



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its support for the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation establishing the "Erasmus for all" programme {COM(2011) 788 final} and welcomes the positive opinion issued in this regard. Let me apologize for the delay in replying.

The Commission particularly welcomes the Senate's recognition of the need at European level for the integration and simplification of the current programmes through a single programme covering the fields of education, training, youth and sport, within the context of the EU 2020 strategy.

The Commission fully shares the conviction expressed by the Senate on the absolutely central role of education and training in Europe 2020, while fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

The Commission is convinced that the programme "Erasmus for all" will make a significant contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy through its direct support to all sectors of education (higher education, vocational education and training, school and youth), in a lifelong learning perspective, and including the integration of the current international programs (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa and Edulink). It also welcomes the favourable comments of the Senato regarding international mobility, as well as the stress on the need for a simplification of procedures for issuing visas to foreign non-EU students going to Italy.

At the same time, the Commission takes note of the concerns relating to the allocation of 25% of total funds on the basis of performance criteria. However, the Commission is convinced that the implementation of this rule will ensure a more efficient use of European funds, as it will encourage Member States to themselves ensure efficient use of funds, as is the case of Italy in the current programmes.

As regards the concerns expressed about the provision related to the revision of the performance criteria through delegated acts, the Commission shares the opinion of the Senato that the criteria for allocating funds should be identified already in the Regulation, and integrated and corrected later if necessary.

*Mr Renato SCHIFANI
President of the
Senato della Repubblica
Piazza Madama, 1
IT – 00186 ROMA*

The use of delegated acts as provided by Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union responds to this demand. Experience of current programmes has shown a certain lack of flexibility, together with a lack of means to adapt them to the changing needs of society, and this has led to criticism by the main stakeholders from the sectors concerned.

The use of delegated acts for a possible (but not compulsory) review of performance criteria complies with the definition set on in Article 290 TFEU and is intended by the Commission as a response to these criticisms and to prevent the program from being too rigid in its implementation throughout its duration.

The Commission would like to reassure the Senato that delegated acts are not a blank check signed by Member States for the Commission. The Commission's commitment, reflected in the recitals of the proposal to conduct systematic consultations of experts ensures that Member States' opinions are taken into account. This consultation may also be extended to experts appointed by the European Parliament, if so requested, so as to ensure a high level of representation of the interests of European citizens. Finally, the right of objection provided in the proposal to the European Parliament and Council is another guarantee against any possible misuse of delegated powers.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns expressed by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*