

Dear Honourable Member of the European Parliament,

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 2017 in which you raise a number of issues relating to the programme for granting residence rights or citizenship in Portugal.

Please let me begin by underlining that the Commission has made the fight against tax avoidance, money laundering and terrorism financing one of its priorities.

As regards the specific points you make, we have taken note of the proposal that you have tabled in the context of the revision of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Money Laundering Directive. We understand the importance of the issue, which is currently being discussed during the ongoing trilogues.

With respect to the conferral of citizenship for investment, according to settled case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU, it is for each Member State, having due regard to Union law, to lay down the conditions for acquisition and loss of nationality. Since the Treaty of Maastricht, granting Member State nationality also means granting EU citizenship and hence strong additional rights. Therefore naturalisation decisions by a Member State are not neutral with regard to other Member States and the EU.

The Commission nonetheless expects Member States to use their prerogative to award nationality in the spirit of sincere cooperation with other Member States and the EU. Account should be taken of the norms and obligations by which they are bound under international law and the criteria upon which Member States traditionally build their nationality laws.

The Commission announced in its EU Citizenship Report 2017 that in 2017/2018 it will produce a report on national schemes granting EU citizenship to investors describing the Commission's action in this area, current national laws and practices, and providing some guidance for Member States. We will consider the aspects raised in your letter in the context of preparing this report.

Finally, I would be grateful to count on your support for furthering the fight against money laundering, including by supporting the closing of negotiations on the legislative proposal aiming to amend the 4<sup>th</sup> AMLD.

Yours faithfully,



Věra JOUROVÁ

Ms Ana GOMES  
Member of the European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz  
B-1047 Brussels

4