

## **CONTRIBUTION ON THE FUTURE “EU 2020” STRATEGY EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE IN LITHUANIA (ECC-NET)**

European Consumer Centre in Lithuania (further – ECC Lithuania) does agree with the idea, that Europe needs to promote key, agreed priorities and to work on delivering them over several years if it needs to achieve a sustainable social market economy, a smarter and greener economy. No single Member State can successfully address these challenges alone. By acting together on a common vision, we can make the whole more. ECC Lithuania does agree that the agenda should exist for all Member States, large and small, old and new, highly developed and still developing: the enlarged EU consists of different levels of development and therefore different needs.

ECC Lithuania gives its view on the priorities which supposed to be the key drivers of EU 2020:

### ***1. Creating value by basing growth on knowledge***

ECC Lithuania does agree that knowledge is the engine for sustainable growth. In a fast-changing world, what make the difference are education and research, innovation and creativity. ECC Lithuania would suggest keeping a high profile on vulnerable groups, gender equality and social cohesion; because it is needed to ensure that no one is excluded from knowledge. Europe does have some of the best universities in the world, but ECC Lithuania would suggest to improve better communication between the universities in the different EU countries (sometimes the feeling emerges that universities of economically stronger countries do discriminate universities of economically weaker countries). ECC Lithuania do support the idea that a new phase in the existing programmes Erasmus, Leonardo and Erasmus Mundus should be considered, complemented by national initiatives, giving all young people in Europe the possibility to spend part of their educational pathway in other Member States. ECC Lithuania does agree that the EU needs to increase its research efforts by pooling resources, jointly developing major research infrastructures across the EU and raising research quality to world leading standards. It also needs to maximize and accelerate the practical benefits of research for Europe's businesses and SMEs - including through major public-private partnerships. The attractiveness and performance of Europe as a research location also depends on creating an internal market and attractive career prospects for researchers. ECC Lithuania does agree that the EU needs to provide more attractive framework conditions for **innovation and creativity**, including through incentives for the growth of knowledge-based firms. ECC Lithuania supports the idea that Europe needs effective policies on digital inclusion and skills, and to encourage active participation and expression over the net.

### ***2. Empowering people in inclusive societies***

ECC Lithuania supports the idea that the flexicurity should be deployed to the full. The challenge is to find the best way to enhance on the one hand, the flexibility of labour markets both on work organisation and on labour relations, and on the other hand, the security provided by lifelong learning and appropriate social protection. Life long learning needs to be much more accessible and universities should be more open to non-typical learners (life long learning is the key element to ensure good transition between jobs and occupations, and in avoiding long-term unemployment leading to loss of human capital). ECC Lithuania strongly supports the idea that tackling inefficient labour market segmentation is also one way of enhancing social justice, but ECC Lithuania does add, that this way supposed to be the most important mean against poverty and exclusion. ECC Lithuania strongly supports the idea that disincentives, such as the unequal treatment of the self-employed under most social security systems and disincentives to move to other Member States because of lack of portability of social and pension rights should be removed (sometimes people who has no job in their mother country decide not to move to other EU country because they do not want to loose their social and pension rights).

### ***3. Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy***

ECC Lithuania strongly supports that the pressure on resources should be reduced by using the material inputs in the economy more efficiently, becoming more productive. The targeted regulation should be done, e.g. promoting energy-efficient products and systems, through emission trading, tax reform, through grants, subsidies and loans, through public investment and procurement policies, and through targeting research and innovation budgets to this end. ECC Lithuania also agrees that better integration of transport networks, developing alternatives to road transport, promoting clean technologies, and upgrading infrastructure will be essential elements. Big European projects such as Galileo, GMES, and smart road, rail (ERTMS), and air traffic management (SESAR) should play a key role in the integration of transport networks.