

Better Regulation in Europe
The work of the group of Directors and experts of Better Regulation
(2002-2010)

The Ad Hoc Group of Directors and Experts of Better Regulation (DEBR) is an informal inter-governmental group of senior officials responsible for the promotion of BR principles at member state level. Their first mandate included monitoring progress in Better Regulation following the Mandelkern report (2001). The DEBR meetings provide a forum for strategic discussions on the Better Regulation Agenda and facilitate also the exchange of good practices and experiences between Member States, EU-institutions and others.

The DEBR meets twice a year and is usually chaired by the member state holding the incoming presidency of the EU. Officials from candidate countries are now also invited.

This initial mandate of the DEBR was best described in a "[report to the ministers responsible for Public Administration](#) in the EU member states on the progress of the implementation of the Mandelkern Report's Action Plan on Better Regulation" (Athens, May 2003). This report was filed by an "ad hoc group of experts on Better Regulation", the predecessor of the DEBR.

"The Mandelkern Group was formed by a Resolution of the Ministers of Public Administration at Strasbourg, which gave it the "mandate to develop a coherent approach to this topic and to submit proposals to the Ministers, including the definition of a common method of evaluating the quality of regulation". The [final Report](#) of the High-Level Advisory Group was welcomed at the Laeken Summit of the European Council. Parallel to this, the Commission published its Action Plan for improving and simplifying the regulatory environment in June 2002. Important steps had been taken for the implementation of the Mandelkern Group suggestions, but many more remained. For this reason, at the last meeting of the Ministers of Public Administration in La Rioja, in May 2002, it was agreed the issues of Better Regulation to be included to the agenda of their next meeting that will take place in June 2003 in Rhodes. According to La Rioja conclusions Ministers "stress the need to maintain an effective co-ordination and exchange of experiences with respect to the implementation of Better Regulation tools within the Member States. Request that the Directors of Better Regulation and the Mandelkern group experts continue to meet together on a regular basis under the name of Mandelkern Group on Better Regulation, ensuring the coherence of their work with the above mentioned Action Plan. The group in question will report to the Ministers responsible for Public Administration and Better Regulation on the results of the implementation of better regulation tools in Member States and on the Action Plan"."

At the [10th meeting of the ministers responsible for public administration](#), Rhodes, June 2003, the ministers "welcomed this report of the ad hoc Group of experts on Better Regulation and acknowledged the progress made by the member states and the Commission on better regulation issues, especially those regarding the implementation of the Action Plan of Mandelkern Report for the member states and the Commission"

From 2003 to 2005, the group reported within the European Network for Public Administration ([EUPAN](#)), to the regular meetings of the ministers in charge of public administrations, and the directors general responsible.

In 2005, the group became autonomous, and has met since then at the invitation of the EU rotating presidency.

The activity of the group can be retraced from a number of official documents preserved on the internet.

Rome, December 2003: [11th MEETING OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS](#) responsible for public administration and [41st meeting of Directors General](#) responsible for public administration

The Ministers of Public Administration reaffirm their wish for the setting up of an ad hoc horizontal working party on better regulation reporting to the Council, through Coreper, in accordance with Article 207 of the Treaty, with a view to assisting in the follow-up of the Commission's Action Plan "Simplifying and Improving the Regulatory Environment".

Dublin, May 2004: [42nd meeting of Directors General](#) responsible for public administration, The Directors General note the positive outcomes of the meetings of the Directors and Experts of Better Regulation in the Hague (February) and in Dublin (May) and welcome the organisation by the Irish Presidency of a Seminar on "The Contribution of Better Regulation to Competitiveness and Social Progress".

They welcome the report on "[Comparative Analysis of Regulatory Impact Assessments](#) in Ten EU Countries", which concludes the first phase of the initiative on RIA launched during the Italian Presidency and supported by Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands, and note the intention to commence phase two of this project. They also welcome the discussion on the future role of the Directors and Experts of Better Regulation initiated by the Irish Presidency. At the initiative of the Irish presidency, a [joint statement on regulatory reform](#) was agreed by the four incoming presidencies (26 Jan 2004).

Maastricht, November 2004: [43rd meeting of the director generals](#)

"The Directors General expressed their continued interest in the activities of the DBR-group and welcomed in this respect the initiative of the Luxembourg Presidency to entrust Mr Mandelkern to make an inventory of all the groups working on this subject at the European level, in order to deliver a first report on the state of play of (all) the written recommendations since November 2001. They underline that this work has to be compatible with the scope of the activities of the EU on Better Regulation."

Luxembourg, June 2005: [44th meeting of the Directors general](#) responsible for public administration

The Directors General noted the ongoing progress of the work of the Directors and Experts of Better Regulation. They noted the development report "Better Regulation at the European Union level – [Milestones on the way to better laws](#)" which gives an overview of all actors involved in Better Regulation issues ([Version française](#)).

They noted the [Six Presidency Initiative on advancing Regulatory Reform in Europe](#) by the Irish, Dutch, Luxembourg, UK, Austria and Finland Ministers of Finance of December 2004; they underlined the importance that the initiative should not duplicate activities in the Community framework.

The directors general continued to meet on a regular basis (for instance [45th meeting](#) in Newcastle in December 2005), but did not supervise or orient the work of the DEBR. In some cases, for instance in Prague in May 2009, they passed comment on the "[conclusions](#)" on Better Regulation for submission to the Competitiveness Council on 28 May.

Helsinki, May 2006: The [DEBR meeting](#) focussed especially on alternatives to regulation and the assessment of regulatory impacts. Other themes included how to develop legislation so that it will not impose unnecessary administrative burdens for instance on businesses and how best to adapt EU legislation to national legislation.

Berlin, October 2006: [meeting of the DEBR](#) programme and presentations (also in [German](#)).

Lisbon, May 2007: The DEBR meeting was held in a [splendid venue](#), overlooking the Praça do Comercio, with a rich [agenda](#). Proceedings will soon be uploaded.

Brod, SI, December 2007: opened by the minister in charge of public administration, the meeting focussed on communication issues.

Paris, June 2008: the [DEBR meeting](#) in Paris was held in the ministry of finance, and included, in addition to the usual topics, a number of workshops on new themes:

- administrative burdens and the Services directive;
- access to legislation;
- communication and BR;
- regional aspects of BR.

The event included a visit to two important actors of Better Regulation, the national Assembly and the Conseil d'Etat. The dinner served on a bateau-mouche was also a memorable occasion.

All documents and presentations are available to [CIRCA members](#).

France also organised an international seminar on "[better regulation an access to law](#)" in Paris in December 2008.

Prague, October 2008: The main topics of the [DEBR meeting](#) were:

- Improvement of the Impact Assessment in the Council (methods, procedures);
- Access to Regulation;
- eGovernment as a Possible Way of Simplification of the Regulatory Environment.

At the initiative of the Czech presidency, a "[Prague declaration](#)" on further progress in better regulation and better business environment was signed on 14 May 2008.

Sandham (SE), June 2009: The [DBR Meeting](#) was held on the island of Sandhamn in the archipelago outside Stockholm. It was organised by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth in close co-operation with the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications. The theme for DBR Meeting was a journey in time: "Past, Present and Future".

- "Return to the work of the Mandelkern Group" — Members of the Mandelkern Group gave their reflections on the work of the group, what they aimed to achieve and how the Better Regulation Agenda has developed since the final report of the group in 2001.

- "What is going on today & What have we achieved so far" — Reflections and discussions on main strategies, tools and actions in the ongoing better regulation work.

- "The Future of Better Regulation" — What will be the main topics for the future Better Regulation Agenda? How should we further develop the agenda? Presentations and workshop discussions gave further input to the Better Regulation Agenda "post-Lisbon".

Madrid, November 2009: The [DBR meeting](#) was enriched by the participation of delegates in a conference organised by the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations (CEOE) & the Spanish Confederation of Spanish Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (CEPYME). There was also a beautiful flamenco evening.

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