

**Committee of the Regions**

The first Vice President

Brussels, 31.05.2010* 0890
PCab/KNOW/bgen/D/1353/2010Dear Presidents,
Dear Prime Minister,

As the EU's cities and regions are key players in policies aimed at increasing the wealth and well-being of EU citizens, the Committee of the Regions has consulted them on the Europe 2020 blueprint published by the European Commission in March.

Offering very detailed and constructive contributions, 90 local and regional authorities from 21 Member States welcomed the Europe 2020 project in terms of its priorities and its ambitious commitment to EU-wide targets. The Flagship Initiatives were appreciated as a practical instrument that would enable Europe 2020 to deliver on its promises. The "Key Findings, Assessment and Policy Implications" of the "Your Voice on Europe 2020" consultation are attached.

When it comes to content, however, the overwhelming majority of the cities and regions consulted believed that the Europe 2020 project, as it stands, does not have the means to deliver on its promises. As a matter of fact, respondents expressed doubts over the new strategy's policy actions and tools, its lack of flexibility in adapting to variable territorial conditions, and its proposed governance and funding channels.

Indeed, they said that, for Europe 2020 to be successful:

1. its objectives, indicators and targets should be flexibly adapted to existing socio-economic differences and disparities between regions and territories;
2. a new set of indicators, complementing GDP with broader measures of sustainability and quality of life, should be used as a policy tool to stimulate growth, mobilising local resources;
3. the Flagship Initiatives should be used as an opportunity to focus existing EU funding instruments on a limited number of priorities, overcoming the present fragmentation;
4. cutting red tape should be made a priority;
5. EU, national, regional and local policies, including those under the responsibility of groupings of regions and cities (e.g. European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, macro-regions), should be implemented in a coordinated and synergetic manner;
6. it should be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing with a strengthened cohesion policy for all EU territory.

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The EU's Assembly of Regional and Local Representatives

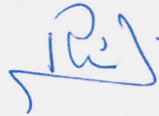
On this basis, most contributors thought that the timeline set to adopt Europe 2020 in the coming months is too tight to allow the key forthcoming decisions to be taken in partnership by all government levels and other stakeholders concerned by their implementation. They also warned that without involvement there can be no ownership: a joint commitment from all tiers of government to the success of Europe 2020 is crucial.

The **Committee of the Regions** shares these views and notes that the **same concern was expressed** by the Conference of the **Committee Chairs of the European Parliament** on 5 May 2010.

Therefore, the Committee of the Regions:

- 1. calls on the European Council to invite all Member States to activate existing institutional tools to involve their regions and cities**, in accordance with their respective constitutional rules, in their countries' contributions to the EU targets and flagship initiatives and in the draft National Reform Programmes;
- 2. asks that the roadmap for Europe 2020 be rescheduled** to allow time for key decisions to be shared by all the relevant partners;
- 3. will take part in the Europe 2020 inter-institutional partnership** as it continues to monitor progress on the ground, by means of its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform, as requested by the European Parliament, and will report regularly to the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Yours faithfully,



Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso

TO:

Herman van Rompuy
President of the European Council

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
Prime Minister of Spain

CC:

Jerzy Buzek
President of the European Parliament

The Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the European Union