30/EU 2014/33/EU 2014/34/EU 2014/35/EU 2014/53/EU and 2014/68/EU as regards emergency procedures for the conformity assessment, presumption of conformity, adoption of common specifications and market surveillance due to an internal market emergency (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/2811	14/11/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2811 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Directive 2014/65/EU to make public capital markets in the Union more attractive for companies and to facilitate access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises and repealing Directive 2001/34/EC (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/2839	45393	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Directive 2014/62/EU as regards certain reporting requirements
2024/2808	45484	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/2839 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Directives 1999/2/EC 2000/14/EC 2011/24/EU and 2014/53/EU as regards certain reporting requirements in the fields of food and food ingredients, outdoor noise, patients' rights, and radio equipment (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/1712	24/06/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims
2024/1725	15/07/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 amending Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste (Text with EEA relevance)

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2024/1619	19/06/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1619 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2024 amending Directive 2013/36/EU as regards supervisory powers, sanctions, third-country branches, and environmental, social and governance risks (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/1654	19/06/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1654 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2024 amending Directive (EU) 2019/1153 as regards access by competent authorities to centralised bank account registries through the interconnection system and technical measures to facilitate the use of transaction records
2024/1306	45509	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1306 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2024 amending Directive 2013/34/EU as regards the time limits for the adoption of sustainability reporting standards for certain sectors and for certain third-country undertakings (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/1265	30/04/2024	2024	Council Directive (EU) 2024/1265 of 29 April 2024 amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States
2024/927	26/03/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/927 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2024 amending Directives 2011/61/EU and 2009/65/EC as regards delegation arrangements, liquidity risk management, supervisory reporting, the provision of depositary and custody services and loan origination by alternative investment funds (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/1174	22/04/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1174 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 amending Directive 2014/59/EU and Regulation (EU) No 806/2014 as regards certain aspects of the minimum requirement for own funds and eligible liabilities (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/884	19/03/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/884 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2024 amending Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/869	19/03/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/869 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2024 amending Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 98/24/EC as regards the limit values for lead and its inorganic compounds and for diisocyanates
2024/790	45507	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2024 amending Directive 2014/65/EU on markets in financial instruments (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/825	45446	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/825 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2024 amending Directives 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU as regards empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and through better information (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/1711	26/06/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1711 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001 and (EU) 2019/944 as regards improving the Union's electricity market design (Text with EEA relevance)
2024/505	45628	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/505 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 February 2024 amending Directive 2005/36/EC as regards the recognition of professional qualifications of nurses responsible for general care trained in Romania (Text with EEA relevance)

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2024/1438	24/05/2024	2024	Directive (EU) 2024/1438 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Council Directives 2001/110/EC relating to honey 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption 2001/113/EC relating to fruit jams, jellies and marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée intended for human consumption, and 2001/114/EC relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption
2024/1499	29/05/2024	2024	Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC
2023/1791	20/09/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast) (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/2225	30/10/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2225 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on credit agreements for consumers and repealing Directive 2008/48/EC
2023/977	22/05/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/977 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of Member States and repealing Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA
2023/1544	28/07/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/1544 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 laying down harmonised rules on the designation of designated establishments and the appointment of legal representatives for the purpose of gathering electronic evidence in criminal proceedings
2023/970	17/05/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/2843	27/12/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2843 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2023 amending Directives 2011/99/EU and 2014/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directive 2003/8/EC and Council Framework Decisions 2002/584/JHA 2003/577/JHA 2005/214/JHA 2006/783/JHA 2008/909/JHA 2008/947/JHA 2009/829/JHA and 2009/948/JHA, as regards digitalisation of judicial cooperation
2023/2668	30/11/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2668 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work
2023/2864	20/12/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2023 amending certain Directives as regards the establishment and functioning of the European single access point (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/2661	30/11/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2661 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2010/40/EU on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport (Text with EEA relevance)

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2023/2673	28/11/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2673 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Directive 2011/83/EU as regards financial services contracts concluded at a distance and repealing Directive 2002/65/EC (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/2226	24/10/2023	2023	Council Directive (EU) 2023/2226 of 17 October 2023 amending Directive 2011/16/EU on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation
2023/2413	31/10/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652
2023/2123	45240	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/2123 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 October 2023 amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data
2023/959	16/05/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/959 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 amending Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Union and Decision (EU) 2015/1814 concerning the establishment and operation of a market stability reserve for the Union greenhouse gas emission trading system (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/175	27/01/2023	2023	Commission Directive (EU) 2023/175 of 26 January 2023 amending Directive 2009/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards 2-methylloxolane (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/958	16/05/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/958 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 amending Directive 2003/87/EC as regards aviation's contribution to the Union's economy-wide emission reduction target and the appropriate implementation of a global market-based measure (Text with EEA relevance)
2023/946	15/05/2023	2023	Directive (EU) 2023/946 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 amending Directive 2003/25/EC as regards the inclusion of improved stability requirements and the alignment of that Directive with the stability requirements defined by the International Maritime Organization (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/2561	23/12/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers (codification) (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/2041	25/10/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union
2022/2381	44754	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/993	27/06/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/993 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2022 on the minimum level of training of seafarers (codification) (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/1999	24/10/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road (codification) (Text with EEA relevance)

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2022/2523	22/12/2022	2022	Council Directive (EU) 2022/2523 of 14 December 2022 on ensuring a global minimum level of taxation for multinational enterprise groups and large-scale domestic groups in the Union
2022/2556	27/12/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2556 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Directives 2009/65/EC 2009/138/EC 2011/61/EU 2013/36/EU 2014/59/EU 2014/65/EU, (EU) 2015/2366 and (EU) 2016/2341 as regards digital operational resilience for the financial sector (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/2380	44754	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2380 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 amending Directive 2014/53/EU on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/2464	16/12/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/738	16/05/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/738 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 amending Directive 2006/1/EC on the use of vehicles hired without drivers for the carriage of goods by road (Text with EEA relevance)
2022/890	44779	2022	Council Directive (EU) 2022/890 of 3 June 2022 amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards the extension of the application period of the optional reverse charge mechanism in relation to supplies of certain goods and services susceptible to fraud and of the Quick Reaction Mechanism against VAT fraud
2022/542	44716	2022	Council Directive (EU) 2022/542 of 5 April 2022 amending Directives 2006/112/EC and (EU) 2020/285 as regards rates of value added tax
2022/543	44716	2022	Council Directive (EU) 2022/543 of 5 April 2022 amending Directives 2008/118/EC and (EU) 2020/262 as regards tax-free shops situated in the French terminal of the Channel Tunnel
2022/362	44654	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/362 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 February 2022 amending Directives 1999/62/EC, 1999/37/EC and (EU) 2019/520, as regards the charging of vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures
2022/431	16/03/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/431 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2022 amending Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work
2022/211	18/02/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/211 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2022 amending Council Framework Decision 2002/465/JHA, as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data
2022/228	21/02/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/228 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2022 amending Directive 2014/41/EU, as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data
2022/642	20/04/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/642 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 April 2022 amending Directives 2001/20/EC and 2001/83/EC as regards derogations from certain obligations concerning certain medicinal products for human use made available in the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland and in Cyprus, Ireland and Malta (Text with EEA relevance)

Regulation No	Date of publication	Year	Title
2022/2557	27/12/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC
2022/2555	27/12/2022	2022	Directive (EU) 2022/2555 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, amending Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 and Directive (EU) 2018/1972, and repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (NIS 2 Directive) (Text with EEA relevance)

Table 3. List of variables included in the composite indicator EU-RQI

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
The quality of the regulatory text	Is the legal act clearly written and unambiguous?	The clarity of legal acts is a fundamental component of better regulation, ensuring that legal texts are understandable, precise, and free from ambiguity. A clearly written directive should convey its essential message with minimal cognitive effort, eliminate redundant procedural detail, and guide the reader logically through well-structured content, aided by informative headings and cohesive language. Clarity improves not only compliance and implementation but also trust in governance, especially in supranational entities like the EU. Simplifying legal language and avoiding bureaucratic jargon is essential to making legal texts accessible to a broader audience, as widely advocated in the literature on legal drafting and better regulation.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Mousmouti, 2012; Vannoni & Osnabrugge, 2024; Xanthaki, 2024; European Parliament et al., n.d.
The quality of the regulatory text	Is the legal act simple and concise (avoiding unnecessary elements)?	A simple and concise legal act eliminates superfluous words and expressions while ensuring every new term is clearly defined and consistently used. Employing short phrases, active voice, and logically structured articles and paragraphs enhances readability. By cutting redundancy and favouring positive form over convoluted constructions, the directive becomes more direct, accessible, and easier to implement.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Sphere of Law, 2024; Columbia Law School, n.d.; Legal Writing Simplified, n.d.
The quality of the regulatory text	What is the average number of words per sentence?	Average words per sentence measure the syntactic load of a document—longer sentences typically pack more clauses, making them harder to process. Reducing sentence length enhances readability and clarity. EU clearwriting guidance frequently recommends keeping sentences to around 20 words on average to maintain accessibility and ease of comprehension.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	European Commission, n.d.; European Court of Auditors, 2012;
The quality of the regulatory text	How many pages does the legal act cover (without annexes)?	Page length, excluding annexes, serves as a basic but informative proxy for legal density and potential complexity. While not inherently problematic, longer acts often contain more provisions, definitions, and cross-references that may burden comprehension. A shorter main body often aligns with clarity, especially when supported by clear structure and precise language.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Xanthaki, 2014; European Commission, n.d.

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
The quality of the regulatory text	How many articles have the act?	Counting the total number of articles in a legal act provides a concrete indicator of its structural complexity. Each article typically introduces a distinct regulatory provision or concept, so a higher article count may suggest more granular legal obligations or wider regulatory scope. Counting sub-articles like 1a, 1b, and 1c individually reflects the real density of the normative framework.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Xanthaki, 2014; European Commission, n.d.
The quality of the regulatory text	What is the average number of characters per sentence?	Average characters per sentence is a blended metric reflecting both sentence length and word complexity, but it lacks precision in isolating either dimension. While it can serve as a rough proxy for syntactic and lexical load, it is less informative than tracking words per sentence and letters per word separately. Nevertheless, higher values may indicate denser, more difficult text, and can serve as a directional indicator of complexity.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Kincaid et al., 1975; Coleman & Liao, 1975; DuBay, 2004
The quality of the regulatory text	Are identical concepts expressed in the same terms?	Consistent terminology is essential in legal acts to uphold internal coherence and clarity. When identical concepts are expressed using different terms, it can confuse readers and undermine the text's logical structure. Consistency helps maintain interpretive clarity, especially in complex, multi-actor drafting environments like those of the EU, where reuse of text is common.	Ordinal (1-5)	1=0, 2=0,25, 3=0,5, 4=0,75, 5=1	European Parliament et al., 2013; Pachon Aljanati, 2017; Chouhan & Gertz, 2024
The quality of the regulatory text	What is the average number of sentences per paragraph?	Average sentences per paragraph (SPP) reflects how readability and scannability are structured within the text. Shorter paragraphs—comprising fewer sentences—enhance scannability, helping readers locate key ideas quickly and maintain focus. Dense, lengthy paragraphs can deter attention and hinder comprehension, particularly in policy documents or legal texts intended for broader audiences.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Goldstein, 2015
The quality of the regulatory text	What it's the average number of commas per sentence?	Commas per sentence provide a practical proxy for clause-stacking—each comma often marks a grammatical insertion such as non-restrictive clauses or appositives, increasing memory and integration load for the reader. While more commas can signal richer structure, they may also indicate more cognitively demanding prose. Used alongside words per sentence, comma density can help identify overly embedded or complex prose.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Gibson, 2000; Bartek et al., 2011

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
The quality of the regulatory text	Is there an article included in the law that defines the subject matter and scope of the act?	An opening article defining the subject matter and scope of a legal act ensures early clarity regarding what the act addresses and to whom it applies. A well-crafted scope article offers information beyond the title—providing essential context upfront and helping readers understand the act's reach without misinterpretation.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Parliament et al., n.d.; Joint Practical Guide, Guideline 13
The quality of the regulatory text	Are obsolete acts and provisions expressly repealed in the act under examination?	Explicitly listing repealed or amended acts in a legal act's repealing or amending article ensures transparency and clarity. Such precision helps readers understand the legal landscape and prevents confusion about which provisions are no longer in force, reinforcing legal certainty and coherence.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Joint Practical Guide, Guidelines 20–22
The quality of the regulatory text	Do sentences express just one idea and do articles group together ideas with a logical link between them?	Effective drafting requires each sentence to convey a single idea, while articles should group related ideas under a logical structure. This approach promotes clear reasoning, prevents cognitive overload, and enhances reader comprehension by avoiding dense and jarring text blocks.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Joint Practical Guide, Guidelines 4,4
Initiative	Does the EU law respond to a priority of the Commission's multiannual plan?	EU legislation should align with the strategic priorities established in the Commission's multiannual plan—derived from the European Council's five-year strategic agenda—to ensure coherence and political relevance. When a legal act reflects those priorities, it demonstrates that policymaking is structured and purpose-driven, reinforcing legitimacy and strategic consistency.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Council, 2019; European Commission, n.d.

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Initiative	Which priority of the Commission's multiannual plan does the EU law respond to? (drop down menu with priorities currently applicable)	The current (2019-2024) strategic agenda of the European Commission is comprised from the following 4 priorities: 1. Protecting citizens and freedoms Effective control of the EU's external borders and further developing a comprehensive migration policy. Fighting against terrorism, cross-border and online crime, increasing the EU's resilience against both natural and man-made disasters. 2. Developing a strong and vibrant economic base Building a resilient economy by deepening the Economic and Monetary Union, completing the banking and capital markets union, strengthening the international role of the euro, investing in skills and education, supporting Europe's businesses, embracing the digital transformation, and developing a robust industrial policy. 3. Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe Investing in green initiatives that improve air and water quality, promote sustainable agriculture and preserve environmental systems and biodiversity. Creating an effective circular economy and a well-functioning EU energy market that provides sustainable, secure and affordable energy. A faster transition to renewables and energy efficiency, while reducing the EU's dependency on outside energy sources. Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. 4. Promoting European interests and values on the global stage Building a robust foreign policy with an ambitious neighbourhood policy and a comprehensive partnership with Africa. Promoting global peace, stability, democracy and human rights. Pursuing robust trade in line with multilateralism and the global rules-based international order. Taking greater responsibility for security and defence, while cooperating closely with NATO. 5. None. The researcher shall choose the applicable option for each directive.	Drop down menu	Not assessed	
Initiative	Does the EU law respond to a priority of the Commission's annual work program?	Legislation aligned with the Commission's annual work program demonstrates policy coherence and responsiveness. Each year, the EU Commission sets targeted priorities that operationalize broader strategic agendas. Ensuring correspondence with those annual priorities helps verify that the law is timely, focused, and serves the defined political goals for that year.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, n.d.; European Commission, 2018–2020 communications

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Initiative	Does the law under examination propose a major new law or is it an evaluation/ amendment of an existing law?	The title of an EU legal act serves as a primary cue for its nature: whether it establishes a major new legal framework or amends existing legislation. Since titles in EU drafting conventions explicitly indicate when an act is an amendment, they should be used to categorize the act reliably. This clarity ensures accurate classification and avoids misinterpretation.	Drop down menu	Not assessed	Joint Practical Guide, points 18.9–18.10
Initiative	The Commission proposed the law - On its own initiative - Responding to an invitation from the European Council - Responding to an invitation from the Council of the European Union - Responding to an invitation from the European Parliament - Responding to an invitation from citizens (following a successful European Citizens' Initiative) - Responding to an invitation from the European Central Bank - Responding to an invitation from the Court of Justice	Given the Commission's near-monopoly over legislative initiative, most laws originate from its own proposals. However, other EU bodies—including the Council, European Parliament, citizens (via citizens' initiatives), and European Council—can invite the Commission to submit proposals. Identifying the correct initiator ensures accurate mapping of institutional dynamics and political context.	Drop down menu	Not assessed	European Commission, n.d.; Treaty on EU, Article 17(2); European Parliamentary Research Service, 2025; European Commission (citizens' initiative), n.d.
Subsidiarity	Is there a detailed statement with qualitative and, where possible, quantitative indicators allowing an appraisal of whether the action can best be achieved at EU level?	An explicit and detailed statement explaining how and why EU-level action is more effective—supported by qualitative and, where feasible, quantitative evidence—anchors compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Such clarity ensures transparency in distinguishing what truly merits Union intervention and what does not.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Parliament, 2025; ERA Environmental Law guide; Commission Task Force 2018
Subsidiarity	Does the impact assessment contain an adequate justification regarding conformity with the principle of subsidiarity?	A robust impact assessment (IA) should explicitly demonstrate why EU-level action is necessary according to the principle of subsidiarity. This justification must explain why objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States alone and how EU intervention offers added value. Such clarity ensures transparency and accountability in decision-making.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; Task Force follow-up, 2019; Examples: SWD on medicines, climate law, waste shipment; IA guidelines & IAB system

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Subsidiarity	Are there significant/ appreciable transnational/ crossborder aspects to the problems being tackled?	Identifying crossborder or transnational issues in the impact assessment ensures that the EU's unique role in addressing shared problems is justified. These aspects—such as differences in regulation across borders or administrative barriers—highlight the necessity for coordinated EU-level solutions and demonstrate added value beyond what Member States can deliver individually.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	SWD supporting Associations Regulation IA (crossborder associations), n.d.
Subsidiarity	Is the problem tackled by the law widespread across the EU or limited to a few Member States?	Mapping whether a problem affects the entire EU or only a few Member States helps determine the appropriateness of EU-level action. A widespread issue across multiple Member States justifies Union intervention, while localized problems may be better managed at the national level. This distinction is critical for assessing legitimacy and proportionality.	Binary (Widespread, Limited)	Yes=1, No=0	European Parliament, 2017; European Commission, 2025
Subsidiarity	How many national parliaments enacted the subsidiarity control mechanism for the legislative proposal?	The number of national parliaments that activate the subsidiarity control mechanism reflects the perceived compliance of a legislative proposal with the subsidiarity principle. If several parliaments issue reasoned opinions, it suggests concerns about whether the proposed action is better handled at the national level. Tracking this number is key to understanding the depth of political and institutional scrutiny from Member States.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better	European Union, 2012; Fabbrini & Granat, 2013
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has the law been adopted through: 1) the ordinary legislative procedure (COD), or 2) a special legislative procedure (Consultation, CNS)?	Identifying whether a law was adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure (COD) or a special procedure (CNS) reveals the balance of institutional involvement—especially the role of the European Parliament. COD indicates equal legislative input from the Parliament and the Council, while CNS typically grants the Parliament a consultative role only, pointing to different power dynamics in lawmaking.	Drop down menu	Not assessed	Article 294 TFEU; coding (COD); special procedure (CNS)
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Did the Council adopt the Parliament's first reading position?	Confirming whether the Council adopted the Parliament's first reading position indicates how smoothly and cooperatively the legislative process progressed. When the Council approves the Parliament's first reading text, it signifies immediate agreement and removes the need for further readings, streamlining legislative decision-making.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Article 294(4) TFEU; Europarl (on Council approving EP first reading)

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	If the Council did not adopt the Parliament's first reading position and sent its own first reading position to the Parliament:	This indicator helps determine how the European Parliament responded when the Council issued its own first reading position. It shows whether the Parliament accepted the Council's text with amendments (signaling compromise), proposed a new text (indicating substantial disagreement), or did not engage further (e.g., N/A). Understanding this dynamic reveals the legislative trajectory and the extent of consensus—or conflict—between EU institutions.	Drop down menu	If the Parliament approve the Council's position with amendment=1, If the Parliament proposes a new text, it scores=0	Article 294 TFEU; Parliament can approve Council's position with amendments, propose new text, or not act
	Did the Parliament approve the Council's position with amendment?				
	Did the Parliament propose a new text?				
Drafting, IA, Consultation	N/A				
	In the case that the Parliament proposed amendments to the Council's position, did the Council approve the amendments proposed by the Parliament?	This indicator assesses whether the Council accepted the European Parliament's proposed amendments during the second reading. If the Council approves all amendments, the act is adopted immediately. If not, it triggers the conciliation phase, where both institutions, with the Commission, work to reconcile differences. This step is critical for gauging legislative agreement and the necessity of deeper negotiation.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Article 294 TFEU; Council approves all of Parliament's amendments → act adopted; otherwise, conciliation committee convened
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Had a Conciliation Committee between the Council and the Parliament convened?	The convening of a Conciliation Committee indicates that the Council did not accept all the European Parliament's amendments at second reading, triggering interinstitutional negotiation to resolve divergences. Whether or not the committee is convened reflects the degree of agreement and complexity in the legislative process—and signals whether formal conciliation is required to reach consensus.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	Consilium, 2025; EURLex glossary, 2024
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has an inception Impact Assessment (IA) been carried out?	An inception impact assessment offers an early and transparent introduction to the Commission's preparatory thinking. It outlines initial analyses of the problem, objectives, policy options, and potential impacts—signaling whether the initiative is being grounded in evidence. Having such a document supports accountability and stakeholder engagement from the outset.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, n.d.; Practical Law definition (Historically IIAs, now replaced) European Commission European Parliament Westlaw
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has a roadmap been carried out?	A roadmap sets out the initial policy context for EU action, outlining the problem definition, objectives, and preliminary policy options. Its presence indicates that the legislative initiative has undergone early-stage strategic planning and public transparency. Roadmaps are essential for guiding stakeholder consultation and framing the scope of future analysis.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, n.d.; European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2017

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has an Impact Assessment (IA) been carried out?	An impact assessment is a cornerstone of evidence-based policymaking in the EU. It evaluates the necessity, expected effects, and potential trade-offs of legislative proposals. When an IA is carried out, it shows that the proposal is grounded in systematic analysis, helping to anticipate economic, social, and environmental outcomes and ensuring transparency in legislative development.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the environmental impact and an explicit statement if it is not considered significant?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2016
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the social impact and an explicit statement if it is not considered significant?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2017
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the economic impact and an explicit statement if it is not considered significant?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2018

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the impact on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and an explicit statement if it is not considered significant?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2019
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the impact on competitiveness and an explicit statement if it is not considered significant?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2020
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of who will be affected by the initiative and how?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2021
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA include a description of the consultation strategy and the results obtained from it?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2022

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the IA consider territorial impacts of the law?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2023
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the impact assessment contain an adequate justification regarding the proportionality of the proposal?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2024
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Does the Impact Assessment measure financial or administrative cost for the EU, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators or citizens?	A comprehensive Impact Assessment should include clear evaluations of how a legislative initiative will affect the environment, economy, society, SMEs, competitiveness, and specific stakeholders. It should also assess territorial impacts and summarize the consultation process and results. When any such impact is not expected to be significant, this should be explicitly stated. Including these dimensions enhances transparency, supports evidence-based decision-making, and ensures that the law aligns with the principles of proportionality and informed governance.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020; Interinstitutional Agreement, 2025
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Is there a financial statement attached to the draft law by the Commission?	A financial statement—sometimes referred to as a budgetary or financial implications table—dedicates attention to the fiscal consequences of a proposed law. Its presence ensures transparency regarding expected costs, budgetary impacts, or financial obligations. Without it, decision-makers and stakeholders lack critical information needed to assess affordability, fiscal alignment, and resource allocation.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021; Internal Commission IA policy, 2003

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has there been a consultation before proposing the act?	Conducting a consultation prior to proposing legislation ensures stakeholder engagement and enriches the evidence base for policymaking. This step allows the Commission to gather input from citizens, businesses, experts, and public authorities, enhancing legitimacy, transparency, and the overall quality of the legislative initiative.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2021
Drafting, IA, Consultation	How long did the consultation last? (weeks)	The duration of the consultation period is a key measure of procedural transparency and inclusiveness in EU lawmaking. Sufficient consultation time allows a broad range of stakeholders to review proposals, prepare feedback, and participate meaningfully in shaping legislation. A consultation that is too short may compromise the quality and representativeness of input.	Scale (Min-Max)	The higher the better (within IQR)	European Commission, 2021; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020
Drafting, IA, Consultation	How much time (months) has passed since the closure of the economic and Social Committee the Commission adopted the act?	Measuring the time elapsed between the European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) opinion and the Commission's adoption of a legislative act reflects how promptly the Commission moves from consultation to decision-making. A shorter interval may indicate efficiency, while a longer one may suggest delays or extended deliberation.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	European Union, 2012; European Commission, 2021
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Was a comitology committee involved in the law making process?	Comitology committees play a crucial role in the EU's system of delegated and implementing acts by ensuring Member State oversight of the Commission's rule-making powers. Their involvement demonstrates how national administrations contribute to the shaping of detailed implementing provisions. Tracking whether such a committee was engaged provides insight into the level of technical scrutiny and intergovernmental control in the legislative process.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Union, 2011; Brandsma & Blom-Hansen, 2017; European Commission, n.d.
Drafting, IA, Consultation	How many meetings of the comitology committee took place regarding the proposal?	The frequency of comitology committee meetings provides a measure of the intensity of Member State involvement and the level of technical or political sensitivity surrounding a draft implementing act. A higher number of meetings suggests greater complexity or controversy, while fewer meetings may indicate consensus or routine adoption.	Scale (Min-Max)	The higher the better (within IQR)	European Union, 2011; Brandsma & Blom-Hansen, 2017; European Commission, n.d.
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has the economic and Social Committee given an opinion on the proposed act?	The researcher can find the committee's report at the legislative observatory of the Parliament, in the documentation gateway, under the title "Other Institutions"	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Drafting, IA, Consultation	How much time (months) has passed since the publication of the legislative proposal and the final publication at the Official Journal?	The time elapsed between the publication of a legislative proposal and its final publication in the Official Journal provides a measure of the legislative process's speed and efficiency. Shorter durations suggest rapid political agreement, while longer periods may reflect negotiation difficulties, institutional disagreement, or complex technical scrutiny.	Scale (Min-Max)	The lower the better (within IQR)	Toshkov & Rasmussen, 2012; Golub, 2007; European Parliament, n.d.
Drafting, IA, Consultation	Has any other committee of the Parliament, apart from the Committee responsible for the proposed act, given an opinion on the proposal?	The involvement of additional committees in giving opinions on a legislative proposal indicates the proposal's cross-cutting relevance and complexity. It shows that multiple policy domains or legal issues are affected, and that broader expertise from within the Parliament has been mobilized to enrich the legislative process.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Parliament, 2024; Judge & Earnshaw, 2008; Kreppel, 2002
Implementation	Is there an implementation plan accompanying the law?	An implementation plan provides guidance on how a law will be applied in practice, outlining key milestones, responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms. Its presence enhances transparency and accountability, ensuring that adopted legislation is effectively translated into practice and achieves its intended objectives.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2017; OECD, 2018
Implementation	Are there any sunset clauses (monitoring and evaluation provisions) in the law?	Sunset clauses, monitoring requirements, and evaluation provisions ensure that legislation remains relevant, effective, and proportionate over time. By requiring a review or expiry unless renewed, such mechanisms provide flexibility, allow for policy learning, and safeguard against outdated or ineffective rules remaining indefinitely in force.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2017; OECD, 2018; Mousmouti, 2021
Implementation	Is there an opinion of the EU regulatory scrutiny Board on the specific EU law?	The Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) is an independent body within the European Commission that reviews the quality of impact assessments and major evaluations. Its opinion is an important quality check, ensuring that legislative proposals are evidence-based, proportionate, and aligned with the principles of better regulation. The presence of an RSB opinion signals compliance with EU standards for robust policymaking.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=1, No=0	European Commission, 2017; European Commission, 2020; EPRS, 2020; OECD, 2018
Implementation	Has the transposition deadline expired (in the case of a directive)?	Directives require Member States to transpose their provisions into national law by a set deadline. Checking whether this deadline has expired is essential for monitoring compliance and implementation. If the deadline has passed, Member States are legally obliged to have completed transposition; failure to do so may trigger infringement proceedings.	Binary (Yes, No)	Yes=0, No=1	European Union, 2012; Craig & de Búrca, 2020

Component	Variable name	Rationale	Measurement	Scoring	References
Implementation	If the law under examination is a directive, how many members states have implemented at least one transposition measure?	The number of Member States that have adopted at least one transposition measure shows the extent of progress toward implementing the directive across the EU. Even partial transposition signals early compliance efforts, while absence of measures highlights delays that may undermine legal certainty and the uniform application of EU law.	Scale (Min-Max)	The higher the better (within IQR)	European Union, 2012; Craig & de Búrca, 2020

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the composite indicator

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The quality of the regulatory text	61	22.2	98.2	58.8754	18.02267
2. Initiative	61	100	100	100	0
3. Subsidiarity	61	20	100	78.3607	22.88961
4. Drafting, Impact Assessment, Consultation	61	7.7	78.5	49.9459	23.85818
5. Implementation	61	0	81.5	47.3787	23.13713
Total Score	61	42.62	83.34	66.9118	11.40985
Unstandardized Predicted Value	61	42.62267	83.34291	66.9118033	11.40984491
Unstandardized Residual	61	-0.01956	0.02227	0	0.00987293
Valid N (listwise)	61				

Table 5. Selected metrics of robustness and validity of the composite indicator

Indicators	Values
Standard Error of the Estimate	0.01022
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.941
Cronbach's Alpha	0.857
R Square	1
Adjusted R Square	1
ANOVA F-test (Sig.)	<0.001
VIF (max)	4.19
Tolerance (min)	0.239
Minimum Predicted Value	42.6227
Maximum Predicted Value	83.3429
Mean Predicted Value	66.9118
Predicted Value Std. Deviation	11.40984
Residual Minimum	-0.01956
Residual Maximum	0.02227
Residual Std. Deviation	0.00987
Number of Observations (N)	61
Pearson Correlation between Total and Components	High (0.82–0.89 across components)

