



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 30.04.2018  
C(2018)2444 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication to the European Parliament and the Council “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions” {COM(2017) 534 final}.*

*With this Communication, adopted in the policy context of deepening the Single Market, the Commission aims at addressing some of the legal and administrative barriers that currently hamper closer cooperation and interaction between border regions, and therefore hinder reaching all the objectives of the Single Market. It also aims at contributing to the reflection process started with the White Paper on the Future of Europe, by proposing measures and issuing recommendations that make cooperation easier for regions located at internal land borders and help citizens and businesses from these regions use their full potential.*

*The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's broad support for the actions outlined in the Communication and its support to a swift implementation of measures targeted at creating growth and jobs in the European Union border regions.*

*Concerning the Bundesrat's view that legislation and financing mechanisms should be strengthened, it is important to stress that the engagement of all relevant actors in the Member States and among border stakeholders will be highly necessary. Indeed, as the Bundesrat stated, Member States and regions have to be directly involved in dismantling existing obstacles. In this context, the Commission will appreciate the Bundesrat's support in finding solutions to border hurdles that may still be identified by companies and other stakeholders in German border regions.*

*The Commission appreciates that the Bundesrat's Opinion acknowledges the importance of European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg programmes).*

*Mr. Michael Müller  
President of the Bundesrat  
Leipziger Straße 3 - 4 D  
10117 BERLIN  
Germany*

*The Commission acknowledges the Bundesrat's concern that no additional bureaucracy should be created with the establishment of the Border Focal Point. It takes the opportunity to clarify that the Border Focal Point will not hamper the functions of any existing regional structures, as it is a small internal team working within the existing unit for cross-border cooperation in the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. The role of the Border Focal Point will be to coordinate efforts amongst Commission services to ensure the effective implementation of the actions foreseen in the Communication.*

*The Commission agrees with the statements made in points 8 and 9 of the Bundesrat's Opinion on the importance of funding mechanisms, both now and in the future. The Commission invites the Bundesrat to actively contribute to a strong Cohesion Policy and, in particular, to a strong European Territorial Cooperation. It appreciates the call that the Bundesrat addressed to the German Federal Government in that sense.*

*The Commission agrees with the Bundesrat on the need to support employment in neighbouring border regions in other countries. This line of work will be implemented by the Commission services, as foreseen in the Communication. It also takes note that the Bundesrat reserves the right to a critical review of the proposal for a European Labour Authority within the framework of the Advisory Council. The objective of this proposal, adopted on 13 March 2018, is to provide citizens and businesses working or operating in other Member States with the right information and to strengthen cooperation between the Member States to enforce fair and effective rules.*

*The Commission agrees with the Bundesrat on the importance of a regular provision of data on spatial observation of border areas. In this sense the spatial planning project "MORO – Modellvorhaben der Raumplanung", implemented by the German authorities, contributes significantly to the technical discussion. It should be noted that Commission services have been following this project closely and that further cooperation will be sought.*

*Finally, the Commission wishes to inform the Bundesrat that, as a follow-up to the Communication, the Border Focal Point has already been established in Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, and several of the actions foreseen are already under way, such as the online professional platform and the call for pilot projects.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Corina Crețu  
Member of the Commission*