



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 21.3.2019  
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*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion concerning the Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank ‘Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU strategy’ {JOIN(2018) 31 final}.*

*The Commission welcomes the emphasis put in the Opinion on the necessity of deeper cooperation with Asian countries. The commitment to the rule of law, justice and fundamental values lies at the heart of stability and prosperity. Promoting rules and practices advancing the movement of goods, services, capital and persons across borders, while maintaining a high level of environmental and social protection in the European Union, is very important.*

*The Commission also shares the views expressed on the importance of space and the desirability of increased cooperation between the European Union and Asia in this important domain. It also has the intention of stepping up cooperation with Asia in cutting edge technologies.*

*The Union’s own flagship policy Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) is the basis for the cooperation with Asia in this domain. The Commission is working towards reduced transit times and higher loading factors for rail as well as the extension of TEN-T to countries in our Neighbourhood, and the support by the Camera Deputaților in this regard is very welcome.*

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*While the European Union strategy ‘Connecting Europe and Asia’ does not cover Africa in geographical terms, its principles are applicable globally. The European Union, through the Africa – European Union partnership, is working for a better connectivity for Africa as well, including with its Asian partners.*

*As it is noted in the ‘Connecting Europe and Asia’ strategy, the energy sector is currently undergoing a market-led transition towards renewable energy. Over time, this will result in a more decentralised and resilient grid and lower prices for electricity. This transition is in the interest of both the European Union and its Asian partners, and the need for sustainability, in economic, social, fiscal and environmental terms, cuts across the strategy.*

*The Commission recognises the importance of student mobility and direct cooperation between educators and educational establishments in the European Union and Asia and civil society more widely. In line with the ‘Connecting Europe and Asia’ strategy, the Commission is considering stepping up these efforts.*

*The Commission commends the Camera Deputaţilor for underlining the need for mobilising business and human capital as well as further efforts in European Economic Diplomacy and in connecting European and Asian small and medium-sized enterprises, since these are important aspects of the ‘Connecting Europe and Asia’ strategy.*

*Finally, the Commission is working towards a better market access for European companies, free and fair competition between economic operators, more open and transparent public procurement, non-discriminatory market practices, protection of investment and intellectual property rights, in Asia as well as globally.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Federica Mogherini  
Vice-President/High Representative*