



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 23.3.2018
C(2018) 1531 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Communication on Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: Strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth {COM(2017) 376 final}.

The Communication is based on the results already observed in many Member States where smart specialisation has helped strengthening the role of regions, improving their innovation governance and cooperation between business and research. On that basis, the Commission will seek to boost innovation-led growth in the European Union, with the objective of making smart specialisation a comprehensive tool to help all regions seize the opportunities brought by technological change, digitisation and industrial modernisation.

The implementation of over 120 Smart Specialisation Strategies across the Union is supported with EUR 44 billion from the European Structural Investment Funds out of which Romania allocated EUR 1.3 billion in its operational programmes for 2014-2020.

In addition to these amounts, the Commission supports Romanian authorities through the implementation of the preparatory action of the European Parliament "The economic competitive advantages and the potential for smart specialisation at regional level in Romania". In the framework of this action, the Commission provides a hands-on support to two Romanian regions (North-East and North-West regions) in setting up their smart specialisation strategies and a solid structured dialogue between public administrations, research and business communities. The duration of this preparatory action is 24 months, starting from 2016, with a total budget of EUR 2 million.

In the next months the Commission will continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council in the context of the ongoing discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework to further facilitate effective use of EU public funding for innovation.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Corina Crețu
Member of the Commission*