

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Brussels, 8 March 2010

121st MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS BUREAU

– 12 MARCH 2010 –

ITEM 6

**THE COR AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION BLUEPRINT ON EUROPE 2020:
GIVING VOICE TO EU CITIES AND REGIONS
IN VIEW OF THE SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND BEYOND**

Submitted by the secretary-general

FOR DEBATE

MEMO FOR CoR BUREAU MEMBERS

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**"The CoR and the European Commission Blueprint on Europe2020:
giving voice to EU cities and regions
in view of the Spring European Council and beyond"**

Next steps towards Europe 2020: the CoR and the role of its Platform (EU2020MP)

After the appointment of the new European Commission by the European Parliament on 9 February, and on the basis of the orientations provided by the informal European Council meeting on 11 February, the debate on the new strategy to replace the Lisbon Strategy enters its final stage. Its next steps are:

- 3 March: the European Commission presents its blueprint for a new strategy: communication on EUROPE 2020: "A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"
- 25-26 March: the Spring European Council is expected to hold a first debate;
- 17-18 June: the last European Council under Spanish rotating Presidency is expected to take a decision on the new strategy.

The Committee of the Regions has contributed in many ways to the debate. It adopted an Own Initiative Opinion in December 2009 (Rapporteur Christine Chapman). Furthermore the CoR, supported by its former Lisbon Monitoring Platform (currently EU2020MP), conducted a Consultation among European Cities and Regions on A New Strategy for Sustainable Growth and a Survey on the impact of the European Economic Recovery Plan on the ground, with its findings related to key policy responses for a sustainable recover in the EU

The Lisbon Strategy 's failure to deliver the expected results, in spite of some progress, was clearly exposed in the European Commission 's Working Documents "Lisbon Strategy evaluation document"¹ and "Europe 2020 – public consultation - First overview of responses"².

¹ SEC(2010) 114 final, Brussels, 2.2.2010.

² SEC(2010)116 final, Brussels, 2.2.2010.

More recently, the then CoR President Van den Brande, together with Vice-President Chaves on behalf of the Spanish Presidency, addressed a joint letter to Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso as a follow-up of the 5th Territorial Dialogue held in Palma de Mallorca (ES) on 18 January. Their letter provides the following summary of the CoR 's main messages (our underlines):

"First, as experience has taught us, the reforms which will be needed if the EU is to promote sustainable growth and the creation of new jobs cannot be achieved without effective and efficient coordination of the various competent administrations. Only through greater coordination of economic policies would it be possible to accelerate recovery and sustainable growth in the EU.

Secondly, we believe that we are all agreed that one of the objectives of the new EU 2020 Strategy has to be achieving a higher rate of growth with due concern for sustainability, in economic, environmental and social terms. At the same time, the Strategy should ensure the balanced development of the EU 's regions and cities, with a view to achieving the objective of territorial cohesion which is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

Through the Structural Funds, EU cohesion policy has made a powerful contribution to the long-term objectives of growth and employment and to short-term action aimed at overcoming the crisis. This policy has had a real leverage effect, mobilising new resources both public and private, and has promoted institutional construction and cooperation between the various levels of government. The lesson learned from cohesion policy is that local and regional authorities, being closer to the people and their local environment, can play a crucial role in the effective application of the new Strategy. At the same time, their action reinforces solidarity between Member States and between the richer and poorer areas of the Union.

Thirdly, we believe that the EU 2020 Strategy will yield satisfactory results only if all levels of government share responsibility and work together. The new Strategy has to be based on greater involvement and commitment on the part of the heads of state and government, and on a still greater contribution from the EU's local and regional authorities in a framework of mutual consensus, shared responsibility and respect for the competences of each level of government.

In order to achieve this, the EU 's local and regional authorities should be involved in the design and implementation of the new EU 2020 Strategy, as well as in the monitoring of its results and impact. Their commitment will ensure that the new Strategy takes sufficient and effective account of local and regional characteristics, and it will strengthen grass-roots political involvement in the Strategy."

Next steps

1. It seems necessary that the CoR raises again the voice of EU cities and regions in view of the final decision to be taken at the end of June 2010, and this could be done first of all by a **debate to be held at the Plenary Session on 14-15 April**. In view of this debate, a preliminary analysis of the European Commission proposal, in the light of the recommendations and suggestions included in the latest CoR Opinion, will be circulated to CoR members.

2. This debate could provide the basis, for an official **letter** to be addressed to the President of the European Council by the **CoR President, before the European Council in June.**
3. In the second half of 2010, the **EU2020MP** (formerly LMP) will hold its annual **Workshop**, where experts and technical representatives will discuss on the implementation of the new Strategy adopted in June 2010.
4. Besides these activities, the **EU2020MP**, in coordination with the commission's chairs and secretariats, will agree and implement a rolling programme of **surveys, consultations and other actions** to support the CoR consultative activity in the most relevant fields linked to the new strategy.
5. In **February 2011**, the 6th Territorial Dialogue for Sustainable Growth and Jobs will review the state of play as for the kick-off of the new strategy, also updating its survey on the implementation of the European Economic Recovery Plan as a short-term facet of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

PROPOSAL

The Bureau members are asked to debate the information contained in this document.
