



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18. IV 2012
C/2012/2467 final

Dear President,

I would like to thank the Senate of the Czech Republic for its opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime {COM(2011)275 final}, and to apologise for the undue delay in replying to it.

The Commission welcomes the Senate's view that the directive represents a step forward for the cross-border protection of victims.

With regard to the point raised on the content of the proposed act, the Commission would like to offer the following observations. The Senate expressed concern that the requirement for free of charge translations set out in Article 6 of the proposal is defined too broadly and could lead to additional financial costs for the Member States.

The primary objective of providing the victims with the right to free of charge translation is to safeguard that the victims are able to exercise all rights conferred by the Directive on an equal basis, irrespective of which Member State they are in. The right to translation has a high added value and allows justice to be effectively achieved once the victim can properly explain the circumstances of the crime it has suffered and provide the evidence in a manner understandable to the authorities. This will be ensured if a free of charge interpretation is available at least for the most important phases of the proceedings: during questioning of the victim and for their participation in court hearings.

In the course of the ongoing discussions with the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission will of course be open to discussing definitions and suggestions for ensuring that the rights are drafted so as to achieve an optimum balance between the costs and the benefits of the proposed Directive.

I hope these clarifications address the concern expressed in the Senate's opinion and I look forward to continuing our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senate of the
Parliament of the Czech Republic
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