



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 9.3.2017
C(2017)1110 final*

*Mr Călin POPESCU-
TĂRICEANU
President of the Senat
Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 1-3,
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation establishing a Union Resettlement Framework and amending Regulation (EU) No 516/20154 of the European Parliament and the Council {COM(2016) 468 final}.

Following the presentation of its European Agenda on Migration,¹ the Commission set out its priorities to reform the Common European Asylum System in its Communication, adopted in April 2016: 'Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe'². As a result, the Commission presented two sets of proposals for the reform of the Common European Asylum System on 4 May 2016 and 13 July 2016.

The proposal for a Union Resettlement Framework forms part of the second set of proposals. It aims at offering legal, orderly and safe avenues to the EU for persons in need of international protection. This is an integral part of the overall objectives to ensure protection to those who need it, to reduce the incentives for irregular and uncontrolled ways of arrival, and to protect migrants from exploitation by smuggling networks and from taking dangerous journeys to reach Europe.

In order to achieve these goals, a more structured and harmonised framework for resettlement across the Union was needed, building on the existing resettlement initiatives and practices in accordance with Article 67(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In this context, the Commission finds that a Regulation is the most appropriate instrument to provide for a collective and harmonised approach, with a unified procedure which would reduce the divergences among the national resettlement practices and to ensure that the EU is able to speak one voice in international fora giving more weight and visibility to its contribution to international resettlement initiatives.

¹ COM(2015) 240 final.

² COM(2016) 197 final.

As far as Member States' sovereignty is concerned, it should be stressed that the Commission proposal ensures the full involvement of the Member States in the decision-making process on resettlement plans. To this end, the proposal foresees that the Member States establish the maximum total number of persons to be resettled in the EU every year and that they remain the sole actors defining the details of their participation and their contributions. The Commission implementing decision on a targeted resettlement scheme will be also subject to the scrutiny of the Member States according to the committee procedure. Moreover, the Council and the Commission should take into account the discussions taking place in the High-Level Resettlement Committee prior to any decision, where all Member States are represented and can already indicate what contribution they are willing to make.

With regards to the financial support to Member States, it should be clarified that the lump sum of 10.000 euros granted to Member States for each person they resettle, is not directly linked to the funds needed for the effective integration of the third-country nationals. For this purpose, Member States receive specific additional allocations under their respective National Programmes by the Commission's Asylum Migration and Integration Fund.

The Commission is committed to continue its work to address both the immediate and the long-term challenges of managing migration flows effectively and comprehensively. Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators concerning the proposal are now underway and the Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in the near future. The Opinion has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations with the co-legislators and will inform these 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*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*