

Final document pursuant to article 127 of the Rules of Procedure on the

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: Strengthening their role in the EU's policymaking (COM(2018)703)

The European Commission's Annual Report 2017 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality (COM(2018)490)

The European Commission's Annual Report 2017 on relations between the European Commission and National Parliaments (COM(2018)491)

Adopted on 20 February 2019

FINAL DOCUMENT ADOPTED BY THE EU POLICIES COMMITTEE

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: Strengthening their role in the EU's policymaking (COM(2018)703)

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The European Union Policies Committee of Italy's Chamber of Deputies,

Having examined, pursuant to article 127 of the Rules of Procedure, the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on "The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: Strengthening their role in the EU's policymaking" COM(2018)703 final, the Annual Report 2017 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality (COM(2018)490) final, and the Annual Report 2017 on relations between the European Commission and National Parliaments (COM(2018)491);

Whereas, pursuant to article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union, pursuant to the principle of subsidiarity in areas not falling within its exclusive competence, the Union shall only act if the objectives being pursued cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but by reason of the scale or the effects of the envisaged action, can be better achieved at the Union level;

Considering that the same article empowers the institutions of the European Union to apply the principle of subsidiarity in accordance with the protocol applying the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and empowers the national Parliaments to oversee compliance with the principle of subsidiarity following the procedure provided by the protocol;

Bearing in mind the information and the opinions acquired in the course of hearings held by the Committee;

Noting that the European Commission, acting on the basis of the recommendations of the *Task Force* on subsidiarity and proportionality has submitted proposals and initiatives to strengthen and improve the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the European Union;

Welcoming the proposals of the European Commission based on the recommendations of the *Task Force* on subsidiarity and proportionality, and in particular the discounting of certain periods from the eight-week deadline by which national Parliaments are required to submit their reasoned opinions; to foster greater participation and better coordination by local and regional authorities and the commitment to improve the impact assessment of legislative proposals, and begin assessing compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in current legislation;

Welcoming also the initiative to adopt a common "assessment grid", particularly in terms of the assessing the added value of the work of the European Union;

Trusting that the new European Commission which will be installed following the forthcoming European elections will fully follow up these recommendations of the *Task Force*;

Calling attention to the need to make the European institutional and decision-making system more democratic by a further structural strengthening of the role of the national Parliaments in monitoring the application of the principles of subsidiarity on the one hand, and on the other, the role of the European Parliament and its dialogue with the national Parliaments;

Considering that the main purpose of subsidiarity is to guarantee that decisions are taken at the level which is closest to our citizens;

Considering that the national Parliaments play a crucial role in fostering citizen participation in the European decision-making process and guaranteeing the democratic nature of the whole institutional system of the European Union;

Considering that a number of innovations and improvements can be introduced without requiring any Treaty amendments, beginning with the next European parliamentary term;

Considering, moreover, that in order to give a fresh powerful boost to the European project and to bring the European Union institutions closer to our citizens, we must begin reflecting on a revision of the European Treaties;

Noting the need for this document to be forwarded to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission as part of the political dialogue,

Expresses a

POSITIVE OPINION

With the following qualifications:

- a) The deadline for forwarding the reasoned opinions of the national Parliaments to the European Union institutions should be extended from 8 to 12 weeks, which may also entail amending the Treaties;
- b) By appropriately amending the Treaties, in addition to the “yellow card” and the “orange card” procedures, an additional “red card” procedure should be added so that if the reasoned opinions of the national Parliaments constitute more than 55 percent of the votes, all further discussion of the proposal should be suspended unless the proposal is modified to take on board the concerns and the observations raised by the national Parliaments;
- c) Beginning with the next European Parliament, the Union must embark on a reflection into the procedures for strengthening political dialogue between the European Parliament, the national Parliaments and regional and local authorities throughout the whole European legislative process, and identify the European policy agenda priorities that will help to overcome the democratic deficit that is weakening the democratic legitimacy of the European Union’s institutions;
- d) When revising the Treaties, provision should be made to give full powers for the European Parliament to initiate legislation as the only European Union institution with direct democratic legitimacy;
- e) At the forthcoming Bucharest Summit of cities and regions in March, further discussion is needed on the recommendations of the subsidiarity and proportionality Task Force set up by the European Commission.