

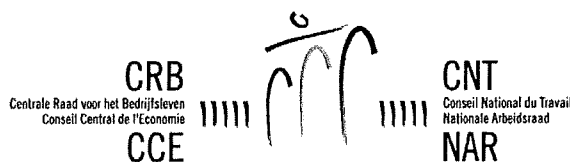
**Rencontre annuelle des Présidents et Secrétaires
généraux des CES nationaux de l'UE et du CESE
Implication de la société civile et des interlocuteurs
sociaux dans la Stratégie Europe 2020**

*Annual meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries-
general of the ESCs of the EU Member States
and the EESC*

*Involvement of civil society and social partners
in the Europe 2020 Strategy*

Contributions nationales et CESE
National contributions and EESC

BULGARIA



Annual meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries-General of the Economic and social Councils of the EU Member States and the European Economic and Social Committee

Questionnaire on the role of civil society and the social partners in the new European strategy EU 2020

This year, the **annual meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries-General** will be on governance and more specifically on the role of civil society and the social partners in the new European strategy EU 2020.

In order to provide an input for the draft declaration, you are kindly asked to answer very briefly (preferably not more than 2000 characters for each question) to the following questions. We thank you in advance for answering in English and preferably before the 10th of June 2010 and for sending your answer to alca@ccecrb.fgov.be.

Questions

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?
2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?
3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?
4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?
5. Would you have any suggestions designed better to coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

**Annual Meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries-General
of the Economic and Social Councils of the EU Member States
and the European Economic and Social Committee**

Questionnaire on the role of civil society and the social partners
in the new European strategy EU 2020

Answers of the ESC of Bulgaria

1. In respect to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy over the last decade, what are in your opinion the structural obstacles to the genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organisations?

The main obstacle to the genuine dialogue with the civil society organisations is the lack of sufficiently active feedback by the bodies of the Legislature and the Executive as regards the Lisbon Strategy implementation.

The active position of the civil society on more significant socio-economic issues in this country, as expressed in the various opinions and analyses, can be used to a greater extent on elaborating strategic documents related to the Lisbon Strategy implementation and on decision-making on the part of the Legislature and the Executive on the implementation of these strategic documents.

There are not used to the full the possibilities of the organised civil society structures to express a consensus-based position on important strategic issues of the economic and social development and on acts of the Legislature and the Executive prior to their approval.

Along with that the civil society structures can impartially analyse and express their opinions and positions on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy objectives in the national strategies, programmes and plans as well as define important guidelines for streamlining the latter.

2. As per your experience, what are the main requirements that should be met in order to ensure effective participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations in the new Europe 2020 Strategy?

There should be ensured active participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations in the discussion on the elaboration of the milestones of the new Europe 2020 Strategy, especially in respect to defining the national objectives and priorities as well as on defining the national objectives and measures designed to eliminate the obstacles, which restrain sustainable growth at national level.

It is of particular importance that the social partners and the civil society organisations participate in the annual monitoring of the implementation of the main guidelines laid down in the strategy and mostly in the degree of advancement of the national objectives fulfillment.

More detailed preliminary information is needed for the decisions of the Legislature and the Executive concerning the national programmes implementation.

The intensive information exchange regarding the views of the social partners and the civil society organisations in the other Member States will assist their active participation in the discussion aimed at defining the national objectives and priorities.

The strategy should be implemented in partnership with all the national, regional and local authorities, in close cooperation and through mutual exchange of positions and opinions among the Parliament, the social partners and the civil society representatives. This will contribute to the elaboration of realistic national programmes, to their effective implementation and overall communication on the strategy implementation.

3. Do you use any specific instruments to improve your participation in the Lisbon Strategy and can you share the use of these instruments as „good practices“?

The Bulgarian ESC has developed a new, typical Bulgarian form of civil dialogue - open public consultations among the ESC and the institutions of the Legislature and the Executive on strategic economic and social issues. This new form of civil dialogue provides a possibility for direct dialogue, for thorough discussion and sharing the positions of the Legislature and the Executive on the one hand and of the civil society organisations on the other hand.

Public consultations, along with the elaborated opinions and analyses of the Council, reflect the stance of the civil society and are of help to the bodies of the Executive and Legislature in decision-making on important economic and social issues.

4. Would you make any specific proposals for the future as regards the new Europe 2020 Strategy in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations both at European and national levels?

A mandatory condition and a very important precondition to achieve the objectives as set is the Europe 2020 Strategy implementation in partnership with all the national, regional and local authorities, in close cooperation and through mutual exchange of positions and opinions among the Parliament, the social partners and the civil society representatives. This will contribute to the elaboration of realistic national programmes, to their effective implementation and overall communication on the strategy implementation. The broad participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations at European level is a milestone of essential significance for the success of the coordination in policy and it should be guaranteed at all stages.

At this stage it is of particular importance that active participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations in the discussion on the elaboration of the milestones of the new Europe 2020 Strategy is ensured, especially in respect to defining the national objectives and priorities as well as on defining the national objectives and measures designed to eliminate the obstacles, which restrain sustainable growth at national level. In this context more detailed preliminary information is needed for the decisions of the Legislature and the Executive concerning the national programmes implementation.

The active position of the civil society on more significant socio-economic issues in this country, as expressed in the various opinions and analyses, can be used to a greater extent on defining the national objectives and on elaborating the national programmes related to the Europe 2020 Strategy implementation as well as on decision-making on the part of the Legislature and the Executive on their implementation. The consensus-based recommendations and proposals by the ESC Members on important socio-economic

issues will provide the possibility to define certain short-term strategic action within the frames of the long-term strategy.

It is of particular importance that the civil society participates more actively and the regional dimension strengthens. The better strategy implementation requires not only the European institutions to bear their full responsibility, but also first and foremost to be taken into consideration all public interests and to be established closer cooperation among the government and the social partners as well as the civil society at national and regional levels.

The successful implementation of the European priorities and the national objectives requires also the participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations in the annual monitoring of the implementation of the main guidelines laid down in the strategy and mostly in the degree of advancement of the national objectives fulfillment. Along with that the civil society structures can analyse impartially and express their opinions and positions on the implementation of the Strategy objectives in the national programmes and plans as well as define important guidelines for streamlining the latter. Within the frames of the long-term strategy the views of the social partners and the civil society organisations can help in defining what the short-term strategic action shall be.

The active participation of the social partners and the civil society organisations will assist the fulfillment of the requirement for „inclusive growth” - building a cohesive society in which people are empowered to anticipate and manage change, thus to actively participate in society and economy.

5. Would you make any proposals aimed at better coordination for the purposes of decision-making at all levels?

The established fruitful contacts with the bodies of the Executive and the Legislature and the active participation of ESC in the discussion of important socio-economic issues can continue through the following:

- Approaching ESC as regards expression of a position on governmental legislative acts, drafts of national strategies and programmes and as regards the measures for their implementation;
- Public consultations on strategic issues of the economic and social development;

- Regional meetings with representatives of the Executive and civil society organisations to discuss the most important issues for the respective regions.

IRELAND

Questionnaire on the Role of Civil Society and the social partners in the new European strategy EU 2020

Questions

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organisations?

Two significant problems with effective dialogue that emerged from Irish experience of the Lisbon process were: first, the open method of coordination (OMC) in the Lisbon process functioned more as a reporting instrument than as an exercise in planning and second, the OMC was considered secondary to and duplicated the national social partnership process. This second issue led to proposals that the OMC be more closely linked to the domestic social partnership process. However, research on Ireland's experience of the OMC has pointed out that the advantages of this depend on the effectiveness of the domestic social partnership mechanisms. If these are ineffective and insufficiently outcome focussed, then aligning the OMC with them is unlikely to invigorate either process (O'Donnell and Moss, 2005). This points to the crucial importance of the quality of the policy and partnership process.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations in the new EU 2020 Strategy?

OMC and OMC-type processes remain central to the new EU 2020 Strategy. These processes can potentially be of great value in policy learning and problem solving but the experience of the Lisbon process shows that realising this potential is difficult.

NESC's research across a range of policy areas in Ireland points to many areas of underperformance and the potential to benefit from policy learning, systematic performance review and external benchmarking of performance. If Ireland is to make effective use of the OMC processes in the EU 2020 strategy, the Irish public

system needs to become more committed to these disciplines. A stronger orientation in the Irish public system in this direction would facilitate more meaningful participation by all types of participants in the EU 2020 strategy, including the social partners and civil society. A focus on learning can also be a guide to identifying the actors that can most usefully participate in the EU 2020 strategy.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practise?

NESC was not a participant as such in the Lisbon strategy. (The potential role of bodies such as NESC in the EU 2020 strategy is discussed in the reply to question 4 below). However, one of the studies undertaken by NESC, *The Developmental Welfare State*, can be understood as an indirect response to the kinds of questions posed by the OMC process in regard to labour market and social policy. The answers to specific questions posed in the OMC in these areas prompted Irish actors to ask deeper questions about Ireland's economic and social model. In *The Developmental Welfare State* study NESC argued that a high performing economy depends on a high level of participation in employment which in turn is contingent upon effective supporting services such as childcare, income support that encourage entry to the labour market; and high quality employment services to support smooth and frequent transitions between jobs. In *The Developmental Welfare State* report the social partners reached a consensus on the broad strategic direction needed to support a high employment economy that supported social progress.

4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

One possibility is to connect Ireland's participation in EU learning processes with national processes of deliberation. There is a link between the hard questions that the EU employment and social inclusion strategies asked of Ireland on specific issues, such as an 'inclusive labour market' and childcare, and NESC's wider review of Ireland's system in *The Developmental Welfare State*, as discussed in the reply to question 4 above. This led O'Donnell and Moss (2005) to canvass the possibility that—not only in Ireland, but also in other member states—we might widen the range of actors that

participate in the OMC, to include bodies whose task it is to analyse long term economic and social development. While the detailed work on the many fine-grained elements in the EU 2020 Strategy will, properly, remain in the domain of the relevant government department and sectoral actors, thought might be given to mechanisms for wider engagement.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed to better coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

One obstacle to better coordination is that within the public system, career progression is typically based on an individual's contribution to their own department's or agency's objectives. Stronger incentives to contributing to cross-cutting issues could help to promote coordinated approaches. This could include for example giving more weight in promotion decisions to an individual's contribution to the achievement of cross-cutting objectives.

GREECE

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHAIRMEN AND SECRETARIES
GENERAL OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS OF THE EU
MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE**

ANSWERS ON THE QUESTIONS

1. Economic growth and social cohesion of the members states of European Union constituted the big challenge for the second half of 20th century and was the main objective of the Lisbon strategy.

The progress however and the evolution of European economy in a competitive and pioneer economy of knowledge advanced slowly. And the situation becomes worst due to the current economic crisis.

This year “Lisbon Strategy” has been completed and “Europe 2020”, is a new chance for Europe to overcome the crisis. Structural changes and deep implementation of the social partners are the needed ones.

2. The society, the environment and the energy are in the centre of “Europe 2020” that should be not only a technocratic but at the same time a deep political and social process. OKE’s opinion is that European economic growth goes with social cohesion, environmental protection and activation of the european citizens.

The achievement of the objectives of “Europe 2020”, must be completed by the wider and deeper participation of the social partners. The enforcement of the social dialogue should be one the main policies of the European Committee.

3. The Greek economic and Social Committee with the collaboration of all social partners has created the Observatory of Policies for sustainable Growth. In this frame OKE tries to make the opinions of society basic components of the reforming policies.

In one degree, this has been achieved: i) OKE has issued “Opinions” on the reforms that are necessary for the upgrading of the research, for the improvement of the knowledge society, for the modernization of the public

administration, ii) It has also concrete proposals for the confrontation of crisis repercussions in the job market and in the public finances, iii) finally OKE through the Observatory has participated in the planning and in the evaluation of National Reforms Program.

4. "Europe 2020" includes the social dimension as motive force for the growth and the social dialog and the social collaboration as important part of the development process. The social partners really knows that their participation and their attendance is the only ones that can lead to the overcome of the crisis and to a more powerful and competitive Europe. But as the past reveals it is necessary more effort and closer collaboration in national and international level by the social partners so that their role will be strengthen.

SPAIN

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?

The Spanish experience is not one of structural obstacles, since one of the distinctive marks of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy was in fact the setting up of a mechanism of consultation to social partners, by means of the Protocol of consultation, participation and follow up of the implementation of National Reform Programmes, approved in 2006. Thus, the norms or programmes related to the implementation of the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) have been submitted to consultation and participation of the most representative economic and social partners.

The Economic and Social Council of Spain also plays its own role in a double sense, within the framework of its legal competences. On one hand, with regard to the application of norms, it issues opinions and reports about horizontal questions such as education, the sustainable development strategy, employment active policies, and so on. On the other hand, with regard to the evaluation of results, it produces a full analysis in its Annual Report on the Socioeconomic and Employment situation of Spain, that includes a chapter on the Lisbon Strategy and continuous references to it in the different sections.

Notwithstanding these facts, although the social partners have acknowledged their participation in the proposals for the NRPs, they have also considered that their involvement did not reach its full potential, since their suggestions and comments were not fully reflected in the final documents. Therefore, in order to have a really effective consultation, For this reason, governments must show a real engagement not only for opening consultation, but also for taking into account the opinions of those consulted.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?

The social partners have insisted that their participation in the making, implementation and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes should be reinforced. Considering the answer to question 1, the stress should be laid upon more intense consultation, and more coherent attention from governments. Probably, the

greatest value of the Lisbon Strategy was establishing linkages and searching for coherence among the different economic, social and environmental policies. In this sense, and for the sake of efficiency, the same coherence and linkages should be applied to the different modalities of participation of social partners in the new Europe 2020 Strategy. Participation would be more effective if, even if addressed to each different aspect of the Strategy, it started from the fact that those different aspects are related to the Strategy, so that social partners could value the repercussion of each subject in the general objectives of the Strategy.

At the same time, greater coordination should exist between the European Union and the Member states, and in the concrete case of Spain, better coordination between the different Administrations (national, regional, local) and the latter and the social partners.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

The most remarkable practice of consultation at the ESC of Spain is the consideration of European policies as the starting point for analysis norms and for writing the Annual report. It is an achievement that systematically the national socioeconomic affairs studied by the Council are set within the framework of the European Union and the common policies. The European perspective is therefore considered as a crosscutting criterion by the members of the Council when performing their duties.

An outstanding good practice has been the organisation in April 2010 of the Seminar of Economic and Social Councils of the European Union on “The Strategy of growth as of 2010 in a changing Europe”, during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. The Seminar was the occasion to know about and exchange national experiences and different perspectives from 14 European Councils and the European Economic and Social Committee, representatives of the European Commission, Council and experts about the Lisbon Strategy and the (future) Europe 2020. This Seminar was also the kick off of the work model according to the Trium of Presidencies, since it will be followed by two other Seminars in 2010 and 2011 organized by the Central Economic Council and the National Labour Council of Belgium, and the Economic and Social Council of Hungary, simultaneously to the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union.

4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

Please read hereabove answer to point 2, that is applicable to the national level and the European one. Regarding multilevel governance, more coherence is always desirable between subjects of economic and social life, Administrations that elaborate policies at different levels, between Administrations and social partners, and between social partners themselves. The ESC has insisted repeatedly upon the participation of social partners in the design of implementation of Strategies of grow, also at the European level, via the European Economic and Social Committee.

During the Seminar organised by the ESC of Spain about the new Strategy, several points of agreement aroused among the participants, that may be of interest for this questionnaire:

The plurality of European experiences during the decade that covered the Lisbon Strategy is a direct consequence of the very strategy, the open method of coordination, the multiplicity of fora and mechanisms established between governments and economic and social partners, the different socio-political systems and even the various intranational decision-making levels.

We should progress towards a shared diagnosis of the social, economic and employment situation, identifying common interests rather than more or less defined ideals.

An essential factor for success of Europe 2020 will be ownership of the European discourse by its citizens at all levels, making them share its objectives and main action lines. In particular, ownership will be a key for getting the objectives related to innovation or training, and the array of systems and actions that connect them with economic world. Conversely, the new Strategy 2020 must guarantee the participation of those involved in it, especially the social partners, in due times and places, thus saving the very legitimacy of social dialogue, in its different modalities, institutionalized or not, national or European.

The Economic and Social Councils, within the framework of their national competences, must play their role as institutions of consultation and participation with regard to the strategies of growth. This does not put aside the other fora of dialogue, at

the national or European levels, in which take part the same organisations that are members of the Councils.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed better to coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

At the Seminar in Madrid, it was underlined that it could be understood, from the variety of experiences of the Councils, that the multilevel governance of the open method of coordination is one of the most distinctive trends of the European strategies of growth and employment, and most important for its real effectiveness. At the same time, the complexity of cases comes from the fact that the implementation of the strategy requires the intervention of a great diversity of actors, of the public sphere and significantly of the social partners, which also takes place in a great number of territorial levels, from the maximum decision-taking levels at the European institutions to the final implementation at local level.

It is possible to suggest the need of better links or interactions between the different levels of decision and implementation, following an evaluation of the effectiveness of the open method of coordination, the mechanisms of dialogue or even the implementation of subsidiarity.

Member states should have a real engagement with Europe 2020, assuming that the economic challenges ahead require a European, coordinated action, going over individual reactions. Accordingly, the European Union should set realistic objectives, have the adequate tools, the necessary means and a will that can prove its credibility.

Europe 2020 has, among others, the comparative advantage to Lisbon of establishing a small number of objectives; the endeavour is to include it in the set of common policies, looking for coherence and complementarity, and assuring the participation of social partners at the different levels of decision making.

FRANCE

SECRÉTARIAT GÉNÉRAL

Paris, le 5 juillet 2010

DIRECTION DES SERVICES LÉGISLATIFS
ET ÉCONOMIQUES

DÉLÉGATION POUR L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

Objet : Réponse au questionnaire sur l'implication de la société civile et des interlocuteurs sociaux dans la nouvelle stratégie Europe 2020 en vue de la rencontre annuelle des Présidents et Secrétaires généraux

Le Conseil Central de l'Économie (CCE) et le Conseil National du Travail (CNT) de Belgique ont adressé aux CES nationaux un questionnaire comprenant cinq questions en vue de la rencontre de septembre 2010 des présidents et secrétaires généraux des CES nationaux.

Ce document constitue la réponse du Conseil économique, social et environnemental de France à ce questionnaire.

Question 1 : « *Après dix années de mise en œuvre de la stratégie de Lisbonne, quels sont selon vous les obstacles structurels à un véritable dialogue avec les interlocuteurs sociaux et les organisations de la société civile ?* »

Si la stratégie de Lisbonne reste peu connue des acteurs de terrain et du grand public, cette méconnaissance s'était atténuée chez les interlocuteurs sociaux et les organisations de la société civile au cours de ses dix ans de mise en œuvre. Un important travail pédagogique d'information et de sensibilisation devrait être accompli pour favoriser la notoriété de la stratégie Europe 2020, de ses objectifs, des instruments qu'elle mobilise (initiatives phare de la Commission, politiques communautaires, Programmes nationaux de réforme) et de son importance pour l'Union et ses États membres. En effet, nombre des acteurs qui étaient parvenus à identifier la stratégie de Lisbonne risquent d'ignorer totalement la nouvelle stratégie, au moins les premières années de sa mise en œuvre. Le contexte actuel de crise, peu favorable à l'Union européenne et à sa popularité dans la population, rend cet impératif d'autant plus important. Les CES nationaux et le Comité économique et social européen pourraient y apporter leur concours.

Un dialogue s'est progressivement instauré, en France, en préparation des sommets de printemps successifs : ainsi, en France, le Conseil économique, social et environnemental, les partenaires sociaux, via le Comité du dialogue social pour les questions européennes et internationales, ainsi que divers conseils spécialisés, sont consultés chaque année par le gouvernement sur le projet de PNR ou son rapport de suivi, ce qui a constitué un progrès important. Les délais de consultation restent toutefois souvent relativement courts. La mise en œuvre du PNR supposera par ailleurs un suivi et une évaluation, pour mesurer et analyser les effets des mesures adoptées et le degré de réalisation des objectifs poursuivis. Le Conseil économique, social et environnemental pourrait être associé à ce suivi dans les différents domaines couverts par le PNR¹.

¹ Source : *Premières observations du CESE de France sur le Projet de PNR 2008-2010*, p. 2.

Question 2 : *« Selon votre expérience, quelles exigences essentielles doivent être remplies afin de garantir la participation effective des interlocuteurs sociaux et des organisations de la société civile à la nouvelle stratégie UE 2020 ? »*

La possibilité de contribuer, en amont, au projet de PNR avant son élaboration doit être offerte aux interlocuteurs sociaux et aux organisations de la société civile. Il est par ailleurs indispensable qu'ils soient consultés sur le projet de PNR une fois celui-ci élaboré par le gouvernement, avant sa finalisation, et qu'un temps suffisant soit laissée à cette consultation.

A cet égard, il aurait été souhaitable que la date à laquelle le PNR devra être adressé à la Commission européenne soit précisée dès le Conseil européen, la mention « à l'automne 2010 » couvrant une période qui s'étend du 20 septembre au 20 décembre. Par ailleurs, la stratégie Europe 2020 n'ayant été finalisée et ses grands objectifs fixés que lors du Conseil européen du 17 juin 2010, il serait souhaitable que la préparation des PNR puisse se poursuivre jusqu'à la fin de l'automne 2010, afin de laisser le temps nécessaire à la préparation du document et à la consultation par le gouvernement des interlocuteurs sociaux et des organisations de la société civile.

Question 3 : *« Avez-vous mis en œuvre des outils spécifiques pour améliorer votre participation à la stratégie de Lisbonne et, dans l'affirmative, ces outils peuvent-ils être partagés en tant que bonnes pratiques ? »*

Le gouvernement français avait confié, en décembre 2005, une saisine pluriannuelle sur le suivi des différents axes du PNR 2005-2008 au CESE de France. Celui-ci a lancé pour y répondre une vingtaine de travaux, avis et études dont l'adoption est intervenue au cours des trois années suivantes.

Le CESE de France a par ailleurs élaboré, avant la préparation du PNR 2008-2010, une contribution appelant l'attention du gouvernement français sur les propositions récentes formulées par notre assemblée dans les différents champs du PNR. La même démarche a été lancée, en lien avec le Secrétariat général des affaires européennes (SGAE), pour le futur PNR 2010-2014. Le CESE de France a ensuite été consulté par le gouvernement sur le projet de PNR 2008-2010 et sur le projet de rapport de suivi 2009 du PNR 2008-2010.

De même, tous les deux ans, le CESE de France effectue un suivi de l'évolution de la situation de la France au regard des indicateurs de la stratégie de Lisbonne. Une nouvelle édition de ce travail devrait être élaborée en vue du Sommet de printemps 2011. Elle devrait comprendre, à destination des organisations de la société civile française et des citoyens, une présentation des grands objectifs et des indicateurs de la stratégie Europe 2020.

Question 4 : *« Auriez-vous des propositions spécifiques à formuler pour renforcer le rôle et la participation effective des partenaires sociaux et des organisations de la société civile, tant au niveau européen qu'au niveau national, dans la nouvelle stratégie Europe 2020 ? »*

Pour améliorer leur implication, il importera de laisser plus de temps à la consultation, comme cela a été le cas en France pour le rapport de suivi 2009 du PNR. Un débat en assemblée plénière du Parlement national pourrait également y contribuer². Comme cela a été mentionné en réponse à la question 1, la mise en œuvre du PNR supposera par ailleurs un suivi et une évaluation, pour mesurer et analyser les effets des mesures adoptées et le degré de

² Contribution du CESE de France à la consultation publique sur la future stratégie UE 2020, p. 14.

réalisation des objectifs poursuivis. Le Conseil économique, social et environnemental pourrait être associé à ce suivi dans les différents domaines couverts par le PNR.

Il serait aussi souhaitable que les rapports de suivi successifs des PNR mentionne, outre les mesures gouvernementales, les initiatives importantes d'acteurs issus de la société civile, partenaires sociaux, entreprises, organismes consulaires, associations de consommateurs, organismes à gestion paritaire ou acteurs de l'économie sociale, mais aussi collectivités territoriales, ayant concouru à la réalisation des objectifs d'Europe 2020, afin que le PNR soit véritablement un programme national, et non seulement gouvernemental, de réforme. En France, un effort en ce sens avait été amorcé dans le PNR 2008-2010. Il mériterait d'être poursuivi et amplifié³.

Pour mieux impliquer le niveau régional, il pourrait être demandé aux instances consultatives placées auprès des collectivités régionales telles que, en France, les Conseils économiques et sociaux régionaux, de préparer une contribution dans les domaines de compétences régionales entrant dans le champ de la stratégie Europe 2020. Ces contributions seraient adressées au gouvernement national, qui pourrait les faire figurer en annexe au projet de PNR, comme il le fait notamment déjà pour la contribution du CESE de France. L'option proposée dans la consultation publique de la Commission européenne sur la future stratégie UE 2020 d'une implication dans la stratégie de toutes les régions de l'UE paraît à cet égard positive au CESE de France⁴.

Question 5 : « Auriez-vous des suggestions afin d'améliorer la coordination du processus décisionnel politique à tous les niveaux ? »

Il importe pour la réussite de la stratégie Europe 2020 d'améliorer la coordination de cette stratégie avec l'ensemble des autres politiques conduites par l'Union. Ainsi, la politique commerciale extérieure de l'Union devant être considérée comme l'une des dimensions d'Europe 2020, l'UE doit agir sans faiblesse à l'OMC pour conduire une politique offensive conjuguant d'un côté ouverture et concurrence équitable, de l'autre protection énergique de ses intérêts par une défense commerciale efficace et par la protection de son système de normes. La poursuite de l'approfondissement du marché intérieur en est une autre dimension.

Il importerait également de favoriser une cohérence et une coordination accrue de la stratégie UE 2020, processus à dix ans, avec la stratégie nationale et européenne de développement durable, dont l'échéance est plus lointaine. Cet impératif devrait être pris en compte lorsque sera réexaminé la stratégie européenne de développement durable, même si les DG chargées de la conduite de ces deux politiques ne sont pas les mêmes au niveau européen, de même que les ministères chefs de file diffèrent en France⁵.

³ Premières observations du CESE de France sur le Projet de PNR 2008-2010, p. 3.

⁴ Contribution du CESE de France à la consultation publique UE 2020, p. 14.

⁵ Contribution du CESE de France à la consultation publique UE 2020, p. 15.

ITALY

ANSWER TO QUESTION 1.

Past experience has shown a lack of continuity in the involvement and participation of social partners in the Lisbon Strategy with reference to both the preparation-drafting of NRPs and the checking of results.

This limit, CNEL believes, appears to derive not so much from structural obstacles as from a system of non-formal procedures that end up going against legal provisions in place on the subject of the “participation of social partners and productive categories”.

CNEL believes that it is necessary to fully implement law provisions, in particular sub-section 2 of art. 7 of Law 11/2005, which states:

“In order to ensure the utmost involvement of social partners and productive categories, the Prime Minister or the Minister for Community policies shall organise, in collaboration with CNEL, ad hoc study sessions and invite thereto national associations of Municipalities, Provinces and Mountain Communities and all other interested parties”.

To this end, it is necessary to establish certain procedures to implement what appears to be a veritable right for social partners and civil society organisations to participate in the decision-making process for matters regarding the European Union.

In this sense the CNEL recommendation contained in the Observations and Proposals draft document on the new post-2010 Lisbon Strategy of 27 January 2010 appears to be very appropriate, calling on “national coordinators of the Lisbon Strategy (now the Europe 2020 Strategy) – for Italy the Minister for Community policies – to systematically collaborate with all parties concerned during the drawing up, rollout and evaluation of national reform programmes”.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 2.

The Italian government is preparing to make changes to “General rules on Italy’s participation in the EU regulatory process...”.

These changes partly serve to implement in national legislation the institutional changes introduced on 1 December 2009 with the new Lisbon Treaty.

This could be an opportunity for the Government to take up the need, felt by all, for a broader and more effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations in processes followed to draw up guidelines and present Italian proposals to the European Union.

CNEL, which has been assigned relative roles, powers and functions by Law 936 and Law 11/2005, could fulfil its institutional role as a representative of social partners and organised civil society more effectively, as well as remaining a

key advisor to the Government, Parliament, Regions and local authorities.

It would be sufficient to intervene by issuing new regulations or (as already happens in other areas) through inter-institutional agreements.

For its part, CNEL should structure its consultancy activity in a way that is even more oriented to the objective it intends to pursue with reference to the Europe 2020 Strategy, ensuring a more effective participation of social partners in the new Europe 2020 Strategy.

Firstly, CNEL should steer more directly the work it is already performing through its various Committees, on the issues of infrastructures, energy, research and innovation, social and territorial cohesion policies, employment, poverty, etc. towards the Europe 2020 strategy.

The aim should be to use the tools CNEL is currently working with – studies and researches, observations and proposals documents – in a more direct and explicit manner (dedicated tools) to further the EU's main goals.

Secondly, CNEL should involve the representatives of social partners and civil society organisations in the preparatory process on a continuous basis so as to be able to present results, evaluations and proposals that are supported not only by verified knowledge but also and above all by a large consensus of the actors involved in the process.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 3

The specific tools that CNEL has introduced to improve participation in the Lisbon Strategy may be broken down into the following 4 areas:

- a) studies and researches, through which policies and relative results are analysed. These have focused on many topics and sectors, for example: child-related services, the employment of women and reconciliation policies, the social economy sector, energy, infrastructures, the labour market (employment relations), sustainable development.
- b) involvement in the integrated report drafted by the EESC, obviously for the section concerning Italy.
- c) initiatives organised jointly by the Ministry for Community policies and CNEL which, despite the lack of continuity already mentioned, are to be considered as institutional opportunities for involving social partners, and which, again as already mentioned, need to be improved.
- d) Observations and Proposals documents regarding a number of topics defined by CNEL, examples of which are listed below: Observations and Proposals document on “Education and training” (31 March 2005); Observations and Proposals document on “Guidelines for a national energy policy” (28 March 2005); Observations and Proposals document on

“Research, innovation and technology transfer” (17 April 2007); Observations and Proposals document on “European-wide energy supply problems” (26 February 2009); Observations and Proposals document on “Participation and consensus for the construction of infrastructures and networks (26 March 2009); Observations and Proposals document on “The new post-2010 Lisbon Strategy” (27 January 2010). Observations and Proposals documents, dedicated to the issues of the Europe 2020 Strategy, may be considered as a “good practice”.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 4.

In order to heighten the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations, at both a national and European level in the new Europe 2020 Strategy, CNEL makes the following three suggestions, to be used in combination:

- a. intensify the direct consultation of national ESCs on the part of the European Commission, institutionalising this process and organising, on a yearly basis, a meeting between the ESC, social partners and the civil society organisations;
- b. arrange synchronised events, under the coordination of the EESC, for instance a “week dedicated to the Europe 2020 Strategy”.

The idea is to stage, at the same time in all 27 EU States, organised by national ESCs, consultation initiatives and debates attended by the Government and representatives of Regions and local Autonomies.

These events will serve to acquire the contributions and proposals of social partners and civil society organisations, check results obtained and highlight criticalities and good practices.

- c. enhance the system of the “Integrated report” to the European Council, structuring it in such a way as to be of use for activities requested of national ESCs and ensure it receives the utmost attention from European institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament, Committee of Regions) and from the organisations of social partners and civil society, at both a European and national level.

The EESC should organise a special event in Brussels dedicated to the official presentation of the integrated report.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

The Lisbon Strategy previously and the Europe 2020 Strategy now require the involvement of a host of institutional actors in the implementation of policies and pursuance of objectives. In Italy there are a number of tiers of responsibility: at a national level, Government and Parliament, but also Regions,

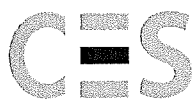
Provinces, Municipalities, with their respective governments and assemblies.

The Government should coordinate the various levels of institutional responsibility through existing instruments or with others that may be required.

CNEL could help with the gathering of information on results achieved vis-à-vis NRPs and the identification of good practices.

Each stage of the Strategy should conclude with a Conference (general progress) organised by the Government and on its behalf by the Minister for Community policies, to be attended by social groups and the most important civil society organisations together with the organisations of Regions, Provinces, Municipalities in order to look at successes and shortcomings and put forward suggestions to improve the strategy and achieve its objectives.

LUXEMBOURG



CONSEIL ECONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL

**Réunion annuelle des Présidents et Secrétaires Généraux des Conseils
économiques et sociaux nationaux et du Comité économique et social
européen
16 septembre 2010 à Bruxelles**

Position du Luxembourg

**au questionnaire sur l'implication de la société civile et des interlocuteurs
sociaux dans la stratégie européenne UE-2020**

Questions

1. Après dix années de mise en oeuvre de la stratégie de Lisbonne, quels sont selon vous les obstacles structurels à un véritable dialogue avec les interlocuteurs sociaux et les organisations de la société civile ?

La stratégie de Lisbonne a présenté un plan ambitieux de transformation du projet de l'Union européenne (UE). D'un côté, elle visait à lancer un modèle socio-économique renouvelé. D'un autre côté, elle promouvait un nouveau mode de gouvernance, la Méthode ouverte de coordination (MOC) – pour ouvrir l'agenda social de l'UE à des sujets comme la politique sociale qui relèvent encore de la compétence nationale. D'un point de vue général, elle devait renforcer la capacité de l'UE à affronter des défis économico-sociaux et institutionnels montants et à accroître son efficacité et sa légitimité.

Dans ce contexte, le terme de participation était l'un des mots clés proposés pour renforcer la gouvernance européenne. En cohésion avec le livre blanc sur la "Gouvernance européenne" de 2000, elle était attendue comme l'un des principes majeurs de bonne gouvernance. En conséquence, la participation devait aider à assurer le lien entre l'UE et ses citoyens, à faciliter une approche moins "du haut vers le bas" et à rendre l'action politique plus incluyente et plus responsable.

Avec la Stratégie européenne pour l'emploi (SEE) – qui touche un grand nombre de réformes difficiles relatives à l'emploi et à la protection sociale et vise à rendre les marchés du travail européens plus compétitifs – les partenaires sociaux de niveau européen sont sollicités à faire entendre leurs opinions mais sans qu'ils disposent d'un rôle dans le développement autonome d'une politique.

L'impact sur les politiques nationales est en général relativement faible, puisqu'il s'agit d'un instrument de politique "doux". Cela va d'un effet très limité dans des pays où la politique d'emploi est protégée nationalement et à haute sensibilité, à un effet plus considérable dans des pays où la politique d'emploi est moins développée et où la réceptivité institutionnelle est plus ouverte.

Par ailleurs, les processus de MOC tant soit peu intégrés dans la stratégie de Lisbonne diffèrent largement par leurs buts, leur fonctionnement et leurs bases légales. Suivant les conclusions du Conseil européen de Lisbonne de 2000, elle consiste en une série de démarches interdépendantes, allant du diagnostic commun d'un problème, ou d'un intérêt commun à le résoudre via la définition de lignes directrices communes non contraignantes, à l'identification de bonnes pratiques et d'indicateurs à fin de référencement (benchmarking), ou à la préparation de rapports nationaux, et finalement à leur évaluation périodique.

En d'autres termes, il s'agit d'une forme de coordination décentralisée pour accomplir des progrès dans des domaines politiquement sensibles où les occasions de régulation sont limitées.

D'autre part, la participation à travers de nouveaux modes de gouvernance comporte une ambiguïté fondamentale. Le nouveau processus de coordination de l'UE intègre une conception à la fois verticale et horizontale de la subsidiarité, mais la logique de participation (des partenaires sociaux et de la société civile) demeure spécifique.

La méthode ouverte de coordination, en tant qu'instrument de coordination politique non contraignant, est appliquée aux divers domaines de la politique sociale. Elle vise à accroître la coordination de l'UE par des règles non contraignantes mais tout en retenant quelques objectifs clés communs et demande aux partenaires sociaux et aux organisations non gouvernementales d'être parties au processus de renforcement des flux d'information, d'identification des bonnes pratiques et de vérification de la mise en oeuvre effective des décisions politiques. Les partenaires sociaux ont ainsi le droit de faire valoir leurs vues sur les politiques de réformes proposées à travers la MOC, mais leur participation n'est ni obligatoire ni centrale.

2. Selon votre expérience, quelles exigences essentielles doivent être remplies afin de garantir la participation effective des interlocuteurs sociaux et des organisations de la société civile à la nouvelle stratégie UE-2020 ?

– Dans son avis du 3 octobre 2007 sur les lignes directrices intégrées pour la croissance et l'emploi (2005-2008), le CES avait retenu que:

" Au niveau national, il importera que, comme par le passé, le plan national pour l'innovation et le plein emploi qui découle des LDI arrêtées à Bruxelles résulte d'une délibération entre les instances parlementaires, les partenaires sociaux et les citoyens, afin de permettre son approbation et son appropriation par tous les acteurs."

Le CES y avait notamment suggéré qu'un débat préalable à la finalisation du programme d'action national devra être initié en associant les pouvoirs publics et les plates-formes du dialogue social et civil. Le programme définitif devra être établi par le Conseil de Gouvernement en concertation avec les partenaires sociaux, avant d'être soumis à l'approbation de la Chambre des Députés.

L'ouverture d'un dialogue plurilatéral comme forme de gouvernance et d'une plus grande implication des parlements nationaux, des partenaires sociaux et de la société civile dans le but de permettre l'approbation et l'appropriation des enjeux par tous les acteurs, est le gage d'une plus grande transversalité qui est impérative pour assurer la réussite des défis lisboètes.

Le CES souligne que la MOC a permis de sensibiliser les opinions politiques à la problématique de l'emploi et de l'inclusion sociale tant au niveau national

qu'eupéen, processus que d'aucuns ont dénommé "*harmonisation cognitive*" autour d'une vision politique commune.

De manière générale, le CES pense que l'un des mérites de "*Lisbonne*", articulé en partie au travers de la MOC (identification d'objectifs, mise en place d'un appareil statistique commun, étalonnage des performances et d'échange des meilleures pratiques), réside dans le fait qu'elle favorise la coopération politique entre les Etats membres dans des matières qui sont pourtant, au moins partiellement, nationales.

La MOC se trouve donc au coeur de la stratégie de Lisbonne. A mi-chemin entre une approche supranationale et intergouvernementale, cette forme de gouvernance par la persuasion vise clairement la convergence, et par là indubitablement une certaine forme de communautarisation, de politiques spécifiquement nationales sans néanmoins disposer d'une force contraignante à l'image d'autres orientations économiques.

Le CES pense que l'aspect "*évaluation par les pairs*" (où les Etats membres sont évalués par les autres Etats membres sous la surveillance de la Commission) caractéristique de la surveillance multilatérale garde toute sa valeur et doit rester présent, et que le processus d'apprentissage réciproque via la coopération et la coordination doit être renforcé.

3. Avez-vous mis en oeuvre des outils spécifiques pour améliorer votre participation à la stratégie de Lisbonne et, dans l'affirmative, ces outils peuvent-ils être partagés en tant que bonnes pratiques ?

L'article 2, alinéa 4 de la loi organique du CES dispose que:

" Dans le cadre de la coordination des politiques économiques des Etats membres de l'Union européenne, le conseil accompagne par ses avis les différents stades de l'élaboration, par le Conseil de l'Union européenne, des grandes orientations de politiques économiques".

Le recentrage des GOPE sur les objectifs de Lisbonne et leur intégration, ensemble avec les lignes directrices de l'emploi (LDE), dans les lignes directrices intégrées pour la croissance et l'emploi (LDI), a impliqué que le CES accompagne, au plan national par ses avis, les nouvelles lignes directrices intégrées, ce qu'il a fait pour la première fois par son avis du 15 mai 2005 sur les LDI.

Suite à son avis du 3 octobre 2007 sur les lignes directrices intégrées pour la croissance et l'emploi (2005-2008), deux auditions publiques ont eu lieu à la Chambre des Députés en 2008 avec les représentants de la société civile organisée. Le CES a participé aux débats visant à dresser un bilan du 1^{er} cycle écoulé et à ébaucher le prochain Programme national de réforme pour la croissance et l'emploi (PNR) du Luxembourg.

– Lors de l'Assemblée plénière du 30 avril 2008, le CES avait estimé que de par ses missions et sa composition, il devrait également être associé plus étroitement à l'élaboration du programme national de réforme qui sera finalisé en automne 2008.

En tant qu'enceinte permanente de concertation et de recherche de consensus entre les partenaires sociaux, le CES pourrait ainsi contribuer utilement à la prise de mesures qui concilieraient compétitivité, environnement et cohésion sociale.

Le CES s'était déclaré prêt à remettre son avis en temps utile, afin de communiquer les vues des partenaires sociaux pour la mise en place du 2^e cycle de la stratégie de Lisbonne.

Cette demande fut adressée en date du 7 mai 2008 à M. Jean-Claude Juncker, Premier Ministre, Ministre d'Etat. Par lettre du 3 juillet 2008, le CES a été saisi d'une contribution à l'élaboration du programme national dans le cadre du nouveau cycle triennal de la stratégie de Lisbonne (2008-2010).

- D'autre part, la loi organique du CES dispose que le Secrétaire général assume également le Secrétariat de la délégation luxembourgeoise du Comité économique et social européen. Sur invitation de cette dernière, les délégations nationales des trois institutions de l'UE (Parlement, Comité des Régions et Comité économique et social européens) se sont réunies au siège du CES pour débattre de leur future collaboration, afin de mieux pouvoir soutenir et servir les intérêts du Luxembourg.

Les implications de la mise en œuvre du traité de Lisbonne nécessitent une coordination accrue entre tous les acteurs politiques et socioprofessionnels engagés dans la formation du processus décisionnel européen, tant au niveau national qu'au niveau des délégations luxembourgeoises de ces trois institutions communautaires.

Les différentes délégations se sont accordées sur :

- la mise en place d'une stratégie pour identifier, au stade le plus précoce possible, les dossiers porteurs d'enjeux pour le Luxembourg pour défendre au mieux nos intérêts dans le cadre de compromis qui inévitablement caractérisent une communauté;
- et
- l'élaboration de fiches synthétiques comprenant un résumé des dossiers, l'impact des décisions au niveau national, la position du Gouvernement, de même que les éléments et les limites des compromis à concéder.

Les relevés des fiches d'impact seront dorénavant communiqués aux trois délégations par la Direction des Relations économiques internationales et elles

peuvent contacter, en cas de besoin, les Ministères concernés. De même, la Représentation permanente auprès de l'UE se tient à disposition des délégations pour toute demande. Ces dispositions permettent une meilleure circulation de l'information et donc une implication plus directe et plus rapide des partenaires sociaux.

4. Auriez-vous des propositions spécifiques à formuler pour renforcer le rôle et la participation effective des partenaires sociaux et des organisations de la société civile, tant au niveau européen qu'au niveau national, dans la nouvelle stratégie UE-2020 ?

Les résultats en termes de participation des partenaires sociaux sont loin de répondre au niveau d'attente des acteurs institutionnels de l'UE. Leur influence réelle sur les réformes nationales a été plutôt faible. La Commission a cependant encouragé la participation des partenaires sociaux européens et nationaux dès le début et le Conseil a beaucoup insisté sur leur implication. Les conclusions du Conseil de 1997, qui ont servi à lancer la SEE, affirment que les partenaires sociaux à tous les niveaux seront impliqués à toutes les phases de cette approche et apporteront leur contribution à la mise en oeuvre des "lignes directrices".

L'implication des partenaires sociaux dans la SEE dispose d'une base légale. Selon l'article 130, "dans l'accomplissement de ses mandats, le comité devra consulter les parties employeurs et salariés". Cependant, l'article 128.3 qui demande aux Etats membres de fournir au Conseil et à la Commission un rapport annuel ne fait pas référence au rôle des partenaires sociaux dans la préparation des PAN.

Le principal effet a donc été instrumental, ce qui signifie d'abord qu'elle a permis d'harmoniser la production d'information dans les Etats membres pour pouvoir comparer leurs politiques de façon précise (dans les rapports et statistiques) ; ensuite, elle a permis d'émettre des recommandations aux divers Etats membres pour mettre en évidence leurs problèmes principaux de politique de l'emploi et du marché du travail.

La MOC étant étendue à beaucoup de politiques sociales différentes (inclusion sociale, retraites, santé, soins de longue durée...), le CES pense qu'il faut élargir l'accès, jusque-là limité, des partenaires sociaux au processus dans les domaines clés de la protection sociale. Une plus grande coordination dans ces domaines est en effet compatible avec la subsidiarité et semble de plus en plus capable de pouvoir dépasser les blocages nationaux, de même que les politiques de l'UE ont réussi à pousser les systèmes nationaux dans une certaine direction (commune) ce qui a comme conséquence de raccourcir lentement la distance politique entre les exigences européennes et les traits spécifiques des systèmes nationaux.

5. Auriez-vous des suggestions afin d'améliorer la coordination du processus décisionnel politique à tous les niveaux ?

Le CES a été associé à l'élaboration du programme national dans le cadre du nouveau cycle triennal de la stratégie de Lisbonne (2008-2010).

Dans son avis afférent du 1^{er} octobre 2008, le CES avait plaidé pour une approche de coordination et de cohérence de l'ensemble des politiques poursuivies en matière de stratégie de Lisbonne et de développement durable.

Selon le CES, pour éviter les doublons et les flottements des compétences, il faut construire la stratégie du développement durable comme un prolongement naturel de long terme de la stratégie de Lisbonne.

Jusqu'à présent, la Stratégie de Lisbonne a misé sur l'implication des acteurs nationaux et sur l'effet d'émulation, plutôt que sur une coordination au niveau européen. Cette approche prudente et pragmatique est justifiée par la nature avant tout politique des réformes à mener et par la nécessaire prise en compte de l'équilibre institutionnel et social propre à chaque Etat membre.

Le CES regrette que la coordination des plans de relance soit encore lente et lacunaire, particulièrement dans la situation actuelle de sortie de crise économique difficile. En effet, des plans de relance davantage synchronisés permettraient de soutenir plus efficacement la croissance dans les Etats membres dans un mouvement d'ensemble.

Un aspect qui pose problème pour une mise en oeuvre adéquate de la stratégie de Lisbonne provient du fait que les domaines politiques auxquels elle s'applique ne sont pas tous similaires. Le calendrier est le même alors que le type d'externalités qu'ils présentent et le temps nécessaire à la fourniture de résultats tangibles par les réformes peuvent différer de manière significative.

L'application d'une méthode similaire à l'ensemble des domaines politiques risque de déboucher sur des stratégies nationales incohérentes : certains Etats membres auront tendance à se focaliser davantage sur des objectifs qu'ils sont susceptibles d'atteindre à court terme plutôt que d'engager de sérieuses réformes dans d'autres secteurs.

L'opportunité d'un accompagnement macroéconomique plus marqué au plan européen, soulève inévitablement la question de la coordination des politiques menées par les Etats membres, notamment dans la zone euro, et donc la question de la gouvernance de Lisbonne.

HUNGARY

Questionnaire - HU

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?
 - (a) Civil society organisations (as well as citizens) are very far from the solemn objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Even the most concrete objectives, such as the competitiveness of the economy, are intangible and have to be translated for the everyday people. If cohesion or sustainability comes into the picture, the task of understanding gets even more complicated.
 - (b) The objectives incorporated into a Union-wide strategy must, by definition, be abstract, since "one size" has to "fit all" Member States. This explains why the strategy cannot be very close to the citizen and their organisations.
 - (c) The elaboration of any strategy of the European Union has to combine the 'top-down' and the 'bottom-up' approaches. Nevertheless, because of the sheer size of the Union, the bottom-up method cannot start at the grass-root level. It is a matter-of-fact statement which is not intended to be a critique of the Union.
 - (d) Member State governments not necessarily have the expertise in this kind of partnership procedure.
2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?
 - (a) It is (better to say: would have been) of pivotal importance that social partners and civil society organisations are consulted before the publication of any blueprint of the new strategy. When the Europe2020 was launched in late 2009 a mere couple of weeks were foreseen for the partnership procedure (with Christmas in the middle of the period).
 - (b) A website dedicated for the partnership exercise is an indispensable method. However, if one wants to achieve genuine reactions, a series of "live" partnership fora is also an absolute necessity—although its price is high in time as well as money.
3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

Since Hungary was not member of the EU at the time of adoption of the Lisbon Strategy, the Hungarian government could only consult the ESC on the implementation of the National Reform Programme. We organised several workshops on the blueprint of the progress report. Although participation in these workshops was, of course, limited, we had some very thorough and instructive discussion. Representatives of various interests could confront their opinions and evaluations with Government officials—which was, in some cases, a really interesting exercise.
4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

If politicians both at national and European levels want to follow the rules of partnership then more time and energy have to be invested in the procedure. It is more a merit than a mistake if the periods covered by the two consecutive strategies do not follow each other uninterruptedly. One has to learn from the results and failures of the

Lisbon Strategy and have the lessons understood and accepted by social partners and civil society organisations.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed better to coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

In the middle (?) of an economic crisis the task to coordinate policy-making at European level is more than challenging—especially if you involve social partners and civil society organisations: many of them will probably tend to offer protectionist solutions. However, in time of difficulties it is perhaps easier to persuade social partners to accept setbacks in the living standards on the one hand and in profits on the other (cf. the bank taxes in many European countries). They can be a sacrifice indispensable to uphold the much respected and advertised European social model.

It would be important to implement the recommendation of the Member States' information ministers (adopted in September 2005) according to which the modern information technologies should be used in gathering inputs from civil society organisations as well as from the general public on any piece of legislation. Furthermore, as indicated above, true partnership events have to be organised by inviting a reasonable number of stakeholders.

NETHERLANDS

Memo

To Belgian ESCs
From SER Netherlands (Roland Zwiers)
Date 14 juni 2010, Den Haag
Concerns Questions Europa 2020 - social dialogue
for meeting European Network of ESCs, 16 september 2010

Questions

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?

In the past ten years the Dutch social partners have increasingly and constructively been involved in the implementation of the Dutch Lisbon strategy. The same is true for local government and environmental organisations. So in the Netherlands one cannot say that there are structural obstacles for a genuine dialogue with the social partners and other stakeholders.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?

Governments must be open for a genuine dialogue. Stakeholders must be willing to make a contribution to the national EU 2020 strategy. It takes two to tango.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

The Dutch government, the social partners and the SER have used several tools to improve stakeholder participation in the Dutch Lisbon strategy.

Since 2000 the Dutch government has asked the SER for several advisory reports on the design and functioning of the EU Lisbon strategies. The SER has also advised on the new EU 2020 strategy.

Each year there is a separate meeting between the Dutch government and the SER about the implementation of the Dutch and EU Lisbon/ EU-2020 strategies as a preparation for the Dutch position on the EU spring summit. The Dutch government has similar preparatory meetings with other stakeholders.

Each year the Dutch government consults social partners and other stakeholders on the contents of (draft versions of) the national reform programme. Commenting on draft versions (instead of the final version) has proved very useful, since in this way there is time for a genuine dialogue. Of course, the government is responsible for the final version of the NRP.

Each year the Dutch social partners produce an annex to the Dutch NRP. In this annex it is pointed out what contributions the social partners have made to the Dutch Lisbon strategy at industrial or national level. This annex also pays attention to relevant SER advisory reports.

Dutch local governments have announced that they will also produce their own annex to the NRP. Previous NRP's already contained best practices from local governments.

4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

In the Dutch context it has been possible to find ways to gradually improve the involvement of social partners and other stakeholders. To some extent this has been a process of trial and error. Most important, however, has been the genuine interest of the Dutch government in the opinions and contributions of social partners and other stakeholders and as a corollary, the willingness of social partners and other stakeholders to contribute to the Dutch Lisbon strategy.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed better to coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

The SER advisory report mentions two ways for improving policy coordination: a better division of policies between the EU and member states and improvements in the open method of coordination.

A better division of responsibilities to meet the EU 2020 goals

After 2010, Europe's social and economic policy agenda should focus more on improving labour productivity, and that shift in focus must affect the division of responsibilities between the EU and the Member States. The Member States have not made enough progress in such areas as R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship working with the open method of coordination. The EU could make great progress in these areas, relatively speaking, by completing the internal market and creating a European Research Area. Its budget and instruments would need to be realigned with these efforts.

Improve the open method of coordination

Specifically, the Social and Economic Council recommends the following:

- Separate monitoring and policy learning. It is difficult to learn while keeping an eye on others. To promote policy learning, more emphasis should be placed on comparative research, evaluations and policy experiments.
- Give the National Reform Programmes more of a leading role. The Member States should take the common, overall strategy more seriously in their National Reform Programmes. They can do this by aligning their national Lisbon cycles with the terms in office of their national governments.
- Country-specific employment targets. For credibility's sake, it is important for the Member States to set their own employment participation targets, in addition to and derived from the overall European target. These targets could then be converted into specific Government policy statements and programmes, so that the Member States would be accountable not only to their fellow Member States but also to their national legislatures.
- Relevant and persuasive indicators. The number of common objectives should not be too large. Guidelines should correspond closely to these objectives. The targets should be made tangible by applying relevant and persuasive indicators, making it easier to evaluate the Member States on their performance. By publishing the results of the Member States by objective and indicator, the open method of coordination will also gain in effectiveness.
- It is particularly important to set an effective overall objective for the micro-guidelines. The Social and Economic Council recommends identifying an objective for 2020 with respect to labour productivity growth per hour worked. Consideration must, however, be given to the differing situations of the Member States at the start.
- Differentiation of the R&D target. The current R&D target remains important because R&D is a good indicator of future innovativeness. After 2010, however, it would be sensible to differentiate between technologically advanced countries and countries that lag behind in this respect. That would not be the case for public expenditure on R&D, which should amount to at least 1% of GDP within the context of the Lisbon Strategy.
- Improve the obvious connection between the broad social and economic policy guidelines and the social protection and social inclusion guidelines. The aim of public prosperity requires an integrated approach encompassing contractual relationships, labour market measures, training and social protection. Some caution should be exercised in formulating quantifiable targets for social protection at European level, given the many different systems in operation in the Member States.

- Clarify the division of powers and responsibilities between the EU and the Member States in the European social policy agenda.
- Root the environmental, climate and energy problem more firmly in the Lisbon Strategy and to promote the ties between economic and ecological innovation more systematically. The EU's multi-year Environment Action Programme offers an appropriate context for doing so. The new Lisbon Agenda and the next (seventh) Environment Action Programme should be clearly linked. By encouraging eco-efficient innovation, the EU can use its environmental, energy and climate policy to make an important contribution to the productivity agenda.

AUSTRIA

Austria

Questions

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?

On national level, there have been no structural obstacles for a genuine dialogue (of politics) with social partners and in many cases also with civil society organizations (for which the Austrian social partners cannot speak because they are not members of social dialogue). The social partners are by law involved in the decision making process at national level: They have to be consulted and may comment on any piece of legislation on national AND European level. At present there is a discussion with the Parliament about how to include social partners in the new subsidiarity procedures foreseen for the national parliaments in the Lisbon Treaty.

Representing all the major groups of society the Austrian social partners did play a role in shaping the Austrian position on the EU 2020 (Post Lisbon) strategy by producing a common position paper and presenting that to national and European decision makers. These positions were also included in the separate comments of each of the partners addressed at the European Commission.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?

Social partners must be representative. They must be able to reach consensus on a broad portfolio of issues dealt within the EU 2020 strategy. The availability of formal consultation procedures would further the dialogue. They must have a mandate to operate on European level, based on common positions. Positions and comments by social partners on whatever level must be quick, comprehensive, but short, of high quality and addressing all the relevant issues.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

There are no (other) specific tools in place for improving our participation in the Lisbon strategy. Our common position paper did place the Austrian social partners in the centre of political discussion, more cannot be achieved by additional specific tools.

4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

From an Austrian point of view It seems to be useful to increase the number (and quality) of European fora (in all main policy areas) for dialogue. BUT: To have additional fora does not necessarily mean better quality of results.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed better to coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

A comprehensive and TIMELY involvement of the social partners on all levels (national and EU) of coordination is important. Compared to other stake holders, the social partner usually can offer a more expertise on the issues concerned.

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PORTUGAL

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with the social partners and the civil society organizations?

The main drawback of the Lisbon strategy, which limited not only dialogue with social partners but also the achievement of its targets, was a global lack of credibility. Excessive detail, goals and priorities, insufficient political instruments and financial means hampered the engagement from social partners and civil society as they did not perceive clear correspondence between national and European targets.

On the other hand, the Lisbon strategy was backed by a weak governance structure and loose monitoring that did not promote stakeholders' accountability. All of this led to poor political will from Member-States concerning the implementation of the strategy which also undermined the necessary trust conditions for a proper involvement of social partners.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure an effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations in the new EU 2020 strategy?

National economic and social committees should be the link between the national coordinators of the strategy and social partners as well as the driver of the debate. As mentioned in answer 4, those committees are also very well positioned to gather the recommendations from social partners regarding the strategy and take them to the national parliaments.

It is of paramount importance to involve not only social partners and civil society but also the local and regional authorities in the 2020 strategy. However, this will only be achieved if those stakeholders see the strategy as a credible instrument to tackle the utmost social and economic urgency of the moment: the reduction of mass unemployment through economic growth.

The strategy should therefore call for realistic reforms based on robust tools to achieve them and on structures that allow for the participation of all stakeholders from a very early stage. This will contribute to increase the sense of ownership from social partners, civil society, local and regional power as well as their accountability regarding the implementation of the strategy at national level.

The 2020 program should be strong on action and not only on ambition. It should also incorporate a truly accurate mid-term assessment, more frequent public reporting by countries and a reinforced open method of coordination that places the European Commission in the driving seat of the whole strategy with real powers to tightly monitor national reform programmes and enforce compliance of the targets.

The program should include key areas for economic growth namely competitiveness, entrepreneurship and work productivity through a new governance system that coordinates economic and fiscal policies and reform programmes.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

The Portuguese Economic and Social Committee (CES) coordinated an own initiative opinion about the program which was approved in its plenary in May 2005.

The national coordinator for the Strategy of Lisbon debated the program with social partners in several meetings. Some of those meetings were organised by CES and some others were directly managed by the coordinator.

Regarding the EU Strategy 2020, CES has dedicated a plenary session to the presentation of the program and of its implementation in Portugal. At the plenary, social partners broadly participated in the debate of the strategy which was presented by the Secretary of State for Energy and Innovation and national coordinator for the Strategy of Lisbon (the Secretary of State for European Affairs also participated in the presentation).

CES intends to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the new strategy on the basis of an own initiative opinion to be proposed and approved in plenary. Furthermore, CES would like to promote several conferences with the participation of national and international experts aiming at raising national awareness regarding the EU 2020 preferably under the sponsorship of the European Economic and Social Committee.

4. Would you have any specific proposals to put forward in order to strengthen the role and the effective participation of social partners and civil society organizations, both at European and national levels, in the new EU 2020 strategy?

As mentioned in answer 2), national economic and social committees should be the driver of the participation of social partners as well as the link between them and national governments regarding the debate of the EU 2020 strategy.

Their views and recommendations could be gathered by those committees which would then take them to the national parliaments with a view to better adapt the implementation of national programs.

Social partners and civil society organizations have an insight on the realities and needs of the work place and of society that should be made the most of in that process. Therefore, a common effort should be made to increase awareness about the significance of the EU 2020 strategy and the importance of social dialogue in its implementation at national level. The understanding of the strategy 2020 should be democratised and the criteria of proximity in its implementation should be promoted across all stakeholders.

In this context, the proposal of EESC's Lisbon Strategy Observatory, dated January 2010, regarding the sponsorship of debates at national level to inform the general public about the EU 2020 strategy was very valuable and should be taken forward.

At European level, communication initiatives could be pursued to help European social partners understand they face common challenges namely the current economic crisis, unemployment, imbalances in public accounts, increasing globalisation, ageing of societies, income inequalities, poverty and social exclusion and the integration of migrants. These initiatives should aim at raising conscience about the importance of social partners in the anticipation and monitoring of structural change, in the assessment of anti-crisis measures and in contributing for evidence-based decisions from authorities.

Those initiatives could increase the attention of the general public regarding the successes of social dialogue. The impact on the lives of citizens following important agreements at European level such as the "Joint analysis of key challenges facing European labour markets" (2007), the "European works council directive" (2009) and the "Treatment of employees recruited directed by the company and by temporary agency workers" (2008) should be promoted.

It is well known that agreements reached by social partners usually deliver better and more efficient results than traditional regulation. Aiming at true engagement from social partners in the EU 2020 strategy, it is important to provide them with a sense of ownership regarding the program implementation and the possibility of truly influencing policy decisions.

A genuine and early participation of social partners and civil society organizations, based on strong mandates from the sectors they represent, will enforce the legitimacy of the strategy and strengthen their commitment regarding implementation of the necessary measures.

5. Would you have any suggestions designed to better coordinate the policy making process at all levels?

CES in Portugal has always promoted a culture of cooperation amongst social partners based on the assumption that they share common ground and common challenges. As mentioned in answers 2) and 4), the national economic and social committees national should be given the conditions to be the drivers of the debate regarding the strategy.

More broadly, at European level, the trust relationship between social partners can be enhanced and national social partners should be motivated to get representation within their European representatives in the sectors in which that representation is not strong enough yet. Additionally, the structures for social representativeness could be further developed in Member States where those structures are still not fully developed.

ROMANIA

**Rencontre annuelle des Présidents et Secrétaires généraux
des Conseils économiques et sociaux des Etats membres de l'UE et
du Comité économique et social européen**

*Réponses données par le Conseil économique et social de Roumanie
au
Questionnaire sur l'implication de la société civile et des interlocuteurs sociaux dans la
Stratégie européenne UE – 2020*

1. Après dix années de mise en œuvre de la stratégie de Lisbonne, quels sont selon vous les obstacles structurels à un véritable dialogue avec les interlocuteurs sociaux et les organisations de la société civile ?

En Roumanie, la mise en œuvre des objectifs de la stratégie de Lisbonne a été attribuée, du point de vue institutionnel, au Département des Affaires européennes, coordinateur du processus d'élaboration et de mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales par rapport aux politiques communautaires.

Le Gouvernement de Roumanie a initié une série de consultations avec les parties politiques parlementaires, l'Académie roumaine, la BNR, les patronats, les syndicats et la société civile dans le but de l'élaboration collective d'une stratégie post-adhésion de la Roumanie.

Toutefois, un dialogue réel et efficace avec la société civile et les partenaires sociaux n'a pas été réalisé à cause de :

- la persistance d'une administration publique centrale surdimensionnée, bureaucratique et dépourvue d'efficacité ;*
- déficiences existantes dans l'analyse, le développement conceptuel, la planification et l'exécution budgétaire au niveau de l'administration publique ;*
- l'absence des débats périodiques au Parlement sur la réalisation des objectifs économiques et sociaux de réforme ainsi que sur ceux de la stratégie de Lisbonne ;*
- la prépondérance du facteur politique pendant les périodes de campagne pour élections parlementaires et présidentielles.*

Tout cela a eu pour résultat un dialogue social formel qui se trouve dans l'impossibilité de se consolider.

2. Selon votre expérience, quelles exigences essentielles doivent être remplies afin de garantir la participation effective des interlocuteurs sociaux et des organisations de la société civile à la nouvelle stratégie UE-2020 ?

Afin de garantir la participation effective des partenaires sociaux et des organisations de la société civile à la nouvelle stratégie UE-2020, les mesures suivantes semblent nécessaires:

- *la réforme de l'administration publique, l'identification exacte des tâches et responsabilités au but d'éviter les blocages au sommet, l'augmentation de la transparence décisionnelle ;*
- *le nouveau-crée « Groupe de travail a haut niveau » ainsi que « les Groupes de travail sectoriels » coordonnés par le DAE, destinés à aborder de manière unitaire la stratégie UE-2020, doivent être appuyés par le Gouvernement et le Parlement dans leurs démarches.*

3. Avez-vous mis en œuvre des outils spécifiques pour améliorer votre participation à la stratégie de Lisbonne et, dans l'affirmative, ces outils peuvent-ils être partagés en tant que bonnes pratiques ?

.....

4. Auriez-vous des propositions spécifiques à formuler pour renforcer le rôle et la participation effective des partenaires sociaux et des organisations de la société civile, tant au niveau européen qu'au niveau national, dans la nouvelle stratégie ?

Propositions spécifiques au niveau national :

- *Le Gouvernement devrait coopter les CDS (commissions de dialogue social), créées au niveau des ministères, dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des objectifs sectoriels découlant des dispositions de la stratégie UE-2020*
- *Conformément à la Loi, de la structure du CES roumain font partie les trois partenaires sociaux : les syndicats, les patronats et le gouvernement.*

En vue du développement du dialogue social, il serait aussi utile de créer un conseil technique composé des représentants de la société civile (milieu académique, la BNR, institutions de recherche, etc.) qui pourrait avoir une contribution substantielle aux débats sur des thèmes économiques et sociaux des CES, tout comme sur ceux concernant les objectifs de la stratégie UE-2020.

- *Les programmes de mesure portant sur la stratégie UE 2020 élaborés par le Gouvernement de Roumanie devraient être remis au CES roumain pour débats et avis consultatif.*

5. Auriez-vous des suggestions afin d'améliorer la coordination du processus décisionnel politique à tous les niveaux ?

En vue d'établir et accomplir de manière réelle les objectifs nationaux en concordance avec ceux de la stratégie UE 2020, chaque état doit disposer de ressources financières propres.

C'est ici qu'intervient le problème de l'existence des systèmes fiscaux nationaux qui diffèrent au cadre de l'UE, ce qui fait que les budgets nationaux peuvent être plus efficaces ou bien moins efficaces du point de vue de l'accumulation des revenus. Il s'agit là de la déficience majeure qui, au niveau de l'UE, engendre un manque de certitude dans l'accomplissement des objectifs assumés par les divers états.

Nous considérons que la décision de l'UE d'unifier le système fiscal de tous les états composants et d'analyser et adopter la formation du budget de chaque pays au niveau de la C.E. serait une décision politique importante qui conférerait consistance aux politiques financières nationales et augmenterait la confiance dans la stabilité économique tant nationale qu'européenne.

Marin SULIMAN

Secrétaire général

**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

1. Considering the past ten years' implementation of the Lisbon strategy, what do you think are the structural obstacles to a genuine dialogue with social partners and civil society organisations?

As regards the relative failure to achieve the Lisbon goals, the predominant view is that this was, first and foremost, due to the lack of more consistent governance. Most of the Member States have made progress over the last few years, but governance is still weakly organised and lacks teeth. This not only implies strengthening the European Institutions' role in the process, but also better cooperation between Lisbon coordinators and all stakeholders during the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes (NRP). Member State governments should involve more social partners and civil society organisations in the planning and implementation of the Agenda.

Lack of information on the NRPs at all levels as well as insufficient time for consultation are generally seen as the main problems that need to be addressed. These include, for instance, the tight deadline, which has already become the norm, for drawing up the national reform programmes in the summer months as well as the appointment of people responsible for Lisbon who in many EU countries have little affinity with social or civil dialogue. The EESC has clearly stressed the importance of the regular and enhanced involvement and participation of organised civil society from the early stages of the decision-making process of the EU through consultations and coordinated interactions with policy makers.

We need to learn from past mistakes and when looking to the future we must in particular pay more attention to communication which must be improved at all levels. Only by making citizens aware of the benefits of Europe 2020 in their day-to-day life can we succeed in implementing the Agenda.

2. According to your experience, what are the essential requirements which must be met in order to ensure the effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations in the new EU 2020 Strategy?

I have been involved in the Lisbon process since its launch in 2000 and based on that I would say that the EU 2020 Strategy is a project for European society as a whole, enabling it to meet the challenges that are quickly changing a globalised world. Based on past experience it is clear that organised civil society has the capacity to identify bottlenecks and be a vehicle for the shape and implementation of the future strategy.

In order to bring about the essential improvements in governance the EESC encourages:

- **Ongoing dialogue** in the Member States based on the respective consultative procedures and competences of the social partners in the individual Member States. This dialogue should involve national ESCs and potentially also bring in other civil society stakeholders

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(NGOs, social economy organisations, etc.) and representatives of higher education institutions and think tanks.

- **The dissemination of information** - Member State governments should provide more details on the new objectives and more information on how to better involve civil society, and then promote the results of civil and social dialogue held in connection with the EU 2020 Strategy goals. Several social partners and civil society organisations feel that the consultation process must be substantially improved.

3. Did you implement specific tools in order to improve your participation in the Lisbon strategy and could these tools be shared as good practices?

In order to improve the participation of civil society in the Lisbon Strategy, the EESC set up specific tools, all with the same aim: to involve civil society at large. We firmly believe that civil society plays a key role in the preparation, implementation and assessment of the necessary reforms.

The EESC has always had a specific structure to coordinate the work of civil society organisations. In July 2008 we created the Lisbon Strategy Observatory (LSO) to step up stakeholder involvement in the Lisbon process. This was based on the wealth of experience garnered by our previous structures which have been in place for almost a decade.

During the last Lisbon cycle (2008-2010), the LSO has prepared jointly with national ESCs and other partner organisations a detailed "Integrated Report on the implementation and future of the Lisbon Strategy in the post-2010 period" which was presented to the Spring Council 2010. It is the third report of its kind, its successful predecessors having been published in 2006 and 2008. The Integrated Report puts forward an extensive list of proposals regarding policy decisions to be taken and makes important suggestions relating to governance and communication. The first part consists of the EESC opinion on "The post-2010 Lisbon Strategy" which was prepared at the request of the Spanish Presidency of the European Council. It was also sent to the European Commission in reply to their consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy. The second part consists of contributions from the Member States' national ESCs and from similar organisations in those countries which do not have a national ESC.

The EESC believes that stakeholder involvement should be given priority. In order to do this, each Lisbon cycle has been capped by a high-level conference involving all leading stakeholders, civil society organisations and policymakers in order to present the Integrated Report and take stock of the success and shortcomings of the last period.

Here I would like once more to point out that cooperation between the EESC and its network of national ECSs plays a key role in the exchange of best practices and benchmarking, and in providing the opportunity to hold genuine discussions on the implementation process with all civil society actors.

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4. Would you have any specific proposals to strengthen the role and effective participation of social partners and civil society organisations, both at European and national levels, in the new 'EU 2020 Strategy'?

The participation of social and economic stakeholders and wider civil society in the implementation of the new strategy could help to develop more balanced and effective policies. Furthermore, it will considerably raise awareness in society and facilitate social acceptance of new reforms. That is why better ownership of the future strategy requires that issues related to multilevel governance be carefully reviewed. The interdependence between levels of governance is particularly significant. In particular it could be possible to set up:

- Europe 2020 Multilevel Governance Pacts – with a view to guaranteeing regular consultation and exchange of information between different stakeholders at all levels of implementation.

This includes interdependence between Member States in the form of (positive or negative) spill-over effects of national actions, particularly in the Euro-zone, interdependence between different levels of government (EU, Member States, regions, civil society), interdependence between different policies and interdependence at global level. Experiences vary between the Member States and therefore dialogue could be strengthened through a:

- European system for the exchange of good practices – a web-based platform providing the possibility for the exchange of good practices and benchmarking models.

Nevertheless the external dimension of the strategy must be consolidated. We need to keep alive the importance of maintaining the EU's role as a key global player and of strengthening its capacity to shape globalisation. The Europe 2020 Strategy could articulate the EU's contribution to the external dimension of Europe's social development. International benchmarks can be discussed in the network of international ESCs and similar organisations.

We must also keep in mind that the success of Europe 2020 depends to a great extent on the capacity of stakeholders to translate the objectives into concrete actions in the Member States. Organised debates carefully following the situation in each Member State could help to improve communication at grass-root level and to find appropriate tools to deliver the objectives. The communication should be a continual process, evaluated and adapted regularly to reflect the reality of each and every Member State.

5. Would you have any specific proposals designed to better coordinate the policy-making process at all levels?

The challenge of becoming a sustainable social market economy will require increased policy coordination and a stronger partnership between the EU, its Member States and all the stakeholders in the design and delivery of reform policies and their implementation at appropriate levels.

In-depth debates will be needed on how synergies function and how policies can be better coordinated at the level of the European Commission DGs, the Council bodies (EPSCO and ECOFIN) and the various committees involved in the new Strategy.

For this to be realised, civil society at large needs a proper action plan with a concrete roadmap. I look forward to continuing the cooperation with national ESCs with a view to building up even closer cooperation on Europe 2020.
