



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 27.2.2018  
C(2018) 1228 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the proposal amending Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations {COM(2017) 481 final}.*

*Democracy is one of the fundamental values on which the European Union is founded. To ensure the functioning of a representative democracy at the European level, the Treaties determine that the citizens of the European Union are directly represented in the European Parliament. Political parties at Union level contribute to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union, a point reinforced in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Political parties and foundations satisfying a number of conditions were offered (already by the current Regulation from 2014) the opportunity to become European legal entities by registering at European level, and thereby enhancing access to European financial support. Despite the progress made with the existing rules, a number of loopholes have been identified. To this end the objective of the Commission's amending proposal is to close these loopholes and to increase transparency still before the 2019 European Parliaments' elections.*

*The current rules about who can sponsor the registration of a European political party are prone to abuse. The Commission therefore proposed to allow only political parties, and no longer individuals, to sponsor the registration of a European political party. In order to make sure that voters know what candidates stand for before entering the voting booth, national parties' websites should show the political programme, logo and gender balance of the European party they are affiliated with. Such transparency would become a condition for European political parties to apply for funding.*

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

*In addition to make the European Union funding received by European parties more proportionate to their representation in the European Parliament, the Commission proposed to lower the fixed pool of money distributed to all parties from 15% to 5% of the total budget. This will increase the share of funding distributed in proportion to the number of Members of European Parliament elected, better reflecting the wishes of the European citizens.*

*Furthermore, in order to ensure that European parties are given the means to better organise themselves, the amending proposal lowers the co-financing requirement to 10% for European political parties and 5% for European political foundations.*

*Finally, in order to tackle fraud and to be able to recover misused or misspent amounts, the Commission's proposal better equips the independent Authority by clarifying its power to de-register a party or foundation which either ceases to comply with the registration criteria, or whose registration was based on incorrect or misleading information. In the same vein the proposal extends the scope of possible measures to recover funds, by also providing for recovery from the individuals responsible for breaching the rules.*

*The Commission welcomes the Senát's broad support for the aims of the proposal. It takes good note of the Senát's recommendation to only remove a European political party from the register on the basis that the party does not fulfil the condition of parliamentary representation in at least one quarter of the Member States in case the party fails to meet this condition for a certain period of time.*

*The Commission is a strong supporter of having vibrant and dynamic political parties at European level. Fostering political debate across Europe on European issues through vibrant European political parties is a long standing Commission objective. The parties, at the level of the European Union, should have a genuine European dimension also by fulfilling the appropriate representation criteria.*

*The Commission also takes good note of the Senát's call related to practical difficulties with an application of the requirement that a European political party shall include in its application for financing evidence demonstrating that its member parties have continuously published on their websites, during 12 months preceding the filing of the application, the political programme and logo of the European political party.*

*The Commission is currently entering the phase of the legislative process where both the European Parliament and the Council are involved. Various aspects of this proposal will be subject to negotiations and the outcome of these negotiations is not known at this stage.*

*The Commission notes that the Opinion as submitted, underlines full support for rationale behind the changes and would like to thank the Senate for its support.*

*I hope that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Sénat and look forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*