

Executive summary

Economic context and drivers of Better Regulation

The economic challenges faced by Italy are significant and have become even more important in the recent context of political turmoil and economic recession. Over the past decade, Italy's economic growth rate has remained below the European average. Labour productivity is falling relative to other large European economies. Export performance has been mixed. FDI has remained lower than in other countries of similar size. Italy also has a high proportion of employment in small firms, often family firms, which represent about 4.5 million firms, and raise specific challenges.

Regulatory reform has a crucial role to play to improve the competitiveness of the national economy. In particular, regulatory simplification, cost-cutting, and improvements in regulatory quality have concrete and direct effects across the whole of the economy. Aware of the challenges, Italy has made important efforts to give its regulatory policies a new impetus. In particular, in recent years, Italy has accelerated the measurement and reduction of burdens (procedures, certificates, information obligations) harming competitiveness.

However, the new momentum for regulatory policy reform needs to stand the test of time. It follows a range of initiatives pursued by successive Italian governments to address the post-war legacy of state intervention and heavy regulation with limited results. A number of challenges remain, in particular:

- Complex devolution has brought forward the need to pay greater attention to the implications of multi-level regulatory management. While the effects of decentralisation have clearly complicated the task of regulatory management and oversight, this needs to be more clearly signposted in the current and future reforms.
- Growing awareness of the need for effective regulatory reform may not be matched by similar awareness or capacity to act in the complex network of public administrations at national and sub-national level that need to be mobilised.
- The mechanisms that could support incremental improvements in regulatory reforms and incentivise administrations to deliver better regulatory management remain poorly developed. In particular, open, public consultation and communication mechanisms on regulatory activity are weak and non-systematic, giving discretionary powers to the administration to use them. Effective provisions to monitor and evaluate the programmes are lacking – with the notable exception of the administrative burden reduction strategy –, preventing constructive feedback on their effectiveness.

Table 0.1. The public governance framework for Better Regulation

Relevant authority	Structures	Functions
President of the Council of Ministers	Department for Legal and Legislative Affairs (DAGL)	Co-ordination and quality of regulatory activity.
		RIA, <i>ex post</i> evaluation
	Minister for Public Administration and Simplification	Office for Administrative Simplification (USA)
		Administrative simplification and burden reduction
	Unit for the simplification and the quality of regulation	Normative simplification

Source: Italian authorities, as of December 2011.

Developments in Better Regulation and main findings of this review

Strategy and policies for Better Regulation

Over 15 years, successive Italian governments have pursued a range of regulatory policy reforms in line with the efforts in neighbouring European countries. Regulatory reform plays an important role in the various packages that have been announced to recover from slow economic growth. The Strategic National Framework aims to provide a strategy to improve the multi-level framework for regulatory reform and to speed up the reform processes. The Minister for Public Administration has initiated a great push to modernise public administration. A Minister for Normative Simplification was put in place in 2008. The Government, which took its functions in November 2011, gave further impetus to regulatory reform, by unifying responsibilities for simplification under the leadership of the Minister for Public Administration and Simplification. The renewed drive for regulatory reform that occurred in Italy towards the end of the 2000s was also in the mainstream of European good practices and was responsive to the mid-term review of the EU Lisbon Strategy.

Italy's strategy for regulatory reform focuses on "cutting-laws", "cutting-burden" and "cutting bodies", demonstrating the political importance of regulatory reform and simplification. Italy has accelerated the simplification of administrative procedures and reduction of burdens. The "guillotine clause", introduced by the 2005 Simplification Act, repealed more than 200 000 laws. Targets for reducing administrative costs, initially set at 25% by 2012, have been brought to 32%. The principle of a proportionate approach to administrative burdens on SMEs has also been introduced in 2010, which, together with the simplification measures adopted for SMEs, has led to estimated saving of EUR 1.5 billion per year. Digitalisation is clearly an important driver of the efforts to get to grips with administrative simplification. With the adoption of the 2008 regulation on RIA, and the approval of *ex post* evaluation (VIR) in 2009, efforts have also been made to systematise and rationalise impact assessments of new government regulations.

However, the challenges that emerged with the 2001 constitutional reform to decentralise the state persist. Decentralisation has provided more scope for experimentation and innovation, but also resulted in an increasingly complex layering of regional and state competences, where co-ordination is of critical importance to counter the risk of fragmentation of responsibilities and preserve policy coherence. The Italian apparatus for co-ordination is well developed compared with many other countries. However, the magnitude of the challenges will require strengthening co-ordination mechanisms, oversight capacities, financial incentives, technical capacities and human capital, and co-operative principles and frameworks to embed "better regulation" principles in the development of the multi-level regulatory system. With a view to address these

needs, Decree-law 70/2011 formally extends the measuring and the reduction of administrative burdens to Regions and Local Authorities, to Independent Authorities and introduces the measurements of burdens falling onto citizens. In 2011, a Joint Committee was also established among State, Regions and Local Autonomies at the Unified Conference in order to co-ordinate the methodologies for measuring and reducing burdens in matters of concurrent competences between the State and the Regions, starting with the construction sector.

A further critical point and a challenge for the new administration is the linkage of the reform agenda with wider key policies to boost competitiveness and ensure sustainable development. The most recent measures taken by the Government of November 2011 are to be welcomed in this respect. Following OECD recommendations, steps have been taken to promote administrative burden reduction and economic liberalisation through the so-called “Salva Italia” Decree-law of December 2011. Cutting administrative burdens is also promoted in the Document of Economy and Finance 2011 in the framework of the National Programme of Reform (PNR) 2011, as well as in recent commitments taken by Italy with the Presidents of European Commission and Council. Law 180/2011 of November 2011 foresees, as a part of regular RIAs, the mandatory *ex ante* measurement of administrative burdens introduced or eliminated by the legislative proposal – and not just their description.

The success of regulatory policy reforms will crucially hinge on the development of quality control mechanisms and incentives for compliance. The development of central quality control bodies for regulation is a good start. The guidelines for the implementation of plans for burden reduction, have formulated actions for the monitoring and evaluation of the burden measurement and reduction activities. Several independent administrative authorities have also gained important experience and display a tradition of disclosing regulatory procedures to stakeholders from which lessons can be learnt. At the occasion of the approval of the new Statutes, various regions (including Lombardy, Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Umbria) have started introducing specific provisions aimed at the evaluation of effectiveness of public policies in meeting the planned objectives. However, staffing and expertise in the units responsible for quality control need to be consolidated and increased. In line with this, transparency and consultation mechanisms, as well as benchmarking processes should be strengthened. With respect to regulatory decisions, quality standards for regulatory impact assessments need to be set. More generally, external, impartial and regular evaluation, based on a clear set of performance indicators, would help obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the Better Regulation programme.

<i>Recommendations – Strategy and policies for Better Regulation</i>	
1	Staffing and expertise in central quality control bodies for regulation need to be consolidated and increased.
2	Transparency and consultation mechanisms, as well as benchmarking processes need to be strengthened.
3	External and regular evaluation, based on a clear set of performance indicators, would help obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the Better Regulation programme.

Institutional capacities for Better Regulation

Success on the regulatory reform agenda requires broad consensus over years and across levels of government to ensure that political commitments are translated into concrete changes throughout the public administration. Stable, expert-driven, and well-resourced institutions at the centre of government must be supported by political leadership in order to promote, oversee, and enforce the regulatory reform commitments of the government. Italy's Better Regulation bodies are a step forward in this direction – in particular, the Department of Legislative Affairs (DAGL) with its regulatory impact analysis team, as well as the Unit for the simplification and the quality of regulation and the Office for administrative simplification, both supporting the Minister for Public Administration and Simplification.

Another significant step is the reform effort underway in the public administration. One major dimension of the so-called “Brunetta reform” (2010) is the nurturing of public servants' behaviour as a means of unblocking change. The reform aims to achieve measurement of real performance both of services and of individuals, relying in part on feedback from the public. Steps have already been taken in that direction. Implementation may however be problematic if the reform faces resistance. Public sector managers, in particular, will be a key determinant of the degree of application of new performance evaluation techniques. At his parliamentary hearing in 2011, the Minister of Public Administration and Simplification reiterated the importance of transparency and accountability, and the critical idea that the citizens should know not only what public administrations do, but also “how they do it”.

Co-ordination between the different bodies involved will determine the success of these efforts. In Italy, the President of the Council of Ministers is formally responsible for regulatory policy. Until the new government of November 2011, direct competences for the Better Regulation reform agenda in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers were split between the Department of Legislative Affairs (DAGL), the Department of Public Administration and the Department for Normative Simplification. Split responsibilities and the lack of formal co-ordination may have explained the limited results of the overall government regulatory policy so far. Under the Government appointed in November 2011, the structures devoted to simplification (Office for administrative simplification and Unit for the simplification and quality of regulation) are regrouped under the responsibility of the Ministry for Public Administration and Simplification, leading de facto to a consolidation of the institutional framework. The Department of Legislative Affairs (DAGL) continues supporting directly the President of the Council in co-ordinating the regulatory activity of the government and in ensuring the quality of regulatory production.

Some issues still do not receive sufficient attention. This is particularly the case of public consultation for which the Italian record is patchy, especially in relation to exploiting the potential of ICT. On other issues such as enhancing RIA, diffusing *ex post* evaluation and systematising communication, the authorities expect the new regulation on RIA under development by the DAGL to address previous lack of attention in this respect. In addition, while resources – including training opportunities – for the Better Regulation agenda seem quite reasonable in the Presidency units, it is not clear whether they are adequate in the ministries or the wider public sector.

Recommendations – Institutional capacities for better regulation

1	<p>The latest government reshuffling of November 2011 better meets international standards of consolidation of institutional framework for regulatory policy. Such setting should be progressively strengthened and confirmed in the long run to avoid continuous re-organisations at the centre of government, which are likely to hamper a consistent and strategic implementation of the reform agenda. The synergies and co-operative mechanisms put in place in support of the administrative burden reduction programme could be taken as a possible example and extended to organise the governance of other regulatory tools.</p>
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Transparency through consultation and communication

Italy is ripe for a more pro active relationship with the wider public in the development of new laws and policies and could learn from other countries in this regard. As of today, there is little structure or formality to consultation and communication activities. Ministries carry out consultations informally in their own way when they launch a draft law. However, endorsement of a draft law by the Council of Ministers does require the opinion of certain advisory bodies (the State-regions conference; independent authorities; parliamentary commissions; and the Council of State). Parliament carries out hearings but only selectively. Greater awareness of the necessity to enhance consultation practices as an “integral part” of decision-making is emerging. A new regulation is under development by the DAGL to address these shortcomings and promote wider consultation in the framework of both *ex ante* and *ex post* analysis of regulation.

Recommendations – Transparency through consultation and communication

1	<p>Ensure speedy development and proper implementation of all the instruments aimed at promoting systematic, timely and transparent public consultation practices, including the forthcoming DAGL regulation on consultation and related detailed guidelines for administrations. The new consultation policy should be properly communicated to stakeholders.</p>
2	<p>Greater analysis, advocacy and communication on the expected gains from regulatory policy would help the country strengthen the coalition of reformers. In the long run, consider how to strengthen the functions of producing such information.</p>

The development of new regulations

Not unlike other EU countries, the Italian legal system is very complex, drawing from a rather legalistic decision-making tradition. The pathway for drafting regulation is more immediately evident to civil servants than options for developing alternative instruments. In recent years, there has also been a tendency to advance the government's programmes by issuing legislative decrees and decree-laws. As a result, Italy's legal system is an example of continuous accumulation of regulatory stock which needs regular cleaning out.

Efforts have been made to systematise and rationalise ex ante impact assessments of new regulations. The adoption of the 2008 regulation on RIA constitutes a concrete initiative to mainstream the tool and facilitate its use. It also signals a renewed commitment on the part of Italy to regulatory reform. This was reinforced by the 2009 Directive on normative procedures, which paid close attention to the importance of bridging normative planning and the RIA process, as well as by the explicit links made in legal acts between RIA and *ex post* evaluation, potentially creating structural and procedural integrated mechanisms. Steps to rejuvenate RIA also include consolidating the procedure in a single document and process and integrating impact assessments for issues which overlap between ministries in a single collective assessment. Efforts are also being made to evaluate impacts on citizens, enterprises and the administration.

Ownership of the RIA process seems to be building in Italy. A number of ministries appear to be switching on to the process seriously and are re-organising their structures and procedures to better meet the requirements, even though communication on organisational upgrading remains incomplete. Broader awareness of the RIA process is also developing with the development of interfaces that facilitate debates with academics and stakeholders (including the business community). An example is the Osservatorio AIR (created in 2009), which serves as a laboratory for carrying out RIA and consultation, and focuses on independent agencies, for which it systematically reviews progress, and proposes improvements.

However, the experience of Italy with RIA still leaves much scope for improvement. Structural gaps in the design of the instrument persist and make improving the current system a difficult task. A new regulation under development at the time of completion of this report is expected to address some of the shortcomings identified by DAGL in the design and the implementation of RIA, VIR and related public consultation. Meanwhile, this report aims to support the reform efforts of the new government by highlighting a number of critical areas for improvement.

Fewer and more targeted and robust RIA would lead to better results, both in terms of achieving policy objectives and of imposing RIA in the daily practice of policy-making. The model provided for by the 2008 RIA regulation institutes a very broad scope for RIA, which has translated in the undertaking of some 150 RIAs per year. While this has meant that the Government has actively worked towards mainstreaming RIAs in the regular activities of administrations and in the routine production of regulations, the high number of RIAs raises important issues. In particular, quantity may come at the expense of quality – both with respect to producing good quality analyses and to ensuring high performance quality check. Fundamentally, capacity of policy makers to take RIA into account in their decision-making may not yet be in line with such level of RIA production. A problem of scope is also recognised by Italy, as the 2008 RIA regulation allows for exempting administration from doing RIAs on urgent and complex proposals – typically the areas where such a tool would bring value. In this respect, DAGL is considering revisiting the criteria for exemption in order to better target when RIAs are carried out by limiting the number of assessment while including the most complex proposals.

The technical capacities for carrying impact assessment – including early consideration of alternatives to regulations and quantitative assessment – need strengthening. Three years after entering into force, the RIA regulation of 2008 has still not been followed by the necessary complementary guidelines. Assessments of costs and benefits still display a number of shortcomings. The 2008 RIA regulation prescribes that the analysis of costs and benefits be carried out only on the “zero-option” and the preferred option, with other options receiving less thorough attention. While this approach is intended to simplify the drafting and make the tool more attractive and more widely used, it weakens one of the fundamental elements of RIA (the structured comparison of options) and may generate assessments that are mere justifications of decisions already taken. DAGL also notes that assessments remain mainly qualitative (estimates of costs and benefits are rare) despite its attempts to diffuse basic knowledge and skills around RIA through more regular and comprehensive training rounds in the Presidency of the Council and across line ministries.

The mechanisms for quality control need to be consolidated. The RIA regulation strikes a good balance between the centre (control and co-ordination) and the periphery (responsibility for producing RIAs). Institutionally DAGL is responsible both for carrying out a procedural and technical analysis of RIAs, typically controlling that the assessments are in line with minimum requirements on the basis of an internal checklist; and for ensuring the co-ordination among administrations so that RIAs are delivered on time to the pre-council meetings. However, there are no explicit deadlines either on launching and implementing or on complying with the changes requested by DAGL. A more general issue of regulatory culture exists: while there are signs that individuals with diversified profiles are being hired or trained in some parts of the central administration, RIA seems to remain trapped in rather legalistic, procedural logics.

Rigorous consultation during preparation of RIA reports and clear and accessible communication of results need to be ensured. Publicity and communication of progress remain largely neglected. DAGL has issued a second report on RIA activity and performance in September 2010, covering the years 2007-2008. However, while final RIA reports are de facto public on the Parliamentary website, their accessibility needs to be improved. The 2008 RIA regulation sets consultation in the framework of RIA only on a facultative basis. Consequently, Ministries carry out consultations in their own way, with little structure and formality. The new regulation under development by the DAGL is expected to address these shortcomings.

Italy is making efforts to embed ex post evaluation of laws. The policy also provides for *ex post* evaluation on all normative acts for which an impact assessment has been performed, two years on. To be effective, though, the initial impact assessment needs to be of sufficient quality and incorporate indicators of success against which the monitoring can be carried out. The process may produce a long stream of amendments. As in some other countries, it is likely to be sensitive for the ministry/politician concerned.

<i>Recommendations – The development of new regulations</i>	
1	Consider the possibility of introducing a prioritisation mechanism to screen among regulations which ones would require full or more in-depth RIAs (Canada’s “triage” mechanism provides an example).
2	Start the RIA process at the earliest stage possible, since good quality RIAs conducted early and allowing the identification of non-regulatory alternatives will help limit the flow of new regulations.
3	Issue binding and precise procedural and methodological guidelines to assist with the preparation of RIAs.
4	Consider further investment in staffing and RIA training to enable ministries to conduct the required technical analysis. Take this opportunity to ensure multi-disciplinary backgrounds and skills and initiate a culture of evidence-based approach to decision making within DAGL and the line ministries.
5	Publish relevant criteria and modus operandi for DAGL in its function of RIA oversight body.
6	Introduce incentive and sanction mechanisms for administrations to comply with requested changes in impact assessments, for instance by publicly reporting each year information on the relative number of proposals returned to the administration by DAGL on the ground of sub-optimal RIA quality, according to the type of proposal and administration and on the type of problems encountered. A library of examples of good assessments by administrations would help illustrate what is expected from RIA drafters.
7	Enhance early inter-ministerial co-ordination and information sharing as fundamental elements informing the ex ante assessments.
8	Reinforce the requirement to consider alternative forms to regulatory interventions at an early stage of the impact assessment process.
9	Make RIAs systematically available to the public on one single point of access.
10	Seek more systematic dialogue with stakeholders and academia. Consider the Osservatorio AIR as a possible model.
11	Consider inserting sunset clauses to avoid instability of the regulatory framework if <i>ex post</i> assessments lead systematically to amendments.
12	Consider the bundling of laws for <i>ex post</i> evaluation in order to reduce political sensitivities and inconsistencies and better align post-analysis with delivery of results for society, economy and environment.

The management and rationalisation of existing regulations

Legislative simplification has long been a cornerstone of Italian regulatory policy, as a response to the continued production of new laws. A major step taken by the authorities involved law cutting, with a special emphasis on SMEs, providing for the removal of redundant and obsolete laws, and those showing “no signs of life”. The next step is codification, which looks into the opportunity to introduce changes in the content via expert commissions set up in ministries, with the aim to align laws to the needs of modern society. Apart from the guillotine mechanism, emphasis has shifted in recent years to administrative burden reduction to assess the opportunity for simplification.

The commitment to administrative burden reduction in recent years is well-timed in the context of the current need to speed up economic recovery. Because of the high proportion of micro enterprises in the composition of Italian industry, red tape has a strong impact on competitiveness. Procedures, which are the same for all or sometimes actually designed for larger companies, weigh most heavily on small firms. Second, there is an entrenched use of un-rationalised administrative procedures and certificates. Third, there are complications caused by decentralisation and regions as well as municipalities going their own way, and overlap of competences. Great complexity and fragmentation were uncovered in the process of measuring burdens. Lastly, the culture of the public administration needs to change as it currently prioritises very detailed legal provisions over actual results.

Administrative simplification initiatives have included:

- Conference of Services, i.e. the simplification of the delivery of complex authorisations. A lead agency convenes all the others, and the Conference is the final authority for delivering an authorisation. Successful implementation is still to be confirmed across multiple agencies and levels of government.
- SCIA initiative, aimed at firms who need a set of permits to start an activity. Started in July 2010, it promotes self certification, via notification by the company that it fulfils all the requirements to start an activity.
- One-stop shops, supported by the implementation of the EU Services Directive. They are run by municipalities or Chambers of Commerce when the latter do not have the capacity yet. As in most other EU countries these are increasingly digitalised services.
- Italy also has a more classic administrative burden reduction programme. On the basis of simplification policies already adopted, it is estimated that the reduction target of 32% by end 2012 would reduce burdens by more than EUR 7.6 billion.

The burden reduction programme of Italy displays strong positive aspects. For one, the programme benefits from strong political commitment, illustrated by the fact that the overall reduction target was raised to 32% by 2012, that the scope of the programme was extended to cover regulations by independent national agencies, burden on citizens; and to include the regional level. The programme is also deemed well targeted – with a specific approach for compliance requirement on SMEs – and relatively efficient. Administrations benefit from the programme through spill-over effects and synergies with other reform actions, notably legislative simplification and e-Government.

More generally, administrative burden reduction is seen as setting good standards for regulatory reforms at the central level. Administrative burden reduction programmes have helped diffuse a more result-driven culture throughout the administrations. Important efforts are made to include a range of competences, ages and background in the teams (economic as well as legal) and to involve stakeholders in the process and its monitoring. The programmes have also triggered practices of e-consultation. Efforts to communicate current initiatives and results from the Administrative Burden Programme are greater than in other fronts of the Italian regulatory reform agenda.

While these reforms to reduce administrative burden represent positive significant steps, they should be broadened, sharpened, and sustained over time. One particular challenge has been the slow pace with which, initially, measurements were launched and concluded and, especially, simplification measures were proposed and adopted. However, according to the Italian authorities, these initial concerns have been overcome, as illustrated by the fact that until now 81 high-impact procedures have been measured through 14 surveys in 10 regulatory areas. Simplification measures have been applied to 8 regulatory areas. Similarly, it is expected that concerns at the split of political responsibility and accountability between the two ministers in charge of administrative and legislative simplification be overcome by their regrouping under a single Minister for Public Administration and Simplification with the new Government of November 2011.

<i>Recommendations – The management and rationalisation of existing regulations</i>	
1	Consider integrating on a systematic basis simplification processes with forms of cost-benefit analysis.
2	Agree on speedier procedure with Parliament for the adoption of simplification proposals.
3	Strengthen the resources allocated to the “MOA Task Force” to speed up the administrative burden measurement process.
4	Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capacities to check progress and results of burden reduction initiatives and ensure wide communication of results.

The interface between member states and the European Union

Italy has made great progress in improving the timeliness of transposition of EU laws related to internal market. A number of initiatives and co-ordination arrangements have helped improve Italy’s record of transposition deficit and infringement procedures. To address the issue of concurrent competences, a standard framework and guidelines have been established by the central government to identify the steps needed to comply with directives and involve stakeholders. A dedicated unit within the Department for European Policies (*Struttura di missione per le procedure di infrazione*) was created in July 2006 to prevent infringements. Deadline of the legislative delegation has been aligned to that of the transposition and continuous monitoring of the approval process of implementation measures carried out.

The country still faces structural challenges to improve the way sub-national authorities participate in policy formulation at the European level, and how they collaborate to avoid delayed, partial and incorrect transposition and implementation of EU law. The revision of the current system, to date in discussion within Parliament, constitutes a timely and precious opportunity to streamline the decision-making process for EU-related acts, and institutionalise good practices. In particular, the revision is an opportunity to address the need for closer co-ordination and joint participation of the regions, as appropriate and where foreseen by the constitutional allocation of competences.

Recommendations – The interface between member states and the EU	
1	Contribute to strengthen the responsibility and capacity of the regions to timely and fully transpose and implement EU law through their closer involvement in the ascending phase of EU decision making; through closer collaboration with the State in the appraisal of infringement procedures; and through burden sharing (or full liability by the regions) in case of ascertained infringement in areas of exclusive regional competences.

The interface between sub-national and national levels of government

Italy has experienced devolution of legislative and regulatory powers to the regions. While Italy celebrates the 150th anniversary of its unification, economic and social heterogeneity is largely a historical legacy. SMEs are often rooted in their territories of origin and may not desire a national market to bring unwelcome competition. There are also big income differences between north and south. In this context, the 2001 constitutional reform has constituted a major milestone by opening the way to a structured but to date still un-finished decentralisation.

This raises a number of difficulties for better regulation, which the central government has yet to address fully. In particular, the reforms have resulted in significant competence overlap (concurrent competences) between the regions and the centre. In addition, the tendency of regions to equate autonomy with regulatory production and differentiation constitutes a major strain on efforts to streamline administrative procedures. The leadership of more mature and successful federal states could be helpful in identifying practical ways forward. Improving fiscal federalism could also be an important lever.

Addressing the complexities of decentralisation, especially concurrent competences, will require a more effective use of co-ordination mechanisms. A structure is in place around three levels of “conferences” or “tables”. The effectiveness of the conference of the regions, a centrepiece of the system, may need to be strengthened. More generally, the system does not seem to sufficiently and systematically integrate multi-level dynamics. The general Agreement of 2007 on regulatory quality and simplification was never given full implementation. The so-called “Development” Decree 70/2011 is an attempt to remedy the situation by instituting a Joint Committee among State, Regions and local authorities for the co-ordination of methods to measure and reduce burdens. The committee aims to act as a platform for peer learning on best practices of administrative simplification and promote shared methodologies of burden measurement and reduction among regions.

Greater awareness and capacity building on the Better Regulation agenda are needed at sub-national level. While some regions are advancing on individual reform fronts – for instance by experimenting with RIA and addressing administrative burden reduction programmes –, sub-national authorities in general and municipalities in particular need to be involved systematically and comprehensively, and take pro-active, responsible action. In this respect, the “Development” Decree 70/2011 generalises the measurement of administrative burdens to the sub-national level. Capacity to do so and heterogeneity of situations nonetheless appear to be a major issue which needs to be tackled.

<i>Recommendations – The interface between sub-national and national levels of government</i>	
1	Pursue a longer-term strategy towards closer co-ordination in regulatory policy matters across different levels of government.
2	Support the implementation of the program for measuring and reducing burdens at regional and local level, including through a strengthening of capacity for regulatory policy in sub-national administrations. The project for operational assistance to the regions (POAT), run by DAGL with some Regions on RIA and <i>ex post</i> evaluation, could serve as a basis.
3	Enhance co-ordination and information sharing as fundamental elements informing the <i>ex ante</i> assessments. Systems like the <i>e-urop@</i> database could be piloted in that respect.