



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and regulation (EC) No 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 {COM(2016) 815 final}. The Commission welcomes the Assembleia da República's broad support for the aims of the proposal.

The Commission agrees with the Assembleia da República on the need to amend the regulations on the coordination of social security systems in order to address the problems of a lack of clarity and transparency of the legal framework and to strengthen the mechanisms for Member States to combat fraud and abuse. The proposal reflects the Commission's ambition to modernise the current rules to ensure that they are fair, clear and easier to enforce.

As the Assembleia da República has underlined in its opinion, free movement is a fundamental right of the Union cherished by its citizens. It brings benefits to workers, employers and the economy at large, helping to tackle labour shortages and skills gaps. The proposal reflects this Commission's political commitment to a fair and truly pan-European labour market. It facilitates free movement of workers and protects their rights while at the same time reinforcing the tools for national authorities to fight abuse or fraud. The proposal also ensures a closer link between the place where contributions are paid and where benefits are claimed, ensuring a fair financial distribution of burden between Member States.

The points made in this reply are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

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*cc. Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
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The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Assembleia da República and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen
Member of the Commission*