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Mrs Sandy MEWIES AM  
Committee Chair  
European and External Affairs Committee  
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Dear Mrs Mewies,

The President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso, asked me to thank you for your letter of 9 December about the draft consultation document on the future 'EU 2020' strategy.

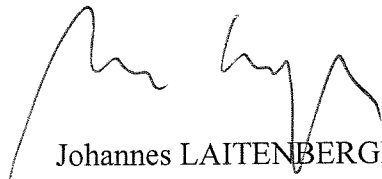
The Commission shares your concern to reinforce political ownership and accountability in the new EU 2020 Strategy. The consultation document shows that the specific actions and objectives of the EU 2020 strategy can only be achieved through partnership. Action is essential at EU, national and regional levels, and the interplay between these levels will allow the strategy to deliver its full potential.

The consultation document reflects the Commission's belief that "take-up across all the regions of the EU will be crucial to its success". We agree that lessons should be drawn from the experience with the implementation and communication of the Lisbon strategy. It is clear that the EU 2020 strategy can gain from improved delivery by more intense stakeholder involvement and effective subsidiarity, including better coordination and synergies amongst the different layers of government. Grassroots understanding and ownership of the vision and objectives of the EU 2020 strategy will largely determine its final outcome.

Cohesion policy will be of key importance for delivering the new EU2020 agenda. Cohesion policy provides unique value added through its multi-level partnership and multi-annual programming approach. This can contribute to the delivery, in an integrated way, of the EU 2020 strategy for long-term growth across Europe, meeting the three goals of the agenda: a Europe that is economically competitive, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive.

President Barroso would like to thank you for forwarding the interim report of inquiry on the future of cohesion policy carried out during 2009 by the European and External Affairs Committee. He notes the wide consultation which has been undertaken to support this study and also its findings, which provide a valuable and timely contribution to the ongoing discussions on the future. The President looks forward to hearing from you concerning the final report of the inquiry in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Johannes LAITENBERGER