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*Mr Valeriu Ștefan ZGONEA
President of the
Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy, Greece and Hungary {COM(2015) 451 final}.

The Commission has taken good note of the negative vote of Romania during the adoption of the Decisions by the Council¹ and the reasons provided in the Opinion of the Camera Deputaților. The Commission would like to underline that the proposal forms part of a broader package of ambitious measures that the Commission has proposed and will propose to respond to the current refugee crisis and to prepare for future challenges, in line with its European Agenda on Migration {COM(2015) 240 final}, through which all aspects of the issue, including the root causes, are addressed.

The Commission also notes the Camera Deputaților concern about the suspension clause and the impact of the non-participation of a Member State in the relocation scheme. In this regard, the Commission can assure that neither under the system foreseen in the original proposal nor under the Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 will EU funds be reduced for Member States that have used the suspension option.

These schemes for the relocation of applicants of international protection are to be inherently combined with the 'hotspot' approach, already under implementation in several locations in Greece and Italy. For this purpose, EU agencies have been deployed and are working on the ground with frontline Member States to swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants. Their coordinated work allows those claiming asylum to be immediately channelled into an asylum procedure, where the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) supports the processing of asylum cases as quickly as possible; for those not in need of protection, Frontex assists Member States by managing the returns of irregular migrants; and Europol and Eurojust help host Member States with investigations to dismantle the smuggling and trafficking networks and tackle other security threats. The EU is currently committed to

¹ Council Decisions (EU) 2015/1523, of 14 September 2015, and 2015/1601, of 22 September 2015.

explore further work methods and to increase cooperation levels among the various stakeholders in the hotspots, in order to achieve the full implementation of the relocation strategies in place.

In its efforts to identify long-term and comprehensive solutions, the Commission plans other measures aimed at tackling the root causes of the ongoing refugee crisis, as well as the consequences thereof. In particular, the Commission has launched a study evaluating the Dublin system. This work as well as the experiences reached with the implementation of the temporary emergency relocation schemes under question will constitute the basis for the upcoming Commission proposal on the reform of the Dublin Regulation, announced by the Commission for spring 2016.² In addition, the Commission is currently assessing the need for a more comprehensive reform of the Common European Asylum System.

The Commission is determined to balance these ambitious targets in the asylum field with measures in the areas of migration and border management. It has thus proposed the creation of a European Border and Coast Guard on 15 December 2015 {COM(2015) 671 final}. The Commission is also preparing a renewed approach on legal migration, including a reform of the Blue Card Directive. More vigorous measures on integration are also assessed. The Commission intends in this way to provide a comprehensive response.

The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaților's broad support towards a joint action by all Member States to find adequate solutions to the current refugee and migratory crisis. The views expressed by the Camera Deputaților are very helpful and will be taken into account in the framework of further works.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților, and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*

² Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council Managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration, {COM(2015) 490 final/2} of 29 September 2015.