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Dear Chair Bradauskas and Chair Zemaitaitis,

We would like to thank you for your letter of 6 November 2013 addressed to President Barroso, who has asked us to reply on his behalf. You attached the Contribution of the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the EU of 16-17 October 2013 in Vilnius. The Commission welcomes the establishment of the Interparliamentary Conferences on Economic and Financial Governance that aim at contributing to increasing democratic accountability and legitimacy of the decisions taken in the area of economic and financial governance in the EU, particularly with regard to the Economic and Monetary Union.

In agreement with your letter, the Commission also considers as crucial that substantial changes in the area of EU economic governance are followed by adequate mechanisms to ensure effective democratic legitimacy and accountability. Both national Parliaments and the European Parliament play a key role in this regard. National Parliaments ensure democratic legitimacy of Member States' action in the European Council and the Council, as well as of the conduct of national fiscal and economic policies. At European level, it is primarily the European Parliament that ensures democratic accountability and scrutiny.

The Commission supports efforts to reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the European Semester process. Given the interaction between the European and national levels in the context of economic governance, greater involvement of the European and National Parliaments in the decision-making process is crucial.

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*Mr Bronius Bradauskas*  
*Chair of the Committee on Budget and Finance*  
*Mr Remigijus Zemaitaitis*  
*Chair of the Committee on Economics*  
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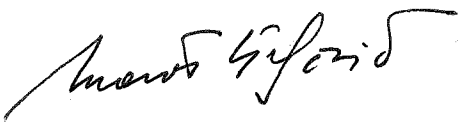
Increased inter-parliamentary cooperation and dialogue is also very important in this context. It is ultimately for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to determine jointly their involvement and the precise organisation and modalities of such inter-parliamentary cooperation in the context of the European Semester.

The Commission remains committed to developing a regular political dialogue with national Parliaments within the framework of the European Semester. The Commission has singled out two particular moments during the Semester when a dialogue with national parliaments in the context of an interparliamentary meeting could provide particular value added (i.e. first, following the publication of the Annual Growth Survey of the European Commission and second, following the adoption of country-specific guidance). Particularly at these key stages, the Commission is ready to discuss with national Parliaments both horizontal and country-specific questions and to provide further clarification of its positions. In the context of the so-called two pack, the Commission is also available to present its Opinions on the draft budgetary plans of euro area Member States to national Parliaments, if requested.

Finally, the Commission agrees that parliamentary cooperation in Europe remains important: the challenge is to manage this effectively in a multilevel governance system with both national parliaments and the European Parliament, each with their specific, complementary roles. In our view, there is an ongoing need for regular inter-parliamentary exchanges to increase awareness of the interdependencies of decisions taken in the area of economic and financial governance in the EU.

We look forward to future successful meetings of the Interparliamentary Conferences on Economic and Financial Governance of the EU.

Yours sincerely,



*Maroš Šefčovič*  
*Vice-President*



*Olli Rehn*  
*Vice-President*