

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment (COM(2019)178)

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

Having examined, pursuant to Rule No. 127 of the Chamber's Rules of Procedure, the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment (COM(2019)178);

Considering that in the communication in question, the European Commission takes stock of the work done on the evaluation of the quality of European legislation in the years 2015-2018 and, based also on the findings of the public consultation conducted by the European Commission that ended on 23 October 2018, sets out recommendations for the future;

Noting that the introduction of better regulation principles had its origins in the desire for better European governance and for anchoring sustainable development in the Union's policymaking by looking at economic, social and environmental impacts together;

Observing that better regulation consists of considering alternative ways to achieve results, highlighting that legislative activity must never be an end in itself and that actions at EU level should always bring added value compared to what can be achieved at national, regional or local level;

Considering that the rationale behind better regulation has become even more compelling than in the past as the increasing pace of technological change across the globe has made it ever more important to understand cross-sectoral impacts and to identify the opportunities for synergies to develop and implement the appropriate policy answers across the full policy cycle, from evaluation to implementation;

Acknowledging the following to be essential requirements: that the decision-making process of the European Union be open and transparent; that citizens and stakeholders join in the task of EU policymaking, policy implementation and decision-making; that the EU base its actions on concrete evidence and take the impact of its actions into account; that the regulatory burdens for businesses, citizens and the public administration be reduced to a minimum.

Recalling that as per Article 5.3 of the Treaty on European Union, under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level;

In the hope that the new European Commission, which will take office after the forthcoming European elections, will continue to advance the initiatives taken to date to improve the quality of European regulatory action;

Acknowledging that this document forms part of the framework of political dialogue and must be forwarded to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission,

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FAVOURABLE OPINION

with the following remarks:

a) During the next European legislature, the European Commission must sustain and reinforce ongoing initiatives to bring greater openness to European Union policymaking and, together with its co-legislators in the European Union Council and the European Parliament, map out a common strategy based on shared objectives for the entire cycle of the European legislative and decision-making process;

b) With reference also to the recommendations of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing less more efficiently, the quality of impact assessments needs to be improved in respect of the aims implicit in the Task Force's remit;

c) At a European level, the policy input from regional and local governments needs to be made more visible and needs to be acted upon, including through the actions of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union in respect of the European decision-making process; at a national level, a deeper level of cooperation is needed between central government, parliament, the regions and local governments, especially during the scrutiny of European-level instruments of legislative planning, so as to bolster the efficiency of the system and encourage the relevant authorities to take greater responsibility for policies, which will, in turn, benefit the quality of legislation at all levels;

d) Instruments of direct democracy and of citizen participation in the European legislative process need to be enhanced, and a start needs to be made on revising the Treaties with a view to endowing the European Parliament with the power of legislative initiative;

e) The European legislature that has just taken office should launch a regular dialogue with national parliaments on the theme of better regulation, and promote the greater sharing of the best practices of Member-State parliaments in this area.