



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 14.06.2022
C(2022) 4141 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by Union citizens residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals (recast) {COM(2021) 733 final}.

The Commission particularly welcomes the Bundesrat's appreciation of the proposal's objectives. This proposal, adopted as part of the Reinforcing democracy and integrity of elections package, was presented together with the proposal for a Council Directive laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for Union citizens residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals (recast) {COM(2021) 732 final}.

Participation in the democratic process is essential for a healthy democratic society. The Commission is determined to enable EU citizens residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals ('mobile EU citizens') to effectively enjoy their fundamental right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections under the same conditions as the nationals of that Member State.

Interinstitutional discussions on the proposal are at an early stage. The concerns raised by the Bundesrat in its Opinion will be given further consideration in the future discussions on the proposal. In response to the Bundesrat's comments on the proposal, the Commission would like to refer to the attached annex.

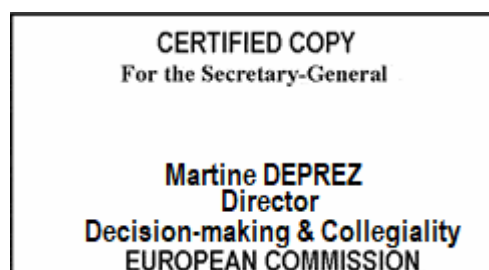
The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Didier Reynders
Member of the Commission*

*Ms Christine Schwarz-Fuchs
President of the Bundesrat
Dr Karl Renner-Ring 3
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Annex

The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Bundesrat in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following clarifications.

As underlined in the Bundesrat's Opinion, the measures proposed by the legislative initiative largely build on existing good practices. They balance the need to foster the broad and inclusive democratic participation of mobile EU citizens with the administrative obligations borne by Member States.

The Commission considers that, whilst the knowledge of the language of the Member State of residence may further foster the inclusion of mobile EU citizens in the social and political life of that Member State, it should not and cannot be prerequisite to exercising this fundamental right to vote and stand as candidate as EU citizen. In this regard, the Commission's proposal would not go beyond similar obligations with regard to communication on electoral rights that Member States already have from other instruments of EU law, such as Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services.

Regarding the introduction of standardised templates for the registration of voters on the electoral roll, the Commission takes note of Bundesrat's concern. However, it considers that having a standard format for such a procedure, available in all EU languages, would help simplify the overall experience of voter registration for EU mobile citizens, and facilitate Member States' communication with those same citizens.

With regard to the designation of a single authority responsible of the provision of information to mobile EU citizens in federal Member States, the Commission takes note of the Bundesrat's concern. At the same time, the Commission will support the co-legislators to ensure that mobile EU citizens get the necessary assistance.
