



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 30.1.2019
C(2019)638 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the creation of a European network of immigration liaison officers (recast) {COM(2018) 303 final}.

The objective of the revision of this Regulation is to enhance coordination between the Immigration Officers, including the new European liaison officers, deployed to third countries, and to optimise the utilisation of these officers as well as to enable them to respond more effectively to the Union's priorities in the field of migration.

The Commission welcomes the Opinion from the Camera Deputaților and its endorsement of the Commission's approach for the recast of the Immigration Liaison Officer Regulation 377/2004. The Commission notes the support to the overarching aim of this recast proposal to optimise the capability of immigration liaison officers operating in third countries, particularly in terms of the critical role they play in countering irregular migration. The Camera Deputaților's recommendation for Member States to use Union funding for joint deployments of immigration liaison officers is in line with the Commissions' efforts to encourage such joint deployments by Member States, in order to support a more effective use of resources.

The Council has recently agreed on a General Approach on this Regulation, and the agreed text confirms the need for synergies in the existing modalities of cooperation between Member States.

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One of the Member States' concerns has been for them to maintain the primary role in the management and tasking of the national immigration liaison officers. While this concern has limited the extent to which new responsibilities were assigned in the Commission's proposal, the Commission has proposed the establishment of a new governance structure – the Steering Board – which would ensure that information is shared through a secure platform and shared tasks would be commonly agreed and set. Also, the comprehensive set of Rules of Procedure agreed by the Board would provide an operating framework, which would include a biennial work programme for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes and accountability for funds being utilised.

The proposal includes also a provision on the obligation to report on the implementation of the recast proposal within five years of its entry into force. It also recalls the need for immigration liaison officers to operate in a framework that takes due account of the obligation to protect fundamental rights of migrants, especially those who are vulnerable.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*