



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 23.1.2018
C(2018) 216 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Council Recommendation on tracking graduates {COM(2017) 249 final}.

The Commission proposal responds to the importance of improving the availability and comparability of data on education outcomes. Good quality data in this area can show the impact of education systems and of educational reforms; it can be useful in identifying and tackling skills mismatches; and it is important for stakeholders at all levels, including prospective students who are deciding what to study, teachers developing and delivering education programmes and policy-makers steering education systems.

The Commission would like to inform the Camera Deputaților that the Recommendation was adopted by the Ministers of Education at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council on 20 November 2017.

In order to respond more specifically to the particular concerns expressed by the Camera Deputaților, the Commission would like to clarify the following:

The Commission welcomes the support expressed by the Camera Deputaților for the proposal and would like to underline that each Member State will decide how to implement graduate tracking, according to their national legislation, circumstances and resources. All commitments made by Member States will be voluntary.

The Camera Deputaților raises the importance of adhering to data protection rules. The Commission has taken note of data protection concerns when negotiating the proposal with Member States in the Council's Education Committee. The final text of the Recommendation makes it clearer that Member States are not obliged to take action that is not in compliance with their national data protection legislation.

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With regard to the comments by the Camera Deputaților on the type of data to be collected, how it will be verified and the need to support Member States whose Information Technology infrastructure is less developed, the Commission wishes to point out that a network of experts, which will contain representatives from each Member State, will provide a forum for cooperation and mutual learning on all elements of the Recommendation. In view of the fact that data collected across the European Union vary, this network will also explore options for developing comparable data. Member States are also encouraged to explore options for Union funding for graduate tracking initiatives.

The Commission takes note of the recommendations by the Camera Deputaților on support for education systems, the use of the Eurydice network and support for research in pedagogy. The Commission proposes a number of actions in the renewed European Union agenda for higher education to support effective and efficient education systems, improve cooperation with the Eurydice network and support academic staff in developing their pedagogical and curriculum design skills.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications 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*

*Tibor Navracsics
Member of the Commission*