

Stockholm County Council
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CONSULTATION ON THE
FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY
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European Commission
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Stockholm County Council (SCC) – Response to the suggested EU2020 Strategy

- SCC welcomes a follow-up of the Lisbon strategy and is **positive to the basic intentions of developing a greener and smarter market economy with focus on social responsibility.**
- SCC would however, like to see a **clearer focus on the importance of the regional level.** The strategy will need to be implemented in great deal by the regional level therefore the regional participation and influence built up until today needs to be continuously developed. SCC also agrees with the views submitted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in this matter.
- SCC would also like to **emphasize more on the importance of public health related to the challenges that Europe is facing;** especially regarding demography and economy. Both have clear health dimensions and relations to today's health care systems. Health has a more central place in the Lisbon treaty than in the earlier treaties with clearer responsibilities between the Member States, the Commission and the European Parliament. It is important to ensure that these statements are not weakened in a new strategy and that "a high level of human health shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities" as stated in the *Lisbon treaty article 168.*

The economic value to society of a healthy population has been highlighted in various strategic EU documents for the current period. The white paper *Together for health: strategy for EU 2008-2013* recognises the links between health and economic prosperity. The Commission report *Dealing with the impact of an ageing population in the EU* states that there will be strong pressures to increase public spending on health in future years. "Flexicurity" which is mentioned in the working paper needs to be accompanied by preventive health interventions to manage future economy.

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Health is also an important factor for knowledge-based growth and empowered citizens. The communication *Solidarity in health; reducing health inequalities in the EU* shows how differences in opportunities affecting health have an impact on to which extent individuals actually participate in society. We know that the health status differs within and between the EU member states, with a 14 year gap in life expectancy at birth for men and an 8 year gap for women. In order to create an inclusive society as proposed in EU2020, public health initiatives often with preventative interventions early in life are needed alongside with the proposed education and labour market proposals.

- Finally the SCC would like to raise awareness about **the importance of the healthcare sector as being a particularly important part of the overall economy.**

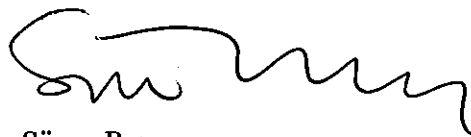
The healthcare sector has substantial possibilities when it comes to innovation and development, and it is closely linked to the objective of a competitive economy. SCC finds it important that common resources for research and development and other funding programmes of the EU are used to encourage and support such a continuous development.

There are also several important areas of cooperation – e.g. patient safety – where there is a clear EU added value with no conflict to the subsidiarity principle of each member state's right to organise its health care system.

Additionally, there is a workforce perspective, as healthcare constitutes one of the most significant sectors of the EU economy, providing employment for one in ten of the EU workforce. With a larger older segment in the population and a social development within the EU that changes family structures as more women join the workforce, the need for formal care will probably increase as the informal care will decrease. In the *Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health* it is stated that there will be a shortage of health care staff in the future and that it is important to increase the attractiveness of these professions in the future.



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