



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Memorandum

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**Ministry of Industry, Employment
and
Communications
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SimpLex Division

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**Administrative Tools for Preventing and Addressing
Customer Complaints**

Mr Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to address the tools mentioned in the agenda but also give you a brief introduction on the work of the Simplex Division, a new function within the Government Offices in Sweden.

Plain-language drafting

Sweden has long traditions of plain language work. For the past thirty years the Swedish government has been working to make the communication between the administration and the public more effective.

At the division for Legal and Linguistic Revision in the Ministry of Justice there are four language experts and five legal advisors who provide legal and linguistic services to the officials.

The ultimate aim of the division is to reassure democracy. Since clarity is imposed on legal documents through paragraphs in the Swedish legislation the gap between the citizens and the politicians is narrowed.

There is also the Plain Swedish Group appointed by the government in 1994 to encourage state agencies all over Sweden to start plain language projects. The group is best described as a forum for discussion and new ideas.

The Silent-is-consent-rule

The Silent-is-consent-rule has no real function in Sweden since Swedish businesses can act on the market without licenses. There are nevertheless some exemptions as to activities concerning life, health and environment. Hence dentists, doctors, lawyers and businesses that work with dangerous activities for example pollutions, have to be licensed.

Time limits for administrative decision-making

The general rule in Swedish governance when it comes to public access to documents is a rule of openness. Every restriction to this rule must be stipulated by law. The exemptions are for instance when it is in the interest of the safety of the nation or for the protection of individuals personal or economic matters.

This open governance is for example expressed by the fact that legislation stipulates that decisions should be presented to the public promptly.

E-government

Even though Sweden is in the front-line of Internet-solutions it was just recently the Entrepreneurs guide was launched. The Entrepreneurs guide is a fast, smooth and smart web service that simplifies the entrepreneurs' information retrieval. The government initiated the entrepreneurs Guide by instructing the Swedish Agency for business Development to develop Internet based electronic services targeted at prospective and active entrepreneurs for information and handling matters.

Sweden is now taking about the 24-hour agencies. The customers have access to the agencies information, application forms and other documents 24 hours a day.

Hopefully, the public will in the future, when the electronic signature problem is solved, have the possibility to communicate with the authorities on a non-paper-basis.

SimpLex

In 1998 the government established the SimpLex Division at the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications. SimpLex target groups are Government Offices, Executive Authorities and Committees of Inquiry.

The aim is to achieve better and simpler regulation and thereby reducing the administrative burdens on SMEs. All draft proposals of laws and regulations and all directives to committees of inquiry that might propose regulation on SMEs, are being scrutinized by SimpLex. With the proposals must follow an impact assessment that follows a checklist. The checklist consists of 12 points that has to be answered. The assessment of a certain law is presented to Parliament when the bill is submitted.

Up till today SimpLex receives between 1-2 proposals a day that have effects on SMEs.

The same 12-point-checklist also applies to authorities and agencies. They too have to assess and analyse all relevant proposals of binding regulations that they are about to issue.

SimpLex has also the mandate to identify existing laws and regulations that are in need to be simplified from a small business perspective. Finally, SimpLex has an on-going better regulation training programme for the ministries, the relevant agencies and committees of Inquiry.