



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.10.2017  
C(2017) 6750 final*

*Dear Chairs,*

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

*This proposal forms part of a broader package of measures designed to address women's under-representation in the labour market and to encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. As such, it aims at ensuring the implementation of the principle of equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work.*

*The above aims are pursued by modernising the already existing European Union legal framework in the area of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements. This will allow parents and carers to better reconcile their work and caring duties. The proposed directive builds on the existing rights and strengthens them, as well as introducing new rights. It therefore maintains the level of protection already offered by the European Union acquis in the area of work-life balance.*

*The Commission takes seriously the concerns expressed by the Folketing as regards the need for European Union action and the respect for national arrangements. The Commission would like to point out that the modernisation of the existing legal framework aiming at setting common minimum standards for work-life balance policies can only be achieved by action at Union level rather than by individual Member States alone. Only European Union*

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*action will ensure that sufficient progress is achieved in all Member States in this policy area. It is necessary to create a level playing field across Member States; that is why the Commission proposes minimum standards, which allow Member States to implement more favourable provisions if this is deemed appropriate.*

*Regarding the Folketing's concern about the respect of the freedom of individuals and families, the Commission would like to emphasise that, by strengthening existing rights and introducing new ones, it aims to offer parents and carers more opportunities and choice on how best to reconcile professional and family responsibilities.*

*Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the proposal are now underway and 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 Folketing and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Valdis Dombrovskis  
Vice-President*