



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.11.2017  
C(2017) 7425 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU {COM(2017)253 final}.*

*In putting forward this proposal, the Commission is delivering on its commitment in 2015 to present a new initiative taking a broader perspective to improve lives of working parents and carers.*

*The Commission welcomes the Senát's positive outlook in relation to the proposal and takes note of the concerns expressed as regards extending to 12 years the age of the child in relation to whom parental leave may be taken. The reason for this extension is the need of parents to stay with children beyond their early childhood. The extension allows parents more flexibility in deciding on when it is more appropriate to take leave, which in turn will facilitate take-up by fathers, thereby supporting a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. The age of 12 was chosen because it allows parents to accompany their children in a crucial period of their life: namely before they gain greater autonomy and maturity.*

*As regards the recommendation of the Senát for more flexible rules regarding the entitlement to adequate income during parental, paternity and carers' leave, evidence shows that an adequate level of compensation (set at least at a level equivalent to sick pay level) has a significant impact on the take-up of entitlements, especially by men, who are often first-earners. Not including an appropriate level of compensation in the proposal for a Directive would be counter-productive since it would not encourage or support men to take leave and would consequently push second-earners, most often women, to take it.*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH  
President of the Senát  
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*Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators concerning the proposal are now underway, and the Opinion of the Sénat will inform the discussions in the ongoing negotiations with the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission trusts that an agreement will be reached in the near future.*

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Sénat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Valdis Dombrovskis  
Vice-President*