

Brussels, 14 DEC. 2010
C/2010/ 8835

Dear President,

The European Commission has received the opinion of the Czech Senate relating to the 2009 annual report on relations between the Commission and the National Parliaments {COM(2010) 291} and welcomes your Assembly's intention to make use of the new procedures introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, as well as your active participation in the political dialogue with the European Commission in general.

Convinced that the subsidiarity control mechanism is to be seen as a specific aspect of a much broader, political relationship with national Parliaments, the Commission underlines the importance of the political dialogue launched by President Barroso in 2006. In this framework, the Commission examines carefully all opinions it receives from national Parliaments, and replies to them in a substantial way.

As regards the content and the level of detail of our answers to your opinions, I would like to assure you that the Commission is constantly working to make sure that its replies meet national Parliaments' expectations and provide a real added value, while there might always be situations where the Commission in its formal replies to national Parliaments has to avoid prejudging its position in an ongoing negotiation process. Taking also into account that the political dialogue is increasing steadily in intensity and volume, I believe we have made important progress in this respect during the last few years, and we will of course strive for further improvements. In this respect, any comment from your side is most welcome, even as a direct reaction or follow-up answer to one of our concrete replies. Our dialogue should be a true, open dialogue, and not necessarily confined to "one round" (opinion –reply).

Let me add that the Commission also welcomes your practice to regularly examine its Work Programme and that, beyond the issue of subsidiarity, we would very much welcome your comments and input to feed into the preparations for the President's yearly State of the Union speech, and for the following Work Programme. We are convinced that national Parliaments should not be heard only downstream but also upstream. They would thus be in a position to help us build a real consensus on where the EU should focus its policy. Should you wish so, my fellow Commissioners and I would be most happy to meet your Assembly in order to discuss in more detail those issues of particular importance to you.

Mr. Přemysl Sobotka
President of the Senate of
the Parliament of the Czech Republic
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I would like to seize the occasion to thank the Czech Senate for its active and constructive approach in its relationship with the European Commission. This is an important step towards further improving the process of policy formulation and spreading the ownership of our initiatives at national level. I therefore hope the Commission will continue to benefit from your Assembly's opinions and am looking forward to further developing our contacts and exchanges.

Yours sincerely,