



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2015) 4401 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the Commission Communication "An open and secure Europe: making it happen" {COM(2014) 154 final}.

The Commission notes that the Senato della Repubblica shares its view that the EU needs to consolidate and implement the acquis in the field of home affairs. It also welcomes its emphasis on the importance of ensuring that fundamental rights are guaranteed, including data protection. These are principles which are an obligation for all EU institutions and Member States and fundamental in the development of an open and secure Europe, as underlined in the Commission's Communication.

In the field of asylum, the Commission agrees with the Senato della Repubblica that efforts should now focus on the coherent transposition and effective implementation of the revised Common European Asylum System and with the need for the EU and its Member States to show responsibility, solidarity and partnership. The Commission welcomes the fact that the Senato della Repubblica signals openness to discussing possible additional legal avenues for access to asylum in the EU.

Whilst recalling that Member States remain responsible for controlling their borders, the Commission agrees that further efforts need to be made at European level, in order to provide for support to those Member States which are confronted with steady migratory pressure at the external borders. Operational support coordinated by Frontex, based on solidarity among Member States and their contribution, will have to result in more effective control of the external borders. In this context, please note that Triton operation was prolonged until end of 2015 and its budget will be significantly increased.

The Commission also agrees with the Senato della Repubblica's views that EU measures to address migration and prevent tragedies at sea must be based on an overall approach to migration and mobility and that the initiatives identified by the Mediterranean Task Force and in the Council conclusion "taking actions to better migratory flows" adopted on 10 October 2014 must continue to be implemented.

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President Juncker has made a new migration policy as one of his ten political priorities.

As announced in its work programme for 2015, the Commission has adopted a European Agenda on Migration presenting among other priorities also a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talents and skills, as well as to improve the management of migration by intensifying cooperation with third countries, fostering responsibility sharing and solidarity in assisting migrants in need of protection and fighting against irregular migration and smuggling.

In this context, the Commission on 27 May has adopted an EU Action plan against migrant smuggling with a comprehensive EU approach to tackle the criminal networks who smuggle and traffic migrants, exploiting their aspirations to a better life. The Plan for 2015-2020 sets out concrete actions to prevent and counter migrant smuggling. Actions include setting up a list of suspicious vessels; dedicated platforms to enhancing cooperation and exchange of information with financial institutions; and cooperating with internet service providers and social media to ensure internet content used by smugglers to advertise their activities is swiftly detected and removed

As regards security, the Commission notes the focus placed by the Senato della Repubblica on the need to devote particular attention to preventing the legal economy and public procurement to be infiltrated by organised crime. Fight against organized crime will be one of the main issues that the Commission has proposed in the context of the European Agenda on Security to follow up on the Internal Security Strategy (2010-2014) as announced in the Commission's work programme for 2015.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*