



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.5.2013
C(2013) 2708 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations {COM(2012) 499 final}.

Whilst expressing a positive opinion on the Commission's proposal, the Camera dei Deputati raises a number of questions on which the Commission wishes to make the following observations.

(a) The draft Regulation provides, amongst the conditions for registration, for a criterion based on electoral success. Article 3(1)(b), which is identical to the corresponding provision in Regulation (EC) 2004/2003, proposes two options: either the European political party must be represented in seven Member States by Members of the European, national or regional parliaments or it must have received, in seven Member States, at least three per cent of the votes cast at the most recent elections to the European Parliament. The Commission considers that, notably with the second of the two alternative criteria, this provision is balanced and does not unduly favour Member States with a regional structure.

The Commission would also like to stress that it did not propose that the European Parliament would take into account representatives of regional assemblies with legislative powers only. This would have raised the entry barriers for new political parties and differentiated between Member States on the basis on their internal organisational structure.

(b) The draft Regulation provides, in Article 7(2), for a specific procedure to check the compliance of a European political party with the values on which the EU is founded. This procedure is inspired by Regulation (EC) 2004/2003, according to which the European Parliament shall verify, by a majority of its members, that a political party at European level continues to respect the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

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Some voices, both in the Council and in the Parliament, have been pleading in favour of a higher majority threshold within Parliament in this respect. For example, some amendments tabled to Mrs Giannakou's draft report, but rejected in the committee vote, proposed to provide for a majority of three quarters of the Members voting. The Commission considers that this is an issue which remains to be carefully examined in the context of the on-going legislative work, taking due account of Article 231 TEU and other relevant Treaty provisions.

(c) The Commission would like to reassure the Camera dei Deputati that the Commission's proposal would allow European political parties, registered as such in compliance with the Regulation, to benefit from full recognition and capacity in all Member States without any other formality. They will be granted one single legal personality which is the European one. This European legal personality would directly apply in all Member States.

(d) The draft Regulation provides that contributions to a European political party from its members shall not exceed 40% of its annual budget. This provision aims at preventing a European political party from being pre-dominantly financed, and hence influenced, by possibly one single member party or a very limited number of member parties. Such a scenario would tend to deprive the party of its European and transnational dimension. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to look for alternative and complementary sources of funding.

The Camera dei Deputati fears that such a limitation may make the European political parties excessively dependent on EU funding. Based on the assessment of the current Regulation, the Commission does not draw such a conclusion, nor did the Parliament question this provision in its resolution adopted in April 2011 (Giannakou report). In addition, the Commission's proposal raises the level of permitted donations from 12000€ to 25000€ per year and per donor, in order to foster the ability of the European political parties to generate own resources.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*