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Frans Timmermans

Vice-President of the European Commission for Better Regulation,
Inter-Institutional Relations, Rule of Law and Charter of Fundamental Rights

Dear Vice President Timmermans,

Forging a new partnership with national parliaments has been presented as one of the priorities of the new European Commission. The debate on strengthening the role of national parliaments in the EU has been greatly advanced through COSAC meetings, and the latest Contribution of the LII COSAC (December 2014, Rome) acknowledged that while the majority of national parliaments/chambers positively assess the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions conferring new powers on national parliaments, there is also support for creating new instruments that would promote more active involvement in the EU decision-making process and would not require formal Treaty amendments.

On 19 January 2015, at the initiative of the Dutch Tweede Kamer, an informal meeting took place in Brussels. Representatives from 14 parliamentary chambers and the European Parliament discussed, among other topics, the idea of enhancing the existing political dialogue by introducing a “green card” mechanism. Building on a discussion paper prepared by the UK House of Lords, it is proposed that the “green card” would enable national parliaments to make constructive suggestions for legislative proposals to the European Commission.

The practical implementation of this idea requires further analysis and consideration, and thus a significant part of our work within the parliamentary dimension of the Latvian Presidency will be dedicated to facilitating the exchange of views between national parliaments/chambers on this matter. However, already at this stage, we would like to emphasise that the “green card” procedure would build entirely on the existing political dialogue while respecting the right of legislative initiative enjoyed by the European Commission. For this reason, we believe that the “green card” procedure – which could also be called “enhanced political dialogue” – is not incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty.

We plan to explore this topic in detail in our Bi-Annual Report and present a common vision of the “green card” at the plenary meeting of LIII COSAC in June 2015 in Riga. We believe that giving national parliaments an opportunity to play a *pro-active*, rather than merely *reactive*, role in shaping EU legislation will enhance democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making and policy-making process. We highly value current constructive commitment of the European Commission to political dialogue with national parliaments, and we hope that the new initiative, once its scope and procedure have been agreed, will gain its support.

We look forward to continued good cooperation with the European Commission and a fruitful discussion on the abovementioned initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Lolita Čigāne
Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee

