



To:

President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso
President of the European Council, Fredrik Reinfeldt
President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek

Cc:

Presidents of the upcoming Trio Presidency, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Herman Van Rompuy,
Gordon Bajnai

November 19, 2009

Dear Presidents,

Re: Postpone the adoption of the Europe 2020 agenda to allow a genuine democratic debate to take place

The European Council has planned to decide on the direction of the EU for the next decade – the Post Lisbon Agenda – in March 2010.

The decision of the European Council will bear huge consequences as it will determine the political orientation, objectives, actions and investments of the European Union and its members for one decade. This will deeply affect all people living in the European Union.

Taking a decision of such importance shouldn't be done hurriedly and behind closed doors; rather, it should include a dialogue with citizens and civil society, as requested by the article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty.

Not properly engaging citizens and civil society in discussing the Europe they want would be a missed opportunity to generate ownership, public acceptance of EU future strategy and to start a new 'era' on a firm democratic basis, rooted in dialogue with citizens and civil society.

However, the current situation is as follows:

1. Despite the Commission's commitment made to the European Parliament¹ that a public consultation would take place in September 2009, it seems that the consultation has been postponed to the end of November.

If March 2010 remains the deadline for Member States to come to an agreement on EU strategic objectives we are concerned that the Commission's minimum standards for consultation will not be met.

¹ Written response given by Jose Manuel Barroso to the European Parliament, August 2009 - P-3697/09

It is also difficult to understand why the European Commission has not been able to better plan this consultation on the post-Lisbon strategy considering that the Lisbon strategy was a five years cycle that should have naturally encompass a period for evaluation and consultation.

2. As part of the Better Regulation agenda, an independent and public evaluation of the Lisbon strategy should have indeed taken place to assess how effective the strategy has been in delivering on its objective. This evaluation is indispensable to draw valuable lessons on what has worked or not.
3. The European Parliament will not have time by March 2010 to come up with clear recommendations on the Europe 2020 agenda.
4. The current college of Commissioners' mandate has expired and the college is meant to run day to day business and not propose new legislations and strategies.
5. The Lisbon Treaty has just entered into force. A proper analysis of how the Treaty's implementation will affect the new 2020 Agenda has yet to be undertaken.
6. And finally, the current Lisbon Strategy runs until end 2010. There is therefore no urgency in trying to come up with a new Strategy in four-month-time.

Therefore, Social Platform, the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe, calls on the Commission and the upcoming Presidencies of the EU to postpone the decision on EU next strategic objectives to December 2010 under the Belgian Presidency.

A postponement would strengthen the democratic accountability of the Post Lisbon Agenda by allowing the upcoming College to take responsibility for the proposal, allowing the European Parliament and civil society to participate in the debate and assess how effective the previous Strategy has been.

Let's all make sure the new ten year long strategy is more successful than the previous one, builds on past mistakes and move the EU forward with all actors and in particular citizens on board.

We look forward to hearing your response to our concerns and proposals,

Yours sincerely



Conny Reuter
President



Roshan Di Puppo
Director