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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Europe 2020 – public consultation  
Overview of responses**

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## COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

### Europe 2020 – public consultation Overview of responses

The public consultation on Europe 2020, which the Commission launched on 24 November 2009, officially closed on 15 January 2010. Together with the considerable number of contributions submitted after this date, the Commission has in total received around **1400 contributions**<sup>1</sup> from a very wide range of interested parties coming from virtually all EU Member States and their regions and from a number of non-EU stakeholders and countries. All Member States' governments, 2 national parliaments, 8 EU and national political parties, 30 ministries or governmental agencies, 148 regional public authorities, 10 EU-level bodies, 45 trade union organisations from both the EU and national levels, 232 EU and national business and professional federations, 51 individual companies, 190 NGOs, 54 'think tanks', 32 representatives of the academic community, 10 consumer organisations and also around 500 citizens responded. All contributions can be accessed at <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020>.

The Commission warmly welcomes the large number of contributions received. The strong interest the consultation generated especially among stakeholders active at national and sub-national levels, demonstrates the importance attached to the future EU strategy across the Union and a clear willingness to contribute to formulating the Europe 2020 vision. The Commission has carefully analysed all responses and will strive to take them into account as it prepares its proposals for the upcoming European Council.

This paper presents an overview of the key ideas presented by the different groups of stakeholders. It further develops the substantially shorter summary published ahead of the Informal European Council of 11 February<sup>2</sup>. An attempt has been made to provide a representative, rather than fully exhaustive, overview illustrating the essence of the feedback the Commission has received and highlighting salient viewpoints. The concrete ideas quoted in this summary have been chosen as illustrations of the positions expressed either because of their originality or because they were representative of many other contributions.

## 1. MEMBER STATES

### 1.1 Policy focus

In general, there is full support among Member States for the continuation of a common EU strategy as a successor to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. In the programme for its Council Presidency, Spain notes that "the goal is to provide the Union with an effective instrument to champion and coordinate modernising policies that may facilitate the transition to a more sustainable economy".

In the current context of an economic crisis and rising unemployment, the majority of Member States stress the importance of keeping the focus of Europe 2020 on **delivering**

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<sup>1</sup> Final figure after eliminating double entries in particular due to contributions sent in several versions or several languages.

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020\\_public\\_consultation\\_preliminary\\_overview\\_of\\_responses.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020_public_consultation_preliminary_overview_of_responses.pdf)

**growth and more and better jobs.** The Czech Republic, for example, suggests that the focus of the Growth and Jobs Strategy should be fully preserved since "the biggest drawbacks were of procedural and ownership nature and not the one of content".

However, most Member States insist that these objectives must be achieved **in a more sustainable way** and while tackling environmental and social challenges more decisively. Around half of the Member States thus explicitly endorse the strong links between the economic, environmental and social pillars and the need to better exploit the synergies that can be generated by tackling these issues together. For many Member States, the Europe 2020 strategy must in particular pay more attention to **social outcomes** and to reversing the increase of inequalities, and several call for the social dimension of the strategy to be strengthened through the transversal social clause included in the Lisbon Treaty. For France, for example, the crisis "shows the need to rethink our growth model in order to promote a more balanced financing of our economy, think through the jobs of the future (...) and play a decisive role in the globalization process". The UK proposes "an EU compact to generate strong, sustainable and balanced growth".

The need to "**green**" the EU economy in line with the agreed objectives for 2020 is stressed by the overwhelming majority of the contributions. Sweden for example proposes "turning environmental challenges into opportunities through a greening of the economy and an innovative business climate". Some countries, however, insist that implementation of commitments in the fight against climate change must reflect a fair international effort-sharing and not cause over-due burden possibly leading to carbon leakage. Italy for example says that "in the absence of an international agreement (...), the EU should make all efforts to safeguard the competitiveness of its industry".

Some also think that Europe 2020 should be better linked up with other EU strategies and in particular with the **Sustainable Development Strategy**. Slovenia is "of the opinion that the EU needs a single strategic long-term document supported by a more operational short-term implementation document".

Many Member States point to the recent deterioration of public finances as a crucial issue to address. They therefore call to devote more space to the financial aspects of reforms and to **fiscal sustainability** while planning the exit from the crisis in the context of Europe 2020. The consolidation of public-sector budget is considered as a major precondition by several Member States for a successful realization of reforms, which in turn can support fiscal consolidation. Many contributions however stress that investments in new sources of growth should not be sacrificed, which would in particular require a careful prioritisation of expenditures. Slovakia for example, "recommends devoting more space to financial aspects of reforms and fiscal sustainability, which is an important precondition for successful realization of reforms". Some, however, warn against a weakening of social security systems and of the level of social services.

Many Member States also see **territorial cohesion** as an important basis for achieving balanced growth and competitiveness and feel that it must be promoted better. For Portugal, "considering that the major challenges faced by the EU have asymmetric impacts on the Union' territories, it is key that the territory is a component of this Strategy." In this context, for many Member States, cohesion policy and in particular the new generation of structural funds 2014-2020 should be built upon Europe 2020 principles and spirit, supporting knowledge and innovation-driven development. For some, this may also require setting new priorities for the future cohesion policy. Greece fears that "the proposed Europe 2020 Strategy

will not fully serve the objectives of the Cohesion Policy (...) even though Cohesion Policy is expected to be the main financial contributor to the Europe 2020 agenda".

Concerning policy focus, there is general support for the **thematic priorities** (growth based on knowledge, inclusive societies and a greener, competitive economy) proposed in the Commission consultation paper. There are, however, some nuances. Some, for example, propose to keep focussing on the four themes agreed at the 2006 European Council.

### **Some issues related to the general policy focus stand out.**

Many Member States stress the importance of reinforcing the **external dimension** of the strategy as a response to continuing globalisation. In this context, most Member States stress the importance of maintaining EU's role of a key global player and of strengthening its capacity to "shape" globalisation.

There are, however, differences in priorities. Some countries, insist more on promoting barrier-free international trade. For others, open trade should be promoted, but this must be done while ensuring level-playing field for EU business, in particular in terms of market access, access to raw materials, energy, or social and environmental standards. France, for example, thinks that "in the same way the EU is open to third country business, in a perspective of reciprocal benefits, EU businesses should also enjoy barrier-free access to third country markets, including to public procurement markets". This is echoed by calls made by many countries to promote efficient, fair and rules-based international trade and finance systems and propagating the European standards and values at the international level, including through regulatory cooperation. Many Member States also mention the need for a secure and efficient energy supply to be part of the external dimension of the strategy. For Hungary for example "secure and efficient energy supply for Europe should be a cornerstone of the external dimension of the growth and jobs strategy".

Some Member States stress the need to tackle more vigorously the risk of **external and internal imbalances**. The Netherlands for example considers that "addressing macro-imbalances (bubbles in asset markets, rapidly deteriorating competitiveness and unbalanced current account developments and the existence of large debts in foreign currency) should be an important element of the post 2010 monitoring framework". In this context, for many countries efficient and stable financial markets are key prerequisites for success and the EU should take a leading role in setting up a credible international financial architecture that facilitates the development of sound financial innovations that support the real economy.

Some countries finally stress the importance of defining a better **immigration policy** as part of the new strategy. For Greece, for example, "the issue of immigration is an important element of (the) reform agenda and merits special deliberation as the economic and social effects of legal and illegal migration are made increasingly apparent in many EU economies".

### **A number of specific issues are addressed under the three thematic priorities proposed by the Commission.**

Increasing productivity through innovation: Several Member States stress the importance of knowledge-based growth and in this context the need to fully unlock the potential of innovation (and eco-innovation in particular). Estonia for example notes that "without new product development and the implementation of new research solutions we can't talk about larger export capacity, increased added value and new jobs".

Some countries also stress that the innovation agenda should go beyond an emphasis on technological research and include broader aspects, including the demand side. Finland for example deplores that "the current R&D objective (...) covers only partly R&D activities and fails to take into account new aspects of innovation". A wide range of policy instruments is proposed in the various contributions, but most of them stress the importance of intellectual property protection and commercialisation, of a better use of the wide potential of public procurement or the need to support young innovative companies.

A number of Member States emphasize the need to increase investment in research in particular from private sources. There is also very broad agreement on the need for a more focussed and interlinked R&D, innovation and education policy at all levels, improving the functioning of the knowledge triangle and striving for excellence. At the EU level, the need for a better coordination and cooperation between Member States and the further development of a true European Research Area is particularly emphasized, as is the development of a "fifth freedom" of circulation of knowledge. At the same time, many see scope of improved functioning of the Research Framework Programme, in particular through its simplification and easier access for SMEs.

A large number of countries suggest that collaborative research should concentrate on the development of key sciences and technologies in the main fields which will allow the EU to tackle major societal challenges. Austria proposes "creating and deploying the capacities, technologies and sciences to cope with the Grand Challenges of society" and hence thinks that "the Europe 2020 strategy should concentrate on the future development of key sciences and technologies in fields such as transport, ICT, energy and environmental, health and security". The need to better tap the potential of knowledge clusters is also mentioned by some Member States as is the important role to be played by the European Institute of Technology and Innovation.

Many Member States finally stress the importance of a wider uptake of ICT as a means to achieving the objectives of the strategy, including through efforts to enhance digital skills. For many, this includes the building of modern broad-band infrastructures. In this regard, Estonia thinks that "in order to develop digital economy and simplify cross-border procedures we need to set as an objective to implement, by 2020, a single and secure European e-services area, where the citizens of the EU have easy access to all public services, including cross-border services provided by other Member States."

Promoting education and skills: There is large support for policies providing new and better skills and competencies. High quality education and life-long training systems are generally seen as one of the keys for the long term strategy to raise productivity and ensure competitiveness.

Some Member States particularly emphasize the importance to achieve excellence in tertiary education. For example, Romania considers that "a stronger support to the research within European universities is needed (...) in order to transform them into real and worldwide competitive growth and innovation centres". Others stress the importance of high quality primary education, of reducing early school leaving and providing the necessary basic skills to all. In this context, many Member States mention the need for a better focus of education systems on creative, innovative and entrepreneurial skills together with the need for a more active cooperation between education and training institutions and employers. Sweden for example thinks that "special attention needs to be given to promoting the creativity and

innovative capacities of the younger generations". Finally, some countries stress that transnational mobility of both students and teachers should be promoted.

**Supporting SMEs and entrepreneurship:** SMEs are seen by many Member States as the backbone of their and EU's economy. For many of these Member States, the role of SMEs in promoting innovation needs to be at the centre of the new strategy and a more favourable environment should be created (based on the "think small first" principle), including by reducing administrative burdens, improving the effectiveness of the public sector and promoting entrepreneurship. Many contributions refer to the Small Business Act in this context. For example Slovenia stresses that "SMEs should continue to be of vital importance as they are the backbone of the European economy, contributing considerably to economic growth, creation of new jobs and welfare in general." More generally, a number of Member States call for a smarter regulatory framework which would further reduce burden on business and safeguard Europe as an attractive place to invest.

**Making full use of the internal market potential:** For several Member States the internal market should remain at the heart of Europe 2020, while any protectionist tendencies should be resisted. In this context, Malta emphasises that "given the cross-border nature of Single Market-related issues, effective enforcement and implementation can only be achieved if relevant authorities are linked to each other in cross-border networks, facilitating the exchange of information, cooperation or joint action". Some countries call for structural reforms to strengthen competition, in particular in the service sector and network industries. For others an ambitious European Digital Agenda should take concrete steps towards the completion of an Online Single Market and introduce a new cross-border e-commerce strategy.

The need to develop an internal market in services and to promote the free movement of labour is also frequently mentioned. For Portugal "this implies ensuring that social protection systems do not act as vested barriers to the free circulation of workers, but instead as an incentive to their mobility, ensuring the portability of acquired social rights." For some countries this should be done while paying due attention to the social dimension, including, by permanently looking for a balance between growth, safeguarding free movement, and guaranteeing fundamental social rights.

**Improving infrastructure networks:** Intelligent transport, energy, telecommunications and ICT infrastructure development is generally considered as a prerequisite for a well-functioning internal market and for greater energy efficiency and security. Several Member States in particular consider Trans European transport Networks (TEN-T) as an essential element for the competitiveness of Europe. They point out a strong need for large investments in traditional ground-base infrastructures particularly for peripheral countries and recently accessed Member States.

**Focussing on employment...:** the large majority of contributions explicitly support the Flexicurity concept as a way to increase employment rates. Many emphasize the importance of (multidimensional) active inclusion policies and some stress the need to prevent a two-tier labour market. In their joint opinion, the Committees of the Danish Parliament stress active labour market policy and education as "necessary in order for our societies to address effectively future challenges". Many Member States have identified support to female employment and of employment of young and/or older people as key areas for action while others have emphasized the need to reinforce the gender equality dimension in the future strategy and to promote the reconciliation of private and professional life. Finally, the need

for an efficient, flexible and demand-driven labour migration policy and a better integration of immigrants on the labour market is mentioned by some countries. The Joint Committee on European Affairs of the Irish Parliament thinks that "the EU's evolving immigration policy should be linked to the ongoing identification of the key 'skill-sets' required by labour markets across the Union in order to ensure that unpredicted shortages in labour supply do not occur in critical areas of the European economy".

... and social inclusion and the fight against poverty: Several Member States also call for poverty reduction and the fight against social exclusion to be made a specific priority. In this context, a number of Member States stress the need to focus not only on providing more jobs, but also better jobs as the best way to ensure a sustainable and fair growth and on the fight against social exclusion and poverty, including, for some, through the definition of an EU level target. In this context, Cyprus observes that having a job "isn't always a guarantee against the risk of poverty" and thinks that it is "why efforts should be made to ensure access to good quality employment, make work pay and ensure strong safety nets for the needy".

Developing a greener economy: Most Member States consider that measures leading to reduce the environmental footprint of the European economy should be an important part of the future EU strategy. Denmark stresses that "greening of the single market would provide a springboard for EU businesses to become global leaders in the production and trade in green goods, services and technology". The most often mentioned instruments leading to greater energy efficiency and the reduction of environmental pollution are market based instruments such as standard setting, smart regulation and the internalisation of external costs of pollution. The UK for example proposes to "establish a green Single Market for emerging low-carbon and environmental technologies, services and products (...) by developing standards (...) for measuring and auditing carbon footprints, clear standards and labelling for energy-efficient products and measuring resource efficiency over their life-cycle".

Developing an EU energy policy: Some Member States also stress the key importance of a more integrated EU energy policy. For Lithuania for example "it is necessary to create single EU energy market based on fair competition between the suppliers and technologies as well as shape solid coordinated energy policy with regard to the third countries".

Ensuring a competitive, diversified and sustainable industrial basis: several Member States particularly stress the importance of a strong and innovative industrial basis for a successful transition to the low carbon economy. In this context, some ask for a genuine European Industrial Strategy. Portugal, for example calls for "ensuring a competitive, solid, modern, diversified and sustainable industrial basis" and stresses that "the creation of value, basing growth on knowledge and on eco-efficiency, should be the object of integrated and consistent public policies and mechanisms".

## 1.2 Governance

All Member States agree that governance must be improved to close the implementation gap of the Lisbon Strategy.

In this context, several call for stronger and better **economic policy co-ordination**. Germany for example wants to see "more effective co-ordination of the economic and employment policies". In its presidency programme, Spain stresses that "the coordination of national economic policies is essential to promote recovery and sustainable growth" and considers that

the launching of a “New Growth and Employment Strategy – «Europe 2020» – as a follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy will be the suitable coordination instrument”.

Several Member States also insist on the need for improved **integration across policy fields** to ensure effective mutual interactions of economic, employment, social and environmental policies, and thereby enhanced delivery.

**Institutional arrangements:** There is generally strong support for giving the European Council lead responsibility for both steering the new strategy and guiding the work of other Council formations. This is seen as giving a greater political impulse to the strategy by ensuring that the strategy is defined and owned at the highest political level and that it is adequately reflected in national planning.

Some Member States also think that work between Council formations and inside the Commission should be better coordinated. Others believe that the role of the National Lisbon Co-ordinators network should be enhanced, including by the appointment of National Co-ordinators at least at ministerial level.

A number of contributions stress that the future Europe 2020 strategy should have a stronger European dimension complementary to the efforts of Member States and under the leadership of the Commission. Belgium thinks that "the European Commission must fully exercise its powers to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. To this end it must strengthen its regulatory framework ("hard law") launch concrete action plans and extend the effective use of impact assessments to assess policies and actions in relation to all aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy". For some countries this should be done on the basis of a clear agenda for actions to be implemented at EU level as a successor to the Community Lisbon Programme. According to the Netherlands, "topics for this agenda include, amongst others, lowering the administrative burdens of EU regulation, the creation of an EU patent, further development of the internal market including services (...), implementation of the Small Business Act, reforming the EU budget with an eye to the priorities of a new strategy, the realisation of a European Knowledge Area and a European Digital Agenda."

**Time horizon:** Most Member States explicitly endorse the proposed 2020 horizon of the strategy. Some propose a possible review in 2015. Ireland for example supports "the medium to long term approach proposed by the Commission, with a review of the strategy after 3 to 5 years with a view to revised proposals for a further five years up to 2020". Others rather propose to continue working in three-year cycles leading to stock-taking in 2013 which would according to some give time for the second cycle to coordinate the policy priorities with other related strategies, such as the Multi-annual Financial Framework.

**Objectives and guidelines:** Most Member States call for pursuing a limited number of concrete objectives. Defining measurable EU-level targets to follow the fulfilment of these objectives is generally seen as useful but many think that they should be complemented by national targets in order to take into account the different starting positions of the Member States. Some countries, however, insist that national targets should be set by the Member States themselves and not by the EU. Latvia thinks that "the “Europe 2020” strategy should be broad enough in terms of the choice of country-specific targets and policy directions". A few Member States suggest going "beyond the GDP" and build new indicators which could measure better social well-being and welfare.

**Monitoring of implementation:** For many Member States the existing mechanisms of implementation and monitoring should be strengthened, including for many through a better cooperation between the Commission and the Member States leading to more precise and relevant country-specific recommendations. At the same time, it is of central importance for many Member States to retain the partnership approach between the Member States and the Commission and to apply it consistently in multilateral oversight.

Most Member States agree with the continuation of annual reporting and assessment cycle but many countries ask for streamlining the reporting system in order to reduce administrative burden. For example Bulgaria is "strongly in favour of keeping the yearly reporting as a guarantee to preserving the momentum on reforms and consolidating ownership".

A majority of Member States call for a clearer and more evidence-based assessment of progress based on a coherent and transparent methodology. Luxembourg for example thinks that "more analytical tools should be developed and implemented in order to set up a more robust and transparent evaluation framework" and refers to the work of the Lisbon Methodology Working Group in this context.

For many this could include the use of benchmarking, scoreboards or rankings. Some others appear more cautious in order to "try to avoid the situation where there are too many sticks and not enough carrots" (Poland). Some suggest to introduce positive incentives to reforms, e.g. through "directing EU funds towards the most effective reformers". (Denmark).

A number of countries support greater use of the possibility given to the Commission to address economic policy recommendations to the Member States in the situations foreseen by the Treaty. Finland for example thinks that "active use of recommendations under article 99(4) (new article 121(4)) and use of other relevant Treaty-based provisions by the Commission would enhance surveillance". For Germany, "greater use could be made of the possibilities of the Treaty, e.g. the warning tool (article 121 (4))".

While all Member States recognise the strong inter-linkages between fiscal policy and structural reforms and thus the need for coherent policy advice, many want to preserve the role of the different economic policy coordination instruments foreseen in the Treaty. The specific role of the Stability and Growth Pact for guiding fiscal policies should in particular be preserved for a number of Member States. Some, however, propose to better align reporting timeframes.

Some Member States explicitly support the idea that thematic reviews should complement country-specific surveillance. For some, the latter should better take into account the heterogeneity of the EU. Besides the setting of national targets, some propose for the purpose of monitoring and surveillance to group countries with similar challenges in clusters.

A few Member States mention the Open Method of Coordination as a useful instrument but think that it should be improved and reinforced (the "Cambridge review" allowing a review by peers of employment policies, is cited as a positive example). For some Member States policy learning could also include examples of best practices on a national as well as a sub-national (regional and local) and transnational level (cross-border cooperation).

More generally, a stronger involvement of the regions, based on partnerships at national level, in the implementation of the strategy, including for the elaboration of national reform programs and through the setting of regional sub-targets, appears to be crucial for many

Member States. Some Member States also call for adding a cross-border regions angle following the example of the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Finally, many call for a stronger involvement of the national and European parliaments and a majority of Member States suggests that the participation of social and economic stakeholders and the wider civil society in the implementation of the strategy could help to develop more balanced and effective policies, considerably raise awareness in society and facilitate social acceptance. The Joint Committee on European Affairs of the Irish Parliament, for example "believes that national parliamentarians should meet more often and exchange views more regularly on important EU policies". In the same vein, in their joint opinion, the committees of the Danish parliament find that "the national parliaments ought to play a particular role, when the possible national targets for achieving the new strategy will be fixed".

### **1.3 Financing**

Many Member States call for a stronger link between the future multi-annual financial framework and the priorities of the new strategy and some call more explicitly for a thorough reform of the EU budget to better support the new strategy. Other suggestions include increasing the flexibility of the EU budget to allow adapting it to changing priorities. Finally, the need for better and coordinated use of the EU budget and lending by the European Investment Bank is also frequently mentioned.

### **1.4 Communication**

Improving communication is important for practically all Member States. They consider that individual citizens should be made aware of the benefits of Europe 2020 in their day-to-day life. In this context, Latvia suggests that the Commission should publish "a consolidated document, which would contain all necessary information on key goals, targets, priorities, governance and implementation framework". Finally, many countries think that stakeholders at all levels can play a crucial role in communicating the strategy and helping to achieve greater ownership.

## **2. EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

The Commission has received contributions from **EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR**.

**The European People's Party (EPP)** points out that Europe 2020 is being developed within a context of economic crisis, climate challenges and social problems. It proposes five key priorities: towards a greener social market economy, a sustainable knowledge-based growth, promoting SMEs and jobs, healthy public budgets and strong European governance. The EPP emphasises in particular the crucial role played by SMEs and innovation as the engine of our economy (the Small Business Act should be further implemented). In this context, an effective protection of intellectual property should be promoted in particular through an effective EU patent regime. Special focus has also to be put on the digital economy. Innovation starts with education and thus life-long learning policies should be strengthened. A strong, reformed and flexible cohesion policy, adapted to the current needs should represent a key element of Europe 2020. Furthermore, the EPP calls for anti-inflation policies and sound budgetary rules which have the long-term effect of promoting growth and increasing the employment prospects. Finally, the EPP underlines the following pending questions in the Commission consultation document: (i) no financing method is developed; (ii) the role of each level of authority (EU, Member States, regional and local authorities) is not defined; (iii)

no inciting or constraining system is foreseen. On governance, the EPP supports a key, steering role for the European Council and an enhanced role for the European and national Parliaments.

**The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)** calls for lessons to be drawn from the crisis by focussing on fair growth and a more sustainable economy. It proposes 5 priorities: a new deal for sustainability; high quality full employment with decent work and social inclusion; the fight against poverty, inequality and insecurity; a high-productivity knowledge economy; and social and territorial cohesion. In each area a series of policy proposals are put forward. One proposal is to merge the Lisbon strategy, the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Stability and Growth Pact into a single strategy. On governance, S&D does not share the view that the European Council be given a central role. Instead, it argues that sectoral Councils, the European Parliament and national parliaments should be better involved. S&D agrees with the need to better involve social partners and regions. Furthermore, S&D calls for a stronger link between the multi-annual financial framework and the Europe 2020 strategy. It also suggests using the European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Public-Private Partnerships as well as Eurobonds and green taxes to finance the new strategy.

**The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)** agrees with the main priorities (green and smart growth), but calls for more focus on the internal market, free movement of people and financial supervision. It criticises the Lisbon Strategy for being "a weak open method of coordination". On governance, ALDE suggests giving the Commission a central role including the use a "carrots and sticks" approach (e.g. rewarding strong performers with additional structural funds and applying financial penalties to those not providing declarations on the correct spending of EU funds on Europe 2020 priorities). The Commission should decide on indicators and convergence criteria to avoid "social dumping" or undermining other Member States' competitiveness. The Commission should monitor the SGP even more effectively. The EU budget should be better aligned with Europe 2020 priorities. Finally, ALDE argues for involving the European Parliament, social partners, regions, national and regional parliaments more and for using communication as a "pressure tool".

**The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) proposes** to focus the new strategy on Europe's comparative economic advantages and existing commitments rather than extending it into "new" areas. The proposal for the new strategy should be reconsidered in the light of the lessons drawn from the Lisbon Strategy. ECR proposes to concentrate on a set of issues to (i) complete the single market for goods and services (including IPR) but also for R&D and energy; (ii) further reduce administrative burdens on enterprises and focus on SMEs; (iii) foster innovative procurement and PPPs. Subsidiarity should be respected when designing social policies. Wage flexibility is considered crucial and young people should be better prepared for the labour market. The quality of universities and of teaching must be improved as skills are essential. The climate and energy legislative packages should be implemented as a matter of priority.

A few contributions from **political parties in Member States** have also been received.

The German Bundestag fraction of the SPD supports the vision of the EU as a green, knowledge-based economy to be achieved through a strategy that better exploits synergies between the economic, social and environmental pillars, and proposes a Social Stability Pact including legally binding minimum wages in all Member States. SPD Düsseldorf stresses the

need for better economic and employment policy coordination including for example minimum standards for business taxation. Alternativa Demokratika – the Maltese Green Party – in support for the views expressed by the **Green Group of the EU Parliament** calls for a longer and more widely publicized consultation process before launching a new strategy. Finally, the Spanish political party "Por Un Mundo Mas Justo" (For a fairer world) supports a coordinated EU economic agenda, which would turn inputs such as technology, R&D, innovation and talent into improvements in citizens' quality of life and help combat poverty.

### **3. REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Around 150 regional or local authorities from some two thirds of Member States responded. Almost 120 contributions come from regional authorities and mixed associations, and 30 from municipalities and associations.

Despite the large number of responses from a varied set of actors, there is broad support for the proposed objectives. There is also a consistent, clear message from regional and local stakeholders that their role in the Strategy needs to be increased to secure a full and equal partnership between different levels of government (multi-level governance) and make the Strategy a success. Many respondents indeed identify the exclusion of the regional and local level from the Lisbon Strategy as one of its key shortcomings. There is thus strong insistence that regional and local bodies need to be fully associated in all stages of the process, an integrated approach across different sectors should be followed, and that the resources and opportunities offered by cohesion policy and the Treaty Objective of territorial cohesion be embraced in a full – and equal – partnership within the Europe 2020 strategy.

**Many regional and local authorities argue that the key areas of the strategy correspond to their competences** and that they can therefore use both their own and cohesion policy resources to make a significant contribution to the delivery of reforms on the ground. A number of associations make the point particularly clearly: for example the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) argues that a multi-level governance system will allow regions to respond to both sectoral and territorial needs resulting from different cultural, economic and social situations while the Eurocities network observes that the active participation of local authorities is essential to ensure coherence between policy and delivery. Barnsley MBC (UK) draws attention to the role of cities in ensuring an inclusive society through its “progress Together” model in which ESF resources help to reconnect unemployed and inactive people to the labour market while for example Antwerp (BE) ensures the provision of language skills and day-care.

**In this context, many contributions see cohesion policy as the key delivery mechanism for Europe 2020**, and contrast the effective delivery of results on the ground from cohesion policy with the failure of the Lisbon Strategy to meet its targets. There are repeated positive references to the "lisbonisation" of cohesion policy, with the earmarking of set amounts of funding in cohesion policy programmes for Lisbon Strategy-related actions. Some even argue for an integration of various types of sectoral spending into cohesion policy.

The region of Västra Götaland (SE) remarks that cohesion policy is the only policy area in the EU in which local, regional and national levels are all responsible for implementation. By integrating its regional strategy with the Spanish national strategy for Lisbon, Andalusia has been able to devote 77% of its Structural Funds resources to the Lisbon Strategy. The G4 cities (NL) underline their role in delivering reform on the ground through their work on

"active inclusion" with the assistance of Structural Funds. London (UK) is using the ERDF-supported JESSICA facility to fund low-carbon programmes and decentralised energy and waste infrastructure. The Piteå Municipality (SE) considers that the European Digital Agenda is very important to sparsely populated areas. Birmingham (UK) presents a set of initiatives including a Digital District to provide a densely populated area with the opportunities resulting from an exceptionally high-speed network, a project to stimulate an entrepreneurial culture among people in deprived areas through coaching and an electric car demonstration project. The Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia considers that aligning the cohesion policy to the Europe 2020 objectives would bring more coherence to the issues of land revitalisation, urban regeneration, ecological development and sustainable transport and cultural infrastructure.

**There is also unanimity concerning the importance of promoting national, cross-border and transnational partnerships.** The institutionalised co-ordination on European issues in the Netherlands whereby positions on EU matters are jointly prepared by the national government, municipalities and provinces is mentioned as a good example of national partnership-building which could be used in other countries.

Some respondents stress that long-existing cross-border and transnational partnerships, and the newer idea of macro-regional strategies, lead regions to look across borders and consider wider relationships. Purely vertical linkages – national, regional, local – are thus being supplemented by macro-regional cooperation, cross-border initiatives and trans-national and inter-regional interest groups and networks. For example the North East (UK) mentions (among several others) the European Regions of Innovative Productivity (ERIP) project funded by the North Sea programme of Interreg and promoting lean manufacturing and the competitiveness of SMEs. All these partnerships are cited as potentially valuable – even indispensable – assets for transforming the Europe 2020 strategy into concrete actions on the ground. Paralimni City (CY) proposes an ambitious six-point plan, involving EU, national and local action to implement genuinely sustainable cities.

Many contributions refer to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Several respondents, including the Marshals' Offices in Poland, underline the integrated approach taken forward by the Commission for the Strategy's preparation, the planned delivery methods, and the initial stages of the implementation phase. Regions in other parts of the Union propose a similar approach in their areas. For example East of England and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (both UK) call for a Macro-regional strategy for the North Sea while the CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission believes that the examples of the Baltic and Danube macro-regional strategies should be applied in its region. The European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation is also mentioned by many as a potential tool in simplifying cross-border activities, although requiring greater political support. Like many other respondents, the Atlantic Arc Cities see social cohesion as a major preoccupation, going beyond employment policies to reconstructing the mixed social fabric that characterises successful, dynamic communities and requiring action at multiple levels. The Union of Baltic Cities calls for multi-level action to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, risks concerning transport, oil and chemical industries and damage from drug trafficking. Internal migration including 'brain drain' issues is also highlighted as of concern to these cities.

**Finally, respondents share the view that communication should be improved.** There is a widespread view that the vision in the consultation document is not clear or original enough to inspire effective action. The role of regional and local administrations, as the elected bodies

closest to the European citizen, in transmitting strategic information is highlighted in many responses and examples such as the PASTEL platform in Champagne-Ardenne (FR).

#### 4. EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

In its opinion, the **Committee of the Regions (CoR)** (Rapporteur: Mrs Christine Chapman), supports the priorities as established by the Commission in its consultation document and particularly puts the focus on competitiveness in the green economy, social inclusion and cohesion. However, the CoR calls for a more "ambitious overarching goal in the strategy" in order "to rebalance and re-orientate the strategy towards making Europe a sustainable and socially just and cohesive society". The opinion highlights the key role of the regional and local levels in the definition and the implementation of the new strategy (multi-level governance). The role of the Cohesion Policy in implementing the objectives of the strategy on the ground is also seen as essential. The CoR had also launched in March 2009 a consultation of European regions and cities on a new strategy for sustainable growth. 80 contributions were received and the final report points out some interesting ideas for the new strategy such as setting up a regional M. or Ms. Lisbon (Europe 2020) or making the country-specific recommendations more concrete and accompanying them by a roadmap or a database on implementation available to all actors.

**The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** contributed to the consultation in the form of a Declaration of President Sepi accompanying the Integrated Report on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy that consists of proposals from organised civil society, which contains contributions from national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and partner organisations as well as the EESC Opinion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy (Rapporteur: M. Greif). In its opinion, the EESC calls for a reinforcement of the integrated approach of policies that was already promoted by the Lisbon strategy. The EESC believes that a "balanced macroeconomic policy that duly combines supply- and demand-side aspects must constitute an integral part of the post-2010 strategy". The EESC lists the following policies as key in the new strategy: the reinforcement of the internal market, a new global financial system, enhanced social cohesion, tackling inequality and poverty, the knowledge triangle (education, innovation and research), an inclusive labour market, industrial policy and entrepreneurship (including SMEs), migration issues, climate change and energy (call for a "New Green Deal"). The EESC considers that in order to achieve these objectives, the EU budget should be reformed according to the priorities of the new strategy. At the same time, alternative should be found to EU funding (EESC proposes a carbon tax or a tax on financial transactions). The EESC also calls for the external dimension of the strategy to be consolidated.

On governance, the EESC proposes that further ambitious goals be set as well as new targets (on issues such as gender equality, fight against poverty and transition to a low-carbon economy). It is important that the starting position of Member States is taken into account when setting targets. Moreover, the role of EU institutions should be boosted in the new strategy and the Open Method of Coordination made more effective. The EESC suggests that the national ESCs monitor the progress of their Member States towards reaching the objectives of the strategy. Last but not least, regions and local authorities as well as the civil society should be better involved in the new strategy.

The **Eurosystem** submitted a contribution fully supporting the integration of social and environmental objectives into the Europe 2020 Strategy, while maintaining the overall focus on growth and jobs. Particular attention should be given to a well-functioning labour market,

internal market policies, competition and innovation, sound financial systems and the strict implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact. Social and environmental objectives should rely, as far as possible, on market-based instruments. Ambitious targets for the functioning of the internal market should be set. Moreover, the Eurosystem sees a need for a further strengthening of country surveillance within the Eurogroup, which should include a regular review of national competitiveness developments and of imbalances and vulnerabilities within the euro area. Finally, the Eurosystem broadly agrees with the governance structures proposed by the Commission and considers that the ECOFIN Council should continue to play a central role in preparing contributions relating to Europe 2020 for the European Council.

The **Economic Policy Committee (EPC)** holds the view that the post-2010 agenda should move EU policy away from crisis management back towards a strategy of longer term action. The clear focus on growth and jobs should be maintained and reinforced. In term of governance, the EPC observes that the existing monitoring needs to be improved to concentrate more on substance than on format. The EPC agrees with a limited number of properly framed targets.

The **Employment Committee (EMCO)** thinks that the European Employment Strategy (EES) should play a central role in the Europe 2020. Full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion, competitiveness, coping with climate change and demographic change need to become more visible in Europe 2020. Commonly agreed EU targets and benchmarks, a limited number of headline EU targets and national targets reflecting different starting positions should be established.

The **Social Protection Committee (SPC)** emphasises that Europe 2020 should be based on an integrated vision combining progress in terms of growth, employment, reduction of poverty and greater social cohesion. This interaction should be reinforced by effective policies aiming to prevent and fight poverty, social exclusion and all types of discrimination, the implementation of comprehensive active inclusion strategies and through adequate and sustainable social protection.

The **European Centre for Development and Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)** believes that the Europe 2020 Strategy should include concrete policies on innovation and creativity and in particular on education and training, including vocational education and training. Partnerships between businesses and research bodies should extend to education and training authorities with a view to helping to match skills with the needs of the labour market.

The **European Research Council (ERC)** underlines the importance of generating knowledge leadership as a basis for innovation, greening the economy, competitiveness and prosperity. It calls for world-class knowledge infrastructure and for retaining and repatriating top scientific talent from the EU and beyond.

**European Standards Organisations (CEN, CENELEC, ETSI)** highlight the role standardisation can play in support of the Europe 2020 Strategy's objectives, and in particular for the further development of the single market.

## 5. SOCIAL PARTNERS

Around 325 contributions from social partners were received. They cover input from social partners both at interprofessional and sectoral level. In addition to the numerous contributions submitted by registered EU-level organisation/stakeholders, the Commission received many

contributions from national (member) organisations, confirming that there is an intense debate about future priorities not only at EU level but also at national and sub national levels.

In general, social partners stress the need to invest in innovation and upgrade the skills base of the European economy while calling for a broader perspective than that of the consultation document. They recall in particular that quality education is a public responsibility and that education is not only a tool for the economy, but also has a vital role for social cohesion, equality, active citizenship and cultural diversity. They moreover call upon the Commission to making the exit from the current economic and financial crisis the EU's number one priority, accompanied by a better regulation of financial markets, a stronger growth-oriented policy coordination, a stronger focus on the qualitative dimension of employment, increased access to finance, reduction of administrative burdens, modernisation of social protection systems, a sound immigration policy, and a more effective fight against increasing inequalities, poverty and social exclusion.

### 5.1. Trade Unions

45 organisations representing labour responded and generally consider that the Lisbon strategy has failed to deliver the expected results, as exemplified by increasing social exclusion and with social cohesion today weaker than at the start of the strategy. These stakeholders consider that this was in part because some of the strategy's policy priorities that they support ('flexicurity' and 'demographic change') have not seriously been put into practice at political level and because of the absence of other policy priorities (qualitative employment, inequalities, poverty) in the strategy. Another reason for the failure is seen to be the lack of political ownership and coordination of the strategy, mainly at national level.

Among organisations representing labour, there is a fair degree of support for an **ambitious new agenda** and strategic vision for Europe, combining a just transition to a competitive 'green' economy with a strengthened social Europe that promotes social and environmental standards both within the EU and at global level, and for a number of priorities and objectives proposed in the consultation document. Many are of the opinion, however, that the vision presented in this document lacks focus, that it is rather unbalanced and that it is far from complete, in particular with regard to its social objectives.

At the same time, organisations representing labour welcome the strengthening of social provisions in the new Lisbon Treaty and ask for a **stronger social dimension** of the EU, including re-connecting market liberalisation with social and environmental objectives, a better integration of economic, social and environmental aspects in the new strategy; a better enforcement of the EU's social acquis and the development of a more ambitious and effective common EU social policy and active labour market policy to complement the EU internal market.

Concerning governance, organisations representing labour recall that **transparency and visibility of the strategy** are a precondition for successful implementation. Clear quantitative targets and reporting methods should be defined and the Treaty-based employment strategy should be a cornerstone of the Europe 2020 strategy. They remind that careful impact assessments need to be conducted, fully involving social partners and social dialogue committees and that political decisions need to better reflect the outcomes of these impact assessments.

Finally, they regret that the European policy instrument of **social dialogue** is not mentioned in the consultation document and ask to play a key role in designing and implementing the EU2020 strategy.

More specifically, **the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)** supports the aims of building a 'smarter' and 'greener' economy and believes that the post-2005 Lisbon Strategy shifted to too liberal an approach. The Europe 2020 Strategy should therefore strengthen the social profile of the EU and defend the European social model. It should commit to full and quality employment. A new social programme should be adopted to ensure fair and secure employment (complement exit strategy from the financial systems support with entry strategy getting people back to work). The social acquis should be strengthened and enlarged (e.g. clarification of the Posted Workers Directive; workers rights in EU private company statute). Building an inclusive, non-discriminatory and 'fair' labour market with good wages, stable contracts, quality jobs and robust unemployment benefits should be a key priority (demand-side labour market policies should be used to this end, including an EU recovery plan for jobs). Tackling short-termism in the governance of companies should be a further priority, including an action programme on corporate behaviour (strengthen workers rights and participation), together with lifelong training and education, 'green' skills and climate change. Public funds should be used towards these ends and to ensure that wealth is shared more widely.

## 5.2 Employers organisations and other business stakeholders

Around 280 contributions from the business community, in most cases either sectoral industry federations or EU/national industry federations, were received - many of which are also recognised EU-level social partners owing to their active engagement in European (sectoral) social dialogue. Roughly one sixth of the respondents are individual companies.

These stakeholders by and large share the key priorities identified by the Commission but put relatively more emphasis on "creating growth and knowledge" and on "creating a competitive, connected and greener economy". They also highlight that European institutions should focus more clearly on competitiveness and that the productivity and the capacity of the public sector to innovate should be strengthened.

The majority of business stakeholders underline the need to focus more clearly on **SMEs** and on the implementation of the Small Business Act and stress the importance of the single market as well as better regulation for the successful delivery of the new strategy. Many contributors emphasise the need for less regulation and a stable and predictable legislative and regulatory framework.

Concerning the **single market**, the need to complete it in particular for services and energy, the need for an EU patent and unified patent litigation system, and for policies to support the mobility of people and knowledge are particularly prominent. Many stakeholders from the business community also highlight the importance of ensuring a level playing field with fair competition and uniform enforcement of rules across all Member States and economic actors. They equally underline the need for stable financial markets, supported by smart regulation and supervision and ensuring availability of finance to enterprises.

The creation of a **digital single market** should be a priority according to many business representatives, who criticise the continued fragmentation of the EU e-commerce market and point to its enormous potential for consumers and enterprises. The electronic goods and

digital media industries call for issues such as the territorial management of copyright licensing to be addressed, while representatives of the creative industries underline the importance of effective copyright protection and remuneration for right holders.

More broadly, the importance of **information and communication technologies (ICT)** in driving innovation, growth and creativity is stressed in a number of contributions. Policies to stimulate the rollout of Next Generation Networks (very high speed networks) have been called for by various stakeholders, with emphasis on sustainable competition, technological neutrality and openness. Other points expressed by respondents included, for instance, support for the Council's target of broadband for all by 2013, a harmonised roadmap for release of spectrum, mandating open standards for interoperability and data portability, as well as ensuring that consumers and businesses can continue to use the Internet applications, services and devices of their choice. Another suggestion was to create European Lighthouse Projects in areas such as ICT-enabled energy networks, health informatics and logistics/traffic management to establish lead markets in the digital economy.

Many respondents indicate that **education, research and innovation** should enjoy priority. Issues of considerable concern include the commercialisation of innovation, the protection of intellectual property rights and, in particular for SMEs, better vocational training. Several stakeholders also point out that the concept of innovation should be broadened to encompass non-technical (social, organisational) aspects of innovation. The need for a coordinated approach to research and standardisation was also raised. Others emphasise that the conditions for researchers should be improved taking gender aspects into account. Intel for example proposes to allocate one billion Euros to European Investment Fund's venture capital operations in order to build critical mass for European venture capital markets and organize a high-profile yearly European business plan competition in association with the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) and with funding for successful ideas.

In order to achieve a competitive, green and connected economy, business stakeholders see **increased resource efficiency, better infrastructure networks and an improved regulatory environment as essential**. Overwhelmingly, business stakeholders identify the promotion of efficient technologies as being the most important policy.

Many contributors highlight that Europe needs **a strong industrial basis and an ambitious, future-oriented industrial policy** and support an integrated industrial policy in the framework of Europe 2020. They stress that industrial policies should aim at improving framework conditions in general. Other contributors underline the need to launch large structuring, federating pan-European programmes, in particular in the aeronautics, security and space sectors. Some suggest that industrial policies should focus on competitive sectors with important growth potential, including, but certainly not limited to, green products. Several associations also highlight that the new industrial policy should promote the synergies between the services sector and manufacturing.

Several stakeholders highlight the substantial investment needed in **the energy sector** to enable the use of all low-carbon technology options, including through smart grids, and stress the importance for EU policies to promote diversification of primary energy sources and routes. They also support a European electricity super-grid which will enable increase in the share of renewable electricity and decentralised generation. Furthermore, they stress the need to ensure that energy priorities are reflected in future financial perspectives. They welcome that the consultation identifies the need to match the upgrade of network infrastructures with a

need to rely on robust competition and functioning liberalised energy markets within the single European market.

**Entrepreneurship, flexicurity and skills** are highlighted in almost equal proportions as means to achieve inclusive societies. In the context of flexicurity, flexibility through labour relations is the single most important policy for business stakeholders. In addition, encouraging entrepreneurship through adequate support measures and removing remaining barriers to the free movement of labour in the internal market are emphasised. Last but not least, developing new skills for new jobs is seen as important. Life long learning and e-skills for the digital economy have been identified as vital.

EU industry contributions have underlined **the external dimension** as key for a competitive Europe in the decades ahead. Key aspects highlighted are the creation of a level playing field for EU economic operators on a variety of avenues, in particular market access, access to raw materials, energy, social and environmental standards. Many business stakeholders also argue that more should be done to develop external aspects of the internal market by pursuing regulatory cooperation, convergence and equivalence through multilateral and bilateral channels.

In terms of **governance**, business stakeholders underline that they should be better involved and that communication should be made more effective. In general, however, business stakeholders suggest that the existing coordination mechanisms and instruments should be kept but reinforced with a view to enhance coherence amongst policies. In particular, the target of spending 3% of GDP on R&D across Europe should not be abandoned and benchmarking should be used to foster policy learning across Member States.

More specifically, **Business Europe** encourages the EU to embrace change and implement far-reaching reforms to sustain growth, support job creation and restore the viability of public finances. On governance, the weak means of delivery and lack of ownership are considered as the root of the problems experienced by the Lisbon Strategy: differentiated national targets and involvement of sub-national authorities could improve ownership. For Business Europe Europe 2020 must set a limited number of realistic and measurable objectives (the main objective should be raising the EU's growth potential to 2% by 2015). Europe 2020 should include robust benchmarking and monitoring systems and make use of the developed assessment methodology framework. The Commission legislative programme should focus more on competitiveness, the better regulation agenda should be re-launched and impact assessments should focus on growth and jobs. The EU budget should be overhauled to promote competitiveness. The Commission President should address each national Parliament once a year, explaining objectives, policies and progress made.

**EUROCHAMBRES** broadly agrees with the priorities proposed in the Commission consultation document, while considering that creating a competitive, connected and open economy should be the key objective. The completion of the internal market is considered as a key precondition for the successful implementation of Europe 2020. Furthermore, EUROCHAMBRES calls on the Commission to: i) define key priority areas and set realistic and clearly defined targets for measuring progress; ii) maximise synergies between the different policy areas and make the strategy business-friendly by applying better regulation principles to its implementation and respecting administrative burden reduction targets; iii) involve stakeholders at national, regional and local level in the foreseen “partnership for progress” and effectively communicate the strategy to them and to the general public; and iv) closely monitor implementation by the member states and hold accountable those that do not

respect their targets, while creating stronger incentives for member states to meet the targets, linking the attribution of European funds to the implementation of the strategy and including meaningful benchmarking in the evaluation processes.

**The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME)** proposes a far-reaching re-regulation of the financial sector, new support instruments for access to finance for SMEs and recovery programmes to support structural reforms. UEAPME also underlines that the capacity of the public sector to innovate and to become more efficient should be strengthened. Public regulations should be enforced without awarding special treatment to selected companies. Social security systems should be reformed to withstand the pressures of rising unemployment and ageing societies and labour market policies should be modernised on the basis of flexicurity principles. UEAPME further thinks that better SME access to the internal market and to global markets should be ensured. An entrepreneurship culture should be established. The regulatory environment should support innovation and business creation (improved access to finance; more efficient patent system; more R&D support). Environmental and climate change policies should take account of SME specificities. The "Think Small First" principle should be applied across the board to ensure policy measures are proportional and should include an SME test, consultation of SME representatives for all new EU legislation and SME involvement in standard-setting processes.

**The European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services (CEEP)** endorses the general outline of the Strategy, but regrets that the working paper contains no mention of the contribution that public services and services of general interest make to job creation, growth, welfare and solidarity. CEEP welcomes that the importance of services of general interest has been enhanced by the Lisbon Treaty, its protocol on SGIs, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and feels that it is now necessary to secure these basic statements with appropriate European law. CEEP (together with a number of others actors) stresses further the need to ensure high quality social services of general interest accessible to all which do contribute to EU prosperity, opportunity and security, and are essential for citizens and enterprises alike. According to CEEP, it is critical that public sector spending is not affected by the post-crisis measures as this could seriously undermine the delivery of the post-Lisbon strategy.

## **6. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

### **6.1 Stakeholders with a social vocation**

The responding stakeholders in this group include European networks of NGOs in the social sector and their counterparts at national level, including in particular the European Anti-Poverty Network and a number of its national branches and the "Social Platform" representing 42 pan-European Social NGO networks, but also various national public or semi-public bodies. Around 115 contributions were received. Stakeholders with a social vocation consider that the Lisbon Strategy has failed in making "a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty". This commitment from 2000 should be reiterated, widened to include inequalities and made a centrepiece of the new Strategy. The general feeling of these stakeholders was that in spite of the Commission's stated intentions the social dimension of the consultation document was weak. Some even considered it to be absent. While stakeholders could embrace "inclusive societies" as a priority they consider that this label is not genuinely reflected, but

instead interpreted in a far too narrow and reductive way. A less utilitarian approach is advocated in particular in terms of how inclusion, migration and education are addressed.

As regards the proposals for inclusive societies respondents feel that more emphasis is needed on quality of work, and tackling in-work poverty and precarious work. Employment is an important part but not the full answer to "inclusion" and "empowerment". Access to quality services and adequate resources must be ensured, also for those who are not active on the labour market. A number of respondents propose taking a legislative measure to set up a European framework on minimum incomes. The potential of the social economy should be emphasised, both in providing those services but also for job creation. Areas that warrant increased attention are child poverty and inclusion of migrants. The Charter of Fundamental Rights should be a reference.

Concerning the proposals on growth through knowledge there is agreement on the importance of education and skills for inclusion, but insistence that vital aspects are missing. More emphasis should be given to ensuring access for low-skilled persons and persons facing other difficulties to enter or remain in employment. Education, however, plays a wider role than merely equipping people for the labour market. The importance of early childhood education available for all must be recognised. E-skills as a way to empower all citizens in the digital economy have also been mentioned.

As concerns the proposals for a greener and competitive economy most respondents call for a stronger social dimension rather than an over-emphasis on the economic pillar and on competitiveness aspects. When addressed, increased weight given to the environmental pillar is welcomed.

Other areas for reform mentioned were Financial/Banking reform in line with social aims, greater emphasis on volunteering; the need for "eco-friendly" social policies and for a greater recognition of the care for the family.

Concerning governance of the new strategy a four-pillar based strategy is advocated, with equal weight given to each of the social, employment, economic and environmental dimensions. Policy integration and monitoring should be strengthened. Target-setting will foster delivery. Indicators "beyond GDP" need to be developed and used in assessing progress. The involvement of all relevant stakeholders in all phases and at all levels of government is key. Implementation should build on existing mechanisms, such as a further strengthened OMC on poverty/inclusion through more robust targets and monitoring, typically beyond simple monitoring of GDP.

On the process it is generally felt that the development of a new flagship strategy would have required more extensive and in-depth exchange. A thorough analysis of the outcomes of the Lisbon Strategy, and of the causes of the crisis, is advocated. There are calls for postponing adoption of Europe 2020 until early 2011 to allow for a full consultation exercise to strengthen ownership of all actors whose contribution is vital for success.

More specifically, social NGOs promoting gender equality are advocating a strong gender dimension in the future EU2020 strategy. The European Women's Lobby underlines that there is a strong need to "reinstate and strengthen equality between women and men as inherent pillar of the Europe 2020 Strategy accompanied by new targets and monitoring mechanisms".

These stakeholders underline the strong link between gender equality, economic growth and employment, including in times of crisis. The under-use of potential of women (while they represent 60% of new university graduates) is presented as an enormous waste of resources, especially in the context of the knowledge-based economy. They also underline that the priority theme should be inclusive societies with specific emphasis on improving access to the labour market and social situation for both women and men and reducing gender-based discrimination. The European Women's Lobby underlines in this context that the removal of the targeted employment guideline on equal opportunities since 2005 played a role in diluting the goal of equality between women and men and asks for a gender specific employment guideline, indicators, targets and annual country-specific recommendations. The European Women's Lobby also underlines the need to support small and medium size companies and entrepreneurship in general with a specific focus on female entrepreneurship (introduce target, access to credits) and improving the situation of female self-employed and helping spouses.

These stakeholders further propose reforming the male-breadwinner model (individualisation of social protection rights, close the gender pay gap, guarantee pension rights, ensure access to life-long-learning and recognise skills) and developing an economy of care (targets for care for elderly dependants, improve careers in education and care, create new employment opportunities, follow up of parental leave taken by men and developing new legislation in the field on other types of leave). Other recommendations include the setting up of a permanent gender impact assessment procedure for all European Structural Funds, Cohesion Funds and funds related to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, improving access to credits and information to women entrepreneurs and supporting persons with care responsibilities (to enable them to work) and the care sector (to respond to the needs of an ageing population and also to create good quality jobs).

Regarding governance, these stakeholders propose to ensure more consistency in the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy, a strong institutional link between commitments at the European and national level and to set up a better monitoring system and systematic gender impact assessment in all policies, targets, benchmarks and measures of the future Europe 2020 Strategy.

## **6.2 Stakeholders with an environmental vocation**

Around 35 contributions were received from various stakeholders with an environmental focus, such as national, regional and local public agencies, some industry federations, multi-stakeholder associations, research institutes, environmental NGOs and individual companies.

Some environmental stakeholders (e.g. European Network of Environmental Authorities - Managing Authorities) believe that Europe 2020 should serve as an umbrella strategy that covers all strategic objectives and targets EU will face in the coming 10 years. As such, it should start with a broader focus to consider a matrix of issues that are going to shape EU policy in the coming decade (going beyond the economic and financial crisis), putting forward cross-cutting priorities (e.g. environment, sustainability, climate change and energy security, jobs) within EU competence that will shape the overall policy, and integrating them in all sectoral policies. The strategy should also qualify more precisely the use of the term "sustainable".

While environmental stakeholders agree with such challenges as climate change and resource efficiency identified by the Commission, they have also highlighted a number of other challenges that need an urgent response, i.e. preservation of biodiversity and eco-systems,

sustainable energy, water management, dealing with increasing waste, hazardous chemicals and unemployment.

Environmental stakeholders put more emphasis on the priority "Competitive, connected and green economy". The stakeholders stress the need to better integrate environmental issues with other policy areas. The economic relevance of protecting the environment and ecosystems, as well as eco-efficiency, sustainable development, social cohesion, health and well-being are mentioned as additional priorities. Loss of biodiversity and environmental pollution should be also amongst the main priorities in the new strategy. A large number of stakeholders call for taking a global approach. A majority suggest that there should be strong links with the Sustainable Development Strategy, the Stability and Growth Pact and cohesion policy.

Integration of environment into the full range of EU policies is considered necessary for ensuring that potential environmental consequences are taken into account in decision making. The vast majority of environmental stakeholders stress that resource-efficiency, management of biodiversity, energy-efficiency and renewable energy, and the transformation of infrastructure networks should be the main priorities.

All environmental stakeholders stress that over-use of natural resources is one of the most pressing challenges to be addressed without any delay. While prosperity has material dimensions, it still needs to be set within nature's limits of ecosystem functioning and natural resources availability. The stakeholders fully support the shift to low-carbon and resource-efficient economy, and call for a strategy that would go beyond more efficient use of resources. The strategy should emphasise preventive measures, such as conservation and sustainable management of natural resources (freshwater, soil, biodiversity, energy, forest) and restoration measures. The future Strategy should set concrete, measurable targets for the increase of resource-efficiency and an absolute decoupling of economic growth from the use of resources and environmental degradation. The development and preservation of social and ecological capital are vital assets for Europe to stay competitive.

The rapid and partly irreversible loss of biodiversity and the scarcity of natural resources are identified as a key challenge to be addressed by the future strategy, by a large number of environmental stakeholders. They stress that a green economy needs to integrate efforts to halt biodiversity loss, while it is imperative to make strong link between climate change and nature and biodiversity protection actions, both for mitigation and adaptation. The findings and recommendations of the "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) study that builds the case for a green and resource efficient economy are identified as a useful contribution to the future strategy. The need to shift EU structural funds, inter alia, so that they contribute more to the implementation of post 2010 biodiversity rescue plan is also highlighted. The stakeholders ask for the EU exerting its leadership in global collaboration protecting and preserving ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as setting a new, more ambitious, biodiversity target to be met by 2020.

Environmental stakeholders stress that investment in green infrastructure (e.g. energy and transport sectors) would provide new green employment opportunities. They indicate that EU Structural and Cohesion Funds should be refocused and shifted towards more sustainable transport and energy. They also stress the need to reform the transportation sector, stabilise and reduce mobility needs and ensure trans-border cooperation. The stakeholders suggest that a specific target for the transport sector could be set in the post-2012 climate agreement.

Other important issues highlighted by the stakeholders are integrated smart grids, energy security and an enhanced international cooperation in the field of energy.

A number of stakeholders indicate that energy efficiency should be a primary goal of climate, energy, and industry policy up to 2020. Examples of possible actions provided by stakeholders include transformation to energy-efficient infrastructure, national energy requirements for buildings, setting obligatory targets (e.g. renewables share in electricity, energy efficiency improvements, efficiency standards, and building refurbishment), and liberalisation of energy markets. The Spring Alliance, a multi-stakeholder organisation, for example proposes a mandatory share of at least 35 % of renewable in electricity supply EU-wide by 2020. The stakeholders also call for stimulation of private sector energy efficiency investment, increase allocation of Structural Funds for the housing sector, and increase uptake of EIB funds for energy efficiency. The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) for example suggests launching of a new European Energy Efficiency Action Plan including a binding absolute energy use reduction target of 20% for the coming decade.

Majority of environmental stakeholders identify eco-innovation amongst key priorities of the future strategy. They stress that there is need for eco-innovation and wide-reaching finance mechanisms and incentives, suggesting that an increased proportion of EU R&D budgets should focus on low-carbon, highly energy and resource efficient technologies and industries. Furthermore, existing structural funds could be mobilised and mainstreamed towards eco-innovative and social innovative projects. The stakeholders also call for smarter and more coherent environmental regulation that would help to drive the innovation, as well as for an integrated programme for European Eco-innovation.

Stakeholders stress the need for taxation reform, shifting the revenue from labour to environmental pressures and resource use. Strong support for the use of indicators of well-being that go beyond GDP is also expressed. Environmental stakeholders also identify phasing-out of harmful subsidies and investing in eco-efficient industries as main priorities. They indicate a need for more innovative public procurement to drive eco-efficient innovation (e.g. reaching 100% green public procurement in 2012).

Several environmental stakeholders stress that skills, and particularly green skills, ensuring training and re-training should be main priorities. They further emphasise that sustainable employment, social inclusion and social equality, as well as health protection should be among the identified priorities.

Concerning governance, environmental stakeholders stress that the new Strategy should take a holistic approach ensuring coherence of environmental, social and economic policies, and should have a long-term vision that goes beyond 2020. Setting targets at both, EU and national levels (e.g. targets for energy efficiency, resource efficiency, climate change, conservation of natural resources, preservation and restoration of ecosystems, biodiversity), facilitation of stakeholders' involvement, exchange of best practices, benchmarking, Open Method of Coordination, new guidelines (that would link new governance model to agreed benchmarking), and more transparent decision making are identified as important elements. These stakeholders also stress the need to take into account economic and political developments outside the EU (e.g. China) while considering the need for EU policies that keep us competitive.

### **6.3 Consumer organisations**

10 contributions were received from various stakeholders at EU (BEUC, Euro Coop) and from national consumer organisations.

These stakeholders generally stress the importance of consumer policy for the new strategy. They underline the importance of guaranteeing adequate legal protection for online commercial activity and of tackling e-commerce fragmentation. In this context, they also highlight the value of establishing an integrated retail internal market across the EU, which is only possible if consumers are confident about their rights with regard to cross-border trading.

In general, they agree on harnessing the potential of education, research and innovation of the digital economy. However, they warn against creating 'two-speed' consumption, evolving due to the access and advancement of new ICT, seen as, on one side 'digital natives', and on the other side as 'digital immigrants'. In this context, they also underline the potential impact of innovation advancement on social cohesion, which may lead to a social fracture stemming from unequal access to innovative products.

The majority of consumer stakeholders underline the importance of the consultation process which should include more extensive involvement of not only civil society and NGOs but also other EU institutions, national and local structures and citizens. They call for ensuring more 'ownership' of public policies by businesses.

Some stakeholders also call for a clear priority setting to resolve potential conflict of interest (e.g. greener economy versus single market). Some suggest to develop a social scoreboard to measure effects of new policies on the social situation in a country, and their impact on the most vulnerable groups in society and to focus more on fostering sustainable access to scientific research and data grounded in evidence-based policies.

More specifically, The European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) supports the proposed Europe 2020 objectives, whilst advocating a stronger focus on social inclusion and the demographic challenge. BEUC regrets that the analysis proposed by the Commission does not sufficiently acknowledge the role consumers play in driving markets. Furthermore, it identifies challenges that should be taken account of such as the globalisation of economies and communication technologies, or the dematerialisation which could lead to new opportunities but also new threats to citizens, consumers and other economic actors. On the key priorities, BEUC considers essential that the EU research strategy guarantees the integration of civil society needs, concerns and expectations. It also takes the view that more should be done to empower citizens in the various facets of their lives such as access to basic services, information and communication technologies, social security or healthy food. The single market should be deepened and consumer protection made a cross-cutting priority in the new strategy. The promotion of the consumer interest should be also fully taken into consideration in competition policy. More globally, BEUC suggests that the strategy should have a longer timeframe than the one proposed by the Commission and be explicitly linked with the review of the EU budget to allocate resources properly through reprioritization and in accordance to the proposed objectives.

### **6.4 Stakeholders active in the sphere of health care**

A number of different stakeholders dealing with health-related issues including pharmaceuticals and medicines associations responded to the consultation document.

The general view is that economic growth needs to be not only sustainable, both environmentally and financially, but also responsive to the needs of equity, social justice, health and well-being for people and society. Thus, they call for a more explicit focus in the Europe 2020 strategy on health and well-being, in particular with regard to optimisation of human capital as the most important factor for sustainable growth and fostering innovation in healthcare and health systems.

The majority of these stakeholders underline there is a need for increasing investments in public health infrastructure, including rebuilding the public health workforce, while ensuring sufficient allocation of budget and funding. In addition, given the importance of efficient healthcare systems, they suggest moving from a cure-based health system to a comprehensive, patient-centred disease management approach and ultimately to an appropriate health management throughout the entire life of people.

On governance, health stakeholders stress the importance of the regular and enhanced involvement and participation of civil society and NGOs from the early stage in the decision-making process of the EU, through consultations and coordinated interactions with policy makers.

More specifically, the "**EU Health Policy Forum**" (EUHPF), underlines the failure of the Lisbon Strategy in achieving social and environments goals and calls for a shift from the model of an ever-increasing consumption towards a better stewardship of physical and human resources. EUHPF generally underlines that Europe 2020 needs to focus more on ensuring good health of citizens and good healthcare services as a healthy population is not only an ethical issue but a cornerstone for economic success in a highly competitive globalised world.

## **6.5 Stakeholders from the education, research and "Think tanks" community**

Around 90 contributions were received from a wide range of stakeholders representing the education, research and "think-tanks" communities.

Stakeholders from the education community underline the importance of education to achieving social inclusion as well as active citizenship. They also stress that the focus of the new strategy should not only be on higher education but also on primary and secondary education. Pre-primary education is also mentioned by some stakeholders. Educational stakeholders highlight that a broad range of skills is key to social inclusion. Many stakeholders call for the partnership between the private sector and universities to be extended.

Stakeholders from the research community notably include universities and other public research performing organisations, research funding agencies and associations of scientists and/or engineers. They generally agree with the three priorities defined by the Commission for the new strategy. The general view is that a thriving European Research Area based on openness and excellence is key to the achievement of the three priorities. Synergies between research, education, and innovation policies and programmes are encouraged, as well as more coherence between the various levels of governance, in particular EU and national levels. Several stakeholders see a need for European research and innovation policies to strongly focus on addressing major urgent societal challenges (such as climate change, energy, ageing, health, security, etc). Such an approach should allow public research organisations, businesses, Member States and the Commission to join forces and achieve critical mass to develop European solutions.

Some of these stakeholders consider that European research policy should aim primarily at strengthening European centres of excellence, including access to them (the German "Initiative for Excellence" is mentioned as a model) while others emphasize more the need to deploy research capabilities and raise research quality standards across Europe. The majority of stakeholders underline that the importance of research in the new strategy should also be reflected in both future EU and national budgets, as well in the allocation of structural funds. Finally, the proposal to appoint a Chief Scientific Advisor is welcomed by some stakeholders.

Stakeholders from "think-tanks" include research institutes, individual academics and expert networks (e.g. engineers, statisticians or colleges). Most contributions agree with the challenges identified by the Commission and broadly support the thematic priorities. Most "think-tanks" consider the Lisbon Strategy as a failure. Despite the 2005 overhaul and focusing on growth and jobs, most consider there were too many targets. The economic crisis and its impact on public finance is viewed as a new challenge that will change the overall perspective for Europe 2020. Some "think-tanks" agree that the Strategy's clearly articulated aspiration to create a competitive, connected and greener economy is both welcome and worthy, provided that the economy is also increasingly fairer and more ethical. Several academic "think-tanks" consider the functioning of goods and service markets and the single market a priority for Europe 2020.

Several argue that Europe's current growth model is unsustainable, that the benefits of growth should be shared more fairly and that the financial system should serve the 'real' economy. They consider that skills are crucial to promote inclusive societies. In this context many contributions stressed the need to further promote policies on lifelong learning. Innovation is seen as a most important policy to make our economies greener and smarter. Most "think-tanks" considered growth and knowledge as crucial for the Europe 2020 Strategy.

There is support for stronger economic policy co-ordination and for the improvement of the Open Method of Coordination. Several suggested aligning the economic surveillance under Lisbon and the fiscal surveillance under the Stability and Growth Pact. Many urge the Commission to focus the EU Budget on the Europe 2020 priorities and to present a detailed proposal for a genuine Europe 2020 Community program. Others suggest a strengthened role for the European Council as a way to increase political ownership. Some also suggest making the country specific recommendations clearer. In this context, benchmarking is seen as a possible improvement to assess Member States' performance. Communication efforts around the recommendations could also be improved to engage national stakeholders in the debate.

## **7. CITIZENS**

Almost 500 responses were received from EU citizens based in nearly all Member States. Responses were particularly numerous from citizens based in Spain, where the Commission Representation in Madrid organized a dedicated campaign, but also from Poland, Germany, France and the UK.

Most citizens' comments focus on education, research and the knowledge society, which are seen as crucial for the EU's future. Many demand to remove existing barriers and enhance mobility of academic staff and international cooperation. Citizens from Central and Eastern Europe highlight the problem of "Brain Drain" in the academic sector.

Many citizens express support for the social dimension of the Strategy, arguing for a more social Europe. Especially against the backdrop of the economic crisis, many people are

concerned about their economic outlook. Increased environmental protection and the fight against climate change are considered as highly important, and at the same time as an opportunity to create new jobs and value by the "green economy". Several comments stressed the importance of gender related aspects. Globalisation is seen as both a threat and an opportunity.

## **8. THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **8.1 Third countries**

**The Japanese and Norwegian governments** both expressed their support for the Europe 2020 Strategy.

**Japan** stresses the crucial role of international trade for economic growth, employment and investment and expresses its desire for a continued cooperation and would like to seize every opportunity to strengthen economic relationship with the EU and tackle global economic challenges. Japan and the EU share long-term challenges such as responding to an aging society and must seek sustainable long-term growth. Japan shares the idea that improving efficient use of resources including energy and applying greener innovative technology are vital for further strengthening energy security, creating employment and maintaining competitiveness.

**Norway** considers that the EU and other developed countries, such as Norway, have an international responsibility to act as leaders with regard to sustainability, by providing models for middle-income and developing countries in their efforts to grow and develop sustainably. Norway argues that an efficient Internal Market is a prerequisite for the success of Europe 2020. Norway adds that the potential of education, research, innovation and creativity must be realised, by for instance developing universities, preventing early school leaving and pooling research resources. Norway recognises the need for increased policy coordination and joined European efforts in order to be able to create a common European Research Area. Furthermore, Norway underlines that Europe 2020 would benefit from stating more explicitly that an active and targeted labour market policy is paramount in order to reduce unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Norway also agrees with a more efficient use of resources, including energy.

**Switzerland (Federal Office for Spatial Development)** welcomes the proposed reorientation of the EU's growth policy and shares the view that a consistent focus on a green economy presents an opportunity to find a way out of both the ecological and economic difficulties. The Federal Office recommends mentioning the need to embed the strategy in a coherent and sustainability-centred regulatory framework and particularly supports the proposals for better integration of transport networks, developing alternatives to road transport, promoting clean technologies and upgrading infrastructure. The Federal Office suggests that reference should be made to the EU's work on territorial cohesion.

### **8.2. International organisations**

**The International Monetary Fund's (IMF)** believes the new Strategy should aim at creating the best possible environment for markets to support employment and productivity, focusing on reforming labour markets and on raising productivity. Europe 2020 should revisit the employment strategy in the light of the role of labour market institutions in explaining long-term unemployment. Improved R&D should be mainly pursued by removing obstacles to

innovation through a better access to finance of high-risk capital. Catching up with technological leaders requires additional efforts to increase the quality of tertiary education in Europe. The IMF also underlines that fiscal consolidation is an essential element for sustainable growth.

**The United Nations (UN)** highlights the global dimension of the strategy. The UN welcomes the emphasis in the consultation document on strengthening education and encourages the EU to include within the 2020 Strategy a broader strategy for social inclusion. The UN suggests a focus on the particular needs of migrants, refugees and displaced people, as well as ethnic minorities especially Roma. The UN also underlines that Europe 2020 could usefully articulate the EU's contribution to the external dimension of Europe's social development strategy, expressing a commitment to working with neighbourhood and developing country partners to improve social infrastructure, in line with the UN Chief Executive Board initiatives. The UN also calls to maximize the benefits of a green transformation for groups within the labour force, including women, who have been particularly disadvantaged by today's crisis. In addition, particular focus should be on investments in quality early childhood care and education, and more widely to emphasise child well-being.

**The European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** highlights the importance of an efficient single market with a level-playing field, reduced administrative burden and smart standardisation and certification measures. The precautionary principle should be applied with regard to certification of services, to strike the balance between the free movements of quality services in the single market including the use of certification as a quality tool. The EFTA Working Groups on Education and Research advocate a focus on knowledge-based growth, highlighting the large potential of research, innovation and education, as well as active labour market policies.

### **8.3 International stakeholders**

**The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham)** calls for bold action to support growth and jobs and welcomes the proposed objectives. AmCham suggests adding five further thematic priorities: deepening the single market, achieving a low-carbon economy and promoting Europe as "a showcase of energy efficiency and innovation", innovating on all fronts, creating "a hub of openness for the exchange of ideas, people, capital, goods and services", and finally improving Europe's people power.

**The Japan Business Council in Europe (JBCE)** welcomes the Commission's Europe 2020 strategy with its three main objectives. The JBCE recommends that the EU should maintain its focus on competitiveness and points out that sustainable social infrastructure for the aging society such as social security systems depend on the business activities that create growth and jobs. The JBCE underlines the importance of a fully functioning internal market and of working towards global harmonisation of regulatory environments. In forming and implementing targeted regulation and other policy means, the concept of 'better regulation' should always be applied. Furthermore, the EU should take account of international harmonisation of policies and lead such harmonisation activities. Global harmonisation of regulatory environment as well as growth in international trade and investment would be a key contributor to the realisation of the objectives of EU2020.