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Chairman: David Arculus

1st October 2003

Dear [Stakeholder]

TASK FORCE CONSULTATION ON PROJECT TO SIMPLIFY EU LEGISLATION

The Better Regulation Task Force has decided to include in its new work programme a review of an area of existing European legislation. I would like your views on which area we should select.

The Task Force is an independent body and the champion of better regulation. It advises the Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement are proportionate, accountable, consistent, targeted and transparent.

Time and again stakeholders raise the issue of European regulation with the Task Force. We know that around 40% of significant new regulatory proposals are European in origin and in some sectors the proportion is much higher. Our work to date has looked at the UK end of EU regulation – how it is negotiated and transposed. For example, in July we published our report on the End-of-Life Vehicles and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directives, “Environmental Regulation: Getting the Message Across”.

But now we want to do some work on the European end of the problem. In February 2003 the European Commission launched a new programme for simplifying EU legislation, as part of its Better Regulation initiative. The Commission described it as the beginning of, “a long-term process of gradual modernisation and simplification of existing legislation and policies – not to deregulate or cut back the *acquis* (the body of EU law), but to replace past policy approaches with better-adapted and proportionate regulatory instruments.” Under this programme the Commission will make recommendations to the Council and Parliament to achieve regulatory change in existing legislation.

The Task Force is keen to do a review on an area of European legislation that would support and feed into this simplification programme. We would like to identify an area of existing European legislation, where the regulations have built up in an inconsistent, confusing or burdensome manner. Our review would focus on the actual European Directives or Regulations, for example looking at inconsistent definitions or complex amendments. Proposals that have been put to us so far include data protection or waste legislation. In both of these areas the European Commission has set some work in hand already.

I am writing to ask you for your comments on these suggestions, and to ask whether there are other specific areas of EU legislation that you would like to put forward as candidates for the simplification project. If you are able to make suggestions, it would be useful if you could identify the specific regulation or Directive that you would like to see reviewed, and the problems associated with it. It would be particularly helpful if you could indicate whether these problems are shared by other Member States, because we are keen to find issues with wide relevance. If you are part of a wider pan-European organisation, please feel free to discuss this letter with your counterparts in other Member States and feed in their suggestions.

We plan to focus on only one particular regulatory regime for this study, but will feed other suggestions into our consideration of next year's work programme.

I would be grateful for your thoughts and suggestions by 5th December. If you have any queries, or would like to see a copy of the Communication by the European Commission that launched the simplification programme, please contact Natasha Coates at the Task Force Secretariat. Contact details are at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

DAVID ARCULUS
Chair, Better Regulation Task Force