EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Ms Anna FINOCCHIARO
Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,
Prime Ministerial and Home Affairs,
General Organisation of the State and
Public Administration
of the Senato della Repubblica
Piazza Madama, 1
IT – 00186 ROME

cc. *Mr Pietro GRASSO*
President of the
Senato della Repubblica
Piazza Madama, 1
IT – 00186 ROME

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion concerning a number of Commission communications and proposals, including in particular the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda on Migration {COM(2015) 240 final}[1].

The Commission shares the analysis of the current situation and appreciates the full support given to the comprehensive approach on migration outlined in the above-mentioned Communication, namely as regards the holistic approach taken including medium and long-term actions, proposed measures to reinforce the protection of the external borders as well as the increase of the relevant funds.

Over the past year the Commission has worked for a swift implementation of the Agenda to give a coordinated European response to the current migratory and refugee crisis. The Commission has tabled a series of proposals designed to equip Member States with the tools necessary to better manage the large number of arrivals. It is grateful for the support of the Senato della Repubblica expressed in its Opinion and in particular the support for the proposed European Border and Coast Guard {COM(2015) 671 final}.

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[1]   COM(2015) 240 final, COM(2015) 236 final, COM(2015) 286 final, COM(2015) 238 final, COM(2015) 451 final, COM(2015) 453 final, COM(2015) 454 final, JOIN(2015) 40 final, COM(2015) 490 final.

As regards, the revision of the Dublin regulation, on 4 May 2016, the Commission presented a first package of proposals to reform the Common European Asylum System by creating a fairer, more efficient and more sustainable system for allocating asylum applications among Member States. The basic principle for the reformed Dublin regulation[2] will remain the same – asylum seekers should, unless they have family elsewhere, apply for asylum in the first country they enter – but a new fairness mechanism will ensure no Member State is left with a disproportionate pressure on its asylum system.

The Commission has also proposed to transform the existing European Asylum Support Office (EASO) into a fully-fledged European Union Agency for Asylum to reflect its enhanced role in the new system[3] and to reinforce of the EU's fingerprinting database, Eurodac[4], in order to better manage the asylum system and to help tackle irregular migration.

Concerning the Senato della Repubblica's comments on relocation and resettlement, the Commission presented on 18 May 2016 its latest monthly report on the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes[5], assessing actions taken up to 13 May 2016. Overall, progress remains unsatisfactory since the Commission's second report, despite signs of increased preparation for future action: few relocations have taken place since mid-April, though the pipeline of future relocations has been strengthened. Progress has been made on resettlement as part of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, but must be accelerated to avoid migrants returning to irregular routes. Greater efforts on relocation are increasingly urgent in view of the humanitarian situation in Greece and the increase in arrivals to Italy.

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

Yours faithfully,

Frans Timmermans *Dimitris Avramopoulos*
First Vice-President *Member of the Commission*

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[2] COM(2016)270 final.
[3] COM(2016)271 final.
[4] COM(2016)272 final.
[5] Communication from the Commission – Third report on relocation and resettlement, COM(2016)360 final.