



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.4.2018
C(2018) 1918 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Sejm for its Opinion on the Commission Work Programme for 2018 {COM(2017) 650 final}.

The Commission has already presented a number of the initiatives announced in the Work Programme for 2018 and the remaining legislative initiatives will be presented by May this year to allow for the co-legislators to complete the legislative process before the European Parliament elections in spring 2019. In this context the Commission takes good note of the views expressed in the Opinion and wishes to share the following comments.

The Commission underlines that the principles of solidarity and non-discrimination of Member States are at the basis of the Union policies, including as regards their financing. The Cohesion policy is a concrete expression of solidarity with less economically developed parts of our Union. As indicated in the reflection paper on the Future of European Union finances adopted by the Commission on 28 June 2017: “The design of the future European Union budget must be underpinned by a clear vision of Europe’s priorities and a determination to invest in the areas that will secure economic strength, sustainability, solidarity and security for the future”.

The efficient implementation of the Digital Single Market, the Energy Union, the Security Union and a comprehensive European migration policy is of utmost priority to the Commission. The main legislative proposals have already been presented and the Commission's focus is now on supporting the co-legislators in turning these proposals into legislation and legislation into implementation.

Notably as regards the Security Union, the Commission would like to stress that, as set out in the European Defence Action Plan and the Defence Package of June 2017, there is a strong economic case for greater cooperation on defence among Member States. More

*Ms Izabela KLOC
Chair of the European Union
Affairs Committee of the Sejm
UL. Wiejska 4/6
PL – 00-902 WARSAW*

*cc. Mr Marek KUCHCIŃSKI
Marshal of the Sejm
UL. Wiesjka 4/6
PL - 00-902 WARSAW*

defence cooperation would increase the efficiency of national defence spending and encourage interoperability of defence equipment. It would likely result in savings and better value for public money. There is also a strong strategic case for cooperation as fragmentation hampers the European Union's ability to act and protect its interests and its citizens.

The role of Member States in the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme will be key. Both the work programme as well as the selection of projects will be adopted in comitology with full participation of Member States. Member States will also be in the driving seat for identifying the key defence capabilities.

The Commission agrees on the need to work towards eliminating illegal migration and is convinced that a European approach is necessary. Thanks to the coordinated work of the Commission, Agencies and Member States a highly volatile situation has been stabilised – with irregular arrivals to the European Union dropping by 63% in 2017. A new European Union approach to managing migration has emerged and we need to build on that.

Agreement on the asylum legislative files will only be possible with a strong solidarity component, which effectively eases the pressure on the frontline/lead Member States. This includes an agreement on the revision of the Dublin Regulation and the related proposals on asylum reform. At this stage, a divergence of views remains on the need for a solidarity component in the reform of the Common European Asylum System, but the Commission intends to build bridges and search for a solution which is both good for the European Union and fair to all Member States.

Finally, the Commission agrees that national Parliaments should have a strong role in European decision-making. The Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing Less More Efficiently has started its work in January, with the active involvement of three representatives of national Parliaments. The Task Force will report to President Juncker by 15 July 2018, making recommendations on how to better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, identifying policy areas where work could be re-delegated or definitely returned to Member States, as well as ways to better involve regional and local authorities in the European Union's policy-making and delivery.

The Commission hopes that the above clarifications address the issues raised by the Sejm and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*