

## **RegWatchEurope Workshop on Garnering Political Support: *Oversight Bodies' Strategies & Best Practices of Influencing Decision Makers***

8 June 2022, Prague

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### **Objective**

The workshop's goal was to investigate and debate whether and how independent oversight bodies should approach, garner, develop, and foster relationships with decision makers. Better regulation needs to be acknowledged, endorsed, and given concrete political support in order to function in practice. For some well-established bodies, this is not an issue, although for some this represents a significant challenge, and approaches vary in light of different institutional contexts. Experts from international organisations, national administrations, RWE members, and non-members all attended the workshop.

### **Conclusions**

- (1) The IA process and its scrutiny become more formalised and the importance of its content is diminished when political support is not explicitly stated.**

Although the RIA process is firmly embedded in the legislative process in some countries, without explicit and real backing from the political level, it may start to lose significance as ministries' and practitioners' resistance grows stronger. This can have significant implications especially in times of crisis, when a significant amount of legislation is introduced without adequate ex ante analysis and there is no demand for it from the political level. Doing so increases the likelihood that this pattern may transfer to more traditional, non-crisis legislation.

- (2) Engaging rule-makers and oversight bodies in the formulation of a political package can aid in achieving objectives drawn up by those with first-hand experience.**

As discretion is taken away from individuals with practical knowledge of the subject, the fact that the scope and measures of new law tend to be essentially political decisions lowers the overall quality of new legislation. An intriguing perspective on how bottom-up process to garner political support for concrete issues can take shape is increased involvement of rule-makers and oversight bodies in the development of a political reform package. Then, rather than the other way around, the legislation is modified to match the political climate. However, this can fuel discussion about the risk of undermining the code of conduct and the politicisation of civil servants.

- (3) The independence of the oversight bodies is heavily dependent on impartiality and objectivity, which can be utilized by various parties to their advantage.**

The fundamental goals of the oversight bodies, namely to help create the finest legislation for the country, align with those of the various political parties and other related stakeholders. Political discourse can be supported and validated by thorough examination and impact assessment, thus politicians may frequently seek the advice of an impartial body to aid them enact meaningful laws. Regularly updating decision-makers and the general public on these bodies' activities is an excellent way to raise awareness.