



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2017) 339 final*

*Mr Liviu DRAGNEA
President of the
Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication - Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals {COM(2016) 377 final}.

This Communication is part of a broader package of ambitious initiatives following up on the commitment taken by President Juncker in his Political Guidelines published on 15 July 2014¹ towards a New Policy on Migration. It also follows up on the European Agenda on Migration², which had emphasised the need for effective integration policies for third country nationals.

The Action Plan provides a common policy framework and sets out the concrete policy, operational and financial support to be delivered at EU level to assist Member States in their efforts for the integration of third country nationals.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaților regarding some of the issues covered in the Action Plan, such as the attention to be given to gender aspects and vulnerable groups in integration issues and the importance of pre-departure measures. The Commission takes note of the concerns expressed by the Camera Deputaților with respect to the constraints in implementing integration policies and of the call on the Commission to support addressing challenges linked to integration.

The Commission will continue working to ensure that the support measures at EU level proposed in the Action Plan are timely implemented and will continue the dialogue with Member States on integration matters, for example through the newly established European Integration Network.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/priorities/publications/president-junckers-political-guidelines_en

² [Commission Communication of 13 May 2015, A European Agenda On Migration, COM\(2015\) 240 final.](#)

As regards the more general comments made by the Camera Deputaților on migration management, the Commission wishes to stress that it is delivering on the commitments taken in the European Agenda on Migration to adopt a comprehensive approach to migration, addressing notably the root causes of irregular and forced displacement in third countries. The New Partnership Framework being developed with third countries illustrates this approach. As outlined in the Commission Communication of 7 June 2016³, the EU and its Member States are seeking to deepen cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination, so as to address immediate migration pressure and to tackle the root causes of irregular migration. Work has been progressing with five priority countries: Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia⁴. Furthermore, the Commission is committed to drive forward the work on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, and is regularly reporting on the progress achieved.

In response to the more specific comments in the Opinion the Commission would like to refer to the attached annex.

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*

³ Commission Communication of 7 June 2016 on establishing a New Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, COM(2016) 385 final.

⁴ Commission Communication of 18 October 2016 on First Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, COM(2016) 700 final.

ANNEX

The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților in its Opinion and would like to make the following comments and clarifications:

EU financial support for integration policies

Funding for the current programming period is available to Member States under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund to support integration and there is considerable scope for using the European Structural and Investment Funds to support integration measures. The Commission wishes to refer to the guidance document exploring the synergies between the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and other EU funding instruments in relation to reception and integration of asylum seekers and other migrants for more information⁵. The 2017 budget for the AMIF will be increased by EUR 150 million in order to finance integration-related measures in Member States.

Integration as a part of efforts to build cohesive society

As mentioned in its Action Plan, the Commission wishes to stress that actions supporting the integration of third-country nationals need not, and should not, be taken at the expense of measures benefitting other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups or minorities. Mainstreaming the integration of third country nationals is and should be an integral part of the efforts made to modernise and build inclusive and cohesive societies.

Support to education as tool for integration

The Commission shares the view of the Camera Deputaților that education is among the most powerful tools for integration. Education is one of the priority areas of the Action Plan and the Commission is putting in place several actions in this field, including promoting peer learning between Member States, supporting the school community in promoting inclusive education and contributing to remove barriers to the participation of third country national children to early childhood education.

Target group of the Action Plan

The Commission would like to clarify that the Action Plan addresses the integration of migrants, including refugees, who are nationals of non-EU countries and who are in the EU legally.

Use of new technologies

The Commission takes note of the concerns of the Camera Deputaților regarding a possible misuse of new technologies. However, it would like to point out that some Member States have already developed online tools, for example phone applications, to inform newly-arrived asylum seekers about their rights and about the host society, or to provide basic

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/synergies_between_amif_and_other_eu_funds_in_relation_to_migrants_en.pdf

language training or very practical information to facilitate daily life.

Involvement of local authorities

The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaților on the importance of involving local authorities in the integration process. In this respect, the Commission launched a Partnership under the Urban Agenda for the EU focussing on the integration of third country nationals, where the Commission, Member States, cities and civil society representatives will develop together concrete actions to promote integration.

Pre-departure measures

The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaților on the importance of pre-departure measures and is planning to support projects promoting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

Recognition of qualifications

The Commission shares the view that facilitating validation of skills and recognition of qualifications is crucial to ensure that individuals' skills are used to their full potential. Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe⁶, the Commission proposed measures and tools to support the profiling of skills and the recognition of qualification for third-country nationals. Initiatives will also be launched to support the recognition of academic qualifications.

⁶ [Commission Communication of 10 June 2016, A New Skills Agenda for Europe, COM\(2016\) 381 final.](#)