

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.11.2018
C(2018) 7616 final*

Dear Chairman,

The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Reasoned Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network {COM(2018) 277 final}.

The aim of this proposal is to support the efficient and on-time implementation of the trans-European transport core network. The quick delivery of a high-quality and state-of-the-art European transport infrastructure is a pre-requisite to achieving the overall goals of the European Union's transport policy, such as decarbonisation, digitalisation and deployment of innovative solutions.

The Commission would like to stress that the measures it proposed target the trans-European transport core network, the transnational and European-wide importance of which is clear. Only by delivering the whole network can the European Union gain all of its benefits, which also requires that all parts of the network are treated with appropriate attention.

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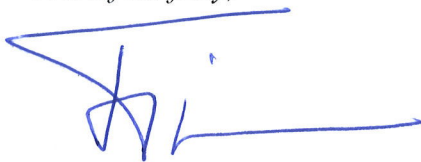
The Commission agrees that the designation of the single competent authority, which is the core of the initiative, should be in accordance with national legal frameworks and administrative set-ups. This is left to the discretion of the Member States and can be delegated on regional or modal basis (Article 5(2) of the proposed Regulation). Moreover, Commission's intention in this proposal is to reduce the complexity, improve the efficiency and increase the transparency of the procedures while other authorities concerned by the project may provide their opinion as input to the procedure, in accordance with national legislation. This contribution shall then be taken into account by the single competent authority in making the final decision. It will provide for a clear management of the overall permit granting in the case of trans-European transport core network projects.

In some Member States, these permit granting procedures are already integrated and centralised with one competent body acting as a leader for the whole process while safeguarding the competences of other players by means of binding opinions which feed into the whole process. This also explains the Commission's choice for the instrument of a Regulation.

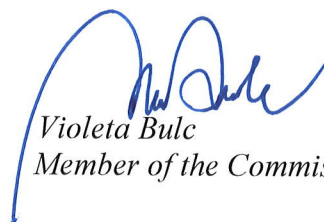
The Commission would also like to draw the attention of the Seanad Éireann to the streamlined permit procedures which are already applicable for the Projects of Common Interest in the energy sector, as provided for by Chapter III of the relevant Regulation¹. This legislative act, in force since 2013 and containing similar measures, has already proven to be effective. According to recent assessments, the expected time for clearing the permit granting procedures for energy transmission projects has been shortened from 10 years to 3.5 years².

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

Yours faithfully,



*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*



*Violeta Bulc
Member of the Commission*

¹ Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1364/2006/EC and amending Regulations (EC) No 713/2009, (EC) No 714/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009

² Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the document Commission Delegated Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the Union list of projects of common interest, SWD(2017) 425 final, based on the report of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators