



Statement on the “EU-2020 Strategy” consultation

“A new sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener economy, where our prosperity will come from innovation and from using resources better, and where the key input will be knowledge”: **this focus on social Europe is highly welcomed by CESI.**

However, CESI is concerned about the mix operated in the working document between policies tackling the effects of the crisis and long-term policies redefining the European Social Model. CESI recognises that the effects of the financial, economical and social crisis will last over the next years and that, accordingly, temporary measures are needed. However, those can't in any case build up the basis of the future European economic and social model. **We urge the Commission to focus on long term strategies** as much on as tackling the crisis taking into account the long term effects of measures fighting the economic crisis. The long term strategy should involve the social partners.

“Having a job is probably the best safeguard against poverty and exclusion” - CESI agrees with this. However, a substantial part of the workforce is in poverty situation due to low relative wages. **Working poor is a reality in the EU and its diminution by 2020 should be an aim of this Strategy.**

Agreeing with the statement made by the European Commission on the importance of the demographic challenge Europe will face in the coming years, CESI suggests **putting forward work-life balance in future EU-policies**. Work-life-balance is a key element to tackle the demography issue, as it fosters natality on the one hand and helps raising the employment rate on the other. Moreover, it will be of growing importance for the care of older people. CESI suggests that the Commission, together with European social partners, explores further innovative labour forms and models to make work-life balance a reality for every worker in Europe.

CESI welcomes the will to **extend training programmes to all categories of workers**. Today, the majority of workforce benefiting from those programmes is already the best educated and trained. Rights to and information on training opportunities should be developed for every worker, and social partners have a role to play there. Training is a necessity in all categories to increase employability and mobility opportunities, be this mobility geographical, sectoral or hierarchical. However, CESI expresses its concerns regarding the approach adopted by the European Commission when it states that “labour mobility must be promoted to ensure that people can take up new opportunities by moving to where their skills are most needed”. **Mobility cannot become an obligation for workers**. Businesses needing specific skills should offer sufficient incentives to attract the adequate labour force.

Knowledge is a guarantee for Europe's competitiveness. In this perspective, CESI welcomes the accent put in the Europe 2020 Strategy on education and research. However, the development of the full economical potential of technological breakthroughs requires a strong industrial basis. In this regard, CESI would welcome a strategy for industries aiming at **maintaining/developing workplaces within Europe**. Hereby CESI underlines the crucial role of efficient public services in the implementation of any long-term EU economic and social strategy. Efficient public services, based on well-educated and motivated workers, are one of the pillars of social cohesion. Additionally, **extensive, performing public services are an important Standortfaktor for Europe**.

CESI asks the Member States to consult every relevant actor at national level, including social partners, before proposing national implementation plans.

Helmut Müllers, Secretary General