



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2014) 7496 final*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants {COM(2013) 919 final}, on the proposal for a Directive on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants and amending Directive 2003/35/EC {COM(2013) 920 final}, on the Communication – “A Clean Air Programme for Europe” {COM(2013) 918 final}, and on the proposal for a Council Decision on the acceptance of the Amendment to the 1999 Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone {COM(2013) 917 final}, which form the “Clean Air Policy Package”.

The Commission welcomes the Senát's support for the Clean Air Policy Package's aim to reduce emissions of air pollutants so as to enable Member States to progress towards the objectives they have set for themselves in the 7th Environmental Action Programme¹, to reduce air pollution and its impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity with the long-term aim of not exceeding critical loads and levels, and to improve outdoor air quality, moving closer to WHO recommended levels. It also welcomes the Senát's call on all Member States to make every effort to ensure that their citizens enjoy clean air. The transboundary nature of air pollution makes it essential that Member States take coordinated action to address it.

The Commission notes the Senát's support for the Czech Government's intention to prepare its own assessment of the impacts of the proposed emission ceilings on the Czech economy. While the Commission is confident that its analysis was based on the best information available at the time, also with regard to consistency across the Member States, it will of course take into account any new information provided in the course of negotiations.

The Commission recognises also the Senát's support for the Czech Government's aim to maintain the stability of regulation of medium combustion plants, which are already regulated in the Czech Republic. As regards the Senát's call for convergence of national

¹ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’, OJ L 354, 28/12/2013, p. 171–200

emission limits in the EU, considering the significant cross-border impacts of transfer of harmful emissions, it is this aim which the Commission's proposal for a Directive on medium combustion plants is designed to achieve, by ensuring cost-effective reductions from the sector across the EU. Furthermore, the adoption of emission limits at EU level would create a favourable environment for technology providers to develop innovative lower cost solutions, thereby reducing the costs of emission reduction from medium combustion plants.

As regards the reactions of some actors that the proposed targets would require additional costs in certain sectors with a significant impact on the competitiveness of the European industry, the Commission points out that all the impacts of its proposals were carefully assessed. According to this assessment only two sectors, i.e. refineries and agriculture, could suffer a net loss of output even assuming no further development of pollution control in our trading partners. These impacts would be relatively small and were substantially mitigated in the final proposals. For agriculture the impacts, particularly on the smallest farms, could be further reduced by use of the Rural Development Funds. As made clear in the Communication, the new air policy would provide a stimulus to the economy through enhanced labour productivity and markets for environmental technology and services. The policy would increase employment, including both new employment and increased labour productivity, by around 100 000 full time job equivalents, of which around 40 000 would be new jobs created. In addition, European business would be well-placed to benefit from the substantial investment in clean technology being made in advanced and emerging economies.

The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council in which your government is represented.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*