



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 19. 3. 2012  
C/2012/ 1795 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission welcomes the opinion of the Senát on the Communication on the conclusions of the Fifth Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion {COM(2010)642}, and apologises for the extremely long delay in responding.*

*This opinion represents an important contribution to the debate on the next multi-annual financial framework presented by the Commission on 29 June 2011, and in the discussions on the new cohesion policy regulatory framework for the period 2014-2020 presented on 6 October 2011. The proposals are currently being discussed in the Council and European Parliament.*

*The Commission greatly appreciates the support expressed by the Senát for some of the core elements of the Fifth Cohesion Report, such as the reinforced strategic approach, the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Contracts, thematic concentration and a new intermediate category of regions. All these elements are reflected in the Commission's legislative proposals, aiming to ensure that the funds effectively contribute to addressing the challenges set by the Europe 2020 strategy.*

*The Commission particularly welcomes the emphasis put by the Senát on ensuring that future cohesion policy should remain open to all regions of the European Union. This is of key importance with a view of the multiple challenges facing European regions in a rapidly changing global context. The Commission's proposal foresees cohesion policy to continue to be implemented in all regions in Europe.*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH  
President of the Senate of the Parliament  
of the Czech Republic  
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4  
CZ – 118 01  
PRAGUE 1*

*The Commission fully shares the view that the future cohesion policy framework should allow for the implementation of comprehensive, integrated approaches which address the specific development needs of Member States and regions and that place-based approaches have a particular role to play in delivering cohesion goals. This is the reason why the Commission has proposed a number of common provisions for the five funds with structural aims, namely the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development and the European Fisheries Fund. The new proposals will enable a more flexible framework to implement comprehensive development strategies and create better synergies between the different instruments.*

*I look forward to continuing our political dialogue on this very important issue.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*