



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

The Commission welcomes the opinion received from the Committee on Industry and Trade of the Swedish Parliament in response to the public consultation on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

As regards the views on territorial potential, the Commission shares the opinion of the Committee that the emphasis should be on raising competitiveness in all regions on the basis of each region's unique conditions. The coverage of all regions is an essential imperative in order to respond to the interests of all EU citizens. Furthermore, every region of the EU is being affected by global economic, social and environmental changes and in the light of the current financial crisis all regions need to adapt and respond to fast-moving changes in their comparative advantages.

The Commission takes note also of the position of the Committee as regards the need for a definition of the concept of territorial cohesion. The launch of a discussion on an appropriate definition is indeed one of the key objectives of the public consultation of the Green Paper. Due to wide range of diversity in accents placed on the concept so far, the Commission will look to bridge this diversity in any definition and common principles that will be proposed.

Concerning the principles for future territorial cooperation the Commission takes note of the call for a consequent application of the subsidiarity principle and for organisational flexibility. In its view, subsidiarity and flexibility have to be combined with the need for strengthening the strategic dimension of cooperation; the elaboration by the Commission of an EU strategy for Baltic sea region, at the request of the Council, will be a test in this regard.

In addition, the Commission supports the position of the Swedish Government referred to in the assessment as regards the necessity to approach regional development issues through a cross-sectoral approach at all levels ranging from local level to EU level.

Yours sincerely,

Margot WALLSTRÖM
Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr. Anders Forsberg
Secretary-General of the Riksdag
Stockholm