

*Brussels, 01/10/2010  
C/2010/6458*

*Dear Ms Kinberg,*

*The European Commission thanks the Riksdag for having examined the Commission Work Programme for 2010 {COM (2010)135} and for having provided an opinion on its content. The opinion is a valuable contribution to the ongoing dialogue between the Commission and national parliaments concerning the political priorities of the Union.*

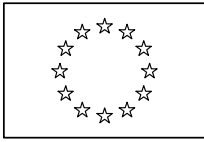
*Please, find the Commission's comments on specific points raised by the Riksdag in the attached document.*

*I look forward to developing our policy dialogue further in the future.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*/-/ Maroš Šefčovič*

*Ms Anna Kinberg Batra  
Chairwoman  
Committee on European Union Affairs  
Sveriges Riksdag  
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## **COMMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE OPINION OF THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT ON THE COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2010 {COM (2010)135}**

The Commission shares the general view expressed in the opening remarks of the opinion, namely the importance which the Riksdag attaches to safeguarding an open Europe, including in the relations between the European Union and the outside world.

### **Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe's social market economy**

The Commission fully agrees with the need to address structural shortcomings and ensuring long-term reforms in order to generate economic growth and employment. The Europe 2020 strategy<sup>1</sup>, presented by the European Commission on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010, intends to help Europe come out of the crisis stronger and turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Since 2008, Europe has been focusing on measures to stimulate demand, boost confidence and support the workers and families hit the hardest by the crisis. The Europe 2020 Strategy and the Stability and Growth Pact will provide the framework to put Europe's public finances back on a sound footing and to move from crisis-related measures to country-specific reform agendas to make growth smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive.

The Commission will address vigorously the challenge of making growth more sustainable, to which the opinion refers. One of the major initiatives in the Europe 2020 Strategy is the so-called "Resource efficient Europe" flagship initiative. This comprehensive policy agenda aims to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency. Work on this agenda is underway. The "Resource efficient Europe" flagship will be delivered through a number of different initiatives included in the Commission Work Programme 2010 and over the following years.

The Commission's communication on Europe 2020 clearly mentions the need to support gender equality and female employment. There was a consensus among the Member States to keep the number of headline targets limited. The Commission and the Member States are aware that it will not be possible to reach a 75% employment rate in 2020 without a significant increase of the female employment rate. The draft Employment Guidelines for Member States' Employment Policies, which were discussed at the Employment, Social

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2010)2020. Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of Ministers on 7 June 2010 recognise the need to promote gender equality, including equal pay, to increase female labour market participation, particularly through work-life balance policies, provision of affordable care, innovation in work organisation and better use of the European Social Fund.

### **Building a citizen's agenda which puts people at the heart of European action**

The Commission shares the Riksdag's view that the Stockholm Programme, adopted in 2009 during the Swedish Presidency of the Council, aims to achieve a more secure and open Europe whilst protecting and promoting the needs and rights of citizens. The Commission also agrees on the importance of the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. EU accession to the Convention will reinforce the obligation of the Union, including its institutions, to ensure that in all its areas of activity, fundamental rights are actively promoted. Together with the rights set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, it will contribute to a coherent protection of fundamental rights in the EU.

The Commission confirms its commitment to ensuring open public debate on some of the major societal challenge facing Europe as a prerequisite for preparing broad-based and adequate policy responses.

### **Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach**

The Commission is in full agreement with the importance attached by the Riksdag to having a transparent, orderly and rapid process towards the establishment of an efficient European External Action Service (EEAS). The Commission will of course be supporting the High Representative / Vice President in her different Treaty tasks.

The Commission can assure the Riksdag that the commitments which the EU has given in relation to enlargement will continue to be respected.

The Commission is also committed to developing the EU's special relationship with neighbouring countries based on respect for the values of the Union and aimed at fostering stronger economic and other links.

The Commission welcomes the Riksdag's support for the Commission priority to pursue the international development agenda. The EU action plan in support of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals formed the basis for the June European Council's conclusions preparing a common EU position in view of the High Level United Nations Review meeting in September on the Millennium Development Goals, which aims at the adoption of a Global Action Plan for reaching the MDGs by 2015.

The Commission also welcomes the support of the Riksdag for the development of a new trade strategy for Europe, as part of Europe 2020, for continuing ongoing trade negotiations and working with partners on issues ranging from market access to regulatory framework and global imbalances.

## **Modernising EU instruments and ways of working**

The Commission welcomes the support expressed by the Riksdag for the Commission's efforts in reinforcing evaluation and implementation of EU legislation. The Commission also welcomes the support of the Riksdag for the Commission's action on simplification of existing legislation, administrative burden reduction and withdrawal of pending proposals, which together with impact assessment of new proposals have been priorities in the implementation of its Better Regulation agenda.

The Commission takes note of the comments of the Riksdag on the EU budget. The Commission has agreed that the Budget review exercise will set out the budgetary guidelines for the period post-2013. As a leading principle, the EU budget should be targeted to policies and areas where it can make a difference and bring real added value. This means in particular a strong emphasis on our political priorities as defined by the Europe 2020 strategy: economic growth and an agenda for job creation, a more sustainable management of resources in a green economy, research and innovation, the consolidation of a strong industrial basis and ensuring the external projection of the interests of the EU in the world. The Budget Review will not address the size or the detailed breakdown of the post-2013 budget. This will be included in the proposals for the next multi-annual financial framework, which the Commission will present during the first semester of 2011.