

Question for written answer E-003340/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Charlie Weimers (ECR)

Subject: Automatic review of EU legislation and zero-based regulation

In 2019, administrative rules in Idaho ceased to be automatically reauthorised, meaning that the authorities have to actively justify and reissue any regulations that are to be maintained. The model was subsequently formalised as ‘zero-based regulation’, involving regular reviews of the rules and regulations in place. By the end of 2024, around 3 235 pages of rules had been abolished, representing around 38 % compared with 2018¹.

As part of the competitiveness agenda, the Commission has set targets to cut red tape by 25 % for businesses in general and by 35 % for SMEs, for example using Omnibus packages, REFIT and the ‘one in, one out’ approach². The Draghi report also points out that the regulatory burden is an obstacle to Europe’s competitiveness³.

1. Has the Commission studied Idaho’s model or other systems with automatic sunset clauses and mandatory reviews of existing legislation?
2. Does the Commission intend to propose or pilot a mechanism whereby parts of the EU’s regulatory framework will have to be regularly reassessed and actively justified in order to remain in force?
3. What specific steps does the Commission intend to take to move from the simplification of individual rules to a real zero-based or regulatory budgeting approach for all the rules and regulations in place in the EU?

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¹ According to the Idaho Governor’s Office and a subsequent assessment of zero-based regulation, 3 235 pages of rules had been abolished by the end of 2024, around 38 % compared with 2018.

² The Commission’s competitiveness and simplification agenda includes targets of cutting red tape by at least 25 % for businesses in general and by 35 % for SMEs. The Commission’s current ‘one in, one out’ approach offsets costs but does not automatically repeal existing legislation.

³ The Draghi report, ‘The Future of European Competitiveness’, section on the simplification of rules.