



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2013) 8221 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion concerning the Communication on “A blueprint for a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union. Launching a European Debate” {COM(2012) 777 final}.

The crisis demonstrated that stronger, more integrated financial, budgetary and economic frameworks are needed to ensure economic and social welfare for EU citizens. It was the need to ensure a long-term vision for the strengthening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) that made the Commission come forth with its Blueprint, presenting objectives, tools and instruments for the short, medium and long-term, to achieve the ambition of a genuine EMU. As stated in the sub-heading of the Communication, the Commission sees the Blueprint Communication as a tool to launch a European debate. This debate is on-going and the Opinion of the Senát provides an important contribution to it.

As regards the Senát's call for more detailed analysis, the Blueprint Communication has set out in rather concrete terms the rationale of the actions envisaged for the short term, such as the initial elements of banking union, on ex ante coordination of major national reforms and a possible convergence and competitiveness instrument. Furthermore, in its call for a roadmap for more integrated financial, budgetary and economic frameworks, the European Council recognised that stabilisation and return of confidence in the euro area would also depend on a clear medium- and long term vision for a genuine and deep EMU. The Blueprint was, however, not the place for a detailed analytical report on the many different options and elements presented for the medium- and long term. It was intended to set out the elements of a vision for deep and genuine EMU, with concrete objectives, timetable and instruments. The

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Commission has presented analyses on some of the elements mentioned in the Blueprint, inter alia in its Green paper on the feasibility of the common issuance of Stability Bonds¹.

The Opinion highlights the importance of evaluating introduced measures. The Commission agrees with this, which is also why the legislative texts for both the six-pack and the two-pack include a reference to carrying out an evaluation by end-2014. Furthermore, the Opinion raises the importance of carrying out impact assessments. Before the Commission proposes new concrete initiatives it assesses the potential economic, social and environmental consequences that they may have. It is a process that prepares evidence for political decision-makers on the advantages and disadvantages of possible policy options by assessing their potential impact, and is subject to clear rules and guidance. The rules concerning impact assessment can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index_en.htm.

Concerning ex-ante coordination of plans for major economic policy reforms and the introduction of a Convergence and Competitiveness Instrument the Commission would like to emphasize the consultative nature of the two Communications, which set out ideas, suggestions and questions on the usefulness of such processes and on the form they could take. Discussions on these issues will continue in the coming months, including on the possible scope of reforms and possible setup of a financial solidarity mechanism.

The Commission also agrees with the Senát on the importance of ensuring that wherever future integration towards a genuine EMU involves further shared management of sovereignty and hence responsibility at the European level, this should be accompanied by commensurate steps to strengthen democratic legitimacy and accountability. We need to ensure high quality politics in a multilevel system, in respect of subsidiarity. Democratic accountability should be ensured at the level where the respective executive decision is taken while taking due account of the level where the decision has an impact.

Given the interdependencies of the decisions of Parliaments in the EU, inter-parliamentary co-operation is a useful element in that context. The Commission supports efforts to reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the European Semester process and the ownership of national Parliaments in that respect. It is a matter ultimately pertaining to national Parliaments and the European Parliament to determine jointly the precise organisation and modalities of inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

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Vice-President*

¹ COM(2011) 818 final