



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.1.2017  
C(2017) 114 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the Commission's 2015 annual reports on subsidiarity and proportionality {COM(2016) 469 final} and its relations with national Parliaments {COM(2016) 471 final}.*

*The Commission welcomes the Senato della Repubblica's positive appraisal of the political dialogue with the national Parliaments, as also confirmed by the long list of Commissioners' meetings with the Senato della Repubblica referred to in the Opinion. These meetings give both parties the opportunity for direct exchanges on major issues and for the Commission they are a chance to listen to the views of national Parliaments and through them hear the voices of EU citizens. Since the beginning of this Commission's mandate, Commissioners have had more than 460 visits or meetings with national Parliaments. In his State of the Union Address in September 2016, President Juncker confirmed his commitment to maintaining the frequency of meetings with national Parliaments, and also called on Commissioners to discuss the State of the Union with the national Parliaments they know best.*

*As regards the written part of the political dialogue, the Commission is pleased that the Senato della Repubblica plays an active role and provides contributions that enrich the debate. The Commission agrees with the Senato della Repubblica that all national Parliaments should consider sharing not only their Reasoned Opinions, but also the Opinions submitted to the Commission under the political dialogue, with the European Parliament. Although the European Parliament has direct access to all Opinions from national Parliaments through the IPEX webpage, it is important to ensure that national Parliaments' views are brought to the attention of individual members of the European Parliament, in particular when they are examining proposals as co-legislators.*

*The Commission is also pleased to note the supportive comments as regards the quality and timeliness of the Commission's replies to national Parliaments' Opinions. The Commission endeavours to give clear and substantial replies to all Opinions from national Parliaments, both as regards the political questions and the more technical issues they raise.*

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

*The Commission shares the views expressed by the Senato della Repubblica as regards the advantages of early involvement of national Parliaments in discussing preparatory documents for EU legislation. In recent years, the Commission has encouraged national Parliaments to participate in the pre-legislative phase, and in order to facilitate that process it has set up a system to alert national Parliaments when public consultations are launched. The Commission notes, however, that in practice, relatively few national Parliaments make their views known in the pre-legislative phase.*

*The Commission concurs with the Senato della Repubblica's emphasis on the need to evaluate previous results in order to provide timely input to decision-making including, where appropriate, before considering any legislative amendments. This is fully in line with the Commission's Better Regulation agenda and the new Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, which was signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in April 2016. In the Interinstitutional Agreement the three institutions clearly confirmed the importance of the greatest possible consistency and coherence in organising their work to evaluate the performance of Union legislation, including related public and stakeholder consultations. Together we should endeavour to avoid putting unnecessary burdens on citizens and businesses, in particular on small and medium-sized enterprises. As I stated in my address to the COSAC Plenary in Bratislava last November, the Commission particularly counts on national Parliaments to help and engage in promoting transparency and scrutinising "gold-plating", as the Union is too often blamed for imposing rules and burdens which do not derive from EU legislation but from national legislation.*

*The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*