



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.3.2021
C(2021) 2305 final

Dear Speaker,

The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2020 Rule of Law Report - The rule of law situation in the European Union {COM(2020) 580 final}.

The Commission welcomes the strong support of the Riksdag for the 2020 Rule of Law Report, covering all Member States and presenting both positive developments and challenges. The report is at the heart of the new preventive rule of law mechanism aimed at preventing challenges from emerging or deepening, based on monitoring, dialogue and debate at national and EU level. The Commission fully agrees with the Riksdag on the importance of direct dialogue with Member States and their competent authorities under the rule of law mechanism, including with national Parliaments, and their close involvement in the preparation of the rule of law report. Its objective is to stimulate a constructive debate on upholding the rule of law and encourage all Member States to examine how challenges can be addressed, learn from each other's experiences and show how the rule of law can be further strengthened, in full respect for national traditions and national specificities.

The Commission agrees with the Riksdag that the COVID-19 crisis is a continued stress test for the resilience of Member States' national systems, for example with regard to citizens' rights and freedoms. This is why the Commission has been closely monitoring the measures taken to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in all Member States since the start of the crisis. The 2020 Rule of Law Report already included elements of the results of this monitoring and pointed to a number of findings and reflections. The Commission plans to report further on this ongoing monitoring in the 2021 Rule of Law Report, where relevant.

The new Regulation on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget is an additional tool, which applies from 1 January 2021 onward. This is a

*Mr Andreas Norlén
Speaker of the Riksdag
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*

historical achievement. For the first time, the Union has a specific tool to protect its budget from breaches of the principles of the rule of law. The Commission is now developing guidelines on some aspects of the application of the Regulation.

The Commission welcomes the debates on the Commission's rule of law report within the Riksdag, recognising the essential role of Parliaments in upholding of the rule of law at national level. Following up on the debate held this January, Vice-President Jourova and Commissioner Reynders would be delighted to pursue further the debate on the rule of law report with the members of the Riksdag in the future.

The Commission hopes that this reply address the issues raised by the Riksdag and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Didier Reynders
Member of the Commission*