



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 13.12.2016
C(2016) 8100 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "European Cloud Initiative - Building a competitive data and knowledge economy for Europe" {COM(2016) 178 final}.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera dei Deputati welcomes the Communication, and recognises the threats of poor performance in this sector.

The European Cloud Initiative (ECI) aims to develop a trusted, open environment for the scientific community for storing, sharing and re-using scientific data and results, the European Open Science Cloud. It also aims to deploy the underpinning supercomputing capacity, the fast connectivity and the necessary high-capacity cloud solutions through a European Data Infrastructure.

The ECI addresses major inhibitors to Europe's ability to exploit the wealth of data it produces and the lack of the necessary European High Performance Computing (HPC) infrastructure in Europe for data processing. Open to all researchers and research centres, the ECI will provide world-class data infrastructures and cloud-based services to boost research and the knowledge society, as described in the Digital Single Market Strategy {COM(2015) 192 final}.

The Commission acknowledges the remarks put forward by the Camera dei Deputati; namely it takes very seriously the financial dimension and cost of the ECI and understands that this ambitious vision requires extensive funding from diverse sources to become a reality. The Commission therefore is considering how the different sources of financing at national and EU-level could be combined in view of exploiting the available resources to the maximum potential.

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

The Commission calls on Member States and on industrial, public sector organisations and research stakeholders to coordinate their efforts to reduce fragmentation of digital infrastructures and build the critical mass to place Europe in a world-leading position. In that context Luxembourg, France, Italy and Spain have taken steps to set-up an “Important Project of Common European Interest” (IPCEI) on HPC and Big Data Enabled Applications.¹ This is a promising initiative from Member States to reduce fragmentation and to align strategies and investments² that is expected to include additional Member States and was encouraged by the European Council in June 2016.

Through Horizon 2020 funding the Commission helps to federate data-intensive infrastructures and research, which contribute toward the gradual change of culture among researchers with respect to data-sharing. In addition, the Commission has established the Open Science Policy Platform with an expert group expressly dedicated to investigate the current reward system and explore ways of incentivising open data usages.

The Commission is committed to continuously working together with Member States with the aim of making the European Cloud Initiative Communication a success. To this end, the active contribution of Member States and of Italy in particular, to the dialogue about the implementation of this Communication is critical.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Günther Oettinger
Member of the Commission*

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/oettinger/blog/luxembourg-launches-supercomputing-project_en.
² <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/actualites/articles-actualite/2015/11/17-conf-data-forum/index.html>.