



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.07.2012  
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Dear President,

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputatilor for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 {COM(2011) 607 final} and would like to apologise for the delay in replying to it.*

*The Commission has taken note of the proposals made in the opinion and will take them into account during the ongoing inter-institutional negotiation process. At the same time, it would like to provide some explanations on certain points, which may address the concerns raised by the Camera Deputatilor.*

*The Commission shares the views expressed by the Camera Deputatilor regarding the necessity to adapt training systems to the skills demand of the European business sector. The Common Strategic Framework - to be adopted by the Commission through a delegated act - will provide orientations for Member States' actions in this regard. Nevertheless, on the basis of Treaty provisions and in the framework of shared management, concrete funding criteria are to be defined by the Managing Authorities in Member States.*

*With regard to the Camera Deputatilor's concern about supporting the social economy, the Commission would point out that any financial support from the Structural Funds to enterprises, including social enterprises, needs to comply with State aid rules in order to avoid distorting competition.*

*The Commission agrees that the European Social Fund (ESF) should primarily invest in promoting employment, education and social inclusion. In the 2007-13 period, 2.7% of the total ESF envelope has been allocated to institutional capacity building, which confirms that support for this priority has not shifted the focus of the Fund away from its core objectives. Nevertheless, adequate administrative capacity represents a pre-condition for the effective design and implementation of policy, which require investment particularly in the less developed regions and Cohesion countries.*

*Many of the common indicators proposed by the Commission have been regularly monitored by Managing Authorities in the current programming period and are essential for following-up the activities of the funds at an aggregate European level.*

*Ms. Roberta Alma ANASTASE  
President  
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*Commission competences in the area of social innovation are similar to other ESF themes and are shared with national and regional authorities according to the principle of shared management. The facilitating role of the Commission will help to strengthen the capacity for social innovation, through e.g. creation of networks and support for mutual learning.*

*The Commission attaches great importance to supporting transnational activities, which have a significant European added value. The Commission's proposal allows Member States to engage in transnational cooperation in any areas falling within the scope of the ESF without any limitation. Nevertheless, the Commission will take a more active role in facilitating transnational cooperation only in relation to a limited number of themes, which are included in the list referred to in the ESF Regulation.*

*The Commission hopes that these explanations serve to clarify the concerns raised in your Opinion and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Camera Deputatilor.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*