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*Ms Regina Bastos
Chair of the European Affairs Committee
Assembleia da República
Palacio de S. Bento
P-1249-068 LISBOA*

*Mr Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues
President of the
Assembleia da República
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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 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Council Joint Action n°98/700/JHA, Regulation (EU) n° 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) n° 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council {COM(2018) 631 final}.

This proposal forms part of a broad migration package of ambitious measures designed to effectively and efficiently address migratory challenges in the European Union. The proposal on the European Border and Coast Guard follows the guidelines by the European Council of June 2018 on the need to achieve a more effective control of the Union's external borders by strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard and providing it with 'increased resources and an enhanced mandate'¹.

As a major game changer, the proposal introduces a standing corps of 10 000 operational staff with own equipment and expanded tasks to carry out border control to be put at the disposal of the Agency and to support Member States whenever they face border management challenges.

While the current Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard² is being properly implemented, it has become evident that certain gaps still exist preventing the Union's border agency from rolling out its full potential in support for the Member States. These persistent shortages include mainly the limitations in human resources and

¹ European Council meeting Conclusions, 28 June 2018, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35936/28-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>

² Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC; OJ L 251, 16.9.2016, p. 1–76.

technical equipment available to the Agency that are nowadays based on voluntary contributions by the Member States. These contributions have often proven to be insufficient and have compromised the level of support provided by the Agency. The main objectives of the new proposal are linked to addressing these deficiencies and to guarantee a permanent flexible solution for the Agency to enable it to support any Member State to ensure effective and efficient external border control whenever need.

The Commission is pleased that the Assembleia da República shares the view that action at Union level as envisaged in the proposal is required to address the issues at stake. The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its positive opinion as regards the compliance of the proposal with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the proposal are now underway. The Commission remains hopeful and is committed to working continuously with the aim of achieving an agreement before the end of the current mandate of the European Parliament.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*