



Brussels, 6 November 2025
(OR. en)

14684/25

LIMITE

COMPET 1080
MI 841
IND 486

NOTE

From: Trio Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: Faster approvals and permits for innovative technologies

In view of the discussion at the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (High Level) on 18 November 2025, delegations will find in Annex a Trio Presidency discussion paper on ‘Faster approvals and permits for innovative technologies’.

High Level Group on Competitiveness and Growth – Meeting of 18 November 2025**Faster approvals and permits for innovative technologies****Discussion Paper**

Geopolitical realities demand strengthening the competitiveness of our industries. As Draghi warns, unless we break down bottlenecks and accelerate the journey of innovation from lab to market, Europe will fall behind and lose influence on the global stage. Powering the EU's next industrial transformation requires bold projects and breakthrough technologies.

At the heart of this effort lie the challenges of project permitting and product approval, which, time and again, are cited as top barriers for industry across the EU. They are a principal obstacle preventing European businesses from bringing innovation to market at the pace our global position demands. The impact is especially severe when it comes to innovative technologies. Innovative projects and products often do not align with existing procedures due to lacking or outdated legislation, insufficient expertise among authorities, and a lack of harmonised standards across countries and regions. As a result, approval processes become slower, more costly, and more complex and thereby negatively influence the European economy in two ways. Firstly, our traditional industries are deprived of timely access to new solutions that could increase efficiency, cut emissions, and optimise processes. Secondly, innovative companies may ultimately decide to relocate their activities outside the EU.

A recent survey among Innovation Fund projects¹ highlights that the scale and complexity of permitting requirements, especially regarding environmental and construction approvals, is a major cause of unpredictability, delay and rising project costs. Furthermore, 43% of respondents identified the novel nature of their operations as a challenge in existing permitting procedures, and over a quarter assessed the institutional capacity of permitting authorities to evaluate their projects as low or very low. Addressing these systemic challenges head-on is a must win battle, to ensure Europe is fertile ground for both today's traditional companies and tomorrow's innovators.

In the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA) and the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), the approach to faster procedures can be characterised as *targeted acceleration* of procedures through one-stop shops, specific time limits, regulatory sandboxes, bundling of environmental assessments and fast-tracks for pre-identified, high-priority strategic projects. If implemented correctly, this method can accelerate certain key projects and large-scale investments, concentrate administrative resources and build expertise. However, implementation remains patchy. According to the Commission, many Member States have yet to fully empower Single Point of Contacts (SPOC) or harmonise processes although the majority of Member States have implemented the permitting provisions foreseen in CRMA and NZIA. During the last meeting of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry), some Member States implied that one-stop shops, SPOC's, time-limits, fast tracks for strategic projects and regulatory sandboxes are not the appropriate industrial policy tools for the upcoming Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) as regards faster permitting.

The *general simplification agenda* also holds potential for faster approvals and permits e.g. the Omnibus V package on defence readiness and the upcoming Omnibus package on environmental rules. By reducing, harmonising or eliminating administrative steps and obligations across the board the simplification agenda can reduce barriers for more types of projects and deliver systemic efficiency. However, simplification in itself will not provide the necessary guidance and certainty for companies with innovative strategic projects and products. Complex innovative projects and products will often require more case-specific guidance and dialogue, since they challenge or fall outside of existing regulatory frameworks, and face double regulation when operating across countries and sectors.

¹ European Commission: European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency, 2025 annual knowledge sharing report of the Innovation Fund – De-risking innovative low-carbon technologies, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2926/9356836>

The central question is how to best combine the *targeted acceleration instruments* with the *general simplification agenda* to make sure that we end up with a conducive environment for rapid and predictable project permitting and product approval. The question has important implications for the upcoming negotiations on the IAA, and for future legislative proposals aimed at promoting innovative technologies, such as the Biotech Act, the Quantum Act, the Innovation Act, the Chips Act 2.0, and the Advanced Materials Act. The HLG discussion aims to explore Members States' opinions on synergy and tension between the targeted acceleration instruments and the general simplification agenda.

In light of the above, we would like to bring your attention to the following question for the debate (we ask delegations to limit their interventions to 2 minutes):

1. Which lessons learned from your experience with the implementation of targeted acceleration instruments, such as NZIA and CRMA, should be taken into account in the design of upcoming industrial policy initiatives for faster approvals and permits for innovative technologies? What role should simplification play in that regard?