



Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal

The President of the European Commission/The High
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COURTESY TRANSLATION

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betreft Mededeling "Inspelen op de veranderingen in onze buurlanden" (COM(2011) 303 def)

Dear Mrs Ashton,
Dear Mr Barroso,

The Standing Committee for European Cooperation Organisations of the Senate of the States General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has taken note in its committee meeting of 28 June 2011 of the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood' (COM(2011) 303 final). The Committee has drawn the following conclusions from its discussion of this communication at its meeting.

The communication concerns a review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It notes that there is a need for greater flexibility and a more tailored response in shaping bilateral relations between the EU and its 16 individual ENP partners: Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The revised Neighbourhood Policy includes the following characteristics: a strengthening of democratic processes (good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights), promotion of economic development and control of migration. Another aim is to foster civil society.

However, the Standing Committee for European Cooperation Organisations considers that what is missing from this communication is any reference to the activities of the Council of Europe in strengthening democracy, good governance, the rule of law and human rights. In this connection, the Standing Committee would make special mention of the activities of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (better known as the Venice Commission). This omission is all the more striking because most of the six eastern neighbours are also member states of the Council of Europe. The Standing Committee for European Cooperation Organisations of the Senate of the States General would therefore like to inquire whether the European Commission and the High Representative share the view of the Standing Committee that significant synergy benefits could be achieved through cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe in relation to their activities connected with and aimed at neighbouring countries. To put it another way, cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe could help to achieve the objectives of the revised Neighbourhood Policy. Can the European Commission



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and the High Representative explain why no mention whatever is made in this communication of the activities of and cooperation with the Council of Europe? Can the European Commission and the High Representative also clarify how this should be viewed in the light of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union on the subject of this cooperation? How will the European Commission shape its cooperation with the Council of Europe in order to achieve, among other things, the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy?

The Standing Committee for European Cooperation Organisations of the Senate of the States General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands looks forward with particular interest to receiving answers to these questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs M.A.H. Strik

Chair of the Standing Committee for European Cooperation Organisations of the Senate of the States General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands