



*Brussels, 20.01.2017  
C(2017) 113 final*

*Dear Chair,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Communication A New Skills Agenda for Europe, Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness {COM(2016) 381 final}.*

*The New Skills Agenda for Europe focuses on increasing skills levels to boost employability and competitiveness, supporting fair, inclusive and sustainable growth. The Agenda supports upward social convergence and the sustainability of the European Social Model, contributing to the Commission's first political priority, "A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment". It aims at addressing three pressing challenges that Europe faces: inadequate skills compared to the requirements of our society and economy, the insufficient transparency of skills and qualifications and the difficulty to anticipate and forecast skills needs of the labour market.*

*In adopting the New Skills Agenda for Europe the Commission is delivering on the promise in its 2016 Work Programme to promote skills development and the transparency of qualifications, supporting vocational training and higher education and reaping the full potential of digital jobs.*

*With this initiative, the Commission outlined its vision on the strategic importance of skills for sustaining jobs, growth and competitiveness.*

*The Commission put forward ten key actions which will contribute to make progress in three priority areas:*

- 1. Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation*
- 2. Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable*
- 3. Advancing skills intelligence, documentation and informed career choices.*

*Ms Lena HALLENGREN  
Chair of the Committee on Education  
of the Riksdag  
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*

*cc. Mr Urban AHLIN  
Speaker of the Riksdag  
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*The Commission is pleased that the Riksdag welcomes the plan to cooperate on strengthening the skills base in Europe. The Commission also acknowledges and supports the work done at national level, noting that this is fully in line with the priorities under the New Skills Agenda for Europe.*

*The Commission fully acknowledges that the responsibility in the field of education and vocational training resides with the Member States (Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) and confirms that no binding measures arise from the Communication. Legislative proposals are being or will be discussed in accordance with the appropriate procedures, fully respecting the competences and responsibilities of the European Parliament and of the Council, where the Swedish government is taking an active role.*

*The Commission further wishes to reassure the Riksdag that EU financial principles and procedures will be respected in the implementation of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.*

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the concerns raised by the Riksdag and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen  
Member of the Commission*