

# Resolution on EU 2020

2010/2591(RSP) - 16/06/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 562 votes to 57, with 24 abstentions, a resolution on the EU 2020 Strategy.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE and ECR groups.

Parliament expresses its disappointment at the main elements of the new EU 2020 strategy agreed by the European Council on 26 March 2010. It calls for the EU 2020 strategy to **pursue a broad political concept for the future of the EU** as a competitive, social and sustainable Union putting people and the protection of the environment at the centre of policy making.

The Council is urged to endorse the key elements of the EU 2020 strategy at its June 2010 meeting but Members insist that it should not adopt final decisions on the key instruments, targets and indicators of the EU 2020 strategy **without having properly consulted Parliament** as soon as possible. In the same spirit, they take the view that national parliaments, regions, municipalities, the social partners and NGOs should be actively involved in defining and implementing the strategy.

Parliament notes the five headline targets agreed by the European Council on: (i) employment rate; (ii) research and development; (iii) greenhouse gas emissions; (iv) education levels; (v) social inclusion. It stresses that these headline targets should be formulated in the framework of a consistent and **coherent sustainable development strategy** combining the economic, social and environmental policy agendas.

**Relaunching the single market:** Members emphasise that the single market is one of the main drivers of European growth and that it still needs to be fully completed. They emphasise that it is important to keep free trade and access to the global market at the core of policy making and to eschew any movement towards protectionism, as innovative entrepreneurs and companies can thrive in a free and global market.

The resolution stresses that bolder initiatives are needed to complete the single market and to win greater public acceptance for it.

The Commission must produce a clear set of political priorities through the adoption of a '**Single Market Act**', which should cover both legislative and non-legislative initiatives designed to create a highly competitive social market economy.

**SMEs in a social market economy:** Members emphasise that the EU should stimulate and encourage SMEs and entrepreneurship, which are crucial to job conservation and creation, that it should reduce administrative and regulatory burdens and simplify rules. They highlight the fact that SMEs are the backbone of the social market economy, creators of jobs and essential players in reinvigorating sustainable economic growth, and that priority should therefore be given to further efforts in the area of reform, such as **SME-friendly legislation**, creating a vibrant environment for start-ups, encouraging entrepreneurship and improving access to finance. They also consider that the EU 2020 strategy should include targets and initiatives to encourage increased average levels of equity and venture capital in companies.

The resolution points out that micro-businesses can often help in combating unemployment, and setting up a business is often a way to succeed despite social inertia, that the first pre-condition for the development

of SMEs is their ability to raise adequate funds for their activities, and that maintaining guarantee mechanisms for SMEs, dynamic second markets and a banking sector that promotes economic activity in Europe are prerequisites for the development of SMEs.

**Employment target:** Parliament reiterates that high-quality employment should be a key priority in a 2020 strategy and that a stronger focus on properly functioning labour markets and on social conditions is vital to improve employment performance. It calls, therefore, for a **new agenda to promote decent work**, ensure workers' rights throughout Europe and improve working conditions.

**Research target:** Parliament urges the Commission and the Member States to **retain the overall target of 3% of GDP for R&D**. It calls on the Member States to make better use of the potential for synergy between cohesion-policy funding and R&D funding and to ensure that these instruments translate into innovation that delivers real benefits to society.

The resolution emphasises that major R&D projects, key energy infrastructure investments and the new EU competence on space policy, as well as EU innovation policy, require **solid, credible and sustainable EU financial support** if the Union's key 2020 objectives are to be met. In order to make European research more efficient, Members take the view that it is crucial that existing structures are better streamlined and that a more research-friendly and innovation-friendly investment climate is created in both the public and the private sector. They call on the Commission to put forward practical measures to improve access to financing, and especially the **availability of risk capital**.

**Climate/energy targets:** Parliament deplores the fact that the European Council's headline targets on climate change greenhouse lack ambition and, in this respect, are not geared towards leadership in a world which is facing climate change. It calls therefore for the **immediate and simultaneous adoption of the following binding targets for the EU:**

- a domestic greenhouse gas reduction target of 30% for 2020 and substantial further reduction in the long run provided that other countries are also ready to commit themselves to taking adequate action;
- a resource-efficiency improvement target;
- a 20% reduction target for energy consumption and an increase in the share of renewable energies to at least 20% by 2020, while removing technical and non-technical barriers to the further development of sustainable renewable energies, as a first step towards creating, by 2050, a non-CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting, highly efficient economy mostly based on renewable energies;
- measurable targets geared towards halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and restoring them where possible by 2020.

**Education target:** noting the headline target on improving education, Parliament deplores the absence of numerical targets and urges the European Council to set a **100% target for secondary education, as well as clear qualitative targets and indicators for primary and secondary education**. It asks Member States to adopt the ambitious targets set out in the [Commission's communication on EU 2020](#) so that, by 2020, school drop-out rates should be below 10% of the age cohort and at least 40% of the population should have completed tertiary or equivalent education.

Members stress the need for robust lifelong-learning policies and to maintain the number of active people on the labour market and to strengthen social inclusion.

**Poverty target:**Parliament insists that the EU 2020 strategy should include a target for **reducing poverty in the EU by half**, and points out that a majority of Europeans currently living in poverty, or at risk of poverty, are women, in particular older women, migrant women, single mothers and carers. It calls for an ambitious long-term strategy against poverty, with far-reaching targets for poverty reduction.

**Gender equality:** Parliament calls for a **programme for gender equality** to eradicate the existing pay gap between men and women and to ensure full participation by women in the labour market and in politics, while promoting women's career opportunities and to improve conditions with a view to reconciling work and family life.

**Cohesion policy:** Parliament considers that a strong and well-financed cohesion policy, embracing all European regions, should be fully in line with the EU 2020 strategy. It considers that the global crisis should be used as an opportunity to re-found our European social market economy as a model of society based on sustainability, solidarity, knowledge, a decisive decrease in poverty and the creation of jobs, and that the EU 2020 strategy should develop the employment potential of the transition towards a sustainable economy.

**Common Agricultural Policy:** Members point out that CAP reform by 2013 and a sustainable forestry strategy should be considered within the framework of the EU 2020 strategy.

**External action by the European Union:** Parliament urges the Commission to take a broader and more comprehensive approach in its external action, in line with the EU concept of policy coherence for development and to use its trade strategy for EU 2020 to promote the Union's core values, such as the promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms and the defence of the environment.