



City of
Gothenburg

**RESPONSE TO THE
CONSULTATION ON THE “EU
2020” STRATEGY**

THE CITY OF GOTHENBURG'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE "EU 2020" STRATEGY

The City of Gothenburg welcomes the consultation on the "EU2020" strategy. In conjunction with the strategy it is important to note that the effects of the recession can be seen on all levels in society. We believe that the key to turning things in the right direction is to acknowledge the equal importance of economic, social and environmental issues when formulating a sustainable strategy for the next ten years. The City believes that the connection between these issues should be strengthened in the strategy, and we would like to highlight the need to amend the strategy so that it encompasses multilevel governance in full and cohesion policy as an instrument to enhance competitiveness, innovation and employment in all European regions and cities.

MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

The City of Gothenburg believes that the strategic objectives of "EU 2020" only will be achieved through a comprehensive multi-level governance system. However, the consultation paper leaves out the importance of the regional and local level when it comes to implementing the strategy. The paper refers to the importance of the interdependence of different levels of governance, yet fails to mention both the regional and the local level.

The current economic recession underlines the importance of qualified governance at all levels and an interaction based on trust and mutual dependency between the different levels of governance. Subsidiarity is the foundation for the responsibilities between levels of multilevel governance. It becomes absolutely central that all policy levels, including the local, have to cooperate to achieve the objectives of the "EU 2020".

Involving the local level in this policy process would also help to ensure that the Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda's goal of achieving territorial as well as economic and social cohesion will be achieved. Only by following an effective partnership approach across all levels of governance, can the needs, challenges and opportunities facing territories be adequately understood and addressed.

COHESION POLICY – AN INSTRUMENT FOR ALL EUROPEAN REGIONS

The City of Gothenburg believes that EU Cohesion Policy is an important instrument when it comes to reaching the goals and priorities set in the "EU 2020" strategy. Cities in Sweden and other parts of Europe are a precondition for growth and development in the EU as a whole and in particular in their surrounding regions. The economic situation of today has led to a situation where cities' dual responsibility, i.e. to provide an extensive welfare system at the same time that they should act effectively as engines of sustainable growth, is under strain.

Work in relation to segregation, social exclusion and high unemployment rates are part of cities' everyday activities. There are for example groups of people who are socially and economically dependant on society's support in order to make it through the day. In Sweden, as in other parts of Europe, these groups are very often concentrated to geographically small areas in big cities.

The City of Gothenburg believes that cohesion policy can facilitate transition to a smarter and greener economy across Europe. It is cities that are best placed to channel funding and engage with citizens in order to drive change. The City of Gothenburg is strongly committed to climate issues as well as adaptation to climate change.

Cohesion policy support provides a real added value to national and regional policies, due to a focus on the promotion of innovative approaches, the reorientation of public and private investments towards priorities of Community interest and the exchange of best practice. Cohesion policy is an instrument for leveraging change and mobilising regional and local actors around EU priorities, ensuring that the benefits of European public goods such as research and innovation are broadly shared. It provides incentives for change and adjustment.

In retrospect of the economic situation, the growing problems that Gothenburg and other cities are facing, and the city's good experience of EU-financed projects (for example VIDE 2010 and City District Development through Partnerships)¹, the City of Gothenburg strongly advocates a continuation of EU Cohesion Policy. The future policy should have a strong focus on sustainable urban development.

European, national, regional and local strategies are without question interconnected. The City of Gothenburg believes that EU Cohesion Policy should be an instrument available to all European regions and cities and as such be an integrated part of the "EU 2020" strategy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The City of Gothenburg finally concludes that the consultation paper points out important priorities. However there are some significant shortcomings in regards to the necessary involvement of the local level in the European policy development and the disregarding of cohesion policy as an important tool for successful implementation of the priorities outlined in the EU 2020 strategy.

We look forward to a revised strategy paper which includes cooperation between the EU, Member States and the sub-national levels (i.e. regions and municipalities) with the aim of implementing the "EU 2020" strategy. The City of Gothenburg believes that it is of high importance that the regional and local level will have the mandate and the financial resources, including Structural Funds, to be able to contribute to the fulfillment of the strategy.

¹ **VIDE 2010** (ESF) aims at educating and creating methods and tools for teachers so that they can better identify entrepreneurs. The goal is that the students' ideas should be implemented within existing companies or organisations.

City District Development through Partnerships (ERDF) The project aims at creating more attractive, safer and more pleasant venues, and is concentrated to deprived areas in the City of Gothenburg. The method and approach is based on an in-depth collaboration between property owners, business owners and the City of Gothenburg.