



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion concerning the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014 {COM(2013) 700 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Opinion of the Senato della Repubblica that appropriate attention should be paid to the development of the enlargement process during the upcoming Italian Presidency.

The Commission shares the view of the Senato della Repubblica that the accession process is very rigorous and comprehensive, notably as regards the rule of law, which is now at the heart of the enlargement process.

As concerns the need for the enlargement countries to strengthen their economic governance, the proposals that the Commission set out in the strategy paper are meant to help these countries address the challenges necessary to meet the economic criteria. As such, these measures do not constitute additional conditions or a new burden for the countries in the accession process. They will help the countries to optimise their reform efforts, improving their competitiveness and enhancing their growth prospects. These recommendations will also be used to support the prioritisation and better targeting of funding under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, improving its effectiveness.

The Commission also takes good note of the views of the Senato della Repubblica on the individual enlargement countries and the support expressed for the respective next steps in this regard.

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its engagement with the enlargement process and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Mr Pietro GRASSO
President of the Senato della Repubblica
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