



**Local & Regional  
Europe**

# **Europe 2020 Strategy**

**Local and regional governments are essential  
for its shaping and implementation**

Consultation of the European Commission

October 2014

## Executive Summary

The economic and financial crisis is a very demanding challenge for all of us, local areas, regions, nation states and EU institutions. Like a wake-up call this crisis forces us to reflect on our perspectives in Europe and how to keep aspirations high. Therefore CEMR welcomes this mid-term review undertaken by the Commission.

Local and regional governments are directly concerned by the Europe 2020 Strategy. They already contribute to improve the quality of life of citizens and to boost EU competitiveness through a multitude of actions. The Strategy should thus also address the potential of local initiatives to contribute to EU targets and seize their potential. It would send an encouraging signal to citizens, companies, communities, local and regional authorities.

Three of the Europe 2020 headline targets are shared competence with Member States (employment, research and innovation, climate change and energy) and two of them are exclusive competence of Member States. And within many Member States, regional and local governments are often the ones competent for policy areas related to the Europe 2020 Strategy such as social services, healthcare, education and training, entrepreneurship, labour market, infrastructure and environment. Local and regional governments not only contribute to it, they are the Europe 2020 Strategy; they already implement policies in these policy areas and would do it anyway. Therefore, it is crucial that they are involved in its shaping and engaged in its implementation on the ground so as to achieve smart, inclusive and sustainable economic growth together. Regional and local government have a key role to play in terms of bringing territories' priorities to the EU and inversely, and of strengthening the feeling of ownership needed to get everyone involved in moving Europe towards the 2020 targets.

The Europe 2020 Strategy shall place local and regional authorities at the heart of the EU's actions and ensure EU and national support to regions and local areas of all types to translate long-term strategy into actions at the local level, be it through financial support or support for capacity building and exchange of good practices.

## Local & Regional Government - Essential for Europe 2020

Europe 2020 Targets	Local & regional governments' (LRG) contribution
<p><b>Employment</b> 75% of 20-64 year-olds employed</p> <p><i>MS competence under EU coordination, Art 5.TFEU</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead bodies promoting economic growth &amp; job creation</b> (in partnership with national governments) – a unique 'place shaping' role</li> <li>• Largest employers in their own right</li> <li>• Providers of employment services: job centres</li> <li>• Providers of business support services (in partnership with Chambers of Commerce): inward investment, incubators, self-employment</li> <li>• Key delivery partners for ESI Funds, Youth Guarantee</li> </ul>
<p><b>R&amp;D, innovation</b> 3% of EU GDP invested in R&amp;D/innovation</p> <p><i>Shared competence, Art.4 TFEU</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead bodies forming partnerships</b> bringing together industry, academia, and the public sector locally</li> <li>• Delivery of Smart Specialisation Strategies in line with the National Reform Programs</li> <li>• Promotion of R&amp;D&amp;I funds: EU and national</li> <li>• Lead bodies for e-Government &amp; e-Inclusion locally</li> <li>• Produce local and regional data</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climate change, energy</b> Greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990 (30% if conditions are right) ; 20% of energy from renewables; 20% increase in energy efficiency</p> <p><i>Shared competence, Art.4 TFEU</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the delivery of sustainable local development (Agenda 21)</li> <li>• <b>Managing 2.5 billion tonnes of waste a year</b> and recycling</li> <li>• Delivering sustainable mobility (transport) plans</li> <li>• Lead bodies for civil protection &amp; disaster management locally</li> <li>• Delivering sustainable energy action plans (Covenant of Mayors)</li> <li>• Promoting decentralised low-carbon production</li> <li>• Delivery of waste and water management plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education</b> Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%</p> <p>At least 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing tertiary education</p> <p><i>MS competence, Art.6 TFEU</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivering pre-school, primary, &amp; secondary education</b> for &gt;70 million children</li> <li>• Lead bodies reducing &amp; preventing early school leaving</li> <li>• Key delivery partners in EU and national skills initiatives</li> <li>• Key partners in promoting e-learning &amp; lifelong learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poverty, social exclusion</b> At least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty &amp; social exclusion</p> <p><i>MS competence, Art.6 TFEU</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead bodies providing health, social, cultural and recreational services</b> to 500 million children, adults, and elderly people</li> <li>• Lead bodies for the delivery of social welfare / benefits schemes</li> <li>• Major providers of social housing</li> <li>• Major providers or commissioners of public passenger transport services</li> <li>• Key partners in delivering employment services to job seekers, the economically inactive, the long term unemployed, &amp; other disadvantaged social groups</li> </ul>

NB: the exact nature of the contribution of local and regional government will depend upon the Member State and the function concerned.

## Background information

Following on from the EU's Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, the Europe 2020 Strategy adopted in June 2010 aims to turn the EU into a 'smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion'. This Strategy puts forward a number of headline targets, which should be reinforced by three overarching priorities: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:

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

In order to achieve these targets, the European Commission has put forward Seven Flagship Initiatives, which aim to stimulate the realisation of these targets, mainly through coordinated action at EU level. These commit both the EU and the Member States, with EU policies and instruments available to realise these goals. This 'thematic approach' is combined with 'Country Reporting' from the national level to help achieve the Europe 2020 Headline targets through the annual national reform programmes.

## Objective of CEMR's response to the consultation

CEMR welcomes the review of the Europe 2020 Strategy and is pleased to be involved in the consultation. It is a good opportunity to once more highlight the crucial role of local and regional governments in the European socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

Although local and regional government is only mentioned for the implementation of the European and national measures of the Europe 2020 Strategy, this CEMR response aims to highlight their important role in ensuring the successful design and delivery of the Strategy's objectives and targets which can only be achieved with measures which take into account the situation and existing initiatives in the relevant territory.

## Questions

### 1) Taking stock: the Europe 2020 Strategy between 2010 and 2014

#### Content and implementation

#### ***What does the Europe 2020 Strategy mean?***

CEMR supports the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially as it has become the overarching European strategy for sustainable development in the EU, embracing all pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. The approach of the Europe 2020 Strategy is appropriate as it is based on an integrated model, taking into account the interactions of different relevant sectors.

We also find that the main added value of the Strategy is the definition of a small number of headline targets that Member States have collectively signed up to. This has provided a more focused approach than its predecessor the Lisbon Strategy. However it is not very clear how the seven flagship initiative are connected to those headline targets as they cover multiple areas, but also how they are chosen. They should not solely remain political statements, but should be translated into concrete action plans. A refocusing of the initiatives would make it easier to see how they can directly contribute to create growth and employment in the European Union.

- ⇒ *Therefore, CEMR, together with its members, proposes that the seven flagship initiatives could be refocused into five initiatives, related to each of the five headline targets.*

Furthermore the policy priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy are now mirrored in the EU budget for the financial period 2014-2020, especially with the alignment of regional policy's investments to the Europe 2020 headline targets (research and innovation, jobs and growth, energy efficiency, social inclusion). Such an alignment between EU budget and EU goals is essential to the success of the Strategy. It is regrettable that other major areas of EU spend are still not well aligned to Europe 2020 Objectives.

⇒ *All EU policies and funding programmes have to be oriented into delivering the common targets of the Strategy.*

The spatial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy should also be further developed, taking into account the diversity of European territories. The Europe 2020 Strategy's objectives can only be achieved with engagements also taken at regional and local level, where subnational levels are often competent and where national and EU initiatives have a direct or indirect impact. Addressing the challenges we currently face requires place-based policies, measures that incorporate the territorial dimension from the outset both in terms of definition and delivery. In this sense, the Strategy has to involve all levels of governance: regional and local government are important partners to ensure the design and successful delivery of the Strategy. The possibility of creating partnerships between Europe, the Member States and local and regional governments and the involvement of individual citizens and other stakeholders needs to be further expanded and better supported. We believe that the Europe 2020 Objectives can only be achieved with measures taken via a place-based approach allowing Europe's territories a certain flexibility and self-determination in order to better achieve both European and local objectives. The absence of any spatial approach would disconnect people and places from the EU and its objectives, consequently reducing the prospect of success.

⇒ *Given the diversity of European territories, the Europe 2020 Strategy should recognise and promote the development of place-based policies.*

### **Do you think that the Europe 2020 Strategy has made a difference?**

The Europe 2020 Strategy has made a difference. It has offered a framework and has ensured that common measurable targets were set, with a shared diagnosis of the challenges to be tackled.

In a time of economic crises, the Europe 2020 Strategy, with its improved focus, has ensured that a more integrated approach towards policies promoting economic growth and employment is undertaken. The Strategy has provided a framework, and has placed the importance of the knowledge economy and innovation in a more central position.

The targets, pillars and priorities have in a general sense turned out to be good guidelines for realising the ambitions of the EU in terms of economy and employment. However the focus on growth and employment has also meant less focus on social policy and environmental interests. Such a prioritisation is welcome provided growth is nevertheless delivered in a sustainable manner. CEMR also notes that employment in itself is a major step towards social inclusion for the individuals concerned.

⇒ *The Europe 2020 Strategy should keep promoting an integrated societal vision, beyond economic development, in order to ensure social, economic and territorial cohesion as a whole.*

Furthermore, in many cases the involvement of local and regional authorities has been too limited. For each Member State, targets have been elaborated in a National Reform Programme. Nonetheless in some cases, the discussions with local and regional governments have been restricted to a mere consultation on the targets and objectives already agreed upon. This annual National Reform Programme should be a good exercise to work hand in hand for the success of the Europe 2020 Strategy on the ground. Individual strengths, weaknesses and development challenges specific to each European region are sometimes merely ignored. We believe that all targets should be made at a national level in conjunction; and that Member States and local and regional governments have to

define together how to reach the targets, in order to avoid that decisions taken at the national level have a negative impact at the local level.

- ⇒ *As most EU legislation dealing with Europe 2020 includes provisions specifically applying to local government, it requires a proper impact assessment at the local level (financial, regulatory and administrative) when drafting these measures.*

***Has the knowledge of what other EU countries are doing in Europe 2020 areas impacted on the approach followed in your country?***

Information sharing on activities between Member States, regions and municipalities in the framework of Europe 2020 allows to learn from one another, and use best practices.

This exchange of information between its members and other specific actions were facilitated by CEMR, analysing the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy, its territorial impact and the policy responses needed. Some actions were key in the work of the association:

- Providing better information and understanding of the situation in the different Member States, regions and municipalities;
- Knowledge transfer and exchange of best practices as a continuing learning process;
- Increasing awareness and visibility;
- Monitoring of the results as part of a common learning process.

CEMR for example actively supports the Covenant of Mayors which is the European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committed to go beyond the EU climate and energy targets by 2020. The Covenant of Mayors should be recognised as a key instrument of this policy framework. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO2 reduction objective by 2020. This initiative has helped local and regional governments to commit jointly (more than 5500 signatories) deliver concrete actions on the ground.

The exchange of ideas between regions and municipalities provides a good incentive to work on common objectives. Likewise the involvement of local governments in the discussion on the National Reform Programmes is a good way to also increase the commitment of all the levels of government.

- ⇒ *CEMR proposes a best practice sharing element to be in the budget of each EU fund (beyond cohesion policy) for example.*

***Are all stakeholders sufficiently involved in the Europe 2020 Strategy? Are you involved in the Europe 2020 Strategy? Would you like to be more involved? If yes, how?***

All the initiatives undertaken under the Europe 2020 Strategy offer a chance to find new ways of policy-making, together with different levels of government and the European institutions: from the global to the local setting in the major policy fields, e. g. economic and social development, job creation and youth employment, education and training, science and research, demographic change and gender policy, migration and integration, environmental protection and climate change, energy efficiency and energy supply, stability of law and security, foreign policy and development cooperation. All these complex tasks require the development of comprehensive solutions. In order to better implement the Europe 2020 Strategy and the flagship initiatives in Europe, all political levels of decision-making have to be involved, as well as the private sector as it represents employers, has expertise and provides funding from commercial services and products. Participation should neither be characterized by centralistic rules nor by the ongoing debate about the division of competences but by sharing tasks to tackle pressing challenges and achieve common goals.

- ⇒ *We need a specific model of governance in the EU, a governing system conducted along the lines of a partnership, what CEMR calls "Governing in partnership".*

The tasks resulting from the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy are, at the same time, local, regional, national and EU tasks. They can therefore only be realised if, together with partners from

industry, science and society, many of the leaders at a local, regional, national and European level join forces and tackle these challenges together. The Europe 2020 Strategy can only be successfully realised with the joint cooperation of key decision-makers at a European, national, regional and local level.

With reference to the multi-level and cross-sectoral nature of the Strategy, CEMR advocates for partnership structures that involve the local, national and EU level, defining their respective tasks and responsibilities and working together to ensure the successful delivery of the Strategy. This would increase transparency in the accountability and reduce deficits in delivery. The Europe 2020 Strategy should also ensure the involvement of local and regional authorities in the specific national process of setting targets, in partnership with their national governments. Indeed, in addition to being consulted, local governments need to be viewed as full-scale partners, an equal sphere of governance with the national and EU level, when it comes to determining objectives and targets. The partnership principle now mandatory in the cohesion policy shall be applied in several EU policies such as energy, climate, state aid, mobility, etc., as most of them have a direct or indirect impact at local level.

⇒ *The Europe 2020 Strategy shall specify the provisions for involving local and regional authorities. The partnership principle is the only way to reach the targets. The good example of shared governance in cohesion policy should be spread across other areas of EU competence.*

Also the European Parliament, as the EU institution directly elected by Europe's citizens, should get a more prominent role in defining and ensuring the political accountability of the new Strategy.

## Tools

### ***Do today's targets for 2020 contribute to the overall Strategy target, namely more growth and jobs?***

Even though the Strategy and its targets are useful, large disparities in the results remain. To improve the implementation of the Strategy, it is necessary to take into account the diversity of economic and social situations within the Member States.

For local governments, it is essential that central government maintains a clear overarching vision and ambition to achieve the targets. Nevertheless, many local activities, strategies and targets play an important role too in achieving the European objectives for growth and jobs on the ground. For example, by drawing up sustainability agendas, many regions, provinces and municipalities are focusing on the ambition of promoting sustainability. Local generation of sustainable energy plays an important role in achieving the European climate targets, as well as smart specialisation strategy for job creation, research and innovation. Involvement of local governments in deploying and tackling bottlenecks and formulating targets is therefore vital.

Regarding the research and innovation target, we believe that the concept of innovation should not be exclusively referring to scientific research and the high-tech industry. This purely science-based approach should be completed by the DUI (doing, using and interacting) concept of innovation. Most innovations arise from the practical context and serve to solve different kinds of problems and give solutions to a variety of needs. Considering this, innovation can and should also take place by the exchange of best practices and experiences among national, regional and local administrations.

Moreover CEMR welcomes the prominent place of the Digital Agenda, and the recognition of the importance of internet access, high-speed broadband and digital inclusion. However, we would like to underline that ICT is more than a business tool or a means to organise our economy more efficiently. It changes our whole society (towards an information society) including the way we are living and thinking. e-Government and e-Inclusion also need to take a prominent place in the Europe 2020 Strategy. The use of ICT will not only "make government services more efficient and easier" but also greener and more effective (e.g. freeing resources from paperwork to real services in social service provision). The use of ICT will make services more accessible, providing even greater benefits to rural or peripheral regions where public administrations may not have physical premises. It also contributes

to changing public services and the very way public administration is organised. Regions and municipalities are home to research and innovation facilities and headquarters and have a role to play in creating a research and innovation-friendly environment. They also support the cooperation between universities and industries through the development of local and regional innovation clusters which create new links between the public and private sectors.

As regards renewable energy and energy efficiency targets, it requires coordinated policies at European, national, regional and local level. A comprehensive economic shift cannot be initiated without the involvement of Europe's regions and towns, which have the necessary competences and the knowledge of the local context. Local and regional authorities see the opportunities of eco-efficient and future-oriented industries and services in their territories and for their population, but also seize the potential of decentralised low-carbon production and lower energy use. Appropriate measures to adapt to the potential impacts of climate change have to be taken here and now to conserve our natural resources and protect our transport, energy and industrial infrastructures. Our economy should develop in line with different policy tools such as internalisation of external costs (e.g. taxing of energy and CO<sub>2</sub>), subsidies, green procurement, and R&D. Regulatory measures can, in some circumstances, also be an efficient way to ensure economic growth. Nevertheless, new obligations for local and regional authorities should always be accompanied with adequate financial resources and supporting tools. In line with cohesion policy, the Europe 2020 Strategy addresses the issue of the availability or adaptation of green skills, both in the private and the public sector.

Finally, regarding social policy and in particular social inclusion which are key national or subnational competences, we welcome the fact that they are firmly embedded in the Europe 2020 Strategy. CEMR supports the priority of empowering people in inclusive societies and we see the need for fostering social cohesion. We share the view that access to, and participation in the labour market is vital for social inclusion. However, social inclusion cannot be limited to the labour market and although it is a major factor, employment alone does not guarantee social inclusion and social cohesion. Addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups and supporting those who are outside the labour market represent a major challenge to all actors involved in the task of creating cohesive and inclusive societies. In many countries, municipalities and regions are not only responsible for the planning and provision of services but they are also main actors in the promotion of economic development, job creation and well-being in their communities, working in partnership with other local stakeholders. Regional and local authorities play an essential role in creating inclusive and cohesive societies, as in many countries they are key providers of social services and can make the link between different stakeholders in their territories (i.e. education and training programmes, childcare, third sector organisations, service providers, welfare services, employment measures, advocacy and representative organisations of vulnerable groups). A growing trend is the refocusing of their social programmes to put a much more clear focus on prevention, early intervention and citizen-centred services. They also carry innovative approaches to address health inequalities for instance. Equally health and social care services are integrated in individual countries across Europe and EU policies would need to reflect that situation rather than regarding them separately. The European Commission, within the limits of its conferred powers, should also develop some policy and programmes along similar lines.

Furthermore, EU competition and employment law frequently clashes with domestic practices that aim to provide innovative and high quality social services locally. A more proportionate approach is needed, precisely to enable local authorities provide the high standards of social protection that the Europe 2020 Strategy stands for.

Furthermore a note of caution should be given about the scope of the Europe 2020 targets as there are subsidiarity concerns that need to be properly factored in. Some of the Commission Country-Specific Recommendations cover issues such as education, property market, employment law that are well beyond the powers conferred by the EU Treaties to the EU. Thus the CSR need to make clear what recommendations are based on powers conferred by the EU and enabling the Commission to issue binding recommendations to other subject areas where the recommendations are only guidance.

On the same grounds the EU institutions need to be extremely cautious when developing new indicators as to make clear when such indicators refer to areas where the EU has power to legislate and where such indicators enable a better peer review within countries, regions and communities. We have recently seen the discussion over Social Inclusion Indicators as an example where this clarification was not made thus raising subsidiarity concerns.

***Do you consider some of the existing targets to be more important than others? Explain.***

For CEMR, the integrated approach to sustainable development is a key feature of the Europe 2020 Strategy, therefore all the existing targets together are key for EU development. The Strategy should promote the development of European territories regardless of their sizes, but respecting their diversity and specificities. In this sense, the importance of the targets may vary from one territory to another.

To a great extent the implementation of the three pillars of the Strategy, also depends on the existence of adequate infrastructures and capacity in Member States, regions and municipalities. The EU should then focus on supporting the implementation of existing legislation, particularly in those territories falling behind.

***Do you consider it useful that the EU targets are broken down into targets per country? If yes, what is the best method for setting national targets? What has been your opinion of the national targets to date: too ambitious, sufficiently ambitious/not ambitious enough?***

It is useful for European targets to be broken down country by country, but it remains necessary to maintain an overarching European strategy.

It is also essential that the principle of ‘governing in partnership’ be taken into account, which means that all horizontal and vertical partners remain involved, including local government when setting targets at the national level. The Europe 2020 objectives must also be analysed at regional and local level, in order to better identify problems and opportunities. Flexibility must be given to local governments in order to implement strategies best suited to their territories. Governing in partnership ensures coordination between the various levels of government and is a precondition for the Europe 2020 Strategy to deliver added value in terms of growth and coherence on the ground. Territorial pacts and multilevel agreements with governments at all levels would help form a renewed Europe 2020 Strategy.

## **2) Adaptation of the Europe 2020 Strategy: the growth strategy for Europe beyond the crisis**

### Content and implementation

***What are the most important and most relevant subjects that need to be dealt with for more smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?***

Governance and the territorial approach are key areas that should be addressed in order to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

For many years, CEMR has been making the case for a new governance system: a true partnership between all spheres of government, stakeholders and relevant actors to:

- Promote a multi-level governance system at EU level, based on coordinated responsibilities of each level and reliable and jointly decided rules, agreements and self-commitments;
- Combine the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality through power sharing, partnership and participation at all political levels in Europe by voluntary decisions without changing the legal competences between the different political levels;
- Develop horizontal and vertical networks, which can include and mobilise citizens, business, NGOs and other partners for common goals and measures, which are essential for all Europeans, thus strengthening their identification with the European Union.

### ***What new challenges do we need to take into account, in the future?***

Demographic change is one of the key issues the European Union has to address. The European population is rapidly ageing. According to Eurostat data, between 2010 and 2060, the number of people over 65 will grow from 17.4% to 29.5% (compared to 12.8% in 1985) of the total population. The number of people over 80 will nearly triple to 12%. The demographic change Europe is now facing will have significant social, economic and budgetary consequences. According to the WHO, physical and social environments are key determinants as to whether people can remain healthy, independent and autonomous long into their old age. Local, regional and national actors will have to work together to improve conditions, develop and implement new solutions in fields such as employment, healthcare, social services, housing, IT services and transport. The economic and social models of the past 50 years will no longer be suitable for the current situation. Local and regional actors are the ones that can better understand and respond to the specific challenges that demographic ageing and other factors pose to their communities, and are competent for the key policies in this area like outdoor spaces and buildings, transport, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, information, health and social care services.

Moreover, in a context of increasing regional economic disparities and of the drafting of national reform programmes every year in order to evaluate the progress of the Europe 2020 Strategy's implementation, it is crucial to create a new interaction or a new "partnership" between different levels of government, for drawing up and implementing EU policies. Partnership must be promoted to ensure wider participation in decision-making process, programme designing, developing strategies and joint implementation to improve the delivery of both EU and national programmes and policies. Partnership goes hand in hand with the multi-level governance approach, beyond participation and consultation, promoting a more dynamic approach and greater responsibility for the various players.

The involvement of stakeholders/partners at all levels in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of EU policies is needed to ensure that they feel 'ownership' of the EU's interventions and share a common commitment to achieve their implementation at all levels of government. In the current European context, multi-level governance is crucial for the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

### ***How can the Strategy best be linked to other EU policy areas?***

With a total budget of over 450 billion euros (including national co-financing) for the programming period 2014-2020, cohesion policy will be the main investment tool in the European Union. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to bring together all EU tools around the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular funding instruments of the EU and EU programs such as cohesion policy, rural development policy and fisheries policy, Horizon 2020, Erasmus +, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), etc.

⇒ *Further integration of existing funds should be a goal pursued by the Commission.*

Moreover there are still too many overlapping and competing EU schemes. This has weakened local, regional and national applications in various fields. A rationalisation of EU existing initiatives would ease the engagement of local and regional authorities and the coordination of policies on the ground. Regular meetings with local authorities, or their representative organisations, for the analysis of all aspects of local and regional development, would also help national authorities and EU institutions, to increase their expertise and to exchange information and good practices in the concerned areas.

⇒ *The Commission should reinforce the coordination between its services and its initiatives.*

Finally, it is important that EU citizens can claim ownership of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and whatever supersedes it. In this sense, additional effort is needed in terms of communication to make the Strategy more visible; its monitoring and results should be easily accessible to citizens.

***Which instruments do you consider most suitable for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?***

There are two types of instrument for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. On the one hand legislation and regulation, beyond cohesion policy. On the other hand, financial resources. To ensure the deployment of these resources, a better link is needed between the European vision, the national, regional and local strategies.

***What needs to be done at EU level to ensure that the Strategy delivers results? What needs to be done at Member State level?***

To measure the progress of the Strategy, a benchmark is needed at EU level. That benchmark should be based on statistics, so that regional and local authorities can show how they contribute to the headline targets – without making “regional targets” mandatory in the member states. They must be voluntary and regions must set their own targets from their own regional setting. Indicators are often solely macro-economic in nature, and often not available at the regional level. In many countries the geography of NUTS both at II and III level do not reflect recognisable geographies, administrative units, let alone recognisable local communities. While a total revamp of these Eurostat units would be a difficult task due to its EU funding implications at least a decoupling of these statistical units and Europe 2020 measurements is advisable, the more so as in some countries there are better territorial data at national and local level that better reflect and explain, progress towards Europe 2020.

⇒ *The EU needs to provide correct and accurate local and regional statistics / data.*

Moreover, territorial disparities across both the EU and within Member States are still high, as described in the 6<sup>th</sup> cohesion report; therefore flexibility is needed for differentiation according to regions, promoting tailor-made options and more involvement by local government in designing, implementing and monitoring.

Furthermore, the Strategy should be completely gender mainstreamed, to target “quality” in the headline targets. This is in line with the CEMR charter for equality and our members’ important work to really contribute to gender equality in providing public services to the citizens of Europe.

At Member State level, the discussion on the objectives and targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy must be continuous between national, regional and local levels of government and with the other stakeholders. The EU could encourage this approach by engaging local and regional governments in EU peer reviews of national policies for instance.

⇒ *Creation of an EU level central-local partnership performance management / monitoring framework could be considered, with appropriate incentive and enforcement measures applied to each Member State as regards their respect of central-local partnership principles. These could initially take the form of soft measures, for example a central-local partnership ‘scoreboard’ (or Eurobarometer) for each Member State, in each of the relevant EU policy fields.*

***How can the Strategy encourage Member States to focus more attention on growth in their own policy?***

The overarching European Strategy lays down the policy framework. Within this Strategy, subsidiarity must be respected, allowing Member States and local and regional governments to make their own decisions together, according to their competences, needs and specificities.

***Are targets useful? Please explain.***

Targets are useful to all contribute to common and shared objectives of European development. They help to provide an overall focus to bring together all the available instruments (legislation, regulation, policies, soft measures/initiatives and funding).

A target could, for example, be added on demographic change, such as increasing the average healthy lifespan by two years by 2020 in the EU, thanks to a better quality of life and a more inclusive society.

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## About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 57 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its member associations and their elected officials and experts.

Moreover, CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)