



Brussels, 26.03.2014
C(2014) 1923 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion concerning the Commission's Annual Report 2012 on relations between the Commission and national Parliaments {COM(2013) 565 final}.

The Commission appreciates the positive comments of the Camera dei Deputati on the Annual Report and the Commission's efforts to implement an enhanced political dialogue.

The Commission agrees with the Camera dei Deputati that the political dialogue is most effective when the reply follows swiftly after the submission of the opinion. The delays that have been seen in recent years – largely caused by the success of the political dialogue itself and the increase in the number of opinions received from national Parliaments on legislative proposals – have been significantly reduced since measures have been taken to improve the internal Commission procedures. These improvements have already resulted in improved performance and the Commission trusts that it will generally be able to respond within the self-imposed three month deadline.

In this context, the Commission would like to underline that it remains fully committed to providing substantive replies to national Parliaments, and Commission services have intensified their efforts in that respect. It should be noted that there may be situations where a written reply cannot be as explicit and definitive as some would like it to be – because the institutions are engaged in political negotiations, or because it is still too early for the Commission to take a position on certain issues of substance, or because of a lack of clarity in the opinion.

The Commission notes that the political dialogue is bilateral. The Commission has not received any collective opinions from national Parliaments. It will continue to send individual replies to national Parliaments.

As regards the comments of the Camera dei Deputati on how the observations of the national Parliaments have been taken into account, the Commission refers to its reply to the Camera dei Deputati on its opinion on the Commission's Annual Report 2011 on relations with national Parliaments. Furthermore, it should be underlined that the Commission always takes note of national Parliaments' positions for the purpose of the legislative process. However, the Commission will rarely be able to take a final position on a national Parliament's observations at the time of replying, as the institutions are engaged in political negotiations, and it will not be possible either at that point in time to confirm if the observations of the national Parliament in question will be reflected in the adopted legislative text.

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With regard to the political dialogue in the form of visits by Commissioners it should be underlined that such visits take place at the request of the national Parliaments. The Commission naturally agrees that equality of treatment should also apply to this form of dialogue, but this does not appear to pose problems in practice.

As stated on previous occasions, the Commission confirms its commitment to particularly highlight contributions received by national Parliaments in the context of its public consultations and services are regularly instructed as regards the implementation of this commitment. Nevertheless, the Commission notes that in the context of the political dialogue the number of contributions received by national Parliaments on consultation documents, including Green and White papers, has constantly decreased over the last years and that it has constantly encouraged national Parliaments to scrutinise more frequently such consultation documents. The Commission hopes that the automatic alert which national Parliaments now receive each time a new public consultation is launched, as well as the publication on the Europa website of the Commission's forward-planning of public consultations [http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm] as well as of its regular forecast reports of upcoming Commission initiatives and proposals [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm], including White and Green Papers, will help national Parliaments in processing public consultations and other consultation documents effectively.

The Commission has continuously encouraged national Parliaments to express their views on the political and legislative priorities for the forthcoming year and has declared its readiness to take them into account, as far as possible and in full respect of the prerogatives of the European institutions. Nevertheless, the Commission notes that in the context of the political dialogue the number of contributions received by national Parliaments on the Commission Work Programme and future priorities has also constantly decreased over the last years. The Commission will continue to encourage national Parliaments to closely scrutinise the Commission Work Programme and to use it as a strategic tool, allowing national Parliaments to have an early overview of what the Commission plans to come forward with and to express their views on these priorities. However, the Camera dei Deputati should be aware that the Commission Work Programme for a given year is always the result of various reflections and input received.

As regards the comments of the Camera dei Deputati on the availability of documents in different linguistic versions, the Commission refers to its reply to the Camera dei Deputati on its opinion of the Commission's Annual Report 2011, including its remarks on the availability of a summary of all impact assessment in all languages.

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*