

**Danuta Hübner's first comments on the EU 2020 Strategy**  
**"EU 2020 – Regional Actors for Growth and**  
**Innovation"**  
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There is a need for a new European strategy. This is an important need; I believe that the sense of urgency is not yet with us. And this is worrying.

The EU 2020 Strategy should not be a one-off event or document. It should be a permanent feature of European politics. This is one important element of the European added value as compared to national politics where short-termism tends to dominate. At European level, political dynamics have a different logic.

We need the long-term strategy not only to respond to global change or to lead the global change. We need a long-term vision and common progress of action also to cope with our own intra-EU problems and opportunities and to better organise ourselves for those common goals. We need more, not less, of what Lisbon identified. We need more, not less, structural reform.

This strategy must link the crisis exit policies and long-term growth and structural change. It should take into account the diversity of European territory which can allow us to better exploit diverse opportunities, comparative advantages and different potentials. We must truly build on diversity after so many years of talking about it. It must be based on the assumption of an active citizen and active society, so it must not exclude anybody from the pursuit of common European objectives. Multilevel governance and partnership so well known from cohesion policy experience (business, academia, civil society).

It must also do both of the following:

- identify new engines, focus on them but at the same time work towards upgrading the entire economy, expand growth basis.
- enhance economic links between those growing faster and those lagging behind. Clearly, more cooperation is needed.

As we will be looking for more empires we must make sure that they work towards strengthening European cohesion: economic, social, and territorial. We must finally understand that cohesion is not a cost; it gives strength, taps unused potential, expands growth basis, and generates European social capital.

In the new structure, there should be both elements of change and those of continuity.

We must look into what works and what does not, also with respect to the Lisbon strategy. The lack of its evaluation is a missing element here. What I see as a positive experience of the last years is that combining integrated approach to growth with territorial specificity brings the best results in terms of growth, sustainable jobs, creativity and innovation. This is the European regional policy approach.

Social, economic and territorial cohesion. This is a treaty-based European mission. It therefore needs to be reflected in European policies and European budget. But cohesion policy must be strongly intertwined with the future European strategy, not because the Treaty so decides but because this policy mobilizes creativity and innovation potential. It involves local and regional level of Europe in the pursuit of common European objectives. It gives a chance for modern, effective integrated approach to growth policies. It strengthens internal market. It mobilizes untapped potential.

The cohesion policy should finally get the status of integrated development policy of the European Union.

A big absentee in EU 2020 is governance. The best policy delivery mechanism must be identified with adequate policy tools. Cooperation and sharing responsibilities must be among characteristics of the delivery mechanism. The real drivers for change are not there - business, academic all-inclusive.

Public action (policy, sector, expenditure) will play a role in this new growth model so the best place for this action must be chosen. We have sufficient experience in the EU to say with full responsibility that local and regional level interventions are decisive for dynamism and change, for promoting creativity and innovation, for job creation, for energy efficiency, for bringing different actors together.