



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 24.10.2012  
C(2012) 7408 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Communication on proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework {COM(2011) 398\_500\_510 final} and apologises for the long delay in replying.*

*The proposals that were tabled by the Commission on 29 June 2011 and to which you refer have since been supplemented by the adoption, between October and December 2011, of a full range of proposals for sectoral programmes and instruments designed to implement the next financial framework. These proposals provide more extensive information on the Commission's approach in the relevant policy areas, some of which are mentioned in your Opinion.*

*On the total volume of proposed funding for the financial framework, the Commission would like to draw your attention to the fact that the technical update of the MFF proposal (taking into account the accession of the Republic of Croatia, new regional GDP data and updated GDP forecasts) has recently been adopted.*

*Concerning cohesion policy, the Commission agrees that it should continue to support economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity between the regions of the European Union. The EU budget is a budget for investment and this goal needs to be reflected in all policies, particularly in cohesion policy. The Commission takes note of the Senát's doubts about the proposed category of transition regions, the proposed performance-based reserve of 5% of the structural funds under the Common Strategic Framework and the conditionality linked to macroeconomic stability. The Commission considers that these aspects are essential in order to ensure that the implementation of the programmes achieves the desired results.*

*The Commission takes note of your reservations concerning the proposed Connecting Europe Facility. The Commission agrees that it is necessary that Member States are involved in the approval of the guidelines and the projects of common interest that relate to their territory, as provided for in Article 172 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and considers that this aspect is fully taken into account in the ongoing negotiations on the proposal.*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH  
President of the Senate of the  
Parliament of the Czech Republic  
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PRAGUE 1*

*On the Common Agricultural Policy, the Commission takes note of the Senát's emphasis on the support to active farmers and their contribution to wider objectives that go beyond agricultural policy. Indeed, many of the major challenges ahead (food security, climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, rural depopulation) are linked to the approach taken on agricultural policy. The Commission CAP funding proposal is carefully balanced. The Commission proposals for the reform of the CAP after 2013 addresses these issues with more targeted income support and a fairer distribution between farmers, regions and Member States, within the wider objectives of strengthening the competitiveness, sustainability and permanence of agriculture throughout the European Union. A key element of the Commission's approach is the proposed greening of direct payments to enable optimal use of natural resources.*

*As regards the financing of the EU budget, the Commission is convinced that there is a need to re-align EU financing with the principles of autonomy, transparency and fairness and to ensure that the EU is able to achieve its policy objectives. The Commission believes that its proposal for new own resources would ensure a fair distribution of burden between the Member States and the critical mass necessary to reduce substantially the Member States' contributions to the EU budget. The current system, which is overly dependent on direct contributions from the Member States, does not ensure neutrality and is not consistent with the focus on EU added value.*

*I hope that these clarifications addresses the concerns raised in your Opinion and I look forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Senát, particularly on the future financing of the European Union budget.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*