

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Chairman,

The Commission would like to thank the House of Lords for its Opinion on the Commission Work Programme (CWP) 2014 {COM(2013) 739 final}, and in particular for its support for the overall objectives set out in the Work Programme and the broad priorities identified for 2014, including work connected to REFIT.

The Commission takes note of the particular emphasis put on certain work strands within these priorities and the emphasis on specific and well-targeted proposals. The views of national Parliaments constitute valuable contributions to the debate on the political priorities of the European Union and the Commission continues to encourage national Parliaments to see the CWP as a strategic tool which allows for an early exchange on future priorities.

The CWP 2014 has a strong focus on delivery and implementation with a view to growth and jobs, including the adoption of key pending legislative proposals listed in Annex I. The list of new initiatives in Annex II is much more focused, while the Commission continues to work in a number of areas for which proposals may then be taken forward by the next Commission.

In the area of economic and financial affairs in particular, the Commission will take stock in March of progress under the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and launch a public consultation, thus preparing the ground for the next Commission to review the strategy. The Commission is also looking into fiscal policies in the context of the European Semester process.

Moreover, the Commission is exploring various areas identified for short, medium and long-term action in the Blueprint for a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union. The adoption of the Single Resolution Mechanism is of the utmost importance with a view to completing the Banking Union. The proposal on structural reforms for banks adopted by the College in January 2014 also aims at reinforcing stability and improving transparency by means of a structural separation for high-risk trading activities of the largest banks. In preparing this proposal, the Commission has taken into account the report of the High Level Group chaired by Mr Liikanen as well as existing national rules and global initiatives in this area.

*Lord Boswell
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In general, the important financial reforms that have been undertaken during the current Commission term aim at strengthening regulation and supervision under a single set of rules and striking the right balance between reinforcing stability, safeguarding the single market and lending to the real economy. Together with combatting youth unemployment, improving the financing of the real economy is among the main objectives of our work in 2014, for which it is essential to coordinate action at all levels and using all tools at our disposal. To this end, the Commission will present in March 2014 a package following up on the Green paper on the long-term financing of the economy, which will identify a series of actions and initiatives.

With a view to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Commission presented a climate and energy package in January 2014, continues to work on labour mobility and is pursuing its trade agenda with determination. As regards to the House of Lords question on the Sustainable Food Communication aimed at reinforcing the resilience of the food system, the impact assessment is ongoing with adoption currently planned for the 1st quarter of 2014.

The REFIT initiatives listed in Annex III to the CWP 2014 are particularly important to identify areas where action is necessary to ensure that the EU legislative stock is fit for purpose. The Commission will implement REFIT as a rolling programme and set out new actions on an annual basis in its work programme.

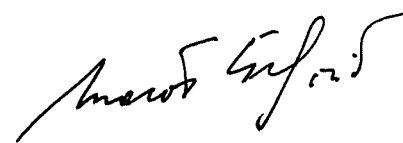
Finally, work is ongoing on data protection to ensure that citizens and companies can exercise their freedoms and rights in security and on protecting citizens against threats of radicalisation and violent extremism by mobilizing a wide range of partners at local, national and EU level. The Commission is working on further protecting citizens and promoting their rights, as well as assuming its responsibilities as a global actor in its neighbourhood and beyond.

The observations of the House of Lords are being circulated to all responsible services. A number of priority items in Annex I of the CWP 2014 are now at the final stages of adoption, while many of the initiatives in Annex II of the CWP 2014 are under preparation, including through public consultation and impact assessment. The observations made by the House of Lords are useful in this process.

Concerning the FTT, the Commission will reply separately and in more detail to the Opinion the House of Lords sent on this issue in December 2013.

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

Yours faithfully,



Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President