



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.12.2017  
C(2017)8508 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion concerning the Communication on School Development and Excellent Teaching for a Great Start in Life {COM(2017) 248 final}, the Communication on a renewed European Union agenda for higher education {COM(2017) 247 final} and the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on tracking graduates {COM(2017) 249 final}.*

*Investing in young people, in general, and through education, in particular, are key priorities on the European Union agenda. The quality of education is decisive for young people's prospects and life chances as it lays down the foundations for personal development and active citizenship, on the one hand, and represents the starting point for a successful professional career and the best protection against unemployment and poverty, on the other. High quality education for all will help the European Union achieve its economic and social objectives and fuel Member States' competitiveness and innovation.*

*The Commission is therefore committed to complementing, supporting or assisting Member States in devising and implementing reforms to their education systems with a view to achieving high quality learning for all young people. To this end, the Commission outlined in its Communications how and where European Union assistance can be most effective, acknowledging that the responsibility in the field of education resides with the Member States (Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).*

*The Commission shares the Senát's view that the quality and attractiveness of the teaching profession are key for producing high-quality educational outcomes. As set out in the Communication on School Development and Excellent Teaching for a Great Start in Life, the Commission will support the teaching profession by, inter alia, developing guidance on policies that can improve the careers and professional development of teachers.*

*The Commission will also support cooperation between the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education and Member States to promote equity in education and*

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

*provide opportunities to students with special educational needs to participate in mainstream education.*

*The Commission furthermore agrees that all young people should have the chance to develop a full range of key competences, including transversal skills. The ongoing review of the 2006 European Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning will help to further strengthen competence development in education and training.*

*With regard to higher education, the Commission agrees with the importance of students to acquire the knowledge, skills and competences, both subject-based and transferable, to thrive in a rapidly changing education and employment environment. The Commission wishes to emphasise that it fully respects the autonomy of higher education institutions: the actions in the renewed European Union Agenda for Higher Education are designed to support, rather than instruct, governments and higher education institutions.*

*Lastly, with regard to graduate tracking, the Commission shares the opinion of the Senát that the initiative should be fully transparent and reflect the differences in national educational programmes. The Commission proposal encourages Member States to develop national tracking systems, use administrative data and graduate surveys and cooperate with different Member States precisely with a view to improve qualitative data analysis and comparison. It seeks to improve both the quality and availability of information on the achievements of graduates.*

*Finally, the Commission would like to inform the Senát that the ideas and actions set out in the Communication, as well as other Member States' initiatives were discussed by the Education Ministers at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council on 20 November 2017. Following these deliberations, the Council adopted the Recommendation as well as conclusions on a renewed European Union agenda for higher education.*

*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,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Tibor Navracsics  
Member of the Commission*