



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.11.2013
C(2013) 8302 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Social Investment Package {COM(2013) 83 final}.

The Social Investment Package highlights the challenges facing Europe and sets out an agenda for social policy to help the Member States carry out the structural reforms needed to meet these common challenges. The Commission appreciates the positive view of the Camera Deputaților of the Social Investment Package and its opinion that the Package works to coordinate and complement other EU policies. The Commission is also very pleased that the Camera Deputaților agrees that EU-level action is appropriate for tackling the increase in youth unemployment and inactivity.

The Commission also appreciates that the Camera Deputaților supports the Commission's position that investing in children is vital for a knowledge economy and for social progress in general. With respect to the Camera Deputaților's concern that too much emphasis on education may not be appropriate and can have an adverse effect on children's development, the Commission would point out that its intention is to support the well-rounded development of children to improve their opportunities. The Commission fully agrees that children need time for play, as well as for developing their relationships with family and friends. The Recommendation on Investing in Children {C(2013) 778 final}, which is part of the Social Investment Package, emphasises the importance of play, recreation, sport and cultural activities outside school, and recommends that the Member States ensure that all children can participate in these activities by addressing the barriers such as cost, access and cultural differences. Furthermore, the Recommendation emphasises the need for Member States to encourage schools, community actors and local authorities to institute better after-school activities and facilities for all children, regardless of their parents' work situation and background.

The Commission also welcomes the opinion of the Camera Deputaților that the Commission's policy towards active ageing is appropriate, given the current demographic changes that Europe is experiencing. Furthermore, the Commission fully supports the Camera

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Deputaților's belief that this policy – and social policy more generally – should be respectful of varying local, regional and national contexts. The Social Investment Package takes account of the wide differences in the economic, employment and social situations in the Member States, and provides guidance on how to meet the mutually agreed targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The guidance will address the specific challenges and priorities in social policy facing individual Member States and will be reflected in European Semester procedures, including the drafting of country-specific recommendations.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns expressed in the Opinion of the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*