

EUROPEAN UNION



**Committee of the Regions**

**CONSULTATION OF EUROPEAN REGIONS & CITIES**

**"Your voice on Europe 2020"**

**(Follow-up to the 2009 CoR Consultation of European Regions and Cities  
on a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth)**

On 3 March 2010 the European Commission has proposed Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – as the successor of the Lisbon Strategy (see a description in Annex 1).

The European Council is now requested to endorse the strategy's overall approach and the EU headline targets and to give its final approval to the strategy.

However some important issues relevant to local and regional authorities still remain open in the strategy, concerning the need for differentiated targets at the territorial level, the need for indicators going beyond GDP, the actual role of the local and regional authorities in the design and implementation of the new strategy, the relationships between Europe 2020, cohesion policy and the EU budget and the need to communicate the new strategy to all EU citizens (see a background note in Annex 2).

It is crucial that they are adequately addressed before final adoption of Europe 2020 by the June European Council.

**Address your opinion to the European and national leaders who will be meeting at the June European Council: your participation is important.**

All details can be found at: <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/>

**Contributions can be sent in any of the EU official languages and will be publicly posted on this webpage in their original language and in English (without your contact details).**

**Please send your replies in Word format (doc), possibly using blank spaces in this same file, to [consultation@cor.europa.eu](mailto:consultation@cor.europa.eu)  
by **Monday 12 April 2010****



<b>First name and surname name of sender<sup>1</sup>:</b>	
<b>Contact details (address, telephone, email)</b>	
<b>On behalf of the Institution:</b>	
<b>Country</b>	

## 1. EUROPE 2020 targets

The Commission has translated the 3 priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth) into 5 EU headline targets at European level:

1. 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D.
3. The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right).
4. The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
5. 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

To ensure that each Member State tailors the Europe 2020 strategy, taking into account national circumstances and differing starting points, the Commission asks them to translate these targets into national targets before the June European Council.

**1.1 Is the balance among the three dimensions of the strategy: economic, social and environmental, appropriate? If not, please explain.**

**1.2 Is the number of targets appropriate and are they sufficiently focused?**

**1.3 What other targets should be proposed by your country as national targets, in order to take into account regional circumstances and different starting points at local and regional level?**

---

<sup>1</sup> **Privacy Disclaimer** The follow-up to your contribution requires the processing of your personal data (name, contact details etc.) in a file. Should you require further information, or wish to exercise your rights under Regulation (EC) 45/2001 (e.g. access or rectify data), please contact the data controller (Head of the Networks and Subsidiarity Unit) at [analysis@cor.europa.eu](mailto:analysis@cor.europa.eu). If necessary, you can also contact the CoR Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@cor.europa.eu](mailto:data.protection@cor.europa.eu)). You have the right of recourse to the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time ([www.edps.europa.eu](http://www.edps.europa.eu)). Note that your personal data will not be published online.

## 2. EUROPE 2020 indicators

The Commission has stated that the outcome of the strategy will be annually monitored "on the basis of a set of indicators showing overall progress towards the objective of smart, green and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion". Nevertheless, no indicators were specified in the proposal.

The political guidelines of the economic strategies are made on the basis of measured performance. Currently, there is already a broad consensus on the need to combine GDP with indicators that better measure economic performance and people's living standards and quality of life.

**2.1 What kind of indicators should be used to monitor progress towards the targets set at European level?**

**2.2 What kind of challenges do you foresee in the use of those indicators?**

## 3. EUROPE 2020: the role of local and regional authorities

The Commission suggests that

"All national, regional and local authorities" should work in partnership, "closely associating parliaments, as well as social partners and representatives of civil society, contributing to the elaboration of national reform programmes as well as to their implementation".

However, when coming to put this principle in practice - in particular, with respect to the seven "flagship initiatives" that should pursue the Europe 2020 ultimate goals (see the annexed info) - the Commission proposes the coordination of works and initiatives at the EU and the national level, while the role of regional and local level is not elaborated.

**3.1 Is there in your country any institutional mechanisms that could help to effectively involving regions and cities in the elaboration of the strategy (defining national targets and reform programmes) as well as its implementation? How can regions and cities be sure that the strategy be more focused and adapted to local and regional differences?**

**3.2 How do you perceive your role in the implementation of EUROPE 2020 (in general, and, in particular, in the design of flagship initiatives)?**

## 4. EUROPE 2020, EU Funding and Cohesion Policy

The Committee of the Regions stresses that the objective of cohesion policy is that of "reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions" (Treaty on European Union, Art. 174). If the Europe 2020 "inclusion" priority has to provide the key link between growth and (economic, social and territorial) cohesion goals, it has therefore to be translated into credible objectives.

The European Commission Europe 2020 proposal states that  
"(...) cohesion policy and its structural funds, while important in their own right, are key delivery mechanisms to achieve the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Member States and regions".

It also adds that

"The discussion should not only be about levels of funding, but also about how different funding instruments such as structural funds, agricultural and rural development funds, the research framework programme, and the competitiveness and innovation framework programme (CIP) need to be devised to achieve the Europe 2020 goals so as to maximise impact, ensure efficiency and EU value added",

acknowledging that

"It is also essential that the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion".

**4.1 How, and under which conditions, could cohesion policy deliver on its key Treaty objective of "reducing disparities" while contributing to the Europe 2020 priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?**

**4.2 How should the EU funding contribute to territorial cohesion and to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in terms of both (A) its overall size and (B) its distribution between different funding instruments such as the structural funds, agricultural and rural development funds, the research framework programme, and the competitiveness and innovation framework programme (CIP)?**

## 5. Communicating EUROPE 2020

In 2009, contributors to the CoR Consultation on the future of the Lisbon Strategy suggested that the Lisbon Strategy failed to be perceived as relevant to the life of ordinary citizens.

The European Commission acknowledges an important role for the regions in explaining the need to commit to EUROPE 2020 and the contribution that Europe and its Member States expect from their "citizen, businesses and their representative organizations" to carry out the necessary reforms.

To this effect, it will propose "a common communication tool box", taking into account "national circumstances and traditions".

**5.1 Do you think that the Europe 2020 proposal can be better communicated to EU citizens than the Lisbon Strategy? In light of the experience of the Lisbon Strategy, what parts of the European society and territory should be the target of a special communication effort?**

**5.2 What elements should be included in the tool box proposed by the Commission? And how should it take into account economic, social, territorial and cultural differentiations across EU countries and regions?**

## Annex I

### Europe2020: Background Note

by Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform of the Committee of the Regions team

#### 1. The EC Europe2020 blueprint meets some key requests from EU cities and regions

The proposal put forward in the European Commission's Communication "EUROPE 2020. A European Strategy for smart, green and inclusive growth"<sup>2</sup> **meets to a large extent five key issues CoR has been requesting**, giving a constructive answer to the Own Initiative Opinion the CoR adopted in its Plenary Session on 3-4 December 2009<sup>3</sup>, as well as to some of the "Questions on the future of the Lisbon Strategy" which emerged from the CoR Consultation of European Regions and Cities on a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth carried out earlier in 2009<sup>4</sup>. After the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Dialogue, held on 18 January 2010, these issues were summarized in a joint letter by the CoR President and the Spanish Council Presidency the European Council President Herman Van Rompuy.

- **First** and foremost, the EC proposal acknowledges that the **EU local and regional authorities must be seen as permanent partners in the design and implementation of the strategy**, which the CoR has been pleading for since 2006. Actually, the "Who does what?" section of the EC proposal (par. 5.2) states that (our underlines) "All national, regional and local authorities should implement the partnership, closely associating parliaments, as well as social partners and representatives of civil society, contributing to the elaboration of national reform programmes as well as to its implementation. By establishing a permanent dialogue between various levels of government, the priorities of the Union are brought closer to citizens, strengthening the ownership needed to deliver the Europe2020 strategy". In addition, the proposal recognises also that "(...)exchange of good practices, benchmarking and networking - as promoted by several Member States - has proven another useful tool to forge ownership and dynamism around the need for reform". However, in spite of what the Commission affirms, these networks have been created by a variety of stakeholders, such as regions and cities or the CoR, more than by Member States themselves, Their role should be better recognised and a room in which they contribute should be better identified

---

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010)2020 (3.3.2010).

<sup>3</sup> The future of the Lisbon Strategy post 2010 (CdR 25/2009).

<sup>4</sup> [www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020).

- **Second**, as requested in CoR Opinion<sup>5</sup>, EUROPE 2020 declares that the Committee of the Regions should be "*more closely associated*";
- **Third, it puts the social and environmental pillars on the same level as the economic one**, thus remedying the overlooking of the social and environmental aspects that most EU cities and regions saw as a major weakness of the Lisbon Strategy. The Commission proposal also points out rightly that targets related to the Europe2020 *smart, sustainability* and *inclusion* priorities should be seen as "*interrelated*" and mutually reinforcing. It also meets the CoR's call to "*develop Europe's competitiveness in the green economy*"<sup>6</sup>;
- **Fourth, it acknowledges that the strategy should adapt to different starting points in a flexible manner.** In fact, while adopting EU-level targets covering the three mentioned priorities, the Commission acknowledges that "*Each Member State is different and the EU of 27 is more diverse than it was a decade ago*", that "*traditional sectors, rural areas*" and "*high skill, service economies*" show different situations. Therefore, the EC proposes that each Member State translates the EU goals into "*national targets and trajectories*" so that "*Investing in research and development as well as innovation, in education and in resource efficient technologies (...) will reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion*";
- **Fifth**, the EC proposal also acknowledges that Europe2020 must meet the need for solidarity between the richest and poorest areas of the Union and it considers that its outcomes will contribute to implementation of the Lisbon Treaty objective of territorial cohesion, stating that: "*It is also essential that the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion*".

## 2. However, other issues relevant to the EU local and regional authorities are not adequately addressed

**Other key issues raised by the CoR are not dealt adequately in the Europe 2020 blueprint**, in particular:

- while acknowledging the need for stronger economic governance, the Europe2020 proposal **does not answer** the CoR request that EU Member States' **national governments are provided with "*stronger incentives to commit themselves to delivering the new strategy's objectives*"**<sup>7</sup>. Instead, it relies on the effectiveness of the mechanisms based on the country-specific

---

<sup>5</sup> The future of the Lisbon Strategy post 2010 (CdR 25/2009)

<sup>6</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>7</sup> *ibidem*

recommendations issued by the European Council and the subsequent policy warning that the Commission could issue if a Member State does not comply with the recommendations after two years;

- as for the **role of the local and regional authorities**, in contradiction to the positive acknowledgements mentioned above, the proposal does not stress the need to involve them in a permanent and structured manner in the **design and implementation of the flagship initiatives**;
- in spite of recognising that **the CoR** "*should be more closely associated*", the proposal does not elaborate on how to involve it in the design, implementation and monitoring of the new strategy;
- the proposal calls for a **discussion "about how different instruments such as structural funds (...) should be devised to achieve the Europe 2020 goals"**. The simple recognition that "cohesion policy and its structural funds" are "important in their own right" should be more elaborated. CoR has always stressed the danger of the currently increasing cross-regional economic disparities (when the disparities between countries are decreasing) and consequently inequalities in social conditions, which play against the European social model. Therefore, in the context of the debate about the size and the rationale of the EU budget, **the link between cohesion policy and EUROPE 2020 should be more carefully reconsidered**, taking into account the role played by cohesion policy for inclusiveness.
- the proposal is silent on the CoR call to go **beyond the "use of GDP as the primary indicator to measure economic performance"**<sup>8</sup> and the subsequent need to complement it with new indicators to better reflect the several phenomena influencing quality of life and (economic, social, environmental) sustainability issues. Indeed, there is a spread awareness and a large debate around the world on the need to combine the GDP with indicators that better measure the economic performances and quality and standards of living of citizens<sup>9</sup>. In fact, the proposal announces that "*The EC will monitor annually the situation on the basis of a set of indicators showing overall progress towards the objective of smart, green and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion*", **but does not disclose what these indicators will be**;
- Europe 2020 states that the proposed EU-level targets "*are representative, not exhaustive*" and invites Member States to set their own additional indicators

---

<sup>8</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>9</sup> A plethora of studies can be mentioned on this topic (e.g. "Measuring the progress of societies" initiative by OECD or the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress) as well as the progressed work by the European Commission itself (Communication, "GDP and beyond", (COM(2009)433 final).



and targets, if they wish so. However, the Europe2020 proposal **renounces to support the identification of additional indicators at the EU level**, which is essential if they are to be used throughout the EU for governance purposes (comparison and benchmarking; monitoring and evaluation; management of territorial policies);

- as for the **need for more effective communication** to citizens and stakeholders, the Europe2020 proposal announces a "common communication toolbox", on which no details are provided though. It remains an essential element for the success of Europe 2020 on the ground. The CoR in its Opinion<sup>10</sup> called for "a more effective communication strategy (...) to raise awareness and promote the key messages of the new Strategy" while contributors to the CoR Consultation<sup>11</sup> requested a strategy "more relevant to the lives of ordinary citizens".

---

<sup>10</sup> The future of the Lisbon Strategy post 2010 (CdR 25/2009)

<sup>11</sup> CoR Consultation of European Regions and Cities on a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth, [www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020).

## Annex II

### Europe 2020: Commission proposes new economic strategy in Europe on Europe 2020 (Press Release IP/10/225, 3rd March 2010)

**The European Commission has launched today the Europe 2020 Strategy to go out of the crisis and prepare EU economy for the next decade. The Commission identifies three key drivers for growth, to be implemented through concrete actions at EU and national levels: smart growth (fostering knowledge, innovation, education and digital society), sustainable growth (making our production more resource efficient while boosting our competitiveness) and inclusive growth (raising participation in the labour market, the acquisition of skills and the fight against poverty). This battle for growth and jobs requires ownership at top political level and mobilisation from all actors across Europe. Five targets are set which define where the EU should be by 2020 and against which progress can be tracked.**

President Barroso said, "Europe 2020 is about what we need to do today and tomorrow to get the EU economy back on track. The crisis has exposed fundamental issues and unsustainable trends that we can not ignore any longer. Europe has a growth deficit which is putting our future at risk. We must decisively tackle our weaknesses and exploit our many strengths. We need to build a new economic model based on knowledge, low-carbon economy and high employment levels. This battle requires mobilisation of all actors across Europe."

First of all, Europe must learn the lessons from the global economic and financial crisis. Our economies are intrinsically linked. No Member State can address global challenges effectively by acting in isolation. We are stronger when we work together, and a successful exit therefore depends on close economic policy coordination. Failure to do so could result in a "lost decade" of relative decline, permanently damaged growth and structurally high levels of unemployment.

The Europe 2020 Strategy therefore sets out a vision for Europe's social market economy over the next decade, and rests on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing priority areas: Smart growth, developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; Sustainable growth, promoting a low-carbon, resource-efficient and competitive economy; and Inclusive growth, fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

Progress towards these objectives will be measured against five representative headline EU-level targets, which Member States will be asked to translate into national targets reflecting starting points:

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
- 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D.
- The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met.
- The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a degree or diploma. .
- 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

In order to meet the targets, the Commission proposes a Europe 2020 agenda consisting of a series of flagship initiatives. Implementing these initiatives is a shared priority, and action will be required at all levels: EU-level organisations, Member States, local and regional authorities.

- Innovation union - re-focussing R&D and innovation policy on major challenges, while closing the gap between science and market to turn inventions into products. As an example, the Community Patent could save companies 289€million each year.
- Youth on the move - enhancing the quality and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education system by promoting student and young professional mobility. As a

- A digital agenda for Europe - delivering sustainable economic and social benefits from a Digital Single Market based on ultra fast internet. All Europeans should have access to high speed internet by 2013.
- Resource-efficient Europe - supporting the shift towards a resource efficient and low-carbon economy. Europe should stick to its 2020 targets in terms of energy production, efficiency and consumption. This would result in €60 billion less in oil and gas imports by 2020.
- An industrial policy for green growth – helping the EU's industrial base to be competitive in the post-crisis world, promoting entrepreneurship and developing new skills. This would create millions of new jobs ;
- An agenda for new skills and jobs – creating the conditions for modernising labour markets, with a view to raising employment levels and ensuring the sustainability of our social models, while baby-boomers retire ; and
- European platform against poverty - ensuring economic, social and territorial cohesion by helping the poor and socially excluded and enabling them to play an active part in society.

The ambition of Europe 2020 means that leadership and accountability must be taken to a new level. The Commission invites Heads of State and Government to take ownership for this new Strategy and endorse it at the Spring European Council. The role of the European Parliament will also be enhanced. The governance methods will be reinforced to ensure that commitments are translated into effective action on the ground. The Commission will monitor progress. Reporting and evaluation under both Europe 2020 and the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) will be carried out simultaneously (while remaining distinct instruments) to improve coherence. This will allow both strategies to pursue similar reform objectives while remaining as separate instruments.

-----

For the full text of the Europe 2020 proposal and for further information, go to:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm)