



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the Commission's 2011 Annual Report on Subsidiarity and Proportionality {COM(2012) 373 final} as well as on the Annual report on relations between the European Commission and national Parliaments {COM(2012) 375 final}.

As the Senato della Repubblica, the Commission recognises the importance of the active participation of national Parliaments during the pre-legislative phase, and in particular in the context of public consultations. The Commission considers the exchanges with national Parliaments on their perceptions of future challenges and priorities of vital importance in order to establish a broad consensus on the overall, EU wide political priorities.

In this context, President Barroso and myself have encouraged national Parliaments on several occasions to engage in a structured debate on the Commission Work Programme (CWP), be it during the COSAC plenary meetings or bilaterally. The Commission notes that very few national Parliaments have chosen to comment on the CWP in their opinions and that the few discussions on the CWP that have taken place in COSAC have not been reflected in the Contributions adopted by COSAC.

The Commission would like to reiterate the strategic importance of the CWP for national Parliaments, as it provides an early overview of what the Commission plans, and when, and thus gives national Parliaments the possibility to prioritise, to prepare and to engage in an exchange of views with the Commission as early as possible on upcoming EU initiatives.

As regards national Parliaments' involvement in economic governance, the Commission has repeatedly underlined its commitment, as part of the European semester, to engage in a constructive dialogue between Members or senior officials of the Commission and national Parliaments, in particular following the adoption of the Annual Growth Survey and the Country Specific Recommendations. This complements the stronger involvement of the European Parliament at different stages in the European semester, starting with the "European week" at the beginning of the year, which the Commission welcomes and supports.

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The Commission will fully support the cooperation fora and procedures to be set up and implemented to ensure democratic oversight of the new economic governance structures. This debate is currently on going as part of the reflections on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union. The Commission is fully aware of its complexity and recognises the added-value of cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments, as this builds up mutual understanding and common ownership for the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) as a multilevel governance system. Concrete steps to further improve it, in accordance with Protocol N° 1 of the EU Treaties and Article 13 of the TSCG, are thus welcome, even though inter-parliamentary cooperation is not in itself sufficient to ensure democratic legitimacy for EU decisions.

In this context, the Commission has published a Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine EMU with the aim of launching a European debate on this important topic, and the December European Council agreed on a Roadmap towards a genuine EMU. The Commission will carefully analyse the contributions to this debate from national Parliaments in the context of the political dialogue.

Such contributions should feed in to an intensive pan-European political debate, which could take shape in the perspective of the 2014 European elections, as suggested by President Barroso in his State of the Union speech on 12 September 2012. In this context, the Commission is convinced that the presentation by all European political parties of their candidate for the post of Commission President would make the European choice clearer for the electors.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised in your Opinion and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue on this crucial issue with the Senato della Repubblica.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*