



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 28.9.2017
C(2017) 6120 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU {COM(2017) 253 final}.

In putting forward this proposal, the Commission is making good on its commitment in 2015 to present a new initiative taking a broader perspective to improving the lives of working parents and carers.

This proposal forms part of a comprehensive package of measures designed to address women's under representation in the labour market and to encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. As such, it aims at ensuring the implementation of the principle of equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work.

The above aims are pursued by modernising the already existing European Union legal framework on family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements. This will allow parents and carers to better reconcile their work and caring duties. The proposed directive builds on the existing rights and strengthens them, as well as introduces new rights. It therefore maintains the level of protection already offered by the EU acquis in the area of work-life balance.

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*cc. Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
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The Commission is aware of the Portuguese legislation, including regarding the provisions on parental leave. The Commission would like to recall that the proposal to increase the length of the non-transferable period of leave from one to four months, in relation to the introduction of compensation, intends to support a higher take-up of leave by first earners, most often fathers, in order to encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men.

Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the proposal are now underway and the Commission trusts that an agreement will be reached in the near future.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Assembleia da República in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Valdis Dombrovskis
Vice-President*