

## New Lisbon Strategy should focus more on the HOW than the WHAT

Today's launch by the European Commission of a consultation on the future "EU 2020 Strategy" is an opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the current "Lisbon Strategy", and to propose improvements for the future.

The consultation headings suggest a reshuffle of similar overall priorities, which in EUROCHAMBRES' view remain valid. However, insufficient engagement by member states in the process has led to a lack of involvement of stakeholders at grass roots level and, consequently, to considerable shortfalls in the implementation of the strategy.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"We should shift attention from the WHAT to the HOW. Part of the blame lies with the 'Open Method of Coordination', which leaves implementation to the goodwill of member states. This method should be reviewed in the future 2020 strategy, and include more incentives for member states to deliver on their targets."*

If Member States take full responsibility for the future Strategy, the sense of engagement will flow down to regional and local authorities as well, thus increasing the chances that the established targets are met.

Mr Abruzzini went on to recommend measures to ensure greater member state involvement: *"The Commission should adopt a carrot and stick approach, potentially making a link between implementation and the allocation of EU funds, while also regularly comparing countries' performances"*.

### Chambers of Commerce: a source of best practices

Over the past ten years, European Chambers have carried out a number of initiatives to turn the theory of the Lisbon Strategy into an everyday reality for businesses and society. Below are some examples from a new EUROCHAMBRES publication launched today that relate to the five priority areas of the current strategy, which might provide inspiration for the post 2010 period:

1. **Dynamic business environment:** Swedish Chambers facilitate access to entrepreneurship for women through their "Promote Women's Entrepreneurship" programme;
2. **Skills:** A UK Chamber's "Starting Point" programme gets young unemployed people in urban areas off the street and into employment;
3. **R&D and Innovation:** a French local Chamber successfully cooperates with regional and local authorities and Industry in the "Lyon Urban Truck & Bus 2015" programme to create clean and sustainable transport solutions for people and goods;
4. **Environment and Energy:** the "MilieuCharter" in Belgian Chambers helps enterprises to engage in a more environment-friendly and energy efficient behaviour;
5. **Global dimension:** Italian Chambers offer "Special Assistance Services" to help their member companies gain access to foreign markets.

**More examples of how Chambers have concretely contributed to the Lisbon Strategy can be downloaded from <http://www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=2096>**

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