



Comments of the Foreign Trade Association (FTA) on the Commission's working document "Consultation on the future EU 2020 Strategy"

FTA, which is the association for European commerce that specializes in foreign trade issues, thanks the EU Commission for inviting interested parties to make comments on the future EU 2020 Strategy. Against the foreign trade background we will only focus on subjects related to international affairs.

- **Page 7, 1. para, 1. line:** It should be stressed that the employment rates of immigrants can be improved by an active integration policy. Furthermore, the cooperation between the member states in this field must be improved.

- **Page 8, 4. para:** FTA supports the commission's approach to industrial policy as far as sustainability, innovation and human skills are concerned. FTA, however, rejects all industrial and trade policy measures which lead to a distortion of the competition between European and imported goods.

According to our experience the EU commission sometimes attaches more importance to the interests of low-competitive European industries than to those of community importers and retailers. The balance of the interests of the different economic operators therefore must be improved.

- **Page 10, 4. para:** This short para is the only part of the working document dealing explicitly with international trade. In principle FTA agrees to this statement. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the EU 2020 Strategy must more take into consideration the worldwide global connections. Emerging economies, the challenge of climate protection, the necessity to create new structures of the World Trade Organisation offer chances and risks for the European economy. Furthermore, a lot of bilateral free trade agreements worldwide will lead to changes in the trade flows between the countries concerned.

It also should be stressed that protectionist measures are a great threat for the European economy. Against the background of the economical und financial crisis in many parts of the world - also in EU countries - a policy of protectionist pinpricks could be seen. Subsidies in favour of the local economy, tariff increases, special taxes and complex import regulations as well as open or hidden "buy national" campaigns are examples which must be avoided.

So the promotion of world trade must be given top priority. Imports are not a threat for European producers but of major importance for stimulating world trade and for the transfer of technology.

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