



*Brussels, 8.3.2017
C(2017) 1580 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted and amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents {COM(2016) 466 final}.

This proposal forms part of a broader package of measures designed to reform the Common European Asylum System. It aims to establish common criteria for recognising applicants for international protection, uniform standards for protection and rights granted to beneficiaries of international protection.

Despite the achievement of harmonisation by the adoption of Directives 2004/83/EC and 2011/95/EU, there is still considerable difference both as regards the recognition rates and type of protection status granted by each Member State as well as the content of the protection.

In the Commission's view, more harmonised rules on qualification as well as on the content of protection will contribute to more convergence of the asylum decisions in the Member States and thereby to a better functioning of the Common European Asylum System.

In order to ensure full convergence between the national asylum systems, decreasing incentives for secondary movement and strengthening mutual trust between Member States, the Commission considers that a Regulation is the most appropriate instrument to achieve these goals.

Furthermore, the change to the EU Long-term Residents Directive is proposed in order to discourage the irregular movement of beneficiaries of international protection within the European Union, without going beyond what is necessary to obtain a deterrent effect.

In this context, the Commission finds that the proposed changes do not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the purported objectives and concern areas where further harmonisation will have a significant impact.

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The Commission welcomes the Senat's general support and confirmation as regards the respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Discussions between the co-legislators concerning the proposals are now underway and the Commission remains hopeful that agreement will be reached on all proposals in the near future.

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*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*