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*Mr Călin POPESCU-  
TĂRICEANU  
President of the Senat  
Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 1-3,  
sector 5  
RO – 050711 BUCHAREST*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Proposal for a Directive on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services ('European Accessibility Act') {COM(2015) 615 final}.*

*The Commission, in the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020<sup>1</sup>, proposed to use a variety of instruments, including legislative and non-legislative ones such as standardisation, to optimise the accessibility of the built environment, transport and information and communications technologies (ICT). The Commission also indicated that it would explore the merits of adopting regulatory measures to ensure accessibility of products and services and referred to the possibility of proposing a European Accessibility Act.*

*The European Accessibility Act was proposed as a Directive with the aim to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services through the harmonisation of functional accessibility requirements in the EU. This will facilitate the work of economic operators and will result in more accessible products at more competitive prices.*

*The Commission thanks the Senat for its support and shares its view on the importance of this proposal for harmonising at EU level the accessibility of products and services. The proposal aims to create a level playing field and the degree of detail of the accessibility requirements is set to be functional so that there is room for innovation, creativity and competition in the solutions proposed by economic operators.*

*The proposal provides a framework for accessibility in Europe and is based on well-known internal market instruments in terms of requirements, use of standards, conformity assessment and market surveillance. The conformity assessment procedure proposed is light and simple, namely self-declaration of conformity.*

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2010) 636 final.

*The related impact assessment illustrates the cost reductions resulting from the proposed harmonisation. The proposal affects only products and services which will be placed in the market after the application date, consequently it does not require the redesign of existing products. In addition it does not introduce any new label. It requires information to be provided in an accessible format rather than assistive additional formats.*

*The proposal, which has a focused scope based on a careful selection process, is a business friendly initiative which contains safeguards to avoid disproportionate burdens on economic operators. A report on the application of the Directive is planned five years after its application.*

*The Commission services regularly share information and experiences on the implementation of accessibility among Member States' experts and other relevant stakeholders including representative organisations of persons with disabilities in the meetings of the High Level Group on Disability. These exchanges contribute to an adequate implementation of accessibility requirements in the Member States.*

*The Opinion of the Senat has been forwarded to the relevant Commission services and will inform the discussions during negotiations with the co-legislators. Discussions between the Commission and the Council, in which your government is represented, are already underway, while the European Parliament is still to appoint the responsible Committee for the related discussions.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen  
Member of the Commission*