



## BRIEFING AND ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

# “EU 2020” – THE EU’S FUTURE POLICY STRATEGY

### What is EU 2020?

EU 2020 will replace the overarching policy framework known as the “Lisbon Strategy” which has guided economic, employment and social policy in the EU since 2000 and will expire in 2010. The Lisbon Strategy dates from March 2000 and aims to make the European Union (EU) the “most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010 (for more information see below). However, the Lisbon Strategy has focused too much on economic growth and competitiveness and neglected social policy.

The EU 2020 Strategy started with a proposal by President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso in Autumn 2009, then a public consultation followed from the Commission with a document outlining potential priority areas and actions. A more concrete proposal will be made by the Commission in March, to be then discussed and agreed upon by Heads of Government (European Council). In addition, several EU Councils of Ministers will have preparatory debates, feeding into the final decisions of the European Council. This includes the Councils with national Ministers of European Affairs (“GAERC” Council), Economic Affairs (Competitiveness Council), Employment/Social Affairs and Economic and Finances.

#### Timetable:

March 3, 2010 (or March 10): publication of the Commission proposal

March 25-26, 2010: European Council and general debate on the EU 2020 proposal of the Commission

June 2010: European Council and adoption of the EU 2020 Strategy

### Why is EU 2020 relevant for you?

In the coming four months, national governments of EU Member States will decide the EU strategy for the next ten years. The strategic objectives of the current Lisbon Strategy have defined the political orientation of the EU. All EU funds and policies had to refer to the Lisbon Strategy and had to show how they contribute to reaching its objectives. In the future, all objectives, policies and programme priorities as well the budgets will also have to contribute to the realisation of the EU 2020 objectives. As about 60% of all national legislation originates from the EU the strategy has the potential for a big impact on each EU country.

It will be more difficult to fight for a more social Europe, for strong social inclusion and anti-poverty strategies, if the overall objectives are not supportive of social cohesion/inclusion and sustainable development. The decision on the new EU strategic objectives will be made in the first half of 2010. The decisive work is currently underway at national level and therefore it is essential to make sure your voice is heard there now.

### What is Eurodiaconia doing?

Eurodiaconia has been actively engaged in discussions with other NGOs to develop proposals for the new strategy, based on previous positions, notably as part of the Spring Alliance and with the Social Platform. For the Alliance’s manifesto please see [here](#).





Eurodiaconia also responded to the public consultation. The [response](#) outlines issues of concern raised by Eurodiaconia members and presents opinions and recommendations to create inclusive societies. The headings, under which many policy areas are dealt with, are entitled: ensuring strong, mainstreamed social inclusion policies; ensuring empowerment for all; supporting quality social services and funding programmes for inclusion.

The Social Platform, of which Eurodiaconia is a member, has been vocal in criticising the consultation paper and **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of the 1500 consultation responses, which despite listing concerns raised by social NGOs appears to suggest a general endorsement of the consultation paper's priorities.

Eurodiaconia will be in contact with key MEPs and Commission staff stressing our main messages and calling for a well-thought through strategy.

## What can you do?

As mentioned above, discussions and decisions on the future strategy will now take place between national ministers and heads of state and government. This is why national level advocacy is essential now. Action toward your government can influence the EU 2020 Strategy and contribute to shaping a more social EU.

**Contact decision makers in your country** and explain the necessity of a new EU strategy that aims to be social and sustainable and one where the economy is a tool to ensure inclusion of all in society. You can make use of Eurodiaconia's response to the consultation to propose more specific issues to be addressed, to call for specific actions (see recommendations sections of the response). We have drafted a [letter](#) template that outlines the key demands of diaconal organisations across Europe. You can adapt it for your organisation and **send to your Prime Minister, President, Ministers for Foreign affairs and Social affairs**. If you know **who your Prime Minister/President listens to** contacting him/her would be important.

National Parliaments will certainly have the EU-2020 Strategy on the agenda, debating it with the Prime Minister or Minister of Economic Affairs in the coming months. **National MPs** are often not very well informed about EU initiatives or debates, so if you are, you have something to offer to them!

The European Parliament (EP) has no formal role, but it cannot be entirely neglected by the Commission and European Council. The EP will try to make its voice heard through a joint "resolution" drawn up by political party group leaders. The Spring Alliance will try to organise a debate with the EP. **Contacting MEPs** active in your field or from your country could help push for our priorities.

Contact high-level **civil servants** involved in preparatory meeting of ministers – the Social Protection Committee (SPC) – list of members from each country see [here](#), and Economic Committee (EMCO) – list of members see [here](#).

## Further information and links

Information about [EU 2020](#) and the [Lisbon Strategy](#) on Eurodiaconia's website [Briefing](#) on the Lisbon Strategy from the Social Platform

European Commission [website on EU 2020](#), including the consultation document and "first overview of responses" to the consultation.

[Eurodiaconia's consultation response](#)  
The Spring Alliance's [manifesto](#)

Campaign letter template for translation and adaptation follows as annex

*February 2010*



[LOGO]

[DATE and PLACE]

Dear [NAME OF PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER],

**Re: [Diaconal organisations/NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION] expects an EU 2020 Strategy where the economy is a tool to ensure inclusion of all in society**

In March 2010, you will decide on the new direction of the EU – the “EU 2020 Strategy”. Rather than a renewed Lisbon “jobs and growth” strategy, which will have failed to achieve its goals by the end of 2010, including making “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”, [NAME ORGANISATION] proposes that the European Council leads Europe towards a more social and sustainable society.

Despite a commitment in the Lisbon Strategy to work for “greater social cohesion”, the economic growth of recent decades has benefitted the rich more than the poor and the gap between the poorest and richest in our societies is widening. We call for a re-commitment to a strong social pillar in the EU 2020 strategy where policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion are of equal importance as sustainable growth and jobs, in deeds as well as word. Growth must serve social cohesion and inclusion and must not be an end in itself.

The objective of an “Inclusive High Employment society” as proposed to the European Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> February is welcomed by social NGOs as long as it is recognised that social inclusion is more than labour market inclusion. We welcome the priority of fighting poverty if this is for the benefit of people living in poverty and not merely for those people to be of benefit to the economy.

[DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ORGANISATION; WHY THESE BROAD PRIORITIES ARE IMPORTANT AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT]

[NAME ORGANISATION] is a member of Eurodiaconia, which has drawn up [proposals](#) for a more inclusive and equitable EU based on the concerns of diaconal organisations across Europe. Our priorities include ensuring strong, mainstreamed social inclusion policies, ensuring empowerment for all in society, whether in or out of work, and supporting quality social services.

We look forward to hearing your response to our concerns and proposals, as well as read your ideas on how to achieve the objectives set.

Yours sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

[ATTACH EURODIACONIA’S CONSULTATION RESPONSE IF DESIRED]