



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2014) 2219 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion concerning its Communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector" {COM (2013) 542 final}.

The Commission welcomes the positive views of the Camera dei Deputati on the proposal. The Opinion rightly stresses the strategic importance of Europe's defence industry for our security and to the economy as a whole. It is this belief that underpins the Communication as a whole and the Commission's desire to do all it can, within its competence, to support this vital sector. It also rightly stresses the important link that exists between the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and other EU policies including industrial policy. This must be taken forward in a way that is fully complementary to the work of NATO. As the Communication states in its opening paragraph; "...the EU needs to develop a credible CSDP. This evolution must be fully compatible with NATO and its principles."

At the heart of our ability to support Europe's defence industry is the effective implementation of the two internal directives for defence on procurement (Directive 2009/81/EC) and on the transfer of defence-related products within the EU (Directive 2009/43). They apply the principles of internal market legislation while including safeguards which recognise the special and strategic nature of the sector. The Commission is fully committed to ensuring the full and correct application of both Directives the importance of which was reiterated by the European Council in its Conclusions on the CSDP on 19 December 2013.

SMEs play a critical role in the European defence sector. The Commission fully supports the objective of improving cross-border market access of defence-related SMEs and their integration in supply chains. The Commission is committed to work with Member States and industry to achieve this objective through non-discriminatory and non-distortive measures such as the application of the sub-contracting provisions of the Directive 2009/81/EC. In addition to the provisions of the Directives, the Communication sets out a wide range of policy measures and instruments that it intends to use to support SMEs.

*Ms Laura BOLDRINI
President of the Camera dei Deputati
Piazza Montecitorio
IT – 00100 ROMA*

The Commission notes the proposal for creating a special fund to support defence research with dual-use benefits. For its part, the Commission has proposed the creation of a 'Preparatory Action' to give it the ability, in agreement with the Council and the European Parliament, to more directly target CSDP-related research.

The Commission plans to adopt a Report to the Council and European Parliament in summer 2014 which will set out, in detail, how it plans to take forward the implementation of the Communication's proposed actions. This will be at the start of Italy's Presidency of the European Union and the Commission looks forward to collaborating with Italy on actions to support the defence sector including the implementation of the Communication.

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*