

Revision of the European Works Councils Directive

Impact assessment (SWD(2024) 10 final, SWD(2024) 11 (summary), SWD(2024) 9 (subsidiarity grid))
accompanying a Commission proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on
amending Directive 2009/38/EC as regards the establishment and functioning of European Works Councils
and the effective enforcement of transnational information and consultation rights

This briefing provides an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's [impact assessment](#) (IA) accompanying the above-mentioned proposal ([COM\(2024\) 14](#)), submitted on 24 January 2024 and referred to the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. The proposal amends the existing [Directive 2009/38/EC](#) and aims to strengthen the role of European Works Councils (EWCs) by facilitating their creation, promoting meaningful consultation processes and ensuring that they have the capacity needed to carry out their work. This revision also aims to improve the gender balance of EWCs.

In 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution through an own-initiative procedure (INI) on [democracy at work](#),¹ and in 2023, its legislative initiative resolution (INL) on a [revision of the European Works Councils Directive](#) aimed to strengthen the role of EWCs while taking into account the different industrial relations systems in Member States.² In the legislative resolution, Parliament asked the Commission to propose an ambitious revision of the EWC Directive. This proposal is part of the 2024 [Commission work programme](#) under the headline of 'An economy that works for people' and follows the political commitment expressed in President von der Leyen's [political guidelines](#) to respond to Parliament's legislative initiatives based on [Article 225](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) with a legislative proposal (IA, p. 2).³

Problem definition

EWCs are transnational information and consultation bodies established in Union-scale undertakings.⁴ EWCs are not created automatically, but upon request by at least 100 employees or their representatives from two different countries of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA), or at the initiative of the employer (IA, p. 3). They are designed to ensure that workers receive meaningful information and have dialogue with central management on EU-level decisions that could affect their working and/or employment conditions. While EWCs can issue non-binding opinions on management's proposed measures on transnational matters, their competence and scope of action is distinct from national representative bodies.

The 2018 [evaluation](#) of the directive⁵ confirmed the added value of EWCs in ensuring and organising transnational social dialogue in multinational companies, but it also identified several shortcomings: the creation rate of new EWCs was considered to be low;⁶ the consultation of EWCs was found to be sometimes ineffective; EWCs faced obstacles in access to courts in some Member States; there was a lack of effective remedies and effective and dissuasive sanctions in some Member States⁷ (IA, p. 4).

The IA identifies one problem (IA, pp. 4-9): **suboptimal effectiveness of the framework for informing and consulting employees at transnational level**. The IA refers to the evaluation's



findings on the lack of a genuine and meaningful dialogue on transnational matters, with questions not properly answered by management, as well as uncertainty over whether a matter is transnational, and whether the EWC needs to be informed and consulted. In addition, the 2018 evaluation concluded that there is uncertainty regarding the process for setting up an EWC, coverage of its expenses, access to justice and effective remedies when rights under the directive are infringed (IA, pp. 5-7 and Annex 2). The IA points out that the views of key stakeholders on the problem are polarised regarding the perception of obstacles and the revisions needed to the framework. However, both employee representatives and managers consider that EWCs are useful, but to a different degree (Annex 2). The IA argues that the scale of the problem cannot be defined in objective terms due to the functioning of transnational information and the fact that consultation depends on variables specific to each undertaking (IA, p. 5).

The consequences of the shortcomings in the effectiveness of the existing EWC framework differ between affected employees and affected companies. For affected employees, the IA argues that the problem reduces their involvement and limits the social dialogue in the company, which can lead to lower employment levels, a less motivated workforce and suboptimal working conditions. For affected companies, the unused potential of EWCs may lead to higher indirect costs of implementing measures in cases of corporate restructuring, loss of business due to a risk of delays to decision-making and implementation of decisions, fines for non-compliance with information and consultation requirements, and reputational risk as a result of a dispute (IA, p. 8). In addition, the IA mentions that the unused potential of EWCs could also affect companies linked to Union-scale undertakings in the value chain and the regional economic systems that depend on them (IA, p. 9 and Annex 10). The IA also mentions that, given the transnational nature of EWCs, their effects propagate across borders (IA, p. 9 and Annex 4).

The IA identifies **four problem drivers** (IA, pp. 9-19 and Annexes 4, 8 and 9):

- 1 'Workers of certain Union-scale undertakings do not have the same minimum rights regarding establishment and operation of EWCs.' The reason for this is that the directive excludes from its scope undertakings with voluntary agreements or Article 14 EWC agreements (IA, p. 10);
- 2 'Not sufficiently efficient and effective setting-up of EWCs and gender imbalance';
- 3 'Obstacles to the effective operation of EWCs';
- 4 'Shortcomings in enforcing the directive'.

Overall, the IA sufficiently substantiates the need for a revision of Directive 2009/38/EC and provides a problem definition with a clear problem tree that illustrates how the drivers relate to the problem and the consequences for different stakeholders (IA, p. 9). However, more evidence could have been provided on what has worked and what has not, and what will change under the initiative.

Subsidiarity/proportionality

The appropriate legal basis for a revision of the directive is [Article 153\(1\)\(e\)](#) TFEU in conjunction with [Article 153\(2\)\(b\)](#) TFEU⁸ (IA, p. 19). The IA sufficiently explains the necessity for and the added value of EU action. The EU-level initiative is needed because:

- only an EU initiative can set common rules on information and consultation of workers at transnational level within the EU (IA, p. 20);
- common minimum requirements at EU level remain necessary to improve workers' rights to information and consultation at transnational level across all Member States (IA, p. 20).

Due to the cross-border nature of the undertakings, individual Member States cannot address the shortcomings of the current framework in a coherent and effective manner. Therefore, the specific EU added value lies in the establishment of minimum standards, below which Member States cannot compete on the single market (IA, pp. 20-21).

The IA provides a [subsidiarity grid](#), following the recommendation of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, using the indications and template provided in tools #5 and #11 of the [Better Regulation Toolbox](#).

Proportionality is discussed in section 3 of the subsidiarity grid and in the comparison of policy options as to their proportionality in relation to the baseline. The IA states that the preferred option offers the best balance between taking robust measures, reinforcing the framework for social dialogue in companies while minimising the burden and costs for undertakings to avoid a negative impact on competitiveness.

The referral letter was transmitted to [national parliaments](#) and the deadline to express concerns related to subsidiarity is 16 April 2024.

Objectives of the initiative

The IA defines one general objective and four specific objectives (SOs), which are briefly outlined. The general objective is to **improve the effectiveness of the framework for informing and consulting employees at transnational level** (IA, p. 21); this is consistent with the aims and principles of the current directive.⁹ The four SOs are rather general in nature:

- 1 **Avoid** unjustified **differences** in workers' minimum information and consultation rights at transnational level (IA, p. 21);
- 2 Ensure efficient and effective **setting-up of EWCs** by preventing delays in the setting-up of EWCs, ensuring appropriate resourcing of Special Negotiating Bodies (SNBs) and improving **gender balance** on EWCs and SNBs (IA, p. 21);
- 3 Ensure appropriate **resourcing of EWCs and an effective process** for informing and consulting them by improving legal certainty of key concepts and strengthening genuine exchange of views between EWCs and central management on transnational matters (IA, p. 21);
- 4 Promote more effective **enforcement of the directive**, including through access to justice for employee representatives, SNBs and EWCs, and effective, dissuasive and proportionate sanctions (IA, p. 21).

The IA presents an intervention logic with an overview of the general objective, the SOs, the policy options and their links with the problem drivers (IA, p. 25).

The IA presents the SOs articulated in 11 operational objectives in Annex 13, which also describes monitoring indicators to measure the success of the initiative. According to the S.M.A.R.T. criteria, the objectives ought to be specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Despite no timeline being provided, the objectives seem to meet these criteria (IA, pp. 21-25; Annex 3).

Range of options considered

The IA includes a **no-policy change scenario** that serves as a baseline for assessing and comparing the policy options. This baseline is based on a timeframe of 10 years to take into account the effects of the amendments to the directive.¹⁰ The IA considers that, in the absence of additional policy measures on EWCs, the **suboptimal effectiveness** of the framework for informing and consulting employees at transnational level would remain, as it is unlikely that Member States would address that deficit if they are not required to do so by a new EU initiative (IA, pp. 22-23; Annex 12).

The IA presents **10 policy options with accompanying measures** linked to the SOs and problem drivers (IA, pp. 25-32). It also explains the discarded policy measures and the reasons for discarding them (IA, p. 32; Annex 11).

Overall, the IA describes the policy measures and policy options sufficiently, in a balanced manner, and includes an intervention logic (IA, p. 25) and stakeholders' views in each policy area (IA, pp. 26-32). However, the policy options of each SO and the combination of legislative and non-legislative measures are cumulative, and their relevance is not clearly justifiable for some policy alternatives.

Table 1 – Policy options assessed for each specific objective

Specific objective	Policy option		
SO1: To avoid unjustified differences in workers' minimum information and consultation rights at transnational level	1a. End the exemptions under Article 14 after a transitional period, enabling workers in undertakings with pre-existing 'voluntary agreements' to request the establishment of an EWC.		
SO2: To ensure efficient and effective setting-up of EWCs	2a. (low intervention): Interpretative guidance on effective setting-up of EWCs.	2b. (medium intervention): Clarify resourcing of SNBs to cover reasonable legal costs.	2c. (max intervention): 2b + gender balance objectives (40 % target) to be negotiated into new and revised EWC agreements.
SO3: To ensure the appropriate resourcing of EWCs and an effective process for informing and consulting them	3a. (low intervention): Interpretative guidance on an effective consultation procedure, including the interpretation of the concept of 'transnational matters', and on the appropriate resourcing of EWCs.	3b. (medium intervention): - Clarify concept of transnational matters without significantly broadening it; - management to provide reasoned response to EWC opinions before adopting a decision on transnational matters; - clarify resourcing of EWCs as regards legal costs, access costs, and costs of access to expertise, among other things; - clarify that central management may declare information confidential only in the legitimate interest of the undertaking, and the obligation to inform employees' representatives upon request of the grounds for confidentiality/non-disclosure; - subsidiarity requirements of at least two plenary meetings/year.	3c. (max intervention): 3b, except for the respective first measure of 3b and 3c, which are alternatives, and: - expand the concept of transnational matters and require management to justify that a matter is not transnational; - provide for a general right to assistance of EWCs by experts of their choice; - exempt information-sharing with national/local employee representatives from confidentiality restrictions and dispensation of mandatory requirement of prior judicial authorisation if management wants to withhold information.
SO4: To promote more effective enforcement of Directive 2009/38/EC	4a. (low intervention): Commission recommendation on effective sanctions and access to courts.	4b. (high intervention): - Obligation on Member States to notify Commission how access to justice and effective remedies are ensured; - when providing for fines to sanction violation of EWC rights, Member States must take into account company turnover.	4c. (max intervention): 4b+ - sanctions to include financial penalties up to 4 % of net worldwide turnover; - suspension of management decisions taken in violation of the information and consultation obligation.

Data source: IA, pp. 24-32.

The combination of options **1a**, **2c**, **3b** and **4b** is the preferred policy option. In terms of accompanying measures, the IA proposes the following combinations of policy options:

- 1 Combination of options **2b** and **2c**, with the clarification that an SNB is to be set up and its first meeting convened within six months (IA, pp. 25-27).

- 2 Combination of options **3b** and **3c**, with the clarification of existing provisions on the format of the meetings, training and expertise for SNB and EWC members (IA, p. 25, pp. 27-30).
- 3 Combination of options **4b** and **4c** laying down Member States' obligation to ensure effective access to courts for EWCs and SNBs, including actions against abuse of confidentiality, and laying down the obligation on Member States to provide for effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions (IA, p. 25, pp. 30-32).

Assessment of impacts

The IA assesses the main expected economic and social impacts of all policy options (IA, pp. 33-43) and considers the costs and benefits of Union-scale undertakings, the impacts on competitiveness, the benefits for employees, and the impacts on fundamental rights (policy options 2, 3 and 4), on consumer prices and on Member States. The IA takes into account the EEA in the assessment of impacts and refers mainly to the metal, services, chemical, building, food, agriculture and tourism sectors, as undertakings with EWCs are primarily concentrated in these sectors; their headquarters are also mainly located in seven Member States – Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Slovenia. Nevertheless, the impacts of certain policy measures can vary depending on which national law is applicable to an EWC. Annex 12 of the IA provides details of other impacts with less relevant or foreseeable effects (IA, pp. 161-218).

The IA considers **economic impacts** in all policy options and provides some estimations of the costs for undertakings (IA, pp. 35-37; Annex 12), but brings very limited evidence of the benefits for undertakings. Option **2c** seems to contribute positively to the quality of EWCs' non-binding opinions, and to management decisions on transnational matters (IA, pp. 35-36). Options 3b and 3c could lead to indirect recurrent costs related to delayed decision-making, while option **3b** is expected to increase legal certainty and promote trusting relationships between the parties, which could increase the benefits of EWCs compared to the baseline (IA, pp. 37-39). Policy options 4b and 4c could create significant enforcement costs (IA, pp. 41-42).

The IA considers that there is no firm evidence of significant direct impacts on the **internal market**. However, the increased gender balance under option **2c** could contribute to delivering positive impacts such as higher levels of employment and productivity, but the IA does not quantify these benefits (IA, p. 36).

Impacts on **consumer prices** are unlikely for all policy options, even for option 4c. **Member States** are expected to incur some additional adjudication costs under option 3c due to the novelty of the procedures (IA, p. 39).

When assessing **social impacts**, the IA discusses the quality of social dialogue. It found that options 2b and 2c could bring positive impacts for employees, but, due to the non-binding nature of the measures, the benefits would be limited. In addition, option **2c** would ensure a better gender balance and could improve the quality of social dialogue, with indirect positive impacts on working conditions and employment. Nevertheless, the IA does not quantify these effects. All options under policy area 3 seem to bring positive impacts. However, the non-binding status of option 3a would make them uneven, while under options **3b** and **3c** the benefits would be moderate (IA, pp. 36-40). Finally, option **4b** is expected to significantly improve the implementation of the directive, and thus social dialogue on transnational matters; the IA estimates that the improved access to justice would cover 4.3 million employees (IA, p. 43).

The IA assesses the impact on **fundamental rights** as positive. Policy options under policy area 2 would improve employees' rights to information and consultation within the undertaking, and would indirectly bring benefits regarding the right to an effective remedy and equality between women and men (IA, p. 37). Policy options under policy area 3 would promote an employee's right to information and consultation within the undertaking and would indirectly also bring the right to

an effective remedy (IA, pp. 39-40). Policy options under policy area 4 are expected to promote the fundamental rights to an effective remedy and to inform and consult to a limited extent (IA, p. 43).

This initiative will not have foreseeable impacts on the **environment**.

The IA also assesses and compares, using indicators, the policy options against the Better Regulation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and proportionality.¹¹ It applies a multi-criteria analysis and finds the combination of options **1a**, **2c**, **3b** and **4b**, with their respective accompanying measures, to be the most appropriate policy option for this initiative. These policy options combined are expected to mutually reinforce each other and create synergies; this combination also ensures internal and external coherence with the directive (IA, pp. 50-51). In qualitative terms, the expected effects are: facilitation of access to justice, strengthening of social benefits, improvement of the process for setting up and operating EWCs, reduction in the risk of disputes, and limitation of the potential enforcement costs, among other things (IA, pp. 51-52).

The IA presents a summary of costs (quantified) and benefits (not quantified) of the preferred option in Annex 3 (IA, pp. 82-90).

SMEs/Competitiveness

The IA explains that this initiative will not have relevant impacts on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) because the thresholds set out in the directive under the definition of 'Community-scale undertakings' do not apply to SMEs.

The IA provides a **competitiveness check** in Annex 5 that assesses the four competitiveness dimensions in line with the [Appendix to the Better Regulation Toolbox](#). The impact of this initiative on cost and price competitiveness, internal competitiveness and capacity to innovate are found to be insignificant (IA, p. 129).

The IA argues that the costs of the preferred option – the combination of options **1a**, **2c**, **3b** and **4b** – are expected to be negligible for undertakings, as they account for less than 0.001 % of their average global annual turnover (IA, pp. 129-131), and explains that no negative impacts on competitiveness of the preferred policy combination have been identified (IA, p. 131).

Simplification and other regulatory implications

The IA argues that this REFIT initiative takes into account the need to keep costs for undertakings to the necessary minimum and avoid administrative burdens (IA, p. 52). Regarding the application of the 'one in, one out' (OIOO) approach, the IA identifies only one-off business adjustment costs of €148 000 (= 0.0006 % of average global turnover) per negotiation of a new EWC agreement and an incremental increase in the business costs of operating an EWC due to better coverage of training costs, legal costs and experts' fees (IA, pp. 90-91); no additional costs have been identified for citizens.

According to the IA, this initiative is coherent with two [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) – SDG 8, on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (IA, p. 92).

Monitoring and evaluation

The IA explains that the monitoring framework will take into account a two-year transposition period and an additional transitional regime for the adaptation of existing agreements by the parties. Therefore, the IA suggests evaluating the initiative seven years after it enters into force (IA, p. 53). The IA includes the relevant monitoring indicators linked to the operational objectives in Annex 13 (pp. 216-218) and explains the data sources (ETUI database of EWCs, information notified by Member States, potential ad hoc survey/study, desk research, etc.). However, the descriptions of the data sources are less specific than the indicators, so there is a risk of incomplete information being provided for some indicators.

Stakeholder consultation

In line with [Article 153](#) TFEU, this legislative initiative on the revision of the EWC Directive is subject to consultation of European social partners. The [first stage](#) of the two-stage consultation was launched on 11 April and ended on 25 May 2023. The [second stage](#) took place between 26 July and 4 October 2023. As required by the Better Regulation Guidelines, the IA describes the broad stakeholder consultation activities in a dedicated annex (IA, Annex 2, pp. 59-79).

The first stage of the consultation received four replies from trade union organisations¹² and eight from employer organisations.¹³ The second stage of the consultation received feedback from the same organisations, but five employer organisations¹⁴ did not provide responses to the questions in the consultation documents; instead, they stated their willingness to enter into negotiations with ETUC with a view to finding an agreement under [Article 155](#) TFEU to improve Directive 2009/38/EC (IA, pp. 59-64).

In addition to the Treaty-based consultations of social partners, other consultation activities, such as semi-structured stakeholder interviews, an online survey of companies with EWCs, and evidence-gathering workshops with management and employees' representatives, were conducted in the context of the supporting study (IA, pp. 67-79).

There was no public consultation for this initiative.

Supporting data and analytical methods used

In addition to feedback from consultations, the IA relies on the 2018 evaluation, legal comparative analysis, case-law analysis, the ETUI's EWC database, an external [IA supporting study](#), and independent research in the policy field. The IA describes the analytical methods used in Annex 4 (pp. 93-128). It explains the methodology for the assessment of the baseline, which is carried out over a 10-year period, and under the assumption of 'stationarity' and linear growth of active EWCs. The IA also provides an overview of data indicators and considers the data limitations such as a non-exhaustive database, data not being up to date, non-representative samples and potential bias (IA, pp. 103-109). In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, and specifically with tools #56, #57 and #59, the IA also provides the methodology used to monetise costs for the baseline scenario, the assessment of economic impacts and the impact on competitiveness (IA, pp. 110-126). In addition, a sensitivity analysis is performed to consider the costs/average global turnover ratio in case of lower estimates for turnover (IA, pp. 127-128).

Follow-up to the opinion of the Commission Regulatory Scrutiny Board

The Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) gave a [positive opinion with reservations](#) on the draft IA report on 30 November 2023. The RSB indicated some shortcomings, specifically that the IA report should assess the effectiveness of the voluntary measures, that the problem definition should be underpinned with solid evidence on what worked and what did not, and that all relevant policy options should consider the choice of global turnover as a basis for imposing penalties.

According to the RSB, the IA should explore whether soft law measures such as a recommendation on penalties might prove more effective than a binding but unquantified reference to a percentage of global turnover. The report should also be clearer on the consideration of an alternative package of measures, including different combinations of legislative and non-legislative measures. In addition, the RSB highlights that the report does not sufficiently assess and quantify the total cost of the options. Finally, according to the RSB, the affirmation of zero impact on competitiveness is not sufficiently substantiated.

Following the Better Regulation Guidelines, the IA describes in Annex 1 the procedural information and how the points raised by the RSB have been taken into account (IA, pp. 54-58). The RSB's comments appear to have been largely addressed. However, this cannot be confirmed, as the previous draft is not publicly available.

Coherence between the Commission's legislative proposal and IA

The legislative proposal seems to be aligned with the preferred policy option.

The impact assessment (IA) was prepared after the evaluation, so the 'evaluation first' principle was properly followed. This IA relies on an external IA supporting study, a two-stage stakeholder consultation and independent research. The problem definition is clear and is accompanied by a problem tree, but there is a lack of solid evidence of what has worked and what has not. The IA presents 10 policy options; these are cumulative and some of the options do not seem to be relevant policy alternatives. The preferred option is discussed extensively in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and proportionality. The IA assesses the economic, social and fundamental rights impacts of all policy options. It also provides a competitiveness check, and concludes that the effect on competitiveness is negligible, but the incidence of legal actions or financial penalties is debatable. There is no SME test performed for this initiative because of the dimension of 'Community-scale undertakings'. The IA includes a sensitivity analysis and acknowledges limitations and uncertainties concerning quantification and cost data collection.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This covered areas of worker information, consultation and participation, trade unions, and works councils, as well as some aspects of company law and corporate governance.
- ² In 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted an explanatory [opinion on democracy at work](#) that underlined the need to substantially improve effectiveness and resources of EWCs.
- ³ In the State of the Union 2023 [Letter of Intent](#), President von der Leyen announced that the initiative on rules on EWCs is one of the key priorities of the Commission for 2024.
- ⁴ Principle 8 of the [European pillar of social rights](#) states that 'workers or their representatives have the right to be informed and consulted in good time on matters relevant to them'.
- ⁵ Directive 2009/38/EC (also known as the 'recast Directive') was adopted on 6 May 2009 and was amended in 2015 to include provisions on: principles and concepts of information and consultation, opening and process of negotiations, procedure to set up an EWC, minimum rights and obligations, links between the levels of information and consultation of employees, adaptation clause, continuity, subsidiarity requirements and enforcement provisions (IA, Annex 6).
- ⁶ SWD (2018) 187, pp. 21-22.
- ⁷ SWD (2018) 187, p. 15.
- ⁸ Article 153(1)(e) TFEU provides the legal basis for the Union to support and complement the activities of the Member States to improve the informing and consulting of workers. In this field, Article 153(2)(b) TFEU empowers the European Parliament and the Council to adopt – in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure – directives setting minimum requirements for gradual implementation, having regard to the conditions and technical rules obtaining in each of the Member States (IA, p. 19).
- ⁹ In detail: with Article 1(1), which aims to improve the right to information and consultation of employees in Union-scale undertakings and groups; and with Article 1(2), which aims to define and implement the arrangements for informing and consulting employees in such a way as to ensure their effectiveness and to enable the undertaking or group of undertakings to take decisions effectively (IA, p. 21).
- ¹⁰ This timeframe corresponds to the period required for amendments to produce their full impact.
- ¹¹ In accordance with Better Regulation tool #5.
- ¹² These were from the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI), European Managers (CEC), and Eurocadres.
- ¹³ These were from Business Europe, SGI Europe, SMEunited, the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG), the Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology-Based Industries (CEEMET), the European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry (EFCI), Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés in Europe (HOTREC), and the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois).
- ¹⁴ These were Business Europe, Hotrec, Ceemet, ECEG and SGI Europe.

This briefing, prepared for the EMPL committee, analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission's own Better Regulation Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the impact assessment. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal.

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