



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2022) 5972 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Towards a green, digital and resilient economy: our European Growth Model {COM(2022) 83 final}.

The Communication recalls the common objectives to which the European Union and its Member States have committed with respect to the green and digital transitions and to strengthening social and economic resilience. It sets out the key investments and reforms that are required to achieve these objectives. The Communication explicitly acknowledges that the European economy is undergoing unprecedented transformations in the context of major uncertainties linked to the global and security outlook. Against this background, it confirms the need to work closely with all relevant actors, including the European Union, Member States and the private sector, to reinforce its long-term sustainable growth agenda.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera Deputaților supports the objectives and actions set out at European Union level to ensure a green, digital and resilient economy. The Commission agrees that collaboration between all stakeholders is required to implement the European Green Deal and the Digital Agenda for Europe. Adequate and well-targeted support for businesses and households is indeed crucial during the transition, including in rural areas.

The Commission also agrees with the Camera Deputaților that the European Union's cohesion policy has a key role to play to ensure the success of the green and digital

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transition in a balanced manner throughout the European Union and it shares the Camera Deputaților's concerns about the impact of the invasion of Ukraine. For this reason, the Commission has taken immediate action following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to help mobilise financial support to Member States hosting persons fleeing the war. In this context, the Commission has adopted a proposal for Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe to support Member States and regions in providing emergency support to people fleeing from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and has proposed to increase the total pre-financing from the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU). On 29 June, the Commission proposed another set of amendments to the Common Provisions Regulations 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 to further speed up and simplify Member States' support to the integration of third country nationals, while addressing other impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the implementation of projects funded by the EU.

The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaților that diversification is a key ingredient of a resilient European economy. To support diversification and competitiveness, the European Union needs to remain open to trade, strengthen the multilateral trading system and make active use of the trade policy tools at its disposal, including free trade agreements and measures to ensure undistorted trade. The reform of the World Trade Organisation process, including restoring a functioning Dispute Settlement System, will continue to be a key priority for the Commission, in particular now that the reform process was launched by the membership at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in June 2022. The agreement to launch the reform was only one of the successful outcomes of the Ministerial Conference, which also secured a multilateral agreement on fisheries subsidies, a response to the pandemic and food security crisis and the extension of the e-commerce moratorium. The Commission also fully agrees on the importance of ensuring European Union companies' access to international markets for environmental products and services, both at multilateral level and in our bilateral agreements, also as part of streamlining sustainability in all our trade agreements to ensure that our trade is greener, fairer and more sustainable (as set out in our recent Communication 'The power of trade partnerships: together for green and just economic growth'¹). The Commission will also continue to pursue an ambitious bilateral and multilateral agenda to support the European Union's geopolitical, economic and sustainability objectives.

The Commission also agrees that there is an urgency to reduce the European Union's energy dependence. Its REPowerEU Plan, adopted on 18 May 2022, comprises a set of measures to achieve the twin ambition of ending the European Union's dependence on Russian fossil fuels and tackling the climate crisis. Building on the 'Fit for 55' package, it combines energy savings, diversification of energy supplies and the accelerated roll-out of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels in homes, industry and power generation. Taken together, these actions will structurally transform the European Union's energy system and reduce our dependence on Russian fossil fuels. Moreover, the

¹ COM(2022) 409 final.

Commission has proposed on 20 July 2022 the ‘Save gas for a safe winter’ plan, which sets out how the European Union can tackle potential further disruptions in gas supplies from Russia in a coordinated manner, in view notably of the upcoming winter season.

With respect to the need for measures to strengthen agricultural production, the Commission wishes to emphasize that food supply is not at stake in the European Union today. Nevertheless, it recognises that the invasion of Ukraine and a global commodity price boom have further destabilised already fragile agricultural markets and are driving up prices in agriculture. In that context, while short-term emergency support measures are important, they do not replace the importance of refocusing the food sector towards sustainability and resilience in the long run. Food sustainability is fundamental for food security. Without a transition set out in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, food security will be severely at risk in the medium and long-term, with irreversible impacts globally. In implementing these strategies, the Commission is keen to ensure that the overall productivity of European Union agriculture, fish and seafood production is not undermined. To this end, the Commission proposed a package of short-term support measures for the affected sectors, complementing the National Strategic Plans designed by Member States to implement the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Commission agrees on the need to protect and restore biodiversity, including nature restoration and the protection of wild flora and fauna. On 22 June 2022, the Commission presented a proposal for a Regulation on nature restoration², which combines an overarching restoration objective for the long-term recovery of nature in the European Union’s land and sea areas with binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species, such as agricultural, urban, marine and forest ecosystems, and pollinators.

Like the Camera Deputaţilor, the Commission is convinced that education and skills must be at the centre of our collective policy action. The Commission’s Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025³ formulates a shared vision to improve access to quality education and training and to equip European Union citizens with the right knowledge and skills to reap the benefits of the green and digital transitions. The Commission agrees with Camera Deputaţilor’s insistence on the need to adapt education and training systems of the Member States to the digital age. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027⁴ proposes a set of initiatives to foster the development of a digital education ecosystem with enhanced digital competences for the digital transformation.

The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaţilor that both security of supply and innovation capacity must be strengthened to increase the single market’s resilience to shocks. The updated industrial strategy has helped to identify areas in which we have strategic dependencies that need to be addressed. The proposed European Chips Act⁵,

² COM(2022) 304 final

³ COM(2020) 625 final

⁴ COM(2020) 624 final

⁵ COM(2022) 45 final, COM(2022) 46 final, COM(2022) 47 final and C(2022) 782 final

adopted on 8 February 2022, aims at reaching the strategic objective of increasing the resilience of Europe's semiconductor ecosystem and increasing its global market share. It also aims at facilitating early adoption of new chips by European industry and increasing its competitiveness. Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the proposal are now underway and the Commission remains hopeful that an agreement will be reached in the near future.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Věra JOUROVÁ
Vice-President*