



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the Annual report on relations between the European Commission and national Parliaments {COM(2012) 375 final}, and apologises for the delay in replying.

While fully understanding the expectation of national Parliaments to be informed about the concrete follow-up given to the Opinions received, the Commission would, however, like to emphasise that it may not always be possible to be definitive in a written reply, either because the Commission has not yet taken a decision on the content of a forthcoming proposal or because inter-institutional negotiations are ongoing. As to your suggestion of making the impact of national Parliaments' Opinions on the legislative process more explicit, for instance by giving concrete examples in the annual reports on relations with national Parliaments, the Commission would like to stress that it conducts the political dialogue with national Parliaments in full respect of the prerogatives of the EU institutions, and that, should the Commission modify its position in the course of the legislative procedure, this would generally be the result of the combination of several factors, which would then result in an overall political consideration. National Parliaments' opinions feed into this assessment but given the complexity of the legislative process, it is extremely difficult to identify the impact of a given opinion on a legislative draft.

Concerning your comment related to the translations of Impact Assessments, the Commission is aware of the possible inconvenience for many national Parliaments of Impact Assessments for Commission proposals not being available in their respective official languages. This is a consequence of resource constraints. As you may know the Commission has proposed to reduce its staff by 5% in its MFF proposal. This inevitably has an impact on the speed and range of services it can provide. However, the Commission would like to draw your attention to the fact that it does provide national Parliaments with a summary of each impact assessment, no longer than 10 pages, which is sent to national Parliaments at the same time as the proposal itself and the detailed impact assessment. The summary is translated into all languages.

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Concerning your wish to make the impact of the political dialogue with national Parliaments on the Commission Work Programme (CWP) more visible, the Commission would like to reiterate that it 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 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 Contribution.

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 remains firmly committed to improving and deepening the political dialogue with national Parliaments. In this context, the Commission has repeatedly underlined its commitment, as part of the European semester, to engage in a constructive dialogue between Members of the Commission or senior officials 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 of course welcomes and supports.

Let me underline that 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 ongoing as part of the reflections on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union. The Commission is fully aware of its complexity, and shares the Camera dei Deputati's view on the necessity to reconcile different proposals and initiatives to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation in these areas. The Commission recognises the added-value of cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments, as this builds up mutual understanding and common ownership for 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 interparliamentary cooperation is not in itself sufficient to ensure democratic legitimacy for EU decisions.

On 28th of November, the Commission published a "Blueprint for a deep and genuine EMU", which was the Commission's input into the roadmap "Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union", published on 5 December 2012 by the President of the European Council and elaborated in close collaboration with the Presidents of the European Commission, the Eurogroup, and the European Central Bank. The conclusions of the December 2012 European Council refer to many of the proposals contained in the Commission's blueprint for the immediate term, such as ex ante coordination of major national reforms; contractual arrangements between the Member States and the EU institutions; and - linked to this - solidarity mechanisms at EU level to support the implementation of reforms. . President Van Rompuy, in close cooperation with President Barroso and in consultation with Member States, will present possible measures and a

time-bound roadmap to the June 2013 European Council. The Commission will carefully analyse reactions from national Parliaments to the ongoing reflections and discussions on the future of the EMU.

Concerning your questions related to the Eurojust and Europol regulations foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission would like to inform you that the proposal for the reform of Eurojust is programmed for the second quarter of 2013, as part of the initiative on the creation of a European Public Prosecutor Office for the protection of the financial interests of the Union. Following the consultation phase, in which national Parliaments actively participated, be it through Opinions on the Commission Communication on the procedures for the scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament, together with national Parliaments {COM(2010) 776 final} or through their participation in various meetings organised by the Commission services, the legislative proposal for Europol is currently being prepared in line with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, agreed in July 2012. The Commission will keep national Parliaments duly informed about any development in this field.

Finally, the timeliness and quality of the Commission's replies to national Parliaments' Opinions, the Commission has taken careful note of your comments, and notes that these are also reflected in the most recent COSAC Contribution adopted on 24 October in Nicosia. The Commission fully understands the concerns of national Parliaments with regard to the difficulties it has experienced in systematically respecting the self-imposed 3-month deadline but would note that these difficulties have occurred in the context of a rapid increase in the number of Opinions received. We are taking steps to avoid delays in the future.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the comments and issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*