



ANSWER TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15 January 2010

European Commission public consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy

The contribution of the Precast Concrete industry (BIBM)

The European Precast Concrete industry firmly believes that Europe has the necessary assets for exiting the current crisis stronger than before in the international landscape. A sustainable market economy based on environmental and social principles is the identified key strategy for achieving this objective that our industry fully supports.

The European Precast Concrete industry believes that three axes should be developed to achieve the objective:

1. Focalise the public and private economic efforts on tangible investments aimed at contributing to future growth, wealth and development;
2. Stimulate the competitiveness of the industrial manufacturing sector as bearer of added value for the whole stakeholder chain;
3. Adopt a global and stable framework for achieving sustainable development.

Focalise the public and private economic efforts on tangible investments aimed at contributing to future growth, wealth and development

National Governments and the European Union injected a considerable amount of money in the economy in order to sustain it during this critical period. But we are not yet out of the tunnel. Decision making bodies should realise that only money invested in assets which are potential creator of welfare is "well invested" money and not a burden for future generations.

Examples of welfare creation of assets are

- *Transport infrastructure*: The free circulation of goods, services and people in Europe needs a modern transport infrastructure adapted to people's needs. The improvement of railway and road transport across and particularly between Member States remains a key factor for making Europe ready to exploit its potential during the recovery;
- *Water collection and treatment*: A constant quality of our drinking water starts from its collection and cleaning. A modern system needs to be implemented for ensuring the availability of such a fundamental resource for future generations. Equally, more extreme climatic events are demonstrating the need for improved flood defenses in several EU countries;
- *Living and working places*: The EU should introduce mechanisms to increase the rate of renewal of Europe's building stock. The construction of new, energy efficient buildings would allow for substantial energy savings and a corresponding reduction in CO₂ emissions from buildings, thus allowing the EU to meet its commitments;
- *Efficient industrial areas*: Modern and efficient manufacturing and trading areas supporting the needs of the European industry should be developed in a harmonised way within a global urban plan.



Stimulate the competitiveness of the industrial manufacturing sector as bearer of added value for the whole stakeholder chain

The EU should create a level playing field for the successful development of the European manufacturing industry, creator of added value and welfare for our countries. An unbalanced support of the services sector would oblige key manufacturing activities to be delocalised outside the European Union area with a short term impact on employment and a long term loss of strategic knowledge and access to resources.

In order to achieve this objective, the precast concrete industry supports:

- *the practice of fair payments*: when the structure of the market shows excessive unbalance between customers and clients, binding rules for the achievement of a fair system of payment (i.e. appropriate and timely payment for all stakeholders in the supply chain) should be set in order to ensure a sound competition.
- *the protection of SMEs in the case of evident market failures*: manufacturing activities and particularly SMEs are vulnerable to the changing behaviour of the financial and insurance sectors. Clear principles should be set in order to avoid healthy and flourishing activities to be wiped out because of cash or credit problems.
- *An increased consideration of local manufacturing activities in a global perspective*: supporting manufacturing industries that have a direct impact on the development of the local activities is a source of welfare for all the stakeholders (clients, suppliers, users, workers...) in the value chain. Policies should be put in place for reducing the administrative burden for these entities, enhancing their competitiveness and allowing their development.

Adopt a global and stable framework for achieving sustainable development

Industrial activities develop in a regulated framework. In order to allow the best solutions to take the lead, they have to be assessed considering the impacts at all levels and during the whole life span. In order to allow the achievement of long term objectives of development, this framework has to be stable. Only a regulation that follows these two principles leads to a really sustainable development.

In practice, the precast concrete industry suggests considering:

- *social, economic and environmental aspects together*: a sustainable development is based on these three pillars, which should always be considered together in a way that they strengthen each other (instead of competing). Priority should be given to solutions that globally outperform as a whole in the three areas.
- *the whole life cycle*: a sustainable project maximises the benefits in the three aforementioned areas during its entire life span (production, use and end-of-life, plus the intermediate stages). Priority should be given to solutions that globally outperform during their whole life cycle.

and to set

- *long term strategic objectives*: before implementing the details of the framework, its main trends have to be discussed and agreed between all the stakeholders. A sustainable market economy based on environmental and social principles is possible only when the driving principles remain stable through time.

BIBM is the European organisation representing the Precast Concrete industry, involved in the supply of sustainable solutions for the built environment. The sector employs more than 210.000 people in 8.000 production plants around Europe, generating more than 35 billion Euros of turnover.

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