



FRANSTIMMERMANS
First Vice-President

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Brussels, 11. 04. 2017
Ares (2017) 752613

Dear Mr Sleight, Dear Mr Sutter,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 2017, also addressed to President Juncker, the Vice-Presidents and Commissioners, in which you express your concerns about the Commission's initiative to modernise the comitology procedures.

This initiative follows up on a statement by President Juncker in his State of the Union address to the European Parliament in September 2016 when he said: "It is not right that when EU countries cannot decide among themselves whether or not to ban the use of glyphosate in herbicides, the Commission is forced by Parliament and Council to take a decision. So we will change those rules – because that is not democracy¹".

Since the beginning of its mandate, the Juncker Commission has taken a number of measures to ensure a political debate before submitting and adopting proposals for delegated or implementing acts on sensitive subjects. To ensure that the political responsibility is supported by the co-legislator, the Commission proposed to amend the Comitology Regulation on 14 February 2017 by a package of four targeted amendments (see press release http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-264_en.htm).

As you can read in this press release, the envisaged changes to the Comitology Regulation are limited to the appeal committee procedure. They have the objective to enhance transparency and accountability in implementing EU legislation. They do not aim at making the comitology decision-making system for Commission implementing powers less science-based than before.

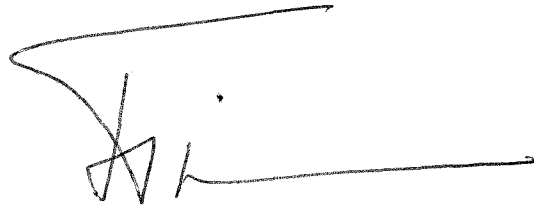
¹ State of the Union Address 2016: https://ec.europa.eu/priorities/state-union-2016_en

*Mr Thomas N. SLEIGHT
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It is of utmost importance that the decision-making process for the authorisation of products and substances is driven by sound science and the appropriate application of the legislation. The proposed changes would also not prolong the process unduly. The proposed second referral to the appeal committee, an optional step, would add one month to the procedure. The proposed referral to the Council for an opinion would have a timeframe of three months and is again optional and foresees the possibility of shorter timeframes. I consider that these additional timeframes are proportionate given the objective to come to more accountability in the decision-making process.

Yours sincerely,

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

Frans TIMMERMANS