



SAEIMA OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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Mr Kristian VIGENIN

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
and Oversight of the European Funds of the
National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria

Dear Mr. Vigenin,

On behalf of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima I would like to take this opportunity and share my thoughts on some aspects of the work of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently".

Establishment of the Task Force provides an opportunity for National Parliaments to reflect and re-evaluate the existing EU scrutiny systems at national levels and make some general observations on the practical application of the instruments provided by the Lisbon Treaty as well as the practices derived from the political commitments.

Regarding the scrutiny process at the national level, I truly believe, that the government seeking a mandate from the parliament in order to present the national interests at the Council is especially advantageous for the parliaments with a relatively small administration. It provides the parliament with an access to relevant information, engages it in the decision making, which at the same time means sharing an overall ownership of the decisions taken at the EU level. Thus, the scrutiny system at the Member State level influences parliament's activities in terms of application of the Lisbon Treaty. The best practice examples of close National Parliament involvement in formulating the National positions should be highlighted and, where possible, efficiently followed by.

Apropos of the Lisbon Treaty instruments, notably, the evaluation of the subsidiarity principle – in my Committee I observe the attractiveness of the Reasoned Opinions to be employed when there is no clear breach of the principle and when it is not a matter of solving a problem at the most effective level. At the same time, we have to bear in mind, that for some parliaments, the Reasoned Opinion is the only formal instrument available to engage in the EU decision making process. Furthermore, when it may occur that the proposal itself complies with the subsidiarity, some parliaments might not necessarily agree with the aims of that specific proposal, then it would mean that the process is on the edge of the principle of subsidiarity and disagreement with the content of the proposed action.

Whilst it is an essential power of the Commission to maintain proposal after a 'yellow card' procedure has been triggered, at the same time, relevant commissioner should seek proper political dialogue in the capitals with the parliaments raising a 'yellow card'. This means – the issues at hand could be resolved by more open dialogue between National Parliaments and the European Commission.

Often National Parliaments point out 8-weeks period for the submission of Reasoned Opinions as being problematic. I do not think that further extension of the 8-week period would improve 'yellow card' procedure. However, the main quantitative aspects of the impact assessment could be included in the explanatory memoranda of the proposal; thus, the benefit of the action at the EU level would be more notable.

I hope that my reflections above will be useful in drafting Task Force's report.

Please be assured of my highest consideration and accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lolita Čigāne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lolita Čigāne

Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee