



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 21/11/2011
EP/2011/8265 final.

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic for its opinion on the Communication of the Commission Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow {COM(2011)66}.

The Commission shares the Senate's assessment of the importance of high quality early childhood education and care and its statement that the organisation and content of such provision is a matter of competence of the Member States, as defined under Article 165 of the Treaty.

The Commission confirms that its role will be to support Member States according to Article 165, which states that "The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity".

Inter-alia the Commission will base its actions on the invitation contained in the Council Conclusions 2011/C 175/03 (OJ of 15.6.2011) to the Commission, namely:

- 1) to support the Member States in identifying and exchanging good policies and practices via the open method of coordination;*
- 2) to broaden the evidence base of early childhood education and care, by building on and supplementing international research with EU-wide research and making the results of such research more easily available;*

*Mr. Milan Štěch
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of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
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3) *within the Education and Training 2020 ('ET2020') strategic framework, to monitor and report on progress towards the 'ET2020' benchmark target for participation in early childhood education, and towards achieving the aims set out in these Conclusions of broader access and better quality.*

Such actions will not entail the development of legislative measures.

I hope that these clarifications address the specific issues raised in the Senate's opinion, and I look forward to continue our political dialogue on this and other matters.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*