



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 14.5.2013  
C(2013) 2830 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its detailed Opinion concerning the Commission Communication on a Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery, {COM(2012) 582 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's support, in particular on the basic approach of highlighting the importance of industry for growth and well-being. It should be pointed out that a real partnership between the EU, Member States and industry will be needed for successful implementation of the European industrial policy. We would expect that the priorities set out in the Communication will be adapted by Member States in accordance to their national needs. Such joint action of industry and public authorities also means that Member States should build on their specific strengths and characteristics, applying "smart specialisation" also when making use of cohesion and structural funds.

### Competition and markets, priority action lines

The Commission's policy approach is characterized by a focus on framework conditions. It is based on a horizontal approach, without any attempt at "picking winners". The focus on six Priority Action Lines is a reflection of consultations with stakeholders on areas where concrete action can be helpful, but these are technologies that are usually not tied to a specific sector. What they have in common is that they are generally considered as having considerable growth potential. All actors will of course have the opportunity to focus on these six action lines or other actions as they see fit.

The Commission's work on Smart Regulation continues. As you may know, the tools of competitive proofing and fitness checks are being increasingly used and fine-tuned by the Commission. Fitness checks are now being launched for the petroleum refining and aluminium sectors.

### The importance of SMEs

The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's emphasis on the importance of SMEs. It takes note of the comments of the Bundesrat, and would like to point out that the Enterprise Europe Network is of course specially focused on the needs of SMEs.

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President of the Bundesrat  
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Education and skills

*It is clear that the competence for many policy areas lies largely with Member States rather than at EU level. This concerns industrial policy as well as for instance education and skills. While the remarks of the Bundesrat that education policy is for the Member States to design and implement is of course fully valid, the Commission would nevertheless see a role for the EU in helping spread good practice in this and other areas. This is the basic aim of several Commission initiatives such as the policy guidance for effective education and training systems.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*