

## **CHANGING LIFESTYLES IN A DECADE: 2020 VISION FOR EUROPE**

Over the next ten years, we want to bring about a major change of lifestyle in Europe. Our aim is to lead Europe out of unemployment, recession and inequality into a new age of prosperity and opportunity.

By summer 2010, an EU summit will adopt a new 10-year economic, social and environmental strategy. The Commission calls this the EU 2020 strategy. We, as the European Parliament's main progressive force, want to shape that strategy. So we now present detailed proposals, based on our belief that Europe must be more than a market.

In this policy framework, "2020 Vision", we envisage a Europe in which people will embrace and benefit from a new green lifestyle. Our proposals will make Europe one of the most successful and competitive regions in the world, creating the high quality of life that should be the hallmark of our advanced society.

With our policies, Europe will create ten million jobs within a decade, three million of them in the green economy, and end homelessness by 2015. Eradicating poverty will be a central goal and we will work for a coordinated European housing strategy.

Improving skills and harnessing the potential of technology will be important tools. So, every young person leaving the education system will be offered a high-quality training course that meets their needs and every citizen will have free broadband.

Our new sustainable lifestyle in Europe will lead the world and respond to the challenges of globalisation and climate change in a way that safeguards future generations.

Greed and waste underpinned the recent problems of our society. We want reforms in our financial system to prevent unregulated traders from ever again bringing us to the brink of ruin. We will promote legislation that ends inequality and creates a society of solidarity and social justice.

### **A new green lifestyle**

Turning our economies around to make them green rather than polluting, creates opportunities that we intend to seize, so that a greener Europe will also be a fairer, more prosperous Europe.

The EU has already made three key commitments for 2020: to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent; to boost renewable energy by 20 per cent; and to cut energy use by 20 per cent through greater efficiency.

To achieve those goals, we want the EU to create new jobs in transport, renewable energy and energy efficiency. That in turn will require investment and incentives for research, innovation, education and training. Our policies will, for example, cut traffic pollution by bringing in intelligent transport management systems and green car programmes.

The goals must be taken seriously. That means, first, that we need to monitor government progress on putting legislation into effect — and we need to act on failures. Second, people must be helped to adopt green lifestyles by having all the information they need — on energy efficiency, green products and recycling, for example — to make informed choices.

## **Supporting one another**

Across Europe, communities have been threatened by unemployment, poverty and inequality. Yet the goal of full employment in high quality jobs — and with it, opportunity and prosperity — is entirely realistic.

We need action to hold society together and promote solidarity.

People deserve decent and secure jobs in which they are treated with dignity. To achieve that, European legislation should strengthen rights at work, promote equality between women and men and provide for closer discussions between unions and management. We also want targets and financial support. If necessary, we should name and shame governments that fail to play their part.

All young people should be offered high-quality training after they finish their education. At the same time, we should help older people to stay at work if they wish to — and we should ensure that immigrant workers can make their full contribution to society as well.

It is unacceptable that nearly 80 million people in the EU live in poverty. We need a policy push to eradicate the problem and as a signal of our intentions we want an EU target of ending homelessness by 2015.

A properly financed EU budget will be crucially important in supporting such measures. For example, we need EU-level investment in care and support services for children, the elderly and disabled people. Changes in legislation will be needed to allow the use of EU funds in promoting a coordinated housing policy. But we should not hesitate to make the reforms that are needed.

Every corner of Europe should have the same opportunities. We will promote action to ensure that there are no pockets of inequality in our 27 member countries, no isolated areas of deprivation.

Securing access for everyone to public services, reforming the common agricultural policy and streamlining regional policy will be important in achieving this goal. We set out specific policy action too, such as providing free broadband across Europe and investing in Europe-wide networks for energy and transport.

## **From recovery to prosperity**

Our proposals will lead Europe from management of the current crisis to long-term and sustainable prosperity.

A painful lesson of recent years has been that the EU-wide drive to deregulation failed us. We need an economy that serves social justice, environmental goals and the challenges of an ageing population.

Recklessness in the financial sector must never again be allowed to jeopardise economic and social progress, undermine economies, destroy families and burden EU taxpayers. The financial sector must quickly be brought under proper regulation that restores it to its historic purpose of supporting the real economy.

## **Paying the bills**

Ambitious goals need an ambitious budget. Cutbacks by ministers have left key programmes such as Galileo without the funds they need. We want the money put back in those budgets and full funding of the EU budget to the agreed 1.24 per cent of gross national income.

Tax policy has a key role to play, beginning with a concerted EU fight against tax havens and tax dumping, to ensure that everyone makes their contribution. We want a common EU tax base and steps towards harmonising VAT rates. Large international transfers of funds should be taxed and tax policy overall should help to deliver Europe's green future.

An EU investment strategy linked to our 2020 vision should be supported by a stronger role for the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In addition, Eurobonds should be introduced to finance projects of common interest.

## **Partners for progress**

There is a role for everyone in our 2020 vision. Local and regional government, the unions and employers, NGOs and others will be able to make their contribution. National parliaments and the European Parliament will cooperate closely in making the vision a reality and in ensuring that this is done with the greatest possible degree of openness and accountability.

In our 2020 vision, the European Union will play a leading international role in reforming the management of world affairs in the interests of a more just, more equal and more sustainable planet.

We should not rely on GDP as the only way of monitoring the success of the strategy. We need new indicators to measure prosperity, well-being and quality of life and we ask the European Commission now to come forward with proposals.

The primary aim of EU policy should be to improve people's quality of life. We will continue to work on our proposals and in 2010 we will come forward with further detail.

Our focus now is on simple, practical policy ideas. Our goal for the future is to bring long-term, lasting benefits to our 500 million citizens.

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