

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.12.2015
C(2015) 9110 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the House of Commons for its Opinion on the Commission's 2014 annual reports on subsidiarity and proportionality {COM(2015) 315 final} and its relations with national Parliaments {COM(2015) 316 final}.

Since taking office, this Commission has made clear its determination to reform what it does and how it does it. As we underlined in the Better Regulation Communication in May, the EU, its institutions, and its body of law, are there to serve citizens and businesses who must see this in their daily lives and operations. Acting at EU level only when there is a real need and added value and improving the quality of the EU legislative process are key to this.

The new approach to policy making at the heart of our Better Regulation agenda is designed to ensure that policy is prepared, implemented and reviewed in an open, transparent manner, informed by the best available evidence and backed up by the comprehensive involvement of stakeholders. We want this to begin at the very earliest stages of policy development. This is the aim of the publication of inception impact assessments, which will provide stakeholders with more detailed information about the problems, policy options and the expected impact of an initiative as well as how the Commission intends to consult them. All inception impact assessments are made available online. I welcome the House's request that they be transmitted directly to national Parliaments early on, and will ensure that this is indeed the case.

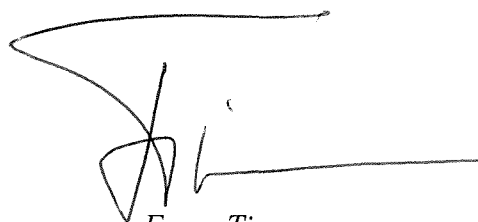
The Commission recognises that national Parliaments, as the directly-elected representatives of citizens at the national level, have an important role to play in 'bridging the gap' between their constituents and the EU institutions. This is why this Commission is working hard to strengthen its relations with national Parliaments and we are grateful for the House of Commons' support for the measures we have taken to date in this regard.

*Sir William CASH, MP
Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee
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At the COSAC meeting in Rome last year, shortly after this Commission entered office, I responded to the issues raised in the letter to President-designate Juncker of June 2014 calling for the Commission to establish a working group to examine the role of national Parliaments in the EU. As I underlined at the time, in the Commission's view, the most appropriate and effective way to take such an idea forward would be for the national Parliaments most interested to initiate the setting up of a working group with all like-minded colleagues. Since that occasion, I have followed with active interest the discussions that have taken place in the various working groups that interested national Parliaments have themselves held on this subject and which have continued during the Luxembourg COSAC presidency, and I remain ready to engage, in particular in the context of COSAC with all national Parliaments on these issues.

I look forward to continuing our dialogue in the future and to the contribution that I would hope the House of Commons will wish to make to the reflection on an increased role for national Parliaments in the preparation of EU decision-making that was announced in the Commission Work Programme for 2016.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'F' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*