



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.1.2017
C(2017) 20 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 230/2014 of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace {COM(2016) 447 final}.

With this proposal, the Commission honours the commitment made in its 2016 Work Programme to further develop instruments to enhance security and development in partner countries and to support them in improving security sector reform and capacity building in support of security and development. The proposal forms part of a broader package that covers elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support Security Sector Reform {JOIN(2016) 31 final}.

Improving the capacity of partner countries to prevent and manage crises by themselves in support of the rule of law is a priority for the Commission and with this proposal the EU would be able under exceptional circumstances to provide assistance to all relevant security sector actors, including military actors. The proposal is in line with the new United Nation's (UN) 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and in particular with Sustainable Development Goal 16 which calls for building capacities at all levels to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

The Commission takes note of the Senat's remarks relating to the geographical balance and to the importance of complementarity with similar assistance instruments.

With regard to the Senat's observations recommending an inclusive and balanced approach from the geographical point of view, the Commission recalls that while Regulation (EU) 230/2014 has a global scope, Union assistance under the proposal is conditional upon the exceptional circumstances laid down in Article 3a (3). The Commission is therefore not in a position to anticipate the breakdown of future assistance based on geographical criteria.

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On the question of complementarity with other assistance tools and the need to take into account in particular the NATO Defence Capacity Building, the Commission would like to inform the Senat that the High Representative and the Commission are indeed pursuing a trilateral EU-UN-NATO cooperation on Defence Sector Reform, which has been identified as one of the priorities of the EU-UN Strategic Partnership agreed by the Political and Security Committee of the Council in 2015. The European Union Global Strategy furthermore highlights the importance of cooperation with other international Partners and for coordinating work on capacity building with the UN and NATO in particular.

Moreover, the common set of proposals to implement the EU-NATO Leaders' Declaration, as endorsed by the Council on 6 December 2016, includes a commitment by the EU and NATO staffs to foster cooperation, including on the ground, on building partner's capacity and resilience, in particular in the Western Balkans and the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods. This includes identifying possibilities for the EU and NATO to participate in their respective projects and programmes and to ensure complementarity of maritime capacity building efforts.

The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
Fist Vice-President*

*Federica Mogherini
High Representative*