



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.10.2018  
C(2018) 6616 final*

*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 on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context {COM(2018) 373 final}.*

*The proposal forms part of a broader package of ambitious measures designed to govern cohesion policy for the post-2020 period, in particular to promote socio-economic and territorial cohesion across the European Union, via the cohesion policy. It is a necessary complement both to the financial support under the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg), but also to the institutional support such as European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, as those groupings are not given legislative powers to overcome legal obstacles.*

*As rightly pointed out by the Assembleia da República, the proposal aims at making cohesion policy funding more effective for investments and projects carried out in cross-border regions. In addition, the proposal is a direct follow-up to the Commission Communication 'Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions' {COM(2017) 534 final}.*

*Work undertaken by the Commission since 2015 has shown how obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature still impede on the lives of citizens and businesses in cross-border regions despite the existence of the Single Market and the associated freedom of movement. The above-mentioned Communication and its accompanying Staff Working Document {SWD(2017) 307 final} provide ample evidence of this. In parallel, an informal working group of Member States, under the leadership of Luxembourg has reflected on the appropriateness of devising innovative solutions to border obstacles.*

*Ms Regina BASTOS  
Chair of the Comissão de Assuntos Europeus  
Assembleia da República  
Palácio de S. Bento  
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*cc. Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES  
President of the  
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*Setting up a mechanism on each land border to resolve legal obstacles would therefore enable actors in border regions to develop and implement joint projects under a single set of rules and make those projects quicker and cheaper. A recent study contracted by the Commission<sup>1</sup> on the economic impact of border obstacles on gross domestic product and employment levels in internal land border regions estimates that even if only 20% of the existing obstacles were removed, border regions would increase their gross domestic product by 2%.*

*The Commission is pleased that the Assembleia da República shares the view that action at the Union level as envisaged in the proposal is required to resolve the legal border obstacles and to enhance the development of the internal border areas.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Corina Crețu  
Member of the Commission*

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<sup>1</sup> Politecnico di Milano (2017) ‘Quantification of the effects of legal and administrative border obstacles in land border regions’; see COM (2017) 534 final, p. 6; for more details see its accompanying SWD(2017) 307 final, point 2.2, p. 20-22.