



*Brussels, 28.9.2017
C(2017) 6276 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 Communication on a More Effective Return Policy in the European Union - a Renewed Action Plan {COM(2017) 200 final} and the Commission Recommendation on making returns more effective when implementing the Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council {C(2017) 1600 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Senát's support for the Renewed Action Plan and its commitment to the practical implementation of the Commission's recommendations with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the Union return policy. The return of all those who do not have the right to stay in the EU remains a top priority for the Commission. It is the way to preserve public trust in the proper functioning of the European asylum and migration management system.

The Commission is pleased to inform the Senát that some of the points contained in the Communication which the Senát's Opinion explicitly mentions are in the process of being implemented. In particular, the Commission has already committed an additional EUR 200 million under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund to support Member States in their efforts to return irregular migrants, both through Specific Actions with a view to creating EU added value through joint programmes of Member States and through top-ups of Member States' National Programmes. In parallel, the discussion at technical level with Member State experts continues with a view to swiftly updating the Return Handbook in line with the Recommendation.

The Commission would like to stress that its Recommendation is in line with the international and European Union framework. The Recommendation and the forthcoming revision of the Return Handbook aim to provide guidance on concrete and immediate actions to address legal and practical obstacles to return and to achieve more effective return procedures within the existing legislative framework of the Return Directive¹.

¹ Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals. OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 98.

The Commission agrees with the Senát that the actions taken by Member States to implement the Recommendation must go hand-in-hand with a robust and credible common EU approach towards third countries that do not cooperate on the readmission of their own nationals. The Commission will continue to address this point as part of its discussions with third countries in the context of the Partnership Framework on Migration.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitri Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*