

# Implementation of Impact Assessment at the European Commission

*RPC/AMSDE Informal Workshop on  
"The Role of Impact Assessments in Policy Making"*

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# Some History

- **2002 - System established.**

It integrates and replaces previously used single-sector type assessments.

- **2006: Impact Assessment Board established.**

It provides **central quality control** and support function independently of policy-making departments

- **By 2011: nearly 700 IAs produced** o/w nearly 500 scrutinized by the IAB (incl. all drafted since 2008).

- **2010: European Court of Auditors Special Report**

"The Commission has put in place a comprehensive impact assessment system which for several aspects can be considered as good practice within the EU"

# What does an IA do?

1. Identify the **problem**
2. Assess **need for EU**-level intervention
3. Define the **objectives**
4. Develop policy **options**
5. Analyse the **impacts** of the options
6. Compare the **options**
7. Outline policy monitoring and **evaluation**

# Key System characteristics: Coverage

- AI is required for **all initiatives** expected to **have significant impacts**:
  - All major legislative and policy-defining proposals
  - Comitology items (implementing measures)
- Centralised identification (SG), after consulting services
- Transparency provided by **Roadmaps**: planning documents published at early stages of policy-making

# Key system characteristics: Scope Analysis

- **Integrated:** all benefits and costs; economic, social and environmental impacts.
- **Proportionate**
  - Level needed for different steps of the IA analysis
  - Avoid efforts that would not lead to further insights / alter conclusions or their robustness
  - Determined during process and examined by the IAB
  - Depends on:
    - Significance of impacts
    - Political importance
    - Stage of policy development
    - Type of proposal

# How deep should the analysis be?

## *An example*



Commission  
européenne

<b>Amending Directive on narrow-track tractors</b>	<b>White Paper on Transport (EU long term transport strategy)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• micro analysis, industry specific</li><li>• ex post evaluation of existing legislation</li><li>• operational objectives</li><li>• detailed options</li><li>• economic costs and benefits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• macro analysis, sector specific (spill-overs)</li><li>• socio-economic background analysis</li><li>• general objectives</li><li>• wide policy options</li><li>• complex mix of economic, social and environmental impacts</li></ul>

# The IA process: who is involved internally?

Service responsible for the initiative  
is responsible for the IA

- Additional ***internal*** input:
  - DG's IA unit/support function
  - Impact Assessment Steering Group (IASG)
    - Include all potentially relevant services
    - Give a broader perspective to IA
    - Can help to assess specific impacts (e.g. social, SMEs etc.)

# Who can be involved externally?

Additional **external** input:

– Stakeholders

- Consultation is an obligation
- Commission's minimum standards apply – COM(2002)704
- Findings are reported in IA

– Expert groups and external consultants

- Guidelines in COM(2002)713
- The Commission always remains accountable for the presented results



# The IA report

- **A communication tool:**
  - Summarizes the results of the process
  - Simple, easy to read and non-technical
  - Short: around 30 pages
- **The executive summary of the IA report:**
  - < 10 pages, following IA report structure
  - Translated to all languages
  - Aims to give a fair and complete overview of the analysis

# What is the IA Board (IAB)?

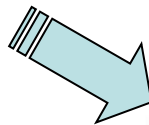
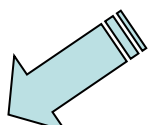
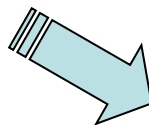
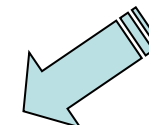
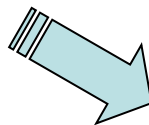
- **Quality control independent from policy-making departments**
  - Five high level officials acting in personal capacity
  - Supported by central secretariat & member-specific staff
  - Chaired by Deputy Secretary General in charge of Better Regulation
  - Gives opinions including recommendations for improvement
- **Positive IAB opinion required to table a proposal to the Commission**

# How does the IAB work?

**The author DG sends draft IA report to the IAB (8 weeks before launch inter-service consultation)**

**DG answers to the comments either in writing or orally during an IAB meeting**

**The IA report is revised, the opinion is published (internally for DGs), it accompanies proposal in interservice consultation and to the Commission**

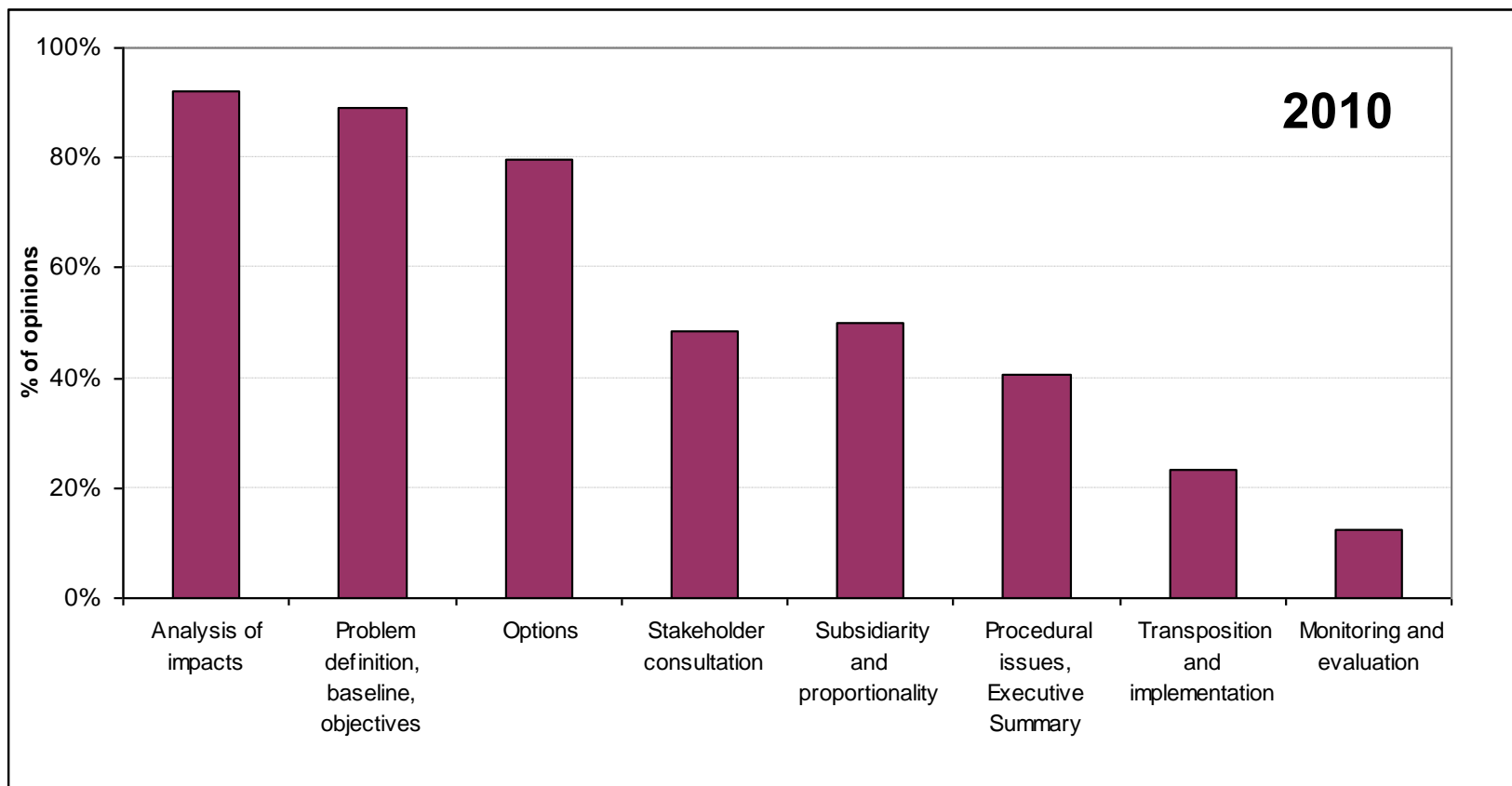


**The IAB sends detailed comments to the DG (Impact Assessment Quality Checklist)**

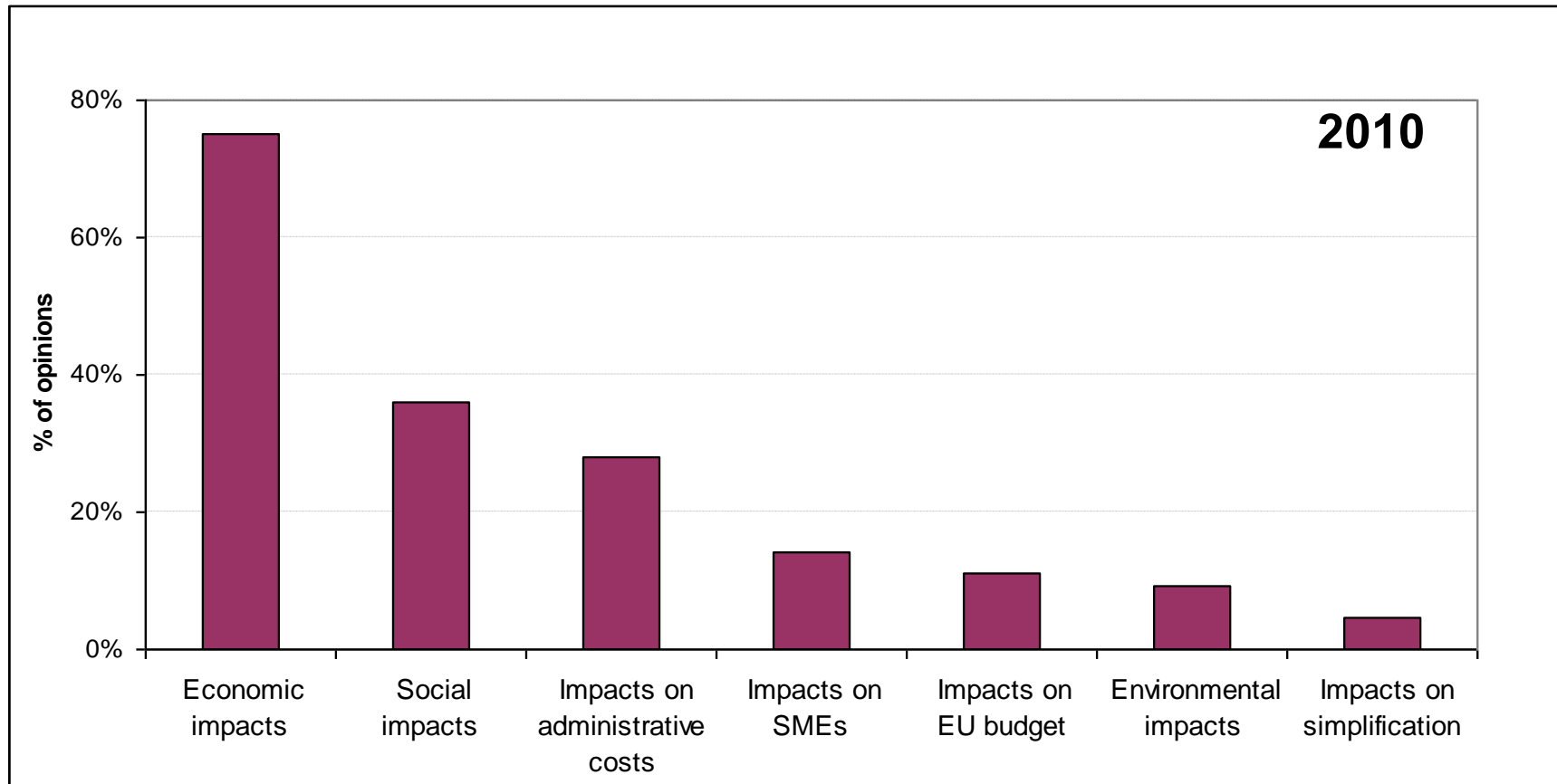
- **The IAB issues the opinion**
- **Critical opinion may lead to resubmission**

**Opinion is published externally (on Europa website) once the policy initiative is adopted by the Commission**

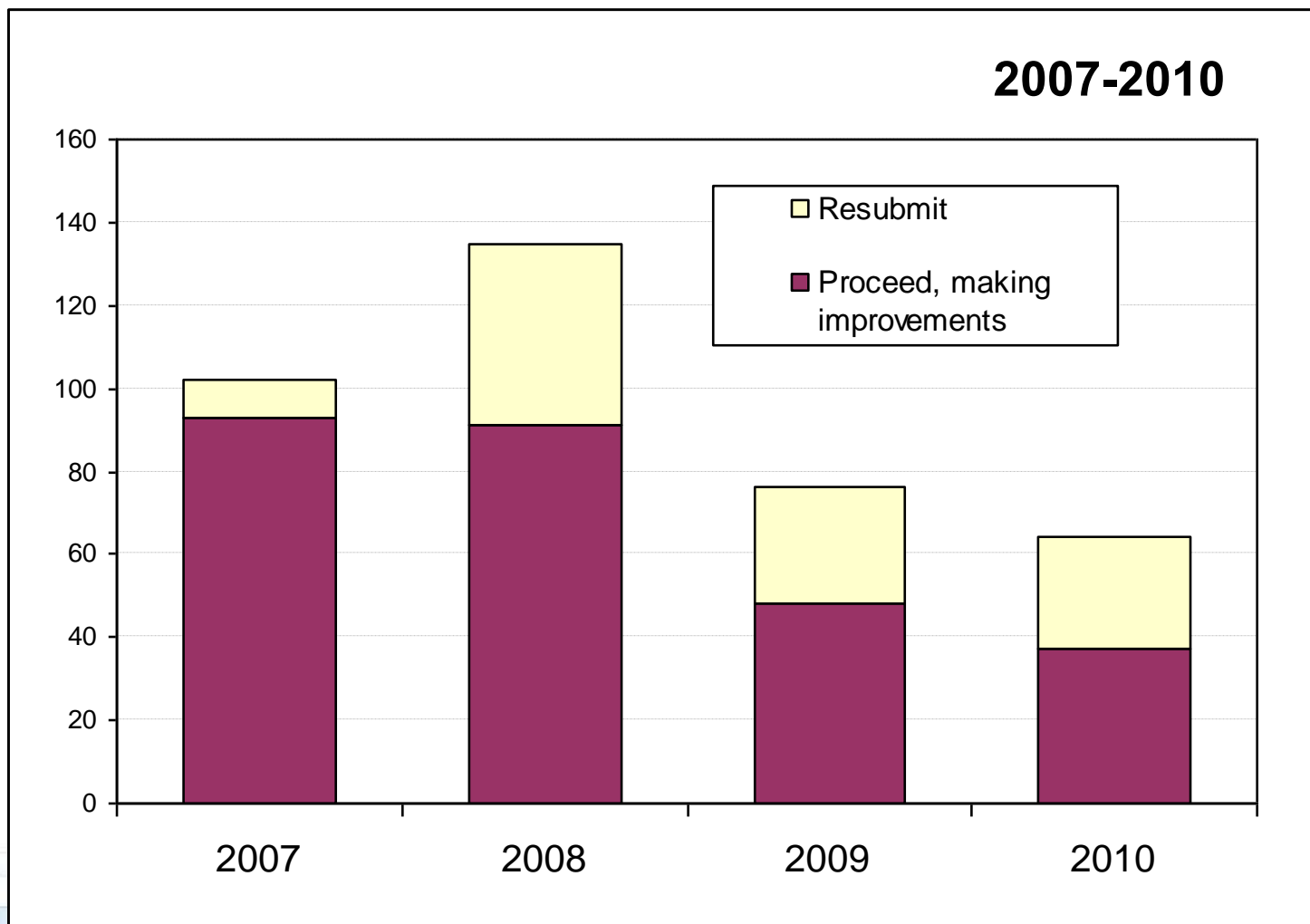
# How often IAB commented on the different elements of the IAs?



# How often IAB commented on the different aspects of analysis?

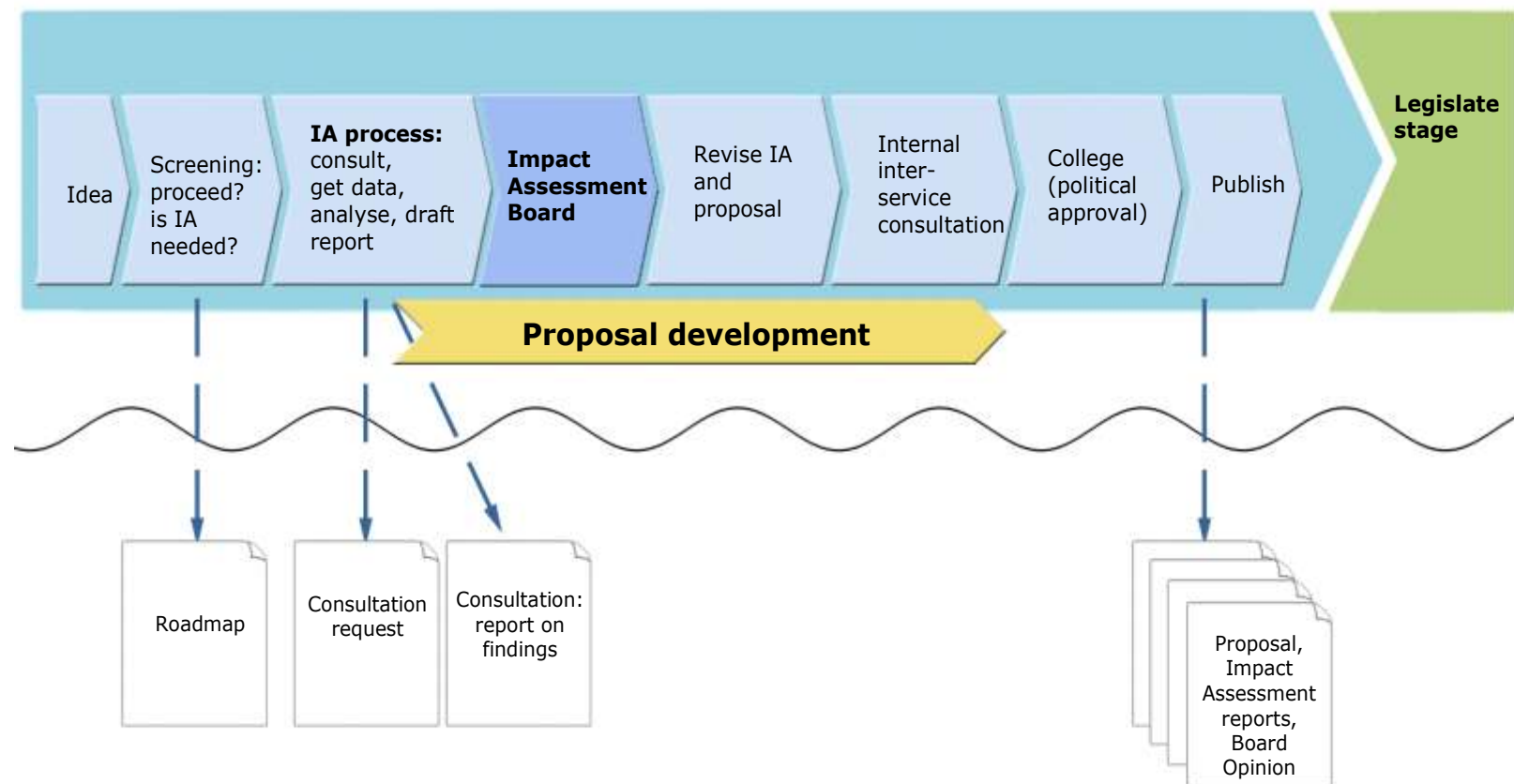


# Number of IAs and resubmission requests



# The IA process: sequence

## Initiate stage: the process inside the Commission



## Initiate stage: outputs seen by outside stakeholders

# How to ensure quality

- **Comprehensiveness.**

All relevant services involved + extensive stakeholder consultations.

- **Accountability and transparency.**

All IAs and IAB opinions are published once COM has adopted the relevant proposal.

Roadmap are published as early as possible.

- **Strong central quality control**

- **Methodological support**

Extensive training and guidance (including on specific impacts)



# Information sources



Commission  
européenne

- Communication on Smart Regulation  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better\\_regulation/documents/com\\_2010\\_0543\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better_regulation/documents/com_2010_0543_en.pdf)
- Court of Auditors report  
<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5372733.PDF>
- Commission work programme  
[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm)
- Detailed information about forthcoming initiatives - roadmaps  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned\\_ia/planned\\_ia\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/planned_ia_en.htm)
- IA reports and IAB opinions  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/practice\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/practice_en.htm)
- Impact Assessment guidelines  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/docs\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/docs_en.htm)
- EC Better Regulation website  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better\\_regulation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better_regulation/index_en.htm)