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European Commission  
Secretariat General  
Unit D1  
B – 1049 Brussels

Dear President Barroso,

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE EU 2020 STRATEGY**

On behalf of Argyll and Bute Council I welcome the opportunity to offer our comments to the consultation on the 'Future EU 2020 Strategy'. We believe the development of this Strategy is very timely and we support the EU 2020 vision of a more inclusive, more sustainable, greener, and strong knowledge-based society able to ensure economic, social, environmental and territorial cohesion across Europe.

Furthermore, we agree with the three key priorities proposed by the paper: (i) creating value by basing growth on knowledge; (ii) empowering people in inclusive societies and (iii) creating a competitive, connected and greener economy.

In terms of specific details we would like to offer the following comments:

### **Territorial Cohesion**

Although the consultation document makes reference to the principle of territorial cohesion introduced by the new Lisbon Treaty, we feel that the draft Strategy gives little detail on its actual implementation. Therefore Argyll and Bute Council calls for any action from the EU aimed at implementing the EU 2020 Strategy to take account of the principle of territorial cohesion and of territorial specificities as defined by Art.174 of the Lisbon Treaty. This is crucially important because we believe that EU territorial cohesion and other territorially minded policies can help deliver the 2020 agenda across Europe and not just in existing 'growth poles'.

### **Multi-level Governance**

We believe that multi-level governance will be fundamental to ensuring the success of the EU 2020 Strategy and as such we feel that a system of multi-level governance

where local, national and EU institutions work together on cross cutting issues needs to be presented in more detail in the Strategy.

### **Delivery Mechanisms**

We believe that multi-level governance should be translated into compatible delivery mechanisms. While we are fully supportive of the global vision proposed in the paper we see the danger of sectoralisation of EU intervention in the proposal for thematic priorities and would be cautious for the EU 2020 Strategy to proceed on that basis. Furthermore, from a practical point of view we would recommend the genuine simplification of EU funds particularly in both the management and structure of funds.

### **Regional Dimension**

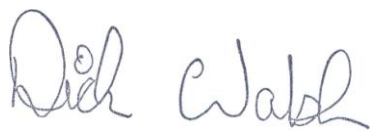
Given the crucial implementation role that local and regional authorities play in EU policy delivery, the regional dimension needs to be an integral part of the future EU 2020 Strategy and we believe this can only be achieved through an efficient and effective multi-level governance system which allows for meaningful engagement with local and regional actors as well as offering flexibility to take account of local circumstances.

Argyll and Bute Council is a member of a number of European networks and as such we would like to support the responses to the Future EU 2020 Strategy from the following organisations:

- Highlands and Islands European Partnership (HIEP)
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)

Argyll and Bute Council welcomes the consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy and the opportunity to input into the future shape of the Strategy. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of the consultation and await the Commission proposal with great interest.

Yours sincerely,



Dick Walsh, Leader



Len Scoullar, Spokesperson for Islands and European Affairs