

socialplatform



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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC), THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU (EEB) AND THE PLATFORM OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL NGOs (Social Platform) form a unique coalition to achieve a balanced sustainable development in Europe putting people first.

In this document we present our shared analysis of the direction the European Commission is proposing for the Lisbon process and we present a set of proposals for the Spring Summit to correct the too narrow scope proposed in the Commissions' Communication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February.

Our three organisations are deeply disappointed to see that the Commission's proposal for the "new Lisbon strategy" does not respect the broad focus the Lisbon process was given in 2000 and 2001 and instead suggests the 'temporary abandon' of the environment and social pillars. This gives a very bad signal not only to the European citizens, but also to the rest of the world at a time when citizens are asked to support the new Constitution in national referenda.

#### EU can afford a "high road" to development

We disagree with the outdated philosophy of: "growth first, other worries later". This may perhaps lead to short term superficial economic progress, but it risks to deteriorate the natural and social foundations on which long-term European prosperity has been built and will be built. We are concerned that the Commission's words on sustainable and social cohesion will fail to be backed by concrete action.

We strongly believe that the EU can afford and must choose the "high road" to development, looking at its environment, social and economic objectives as being mutually supportive. We call on the 2005 Spring Council to reinstate the ambitions of Lisbon and Gothenburg to make the EU "*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*" and keep the balance between the three main dimensions of sustainable development.

The simplification of the Lisbon mechanisms should not be mistaken for addressing the problems in a simplistic way. By looking at growth and jobs as the only urgent matters, the Commission not only makes arbitrary assumptions, it misses essential opportunities for integration and synergies. It fails to recognise that achieving a sustainable economy in the long term requires immediate action of prevention and precaution, which can deliver positive effects for all three dimensions, when implemented in a creative and intelligent way.

### Widen the focus on Environment

A society which addresses the major issues separately is wasting resources, undermines the European growth potential and stands no chance of achieving the economic goals of Lisbon in a sustainable way.

With regards to the environment, we are particularly concerned that a narrow focus will fail to address the threat of climate change and miss therewith the opportunities for boosting an environmentally friendly economic modernisation that also contributes to public health.

Furthermore, we cannot continue to avoid the problem of ever increasing transport movements with an ever increasing pressure upon environment, biodiversity, peoples' health. A modern economy is one that has decreased its need for problematic mobility.

And finally, the decline of biodiversity loss in Europe and globally is undermining the capacity of the Earth to provide for essential clean natural resources and products. This should be a common concern for all deciding on economic development incentives.

We also recall that environment protection contributes to job creation. According to the Commissions' information (Environmental Policy Review, 26-01-05), the eco-industry in Europe is already employing more than 2 million people in Europe and continues to grow with around 5% per year. In addition, there are huge potential export markets, in particular also in developing countries, for these kinds of services and goods.

### Europe should strengthen its social model

With regards to the social pillar of the Lisbon strategy we stress that investing in social Europe is key to address the Lisbon challenges in relation to globalization, technological progress and greater social cohesion. Europe should not aim at competing with emerging economies on the basis of 'a low road strategy' because this approach can only fail. There will always be countries with even lower wages, even longer working hours or worse working conditions. Instead, Europe should strengthen its social model as well as its drive for sustainable development as a source of excellence innovation and a basis for the knowledge society.

This means improving working conditions and high level of social protection, access to training, securing rights for the flexible work force, and addressing workers' increasing feeling of insecurity regarding the process of restructuring and 'delocalisations' of jobs. This requires creating the right macro-economic conditions for long-term investment. All of this should be done now. Europe cannot afford to wait to address these challenges.

Moreover, experience with 'trickle down strategies all over the world teaches us that greater social cohesion does not result automatically from increased economic activity alone. For growth to have a maximal effect on social cohesion and poverty reduction, effective employment, social protection and social inclusion policies are required. The same goes for issues such as equality between men and women, the fight against discrimination, the integration of migrants, the access to child and elder care, and the promotion of public health which require pro-active policies from governments. Past experience has proved that well designed social policies actually benefit the economy.

## Socially responsible Globalisation

We are also concerned that the European external policy shifts from the promotion of responsible economic global governance towards a simple free trade agenda, in which the rest of the world is only seen as a competitor. This is exactly the opposite of the ambitious agenda promoted by the UK G8 presidency in favour of Africa's development. Therefore, we ask that the revised Lisbon strategy clearly refers to the development dimension of the Doha agenda.

This does not mean that conflicting objectives do not exist between social, environmental and economic, as well as between internal and external policies. But, rather than facing these potential conflicts, and trying to rebuild them into synergies as the most effective way forward the proposed Commission approach prefers to ignore them. But ignoring problems does not help solve them. We hope that political leaders in the Spring council will show political responsibility.

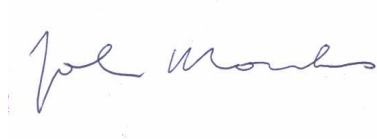
We therefore ask the 2005 Spring Summit to examine jointly the Lisbon and the Sustainable development strategies and to ask the Commission to provide a specific guidance on integration and synergy. We hereby present our:

### PROPOSALS FOR THE SPRING SUMMIT 2005 ON HOW TO MAKE LISBON WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Reconfirm the EU's commitment to greater social cohesion and sustainable development as the overarching framework for all internal and external policies,
2. Reconfirm EU's global responsibilities and leadership, and insist that the short term actions promoted by the Lisbon process must contribute concretely to, and not contradict, the environmental and social commitments the EU has agreed upon.
3. Guarantee that the Spring Summit and overarching instruments such as the strategic annual report of the Commission, the Community Lisbon action programme and the national action programmes do not only focus on "growth and jobs" but also integrate strong social and environmental dimensions to enable an integrated view of these three policy areas.
4. Urge the Commission to issue the pending Communication on "exploring and exploiting the synergies between social, environmental and economic policies", without delay.
5. Resist any attempt to legitimise a standstill on the further improvement of EU's environmental and social policies with reference to the current economic situation. And do not accept the Corporate Social Responsibility concept or other voluntary approaches as a general alternative for legislative and economic instruments action.
6. Ask the Commission to undertake an analysis of the investment requirements of the Lisbon sustainable development goals and their potential for employment, social cohesion and environment and to draw up plans for active public investment policies, defining the respective European and member states responsibilities, and including

targets and monitoring mechanisms. In advance, consider the proposals made by ETUC, EEB and the Social Platform launched in their Manifesto on Investing for a Sustainable Future, for sustainable housing and sustainable transport.

7. Ask the Commission to strengthen the Impact Assessment instrument so as to consider all the three dimensions- the social, the environment and the economic - and to improve input from all relevant stakeholders.
8. Remind the Commission of its commitments to make the Doha round negotiations a truly “development round”,
9. Ask the Commission to undertake a thorough analysis of the impact of the liberalisation of energy markets on sustainable development, including impact on access to service, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and employment.
10. Add reference to the implementation of public procurement directives and how they contribute to sustainable development and ask the member states to devise national plans for green and social procurement. Ask the Commission to issue guidelines on *social* public procurement along the same lines as its guidelines on green public procurement.
11. Decide on the adoption, before the end of 2005, of a strategy to ensure a better reflection of social and environmental costs in the price of products and services, through tax reform taking into account the social and employment impacts, using the revenues for the reduction of costs of labour and social services.
12. Ensure that the Commission’s ‘streamlined’ approach in social protection and social inclusion areas gives the means to achieve the goal of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty.



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