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Ohessa lähetetään perustuslain 97§:n mukaisesti komission 11.12.2007 julkaisema tiedonantopaketti maaliskuussa 2008 kokoontuvalle Eurooppa-neuvostolle. Ohessa komission tiedonantopakettiin kuuluvat asiakirjat siltä osin kuin ne on julkaistu suomen- ja ruotsinkielisinä. Loput asiakirjat toimitetaan ohessa englanninkielisinä.

Lisäksi ohessa lähetetään EU-ministerivaliokunnassa 25.1.2008 hyväksytty muistio ”Komission Lissabon-tiedonantopaketti Eurooppa-neuvostolle – uuden kauden (2008-2010) käynnistäminen, Suomen linjaukset kevään 2008 Eurooppa-neuvostoa varten”.

EU-asioiden valtiosihteeri Jari Luoto

LIITTEET

Asiasanat	Lissabonin strategia
Hoitaa	**UM, VNEUS**
Tiedoksi	ALR, EUE, LVM, OM, OPM, SM, STM, TEM, TPK, VM, VNK, YM , MMM

Valtioneuvoston EU-sihteeristö 24.1.2008

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KOMISSION LISSABON-TIEDONANTOPAKETTI EUROOPPA-NEUVOSTOLLE – UUDEN KAUDEN (2008-2010) KÄYNNISTÄMINEN
Suomen linjaukset kevään 2008 Eurooppa-neuvostoa varten

1. JOHDANTO

Komissio julkaisi 11.12.2007 tiedonantopaketin Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiasta, joka toimitetaan 13.-14.3.2008 pidettävälle Eurooppa-neuvoston kokoukselle. Strategiaraportti[1] sisältää komission ehdotukset siitä, miten strategiaa pitäisi viedä eteenpäin. Tiedonantopaketissa on arvio kunkin jäsenvaltion (ja euroalueen) edistymisestä kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa toteuttamisessa. Komissio on arvioinut yksityiskohtaisesti myös edistymisen politiikanlohkoittain. Lisäksi Lissabonin paketti sisältää seuraavat asiakirjat: 1) ehdotus neuvoston suositukseksi maakohtaisten suositusten ja seurattavien asioiden tarkistamiseksi[2]; 2) ehdotus neuvoston suositukseksi, jolla yhdennetyt suuntaviivat vahvistetaan; 3) uusi yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma; ja 4) analyysi rakennerahastojen suuntaamisesta uudelleen kasvun ja työllisyyden tukemiseksi.

EU-ministerivaliokunnalle esitetään,

että EU-ministerivaliokunta puoltaisi tässä muistiossa esitettyjä linjauksia Suomen valmistellessa maaliskuun 2008 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokousta eri neuvostokokoonpanoissa. Lisäksi EU-ministerivaliokuntaa pyydetään ottamaan kantaa kohdan 4 ehdotukseen. Muistion pääasiallinen sisältö käännetään englanniksi.

2. ANALYYSI VUOSIEN 2005-2007 KAUDEN SAAVUTUKSISTA

Komissio lähtee siitä, että uudistamalla Lissabonin strategian vuonna 2005 ja suuntaamalla sen kasvuun ja työllisyyteen Eurooppa on päässyt pitkälle. Komission mukaan tulokset ovat jo nähtävissä. Talous on paljon paremmassa kunnossa kuin vuonna 2005. Kasvu on vahvaa. Talouskasvun odotetaan kiihtyvän vuoden 2005 1,8 prosentista 2,9 prosenttiin vuonna 2007 ja 2,4 prosenttiin vuonna 2008. Vaikka suurin osa viimeaikaisesta kasvusta on noususuhdanteen ansiota, jäsenvaltioiden rakenneuudistuksilla on myös ollut vaikutusta.

Viimeisten kahden vuoden aikana on luotu lähes 6,5 miljoonaa työpaikkaa, ja vuoteen 2009 mennessä luotaneen vielä toiset 5 miljoonaa. Työttömyyden odotetaan laskevan alle 7 prosentin eli alimmilleen sitten 1980-luvun puolivälin. Työllisyysaste on tällä hetkellä 66 prosenttia, eli se on noussut paljon lähemmäs Lissabonin tavoitetta, joka on 70 prosenttia. Ensimmäisen kerran kymmeneen vuoteen työl-

[1] Komission tiedonanto Eurooppa-neuvostolle: Strategiaraportti uudistetusta Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiasta: uuden kauden (2008-2010) käynnistäminen – Uudistamista on jatkettava, KOM (2007) 803 lopullinen (OSA I), 11.12.2006.
[2] Neuvoston suositus 2007/209/EY, annettu 27 päivänä maaliskuuta 2007, EUVL L 92, 3.4.2007.

lisyyden voimakas kasvu on kulkenut käsi kädessä tuottavuuden vankan kasvun kanssa. EU:hun äskettäin liittyneissä jäsenvaltioissa elintaso nousee selvästi.

Komissio esittää tavoitteiden säilyttämistä ennallaan, koska strategia näyttäisi toimivan. Tämä vastaa pitkälti Suomen näkemystä ja aikaisempia kannanottoja. Tämän vuoksi on syytä keskittyä toimeenpanoon erityisesti niillä osa-alueilla, joilla on edistytty hitaasti. Tällaisia ovat mm. palvelujen sisämarkkinat, rahoitusmarkkinoiden yhdentäminen, verkostotoimialat (sähkö ja kaasu) ja sosiaaliturvajärjestelmien uudistaminen.

Komissio toteaa taloustilanteen olevan hyvä ja katsoo tämän olevan osin seurausta toimeenpannuista rakenteellisista Lissabon-uudistuksista. Rakenteelliset uudistukset ovat kiistatta vaikuttaneet talouskasvuun ja tuottavuuteen, mutta välttämättä niiden käynnistämistä ei voida lukea Lissabonin strategian ansioksi. On kuitenkin hieman liian aikaista tehdä johtopäätöksiä siitä, kuinka suuri osa tuottavuuden kasvusta pohjautuu rakenteellisiin uudistuksiin ja kuinka suuri osa suotuisiin suhdanteisiin. Joka tapauksessa strategian avulla on voitu suunnata jäsenvaltioiden huomio kasvun ja kilpailukyvyn kannalta keskeisiin uudistuksiin ja panostuksiin.

Suomi katsoo, että komissio olisi voinut ottaa analyysissään huomioon korostetummin nykyisen taloustilanteen epävarmuudet ja riskit (kuten rahoitusmarkkinoiden epävakaus), jotka saattavat hidastaa kasvua ja pysäyttää myönteisen työllisyyskehityksen.

3. LISSABONIN STRATEGIAN TOTEUTUS SEURAAVAN KAUDEN AIKANA (2008-2010)

3.1 Pääpaino jatkuvuudessa

Komission mukaan seuraavalla kolmevuotiskaudella jäsenvaltioiden keskeinen haaste on toteuttaa jäljellä olevat uudistukset. Koska uudistusten toteuttaminen ja tuloksien saaminen vie aikaa, strategia ei nyt tarvitse suuria muutoksia. Vuonna 2006 maaliskuun Eurooppa-neuvoston hyväksymät painopistealueet (osaaminen ja innovaatiot; yritysympäristö; ihmisiin investointi ja työmarkkinoiden uudistaminen; energia ja ilmastonmuutos) säilyvät ennallaan.

Suomi pitää strategian nykyisiä painopisteitä perusteltuina, sillä ne vastaavat kasvun ja työllisyyden haasteisiin Suomessa ja Euroopassa ja ovat osoittautuneet toimiviksi. Painopisteet ovat hyvin pitkälle yhteneväisiä nykyisen hallituksen ohjelman kanssa. Tämän vuoksi on hyvä, että painopisteet pysyvät muuttumattomina ja tulevalla kolmivuotiskaudella keskitytään viemään loppuun jo sovitut uudistukset. Suomi pitää tärkeänä, että tulevaisuudessa pohditaan, miten strategia ottaa huomioon muilla alueilla (esimerkiksi rahoituskehyksien osalta) tapahtuvan kehityksen ja kannanmuodostuksen. Tällä parannetaan EU:n toiminnan johdonmukaisuutta.

3.2 Ulkoinen ulottuvuus

Komission mukaan EU voi parhaiten vastata globalisaation haasteisiin Lissabonin strategian avulla. EU:n ulkoisten toimien muotoilu on otettava tehokkaammin huomioon strategian toteuttamisessa, koska strategia toimii globaalissa toimintaympäristössä.

Suomi pitää Lissabonin strategian ulkoisen ulottuvuuden vahvistamista tärkeänä. EU:n sisämarkkinoiden avoimuuden ja dynaamisuuden vahvistaminen on edellytys sille, että EU voi toimia tehokkaasti myös globaaleilla markkinoilla. EU:n on perusteltua toimia edelläkävijänä mm. standardien asettamisessa ja edistämisessä (esimerkiksi ympäristöteknologiat, työelämän standardit). On myös tärkeää kehittää EU:n ja sen kauppakumppaneiden välistä sääntely-yhteistyötä.

Suomi pitää tärkeänä, että avoimuuden, markkinoillepääsyn ja tasapuolisten kilpailuolosuhteiden merkitys huomioidaan kasvu- ja kilpailukykytekijänä. Kilpailukykynäkökohdat ovat keskeisiä EU:n monenkeskisissä ja alueellisissa vapaakauppaneuvotteluissa sekä kehitettäessä EU:n omia kauppapoliittisia välineitä. Monenvälisten kauppaneuvotteluiden lisäksi EU:n on hyvä olla aktiivinen myös kahdenvälisten kauppasopimusten aikaansaamiseksi.

Suomi katsoo, että raaka-aineiden saatavuuteen tulisi kiinnittää huomiota yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmassa, koska komissio valmistelee erillistä aloitetta aiheesta (odotetaan valmistuvan touko/kesäkuussa 2008).

EU:n tulisi säilyttää vapaakauppaa tukevan peruslinjansa myös tulevaisuudessa taloudellisten ulkosuhteiden lähtökohtana. Suomi katsoo myös, että kansainvälisen toimintaympäristön vakaus on EU:lle tärkeä edellytys globalisaation hyötyjen saavuttamiseksi. Tämän takia Suomi tukee vuoropuhelun kehittämistä ja kokemusten vaihtoa kolmansien maiden kanssa.

Ilmastopolitiikassa EU:n on jatkettava kansainvälisiä ponnisteluja kattavan ilmastosopimuksen aikaansaamiseksi myös siitä syystä, että ilmastopolitiikka asettaa kilpailukykyhaasteita teollisuuden toiminnalle.

3.3 Yhdennetyt suuntaviivat

Talouspolitiikan ja työllisyyden yhdennetyt suuntaviivat määrittelevät Lissabonin strategian tavoitteet, jotka koskevat makro-, mikro- ja työllisyyspolitiikan täytäntöönpanoa. Komissio ehdottaa, että jäsenmaiden vuonna 2005 yksimielisesti sopimat suuntaviivat säilytetään ennallaan seuraavan kauden aikana.

Suomi pitää hyvänä, että komissio ehdottaa yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen pitämistä ennallaan. Tämän vuoksi on hyvä, ettei sosiaalisesta ulottuvuudesta ole laadittu omia suuntaviivoja vaan se on sisällytetty vahvemmin strategian nykyiseen rakenteeseen. Suomi tukee Lissabonin strategian tiiviimpää vuorovaikutusta sosiaalisen ulottuvuuden avoimen koordinaatiomenetelmän kanssa. Sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon edistäminen tulisi tiiviimmin nostaa Lissabonin strategian yhteyteen Euroopan sukupuolten tasa-arvoa koskevan sopimuksen mukaisesti.

Suuntaviivaan 18 (elämänvaiheajatteluun perustuvan työn edistäminen) liittyen on lisätty kappale lastenhoidon edistämisestä. Suomessa päivähoitoa tarjotaan kaikille alle kouluikäisille lapsille. Kun asiaa mitataan päivähoidon käytöllä, Suomi ei saavuta tavoitteita[3], subjektiivisesta päivähoito-oikeudesta huolimatta, koska vanhemmat valitsevat toisin. On tärkeää, että tuloksia raportoidessa Suomi tuo jatkossa esille sen, että tilanne lastenhoidon suhteen on hyvä, vaikka tilastot eivät sitä välttämättä näytä.

3.4 Jäsenvaltiotason arviointi

Paketti sisältää myös maakohtaiset arvioinnit edistymisestä kussakin jäsenvaltiossa ja euroalueella. Komissio ehdottaa Suomelle edelleen maakohtaisten suositusten sijaan ns. seurantakohteita (’points to watch’).

[3] Tavoite: lastenhoitopalveluja tarjotaan vuoteen 2010 mennessä vähintään 90 prosentille kolmevuotiaista ja sitä vanhemmista alle kouluikäisistä lapsista ja vähintään 33 prosentille alle kolmevuotiaista lapsista.

Suomi pitää arviota Suomen työllisyyden haasteista osuvana. Rakennetyöttömyys, työmarkkinoiden kohtaamattomuus -ongelma sekä maahanmuuttopolitiikka ovat myös Suomen oman arvion mukaan keskeisiä haasteitamme, joihin vastaamme mm. kehittämällä omaa kansallista joustoturvamallia.

Palvelualojen kehittämisen tarve ja viittaus kilpailun lisäämiseen ja tuottavuuden parantamiseen palvelusektorilla ovat kannatettavia. Suomi pyrkii (uuden hallitusohjelman pohjalta) vastaamaan tähän haasteeseen hankekokonaisuudella, johon kuuluvat mm. kilpailurajoituslain uudistaminen, palveludirektiivin tehokas implementointi, sisämarkkinapolitiikan yleinen kehittäminen sekä kuluttajien aseman vahvistaminen.

3.5 Yhteisön Lissabonin ohjelma

Komission tiedonantopaketti sisältää uuden yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman, jossa vahvistetaan EU:n ensisijaiset toimet seuraavalle kolmevuotiskaudelle. Uusi ohjelma sisältää komission mukaan 10 keskeisintä tavoitetta kasvun ja työllisyyden edistämiseksi vuoteen 2010 mennessä. Komissio ehdottaa, että EU:n toimielimet ottavat kantaa ohjelman tavoitteisiin ja hankkeisiin.

Komission ehdotus uudeksi yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaksi merkitsee olennaista muutosta aiempaan yhteisön ohjelmaan verrattuna. Merkittävä parannus on se, että tulevan ohjelman rakenne on aiempaa selkeämpi. Suomi pitää erityisen tervetulleena, että ohjelma perustuu neljän painopisteen varaan ja tukee yhteisöohjelman yleisiä tavoitteita. Komission ehdotus sisältää varsin tarkan listan mm. lainsäädäntöaloitteista ja niiden käsittelyaikatauluista, mikä tuo ohjelmaan sisältöä ja on sinänsä hyvä asia. Toisaalta tietyt toimenpiteet näyttäisivät olevan sellaisia, jotka itse asiassa kuuluvat jäsenmaiden toimivaltaan. On tärkeää vielä varmistaa ohjelman seurannassa, että ohjelma tuo EU-tasolla aidosti lisäarvoa kansallisten toimenpiteiden ohella. Ohjelman yksityiskohtainen hankelista ja siihen liittyvä käsittelyaikataulu on tutkittava vielä tarkkaan ennen kuin siihen voidaan sitoutua tulevan neuvostotyön osalta.

3.6 Erityishuomioita komission ehdottamiin toimiin painopistealueilla

Komissio ehdottaa uusia toimenpiteitä neljällä painopistealueella, jotka kevään 2006 Eurooppaneuvosto asetti uudistetun strategian perustaksi. Osa niistä sisältyy myös uuteen yhteisön ohjelmaan. Komissio katsoo, että painopistealueiden määrittäminen on keino tuoda eri tasot ja toimijat (jäsenmaat, yhteisö) yhteen. Jos on kyse toimista, jotka jäsenvaltioiden on toteutettava, ne olisi kirjattava kansallisiin uudistusohjelmiin. Jos ne edellyttävät yhteisön tason toimintaa, niitä olisi toteutettava yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman puitteissa. Lisäksi monet niistä voidaan toteuttaa ainoastaan, jos niiden tukena on proaktiivinen ulkosuhdepolitiikka, jonka tavoitteena on auttaa EU:ta ohjaamaan globalisaatiota ja hyötymään sen tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista.

Investointi ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistaminen: Komissio ehdottaa, että jäsenvaltiot ja EU investoisivat enemmän ihmisiin pitämällä työllisyyden ja koulutuksen lähtökohtana elämänkaariajattelua. Koulutukseen ja osaamiseen olisi näin ollen panostettava kaikissa ikävaiheissa. Työmarkkinoita olisi nykyaikaistettava ja sosiaalista yhteenkuuluvuutta vahvistettava.

Suomi pitää hyvänä, että komissio korostaa ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistamiseen panostamista. Esitetty tarve kehittää yhteiseurooppalainen työmarkkina-koulutustarveennakointijärjestelmä on tervetullut. Työperusteiseen maahanmuuttoon on myös kiinnitetty entistä enemmän huomiota, mikä on Suomen mukaan tervetullutta.

Suomi pitää kuitenkin tärkeänä, että tuottavuuden merkitystä käsiteltäisiin strategiassa laajemmin sisällyttäen myös työelämän kehittämisen.

Yritysympäristö: Jäsenvaltioissa olisi noudatettava yhdennettyä toimintalinjaa pienyrityksiä koskevan säädöksen avulla ja edistettävä miljoonien pk-yritysten kehitystä ja kasvua, sillä pk-yritykset tarjoavat yhdeksän kymmenestä työpaikasta.

Yrittäjyyden edistäminen on Suomen elinkeinopolitiikan painopisteitä ja yhä tärkeämpää myös innovaatiopolitiikan kannalta. Komissio korostaa hyvin vahvasti pk-yrityksiä ja keinoja edistää pk-yritysten toimintaedellytyksiä (esim. pienyrityksiä koskeva eurooppalainen säädös[4]). Suomi katsoo, ettei pk-yritysten erityiskohtelu saa johtaa yritysten kasvun esteisiin siten, että pk-yritykset eivät halua kasvaa vain siksi, että saattaisivat menettää erityiskohtelunsa pk-yrityksenä. Kasvukynnyksiä ei tulisi synnyttää vaan pikemminkin poistaa. Selvästi nykyistä suurempi osa pk-yrityksistä tulisi saada nopean kasvun yrityksiksi. Tämän vuoksi komission pk-aloitteiden (ml. EU-lainsäädäntöön mahdollisesti ehdotettavien pk-poikkeusten) sisällöstä on saatava lisätietoa, ennen kuin niitä voidaan varauksettomasti tukea.

Paremman sääntelyn osalta Suomi katsoo, että yritysten hallinnollisen taakan vähentämisessä keskeinen merkitys on komission strategiaraportissakin todetulla hallintomenettelyjen ja viranomaisten käytännön menettelytapojen yksinkertaistamisella ja nykyaikaistamisella. Yritysten hallinnollisen taakan keventämisen osalta yhtenä aikarajana on aiemmin ollut, että jäsenmaat esittävät taakan vähentämisstrategiansa viimeistään vuonna 2008. Komission strategiaraportissa mainittu kevät 2008 on Suomen kannalta liian kunnianhimoinen tavoite.

Komission marraskuussa 2007 julkaisema sisämarkkinatarkastelu (Single Market Review) tulisi huomioida olennaisena osana yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman täytäntöönpanoa ja seurantaa. Sisämarkkinatarkastelussa keskeisesti esiin nostetut linjaukset sisämarkkinoiden toiminnan tehostamisesta mm. uusien työskentelymenetelmien ja monipuolisempien välineiden, sisämarkkinasääntöjen täytäntöönpanon ja soveltamisen vahvistamisen sekä jäsenmaiden välisen yhteistyön lisäämisen keinoin tulee olla keskeisiä yhteisön ohjelman toteutuksessa.

Panostaminen osaamiseen ja innovaatioihin: Komissio ehdottaa, että ”viidennen vapauden” toteutumista eli tiedon vapaata liikkuvuutta olisi edistettävä perustamalla todellinen eurooppalainen tutkimusalue. Tavoitteena on, että perusedellytykset innovaatioiden edistämiselle ja palkitsemiselle ovat EU:ssa kohdallaan. EU:n olisi myös yhdistettävä resurssejaan suurten infrastruktuurihankkeiden edistämiseksi. Lisäksi komissio katsoo, että tieto- ja viestintätekniikka on avain tuottavuuden lisäämiseen ja innovaatioiden edistämiseen. Tämän takia jäsenvaltioita kehotetaan laatimaan omat laajakaistastrategiansa ja asettamaan kansalliset tavoitteet nopeiden Internet-yhteyksien käytölle. Päämääränä on, että 30 prosenttia EU:n väestöstä ja kaikki koulut käyttävät nopeita yhteyksiä vuoteen 2010 mennessä.

Komission strategiaraportissa esitetyt toimet osaamiseen ja innovaatioihin investointien osalta perustuvat eurooppalaista tutkimusaluetta[5] koskevan vihreän kirjan ajatuksille sekä laaja-alaisen innovaatiopolitiikan strategiaan. Raportissa esitetyt sekä yhteisön että jäsenmaiden toimet ovat pääosin kannatettavia. Käytettävissä olevan tiedon perusteella komission suunnitelmaan ns. tutkijan passista Suomi ei voi suhtautua varauksettomasti ennen kuin ehdotuksen tarkempi sisältö (perustelut, kriteerit, käyttökohteet) on tiedossa.

Energia ja ilmastomuutos: Komissio pitää tärkeänä, että energian sisämarkkinat saadaan valmiiksi ja EU:n ilmastopaketti hyväksytään. Jäsenvaltioita kehotetaan mm. asettamaan pakolliset energiansäästötavoitteet julkisille rakennuksille ja pitämään energiatehokkuutta järjestelmällisesti yhtenä julkisten hankintojen valintaperusteena.

Suomi pitää tärkeänä, että energia ja ilmastonmuutos näkyvät vahvasti Lissabonin strategiassa. EU:n energia- ja ilmastopolitiikalla on merkittäviä vaikutuksia eurooppalaisten yritysten kilpai-

[4] Small Business Act (SBA).
[5] ERA - European Research Area.

lukykyyn. Suomi pitää tärkeänä, että EU:n energia- ja ilmastopoliittiset toimet tehdään mahdollisimman kustannustehokkaasti, jotta taloudelliset ja yhteiskunnalliset kustannukset eivät muodostu yritysten ja kansalaisten kannalta kohtuuttomiksi.

Energia- ja ilmastopolitiikka on Suomen hallituksen painopisteitä. Suomi on sitoutunut tekemään oman osansa EU:n energia- ja ilmastopolitiikan tavoitteisiin pääsemiseksi. Suomi pitää erittäin tärkeänä, että kansalliset olosuhteet ja jo toteutetut toimet, mukaan lukien uusiutuvan energian käytön lähtötaso ja energialähteiden monipuolisuus, otetaan huomioon EU-tavoitteiden taakanjaossa.

Suomi pitää EU:n päästökauppajärjestelmän kehittämistä oleellisena osana EU:n ilmastopolitiikan toteuttamisessa. Päästökauppajärjestelmän uudistuksessa on otettava huomioon järjestelmän vaikutukset erityisesti globaaleilla markkinoilla kilpailevan energiaintensiivisen teollisuuden kilpailukykyyn.

Suomi kannattaa energian sisämarkkinoiden kehittämistä, jotta investointiedellytyksiä voidaan parantaa ja kilpailua lisätä tavoitteena alhaisemmat energian hinnat. Suomi myös kannattaa komission sähkön ja kaasun sisämarkkinoita koskevan lainsäädäntöpaketin yleisiä tavoitteita. Lainsäädäntöehdotusten käsittelyssä on tärkeää, että huomioidaan erilaiset tavat toteuttaa tehokkaasti sisämarkkinoiden toimivuus.

Suomi pitää teknologian kehittämistä ja käyttöönottoa yhtenä keskeisimpänä toimenpiteenä energia- ja ilmastopolitiikan tavoitteiden saavuttamisessa. Energiateknologian kehittäminen on olennainen tekijä päästövähennyksiin pyrittäessä. Samalla uusien energiateknologioiden tutkimukseen ja kehittämiseen panostaminen parantaa eurooppalaisen teollisuuden kilpailukykyä.

Suomi valmistelee parhaillaan vuoteen 2020 ulottuvaa kansallista energia- ja ilmastostrategiaa, jossa määritellään keinot EU-tavoitteista Suomelle seuraavien tavoitteiden toteuttamiseksi. Strategia sisältää myös uuden tiukennetun energiansäästöohjelman. Suomessa valmistellaan parhaillaan lisäksi ehdotusta kestävien julkisten hankintojen toimintasuunnitelmasta sekä eri ministeriöissä kestävän kehityksen ohjelmia.

3.7 Lissabonin strategia ja alue- ja rakennepolitiikka

Komissio analysoi rakennerahastojen suuntaamista uudelleen kasvun ja työllisyyden tukemiseksi. EU:n uuden sukupolven alue- ja rakennepoliittisten ohjelmien varoista tietty osa[6] on korvamerkittävä Lissabonin strategian kilpailukyky- ja työllisyystavoitteiden tukemiseen, jotta niiden vaikutus kasvuun ja työllisyyteen voitaisiin maksimoida. Vuosina 2007–2013 EU:n alue- ja rakennepolitiikkaan on käytettävissä 347 miljardia euroa.

[6] Vähintään 60% konvergenssitavoitteessa ja vähintään 75% kilpailukyky- ja työllisyystavoitteessa on korvamerkittävä.

Suomi katsoo, että EU:n alue- ja rakennepolitiikalla on mahdollista parantaa Lissabon-tavoitteiden saavuttamista. Rakennerahastovarojen uudelleenkohdentaminen, jossa Lissabon-tavoitteet ovat keskeisiä, on lisännyt EU:n politiikkavälineiden käytön johdonmukaisuutta ja tehokkuutta.

Suomi on toteuttanut hyvin rakennerahastotoimien kilpailukyky- ja työllisyystavoitteen korvamerkintävelvoitetta. Uudessa työvoima- ja elinkeinoministeriössä rakennerahastoja koskevat hallintoviranomaistehtävät on yhdistetty, mikä helpottaa kilpailukyky- ja työllisyyspolitiikan tavoitteiden yhteensovittamista.

4. Lissabonin strategian vaikuttavuuden vahvistaminen

Jäsenvaltioiden talouksien välillä on voimakas keskinäinen riippuvuus. Jos kaikki liikkuvat samaan suuntaan ja uudistusten ajoitus sovitetaan yhteen, saadaan monia hyötyjä. Uudistetussa strategiassa yhdennetyt suuntaviivat ovat talouspolitiikan tiiviimmän koordinoinnin keskeinen väline. Ne tarjoavat yleiset puitteet, joissa eri kehitysvaiheissa olevat jäsenvaltiot, joiden yhteiskunnalliset järjestelmät ja institutionaaliset puitteet ovat erilaiset, voivat toteuttaa omia kansallisia uudistusohjelmiaan.

Komission mukaan uudistusten koordinointia on edelleen vahvistettava. Komissio ehdottaa, että jäsenvaltiot keskustelevat siitä, millaisella politiikalla ne vastaavat maakohtaisiin suosituksiin ja seurattaviin asioihin osana neuvostossa tehtävää monenvälistä seurantaa. Keskustelun jäsentämiseksi kunkin jäsenvaltion pitäisi esittää täytäntöönpanoraporttien osana toimintasuunnitelma, jossa luetellaan toimenpiteet, jotka jäsenvaltio aikoo suositusten ja/tai seurattavien asioiden johdosta toteuttaa.

Suomi pitää tärkeänä, että Lissabonin strategian vaikuttavuutta jäsenmaittain parannettaisiin jatkossa. Maakohtaisilla suosituksilla ja seurantakohteilla voidaan entistä paremmin ohjata Lissabonin strategian toteuttamista jos maakohtaiset suositukset ja seurantakohteet ovat hyvin kohdennettuja.

Komissio ehdottaa koordinaation vahvistamisesta siten, että jäsenmaat sisällyttäisivät kansallisiin edistymisraportteihinsa toimintasuunnitelmat maakohtaisten suositusten ja seurantakohteiden toteuttamisesta. Suomi tukee tätä ehdotusta ja katsoo, että sen tulisi koskea kaikkia yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen politiikkalohkoja.

Suomi katsoo, että jo nykyinen raportointirakenne mahdollistaisi menettelyn ilman uusia raportointivelvollisuuksia. Raportteja tulisi virtaviivaistaa ja syventää niiden käytettävyyden parantamiseksi.

EUROOPAN YHTEISÖJEN KOMISSIO

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KOMISSION TIEDONANTO EUROOPPA-NEUVOSTOLLE

Strategiaraportti uudistetusta Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiasta: uuden kauden (2008–2010) käynnistäminen

Uudistamista jatkettava

UUDISTAMISTA JATKETTAVA

Uudistamalla Lissabonin strategian vuonna 2005 ja suuntaamalla sen kasvuun ja työllisyyteen Eurooppa on päässyt pitkälle. Unionin työskentelytapaan on tullut jäädäkseen merkittävä muutos: jäsenvaltioiden ja komission läheinen kumppanuus ja selkeä vastuunjako ovat mahdollistaneet merkittävän edistymisen.

Tulokset ovat jo nähtävissä. Talous on paljon paremmassa kunnossa kuin vuonna 2005. Kasvu on vahvaa. Viimeisten kahden vuoden aikana on luotu lähes 6,5 miljoonaa työpaikkaa, ja vuoteen 2009 mennessä luotaneen vielä toiset 5 miljoonaa. Näiden lukujen takana on miljoonia eurooppalaisia, jotka on nostettu työttömyyden kurimuksesta ja joiden elämä on kääntynyt parempaan suuntaan.

Kasvu on tietysti osittain noususuhdanteen ansiota. Rakenneuudistuksilla, joita jäsenvaltiot ja unioni ovat viime vuosina toteuttaneet Lissabonin strategian puitteissa, on ollut merkitystä, ja ne takaavat parhaan suojan laskusuhdanteen varalle.

Lissabonin strategia on EU:n väline, joka kulkee muutoksen rinnalla. Se on olennainen osa niitä keinoja, joilla unioni vastaa globalisaation haasteisiin, ja se auttaa eurooppalaisia käsittelemään näitä uusia haasteita ja mahdollisuuksia.

Uudistaminen voi olla rankkaa, eikä siihen aina suhtauduta suopeasti. Uudistukset ovat kuitenkin ainoa tapa vastata tämän päivän tarpeisiin. Tähänastiset tulokset kannustavat meitä eteenpäin strategian seuraavalla kaudella.

Tämä tarkoittaa, että uudistamista on jatkettava. Liian monet eurooppalaiset ovat edelleen työttöminä. Eurooppalainen liiketoimintaympäristö ei vieläkään ole yritysten kasvun kannalta paras mahdollinen. Innovoinnin, tutkimuksen ja kehityksen edistäminen on Euroopassa edelleen hajanaista, ja yksityisen sektorin panos on vielä riittämätön. Olemme vasta alkaneet tehdä EU:sta vähäisten hiilidioksidipäästöjen taloutta. Koska talouskasvun hidastuminen maailmanlaajuisesti on mahdollista, on tärkeää jatkaa määrätietoisesti uudistamista ja lisätä talouksiemme joustavuutta.

Lissabonin strategia edellyttää vahvaa johtajuutta. EU:n johdolla syntyy tuloksia. Kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvostossa sovitut ensisijaiset toimet ovat todella panneet asioihin vauhtia. Yrityksen perustaminen on nyt lähes kaikissa jäsenvaltioissa entistä helpompaa ja nopeampaa. On sovittu yhteisistä joustoturvaperiaatteista. Tämä on vankka pohja uusille poliittisille aloitteille.

Meidän on hyödynnettävä tätä innostusta ja laadittava kunnianhimoinen luettelo uusista toimista. Tässä joitakin esimerkkejä siitä, mitä meidän on yhdessä tehtävä:

- vähennettävä koulunkäynnin keskeyttävien määrää, jotta kukaan ei jää kelkasta globalisaation aikakaudella
- luotava Eurooppaan uusi ”viides vapaus”, osaamisen vapaa liikkuvuus, jotta Eurooppa voi hyödyntää luovuuttaan
- kehitettävä nopeita internetyhteyksiä innovoinnin edistämiseksi ja Euroopan pitämiseksi internetaikakaudella eturivissä

– tuettava pieniä ja keskisuuria yrityksiä antamalla pienyrityksiä koskeva eurooppalainen säädös

– parannettava merkittävästi rakennusten energiatehokkuutta käyttämällä mittavia julkisten hankintojen määrärahoja muutoksen aikaansaamiseksi

– vahvistettava koulutuksen, tutkimuksen ja innovoinnin keskinäistä yhteyttä, erityisesti perustettavan Euroopan innovaatio- ja teknologiainstituutin toiminnan ja yhteisten teknologia-aloitteiden avulla.

Euroopalla on ainutlaatuinen tilaisuus muuttua luovaksi, moderniksi, innovaatioystävälliseksi, vähäisten hiilidioksidipäästöjen taloudeksi, jossa dynaamisen liiketoimintaympäristön, korkean osaamistason työvoiman ja laadukkaan koulutuksen tukena on vahva sosiaalinen malli. Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategian ansiosta me eurooppalaiset voimme elää väylien, mahdollisuuksien ja yhteisvastuun yhteiskunnassa, jossa voimme hyödyntää avoimuutta ulkomaailmaan ja muokata globalisaatiota eurooppalaisten arvojen mukaiseksi.

José Manuel Durão Barroso

Brysselissä 11. joulukuuta 2007

SISÄLLYSLUETTELO

1. Johdanto 5

2. Ensimmäisen Lissabonin kauden (2005–2008) aikana toteutetut rakenteelliset uudistukset 6

3. Lissabonin strategian syventäminen seuraavan kauden aikana 7

3.1. Uudistusten läpivieminen kansallisella tasolla 7

3.2. Talouspolitiikan koordinoinnin vahvistaminen 8

3.3. Yhteisön tasolla tarvittavat uudistukset, yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma mukaan lukien 9

3.4. Ulkoisten toimien muotoilu 9

3.5. Kansallisen tason, yhteisön tason ja kansainvälisten toimien yhdistäminen tehokkaaksi politiikaksi 10

4. Toimet neljällä ensisijaisella alalla 11

4.1. Investointi ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistaminen 11

4.2. Liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen erityisesti pk-yrityksissä 13

4.3. Panostus osaamiseen ja innovointiin 14

4.4. Energia ja ilmastonmuutos 16

5. Jatkotoimet keväällä 2008 kokoontuvan Eurooppa-neuvoston jälkeen 17

1. JOHDANTO

Uudistaessaan Lissabonin strategiaa vuonna 2005 Euroopan unioni ja sen jäsenvaltiot sitoutuivat uuteen kumppanuuteen, jolla pyritään turvaamaan kestävä kasvu ja työllisyys.

Nyt kun kolme vuotta on lähes kulunut, kumppanuuden tulokset ovat selvästi nähtävissä. Talouskasvun odotetaan kiihtyvän vuoden 2005 1,8 prosentista 2,9 prosenttiin vuonna 2007 ja 2,4 prosenttiin vuonna 2008. Vaikka suurin osa viimeaikaisesta kasvusta on noususuhdanteen ansiota, jäsenvaltioiden rakenneuudistuksilla on myös ollut vaikutusta. Viimeisten kahden vuoden aikana on luotu lähes 6,5 miljoonaa työpaikkaa, ja vuoteen 2009 mennessä luotaneen vielä toiset 5 miljoonaa. Työttömyyden odotetaan laskevan alle 7 prosentin eli alimmilleen sitten 1980-luvun puolivälin. Työllisyysaste on tällä hetkellä 66 prosenttia, eli se on noussut paljon lähemmäs Lissabonin tavoitetta, joka on 70 prosenttia. Ensimmäisen kerran kymmeneen vuoteen työllisyyden voimakas kasvu on kulkenut käsi kädessä tuottavuuden vankan kasvun kanssa. EU:hun äskettäin liittyneissä jäsenvaltioissa elintaso nousee selvästi.

Kaikki jäsenvaltiot eivät kuitenkaan ole toteuttaneet uudistuksia yhtä määrätietoisesti. Joissakin uudistuksissa, kuten markkinoiden avaamisessa ja työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen purkamisessa, on jääty jälkeen. Samaan aikaan olosuhteet ovat muuttumassa vähemmän suotuisiksi maailmantalouden kasvun hidastumisen, rahoitusmarkkinoiden kuohunnan ja hyödykkeiden hintojen nousun vuoksi.

Valtioiden ja hallitusten päämiehet keskustelivat lokakuussa 2007 Lissabonin epävirallisessa Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa Euroopan suhtautumisesta globalisaatioon[1]. He vahvistivat uudistetun Lissabonin strategian keskeisen aseman ja pyysivät syventämään sitä seuraavalla kaudella. Lisäksi he korostivat, että EU:n olisi käytettävä strategiaa globalisaation muokkaamiseen omien arvojensa ja etujensa mukaisesti. Unionin kehitysmalli, jossa kilpailukykyyn yhdistyvät yhteisvastuu ja kestävyys, ja sen pitkä kokemus taloudellisesta yhdentymisestä voivat olla merkittävä valtti globalisaation aikakaudella. Lissabonin sopimuksen allekirjoittamisen myötä EU siirtyy uuteen aikakauteen. Nyt kun merkittävät institutionaaliset kysymykset on ratkaistu, EU voi kiinnittää huomionsa asioihin, joilla on suora vaikutus kansalaisten jokapäiväiseen elämään.

Tämän kevään 2008 Eurooppa-neuvostolle esitettävän tiedonannon ensimmäinen osa sisältää komission ehdotukset siitä, miten strategiaa pitäisi viedä eteenpäin. Siinä korostetaan kansantalouden vakauden merkitystä ja tarvetta toteuttaa jäljellä olevat uudistukset, jotta voidaan vahvistaa niitä perusteita, joilla vakaata talouskasvua tulevaisuudessa ylläpidetään, ja auttaa EU:ta kestämään maailmantalouden epäsuotuisaa kehitystä.

Toinen osa sisältää arvion kunkin jäsenvaltion (ja euroalueen) edistymisestä kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa toteuttamisessa sekä neuvoston hyväksymät maakohtaiset suositukset[2]. Kolmas osa on oheisasiakirja, jossa on yksityiskohtainen arviointi edistymisestä politiikanlohkoittain[3]. Lisäksi Lissabonin paketti sisältää seuraavat asiakirjat: 1) ehdotus neuvoston suositukseksi maakohtaisten suositusten ja seurattavien asioiden tarkistamiseksi; 2)

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1 Euroopan yhteinen etu: menestyminen globalisaation aikakaudella - KOM(2007) 581.

2 Neuvoston suositus 2007/209/EY, annettu 27 päivänä maaliskuuta 2007 (EUVL L 92, 3.4.2007).

3 Työllisyyttä koskeva osa on myös yhteisen työllisyysraportin perusta. Siinä on myös tiivistelmä kasvualoitteen väliarvioinnista.

ehdotus neuvoston suositukseksi, jolla kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevat yhdennetyt suuntaviivat vahvistetaan; 3) uusi yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma; ja 4) analyysi rakennerahastojen suuntaamisesta uudelleen kasvun ja työllisyyden tukemiseksi.

2. ENSIMMÄISEN LISSABONIN KAUDEN (2005–2008) AIKANA TOTEUTETUT RAKENTEELLISET UUDISTUKSET

Vaikka siitä, mitä pitäisi tehdä, vallitseekin laaja yksimielisyys, toteutusvauhti on ollut epätasaista. Kaikki jäsenvaltiot ovat toteuttaneet vuoden 2005 jälkeen merkittäviä uudistuksia, mutta jotkut ovat vastanneet haasteisiin toisia määrätietoisemmin. Viimeisen vuoden aikana on ollut nähtävissä merkkejä ”uudistusväsymyksestä”.

Myönteistä kehitystä on, että budjettivajeet ovat supistuneet suhteessa BKT:hen vuoden 2005 2,5 prosentista vuodelle 2007 ennustettuun 1,1 prosenttiin ja julkinen velka on vähentynyt vuoden 2005 62,7 prosentista hieman alle 60 prosenttiin vuonna 2007. Mahdollisuutta käyttää suhteellisen vahvaa kasvua rakenteellisten alijäämien supistamiseen ei ole kuitenkaan täysin hyödynnetty, etenkään euroalueella.

Joissakin jäsenvaltioissa kasvuolosuhteiden kohenemisen rinnalla on syntynyt vähitellen epätasapainoa, mikä näkyy suurina vaihtotaseen alijääminä ja ylikuumenemisen merkkeinä, kilpailukyvyn heikkenemisenä, kotitalouksien velkaantumisena sekä asuntojen hintojen nopeana nousuna.

Euro on ollut vakauden ankkuri. Se on helpottanut yhtenäismarkkinoiden toimintaa euroalueen ja koko EU:n hyväksi. Euroalueen arvioitu potentiaalinen BKT:n kasvuvauhti on kiihtynyt 2,25 prosenttiin eli 0,2 prosenttiyksikköä vuodesta 2005, mikä on osittain rakenneuudistusten vaikutusta.

Tuottavuuden kasvu saavutti vuonna 2006 1,5 prosenttia, kun vuotuinen kasvuvauhti vuosina 2000–2005 oli 1,2 prosenttia. Eurooppa on kuitenkin jäljessä muista johtavista talouksista sekä investoinneissa tieto- ja viestintäteknologiaan että sen käytössä tuottavuuden lisäämiseen. Verkkotoimialojen ja -palvelujen avaaminen kilpailulle on ollut hidasta ja markkinoille tulolle on edelleen merkittäviä esteitä. Jotkin jäsenvaltiot ovat jäljessä sisämarkkinadirektiivien täytäntöönpanossa. Myöskään toimet teollis- ja tekijänoikeuskehyksen parantamiseksi ja standardoinnin nopeuttamiseksi eivät ole kantaneet hedelmää.

Sääntelyn parantamiseen tähtäävää EU:n suunnitelmaa toteutetaan, vaikkakin monien jäsenvaltioiden on vielä pantava täytäntöön tarvittavat välineet, kuten vaikutusten arvioinnit ja menetelmät hallinnollisen rasituksen mittaamiseksi ja vähentämiseksi.

Yrityksen perustaminen on lähes kaikissa jäsenvaltioissa entistä helpompaa ja halvempaa. Kokonaisuutena tarkasteltuna Euroopalla ei kuitenkaan ole vielä dynaamista yrittäjäkulttuuria. Liiketoimintaympäristön parantamiseksi toteutettavat toimet ovat liian usein yksittäisiä eivätkä osa pk-yritysten kasvuun tähtäävää kokonaisvaltaista lähestymistapaa. EU:n tavoitteena on kasvattaa T&K-investoinnit 3 prosenttiin suhteessa BKT:hen vuoteen 2010 mennessä. Jotta tätä tavoitetta voitaisiin lähestyä, jäsenvaltiot ovat sitoutuneet merkittävään T&K-investointien lisäämiseen, mutta kunnianhimoinen tavoitteenasettelu ei vielä näy tuloksina.

Työllisyyden kasvu on ollut vaikuttavaa, vaikkakin eräät alueet ja ryhmät eivät ole päässet tästä yhtä lailla osallisiksi. Monet jäsenvaltiot ovat alkaneet uudistaa eläkejärjestelmiään. Tämä on johtanut vanhempien työntekijöiden työllisyysasteen jatkuvaan ja voimakkaaseen nousuun, mutta 50 prosentin tavoitteeseen on vielä matkaa. Naisten työllisyysaste on 57,2 prosenttia. Se on noussut merkittävästi ja lähestyy 60 prosentin tavoitetta, vaikkakin jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi toteuttaa lisätoimia sukupuolten tasa-arvon edistämiseksi työmarkkinoilla.

Noin puolet jäsenvaltioista on kehittänyt – tai on kehittämässä – toimintalinjojaan ns. joustoturvan pohjalta. Toteutetut toimenpiteet ovat kuitenkin edelleen hajanaisia. Käynnissä on pysyvä muutos passiivisista työmarkkinoista aktiivisiin. Jäsenvaltiot uudistavat sosiaaliturvajärjestelmiä erityisesti tekemällä muutoksia vero- ja etuusjärjestelmiinsä tasapainon löytämiseksi oikeuksien ja velvollisuuksien välille. Tietyille työntekijäryhmille (esim. vasta työelämään tulleille) on tarjolla joustavampia työsopimuksia, mutta niitä tukemassa ei ole riittävästi mahdollisuuksia hankkia uutta osaamista, joiden avulla työmarkkinoilla voi edetä. Muunlaisia sopimuksia koskevien sääntöjen uudistaminen on vaikeampi tehtävä, ja se on jäänyt vähälle huomiolle. Tämän vuoksi segmentoituminen jatkuu monilla työmarkkinoilla, joilla vakituisilla työntekijöillä on hyvä työsuhdeturva, mutta muiden sopimusehdot ovat heikommat ja työsuhteen tulevaisuus epävarma.

Myöskään elinikäisessä oppimisessa ei ole päästy siihen mihin pitäisi, etenkään vähiten koulutettujen joukossa, jossa tarve on suurin. Koulutusjärjestelmät eivät vielä vastaa riittävästi työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin.

EU on ottanut ensimmäiset askeleet muuttuakseen vähäisten hiilidioksidipäästöjen yhteiskunnaksi. Koko EU:ta koskevan Kioton tavoitteen saavuttamisessa on edistytty, ja EU asetti kevään 2007 Eurooppa-neuvostossa kunnianhimoiset tavoitteet kasvihuonekaasupäästöjen vähentämiselle ja uusiutuvan energian osuuden lisäämiselle vuoteen 2020 mennessä.

Tämän tiedonannon II osassa on tarkempi selvitys edistymisestä kussakin jäsenvaltiossa.

3. LISSABONIN STRATEGIAN SYVENTÄMINEN SEURAAVAN KAUDEN AIKANA

Vaikka EU:n talous on paremmassa kunnossa kuin vuonna 2005, uuden Lissabonin kauden alkamiseen liittyy maailmantalouden kasvun hidastuminen ja rahoitusmarkkinoiden kuohunnasta sekä öljyn ja raaka-aineiden hintojen noususta johtuvat riskit. Siksi nyt onkin aika päättää strategian toteuttamisen syventämisestä. Näin voidaan lujittaa luottamusta ja vahvistaa talouden perustekijöitä mahdollisesta talouden taantumasta selviytymiseksi.

3.1. Uudistusten läpivieminen kansallisella tasolla

Seuraavalla kaudella jäsenvaltioiden keskeinen haaste on toteuttaa jäljellä olevat uudistukset, erityisesti maakohtaisissa suosituksissa ja seurattavissa asioissa esitetyillä aloilla.

Koska uudistusten toteuttaminen ja tuloksien saaminen vie aikaa, komissio ehdottaa, että nykyiset suositukset pidetään lähes entisellään ja että niitä hienosäädetään ottaen huomioon kehitys, jota on tapahtunut sen jälkeen, kun ne keväällä 2007 vahvistettiin.

EU:n uuden sukupolven koheesiopoliittisten ohjelmien varoista yli 60 prosenttia on korvamerkittävä[4] kansallisten uudistusohjelmien tukemiseen, jotta niiden vaikutus kasvuun ja työllisyyteen voitaisiin maksimoida. Vuosina 2007–2013 koheesioon on käytettävissä 347 miljardia euroa. Tätä täydentää noin 160 miljardin euron julkinen ja yksityinen kansallinen osarahoitus. Vuoteen 2013 asti käytetään vuosittain yhteensä 70 miljardia euroa, suurimmaksi osaksi kansallisten uudistusohjelmien tukemiseen. Nyt kun ohjelmasuunnitteluvaihe on saatu päätökseen, on tärkeää varmistaa, että menot vastaavat korvamerkittyjä sitoumuksia eikä niitä myöhemmin siirretä vähemmän tärkeisiin kohteisiin.

Paikalliset ja alueelliset viranomaiset ovat jo aktiivisesti mukana uudistetussa Lissabonin strategiassa korvamerkittyjen koheesio-ohjelmien ohjelmasuunnittelun ja toteuttamisen kautta. Tarvitaan lisätyötä, jotta voidaan vahvistaa laajempaa sidosryhmäosallistumista ja tehostaa kokemusten, ajatusten ja parhaiden käytäntöjen vaihtoa, mikä on ennestäänkin strategian merkittävä vahvuus. Tässä yhteydessä komissio kiittää Euroopan parlamenttia, Euroopan talous- ja sosiaalikomiteaa ja alueiden komiteaa siitä, että ne ovat olleet hyvin kiinnostuneita seuraamaan erityisesti, missä laajuudessa eri sidosryhmät osallistuvat strategiaan.

3.2. Talouspolitiikan koordinoinnin vahvistaminen

Jäsenvaltioiden talouksien välillä on voimakas keskinäinen riippuvuus. Jos kaikki liikkuvat samaan suuntaan ja uudistusten ajoitus sovitetaan yhteen, saadaan monia hyötyjä. Lissabonin strategian uusi hallintotapa, joka korostaa EU:n ja jäsenvaltioiden välistä kumppanuutta, on osoittautunut onnistuneeksi. Uudistetussa strategiassa yhdennetyt suuntaviivat ovat talouspolitiikan tiiviimmän koordinoinnin keskeinen väline. Ne tarjoavat yleiset puitteet, joissa eri kehitysvaiheissa olevat jäsenvaltiot, joiden yhteiskunnalliset järjestelmät ja institutionaaliset puitteet ovat erilaiset, voivat toteuttaa omia kansallisia uudistusohjelmiaan. Ne on määritelty riittävän laajasti, jotta poliittisen ympäristön muutokset voidaan ottaa huomioon. Myös siitä on jäsenvaltioiden ja sidosryhmien välillä vahva yksimielisyys, että suuntaviivoja ei pitäisi muuttaa ja että olisi keskityttävä toteuttamiseen[5].

Näistä syistä komissio ehdottaakin, että nykyiset suuntaviivat vahvistetaan uudelleen seuraavaksi kaudeksi, mutta päivitetään perustelut, joissa selitetään, missä kontekstissa suuntaviivat olisi toteutettava. Tähän kuuluu esimerkiksi, että painotetaan toimenpiteitä, joilla pyritään investoimaan ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistamiseen. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi käytävä kansalliset uudistusohjelmansa läpi ja varmistettava, että ne ovat ajan tasalla uuden kauden alkaessa, ja niiden olisi edelleen otettava sidosryhmät laajasti mukaan kansallisten uudistusohjelmien kehittämiseen ja toteuttamiseen.

Viimeisten kolmen vuoden kokemukset ovat osoittaneet, että uudistusten koordinointia on edelleen vahvistettava. Siksi komissio ehdottaakin, että jäsenvaltiot keskustelevat siitä, millaisella politiikalla ne vastaavat maakohtaisiin suosituksiin ja seurattaviin asioihin osana neuvostossa tehtävää monenvälistä seurantaa. Keskustelun jäsentämiseksi kunkin jäsenvaltion

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[4] Korvamerkittyjen varojen osuuden on oltava vähintään 60 prosenttia vähemmän kehittyneillä alueilla, jotka ovat lähentymisohjelmien nojalla tukikelpoisia, ja 75 prosenttia suhteellisesti vauraammilla alueilla, jotka ovat tukikelpoisia kilpailukyky- ja työllisyysohjelmien nojalla. Kynnysarvoja sovelletaan toukokuun 2004 jälkeen unioniin liittyneisiin jäsenvaltioihin vapaaehtoisesti.

[5] Evaluation of the Integrated Guideline Package for Growth and Jobs, loppuraporttiluonnos, lokakuu 2007, Eureval and Rambøll Management ja Ecofin-neuvoston päätelmät (13.11.2007).

pitäisi esittää täytäntöönpanoraporttien osana toimintasuunnitelma, jossa luetellaan toimenpiteet, jotka jäsenvaltio aikoo suositusten ja/tai seurattavien asioiden johdosta toteuttaa.

Lisäksi uudistusten koordinointi on erityisen tarpeellista euroalueen osalta. Komissio esittää ennen vuoden 2008 kesää katsauksen EMUn toiminnasta sen kymmenvuotisen taipaleen kunniaksi. Katsauksessa tehdään myös ehdotuksia koordinoinnin ja hallinnon tehostamiseksi.

3.3. Yhteisön tasolla tarvittavat uudistukset, yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma mukaan lukien

Uusi yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma on yhteisön panos uudistettuun Lissabonin strategiaan. Se olisi nähtävä kansallisten uudistusohjelmien kaltaisena ohjelmana, jossa esitetään ne yhteisön toimet, jotka tuovat eniten lisäarvoa jäsenvaltioiden uudistuksille ja jotka vaikuttavat eniten kasvuun ja työllisyyteen. Jotkut yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman toimenpiteet edellyttävät ainoastaan komission hyväksyntää, mutta useimmat edellyttävät myös neuvoston ja parlamentin ensisijaista hyväksyntää. Kaikilla EU:n toimielimillä on oltava yhteistä poliittista tahtoa päästä näistä toimenpiteistä sopimukseen seuraavan kauden aikana kasvun ja työllisyyden edistämiseksi. Yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma esitetään kokonaisuudessaan erillisessä tiedonannossa.

On tärkeää, että jäljellä olevat yhtenäismarkkinoiden aukot paikataan yhteisön tasolla, etenkin palveluiden osalta, jotta kansallisista uudistuksista voidaan saada täysi hyöty. Komissio on äskettäin esittänyt näkemyksensä 2000-luvun yhtenäismarkkinoista[6]. Joitakin ehdotetuista toimenpiteistä viedään eteenpäin yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman avulla. Niillä pyritään antamaan valtaa kuluttajille ja pienyrityksille sekä parantamaan yhtenäismarkkinasääntöjen täytäntöönpanoa ja soveltamista, esimerkiksi perustamalla kansallisen tason yhtenäismarkkinakeskuksia sekä seuraamalla säännöllisesti kulutushyödykkeiden hintakehitystä. Kuluttajalainsäädännön voimaan saattaminen antaa kuluttajille paremmat mahdollisuudet valita tuottajien väliltä, mikä lisää kilpailua.

3.4. Ulkoisten toimien muotoilu

Vaikka EU:n on suojeltava omia kansalaisiaan, etujaan ja arvojaan, protektionismi ei ole oikea ratkaisu. EU kuuluu maailman suurimpiin kaupankävijöihin ja sijoittajiin. EU:n avoimuus merkitsee teollisuudelle halvempia tuotantopanoksia, kuluttajille huokeampia hintoja ja laajempaa valikoimaa sekä liike-elämälle kannustinta kilpailuun ja uusia investointeja.

Lissabonin strategia toimii globalisoitumisen kontekstissa, ja tämä on otettava tehokkaammin huomioon sen toteuttamisessa. Tämä voidaan tehdä monilla eri tavoilla:

– EU:n pitäisi käyttää kaikkia välineitään sen varmistamiseksi, että EU:n avoimuus säilyy ja että vastapainona sen yritykset pääsevät lisääntyvässä määrin kolmansien maiden markkinoille.

  Monenvälisiä neuvotteluja, erityisesti onnistuneesti loppuun saatettuja Dohan neuvottelukierroksen tuloksia ja käynnissä olevia kahdenvälisiä kauppasopimusneuvotteluja, on käytettävä uusien markkinamahdollisuuksien

[6] 2000-luvun Euroopan yhtenäismarkkinat - KOM(2007) 724.

avaamiseksi ja tullien ja muiden kaupan esteiden poistamiseksi[7]. Neuvotteluissa olisi edistettävä myös sääntöihin perustuvaa lähestymistapaa, joka tukee sosiaalisen suojelun ja ympäristönsuojelun normien korkeaa tasoa. Lisäksi komissio raportoi vuosittain markkinoille pääsystä ja selvittää, missä maissa ja millä sektoreilla on vielä merkittäviä esteitä. Kyseisten maiden kanssa olisi periaatteessa aloitettava neuvottelut. Jos ongelmat eivät poistu, olisi harkittava kauppaa koskevien yhteisön välineiden käyttöä ja/tai toimia WTO:ssa. Erityistä huomiota kiinnitetään julkisten hankintojen markkinoille pääsyn parantamiseen ja immateriaalioikeuksien soveltamiseen, terveeseen kilpailuun sekä pk-yritysten markkinoillepääsyyn.

– EU:n pitäisi päivittää strateginen vuoropuhelunsa keskeisten kolmansien maiden kanssa molemmille osapuolille edullisten ratkaisujen löytämiseksi, tiukempien normien edistämiseksi ja sääntelyn lähentämiseksi.

  Yhtenäismarkkinoista saadun kokemuksen ansiosta EU:lla on tarjota asiantuntemusta (esim. markkinoiden yhdentämisestä, sosiaalisesta suojelusta, työllisyydestä ja työntekijöiden oikeuksista, terveydenhuollosta, ympäristönsuojelusta, kilpailusäännöistä ja tulliasioista), josta voi olla hyötyä sen keskeisille kumppaneille. Keskustelut voisivat johtaa myös ratkaisuihin sellaisissa asioissa, joissa EU:lla on strategisia etuja valvottavanaan (esim. markkinoillepääsy, energia, ilmastonmuutos, muuttoliikkeen hallinta, ihmisarvoinen työ, tekniset standardit, immateriaalioikeudet ja pk-yrityspolitiikka). Uusia lähestymistapoja, joissa otetaan huomioon kunkin kumppanin erityisluonne, olisi perustettava, esimerkkinä äskettäin perustettu transatlanttinen talousneuvosto. Erityistä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä unionin naapurimaihin.

3.5. Kansallisen tason, yhteisön tason ja kansainvälisten toimien yhdistäminen tehokkaaksi politiikaksi

Keväällä 2006 kokoontunut Eurooppa-neuvosto sopi neljästä ensisijaisesta alasta, jotka ovat uudistetun strategian tukipilarit (osaaminen ja innovointi, liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen, investointi ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistaminen, energia/ilmastonmuutos). Nämä ensisijaiset alat limittyvät toisiinsa. Yhdessä ne muodostavat yhdennetyn poliittisen lähestymistavan.

Kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvosto myös vahvisti kullekin ensisijaiselle alalle muutamia konkreettisia toimia, jotka oli määrä toteuttaa ennen ensimmäisen kauden päättymistä. Toimien toteutusaste on hyvä. Lähes kaikissa jäsenvaltioissa on nyt esimerkiksi mahdollista perustaa yritys viikossa keskitetyn palvelupisteen avulla. Yhteisistä joustoturvaperiaatteista on päästy sopuun. Hallinnollisen rasituksen vähentäminen vauhdittui merkittävästi Eurooppa-neuvoston päätettyä 25 prosentin tavoitteesta. Nämä esimerkit osoittavat, että uudistettua Lissabonin strategiaa voidaan käyttää tuottamaan välittömiä ja kouriintuntuvia etuja yrityksille ja kansalaisille. Tämä muodostaa vakaan pohjan, jolta Eurooppa-neuvosto voi edelleen edistää strategian toteuttamista sopimalla joistakin lisätoimista, jotka on määrä toteuttaa vuoteen 2010 mennessä.

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[7] Globaali Eurooppa kilpailijana maailmassa - EU:n kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiaan liittyvä tiedonanto - KOM (2006) 567.

Uudistettu strategia perustuu kumppanuuteen, jossa otetaan huomioon, että yhteisiin haasteisiin vastaaminen edellyttää, että kaikki tasot hoitavat osuutensa. Ensisijaisten alojen määrittäminen on keino tuoda eri tasot yhteen. Jos on kyse toimista, jotka jäsenvaltioiden on toteutettava, ne olisi kirjattava kansallisiin uudistusohjelmiin. Jos ne edellyttävät yhteisön tason toimintaa, niitä olisi toteutettava yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman puitteissa. Lisäksi monet niistä voidaan toteuttaa ainoastaan, jos niiden tukena on proaktiivinen ulkosuhdepolitiikka, jonka tavoitteena on auttaa EU:ta ohjaamaan globalisaatiota ja hyötymään sen tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista.

4. TOIMET NELJÄLLÄ ENSISIJAISELLA ALALLA

4.1. Investointi ihmisiin ja työmarkkinoiden uudistaminen

Joustoturva merkitsee tasapainoa työmarkkinoiden joustavuuden ja turvallisuuden välillä. Sillä pyritään varmistamaan, että kaikilla kansalaisilla on korkeatasoinen työllisyysturva eli he voivat helposti löytää hyvän työpaikan kaikissa aktiivisen elämänsä vaiheissa. Se auttaa yhtä lailla työntekijöitä kuin työnantajiakin hyödyntämään globalisaation tarjoamat mahdollisuudet. Kun työmarkkinaosapuolten kanssa on päästy sopimukseen, Eurooppa-neuvostoa pyydetään vahvistamaan komission ehdotus joustoturvan yhteisistä periaatteista[8]. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi nyt otettava periaatteet käyttöön ja räätälöitävä ne omaan erityistilanteeseensa sopiviksi.

On tärkeää tehostaa toimia, joilla torjutaan köyhyyttä ja sosiaalista syrjäytymistä ja osallistetaan marginaalissa olevia ihmisiä, erityisesti aktiivisella osallistamispolitiikalla. Köyhyyden vähentäminen on keskeisellä sijalla uudistetussa Lissabonin strategiassa, jossa painotetaan kasvua ja työllisyyttä sekä täytäntöönpanotoimia, joilla investoidaan ihmisten osaamiseen, luodaan yhtäläiset mahdollisuudet, tarjotaan riittävää sosiaalista suojelua ja kunnollisia työpaikkoja. Heikommin koulutettujen työntekijöiden, maahanmuuttajien ja työrajoitteisten tukemista on tehostettava, mm. osaamista kehittämällä.

Globalisaation aikakaudella koulutukseen ja osaamiseen panostaminen kaikissa ikävaiheissa on, paitsi ratkaisevaa Euroopan menestymisen kannalta, myös tehokkaimpia tapoja torjua epätasa-arvoa ja köyhyyttä. Lapsilla kehittyy hyvin varhain taito omaksua tietoa koko elämänsä ajan. Myöhemmin, perus- ja keskiasteen koulutuksessa, lukutaito on ehdoton edellytys menestymiselle. Joka viides 15-vuotias on kuitenkin Euroopassa vailla riittävää lukutaitoa. Joka kuudes 18–24-vuotias on käynyt vain peruskoulun. Tämän vuoksi heidän on hyvin vaikeaa päästä työmarkkinoille ja edetä siellä. Monet päätyvät pitkäaikaistyöttömiksi. Tähän liittyvien tavoitteiden saavuttamisessa ei ole Euroopassa erityisemmin edistytty. On tehtävä määrätietoisesti työtä nuorten perusosaamisen kohottamiseksi ja vähennettävä merkittävästi koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä. Resursseja on keskitettävä muutaman vuoden ajan ratkaisevan muutoksen aikaansaamiseksi.

Ulkomailla opiskelu voi olla tärkeä kannustin henkilökohtaiselle kehitykselle ja kielitaidon karttumiselle. Lähes kaksi miljoonaa eurooppalaista nuorta on voinut opiskella ulkomailla Erasmus-ohjelman välityksellä. Vielä useampien nuorten olisi päästävä hyödyntämään Erasmus-vaihtoa, niin että ajan myötä siitä tulisi tavanomainen osa korkeakouluopintoja.

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[8] Päämääränä yhteiset joustoturvaperiaatteet: uusia ja parempia työpaikkoja jouston ja turvan avulla - KOM(2007) 359.

Kun huolehditaan siitä, että työssä hankittu pätevyys tunnustetaan kaikkialla Euroopassa, ihmisillä on huomattavasti enemmän kannustimia hankkia uutta osaamista koko työuransa ajan. Eurooppalainen tutkintokehys, josta on äskettäin sovittu, auttaa saavuttamaan tämän tavoitteen, edellyttäen, että jäsenvaltiot mukauttavat kansalliset tutkintojärjestelmänsä ja -kehyksensä nopeasti siihen.

Osaamisen kehittäminen ja elinikäinen oppiminen tukevat joustoturvapolitiikkaa lisäämällä joustavuutta, työllisyysturvaa ja liikkuvuutta työpaikkojen välillä. Ammattikoulutuspolitiikkaa on vahvistettava ja kohdennettava, jotta voidaan vastata aktiivisen ikääntymisen haasteeseen ja lisätä tuottavuutta ja työllistettävyyttä. Euroopan sosiaalirahasto voi olla tässä merkittävästi mukana.

Tulevaisuuden osaamistarpeiden ennustamiseksi ja seuraamiseksi olisi tehtävä enemmän. Useilla aloilla on huutava työvoimapula ja osaamisvaje, ja EU:n on parannettava työvoiman liikkuvuutta alueellisesti ja kansallisesti sekä määriteltävä hallittu maahanmuuttopolitiikka, johon liittyy toimenpiteitä maahanmuuttajien taloudellisen ja sosiaalisen kotoutumisen parantamiseksi.

Yhtenäismarkkinakatsauksen ohella komissio on esittänyt näkemyksensä väyliä, mahdollisuuksia ja yhteisvastuuta koskevaksi ohjelmaksi ja käynnistänyt julkisen kuulemisen saadakseen näkemyksiä näistä tärkeistä kysymyksistä. Niitä käytetään laadittaessa uudistettua sosiaalipoliittista ohjelmaa, joka on määrä hyväksyä vuoden 2008 puoliväliin mennessä.

Investoidaan enemmän ihmisiin *pitämällä* ***työllisyyden ja koulutuksen*** *lähtökohtana* ***elämänkaariajattelua****,* ***nykyaikaistetaan työmarkkinoita*** *ja vahvistetaan* ***sosiaalista osallistamista****:*

Yhteisön toiminta:

- komissio esittää vuoden 2008 puoleenväliin mennessä mahdollisuuksiin, väyliin ja yhteysvastuuseen perustuvan ehdotuksen uudistetuksi ***sosiaalipoliittiseksi ohjelmaksi****, jossa otetaan huomioon Euroopan uusi sosiaalinen todellisuus ja käsitellään mm. sellaisia aiheita kuin nuoret, koulutus, muuttoliike ja väestönkehitys;*

- komissio tekee ehdotuksia osaamisvajeiden korjaamiseksi parantamalla Euroopan ***tulevien osaamisvaatimusten*** *ennustamista ja seurantaa;*

- komissio tekee vuonna 2008 ehdotuksia yhteisestä ***maahanmuuttopolitiikasta****.*

Jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi:

- panna sovitut yhteiset ***joustoturvaperiaatteet*** *täytäntöön määrittelemällä etenemistapa kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissaan vuoden 2008 loppuun mennessä;*

- lisätä kohtuuhintaisten laadukkaiden ***lastenhoitopalvelujen*** *saatavuutta yhteisön ja kunkin jäsenvaltion omien tavoitteiden mukaisesti;*

- asettaa tavoitteeksi vähentää merkittävästi ***koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä*** *ja parantaa* ***peruslukutaitoa*** *sekä laatia tätä koskevia toimintasuunnitelmia;*

- yhdistää kansalliset ja alueelliset ohjelmat ***Erasmus-ohjelmaan*** *kansainväliseen opiskelijavaihtoon osallistuvien määrän lisäämiseksi;*

*- laatia vuoteen 2010 mennessä eurooppalaista tutkintokehystä vastaava kansallinen **tutkintokehys**.*

4.2. Liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen erityisesti pk-yrityksissä

Liiketoimintaympäristö on Euroopassa parantunut, kun jäsenvaltiot ovat panneet täytäntöön kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston päätökset ottaa käyttöön keskitetyt palvelupisteet ja vähentää yrityksen perustamiseen kuluva aika yhteen viikkoon tai sen alle. EU:n on nyt mentävä pidemmälle ja sovittava yhdennetystä lähestymistavasta, jossa puututaan pk-yritysten kehityksen esteisiin kaikissa vaiheissa ja joka mahdollistaa useampien pienyritysten kasvun suuremmiksi yrityksiksi, jotka kilpailevat menestyksekkäästi globaaleilla markkinoilla. Lähestymistapa voitaisiin sisällyttää pienyrityksiä koskevaan säädökseen, jossa määritetään periaatteet ja konkreettiset toimenpiteet pk-yritysten tukemiseksi koko niiden elinkaaren ajan.

Selkeä unionin tason prioriteetti on paikata yhtenäismarkkinoiden aukot, etenkin palveluiden osalta, jotta kansallisista uudistuksista voidaan saada täysi hyöty. Se, että jäsenvaltiot panevat palveludirektiivin täytäntöön kattavasti ja oikea-aikaisesti, luo aidot yhtenäismarkkinat palveluille ja tarjoaa lisäksi merkittävän tilaisuuden yhtenäistää menettelyjä, karsia byrokratiaa, helpottaa markkinoille pääsyä ja vauhdittaa yhteentoimivien sähköisen hallinnon sovellusten käyttöönottoa.

EU:n sääntelyn parantamiseen tähtäävä suunnitelma alkaa tuottaa tuloksia ja hallinnollista rasitusta pitäisi vähentää EU:n tasolla 25 prosenttia. Jäsenvaltiot ovat sitoutuneet yhtä kunnianhimoisiin tavoitteisiin kansallisella tasolla. Julkishallinnon nykyaikaistaminen mm. yhteentoimivan tieto- ja viestintätekniikan osalta on tärkeä osa pk-yritysten liiketoimintaympäristön parantamista, ja sen merkitystä innovoinnin lähteenä on aliarvioitu. Monet viranomaiset vastaavatkin jo kasvaviin odotuksiin osana parempaan sääntelyyn tähtäävää ohjelmaa. Ne kohtelevat yrityksiä ja kansalaisia asiakkaina, käyttävät uutta tekniikka, edistävät sosiaalista innovointia ja muuttavat organisaatiotaan läpinäkyvän ja luotettavan palvelun ja tehokkaan muutoksenhaun tarjoamiseksi. Komissio aikoo edistää hyvien esimerkkien jakamista.

Liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen:

Yhteisön toiminta:

*- hyväksytään **pienyrityksiä koskeva eurooppalainen säädös**, jossa esitetään **yhdennetty toimintalinja** kasvupotentiaalin vapauttamiseksi **pk-yritysten** elinkaaren kaikissa vaiheissa;*

*- pyritään tavoitteeseen, jonka mukaan EU:n **hallinnollisia rasitteita** vähennetään 25 prosentilla vuoteen 2012 mennessä, ja toteutetaan kunnianhimoista **yksinkertaistamisohjelmaa**;*

*- lujitetaan **yhtenäismarkkinoita**, lisätään **kilpailua palvelusektorilla** ja jatketaan rahoituspalvelumarkkinoiden yhdentämistä*

Jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi:

*- työskennellä koko ajan johdonmukaisesti **palveludirektiivin** täytäntöönpanemiseksi vuoden 2009 loppuun mennessä; saada kansallisen lainsäädännön katselmus ja arviointi päätökseen*

ennen vuoden 2008 loppua ja perustaa samaan aikaan yhteyspiste ja sähköiset menettelyt sekä ottaa käyttöön toimiva valtioiden rajat ylittävä hallinnollisen yhteistyön järjestelmä;

*- asettaa ja ilmoittaa kansalliset **hallinnollisten rasitteiden vähentämistavoitteet** ennen kevään 2008 Eurooppa-neuvostoa;*

*- hyödyntää kaikin tavoin palveludirektiivin täytäntöönpanon tarjoamia mahdollisuuksia ja sääntelyn parantamiseen tähtäävää ohjelmaa **julkishallinnon nykyaikaistamisen** jatkamiseksi.*

4.3. Panostus osaamiseen ja innovointiin

Kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston päätösten seurauksena jäsenvaltiot ovat asettaneet tavoitteita ja toteuttaneet toimia tutkimus- ja kehitysinvestointien lisäämiseksi. Komission ehdotusten pohjalta ollaan käynnistämässä Euroopan tutkimusneuvostoa ja useita yhteisiä teknologia-aloitteita. Euroopan innovointi- ja teknologiainstituutin (EIT) odotetaan aloittavan työnsä vuonna 2009. Uusista koheesiopoliittisista ohjelmista suunnataan yli 85 miljardia euroa osaamiseen ja innovointiin kohdistuviin investointeihin.

Tämä on hyvä alku, mutta se ei riitä EU:n kunnianhimoisten tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi toteutettava lisätoimenpiteitä saavuttaakseen vuotta 2010 koskevat T&K-investointitavoitteensa. Erityisen tarpeellista tämä on siksi, että EU:n T&K-menot laskivat hieman suhteessa BKT:hen vuonna 2006, kun T&K-menojen kasvu ei ollut yhtä vahvaa kuin BKT:n.

Globalisaation myötä T&K-toimintaa ulkoistetaan yhä enenevässä määrin muualle maailmaan. Euroopassa innovaatioiden suojaaminen ja suojan ylläpitäminen on edelleen liian kallista. Sisällön jakeluoikeudet ovat yhä kansallisia. Yhteentoimivien standardien asettaminen on aivan liian hidasta. Taajuuksia hallinnoidaan edelleen hajallaan, mikä jarruttaa uusien korkean teknologian tuotteiden ja valtioiden rajat ylittävien palvelujen kehittämistä. Korkeakoulujen, tutkimuslaitosten, yritysten ja tutkijoiden yhteistyöllä on liian monia esteitä, myös lainsäädännöllisiä. Tämä estää myös hyödyntämästä Euroopan perinteistä vahvuutta: ihmisten luovuutta ja kekseliäisyyttä.

Suunnan kääntämiseksi Eurooppa tarvitsee ”viidennen vapauden” – osaamisen vapauden – täydentämään tavaroiden, palvelujen, ihmisten ja pääoman vapaata liikkuvuutta. Tämä viides vapaus vauhdittaisi EU:n muuttumista innovoivaksi, luovaksi osaamistaloudeksi:

– Yksi ulottuvuus on todellinen eurooppalainen tutkimusalue, jossa perusedellytykset innovoinnin edistämiselle ja palkitsemiselle ovat kohdallaan ja jossa EU:n ja jäsenvaltioiden T&K-ohjelmat täydentävät toisiaan, jossa resurssit jaetaan kilpailun pohjalta huippuosaamiseen, jossa korkeakoulujen ja yritysten on helppo tehdä yhteistyötä, tutkinnot tunnustetaan kaikilta osin ja opiskelijat, tutkijat ja osaavat työntekijät voivat liikkua vapaasti ja toimia helposti yhteistyössä maailmanlaajuisen tiedeyhteisön kanssa;

– Euroopan on myös yhdistettävä resurssejaan, jotta voidaan tarjota uudenlaista suuren mittakaavan infrastruktuuria tulevaisuuden laboratorioille ja instrumenteille, jotka ovat välttämättömiä, jos halutaan pysyä seuraavina vuosikymmeninä tutkimuksen kärjessä. On sovittu yhteisestä toimintatavasta, jolla ensisijainen tutkimusvälineistö lasereista, teleskoopeista ja merentutkimusvälineistöstä syöpätutkimuksen

tietokantoihin määritetään. Koska resursseja tarvitaan niin paljon, että se ylittää minkä tahansa yksittäisen jäsenvaltion kapasiteetin, on aika tehdä kansalliset päätökset siitä, miten voimat yhdistetään.

– Tieto- ja viestintätekniikka on nopeiden internetyhteyksien tukemana avain tuottavuuden lisäämiseen ja innovoinnin edistämiseen Euroopassa. Liian monet pienyritykset ja kansalaiset ovat vielä vailla nopeita internetyhteyksiä, mikä on kehityksen ja innovointipotentiaalin esteenä. Tietoliikennemarkkinoiden kilpailun lisäämisen ohella tarvitaan kansallisia suunnitelmia, joilla varmistetaan, että vuoteen 2010 mennessä 30 prosenttia EU:n väestöstä käyttää nopeita internetyhteyksiä.

”Viidennen vapauden” eli osaamisen vapaan liikkuvuuden toteuttaminen käytännössä:

Yhteisön toiminta:

*- parannetaan innovoinnin **perusedellytyksiä** luomalla yhdennetty patenttisuojajärjestelmä ja yhden kohtuuhintaisen patentin järjestelmä; yhtenäistetään hajanaiset immateriaalioikeuksia koskevat säännöt erityisesti sisällön levittämisen helpottamiseksi; vauhditetaan yhteentoimivien standardien asettamista ja edetään kohti yhteistä taajuuksien hallintaa; ja parannetaan riskipääoman saantia;*

*- poistetaan esteet **tutkijoiden kansainväliseltä liikkuvuudelta** ns. Eurooppa-passin avulla;*

*- **yhdistetään EU:n ja jäsenvaltioiden tutkimus- ja kehitysresursseja, jotta voidaan varmistaa niiden käytön vaikuttavuus**. Tätä varten sovitaan vuoden 2008 loppuun mennessä, millä alueilla yhteisiä ohjelmia toteutetaan, ja käynnistetään yhteisiä hanke-ehdotuspyyntöjä vuoden 2010 loppuun mennessä;*

*- luodaan **maailmanluokan tutkimusinfrastruktuurin uusi sukupolvi** laatimalla vuoden 2009 loppuun mennessä etenemissuunnitelmat, joiden mukaan 35 yhteisesti sovittua hanketta käynnistetään[9]. Maailmanlaajuisia hankkeita käsittelevä vuoropuhelu aloitetaan asianomaisten kansainvälisten kumppaneiden kanssa vuoden 2008 aikana;*

*- parannetaan kilpailua **nopeiden internetyhteyksien** markkinoilla hyväksymällä tietoliikennealan uudelleentarkastelu toukokuuhun 2009 mennessä.*

Jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi:

*- koordinoida toimia paremmin **innovoinnin** perusedellytysten kohentamiseksi;*

*- osoittaa, miten kansalliset **T&K-investointitavoitteet** saavutetaan vuoteen 2010 mennessä ja miten niiden T&K-strategiat edesauttavat eurooppalaisen tutkimusalueen toteuttamista;*

*- poistaa esteet **tutkijoiden liikkumiselta** julkisten ja yksityisten tutkimuskeskusten välillä;*

*- laatia vuoden 2008 loppuun mennessä kansalliset strategiat, joissa määritetään **se uuden sukupolven maailmanluokan tutkimusinfrastruktuuri**, johon ne haluavat osallistua;*

[9] Euroopan tutkimusinfrastruktuurien strategiafoorumi (ESFRI), tutkimusinfrastruktuureja koskeva kehittämissuunnitelma (European Roadmap for Research Infrastructures), raportti 2006 + neuvoston päätelmät 21.–22.5.2007.

*- asettaa kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissaan **nopeiden internetyhteyksien** käytölle kansalliset tavoitteet[10], joilla pyritään siihen, että EU:n väestöstä 30 prosentilla ja kaikilla kouluilla olisi käytössään nopea internetyhteys vuoteen 2010 mennessä.*

4.4. Energia ja ilmastonmuutos

Kevään 2007 Eurooppa-neuvosto sitoutui tekemään Euroopasta vähäisten hiilidioksidipäästöjen talouden, jonka energiahuolto on varma, kestävä ja kilpailukykyinen. Se sopi kunnianhimoisista tavoitteista kasvihuonekaasupäästöjen vähentämiseksi, energiatehokkuuden lisäämiseksi ja uusituvan energian käytön edistämiseksi vuoteen 2020 mennessä. Seuraavalla kaudella haasteena on luoda puitteet ja välineet, joilla nämä tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa, ja sopia YK:n puitteissa yhtä kunnianhimoisista tavoitteista muun maailman kanssa.

Koko talouden on tartuttava toimeen näin kauaskantoisten tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi. Markkinalähtöiset välineet, kuten päästökauppajärjestelmä, kannustavat talouden toimijoita vähentämään päästöjä kustannustehokkaimmalla tavalla. Vahvistettua päästökauppajärjestelmää olisi täydennettävä toimin, joilla saadaan aikaan oikeudellisesti sitovat kansalliset tavoitteet kasvihuonekaasupäästöjen vähentämiselle ja uusiutuvan energian käytön lisäämiselle. Keinovalikoimaan voi kuulua kohdennettua sääntelyä, taloudellisten instrumenttien, kuten tukien, verokannustimien tai avoimien tarjouskilpailujen, tehokas käyttö sekä läpinäkyvyyttä lisääviä toimia, kuten ympäristömerkinnät tai ympäristötilinpito. Nopeimmin tuloksiin päästään energiatehokkuudessa, jossa viranomaiset voivat toimia pioneereina. Kaikkien näiden toimien rinnalla tarvitaan jatkuvaa panostusta tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen sekä uuden tekniikan aktiivista käyttöönottoa, kuten komissio hiljattain linjasi ehdotuksessaan strategiseksi energiateknologiasuunnitelmaksi[11].

Kilpailukykyisemmät ja yhdentyneemmät energian sisämarkkinat tulevat lisäämään merkittävästi unionin energiahuollon varmuutta, kestävyyttä ja kilpailukykyä. Tämä edellyttää uusia investointeja infrastruktuurin ja yhteyksien parantamiseen, parempaa varastojen hallintaa, yhteisvastuumekanismeja ja monipuolisempaa energialähteiden käyttöä. Samalla kaikki politiikanalat on mukautettava ilmastonmuutoksen vaikutuksiin. Vaikka ilmastonmuutosta voidaankin hillitä hyväksyttävälle tasolle määrätietoisilla globaaleilla toimilla, sitä ei voida estää. Tämä tosiasia on otettava politiikassa huomioon ja minimoitava sosiaaliset, taloudelliset ja ympäristövaikutukset samalla kun kehitetään uuden teknologian potentiaalia EU:n teollisuuden kilpailukyvyn lisäämiseksi.

Euroopasta energiatehokas vähäisten hiilidioksidipäästöjen talous:

Yhteisön toiminta:

*- hyväksytään säädösehdotukset **sähkön ja kaasun sisämarkkinoiden** toteuttamiseksi ja hyväksytään **ilmastonmuutospaketti**, jotta käyttöön saadaan sellaiset edellytykset, joiden avulla on mahdollista vähentää kasvihuonekaasupäästöjä vähintään 20 prosenttia ja nostaa uusiutuvien energianlähteiden osuus 20 prosenttiin vuoteen 2020 mennessä;*

[10] Komissio seuraa EU:n internettalouden kehitystä vuonna 2008 luotavan laajakaistaindeksin avulla.

[11] Euroopan strategisen energiateknologiasuunnitelman laatiminen - KOM(2006) 847.

*- edistetään elinkeinopolitiikkaa, jossa on tavoitteena entistä **kestävämpi tuotanto ja kulutus** ja jossa painotetaan uusiutuvia energianlähteitä sekä hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisiä ja luonnonvaroja tehokkaammin käyttäviä tuotteita, palveluja ja teknologioita;*

*- **tarkistetaan energiaverotusta koskevaa direktiiviä,** jotta sillä olisi tiiviimpi yhteys EU:n energia- ja ympäristötavoitteisiin;*

*- vahvistetaan **rakennusten energiatehokkuutta** koskevan direktiivin vaatimuksia.*

Jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi:

*- **tarkistaa**, että niiden **taloudelliset instrumentit**, kuten verotus, tuet ja perittävät maksut, edistävät ilmastonmuutoksen torjuntaa kustannustehokkaalla tavalla;*

*- vaatia, että hankintaviranomaiset sisällyttävät **energiatehokkuuden** järjestelmällisesti niihin kriteereihin, joiden perusteella julkisia hankintoja koskevat sopimukset tehdään;*

*- asettaa virastorakennuksille **sitovat energiankulutuksen vähentämistavoitteet**;*

*- parantaa **energiaverkkojen yhteenliittämistä**.*

5. JATKOTOIMET KEVÄÄLLÄ 2008 KOKOONTUVAN EUROOPPA-NEUVOSTON JÄLKEEN

Uudistettu Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategia tuottaa jo tulosta. Euroopalla on nyt yhteinen asialista, välineistö, jolla työstää yhteisiä haasteita yhteistyössä, ja tehokas seuranta hoidetaan vuosittain kevään Eurooppa-neuvostossa.

Kaikki on valmiina, jotta kevään 2008 Eurooppa-neuvosto voi **käynnistää seuraavan kunnianhimoisen kauden**

- hyväksymällä 4 jaksossa esitetyillä neljällä ensisijaisella alalla toteutettavat toimet;
- vahvistamalla yhdennetyt suuntaviivat seuraavaksi kolmivuotiskaudeksi;
- vahvistamalla komission ehdotukset maakohtaisiksi suosituksiksi ja seurattaviksi asioiksi;
- kehottamalla jäsenvaltioita toteuttamaan loputkin kansallisiin uudistusohjelmiin sisältyvät uudistukset ja huolehtimaan siitä, että niillä on uudelle kaudelle ajantasaiset kansalliset uudistusohjelmat; kehottamalla jäsenvaltioita esittämään neuvostolle ja komissiolle vuotuisissa täytäntöönpanoraporteissaan konkreettiset toimintasuunnitelmat, joissa esitetään, millä keinoilla ja millä aikataululla maakohtaiset suositukset ja seurattavat asiat toteutetaan;
- vahvistamalla uuden yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman;
- kehottamalla jäsenvaltioita tekemään yhteistyötä kansallisten ja alueellisten parlamenttien kanssa vuotuisten keskustelujen järjestämiseksi kansallisten uudistusohjelmien ja maakohtaisten suositusten toteuttamisesta;

- kehottamalla jäsenvaltioita varmistamaan, että koheesiorahastoja käytetään korvamerkintäsäännösten mukaisesti, jotta niillä on mahdollisimman suuri vaikutus kasvuun ja työllisyyteen;

- kannustamalla kansallisia Lissabon-koordinaattoreita jatkamaan kokemusten vaihtoa uudistuksista, erityisesti neljällä ensisijaisella alalla ja sidosryhmien osallistumisen vahvistamisesta;

- kehottamalla Euroopan parlamenttia aktiiviseen rooliin seuraavalla kaudella, mm. kansallisten parlamenttien kanssa käytävän vuoropuhelun välityksellä.

EUROPEISKA GEMENSKAPERNAS KOMMISSION

Bryssel den 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 803 slutlig
DEL I

MEDDELANDE FRÅN KOMMISSIONEN TILL EUROPEISKA RÅDET

Strategirapport om den förnyade Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning: start för den nya treårsperioden (2008–2011)

Att hålla förändringstempot uppe

ATT HÅLLA FÖRÄNDRINGSTEMPOT UPPE

Tack vare nystarten av Lissabonstrategin 2005 och den förnyade inriktningen på tillväxt och sysselsättning har Europa kommit långt. EU:s sätt att fungera har förändrats avsevärt och varaktigt: det har upprättats ett nära partnerskap och en klar ansvarsfördelning mellan medlemsstaterna och kommissionen, vilket är ett stort framsteg.

Resultaten är redan synliga. Ekonomin är i mycket bättre skick nu än 2005, och tillväxtsiffrorna är starka. Närmare 6,5 miljoner nya arbetstillfällen har skapats under de senaste två åren. Ytterligare 5 miljoner väntas tillkomma fram till 2009. Bakom dessa siffror står flera miljoner européer vars liv har förändrats till det bättre i och med att de befriats från den börda som arbetslöshet innebär.

Till en del är uppgången naturligtvis konjunkturbetingad. Men de senaste årens strukturreformer i medlemsstaterna och EU inom ramen för Lissabonstrategin har också bidragit, och de är det bästa skyddet mot en konjunkturnedgång.

Lissabonstrategin är EU:s redskap för att stödja förändringar. Därmed är strategin ett viktigt inslag i våra åtgärder för att bemöta globaliseringen. Den hjälper européerna att påverka de nya utmaningar och möjligheter som globaliseringen medför.

Reformer är ofta svåra, och ibland impopulära. Men reformvägen är den enda rätta om vi ska kunna tillgodose de behov vi har i dag. Våra framsteg hittills bör sporra oss till nya ansträngningar under nästa treårsperiod av strategin.

Det betyder att vi måste hålla förändringstempot uppe. Alltför många européer är fortfarande arbetslösa. Vi har ännu inte skapat de bästa tillväxtförutsättningarna för företagen. Europa har inte utvecklat någon samlad ansats när det gäller att främja innovation och forskning och utveckling, och den privata sektorns bidrag är fortfarande otillräckligt. EU har bara tagit de första stegen på vägen mot att bli ett utsläppssnålt samhälle. Eftersom det finns risk för en global ekonomisk avmattning är det av största vikt att fortsätta reformerna och öka våra ekonomiers motståndskraft.

Lissabonstrategin förutsätter ett starkt ledarskap. När EU står för det ledarskapet låter resultaten inte vänta på sig. De prioriterade åtgärder som Europeiska rådet enades om vid vårmötet 2006 har verkligen drivit på utvecklingen. Det går nu mycket enklare och snabbare att starta företag i nästan hela Europa. Man har enats om gemensamma principer för ”flexicurity”. Detta skapar en fast grund för nya politiska impulser.

Vi måste hålla reformtempot uppe och enas om en välinriktad uppsättning ambitiösa nya åtgärder. Här är några exempel på vad vi behöver åstadkomma genom samarbete:

- Sörja för att färre ungdomar lämnar skolan i förtid så att ingen hamnar på efterkälken i globaliseringens tidsålder.

- Ge Europa en ny ”femte frihet” – fri rörlighet för kunskap – så att Europa bättre kan utnyttja sin kreativa potential.

- Öka tillgången till höghastighetsinternet för att stimulera innovation och bevara en framskjuten ställning för Europa i internetåldern.

– Främja små och medelstora företag genom att anta en rättsakt för småföretag i Europa.

– Väsentligt förbättra byggnaders energiprestanda genom att använda vår omfattande upphandlingsbudget för att driva fram en förändring.

– Stärka kedjan utbildning–forskning–innovation, särskilt genom att inrätta och starta upp Europeiska institutet för teknik och innovation och genom att inleda och genomföra gemensamma teknikinitiativ.

Europa har nu ett unikt tillfälle att omvandlas till ett kreativt, modernt, innovationsvänligt och utsläppssnålt samhälle med ett dynamiskt företagsklimat, en högt kvalificerad arbetsstyrka och högklassig utbildning, som underbyggs av en stark social modell. Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning bidrar till att hjälpa européerna till ökat välstånd genom sin agenda för tillgång, möjligheter och solidaritet, som kommer att göra det möjligt att dra nytta av vår öppenhet mot omvärlden och att forma globaliseringen enligt europeiska värderingar.

José Manuel Durão Barroso

Bryssel den 11 december 2007

INNEHÅLLSFÖRTECKNING

1. Inledning 5

2. Genomförda strukturreformer under den första treårsperioden (2005-2008) 6

3. Fördjupning av Lissabonstrategin under nästa treårsperiod 8

3.1. Fortsatt reformarbete på nationell nivå 8

3.2. Förstärkt samordning av den ekonomiska politiken 9

3.3. Reformer som behöver genomföras på gemenskapsnivå och gemenskapens Lissabonprogram 9

3.4. Omvärldspolitik 10

3.5. Integrera nationella åtgärder, gemenskapsåtgärder och internationella åtgärder, till förmån för en effektiv politik 11

4. Åtgärder på de fyra prioriterade områdena 12

4.1. Investera i människor; modernisera arbetsmarknader 12

4.2. Frigörande av företagens potential, särskilt de små och medelstora företagens 14

4.3. Investera i kunskap och innovation 15

4.4. Energi och klimatförändring 17

5. Uppföljning efter europeiska rådets vårmöte 2008 18

1. INLEDNING

Med nystarten för Lissabonstrategin 2005 slöt EU och medlemsstaterna upp kring ett nytt partnerskap för hållbar tillväxt och sysselsättning.

Inte fullt tre år senare kan vi se tydliga resultat av detta partnerskap. Den ekonomiska tillväxten har ökat, från 1,8% 2005 till förväntat 2,9% 2007 och 2,4% 2008. Den senaste tidens uppgång är till största delen konjunkturbetingad, men strukturreformer i medlemsstaterna har också bidragit. Närmare 6,5 miljoner nya arbetstillfällen har skapats under de senaste två åren. Ytterligare 5 miljoner väntas tillkomma fram till 2009. Arbetslösheten väntas sjunka till under 7%, den lägsta nivån sedan mitten av 1980-talet. Sysselsättningsgraden, som för närvarande är 66%, har kommit en bra bit närmare det samlade Lissabonmålet på 70%. För första gången sedan tio år har en kraftigt ökad sysselsättning gått hand med en stadig produktivitetstillväxt. Levnadsstandarden i de medlemsstater som nyligen gick med i EU stiger märkbart.

Men inte alla medlemsstater har satt reformeri verket lika beslutsamt. På några områden, t.ex. när det gäller att öppna marknader eller minska segmenteringen på arbetsmarknaden, har reformarbetet gått långsammare. Samtidigt håller de omgivande förutsättningarna på att bli mindre gynnsamma på grund av den globala ekonomiska avmattningen, finansiell turbulens och högre råvarupriser.

Frågan hur Europa ska bemöta globaliseringen[1] diskuterades av stats- och regeringscheferna vid Europeiska rådets informella möte i Lissabon i oktober 2007. De bekräftade den förnyade Lissabonstrategins centrala roll och efterlyste en fördjupning av den under den kommande treårsperioden. De underströk också att EU bör använda strategin för att hjälpa till att påverka globaliseringen i linje med sina egna värderingar och intressen. EU:s modell för utveckling, som förenar konkurrenskraft med solidaritet och hållbarhet, och dess långa erfarenhet av ekonomisk integration kan vara en stor tillgång i samband med globaliseringen. I och med Lissabonfördragets undertecknande går EU in i en ny fas. De centrala institutionella frågorna har lösts, och EU kan nu rikta uppmärksamheten på de frågor som direkt påverkar medborgarna i det dagliga livet.

I den första delen av det här meddelandet till Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2008 redovisar kommissionen sina förslag till hur strategin bör föras vidare. Kommissionen understryker vikten av makroekonomisk stabilitet, men framhåller också behovet av att kvarstående reformer genomförs, för att förbättra grundförutsättningarna för en varaktig och solid ekonomisk tillväxt i framtiden och hjälpa EU att kunna stå emot en ogynnsam utveckling av världsekonomin.

[1] "Det europeiska intresset – För framgång i en globaliserad värld" - KOM(2007) 581.

I den andra delen av meddelandet bedöms de enskilda medlemsstaternas framsteg med att genomföra det nationella reformprogrammet och rådets landsspecifika rekommendationer[2]. Motsvarande bedömning görs för euroområdet sammantaget. Den tredje delen är ett följedokument med en detaljerad bedömning av framstegen på de enskilda politikområdena[3]. I ”Lissabonpaketet” ingår dessutom följande: 1. ett förslag till rekommendation till rådet att uppdatera de landsspecifika rekommendationer och de ”frågor att ge akt på” (*points to watch*) som rådet antog i maj 2007, 2. ett förslag till rekommendation till rådet att på nytt bekräfta de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning, 3. ett nytt Lissabonprogram på gemenskapsnivå, och 4. en analys av omorienteringen av strukturfonderna för att stödja tillväxt och sysselsättning.

2. GENOMFÖRDA STRUKTURREFORMER UNDER DEN FÖRSTA TREÅRSPERIODEN (2005-2008)

Det råder ett brett samförstånd om vad som måste göras, men genomförandet går olika fort fram. Alla medlemsstaterna har genomfört väsentliga reformer sedan 2005, men några har varit mera energiska i sina ansträngningar än andra. En del tecken på ”reformtrötthet” har visat sig under de senaste tolv månaderna.

På den positiva sidan kan noteras att budgetunderskotten har minskat från 2,5% av BNP 2005 till beräknat 1,1% 2007, och att den offentliga skuldsättningen har sjunkit från 62,7% 2005 till strax under 60% 2007. Tillfället att utnyttja de relativt goda tillväxtförutsättningarna för att minska strukturella underskott har emellertid inte till fullo tagits till vara, särskilt i euroområdet.

Samtidigt som tillväxtförutsättningarna förbättrats har obalanser gradvis byggts upp i några medlemsstater. Stora underskott i bytesbalansen och tecken på överhettning, förlust av konkurrenskraft, ökad skuldsättning hos hushållen och snabbt stigande huspriser vittnar om detta.

Euron har blivit en viktig stabiliserande faktor. Den bidrar till en väl fungerande inre marknad, till gagn för euroområdet och för hela EU. Den beräknade potentiella BNP-tillväxten i euroområdet har sedan 2005 ökat med 0,2 procentenheter till 2,25%, vilket delvis beror på effekterna av strukturreformer.

Produktivitetstillväxten var 1,5% 2006 jämfört med en årlig ökningstakt på 1,2% mellan 2000 och 2005. Men Europa sackar fortfarande efter jämfört med andra ledande ekonomier, både i fråga om investeringar i informations- och kommunikationsteknik och när det gäller att använda sådan teknik i produktivitetshöjande syfte. Öppnandet av nätverksindustrier och nätverkstjänster för konkurrens har gått långsamt, och det finns fortfarande betydande hinder för marknadsinträde. Några medlemsstater släpar efter när det gäller att införliva inremarknadsdirektiv. Ansträngningarna för att förbättra reglerna för immateriella och industriella rättigheter och att påskynda standardiseringsarbetet har inte burit frukt.

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[2] Rådets rekommendation 2007/209/EG av den 27 mars 2007 (EUT L 92, 3.4.2007).

[3] Sysselsättningsdelen utgör stommen i den gemensamma sysselsättningsrapporten. Meddelandets tredje del innehåller också en sammanfattning av halvtidsutvärdering av tillväxtinitiativet.

EU:s program för bättre lagstiftning håller på att införas steg för steg, men många medlemsstater har ännu inte börjat använda de nödvändiga hjälpmedlen, t.ex. konsekvensbedömningar eller metoder för att mäta och minska den administrativa bördan.

I nästan alla medlemsstaterna är det numera lättare och billigare att starta företag. En dynamisk, företagarvänlig kultur saknas emellertid fortfarande i Europa som helhet. De insatser som görs för att förbättra företagsklimatet är alltför ofta punktvisa och ingår inte som led i en samlad strategi för att främja de små och medelstora företagens tillväxt. Medlemsstaterna har ställt upp mål som innebär att de tänker öka sina investeringar i forskning och utveckling (FoU) avsevärt, vilket skulle hjälpa EU att närma sig målet om 3% av BNP senast 2010, men deras ambition avspeglas ännu inte i verkligheten.

Sysselsättningstillväxten har varit imponerande, även om den kommit vissa regioner och vissa grupper mindre till del. Medlemsstaterna har börjat reformera sina pensions- och förtidspensionssystem. Detta har bidragit till att sysselsättningsgraden hos äldre arbetstagare ökat kraftigt och varaktigt, även om målet på 50% ännu inte riktigt nåtts. Sysselsättningsgraden hos kvinnor har ökat väsentligt (den är nu 57,2% och närmar sig målet på 60%), men medlemsstaterna bör vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att främja jämställdhet på arbetsmarknaden.

Omkring hälften av medlemsstaterna har utarbetat eller håller på att utarbeta riktlinjer på basis av den s.k. flexicuritymodellen. Men det rör sig fortfarande inte om någon samlad politisk ansats. En tydlig trend till övergång från passiv till aktiv marknadspolitik kan konstateras. Medlemsstaterna är vidare i färd med att reformera sina sociala trygghetssystem, särskilt genom ändringar i skatte- och bidragssystemen, för att skapa en balanserad avvägning mellan rättigheter och skyldigheter. Flexiblare anställningsavtal för speciella kategorier (t.ex. de som är nya på arbetsmarknaden) har införts, men har inte understötts tillräckligt med ökade möjligheter att förvärva ny kompetens som kan göra det lättare att gå vidare på arbetsmarknaden. Den svårare uppgiften, att reformera reglerna för andra slags anställningskontrakt, har ägnats föga uppmärksamhet. Många arbetsmarknader är därför fortfarande segmenterade, med ett gott skydd för den som har fast arbete men mer otrygga villkor för den som är anställd på kontrakt med ovissa framtidsutsikter.

Principen om livslångt lärande har långtifrån slagit igenom, särskilt för lågutbildade, dvs. de som mest skulle behöva omfattas. Utbildningssystemens förmåga att anpassa sig efter arbetsmarknadens behov är ännu inte tillräcklig.

EU har tagit de första stegen på vägen mot att bli ett utsläppssnålt samhälle. Framsteg har gjorts när det gäller att uppfylla det Kyotomål som gäller för EU totalt, och vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2007 satte EU upp ambitiösa mål för att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser och öka andelen förnybar energi fram till 2020.

De enskilda medlemsstaternas framsteg redovisas i detalj i del II av meddelandet.

3. FÖRDJUPNING AV LISSABONSTRATEGIN UNDER NÄSTA TREÅRSPERIOD

EU:s ekonomi är i bättre skick nu än 2005, men EU går in i Lissabonsstrategins nya treårsperiod i ett läge med avtagande global tillväxt och med de risker som är förenade med finansiell turbulens och stigande olje- och råvarupriser. Det här är därför en lämplig tidpunkt att besluta att fördjupa genomförandet av strategin, för att öka framtidstron och stärka de ekonomiska grundförutsättningarna att kunna stå emot en eventuell konjunkturnedgång.

3.1. Fortsatt reformarbete på nationell nivå

Den viktigaste uppgiften för medlemsstaterna under nästa treårsperiod blir att genomföra kvarstående reformer, särskilt på de områden som omfattas av de landsspecifika rekommendationerna eller ”frågorna att ge akt på”.

Eftersom det tar tid att genomföra reformer och dröjer innan man kan se resultatet av dem, föreslår kommissionen att de nuvarande rekommendationerna behålls i stort sett oförändrade men anpassas med hänsyn till framstegen sedan de antogs våren 2007.

För att den nya generationen av program inom ramen för EU:s sammanhållningspolitik ska få största möjliga effekt på tillväxt och sysselsättning har det beslutats att 60% av medlen[4] ska ”öronmärkas” och anslås för att stödja nationella reformprogram. Ett belopp på 347 miljarder euro kommer att stå till förfogande för sammanhållning för perioden 2007–2013. Till detta kommer ungefär 160 miljarder euro i form av nationell offentlig och privat medfinansiering. Totalt kommer 70 miljarder euro att satsas varje år till och med 2013, främst för att stödja de nationella reformprogrammen. Programplaneringsfasen har avslutats, och det gäller nu att se till att utgifterna motsvarar de ”öronmärkta” åtagandena och inte hamnar inom lägre prioriterade områden.

Lokala och regionala myndigheter är redan aktivt engagerade i den förnyade Lissabonstrategin genom sin medverkan i programplanering och genomförande av ”öronmärkta” sammanhållningsprogram. Ytterligare ansträngningar är emellertid nödvändiga för att få en bredare krets av aktörer engagerade och för att intensifiera utbytet av erfarenheter, idéer och bästa praxis. Ett sådant utbyte har redan visat sig vara en viktig styrkefaktor i strategin. Kommissionen välkomnar i detta sammanhang Europaparlamentets, Europeiska ekonomiska och sociala kommitténs och Regionkommitténs stora intresse särskilt av att följa i vilken utsträckning olika berörda parter engageras i strategin.

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[4] De öronmärkta medlen ska motsvara minst 60% i regioner som kan få stöd från konvergensprogrammen och 75% i de relativt sett mer välmående regioner som kan få stöd från programmen för konkurrenskraft och sysselsättning. Dessa tröskelvärden gäller på frivillig basis för de medlemsstater som anslutit sig till EU efter maj 2004.

3.2. Förstärkt samordning av den ekonomiska politiken

Medlemsstaternas ekonomier är i hög grad beroende av varandra. Mycket står att vinna om alla rör sig i samma riktning och om reformer anpassas tidsmässigt. Den nya styrningen av Lissabonstrategin, med tonvikt på partnerskap mellan EU och medlemsstaterna, har visat sig effektiv. De integrerade riktlinjerna är ett viktigt medel för närmare samordning av den ekonomiska politiken inom ramen för den förnyade Lissabonstrategin. Riktlinjerna fungerar som en allmän ram inom vilken medlemsstater på olika utvecklingsnivåer och med olika sociala system och institutionella strukturer kan driva sina egna nationella reformprogram, och de är tillräckligt breda för att möjliggöra anpassningar med hänsyn till förändrade politiska betingelser. Det råder ett brett samförstånd bland medlemsstaterna och berörda parter om att riktlinjerna inte bör ändras och att tyngdpunkten fortsatt bör ligga på genomförandet[5].

Kommissionen föreslår därför att de nuvarande riktlinjerna får fortsätta att gälla under nästa treårsperiod, men att man uppdaterar de förklarande anmärkningar som beskriver i vilket sammanhang de bör genomföras. Man bör t.ex. lägga större tonvikt vid åtgärder som syftar till att investera mera i människor och modernisera arbetsmarknader. Medlemsstaterna bör se över det nationella reformprogrammet och se till att det uppdateras inför den nya treårsperioden. De bör också fortsätta att engagera många olika parter i arbetet med att utforma och genomföra programmet.

Erfarenheterna från de gångna tre åren visar att det finns ett behov av ökad samordning av reformerna. Kommissionen föreslår därför att medlemsstaterna, som led i den multilaterala övervakningsprocessen i rådet, ska diskutera sina specifika åtgärder med anledning av de landsspecifika rekommendationerna och ”frågorna att ge akt på”. För att strukturera diskussionen bör varje medlemsstat redovisa en kort handlingsplan och ange vilka åtgärder den kommer att vidta för att följa upp rekommendationerna eller ”frågorna att ge akt på”. Denna handlingsplan bör vara en del av genomföranderapporten.

Argumenten för att samordna reformer är ännu starkare i euroområdet. I samband med sin översyn av hur den ekonomiska och monetära unionen (EMU) fungerar kommer kommissionen att föra fram förslag till effektivare samordning och styrning inom euroområdet. Översynen görs med anledning av tioårsdagen av EMU:s tillkomst och kommer att läggas fram före sommaren 2008.

3.3. Reformer som behöver genomföras på gemenskapsnivå och gemenskapens Lissabonprogram

Gemenskapens nya Lissabonprogram är gemenskapens bidrag till den förnyade Lissabonstrategin. Det ska ses som motsvarigheten till de nationella reformprogrammen och anger vilka åtgärder på gemenskapsnivå som ger det högsta mervärdet till medlemsstaternas reformer och får de största effekterna på tillväxt och sysselsättning. En del av åtgärderna inom programmet får antas av kommissionen, men de flesta måste antas av rådet och Europaparlamentet och ska där behandlas med förtur. Det krävs en samlad politisk kraftansträngning från alla EU-institutionernas sida i syfte att komma överens om dessa

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[5] *Evaluation of the Integrated Guideline Package for Growth and Jobs*, utkast till slutrapport, oktober 2007, Eureval and Rambøll Management samt rådets (Ecofin) slutsatser från mötet den 13 november 2007.

åtgärder under de närmaste tre åren till stöd för ökad tillväxt och sysselsättning. Gemenskapens Lissabonprogram redovisas i sin helhet i ett separat meddelande.

På gemenskapsnivå är det viktigt att undanröja kvarstående brister på den inre marknaden, särskilt på tjänsteområdet, så att det blir möjligt att dra full fördel av de reformer som genomförs på nationell nivå. Kommissionen har nyligen lagt fram sin vision om 2000-talets inre marknad[6]. Några av de föreslagna åtgärderna kommer att hanteras inom ramen för gemenskapens Lissabonprogram. De syftar till att stärka konsumenternas och småföretagens ställning och förbättra genomförandet och tillämpningen av inremarknadsreglerna, bl.a. genom att det inrättas ”inremarknadscentrum” på nationell nivå och införs en regelbunden övervakning av prisutvecklingen för konsumtionsvaror. Genom åtgärder som syftar till bättre efterlevnad av konsumentlagstiftningen blir det lättare för konsumenterna att välja mellan olika producenter, vilket främjar konkurrensen.

3.4. Omvärldspolitik

EU måste skydda sina medborgare, intressen och värden. Men protektionism är inte lösningen. EU är världens främsta handelsmakt och största investerare. EU:s öppenhet ger företagen lägre råvarukostnader, konsumenterna lägre priser och ett bredare utbud att välja från och företagen incitament att förbättra sin konkurrenskraft. Öppenheten leder till nya investeringar.

Lissabonstrategin genomförs i en värld som håller på att globaliseras. Detta måste avspeglas i större utsträckning i genomförandet. Det kan ske på flera olika sätt.

– EU bör använda alla sina instrument för att se till att dess öppenhet bevaras och motsvaras av ett ökat tillträde till tredjelandsmarknader för EU-företag.

  Multilaterala förhandlingar (särskilt ett framgångsrikt slutförande av handelsförhandlingarna inom ramen för Doharundan) och befintliga bilaterala handelsöverenskommelser måste utnyttjas för att öppna nya marknadsmöjligheter och undanröja tariffära och andra handelshinder[7]. De bör också utnyttjas för att nå regelbaserade överenskommelser som främjar höga normer för socialt skydd och miljöskydd. Kommissionen kommer varje år att rapportera om situationen när det gäller marknadstillträde och ange i vilka länder och sektorer det fortfarande finns betydande hinder. Om så är fallet bör detta normalt föranleda samråd med de berörda länderna, och om problemen kvarstår bör man överväga att utnyttja gemenskapens handelsinstrument eller att vidta åtgärder i Världshandelsorganisationen (WTO). Förbättrat tillträde till upphandlingsmarknader, effektivare åtgärder för att se till att bestämmelser om immateriella rättigheter efterlevs, sund konkurrens och marknadstillträde för små och medelstora företag kommer att ägnas särskild uppmärksamhet.

– EU bör intensifiera sin dialog med viktiga tredjeländer för att arbeta fram lösningar som gynnar båda parter, främja högre standarder och verka för större överensstämmelse i fråga om regler och föreskrifter.

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6 En inre marknad för framtidens Europa - KOM(2007) 724.

7 Ett konkurrenskraftigt Europa i världen – Ett bidrag till EU:s tillväxt- och sysselsättningsstrategi - KOM(2006) 567.

Tack vare sina erfarenheter från den inre marknaden kan EU bidra med speciell sakkunskap som kan vara till nytta för EU:s viktigaste samarbetspartner (t.ex. när det gäller marknadsintegration, socialt skydd, sysselsättning och arbetstagares rättigheter, hälsovård, miljöskydd, konkurrensregler och tull). Diskussionerna med tredjeländer kan också leda fram till lösningar på områden som har stor betydelse för EU (t.ex. marknadstillträde, energi, klimatförändring, hantering av migration, arbete under anständiga villkor, tekniska normer, immateriella rättigheter och politik för små och medelstora företag). Nya samarbetsformer och samarbetsmetoder, som tar hänsyn till varje partners särdrag, bör utvecklas. Det transatlantiska ekonomiska råd som nyligen inrättades är ett exempel på detta. Länderna i EU:s närområde bör ägnas särskild uppmärksamhet.

3.5. Integrera nationella åtgärder, gemenskapsåtgärder och internationella åtgärder, till förmån för en effektiv politik

Vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006 kom stats- och regeringscheferna överens om fyra prioriterade områden som skulle vara hörnstenarna i den förnyade Lissabonstrategin (kunskap och innovation, frigörande av företagens potential, investeringar i humankapital samt energi och klimatförändring). Det finns ett inbördes samband mellan dessa områden. Om de hanteras parallellt får man en integrerad politisk strategi.

På vart och ett av dessa fyra områden godkändes vid vårmötet ett begränsat antal specifika, konkreta åtgärder som skulle genomföras före utgången av den första treårsperioden. Vi kan nu konstatera att medlemsstaterna har uppnått goda resultat när det gäller genomförandet. Så är det till exempel nu i alla utom ett fåtal medlemsstater möjligt att starta företag inom en vecka, tack vare att företagen bara behöver vända sig till ett enda kontaktställe (en s.k. *one-stop shop*). Överenskommelse har träffats om en gemensam uppsättning principer för ”flexicurity”. När det gäller att minska den administrativa bördan har Europeiska rådets beslut om en 25-procentig minskning som mål gett kraftiga impulser till åtgärder. De här exemplen visar att den förnyade Lissabonstrategin kan användas för att ge företag och medborgare direkta och konkreta fördelar. Europeiska rådet har därmed en fast grund att stå på för att ge fortsatta impulser till Lissabonstrategins genomförande och för att enas om ett begränsat antal fortsatta åtgärder som bör genomföras fram till 2010.

Den förnyade strategin bygger på partnerskap. Det betyder att varje nivå måste ta sin del av ansvaret när det gäller att tackla de gemensamma utmaningarna. De prioriterade områdena utgör en gemensam ram för de åtgärder som måste vidtas på olika nivåer. Om en åtgärd måste genomföras av medlemsstaterna bör den tas in i det nationella reformprogrammet. Om den förutsätter ett agerande på gemenskapsnivå bör den genomföras inom ramen för gemenskapens Lissabonprogram. Många av åtgärderna kan dessutom bara genomföras om de stöds av en framåtsyftande yttre politik som kan hjälpa EU att påverka globaliseringen och dra nytta av de möjligheter den erbjuder.

4. ÅTGÄRDER PÅ DE FYRA PRIORITERADE OMRÅDENA

4.1. Investera i människor; modernisera arbetsmarknader

"Flexicurity" handlar om balanserad avvägning mellan flexibilitet och trygghet på arbetsmarknaden. Det är en modell som syftar till att alla medborgare ska omfattas av en hög grad av sysselsättningstrygghet, dvs. lätt kunna finna ett bra arbete i alla skeden av sitt yrkesverksamma liv. Flexicurity gör det lättare för både arbetstagare och arbetsgivare att ta tillvara de möjligheter som globaliseringen ger. Efter den överenskommelse som träffats mellan arbetsmarknadens parter uppmanas Europeiska rådet att godkänna kommissionens förslag till gemensamma principer om "flexicurity"[8]. Medlemsstaterna bör nu genomföra dessa principer och anpassa dem till sina egna specifika förhållanden.

Bemödandena att bekämpa fattigdom och socialt utanförskap och att integrera marginaliserade befolkningsgrupper, särskilt genom en aktiv integrationspolitik, måste öka. Fattigdomsminskning är en central aspekt av den förnyade Lissabonstrategin, med dess tyngdpunkt på tillväxt och sysselsättning och på åtgärder som syftar till att satsa på människors kunskaper och förmåga och att skapa lika möjligheter, tillräckligt socialt skydd och arbetstillfällen av god kvalitet. Insatserna för att hjälpa lågutbildad arbetskraft, invandrare och funktionshindrade måste också intensifieras, särskilt genom att stödja kompetensutveckling.

Att investera mer i utbildning och kompetensutveckling under människans hela livscykel är inte bara avgörande för att Europa ska kunna hävda sig i globaliseringen. Det är också ett av de mest effektiva sätten att bekämpa fattigdom och bristande jämlikhet. Barn utvecklar redan i mycket unga år förmågan att inhämta kunskaper under resten av livet. Senare, i primär- och sekundärskola, blir tillräcklig läskunnighet en förutsättning för fortsatta framsteg. En av fem 15-åringar i Europa har emellertid bristande läskunnighet. En av sex ungdomar i åldersgruppen 18–24 år lämnar skolan i förtid och har bara grundskoleutbildning. De har därför stora svårigheter att komma in på arbetsmarknaden och gå vidare där. Många hamnar i långtidsarbetslöshet. Europa har inte gjort några större framsteg när det gäller målen på detta område. Det krävs därför beslutsamma ansträngningar för att höja ungdomars grundkompetens och drastiskt minska antalet ungdomar som lämnar skolan i förtid. Vad det handlar om är att koncentrera resurserna under ett antal år så att en nivåförbättring uppnås.

Studier i ett annat land kan vara en viktig stimulans för personlig utveckling och ökade språkkunskaper. Tack vare Erasmusprogrammet har närmare två miljoner ungdomar i Europa kunnat studera utomlands. Ännu fler ungdomar bör få möjlighet att omfattas så att studier utomlands så småningom blir ett reguljärt inslag i universitets- och högskoleutbildning.

Om man ser till att kvalifikationer som människor skaffar sig på arbetsplatsen erkänns i hela Europa kommer deras incitament att fortsätta att skaffa sig ny kompetens under hela sitt yrkesverksamma liv att kraftigt öka. Den nyligen antagna europeiska ramen för kvalifikationer kommer att bidra till detta, förutsatt att medlemsstaterna snabbt kopplar sina nationella kvalifikationssystem och kvalifikationsramar till denna europeiska ram.

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[8] *Gemensamma principer för "flexicurity": Fler och bättre arbetstillfällen med en kombination av flexibilitet och trygghet* - KOM(2007) 359.

Kompetensutveckling och livslångt lärande gör det lättare att genomföra program för ”flexicurity” genom att öka flexibiliteten, anställningstryggheten och rörligheten på arbetsmarknaden. För att det ska bli möjligt att möta de krav som ett aktivt åldrande ställer och bemöta både företagens produktivitetskrav och arbetstagarnas intresse av anställningsbarhet krävs en mera konsekvent och målinriktad fortbildningspolitik. Europeiska socialfonden kan bidra med betydande belopp till insatser för det ändamålet.

Mer arbete måste läggas ned på att göra prognoser över framtida kompetenskrav och följa upp behovsutvecklingen. Inom allt fler sektorer konstateras nu en akut brist på arbetskraft och kompetens. Europa kommer därför att behöva förbättra arbetskraftens rörlighet, regionalt och nationellt, och fastställa en politik för reglerad invandring. En sådan politik måste kompletteras med åtgärder för att förbättra invandrarnas integration i arbetsliv och samhälle.

I samband med översynen av den inre marknaden har kommissionen också redovisat sin vision om ett Europa som främjar tillgång, möjligheter och solidaritet. Ett brett offentligt samråd har inletts för att få in synpunkter i de här viktiga frågorna. Resultatet kommer att tjäna som underlag för den förnyade sociala agenda som ska antas före halvårsskiftet 2008.

Investera mer i människor** genom en **livscykelinriktad syn på arbete och utbildning**, **modernisera arbetsmarknaderna** och öka **integreringen i samhället

Åtgärder på gemenskapsnivå:

*- Kommissionen kommer före halvårsskiftet 2008 att lägga fram förslag om en förnyad **social agenda** som kommer att bygga på tillgång, möjligheter och solidaritet, beakta Europas nya sociala verklighet och särskilt omfatta frågor som ungdom, utbildning, migration och demografi.*

*- Kommissionen kommer att lägga fram förslag om hur kompetensbrist kan motverkas genom förbättrade prognoser för och uppföljning av **framtida kompetenskrav i Europa**.*

*- Kommissionen kommer under 2008 att lägga fram förslag till en gemensam **invandringspolitik**.*

Medlemsstaterna bör

*- genomföra de överenskomna principerna om ”**flexicurity**” genom att fastställa nationella färdplaner i de nationella reformprogrammen före utgången av 2008,*

*- öka tillgången till **barnomsorg** av god kvalitet och till ett överkomligt pris, i överenstämmelse med nationella mål och gemenskapsmål,*

*- upprätta handlingsplaner och fastställa mål för att väsentligt minska antalet ungdomar som **lämnar skolan i förtid** och förbättra grundläggande **läskunnighet**,*

*- koppla nationella och regionala program till **Erasmusprogrammet** i syfte att öka antalet elever som deltar i internationellt utbyte,*

*- senast 2010 upprätta nationella **ramar för kvalifikationer** som är anpassade till den europeiska ramen.*

4.2. Frigörande av företagens potential, särskilt de små och medelstora företagens

Företagsklimatet i Europa har förbättrats som ett resultat av att medlemsstaterna genomför besluten från Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006 om att införa ett enda kontaktställe (*one-stop shop*) och minska den tid det tar att starta företag till högst en vecka. EU måste nu gå vidare och enas om en integrerad strategi som riktar in sig på de hinder som små och medelstora företag ställs inför i övriga faser av sin utveckling, en strategi som gör det möjligt för fler småföretag att växa till större företag som kan konkurrera med framgång på globala marknader. Denna strategi skulle kunna tas in i en rättsakt för småföretag där man fastställer såväl principer som konkreta åtgärder med syfte att understödja små och medelstora företag under hela livscykeln.

En åtgärd som har hög prioritet för Europeiska unionen är att avhjälpa de stora brister som fortfarande finns på den inre marknaden, särskilt på tjänsteområdet, så att man kan dra full fördel av de reformer som görs på nationell nivå. Ett fullständigt införlivande av tjänstedirektivet enligt tidsplanen kommer inte bara att skapa en verklig inre marknad för tjänster utan också ge ett utmärkt tillfälle att rationalisera förfaranden, minska byråkrati, underlätta marknadstillträde och påskynda införandet av interoperabla tillämpningar inom e-förvaltning.

EU:s program för bättre lagstiftning börjar ge resultat. Målet är att minska de administrativa bördorna med 25% inom EU totalt sett. Medlemsstaterna har åtagit sig att ställa upp motsvarande ambitiösa mål på nationell nivå. Modernisering av den offentliga förvaltningen, särskilt införande av interoperabla tillämpningar inom informations- och kommunikationsteknik, är en viktig aspekt när det gäller att förbättra företagsklimatet för små och medelstora företag och en underskattad källa till innovation. Många myndigheter har i samband med programmet för bättre lagstiftning redan anpassat sig till de allt större förväntningarna: de behandlar företag och medborgare som kunder, tillämpar ny teknik, främjar social innovation och genomför organisatoriska förändringar i syfte att tillhandahålla öppna, förutsägbara tjänster och effektiva överprövningsmöjligheter. Kommissionen kommer att verka för att det sker ett utbyte av goda exempel på detta område.

Frigörande av företagens potential

Åtgärder på gemenskapsnivå:

*- Anta en **rättsakt för småföretag i Europa** som fastställer en **integrerad strategi** för att frigöra de **små och medelstora företagens** tillväxtpotential i alla faser av deras livscykel.*

*- Närma sig målet att minska den **administrativa bördan** i EU med 25% fram till 2012 och genomföra ett ambitiöst **program för regelförenkling.***

*- Stärka den **inre marknaden**, öka **konkurrensen på tjänsteområdet** och vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att integrera marknaderna för finansiella tjänster.*

Medlemsstaterna bör

*- uthålligt och på ett konsekvent sätt bemöda sig om att införliva **tjänstedirektivet** före utgången av 2009; slutföra den analytiska genomgången av nationell lagstiftning före utgången av 2008 och parallellt inrätta ett enda kontaktställe, införa elektroniska förfaranden och upprätta ett effektivt system för gränsöverskridande samarbete mellan myndigheter,*

*- före Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2008 fastställa och tillkännage nationella **mål för minskningen av den administrativa bördan**,*

*- till fullo utnyttja de möjligheter att fortsätta att **modernisera offentlig förvaltning** som införlivandet av tjänstedirektivet och genomförandet av programmet för bättre lagstiftning ger.*

4.3. Investera i kunskap och innovation

Som en följd av Europeiska rådets beslut vid vårmötet 2006 har medlemsstaterna fastställt mål och vidtagit åtgärder för att öka investeringarna i forskning och utveckling. Europeiska forskningsrådet och flera gemensamma teknikinitiativ har kommit till på grundval av förslag från kommissionen. Europeiska institutet för teknik och innovation väntas inleda sin verksamhet 2009. Inom ramen för de nya sammanhållningsprogrammen kommer mer än 85 miljarder euro att ställas till förfogande för investeringar i kunskap och innovation.

De här åtgärderna är en bra början, men det krävs mycket mer för att Europa ska förverkliga sina ambitioner. Medlemsstaterna bör vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att nå de mål för investeringar i forskning och utveckling (FoU) som de har ställt upp för år 2010. Detta är desto mer angeläget som investeringarna i FoU 2006 inte ökade i samma takt som BNP och deras andel av BNP därför sjönk något det året.

Globaliseringen leder till att forskning och utveckling i allt större utsträckning förläggs till andra delar av världen. Kostnaderna för att skydda innovationer och hävda rättigheter till innovationer är fortfarande för höga i Europa. Licenser för innehållsdistribution är fortfarande nationellt baserade. Förfarandena för att fastställa kompatibla standarder är alldeles för långsamma. Spektrum hanteras fortfarande på ett fragmenterat sätt, vilket hämmar utvecklingen av nya högteknologiska produkter och gränsöverskridande tjänster. Alltför många hinder, även rättsliga, står i vägen för samarbete mellan universitet, forskningsinstitut, företag och forskare. Detta inverkar också negativt på en av Europas traditionella styrkefaktorer: människors kreativitet och innovationsförmåga.

Förr att trenden ska vändas behöver Europa en ”femte frihet” – fri rörlighet för kunskap – som komplement till de fyra befintliga, dvs. fri rörlighet för varor, för tjänster, för personer och för kapital. Denna ”femte frihet” skulle påskynda EU:s övergång till att bli en nyskapande och kreativ kunskapsekonomi:

– En aspekt är att åstadkomma ett verkligt europeiskt forskningsområde, där det inte bara finns rambetingelser som främjar och belönar innovation utan där man också ser till att EU:s och medlemsstaternas FoU-program kompletterar varandra, där resurser fördelas i konkurrens och inriktas på spetsforskning, där det är lätt för universitet och företag att samarbeta, där examina erkänns till fullo och där studenter, akademiker, forskare och högutbildad arbetskraft kan röra sig fritt och lätt samarbeta med det internationella forskarsamhället.

– Europa måste vidare lägga samman sina resurser för att skapa en ny generation av storskaliga inrättningar för de laboratorier och instrument som kommer att bli absolut nödvändiga om Europa ska kunna fortsätta att ligga i täten inom spetsforskning under de närmaste årtiondena. Ett gemensamt program har överenskommits som identifierar prioriterade hjälpmedel i forskningen, alltifrån lasrar, teleskop och utrustning för utforskning av haven till databaser för cancerforskning. Ingen

medlemsstat har resurser nog att ensam bekosta dessa projekt, och därför måste det nu fattas beslut på nationell nivå om hur man kan gå samman för att förverkliga dem.

– Informations- och kommunikationsteknik baserad på höghastighetsinternet är av central betydelse när det gäller att höja produktiviteten och främja innovation i Europa. Alltför många småföretag och medborgare är ännu inte uppkopplade till höghastighetsinternet, vilket hämmar deras utveckling och innovationspotential. Vid sidan av åtgärder för att öka konkurrensen på telekommarknaderna är det också nödvändigt att utarbeta planer på nationell nivå som garanterar att 30% av Europas befolkning kan ha uppkoppling till höghastighetsinternet senast 2010.

Förverkliga den ”femte friheten”: fri rörlighet för kunskap

Åtgärder på gemenskapsnivå:

*- Förbättra de viktigaste **rambetingelserna** för innovation genom att införa en integrerad jurisdiktion för patent och ett enhetligt, ekonomiskt överkomligt patent; förbättra det för närvarande splittrade regelverket om immateriella rättigheter, särskilt för att underlätta innehållsdistribution; påskynda införandet av kompatibla standarder; eftersträva gemensam spektrumhantering; förbättra tillgången till riskkapital.*

*- Undanröja hinder för gränsöverskridande **rörlighet för forskare** med hjälp av ett europeiskt ”forskarpass”.*

*- **Samla EU:s och medlemsstaternas FoU-resurser i syfte att effektivisera resursanvändningen**, genom att före utgången av 2008 komma överens om vilka områden som ska omfattas av gemensamma program och genom att senast 2010 inleda gemensamma ansökningsomgångar.*

*- Inleda arbetet med att skapa en **ny generation av forskningsinrättningar av världsklass** genom att före utgången av 2009 upprätta färdplaner för att sätta igång 35 gemensamt överenskomna projekt[9]. Inleda samtal med berörda internationella partner 2008 om projekt med global räckvidd.*

*- Öka konkurrensen på området **höghastighetsinternet** genom att anta översynen av regelverket för telekommunikationsområdet senast i maj 2009.*

Medlemsstaterna bör

*- på ett bättre sätt samordna sina ansträngningar för att förbättra rambetingelserna för **innovation**,*

*- ange hur deras nationella **mål för investeringar i forskning och utveckling (2010)** ska förverkligas och hur deras strategier på forsknings- och utvecklingsområdet kommer att bidra till förverkligandet av ett europeiskt forskningsområde,*

*- undanröja hinder för **forskares rörlighet** mellan offentliga och privata forskningscentrum,*

[9] Europeiska strategiska forumet för forskningsinfrastruktur (ESFRI), den europeiska strategin för forskningsinfrastruktur, 2006 års rapport samt rådets slutsatser av den 21 och 22 maj 2007.

*- före utgången av 2008 upprätta nationella strategier i vilka anges den **nya generation av forskningsinrättningar av världsklass** som de kommer att delta i,*

*- som en del av det nationella reformprogrammet fastställa nationella mål för användningen av **höghastighetsinternet**[10]; målsättningen är att 30% av EU:s befolkning och samtliga skolor ska ha uppkoppling till höghastighetsinternet senast 2010.*

4.4. Energi och klimatförändring

Europeiska rådet förband sig vid sitt vårmöte 2007 att omvandla Europa till ett utsläppssnålt samhälle med säker tillgång till hållbar och konkurrenskraftig energi. Man enades om ambitiösa mål för att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser, förbättra energieffektiviteten och öka användningen av förnybar energi fram till 2020. Under nästa treårsperiod gäller det att införa de ramar och instrument som krävs för att uppnå målen och att verka internationellt för att man ska komma överens om lika ambitiösa åtgärder inom FN:s ram.

Hela ekonomin måste mobiliseras för att dessa långtgående mål ska kunna nås. Marknadsbaserade instrument, som systemet för handel med utsläppsrätter för växthusgaser, fungerar som incitament för företagen att minska sina utsläpp på det mest kostnadseffektiva sättet. Ett stärkt system för utsläppshandel bör kompletteras med åtgärder för att uppnå rättsligt bindande nationella mål för utsläpp av växthusgaser och förnybara energikällor. Här handlar det om både målinriktad reglering, effektiv användning av ekonomiska styrmedel, t.ex. subventioner, skatteincitament och upphandling, och åtgärder som ger ökad öppenhet och klarhet, t.ex. märkning och miljöredovisning. Snabbast kan man nå resultat på området energieffektivitet, där den offentliga sektorn kan spela en viktig roll genom att gå före. Alla dessa ansträngningar måste kompletteras med uthålliga investeringar inom forskning och utveckling och ett aktivt anammande av ny teknik, i linje med kommissionens förslag till strategisk plan för energiteknik[11].

En mera konkurrenskraftig och bättre integrerad energimarknad kommer att avsevärt bidra till att EU får säker tillgång till hållbar och konkurrenskraftig energi. Detta förutsätter nya investeringar för att förbättra infrastrukturer och sammankopplingar av energinät, en bättre lagerhantering, solidaritetsmekanismer och en mera diversifierad energisammansättning. Samtidigt måste all politik anpassas med hänsyn till klimatförändringens effekter. Klimatförändringen kan hållas inom godtagbara gränser genom beslutsamma, världsomfattande åtgärder, men den kan inte stoppas. Detta faktum måste beaktas i politiken, som måste inriktas på att minimera de sociala, miljömässiga och ekonomiska konsekvenserna. Den måste också, för att öka EU-företagens konkurrenskraft, ta tillvara de möjligheter som ny teknik erbjuder.

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[10] Kommissionen kommer att följa upp hur internetekonomin i EU utvecklas. Det kommer att ske med hjälp av ett index för bredbandsanvändning, som kommer att börja tillämpas 2008.

[11] *Mot en strategisk EU-plan för energiteknik* - KOM(2006) 847.

Omvandla Europa till ett utsläppssnålt och energieffektivt samhälle

Åtgärder på gemenskapsnivå:

Anta förslag till lagstiftning för att ***fullborda den inre marknaden för el och för gas*** *och anta* ***förslagspaketet om klimatförändring****, i syfte att införa ramarna för att fram till 2020 minska utsläppen av växthusgaser med minst 20% och öka andelen förnybar energi till 20%.*

- Främja en industripolitik som syftar till ***en mer hållbar produktion och konsumtion*** *och lägger tonvikten vid förnybar energi och utsläppssnåla och energieffektiva produkter, tjänster och teknik.*

- Se över ***energiskattedirektivet****i i syfte att koppla det närmare till EU:s energi- och miljömål.*

- Skärpa kraven i direktivet om ***byggnaders energiprestanda****.*

Medlemsstaterna bör

- se över ***sina ekonomiska styrmedel****, bl.a. skatter, subventioner och avgifter, för att se till att de bidrar till att bekämpa klimatförändringen på ett kostnadseffektivt sätt,*

- anmoda upphandlande myndigheter att systematiskt ta med ***energieffektivitet*** *bland kriterierna för kontraktstilldelning vid offentlig upphandling.*

- fastställa bindande mål för minskad energiförbrukning i offentliga byggnader,

- förbättra ***sammankopplingen av energinät****.*

5. UPPFÖLJNING EFTER EUROPEISKA RÅDETS VÅRMÖTE 2008

Den förnyade Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning ger redan resultat. Europa har numera en gemensam integrerad agenda, en uppsättning instrument för att tillsammans angripa gemensamma utmaningar och en effektiv årlig övervakning vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte av framstegen.

Allt finns därmed på plats för att Europeiska rådet ska kunna **inleda en ambitiös ny treårsperiod** vid vårmötet 2008 genom att

- godkänna de åtgärder på de fyra prioriterade områdena som anges i avsnitt 4,
- på nytt bekräfta de integrerade riktlinjerna för de kommande tre åren,
- godkänna kommissionens förslag till landsspecifika rekommendationer och ”frågor att ge akt på”,
- uppmana medlemsstaterna att genomföra kvarstående reformer i det nationella reformprogrammet och se till att programmet uppdateras inför den nya treårsperioden; uppmana medlemsstaterna att som en del av den årliga genomföranderapporten lägga fram en konkret handlingsplan för rådet och kommissionen, där de redovisar de särskilda åtgärder som de kommer att vidta med anledning av de landsspecifika rekommendationerna och ”frågorna att ge akt på”, tillsamman med en tidsplan,

- godkänna gemenskapens nya Lissabonprogram,

- uppmana medlemsstaterna att samarbeta med nationella och regionala parlament i syfte att årligen anordna debatter om hur det nationella reformprogrammet och de landsspecifika rekommendationerna genomförs,

- uppmana medlemsstaterna att se till att sammanhållningsfonderna används i enlighet med bestämmelserna om ”öronmärkning” av medlen så att de får största möjliga effekt på tillväxt och sysselsättning,

- uppmuntra de nationella samordnarna för Lissabonstrategin att fortsätta att utbyta erfarenheter från reformarbetet, särskilt på de fyra prioriterade områdena, och från bemödandena att i ökad utsträckning engagera berörda parter,

- uppmana Europaparlamentet att spela en aktiv roll under den kommande treårsperioden, även genom dialog med nationella parlament.

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 11.12.2007
COM(2007) 803 final
PART II

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new cycle (2008-2010)

Keeping up the pace of change

Assessment of the National Reform Programmes

Statistical Annex to the Country Fiches – explanatory notes

The statistical annex presents 14 short-listed Structural indicators derived from the European Statistical System, with a gender breakdown where possible.

The full database of Structural indicators, including data and metadata relating to the EU Member States, the Acceding and Candidate countries, USA, Japan and EFTA countries, is publicly available on the Eurostat Structural indicators website: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/structuralindicators. For each EU Member State, all 14 indicators are presented in one table and two charts.

The 14 short-listed indicators

GDP per capita in PPS	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (EU-27 = 100)
Labour productivity per person employed	GDP in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) per person employed relative to EU-27 (EU-27 = 100)
Employment rate*	Employed persons aged 15-64 as a share of the total population of the same age group
Employment rate of older workers*	Employed persons aged 55-64 as a share of the total population of the same age group
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD)	Gross domestic expenditure on R&D as a percentage of GDP
Youth education attainment level*	Percentage of the population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education
Comparative price levels	Comparative price levels of final consumption by private households including indirect taxes (EU-27 = 100)
Business investment	Gross fixed capital formation by the private sector as a percentage of GDP
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers*	Share of persons with a disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median disposable income
Dispersion of regional employment rates*	Coefficient of variation of employment rates across regions (NUTS 2 level) within countries

Long-term unemployment rate*	Long-term unemployed (12 months and more) as a percentage of the total active population
Total greenhouse gas emissions	Index of greenhouse gas emissions and targets according to Kyoto Protocol / EU Council Decision for 2008-2012 (Actual base year = 100)
Energy intensity of the economy	Gross inland consumption of energy divided by GDP (at constant prices, 1995 = 100), measured in kilogram of oil equivalent per 1 000 Euro
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP	Index of inland freight transport volume relative to GDP, measured in tonne-km / GDP (at constant prices, 1995 = 100)

* Indicators disaggregated by gender

The table

The country-specific table presents data from 2000, 2003-2006 for that country and the EU-27 average. The following flags are used in the data tables:

b	break in series	f	forecast
e	estimates	:	not available
p	provisional value	-	not relevant

The charts

The 14 indicators are presented in two charts which compare the actual value with the EU-27 value[1], illustrating in which areas a particular Member State is performing better or worse than the European average.

The "At risk of poverty" indicator measures relative poverty in a particular country and the EU-27 average is computed as a population-weighted average of individual national values. A comparison of national values with the EU-27 average can therefore be difficult to interpret, and may give a different result than if risk-of-poverty rates were computed based on a common reference threshold. During the transition to data production under the new EU-SILC regulation by all Member States with effect from 2005, indicators were drawn from national sources which were not fully harmonised. The indicators are computed using an income definition which until 2007 excludes imputed rent revenues and mortgage interest payments.

[1] Values in the chart = Current national value / Current EU-27 value * 100.

For the presentation in charts, indicators have been divided into two groups:

- First chart; those indicators for which increasing values indicate a positive trend, i.e. where a value of the indicator above 100 when compared to EU-27 is a relatively good performance;

- Second chart; those indicators for which decreasing values indicate a positive trend, i.e. where a value of the indicator below 100 when compared to EU-27 is a relatively good performance.

The charts also display the two central EU targets of reaching 3% of expenditure on Research and Development and an overall employment rate of 70% by 2010. In the same way as the indicators are compared to the EU-value, the targets have been converted to a ratio which compares the EU target to the real EU-27 value in 2006 (or latest year available).

Data sources

All indicators were extracted from the Eurostat database on 19 November 2007. The source of the information is Eurostat in all cases except for Greenhouse gas emissions (European Environment Agency and European Topic Centre on Air Climate Change) and Gross Domestic expenditure on R&D (Eurostat and OECD).

The European Council has invited Member States to set up national targets on the employment rate and on the gross domestic expenditures on R&D as a share of GDP. The national targets presented are those that respond to this invitation and have been extracted from the respective National Reform Programs.

Explanation of abbreviations

EU-27: European Union (27 countries)

Euro Area: Euro Area (13 countries for all years)

Belgium

1. Economic growth in Belgium reached 2.8% in 2006 and should remain broadly the same in 2007. The unemployment rate is forecast to decline from 8.2% in 2006 to around 7.5% in 2007, slightly above the euro area average. The 2006 employment rate was 61%. It is expected to rise in 2007, but remains well below the EU average, especially for older people. Labour productivity is among the highest in the EU and expected to grow in line with the euro area average. After a government budget surplus of 0.4% of GDP in 2006, the budgetary outturn for 2007 is likely to be a small deficit. The debt-to-GDP ratio remains on a downward trend.

2. Economic policy focuses on controlling labour costs, creating a more dynamic labour market and stimulating innovation. To preserve competitiveness, wage negotiations are based on a bi-annual national indicative wage norm agreed by the social partners, the most recent covers 2007-2008 and takes into account developments in Germany, France and the Netherlands. Measures to further reduce the tax burden on labour need to be reconciled with budgetary targets necessary to reduce the still high debt level and prepare for the cost of an ageing population. Policies to increase employment combined with efforts to curtail public expenditure could enhance medium-term growth and improve the long-term sustainability of public finances. Economic growth could be fostered by removing barriers to competition in services markets (including some network industries) and implementing reforms to boost innovation.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Belgian Implementation Report shows good progress on implementing the 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have decreased over the last year, due to the fact that the current federal government is a caretaker government since elections in June 2007. The continuation of such a situation is likely to delay the implementation of further necessary budgetary measures and thereby also jeopardise targets for 2008.

4. Overall, there has been some progress on responding to the two country specific recommendations adopted by the Council. Belgium has made some efforts to further reduce the tax burden on labour, although it remains high above the EU average. Some measures were also taken to reduce regional unemployment and employment disparities, but not through a comprehensive economic strategy and the disparities are increasing.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Belgium should focus, there has been some progress over the 2005-2007 period, but the pace slowed in 2007. There has been most progress on policies to reduce emissions.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Belgium had launched a series of measures to respond to the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been some progress on most of the

commitments with a deadline of end 2007, but limited development in the flexicurity domain.

7. The Implementation Report specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries. Belgium has made some progress on competition in services, although legislative action is still required in professional services. Progress is limited in the fields of the quality of public finance, employment protection, labour mobility and the development of a coherent flexicurity strategy. The budgetary balance is considerably better than the euro area average.

8. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP by central and regional governments and the social partners continue. The Belgian federal government involves regional authorities in drafting the report. Social partners are extensively consulted and provide advice on policy areas, on some implementing measures and on the reporting process. Governance of the implementation of the NRP is strongly linked to structural funds programmes. EU Structural funds are being directed satisfactorily towards improving access to employment and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. Belgium kept its budget balanced from 2000 until 2004. It planned to do so in 2005, but an exceptional and one-off assumption of debt from the railway company SNCB left a deficit of 2.3% of GDP. The 2006 government budget surplus of 0.4% of GDP exceeded the NRP's balanced-budget objective, but included revenue-raising one-off measures worth about 0.8% of GDP. For 2007, a budget surplus of 0.3% of GDP was planned, but the actual turnout is projected to be a small deficit as many one-off measures, initially budgeted at 0.5% of GDP, will not be executed by the caretaker government. Assuming no policy changes, the projected deficit would increase slightly to 0.4% of GDP in 2008-2009. The current federal government as a caretaker government is not in a position to contain an increase in the public deficit. The debt-to-GDP ratio continues to decline and should reach 84.6% of GDP in 2007 from 94.2% at end-2004.

10. The Council recommended Belgium to undertake further efforts while continuing fiscal improvement, to reduce the tax burden on labour towards the average of its neighbouring countries, especially by reducing the tax wedge on low-skilled workers. Following the income tax reform decided in 2001 and fully implemented in 2006, a further easing of fiscal pressure on earned incomes will follow, notably from a lump-sum reduction in income tax in the Flemish region, the upward revision of the fixed deductible amount for professional spending, and further tax reductions on high-skilled workers, shift work, night work and overtime work. However, the tax burden on labour remains above the EU average. Moreover, the measures seem insufficient to give low-skilled workers more incentives to take up work or to substantially improve the employment rate of older workers.

11. The Council also referred to the need to focus on the long-term sustainability of public finances. Belgium had already taken a number of relevant measures in the

past, including the Silver Fund and the Generation Pact. In 2007, Belgium established a "Fund for the future of the health system" to offset the medical costs of an ageing population. These measures are only a first response to the major budgetary challenge that ageing poses in Belgium, especially given the low effective retirement age. Responding to this challenge crucially hinges on maintaining high primary surpluses and strict control of government primary expenditure growth. The expected cost of age related expenditure has been upwardly revised from 3.5% to 4.4% of GDP between 2006 and 2030. Combined with expected budgetary deterioration in 2007, additional structural budgetary measures may therefore be needed. These should be complemented by growth and productivity enhancing reform measures encompassing the welfare system and product and labour markets.

12. Between 2005 and 2007, Belgium has achieved some progress in addressing the macro-economic challenges set out in its NRP. The country-specific recommendations and points to watch have to some extent been addressed but require further efforts, and they therefore remain valid.

Micro-economic policies

13. Belgium introduced some new measures in 2007 and continued implementing previously taken initiatives to address the its micro-economic challenges. An R&D forum brought together all levels of governance and the private sector to pinpoint Belgium's R&D weaknesses and make recommendations to stop recent declines in investment. Existing initiatives such as fiscal incentives for R&D have been strengthened and public spending on R&D has increased. However, public R&D investment remains well below the EU average.

14. ICT measures continue to be implemented and the federal regulator should now progress with the analysis of the broadband market. The transposition deficit of EU legislation, including the EU Financial Services Action Plan measures, has improved significantly. However, three important directives are still only partially transposed and the public procurement package not yet at all. Work is on-going to reduce the time to start up a business from 26 days to 3 days. Simplification efforts have continued and the institutional set up for better regulation has further improved but no target for reducing administrative burden has been set. Round Table proposals on upgrading legislation could lead to more competition, especially in professional services where legislative action is still required. Competition authorities should enforce competition more actively, particularly in network industries.

15. The Council referred to the need to focus on improving competition in gas and electricity markets and on identifying further emission reduction measures. The measures taken by the federal government and the regions are insufficient, particularly to neutralise the incumbents' market power. The spot market for electricity has been extended, but to be effective, further interconnection capacity is required to remove congestion at the border. Liberalisation of the residential users market in 2007 has been only a partial success, with particularly slow progress in Brussels. The incumbents' presence in transmission and distribution network operators is still high. In Wallonia the incumbent exercises control over nearly all distribution networks. A recent anti-trust decision referred to concerns related to the gas incumbents' anti-competitive behaviour. Measures to ensure independent, clearly mandated, and adequately staffed regulators must be reinforced to ensure effective

regulation of the transmission and distribution network operators and the incumbents. Market rules and their effect on market transparency need reviewing to facilitate new entry.

16. Belgium took appropriate additional emission reduction measures in 2007 and should reach its Kyoto commitments. Financial incentives have been introduced to achieve further energy efficiency and some emission rights will be bought abroad. However, more measures to achieve the renewable target for electricity are needed.

17. Belgium has succeeded in implementing a significant number of measures to deliver on the micro-economic key challenges outlined in the NRP. Good progress has been made on better regulation and the time required to start-up a company. A coherent R&D policy with better coordination across all levels of governance is needed to further increase the level and the impact of public R&D funding if Belgium's R&D is to reach the target of 3% of GDP. The point to watch on competition in the gas and electricity markets has not been addressed sufficiently, and significant challenges remain. The point to watch on reducing emissions represents a good policy response and is therefore no longer merited.

Employment policies

18. Since 2005, Belgium has taken important initiatives covering active ageing, the quality of education and the rights and obligations of people receiving unemployment insurance. However, the overall employment rate (61.0%) and the employment rates for women (54.0%) and older workers (32.0%) remain considerably below the EU goals and getting further from the EU average. Further attention is needed to promote labour market adaptability. Progress over 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of policies to address Belgium's labour market challenges is therefore mixed.

19. The Council recommended that Belgium should take further measures aimed at reducing regional disparities in unemployment and employment. Regional authorities have reacted to some extent. Data transmission between different public employment services has been improved and job vacancies in the regions are now systematically exchanged. Regional public employment services are also reinforcing language training and the active follow-up of jobseekers. Nevertheless, regional disparities in unemployment and employment have further widened. A comprehensive strategy in accordance with the flexicurity approach should reinforce policy measures taken to improve labour market performance.

20. The Council also referred to the need to focus on increasing the employment rate for older workers and vulnerable groups. New measures improve the transition from school to work but a coherent youth strategy is still to be further developed. To promote active ageing Belgium is gradually implementing an important number of measures agreed in the 2005 Generation Pact. Steps have been taken to encourage adaptability in the labour market, including diversity plans, one-to-one coaching, and concentration of older workers and vulnerable groups in active labour market policies. Further reductions of the tax burden on low wages may improve the integration of outsiders. This is a necessary policy response to Belgium's challenges in this area.

21. Recent policy initiatives are inspired by the flexicurity approach, such as a rebalancing between social security and active labour market policies. Overall however, Belgium is not yet addressing flexicurity in a fully integrated way; measures to tackle segmentation remain at the conceptual stage. Although the NRP underlines the importance for Belgium of enhancing participation in lifelong learning to foster flexibility and security in the labour market, opportunities for lifelong learning should be improved, particularly in-company training.

22. Between 2005 and 2007, Belgium has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. Some progress has been made to address the country specific recommendation on regional disparities. A first important package of measures have been taken towards increasing the employment rate of older workers and vulnerable groups, but this needs to be monitored to check whether further measures are required. Belgium requires a comprehensive labour market strategy to improve the performance of the labour market across the territory and the Commission therefore considers a recommendation merited in this area.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of Belgium's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made to implement key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

24. Belgium has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Belgium has shown some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows some policy response to the Council recommendations, but further reform is still necessary. There has been some response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

26. Among the strengths shown by the Belgium's 2007 Implementation Report are the emission reduction policies and the promising results of the guidance and monitoring system of unemployed people.

27. The policy areas in the Belgian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are reducing the tax burden on labour whilst strengthening fiscal consolidation and improving labour market performance. Against this background it is recommended that Belgium:

- continues efforts to further reduce the tax burden on labour towards the average of its neighbouring countries, especially by reducing the tax wedge on low skilled workers, while strengthening fiscal consolidation;

- reinforces the policy measures to improve the performance of its labour market through a comprehensive strategy, in accordance with an integrated flexicurity approach, to enhance labour market participation, lower regional disparities, and increase participation in lifelong learning.

28. In addition, it will be important for Belgium to focus on the following challenges: to fully implement the strategy aiming to ensure the long term sustainability of public finances, including expenditure restraints, fiscal surpluses, and a persistent reduction of government debt; urgently take further measures to improve competition in gas and electricity markets, including through independent and effective regulators and additional measures concerning transmission and distribution operators; to increase substantially its commitment to stimulating R&D and innovation notably by increasing both the level and impact of public funding and developing a coordinated policy mix at all levels; continuing the implementation of the measures to increase the employment rate for older workers and vulnerable groups, monitor their impact and, if need be, take further activation measures.

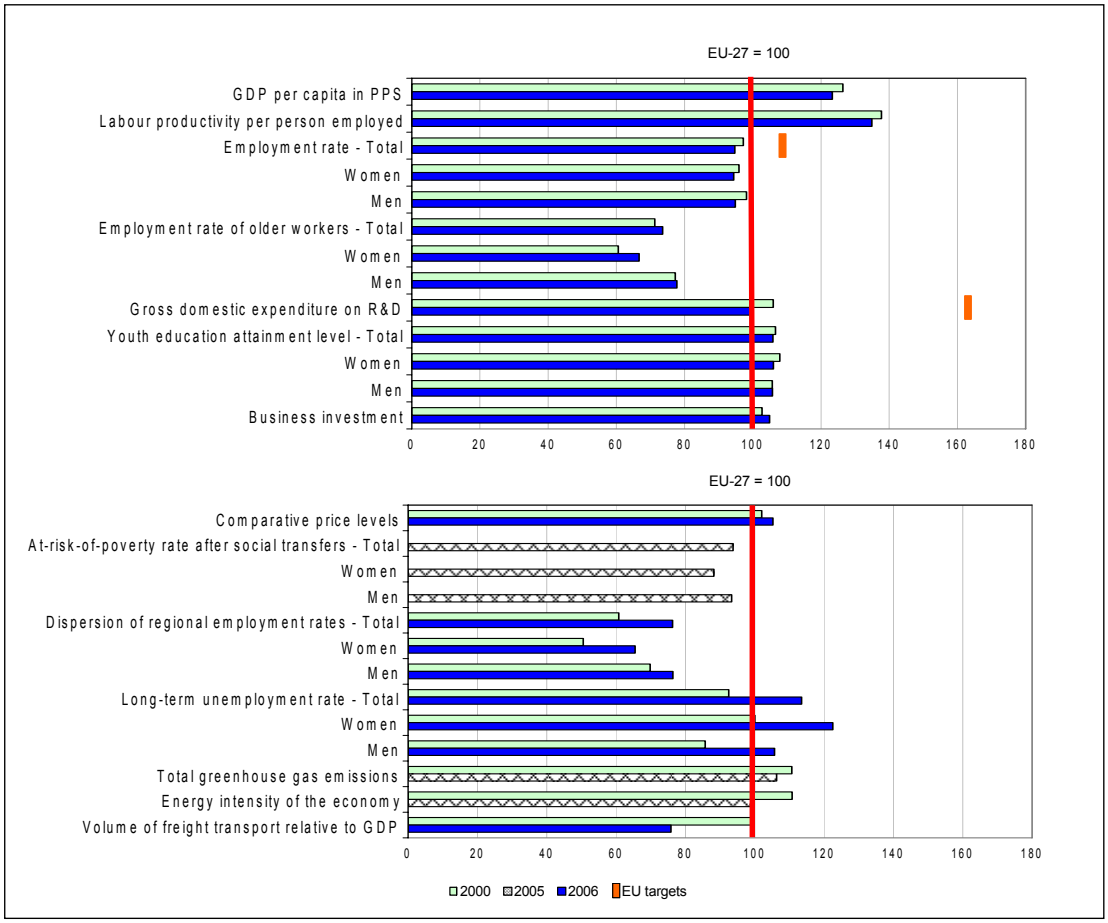
PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

BELGIUM

		BE						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		126.4	123.5	124.5	124.4	123.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		137.7	134.4	135.6	135.2	134.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	60.5	59.6	60.3	61.1	61.0	70.0*	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	51.5	51.8	52.6	53.8	54.0		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	69.5	67.3	67.9	68.3	67.9		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	26.3	28.1	30.0	31.8	32.0		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	16.6	18.7	21.1	22.1	23.2		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	36.4	37.8	39.1	41.7	40.9		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.97	1.88	1.87	1.84	1.83	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	81.7	81.2	81.8	81.8	82.4		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	85.6	84.6	84.8	85.3	85.6		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	78.0	77.9	78.9	78.4	79.1		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		102.0	106.5	105.7	105.1	105.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		18.9	17.1	18.0	18.6	19.1		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	13.0	15.0b	15.0	15.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	14.0	16.0b	16.0	15.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	12.0	14.0b	14.0	14.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	7.9	7.7	8.7	8.4	8.7		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	10.1	9.1	10.7	10.5	10.6		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	6.7	6.9	7.2	6.8	7.1		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	3.7	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.2		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.6	4.2	4.7	5.0	4.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.7		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		100.4	100.8	100.5	97.9	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		236.1	217.4	207.4	205.7	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		98.0	95.0	89.3	83.7	80.9e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

* National target: 70% as soon as possible

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Bulgaria

1. Bulgaria's GDP growth rate has averaged around 4% over the last ten years, accelerating to above 6% per year since 2004. Accordingly, GDP per capita reached 37.1% of the EU average in 2006, but remains among the lowest in the EU. Although the employment rate increased from 49.7% in 2001 to 58.6% in 2006, it is still below the EU average. The unemployment rate fell to 9% in 2006, down from 19.5% in 2001, and is estimated to decline further to below 8% in 2007. Macro-economic imbalances have been increasing substantially in recent years, with widening external deficits and rising inflationary pressures. Moreover, the labour market has tightened since 2006, triggering an acceleration of wage growth to around 20% in the first three quarters of 2007, clearly outpacing productivity growth.

2. Bulgaria joined the EU on 1st January 2007. Its economy is at present performing strongly, but is showing signs of overheating with a high and growing external deficit, growing labour shortages, strong wage growth including in the public sector and rapid increases in credit growth which have fuelled inflationary pressures. The challenge for Bulgaria consists of further tackling these macro-economic vulnerabilities by maintaining a tight fiscal policy and speeding up structural reforms to strengthen its competitiveness. Improving administrative capacity is a prerequisite for a successful implementation of structural reforms.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Since the Bulgarian National Reform Programme (NRP) was submitted in March 2007, the Commission's assessment is mainly based on the quality of the policy response as well as on first steps taken towards its implementation. The NRP identifies five key challenges for the period 2007-2009: maintaining macro-economic stability; infrastructure; improving the business environment; improving the quality of human capital; and activating labour supply through using a flexicurity approach. Furthermore the NRP identifies improving administrative capacity as an overarching challenge.

4. The NRP identifies the right challenges. The NRP clearly prioritises and introduces the correct sequence for addressing the numerous challenges which the country faces. It is also rightly recognising that improving administrative capacity is an absolute prerequisite to achieve progress in other priority areas. The presentation of the NRP is operational. For each priority, based on a clear problem analysis, it briefly lays out the planned measures, the actions, the targets, the associated budgets, responsible services and timelines. The NRP is however weak in presenting concrete policy measures in some areas, in particular strengthening administrative capacity and cutting red tape. The implementation report does not provide sufficient additional information on concrete measures in those two areas.

5. In spite of some progress achieved so far, Bulgaria's economic and social development is still hampered by weak public administration. Corruption still affects the business environment and access to and quality of the public services. Significant

improvements on these aspects are urgently needed. In this context Bulgaria presented a report on the implementation of the Action Plan under the Strategy for Transparent Governance and for Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption. Progress in this area is monitored through the Commission's cooperation and verification mechanism.

6. Whereas legislation to reform the administration was adopted in 1998, the effects are not yet visible. The NRP and the Implementation report contain only measures either of a general or of a technical nature to improve administrative capacity. It does not address the need to develop a comprehensive human resources policy aimed in particular at tackling the high-turnover of senior staff, raising the independence of the civil service, increasing performance-based pay and career development schemes.

7. Furthermore, whereas the NRP rightly prioritises by focusing on only 5 policy areas that Bulgaria needs to tackle as a matter of urgency, this prioritisation is not reflected sufficiently in the planned measures to raise administrative capacity. This weakness could be remedied by recognising that the administrative capacity must first of all be improved in those departments (and regulatory authorities) that are in charge of elaborating and implementing policy measures in those 5 priority areas.

8. The NRP foresees several measures to meet the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. It foresees the establishment of one-stop shops for setting up a business but greater effort will need to be made to ensure adequate simplification. Several projects in the field of entrepreneurship education are on-going, but their scope is limited.

9. Political ownership of the NRP is strong, with the appointment of a national Lisbon coordinator at political level and the quarterly monitoring of progress by the Prime-Minister and the Council of Ministers. Consultation of stakeholders, parliament and the social partners has been substantial. Pursuing this dialogue with stakeholders during the implementation phase will be important. Taking a strongly integrated policy approach across government departments will be key to the successful implementation of the NRP. Meeting the NRP's ultimate aim - to catch up with the rest of the EU by growing robustly and increasing the employment rate – will depend on maintaining strong political commitment throughout its implementation phase.

10. Bulgaria is eligible for € 6.852 billion from the Structural Funds in the period 2007-2013. The links between the priorities in the NRP and the programmes under the Structural and Cohesion Funds are fairly strong. Bulgaria needs to stay focused on strategic priorities and realistic targets, with Structural Funds-assisted activities complementing and not replacing policy developments set out in the NRP. To ensure the efficient absorption and delivery of cohesion policy programmes, the administrative capacity must be further reinforced at national, regional and local level.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

11. Maintaining macro-economic stability in the context of the currency board arrangements through tight fiscal policy, preserving long-term sustainability of public finances, and further structural reform is rightly identified as a key challenge in Bulgaria's NRP. The NRP shows ambition with regard to the medium-term budgetary surpluses (in the order of 1.5%-2% of GDP), but could be more ambitious with regard to the acceleration of structural reforms.

12. The current account deficit rose to around 19% of GDP in the first half of 2007 due largely to buoyant growth of domestic demand and especially investments. This, combined with accelerated wage growth and increasing food and energy prices, contributed to annual inflation rising to over 10% in September 2007. Despite comparatively low employment rates, growing shortages and skills gaps in the labour market have implied a significant acceleration of wage growth. Although Bulgaria targets a budgetary surplus, given rising macro-economic imbalances and signs of overheating, Bulgaria faces risks regarding the sustainability of its growth path. Structural reforms must be accelerated in order to reinforce the economy's ability to adjust, whilst sticking to tight fiscal and income policies to contain domestic demand.

13. The Implementation Report confirms the commitment to high medium-term budgetary surpluses and to avoiding pro-cyclical fiscal easing. Fiscal policy has been tightened in recent years, with the fiscal surplus projected to reach 3% of GDP in 2007. Maintaining this tight fiscal stance is essential given the rising external deficit and inflation. With wage growth in the public sector accelerating during 2007 and a scheduled increase of minimum wages by over 20% in 2008, ensuring that public sector wage policy contributes to wage moderation will be crucial to control inflation and to preserve competitiveness. Moreover, improving the efficiency of public expenditures will also be important to strengthen potential growth. The presentation of the 2008 budget on a programme basis and the envisaged public expenditure reviews, notably in health care and education, are important positive steps in this respect.

14. Bulgaria faces a demographic challenge to its long-term financial sustainability. To limit the expected negative budgetary impact, the NRP acknowledges the need for continued pension and health reform. A special demographic reserve fund has been capitalised to underpin the first-pillar pension system, but the respective legislation is still to be adopted. Furthermore, pensions have been increased twice by 10% in 2007, contrary to existing legislative provisions on pension indexation. Refraining from such discretionary measures would be important to support long-term sustainability. After several delays, a draft national health strategy has been elaborated which provides for an increase in public health expenditure, but needs to be complemented with concrete measures aimed at improving efficiency.

15. In summary, maintaining tight fiscal and income policies while improving public expenditure efficiency and accelerating structural reforms to ease labour market

pressures, improve skills and to increase competitiveness of product and service markets will be crucial to contain external imbalances and inflationary pressures.

Micro-economic policies

16. The NRP identifies improving the business environment and modernising infrastructure as the micro-economic challenges. The Commission subscribes to these priorities. Improving the business environment, transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure, and opening network markets and the services sector will require an integrated policy approach.

17. The NRP sets out some measures, but of a rather general nature, to improve the business environment, such as a better regulation agenda, the introduction of impact assessment for new laws, the introduction of a new electronic-based commercial register, introduction of single form schemes for payments at borders and one stop shops at all levels of administration. Although these measures are a clear step in the right direction, progress should be seen against the backdrop of continued overregulation, long delays in obtaining authorisations, time-consuming settlement of contractual and legal disputes and continued corruption. Besides implementing the better regulation agenda, further urgent structural measures are needed to reduce the number of authorisations and time for their delivery, introduce more transparency and recourse. These measures can assist the public administrations in delivering a better service to the citizen and businesses. Judicial procedures must equally be made more transparent. The introduction of single contact points and electronic-procedures and other obligations deriving from the implementation of the Services Directive must be seized as an opportunity to streamline procedures.

18. The NRP recognises the importance of R&D in the broader context of innovation, and lists a number of problems mainly relating to the limited involvement of the business sector in R&D activity. However, concrete measures are yet to be proposed to address the major problem of reforming the public research base, and Bulgaria has yet to set a target for R&D intensity. In order to ensure long-term productivity growth, it is vital to boost private R&D investment and reform public R&D to be both efficient and relevant to industrial needs. This should be achieved by increasing the share of competitive funding and focusing on few priorities. Better synergy between education and R&D policies is also needed.

19. The NRP and Implementation Report fully recognise the importance of ICT, in particular the development of e-government and broadband infrastructure to facilitate the move towards a knowledge-based society. The NRP sets out in general terms a range of initiatives, most of which will draw on Structural Funds investments, to improve transport, telecommunications, energy infrastructure and competitiveness but underestimates the administrative capacity constraints. Management structures for project implementation covering the whole project cycle, notably project feasibility assessment, project design, tendering and procurement strategies and project/works management must be further reinforced. Urgent measures must be taken to ensure the staffing, independence and proper functioning of regulatory authorities to increase competition in the network industries and in particular in the area of telecommunications, through the rapid and effective implementation of EU legislation.

20. Bulgaria would benefit from an integrated approach in the micro-economic domain. The effects of policies are unclear given the absence of such an approach. The proposed steps to cut red tape and consequently improve the business environment are insufficient to address the challenges.

Employment policies

21. Bulgaria is facing increased labour shortages as a result of fast growth, strong job creation, outward migration and insufficient skill levels in specific sectors. Nonetheless, employment rates remain low and structural unemployment relatively high so that there is, in principle, still a large source of untapped labour. Against this backdrop, activating the labour supply along with improving the adaptability of workers by improving access to and quality of education and training are rightly addressed as main priorities in the NRP.

22. Labour market policies currently focus on activating vulnerable groups and increasing literacy among low-skilled persons. Sustainable economic growth is at risk if further measures are not taken to put into place an integrated active labour market policy approach. So far, notwithstanding some initial measures, there has been limited progress to reform the design and scope of active labour market policies as employment programmes tend to create predominantly subsidised low-skilled jobs providing little opportunity to increase workers' employability through training. Further efforts are needed to assess, analyse and improve the effectiveness, efficiency and adequacy of active policies. More sustainable and integrated policies are necessary to encourage people to participate in the labour market and remain in employment through further opportunities for vocational training and through more far-reaching youth employment policies facilitating school-to-work transition, with special attention to Roma. Strengthening the capacity of labour market institutions to implement policies and adequately deliver employment services should also become a high priority area. The Implementation Report does not foresee further actions to address the need for strengthening the capacity of the Employment Agency and improve its effectiveness, including its role in unemployment prevention.

23. Bulgaria faces major challenges with respect to the financial efficiency and the quality of the education system. Further steps should be taken to reform education and training systems to ensure correspondence between skills supplied and labour market needs, including establishing a reliable labour market monitoring system. In order to tackle persistently high early school leaving, Bulgaria should take an integrated policy approach by focusing more on students at risk, either because of social or geographical background, in particular Roma. A comprehensive and coherent life-long learning strategy should be adopted and implemented to increase participation levels while encouraging employers to invest in training.

24. Recently adopted legislative amendments are first steps towards introducing a flexicurity approach in Bulgaria but an integrated approach must be further elaborated and involving social partners in all policy areas, particularly in life-long learning where their role has been weak. Making contractual arrangements more flexible and tackling the high level of undeclared work can further help increase labour supply. Some progress has been made in tackling undeclared work through compulsory registration of employment contracts and reduction of social insurance

contributions. However, more efforts are necessary to strengthen the administrative capacity of labour inspectorates and improve compliance.

25. Overall, Bulgaria has made some initial progress in the employment policy field. However, despite the current trend of falling unemployment, Bulgaria needs to take a more integrated and better-sequenced approach to increase activity and employment in the formal economy for all; ensure correspondence between skills and labour market needs; and raise the skills potential of the labour force.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

26. In the light of Bulgaria's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of its National Reform Programme and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

27. Overall, the National Reform Programme focuses on the right challenges, but in some areas lacks concrete and substantial measures in particular as regards strengthening administrative capacity. Furthermore the National Reform Programme lacks measures aimed at urgently and significantly reducing red tape to make the business environment more dynamic and competitive. Given the growing economic imbalances it is particularly important for Bulgaria to accelerate the implementation of its National Reform Programme in order to create the necessary conditions for sustainable growth and jobs in the medium to longer term.

28. The National Reform Programme's strengths include a clear problem analysis and right prioritisation and sequencing of reforms as well as strong political ownership. Important provisions for a tight monitoring of progress at the highest political level have been put in place, which should prove an effective tool for ensuring a rapid and effective implementation of the National Reform Programme. The National Reform Programme is furthermore underpinned by a tight fiscal policy which offers a solid basis for accelerating the needed structural reforms to ensure long-term growth.

29. The policy areas in the Bulgarian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority and budgetary impacts of measures and details on the monitoring and evaluation procedures should be clearly spelled out are: administrative capacity; macro-economic imbalances; red tape; and the functioning of the labour market. Against this background, Bulgaria is recommended to:

- urgently strengthen administrative capacity in particular focus on key government functions, including regulatory authorities, and the judiciary.

- contain the growing current account deficit and inflationary pressures, in particular by a tight fiscal policy, improving the quality of public expenditure and promoting wage moderation in order to keep wage developments in line with productivity gains;

- take rapid measures substantially to cut red tape and shorten procedural delays in order to improve the business environment (in particular for SMEs and facilitating start-ups), which will also help in the fight against corruption;

- increase the quality of labour supply and the employment rate by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of active labour market policies and further reform the education system to raise skills to levels that better match labour market needs and reduce early school leaving.

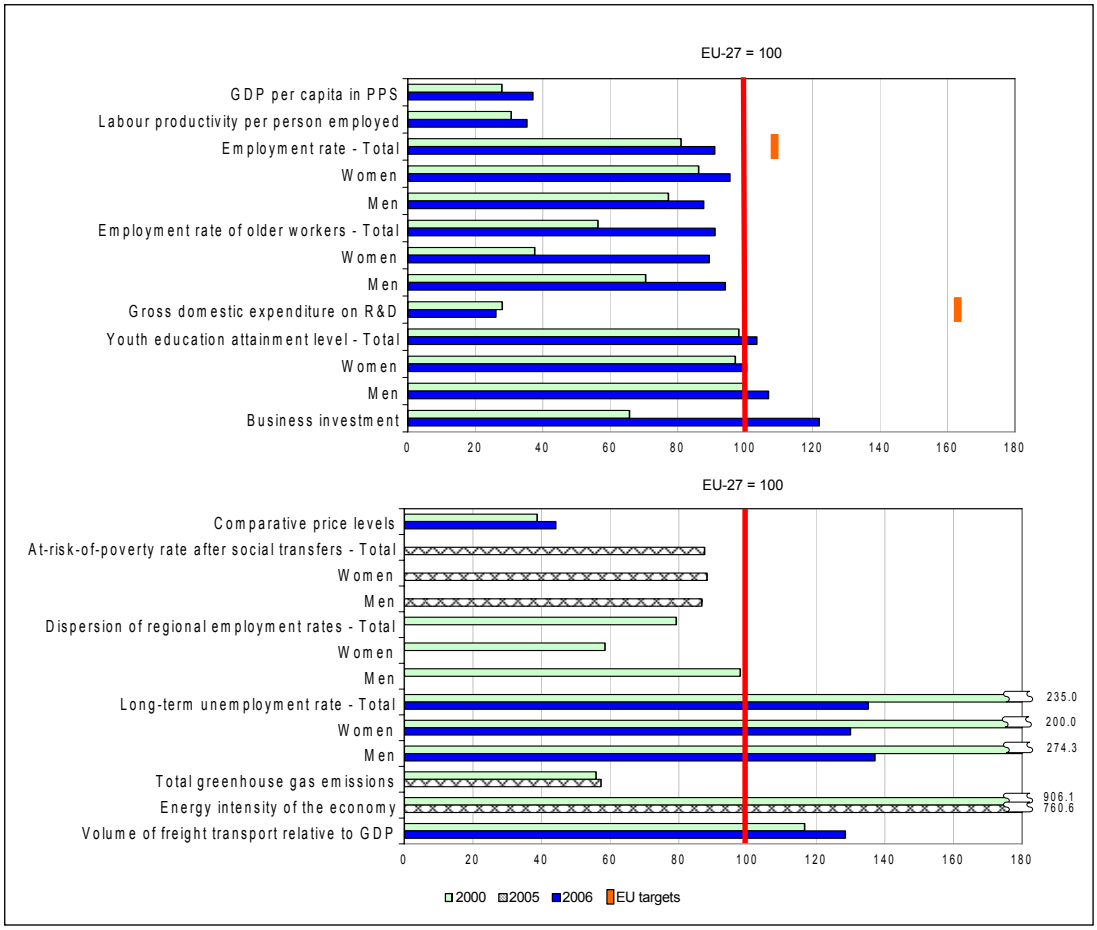
30. In addition, it will be important for Bulgaria over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on: taking further measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances, in particular with regard to potential risks in terms of adequacy and sustainability of pensions; creating all necessary pre-conditions for strong competition in network industries; elaborating an integrated policy for R&D and innovation notably aimed at reforming the public R&D system, shifting public support to R&D- based on an overall R&D intensity target for 2010- towards more competitive funding focused on key priorities; tackling undeclared work by strengthening institutional capacity to perform inspections and ensure legal enforcement; completing the lifelong learning strategy and increasing participation.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

BULGARIA

		BG						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		27.9	32.6	33.6	35.2	37.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		30.6	33.4	33.5	34.1	35.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	50.4	52.5	54.2	55.8	58.6	61.0 (2009)	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	46.3	49.0	50.6	51.7	54.6		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	54.7	56.0	57.9	60.0	62.8		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	20.8	30.0	32.5	34.7	39.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	10.3	21.0	24.2	25.5	31.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	33.2	40.5	42.2	45.5	49.5		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.52	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.48	:	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	75.2	76.3	76.1	76.5	80.5		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	77.0	77.3	77.5	77.1	81.1		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	73.4	75.4	74.9	75.9	80.0		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		38.7	40.7	41.7	42.4	44.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		12.1	16.6	17.6	20.0	22.2		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	14.0	14.0	15.0	14.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	15.0	16.0	17.0	15.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	13.0	12.0	13.0	13.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	10.3	6.8	7.0	7.1	:		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	11.7	8.8	8.9	8.0	:		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	9.4	5.8	5.9	7.0	:		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	9.4	8.9	7.2	6.0	5.0		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	9.2	8.6	7.0	6.0	5.2		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	9.6	9.2	7.3	6.1	4.8		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		50.7	52.7	52.2	52.8	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		1931.1	1769.2	1595.3	1582.4	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		115.6	127.1	138.4	147.9	137.1		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Czech Republic

1. The Czech Republic grew at an annual rate of 6.4% of GDP over 2005 and 2006. Growth in 2007 is expected to be almost 6%, and to remain close to its potential of 5% in 2008 and 2009. GDP per capita is currently 79% of the EU average. This strong economic growth, mainly driven by domestic demand, has positively affected the labour market with the employment rate projected to reach 68% in 2007. The unemployment rate decreased below 6% in 2007 and is projected to drop to 5% by 2009. However, although falling, the proportion of long-term unemployed remains high.

2. Further structural reform focused on labour market flexibility, increasing human capital, and active policy measures to tackle skill mismatches, are now important. High growth rates create a good environment for further fiscal consolidation and a reallocation of spending towards growth-enhancing activities. Whilst the level of government debt is relatively low, at about 30% of GDP, it is anticipated to rise steeply mainly due to the ageing population and the structure of the pension and healthcare systems, putting the long-term sustainability of public finances in the Czech Republic at high risk.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Implementation Report shows some progress on implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period, with a slight acceleration in 2007.

4. There has been some progress on the recommendations issued by the Council to the Czech Republic. Steps have been taken to improve the long-term sustainability of public finances by reforming the pension and healthcare systems. The recommendation on R&D has been partly addressed. Policy measures in the employment, and education and training areas represent important steps forward though continuing effort is now needed.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded the Czech Republic should focus, progress has been mixed. Good progress has been achieved in developing a coherent approach towards improving the regulatory framework for enterprises. An active ageing strategy is being implemented, and regional disparities have slightly decreased, but more progress is needed. Although unemployment amongst disadvantaged groups decreased, the Czech Republic has to move forward significantly to support the better integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market, reconciling work and family life, and in terms of reducing the high gender pay gap.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that the Czech Republic had made mixed progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been further mixed progress on most of the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP within government and with the social partners are quite good. The Office of the Vice-Prime Minister for European Affairs is responsible for the coordination, preparation and evaluation of the Implementation Report, supported by an inter-ministerial working group. Other stakeholders are consulted but more efforts are needed to support implementation at regional and local levels. The Implementation Report provides a clear overview and timetable. Links between the NRP implementation and the structural and cohesion funds are fairly strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The Czech Republic has made partial progress over the 2005-2007 period in addressing its macro-economic challenges. On fiscal consolidation, the budget deficit is likely to worsen to 3.4% of GDP in 2007, mainly due to increases in social spending (likely to cost over 1% of GDP) without compensating measures in other areas. A package of measures to improve fiscal stability in the medium term was introduced in September 2007. This Package includes expenditure cuts above the level of revenue reductions. On the revenue side, these include the introduction of a 15% flat tax rate on personal income from 2008, a gradual decrease in corporate income tax from 24% to 19% in 2010, an increase of the reduced VAT rate from 5% to 9%, and the introduction of new environmental taxes. The package shifts the tax burden from direct to indirect taxation. On the expenditure side, substantial cuts in mandatory spending aim at improving the flexibility of public expenditure toward growth enhancing public spending. Overall, the reform package and the 2008 budget approved by the government should reduce the deficit to 2.9% of GDP in 2008.

9. The Council recommended the Czech Republic to take steps to implement reforms of the pension and healthcare systems. A pension reform has been prepared, including an extension of the retirement age to 65 and the introduction of a fully-funded pillar. Healthcare reform is also under preparation, aiming to transform health insurance companies into joint-stock companies in order to increase their transparency and establish competition among healthcare institutions. The Stabilisation Package introduced co-payments for some medical services. These represent first valuable steps in the right direction.

10. The Czech Republic has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. New measures approved in September 2007 should contribute to fiscal consolidation in the short and medium term, although further efforts will be needed for the long-term. The proposed pension reform should be given a concrete time frame for its implementation as soon as possible in order for the Czech Republic to prepare for the negative impact of population ageing on public finances and potential economic growth.

Micro-economic policies

11. Important steps have been taken over the 2005-2007 period towards improving the business environment. In 2007, most progress has been achieved on the regulatory

framework, while progress in other areas, for example e-government and access to venture capital, was more modest. The timely and effective implementation and application of EU legislation needs attention.

12. The Council recommended that the Czech Republic increase the level and efficiency of R&D expenditure. Public R&D expenditure is projected to increase in 2007, improving the chances of the Czech Republic reaching the target in the NRP. The major challenge now is to increase the effectiveness of spending. Alongside this, R&D expenditure financed by the private sector has increased from 0.66% of the GDP in 2004 to 0.88% in 2006. The private contribution now amounts to 57% of total R&D spending. In addition to expenditure increases, the Czech government has committed to better targeting and to a higher structural fund contribution to R&D. It will also invest more in innovation infrastructure that promotes cooperation between public and private research actors. More pronounced action is now needed to avert research personnel shortages.

13. The Council also referred to the need to focus on: improving the system of patenting and the protection of intellectual property rights, speeding up progress in the ICT area, meeting targets for reducing the administrative burden on enterprises, further developing access to finance for innovative companies, developing links between foreign-owned and domestic companies and introducing entrepreneurship education into the curricula.

14. The Czech Republic lags behind in terms of European patenting, although it performs well on national patenting. The effective enforcement of intellectual property rights remains a challenge. ICT up-take is improving, for which the structural funds have been an important investment source. However, the adoption of several legal acts in the field of e-government and electronic communication needs to be accelerated, and implemented. An insufficient level of interconnection between public authority databases is still a serious obstacle for effective e-government, and the relatively low ICT use by citizens must be addressed. The "Smart Administration Strategy" provides a coherent approach for improving the regulatory framework for enterprises and set a target of a 20% reduction in the administrative burden. This represents a good policy response, but continued reform is essential.

15. A lack of finance for innovation still hampers the development and commercialisation of new products and services, despite the increased use of EU funds. Further promotion of the venture capital market is therefore important. Good progress has been achieved in strengthening cooperation between foreign-owned and domestic companies, again notably through the support of structural funds programmes. The Czech government recognises the economic importance of SMEs. In 2006 it approved "the conception of support for small and medium-sized enterprises 2007-2013". However, it is neither clear how SMEs will directly benefit from this, nor which main areas of support fall under this concept. Better information on the key elements of SME support would be welcome. Although entrepreneurship education has been integrated into the “Framework Educational Programmes” the coverage of these programmes is limited. Action is also needed to simplify the recruitment of the first employee.

16. The Czech Republic has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments of the NRP. Significant progress has been made in

promoting better regulation and the Commission therefore considers that this point to watch is no longer merited. There has been some progress in addressing the recommendation on R&D and the points to watch in the area of intellectual property, ICT, financing for innovation and entrepreneurship education where an increased pace of reform is now needed. The Commission therefore considers that the recommendation and the points to watch in these areas remain valid.

Employment policies

17. Continued economic growth has helped increase employment in the Czech Republic. The employment rate is now approaching the 2008 targets, with the exception of older workers. Although decreasing, youth and long-term unemployment remain high.

18. The Council recommended the Czech Republic to further modernise employment protection, including legislation and tax and benefit systems; improve efficiency and equity in education and training, especially in their responsiveness to labour market needs; provide incentives to invest in training, particularly for older workers and the low-skilled; and increase the diversification of tertiary education supply.

19. A new Labour Code entered into force in January 2007 to facilitate flexible work organisation. However, it did not address employment protection of permanent contracts. The announced introduction of ceilings on social and health insurance contributions is a positive step for reducing non-wage labour costs. Stricter conditions for unemployment and social benefits have contributed to decreased benefit dependency, but this should be combined with more effective active labour market policies. The integration of employment and social administrations is under preparation, aiming to improve the coherence and efficiency of employment and social policies. Within the framework of the public finance reform, benefit reform has been approved which should further increase incentives to work. Extensive educational reform continues. A reform of curricula for primary and secondary education is ongoing, and the number of tertiary students and study programmes is increasing, particularly in technical and natural sciences. A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy was approved, and gives greater access to training and incentives for schools to provide training for adults. However, limited progress has been made to provide incentives for individuals and employers to invest in training. These policy measures are important first steps in the right direction that now need complementing.

20. The Council also referred to the need to focus on a better integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market, reducing regional employment disparities, reconciling work and family life, tackling the gender pay gap and implementing an active ageing strategy. Although overall unemployment is shrinking, further efforts and resources are needed to help disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities and the low-skilled. The situation of the Roma minority requires further attention. No additional measures have been taken to reduce regional disparities. To help address a high gender pay gap, the new flexible duration of maternity leave contains financial incentives to encourage women to return rapidly to the labour market. In order to better reconcile work and family life this measure needs to be complemented by an increase in childcare facilities. A rapid implementation of the active ageing strategy is now required.

21. The Czech Republic partly addresses flexicurity in an integrated way. Permanent contracts continue to be the norm. Active labour market policies lack funding and are not as effective as they could be, and adult participation in lifelong learning remains low. However, a range of measures enhancing labour market flexibility and modernizing the social security system have been implemented. In addition, a broad range of reform measures are being implemented to modernize all levels of education to bring them closer to employment needs.

22. In general, the Czech Republic has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been mixed progress over 2005-2007 in addressing the challenges faced by the Czech Republic in terms of labour market flexibility, greater inclusion in the labour market of groups at the margins, and of improving education. The country specific recommendation and points to watch have been addressed to some extent. The Commission considers the measures taken so far a limited response to the challenges the Czech Republic faces in the fields concerned. It is now important to step up the pace of reform.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of the 2007 Czech Republic Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

24. The Czech Republic has made some progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. The Czech Republic had made some progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows some policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been some policy response on the additional areas requiring attention, as identified in the Council conclusions.

26. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Czech Republic Implementation Report are the coherent strategy to improve the regulatory framework for enterprises, reforms to make work pay, of the curricula for primary and secondary education, to increase participation in tertiary education, and the adoption of the lifelong learning strategy.

27. The policy areas in the Czech Republic National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are the long-term sustainability of public finances in the context of an ageing population, fulfilling the commitments for public R&D expenditure and further increasing its effectiveness, improving security and flexibility in the labour market, improving the efficiency and equity in education and training and increasing participation in lifelong learning. Against this background it is recommended that the Czech Republic:

- with a view to improving the long-term sustainability of public finances, implements the announced reform programme of the pension system without delay, and implements reforms announced in the healthcare system;

- meets the targets for public R&D expenditure and increases its effectiveness, notably by promoting a better collaboration between business, universities and public R&D institutions, and by providing the necessary human resources for research and development;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, further modernises employment protection, including legislation, improves the efficiency and equity of education and training, especially its responsiveness to labour market needs, provide incentives to invest in training particularly for older workers and the low-skilled, and increases the diversification of tertiary education supply.

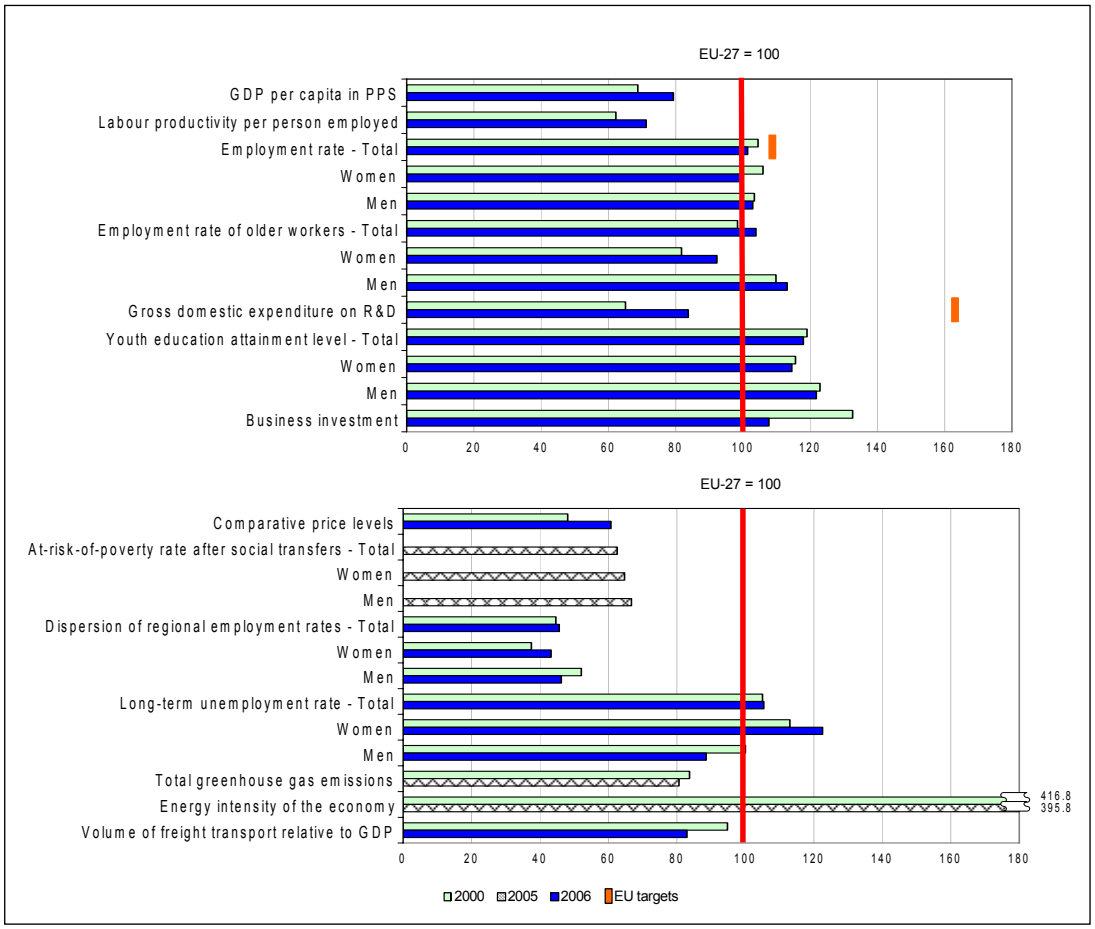
28. In addition, it will be important for the Czech Republic to focus over the period of the National Reform Programme on the following challenges: improving the protection of intellectual property rights; speeding up progress in the ICT area, including by implementing and monitoring a fully enabled legal environment for e-government; improving access to finance for innovative companies, in particular through further developing the venture capital market; increasing the coverage of entrepreneurship education; better integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour market; reducing regional disparities; reconciling work and family life; tackling the gender pay gap; and implementing the active ageing strategy.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

CZECH REPUBLIC

		CZ						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		68.7	73.7	76.1	77.0	79.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		62.2	66.5	68.6	69.3	71.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	65.0	64.7	64.2	64.8	65.3	66.4 (2008)	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	56.9	56.3	56.0	56.3	56.8		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	73.2	73.1	72.3	73.3	73.7		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	36.3	42.3	42.7	44.5	45.2		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	22.4	28.4	29.4	30.9	32.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	51.7	57.5	57.2	59.3	59.5		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.21	1.25	1.25	1.41	1.54	2.06	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	91.2	92.1	91.4	91.2	91.8		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	91.7	91.5	91.8	91.1	92.4		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	90.7	92.8	91.0	91.3	91.1		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		48.1	54.5	54.9	58.1	60.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		24.4	22.1	21.0	20.1	19.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	:	:	:	10.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	:	:	11.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	:	:	10.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.2		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	7.5	7.4	6.6	6.7	7.0		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	5.0	4.9	5.1	4.8	4.3		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.2	3.9		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	5.2	5.0	5.3	5.3	4.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.5	2.9	3.4	3.4	3.1		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		75.9	75.2	75.0	74.2	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		888.4	891.2	874.4	823.4	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		93.9	98.7	92.5	83.0	88.5		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Denmark

1. Denmark performs well with regard to both growth and jobs. In recent years GDP growth has been particularly strong (above 3% in 2005 and 2006), driven by private consumption and a booming housing market, and is now constrained by labour shortages. With employment increasing rapidly, unemployment reached 3.3% in mid-2007, the lowest level in 30 years, and the lowest in the EU. Denmark also has the highest employment rates in the EU at 77.4% in 2006, while levels for productivity and working time are relatively close to the EU-15 average.

2. Denmark has continued to consolidate its public finances to prepare for the ageing of the population and to this end welfare systems have been reformed. Structural unemployment has been reduced through labour market reforms within the flexicurity approach. Given the already high employment level, the potential for further enhancing labour supply lies especially in increasing hours worked, and augmenting participation rates among, in particular, older workers, immigrants and their descendants.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Denmark has made very good progress with implementing the 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. Compared to the large number of actions taken in the first half of 2006, the pace of progress appears to have decreased somewhat over the last year. Progress remains nevertheless good. In August 2007, Denmark presented the "Denmark 2015" plan outlining the medium-term objectives and requirements to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability. The plan also envisages proposals to increase labour supply, improve public sector efficiency and for public investments. Alongside the plan, there are proposals to improve the quality of public services and it has been agreed to lower the taxation on wage income gradually in 2008 and 2009.

4. No country-specific recommendations were issued for Denmark, but the Council concluded that special attention should be paid to: increasing labour supply over the medium term; following through proposed reforms in competition law; improving the functioning of electricity and gas markets; emission reduction policies and measures; and improving primary and secondary education and completion rates of upper-secondary and tertiary education. Within these areas there has been good progress in the past year, notably with regard to the reform of the competition law. The focus on increasing labour supply has been maintained, but a significant part of the measures announced to increase labour supply have yet to be implemented. Progress to improve energy interconnection has been limited. Denmark has taken several initiatives in the area of education but uncertainty remains as to whether they are sufficient. Measures identified to reduce green house gas emissions have been for the most part identified and will now need to be adopted and implemented.

5. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Denmark had responded well to the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and

energy. Since then, there has been good progress on the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP amongst all levels of government and with the social partners continue to be positive. The Lisbon Coordination Committee with representatives from various ministries and stakeholder organisations is consulted on the Danish contribution. The Implementation Report presents a wide range of initiatives over the 2005-2008 period and includes initiatives and contributions to the Lisbon process from social partners and interested parties. Regional and municipal reform has coincided with the start of the new structural and cohesion fund period, making it feasible to improve coherence between the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds. Structural funding is largely earmarked to achieve Growth and Jobs objectives.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

7. Denmark is coping well with its macro-economic challenge of preparing for the ageing of the population and is maintaining fiscal sustainability. Price and exchange rate stability, and high employment, are the cornerstones of its medium-term fiscal strategy. Key here is the "Denmark 2015" plan which aims at maintaining fiscal sustainability by maintaining fiscal surpluses while allowing public expenditure to grow in line with GDP rather than at a more restrained rate. The "tax freeze" is maintained implicitly constraining local government spending. To ensure sustainability, new initiatives are needed to increase employment whilst at least maintaining current working hours unchanged. These initiatives now need to be implemented to achieve the objectives.

8. In general, Denmark is delivering on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP and progress over the 2005-2007 period has been very good.

Micro-economic policies

9. Denmark has made good progress over the 2005-2007 with the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges of improving competition in certain sectors; enhancing public sector efficiency; developing a knowledge society; securing environmental sustainability and energy; and encouraging entrepreneurship.

10. Denmark continues to make good progress within a systematic and comprehensive system for identifying and addressing sectors with competition problems. In addition, new initiatives have been launched to increase the effectiveness of merger control, to fight against cartels, and to enforce public procurement rules.

11. Denmark continues to be one of the best performing countries in the development of the knowledge society. Good progress has been achieved in the areas of R&D and innovation in the period 2005-07, in line with announced plans. The budgetary framework for R&D, agreed in 2006, has been made more concrete so that the objective of increasing public R&D investment to 1% GDP in 2010 is realistic. A

number of initiatives have been launched to stimulate private R&D and innovation. Denmark is leading in broadband penetration and in the use of the digital signature. Policy continues to focus on the integration of ICT systems and on standardisation. Public sector efficiency is addressed in a package of proposals, some of which have been agreed, but most await adoption and implementation. Following transition-related problems after structural, municipal and regional reform, it will be important to reap efficiency gains in the near future.

12. Denmark is further improving its attractive business environment, in particular regarding fast-growing enterprises and the reduction of administrative burdens, for which a 25% reduction target has been set. The one-stop shop for start-ups is a fully web-based system, allowing immediate company registration online. The integration of VAT registration into the online system is planned for January 2008. Measures on entrepreneurship education are planned for all students in primary and secondary school. Progress has also been made in consulting SMEs on the legislative process and facilitating their access to public procurement. Administrative costs have been lowered by 9.7% over the 2001-2006 period.

13. The Council referred in the micro-economic domain to the need to focus on following through proposed reforms in competition law and ensuring that new competition powers are vigorously exercised by the relevant authorities; additional measures in energy interconnection supply, in order to improve the functioning of the electricity and gas markets; and identifying further emission reduction policies and measures.

14. Denmark has made good progress with regard to the improvement of the competition law to fight cartels. A new leniency programme has been introduced in the amendment to the Competition Act of July 2007 and the powers of the Danish Competition Authority have been strengthened. The effectiveness of this new regime has now to be proven. The Commission will continue to follow progress on the actual implementation of the new regime.

15. Denmark has previously taken action regarding the improvement of energy interconnection. The capacity of the electricity link between Denmark and Germany has been expanded by 15-20% and further expansion is being negotiated. An East-West Denmark link is under construction and will be fully operational in 2010. An expansion of the link between Denmark and Norway is envisaged. Although competition in the energy sector has increased as markets have gradually been liberalised, implementation of measures to increase electricity and gas interconnection capacity is still needed to improve market integration.

16. Denmark performs very well on environmental sustainability, especially with regard to indicators such as energy intensity, electricity produced from renewable sources, and environmental technologies. Several measures have been put forward in 2007 addressing climate change, transport, air pollution and waste management and a comprehensive Energy Strategy 2025 is awaiting adoption. The Danish plan to tackle green house gas emissions outlines measures Denmark has identified to meet its Kyoto target. However, this plan still contains a series of unspecified elements where foreseen emission reductions depend on measures still to be identified.

17. Overall, Denmark is implementing measures to deliver on most of the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been good progress in the field of competition. Measures to reduce green house gas emissions have been mostly identified, and measures to enhance energy inter-connectivity are progressing.

Employment policies

18. Denmark already fulfils the Lisbon employment rate target and performs very well on other employment indicators. The Welfare Agreement (2006) addressed the long-term challenge of an ageing population, by increasing the retirement age gradually from 2019. However, this did not address concerns in the short and medium term. In recent years labour supply has risen due to an increase in average working hours and in the activity rates of the young, older people and immigrants. Among the young the activity rate has increased from 68.1% in 2005 to 72.6% in 2007, while the overall activity rate increase from 79.8% to 80.3% over the same period. Total working hours have increased by 2.2% from 2005 to 2006. Over 2005-2007 Denmark has made progress in addressing the labour market challenge of increasing the labour supply. However, labour shortages remain a challenge both in the private and in the public sector.

19. The Council referred to the need to focus on measures aimed at increasing labour supply over the medium term, up until 2015, including further initiatives to improve incentives to work and additional steps to integrate older workers and immigrants into the labour market. The "Denmark 2015" plan and further future measures aim to raise labour supply by the equivalent of some 8,000 full-time employees. Denmark furthermore aims at strengthening employment by an additional 20,000 jobs by 2015, whilst at least maintaining the current level of average working hours. The Danish government has recently taken initiatives to improve incentives to work, better match the unemployed with vacancies, speed up education reform, improve the employment of older workers and immigrants, and encourage immigration. There remains further room for improving incentives for older workers to stay in work rather than resort to early retirement. Overall, the Commission considers the Danish response to be positive, but efforts must be sustained in this area as the labour market will remain tight.

20. The Council also referred to the need to reinforce existing well-targeted measures to improve primary and secondary education and increase the number of students finalising upper-secondary or tertiary education, if the measures prove insufficient to reach the ambitious targets set. Denmark has taken a number of initiatives, including strengthening teachers' education; tests and evaluations starting from second grade compulsory education; faster completion of education and training via a premium on starting tertiary education within two years of finalising upper secondary education, and a reinforcement of business-related youth educational programmes. Public expenditure on education is the highest in the EU at 7.9% of GDP in 2005. It is important to ensure the quality of these investments as reflected in their cost-effectiveness. Effective implementation of existing initiatives, their evaluation and, if required, consideration of additional measures, will be important to reach the ambitious education targets.

21. The close collaboration between the social partners and the government on the four components of flexicurity is the hallmark of the Danish labour market. Flexible

contractual arrangements giving a large degree of freedom to hire and fire are combined with a high level of unemployment benefits that secure income. Continuous efforts to enhance active labour market policies and an improved life-long-learning strategy allow the labour market to adapt to changing economic conditions. The Danish flexicurity model is continuously adapted by adjusting the incentives in order to make sure that people able to work become employed. The social partners are fully involved in all related policy areas

22. In general, Denmark has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. Although the areas requiring particular attention have been well addressed, further initiatives and implementation is required, and the Commission therefore considers these points to watch as remaining valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of the 2007 Danish Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

24. Denmark has been making very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Denmark has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the areas identified by the Council as requiring attention.

26. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Danish Implementation Report is the comprehensive and integrated approach to reform planning and implementation, within a framework for ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability, combined with the active participation of stakeholders.

27. It will be important for Denmark over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: continuing to implement measures on energy interconnection in order to improve the functioning of the electricity and gas markets; increasing labour supply and hours worked over the medium term, including further initiatives to work and additional steps to integrate older workers, immigrants and their descendants into the labour market; reinforcing, in a cost-effective manner, measures to improve primary and secondary education and the number of students finalising upper-secondary or tertiary education to reach the ambitious targets set.

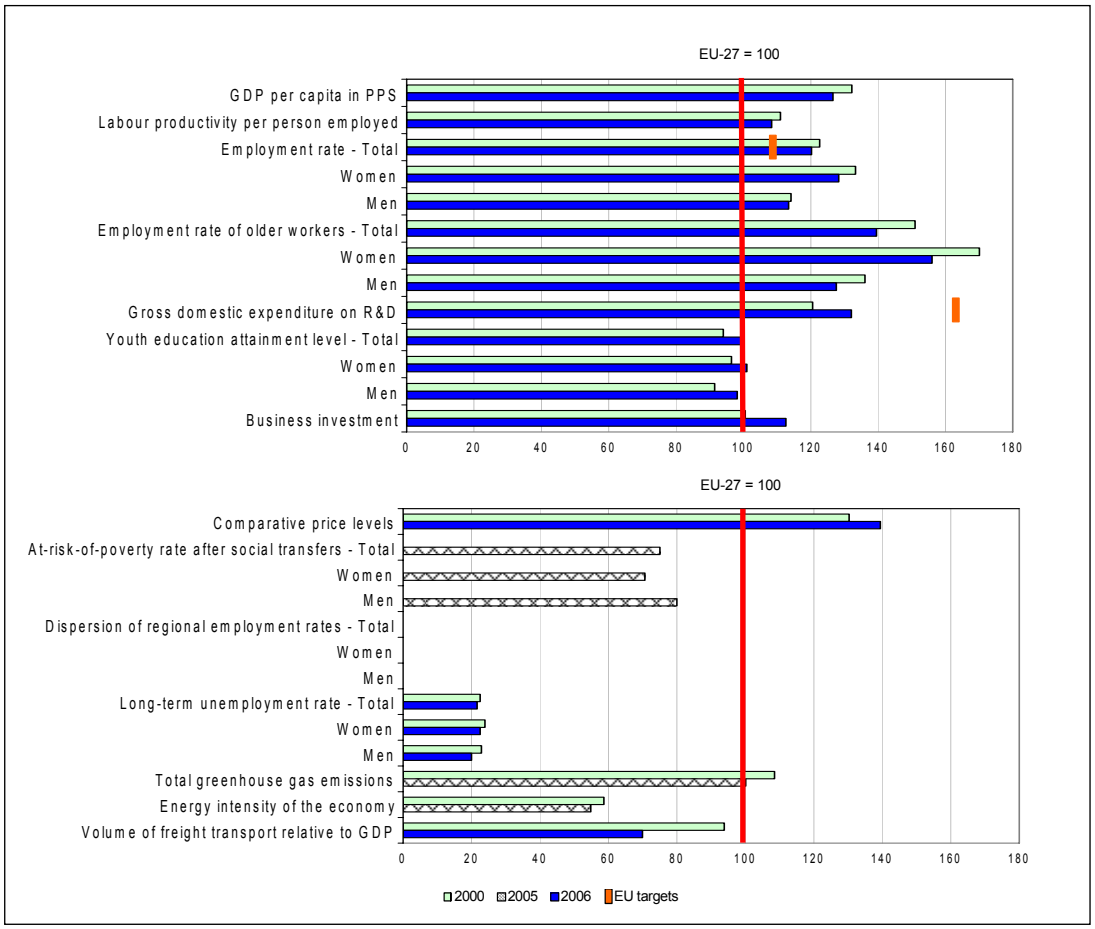
PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

DENMARK

		DK						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		132.2	124.7	124.5	126.3	126.6		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		111.0	106.4	106.8	108.5	108.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	76.3	75.1	75.7	75.9	77.4	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	71.6	70.5	71.6	71.9	73.4		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	80.8	79.6	79.7	79.8	81.2		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	55.7	60.2	60.3	59.5	60.7		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	46.6	52.9	53.3	53.5	54.3		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	64.1	67.3	67.3	65.6	67.1		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		2.24	2.58	2.50	2.45	2.43	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	72.0	76.2b	76.2	77.1	77.4		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	76.5	78.5b	78.1	80.5	81.5		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	67.5	73.8b	74.3	73.8	73.4		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		130.3	141.1	139.6	140.1	139.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		18.5	17.7	17.6	18.7	20.5		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers*	Total	:	12.0b	11.0	12.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	12.0b	11.0	12.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	11.0b	11.0	12.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.2	0.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	0.8	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.7		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		98.4	107.0	98.4	92.2	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		125.0	126.1	121.1	114.1	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		93.0	87.9	87.5	84.3	74.6		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

* Alternative computation for Denmark using income definition including rent revenue and mortgage interest payments: 2003 10.0b, 2004 10.0 and 2005 10.0

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Germany

1. GDP growth in Germany was sluggish during the first half of the decade, before peaking at 2.9% in 2006 and slightly decelerating in 2007 to an expected 2.5%. The potential rate of GDP growth stands at 1.7% for 2007. GDP per capita is projected to be 119% of the EU average in 2007. The employment rate was 67.5% in 2006, reflecting a steep rise in the employment rate of older workers from 45.4% in 2005 to 48.4% in 2006, which is above the EU average. The unemployment rate stood at 10.3% in 2006 and is forecast to fall to 8.1% in 2007.

2. Being highly export-oriented and with a technologically strong manufacturing sector, Germany has held up well in the face of intensifying international competition, benefiting from globalisation. Despite the recent upswing, Germany's growth potential is still held back by a relatively high level of structural unemployment and sluggish productivity growth. To re-invigorate growth and job-creation, Germany is confronted with the task of tackling these structural bottlenecks, while safeguarding the achieved consolidation of public finances.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Implementation Report shows there has been good progress with the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) over 2005-2007, but it nevertheless remains important to continue the reform process.

4. Germany has responded to the recommendations adopted by the Council. Progress has been good in consolidating public finances, mixed progress on tackling structural unemployment and limited regarding competition in services.

5. There has been some progress on the points to watch which the Council asked Germany to focus upon. Progress has been most substantial regarding childcare facilities, business start-ups and facilitating the hiring of the first employee. Germany has not moved forward sufficiently on improving public procurement procedures, improving the framework for competition in the rail sector, and on improving lifelong learning and enhancing adult vocational training.

6. Germany has made good overall progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship and energy, while there has been more limited progress regarding employment opportunities for priority categories. Germany specifies efforts it is taking to meet euro area recommendations in its Implementation Report. Measures taken include efforts to improve the quality of public finances and social security systems.

7. The NRP and the Implementation Reports have been subject to consultations with other federal ministries, the federal parliament, regional governments and social partners. However, the 2007 implementation report does not provide budgetary details on the reforms. Links between the NRP and programmes under the Structural Funds are strong with 81% of the funds in the competitiveness objective (most of

West Germany) and 71% of the funds in the convergence objective (East Germany and Lüneburg) allocated to Lisbon objectives.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The 2005-2008 NRP identified the sustainability of public finances as a key challenge. Good progress has been made since 2005 in reforming the pension system, including by promoting supplementary pensions to ensure social adequacy. The statutory retirement age will rise in steps to 67 years from 2012 onwards. The move will further enhance the long-term sustainability of public finances. An outline for reform of the long-term care system has been adopted, which introduces a periodic adjustment of expenditure. This will require raising contribution rates. Elements of a funded scheme are not planned, contrary to the announcement in the NRP.

9. The Council recommended Germany to improve the long-term sustainability of public finances and implement the health care reform. Public finances have improved markedly, from a deficit at 3.4% of GDP in 2005 towards balance in 2007. This is the result of reform implementation and the economic recovery which raised tax revenues beyond the increase in the standard VAT rate. Budgetary policy used the cyclical conditions to approach its medium-term objective under the Stability and Growth Pact. This will bring debt, currently above 60% of GDP, on a downward trend. The quality of public finances has been improved by reducing non-wage labour costs in 2007 through cutting unemployment insurance contributions, financed partly by the VAT rate increase. The effect has in part been offset by increased contribution rates to health and pension systems. The company tax reform, coming into force in 2008, will reduce statutory corporate tax rates, partly funded by a broadening of the tax base.

10. The health care reforms that entered into force between 2005 and 2007 have at least shown temporary effects on containing expenditures, whilst evidence of the effects of the 2007 reform is not yet available. These reforms give public insurers the option to offer non-standard contracts with a limited choice of service providers to the compulsorily insured. This could provide incentives for a more efficient use of medical services. Competition between health service providers may intensify, as health insurers are now free to deviate from the collectively agreed fee structure for out-patient services. The main reform measure, the financial pool (Gesundheitsfonds) to replace the insurers' autonomy in setting contribution rates, becomes operational by 2009.

11. Progress in addressing the macro-economic challenge has been good over 2005-2007. It is now important to maintain the reform momentum and secure the achieved fiscal consolidation, including by revising budgetary institutions in the ongoing second stage of the reform of the federal system. It is also important to monitor whether the health care reform can deliver the expected benefits. Overall, progress with regard to the euro area recommendations on the medium-term budgetary objective and on the quality of public finances has been good.

Micro-economic policies

12. The key micro-economic challenges identified in the NRP were: the knowledge society; market functioning and competitiveness; the business environment; and ecological innovation. Policy implementation to develop the knowledge society has been good. Since 2005, Germany has launched initiatives to help improve innovative potential particularly through improved cooperation between science, research and business and with venture capital programmes. However, the number of graduates in engineering and natural sciences and the mobility of researchers need to increase further. While the contribution of the federal level towards the 3% R&D-target is significant, regional spending and private sector co-financing has not been specified. Progress in policy implementation to counter climate change and promote renewable energy has been good. A national allocation plan for emissions trading has been adopted, a new law to increase the use of bio fuels has become effective, and the energy efficiency of buildings has been addressed.

13. Germany has made some progress since 2005 to improve market functioning and competitiveness. A significant effort has been made to improve the business environment, especially by reducing the administrative burden, for which a 25% reduction target has been set. Overall, in 2005-2007, progress in implementing the policies that address Germany's micro-economic challenges, notably those concerning knowledge society and ecological innovation, has been good.

14. The Council recommended Germany to focus on improving the framework for competition in product and services markets. There has been no recent progress on relaxing restrictive rules on regulated trades and services. On wholesale bit stream access a measure was taken in September 2006 requiring the incumbent telecommunications company to provide non-discriminatory access and to produce a standard offer for competitors. However, implementation is progressing too slowly, whilst it is important not to exempt new telecommunication markets from ex ante regulation.

15. The Council also highlighted the need to focus on: public procurement procedures; the framework for competition in the rail sector, and in gas and electricity networks; and speeding up business start-ups and the hiring the first employee. Germany has made good progress with facilitating the hiring of the first employee. It has also stepped up its efforts to reduce start-up times and costs for businesses but will not provide one-stop-shops nationwide by the end of 2007. Competition in the rail, gas and electricity sectors improved somewhat, while implementing the planned unbundling measures would further strengthen competition in the rail sector. However, fundamental elements of the existing draft law have been called into question. With respect to gas and electricity networks, Germany has implemented the Community legislation. However, high market concentration, a lack of transparency and vertical foreclosure remain problematic. The legislative process to simplify the complex public procurement procedures has not progressed in 2007, although work on a draft law is ongoing. The Commission considers this a mixed response and it is now important to step up the pace of reform.

16. Germany has partially implemented measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The response to the recommendation and the euro area recommendation on strengthening competition has been limited especially

in telecommunications, liberal professions and public procurement. The process to simplify public procurement procedures has not progressed in 2007 and requires particular attention. Some points to watch have been addressed well, notably on start-ups and procedures to hire the first employee.

Employment policies

17. The key labour market challenge identified in the NRP was the adaptation to the demographic challenge. Labour market improvements over 2005-2007, and in particular the employment situation of older workers, reflect economic conditions, wage moderation, and the effects of reforms implemented to promote better incentives to take up work and prolong working life. With regard to structural unemployment, progress has been mixed. Although decreasing, the long-term unemployment rate still stood at 5.5% in 2006 (above the EU average of 3.7%) and the gap between the unemployment rate of the low-skilled and the overall unemployment rate keeps increasing.

18. The Council recommended that Germany should tackle structural unemployment by integrating the low-skilled into the labour market through better access to qualifications, pursuing the proposed tax-benefit reform, and by providing more effective employment services for the long-term unemployed and by enhancing occupational integration of young people.

19. In 2006, 31% of the budget for active labour market policies for recipients of basic income support was spent on "employment opportunities" (*Arbeitsgelegenheiten)* as compared to only 15% on qualification and training. There has been no agreement on the announced comprehensive tax benefit reform. The effectiveness of the employment services for unemployed recipients of basic income support still poses difficulties. However, reform efforts have been stepped up to improve the employment situation of young people. The National Training Pact, aiming at increasing the number of apprenticeship places has been prolonged and ambitious targets defined. A temporary programme offering on-the-job training for young people who are difficult to place has been transformed into a regular instrument of active labour market policies. Amongst unemployed recipients of basic income support, the activation rate of young people stood at 32.4% in 2006 as compared to a general activation rate of 18.4%. The positive impact of these measures has been supported by the economic upswing. Germany has thus complied with part of the recommendation.

20. The Council also highlighted the need to focus on childcare and lifelong learning. In 2007 Germany set a new national childcare target to provide places for 30% of all under-three year olds by 2013 (compared to 14% in 2006). Parents will also have a legal right to claim a childcare place. To reach the new target, a financial plan for the local authorities in charge of implementation has been adopted. This response is appropriate. In the field of lifelong learning, the government has agreed on guidelines to create incentives for employees to finance their training. No concrete steps have been taken so far on incentives for employers. The Commission considers this to be a limited response.

21. Germany has not sufficiently addressed the flexicurity concept in an integrated manner. In spite of the variety of contracts available, the labour market remains

segmented between insiders and outsiders. Support through active labour market policies is characterised by a low share of spending on training and qualifications, while the focus of the German authorities is on the provision of employment opportunities. On lifelong learning, the share of employees participating in continuous vocational training is declining. The tax-benefit system results in an increasing number of persons combining permanent work in low-paid part-time jobs with basic income support. Generally, the social partners are involved in design and implementation of labour market policies.

22. Overall, Germany has partially implemented measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP and the euro area recommendation. Structural unemployment needs to be tackled, especially by improving the labour market integration of low-skilled people. Demographic change also warrants enhancing continuous vocational training for employees.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of Germany's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

24. Germany has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over 2005-2007 and good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows that there has been some policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been a good response in consolidating public finances, and a more limited response regarding competition in services and on tackling structural unemployment. There has been some response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

26. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 German Implementation Report are: the consolidation of public finances; the strengthening of high-class research and innovation; the progress in tackling youth unemployment; and the determined approach to increasing childcare facilities.

27. The policy areas in the German National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority: are competition in services and structural unemployment. Against this background it is recommended that Germany:

- improve the framework for competition in services, notably by continuing to relax restrictive rules in regulated trades and professions, improving public procurement procedures, without exempting new telecom markets from regulation and effectively regulating wholesale bitstream access;

- tackle structural unemployment by maintaining the path of the reforms outlined in the National Reform Programme. Focus should be placed on integrating the low

skilled into the labour market through a flexicurity approach combining better access to qualifications with the implementation of the announced comprehensive tax and –benefit reform and more effective employment services for unemployed recipients of basic income support.

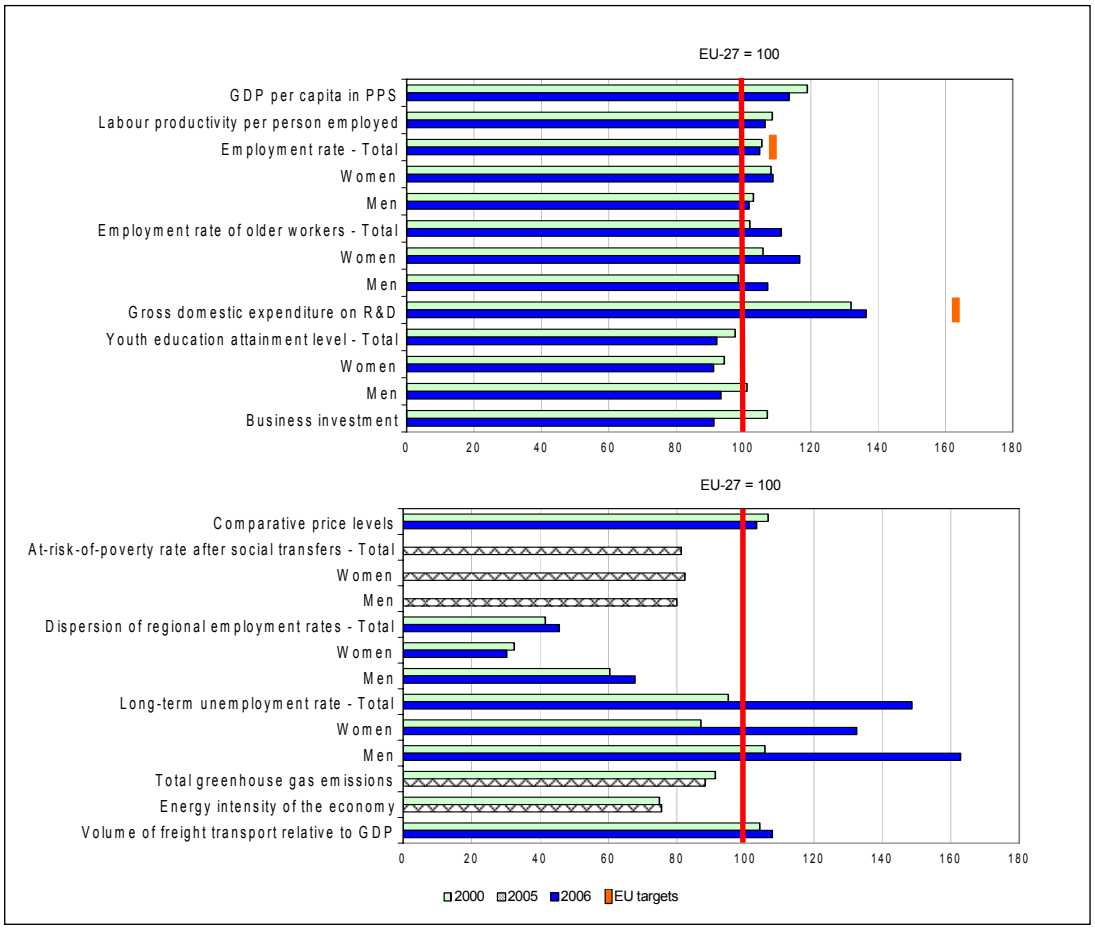
28. In addition, it will be important for Germany over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: securing the long-term sustainability of public finances by firmly locking in the achieved fiscal consolidation, including in the ongoing revision of budgetary institutions in the federal system, and by carefully monitoring the impact of the health care reform to keep expenditure growth in check and strength efficiency in the health sector; improving the framework for competition in the rail sector, and in the gas and electricity networks, where competition remains insufficient due to high concentration; continue further with the establishment of one-stop-shops and the improvement of start-up times; and in the context of the planned measures to promote lifelong learning, enhance continuing vocational training.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

GERMANY

		DE						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		119.0	117.1	116.1	114.6	113.6		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		108.6	108.5	107.5	106.7	106.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	65.6	65.0	65.0	66.0p	67.5p	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	58.1	58.9	59.2	60.6p	62.2p		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	72.9	70.9	70.8	71.3p	72.8p		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	37.6	39.9	41.8	45.4p	48.4p		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	29.0	31.6	33.0	37.5p	40.6p		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	46.4	48.2	50.7	53.5p	56.4p		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		2.45	2.52	2.49	2.48	2.51	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	74.7	72.5	72.8	71.5b	71.6p		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	74.8	73.4	74.2	72.5b	73.5p		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	74.6	71.6	71.5	70.4b	69.8p		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		106.6	106.1	104.7	103.8	103.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		19.7	16.3	16.1	16.0	16.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	10.0	:	:	13.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	11.0	:	:	14.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	10.0	:	:	12.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	5.4	5.9	6.0	5.6	5.2		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	6.5	5.7	5.8	5.0	4.9		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	5.8	6.9	7.3	7.0	6.3		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	3.8	4.6	5.5	5.7p	5.5p		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.0	4.5	5.2	5.3p	5.3p		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.7	4.7	5.7	5.9p	5.7p		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		82.7	83.6	83.2	81.3	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		159.7	161.0	159.6	157.0	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		103.3	103.2	109.4	111.0	115.1		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Estonia

1. Estonia's economy has shown strong growth in recent years, exceeding 10% in 2005-2006 and estimated at around 8% in 2007. Growth was driven by consumption and investment, and facilitated by large-scale financing from abroad, income tax cuts and rapid wage increases. Sustained strong economic growth has, however, led to growing imbalances, evidenced by rising inflation, a tightening labour market and widened external deficits. The employment rate rose to 68.1 % in 2006, while unemployment is estimated to fall below 5% in 2007. Given the increasing labour market tightening, real wage increases have significantly exceeded productivity growth, helping to increase inflation and erode competitiveness, particularly in the low skilled-segments of the economy. Recently, a welcome slowdown in domestic demand has set in.

2. Given the strong job creation and a swift reduction in unemployment, certain sectors now face labour shortages, constraining further rapid catch-up. Continued structural reforms could help ease resource constraints and stimulate sustainable productivity-led growth. Labour market policies, including the modernisation of labour law, would contribute to higher participation in the workforce and to containing wage increases. A stronger competition policy would also contribute to limiting inflationary pressures. Further efforts to improve the regulatory framework for businesses and increase investment in R&D and innovation are necessary for strengthening competitiveness.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Estonian Implementation Report shows very good progress on implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have slightly decelerated over the last year.

4. With regard to the issues referred to by the Council, there has been some progress on competition policy, employment policy and educational policy. Progress has been most substantial on R&D and innovation policy. Estonia has not moved forward significantly on the modernisation of labour law and the implementation of a lifelong learning strategy.

5. Last year’s Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Estonia responded positively to the commitments made by the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been good progress on most commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP are quite good at the national level, although regionally this could be improved upon. Specific consultation in preparing the Implementation Report included a stakeholder seminar and web-based consultation. Estonia has an inter-ministerial working group which coordinates the Lisbon process and includes social partners and academic experts. There is a strong link between the NRP and the Structural Fund programmes, essential given that a significant proportion of the activities described in the NRP are

financed by the Structural Funds. The budgetary resources planned in the Implementation Report also include the Structural funds contribution.

7. In April 2007, the new government agreed a Coalition Programme for 2007-2011. In view of the end of the governance cycle 2005-2007, Estonia decided to update its reform programme only with measures that contribute to meeting the objectives outlined in the 2005 NRP.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Ensuring macro-economic stability, fiscal sustainability and internal and external balance are the government's main macro-economic objectives. Raising the employment rate is seen as key to sustaining the economy's strong growth performance and to raising living standards.

9. The Implementation Report confirms a prudent fiscal policy as the key element of macro-economic stability in the framework of the currency board monetary regime pegging the kroon to the euro. Public finances have posted surpluses in recent years (3.6% of GDP in 2006). However, inflation performance has deteriorated, with a rate above 6% in 2007, and projected to rise further in 2008. Wages have recently been increasing at close to double the rate of labour productivity growth. The external deficit widened to 16% of GDP in 2006, although the 2007 deficit ratio is expected to be slightly lower. These developments should however be seen in the context of a rapid catching-up process with the EU as a whole, supported by massive financial inflows from abroad. With GDP growth rates above potential since 2005, the recent switch to targeting budget surpluses (instead of balanced budgets) was a welcome development, even though more ambitious fiscal targets would be desirable to help reduce core inflation and external imbalances in a medium-term perspective. With respect to the sustainability of public finances, continuing surpluses have allowed further reduction in the already low government debt, which stood at 4% of GDP by the end of 2006, and is expected to fall below 3% of GDP in 2007. Pension increases have recently been higher than those foreseen by legislation. A reform package adopted by parliament in November 2007 will provide for more generous pension indexation, and age and health-related expenditure is thus expected to rise.

10. The overall focus of macro-economic policies and measures proposed in the NRP on stability and long term sustainability are broadly appropriate. Nevertheless, certain elements of Estonia's fiscal policy indicate that the tax incentives (e.g. the lowering of the income tax rates) and budgetary strategy (an increase in expenditure, including in wages and pensions) may limit room for fiscal consolidation. In the near future fiscal policy may fall short of sufficiently countering inflationary pressures and of reducing external deficit in the economy, although these seem likely to be receding from the peaks of 2006-2007. Continued fiscal policy vigilance would also be justified to preserve flexibility in the case of a marked economic slowdown. Finally, efforts to facilitate labour market adjustment and ensure wage increases do not outstrip labour productivity growth are essential to limit inflation and to counter the erosion of external competitiveness.

11. In general, Estonia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. Macro-economic stability and containing inflation now needs to be improved through adequate structural reforms and a determined fiscal policy.

Micro-economic policies

12. Estonia identified R&D and innovation as a key challenge for sustaining strong economic growth and enhancing competitiveness. Good progress has been made over the 2005-2007 period to address this key challenge.

13. The Council highlighted the need to focus on clearer prioritisation and improved cooperation for the effective use of R&D and innovation expenditure; reinforcing efforts to ensure that R&D results are translated into innovative services or products; encouraging closer cooperation between universities and enterprises; and vigorously implementing the planned proactive competition policy. The new "Knowledge-based Estonia" strategy for 2007-2013 aims at providing a long-term, prioritized and systematic development of R&D and innovation activities including the use of the structural funds. Inter-ministerial cooperation has improved, and the Strategic R&D and Innovation Coordination Committee has recently been established. Continued investment has increased R&D intensity from 0.93% of GDP in 2005 to 1.14% of GDP in 2006. Measures have been taken to strengthen competence centres facilitating the cooperation between scientists and companies. Developing human resources, including an increase in the number of scientists and engineers, remains an important challenge. In order to minimize competition-related crimes and efficiently fine cartels, the launch of a new immunity and leniency programme in 2008 is under preparation. After having previously strengthened the cooperation between the competition authority and the sectoral regulators, the government adopted a regulation in September 2007 to merge the national competition authority with these sectoral regulators.

14. During the 2005-2007 period, Estonia has taken a number of significant initiatives to improve the business environment, including the regulatory environment. Better regulation tools have been further developed and an action plan aiming at the simplification of the legal environment has been approved. However, no target for reducing administrative burdens has been set. Estonia's initiatives in the area of e-government contribute to further reducing administrative burdens on companies. Notaries now act as one-stop-shop for the establishment of new companies. The time required to start-up a company is less than a week and, via the internet, only a few hours. In order to improve access to finance for business, the Estonian Development Fund was established in December 2006. In terms of entrepreneurship education, the postponement of the new national curricula until 2009 delays the envisaged increase in attention paid to entrepreneurship in the educational system.

15. Some progress is being made on environmental issues. While the implementation of the Energy Conservation Programme aims at enhancing energy efficiency, the high energy intensity of the economy remains a challenge. The electricity market law has been amended to promote electricity production from renewable sources. In addition to the new public procurement act, general guidelines and tools have been developed to promote sustainable procurements.

16. In general, Estonia has made good progress in the micro-economic field. The points to watch in the area of competition and R&D and innovation have been partially addressed. While the priorisitation and inter-ministerial coordination of R&D and innovation policy have improved, efforts should continue to turn R&D results into innovation, to increase the number of scientists, to bridge the gap between universities and enterprises, and to further develop the new immunity and leniency programme.

Employment policies

17. The NRP identified employment as a key challenge, including increasing the employment rate, reducing structural unemployment, and improving skills through lifelong learning. Employment rates for all age groups have been increasing strongly over recent years. In 2006, employment growth was the highest in the EU, at 5.4%. The female employment rate has been increasing strongly and gender gaps in employment and unemployment rates are low and diminishing. However, a high gender pay gap is a concern for Estonia. The unemployment rate is falling, including for the most vulnerable groups. Many of the planned employment measures have been implemented. However, reducing structural unemployment and integrating inactive people and the long-term unemployed into the labour market remain important challenges for Estonia in order to increase the supply of skilled labour.

18. The Council referred in the employment area to the need to focus on the modernisation of labour laws as well as reinforcing active labour market policies and raising the skills level of the labour force through reforms in education and lifelong learning. No progress has been made regarding the modernisation of labour law announced in the NRP, limiting considerably the flexibility of the labour market and the adaptability of workers and enterprises to a changing economic environment. The Implementation Report also makes no reference to the progress in promoting flexible contractual arrangements. Several measures for increasing the quality of vocational and higher education have been taken. However, several important legislative acts, such as new curricula for basic and upper secondary schools, and new financing models for general education and for adult education have not yet been adopted. The adult participation rate in lifelong learning is low and the current system does not cover the most vulnerable groups. Several reforms in active labour market policies have been implemented. However, the share of unemployed participating in active labour market programmes continues to be very low. Therefore, more emphasis should be put on the efficiency of active labour market policy measures. The impact of the launched reform package is not clear because of a current lack of labour market monitoring and evaluation system. The Commission considers this a partial response to the challenges Estonia faces in the fields concerned.

19. Estonia does not address flexicurity in an integrated way. Nevertheless, policy development has focused on individual flexicurity-related measures. While some reforms have taken place in the social security system, in active labour market policies and lifelong learning, the measures for increasing labour market flexibility and promoting flexible forms of work still need to be developed. Social partners are partly involved in some of the flexicurity components but the involvement of social partners is generally weak and exists mainly at national level, not the sectoral or enterprise level.

20. In general, Estonia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The points to watch in the employment area have been addressed to some extent, although there has been no progress in modernising labour law. It is now important to step up the pace of reforms, in particular regarding increasing the flexibility of the labour market. It is also necessary to make further efforts in raising the skills level of the labour force through the implementation of lifelong learning measures and increasing the efficiency of active labour market measures.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

21. In the light of the 2007 Estonian Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

22. Estonia has been making very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Estonia has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

23. The Implementation report shows some policy response to the areas identified by the Council as requiring attention. There has been some policy response on competition policy, active labour market policies and educational policy. The most substantial response has been on R&D and Innovation policy. Estonia has not moved significantly forward on the modernisation of labour law.

24. Among the strengths shown by the Estonian Implementation Report are: the establishment of an ambitious long-term and systematic new R&D and Innovation strategy; the measures to facilitate start-ups and financing of innovative SMEs; a strong increase in the employment rate and the measures for raising the quality of higher and vocational education.

25. The policy areas in the Estonian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: the employment area where progress on the modernisation of labour law has been limited.

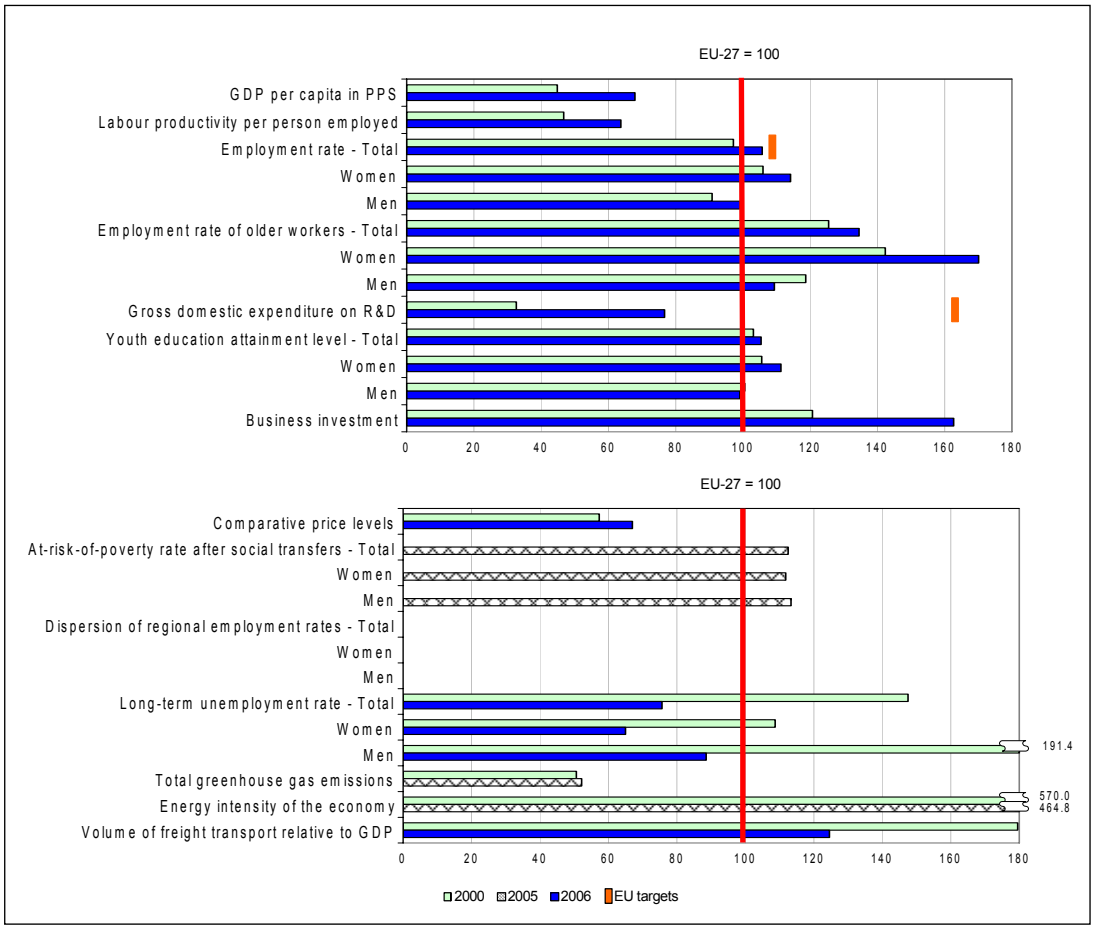
26. It will be important for Estonia over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: improving macro-economic stability and containing inflation through adequate structural reforms and determined fiscal policy; reinforcing efforts to ensure that R&D results are translated into innovative services or products; encouraging closer cooperation between universities and enterprises; launching the new immunity and leniency programme and strengthening competition enforcement; reinforcing active labour market policies and increasing the supply of skilled labour by implementing a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy that responds to labour market needs; reducing labour market rigidities by urgent progress towards labour law modernisation and by promoting flexible forms of work.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

ESTONIA

		EE						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		44.8	54.6	57.0	62.8	67.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		46.7	54.4	56.9	61.5	63.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	60.4	62.9	63.0	64.4	68.1	70.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	56.9	59.0	60.0	62.1	65.3		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	64.3	67.2	66.4	67.0	71.0		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	46.3	52.3	52.4	56.1	58.5		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	39.0	47.3	49.4	53.7	59.2		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	55.9	58.9	56.4	59.3	57.5		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.61	0.77	0.86	0.93	1.41	1.9	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	79.0	81.5	80.3	82.6	82.0		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	83.7	85.1	87.5	87.6	89.8		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	74.2	77.9	73.2	77.6	74.1		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		57.3	62.0	62.8	64.3	67.0		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		22.2	27.5	28.0	27.0	29.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	18.0	18.0	20.0b	18.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	19.0	20.0	21.0b	19.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	17.0	17.0	19.0b	17.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	5.9	4.6	5.0	4.2	2.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	5.0	4.4	4.4	4.2	2.6		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	6.7	4.8	5.6	4.2	3.1		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		45.9	50.1	49.2	48.0	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		1214.8	1179.1	1096.2	966.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		177.9	150.6	159.0	152.4	132.9		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Ireland

1. Over the period 2005-2007, Ireland experienced a continued rapid increase in real GDP per capita, bringing its level in 2006 to 143% of the EU average. Employment levels have continued rising, and labour productivity growth, though it has slowed significantly, remained well above the EU average. Over 2005 and 2006 consumer prices grew faster than in the euro area (2.4% on average annually in Ireland as against 2.2%). This divergence is forecast to widen further in 2007 (2.8% on average annually in Ireland as against 2.0%) due mainly to higher services price inflation.

2. Looking ahead, the main domestic risk comes from the housing sector which having started a steep decline from its 2006 peak may fall further and faster than expected. The worsening external environment, coupled with a real exchange rate appreciation, constitutes a significant risk for exports. As the fiscal outlook is expected to deteriorate over the medium term, a careful prioritisation of public expenditure and the promotion of reforms that strengthen higher-productivity growth, through expanding physical and human capital and reducing inflationary pressures will increase the capacity of the Irish economy to adjust to lower though more balanced growth.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Irish Implementation Report shows very good progress on implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over 2005-2007. The pace of progress has remained the same over the last year.

4. No country-specific recommendations were issued for Ireland. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Ireland should focus in the macro-economic, micro-economic and employment domains, there has generally been good progress. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Ireland had made some progress in meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been good progress on most of the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

5. The Implementation Report does not specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries, but there have been relevant developments. As Ireland's fiscal position has performed better than its medium-term objective under the Stability and Growth pact, the euro area recommendation on budgetary consolidation was not relevant for the period 2005-2007. However Ireland should strictly implement its 2007 Budget to limit the deterioration of the structural balance in 2007 and to ensure adequate room for manoeuvre against any reversal of the growth pattern.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local government and with the social partners continue to be very substantial. The new generation of Irish Structural Fund programmes co-financed by the EU, with 85% of the total programme financing earmarked for Lisbon activities, effectively complement the new Irish National Development Plan in delivering the Lisbon

agenda in Ireland. The 2007-2013 strategy will focus on innovation, knowledge and entrepreneurship in the regions; competitiveness, gateways and hubs; upskilling the workforce and activation and participation of groups outside the workforce.

7. A new Irish government took office in June 2007. Ireland's 2007 Implementation Report confirms the main priorities within the NRP and aims to maintain the successful social partnership process. The Commission agrees with these priorities and welcomes the continuation of the process. A major challenge remaining is the unbalanced development between the Southern and Eastern region and the Border, Midland and Western region, especially in fields relevant for the future competitiveness of the country.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Progress over the 2005-2007 period on the macro-economic challenges identified by Ireland, notably maintaining a stable macro-economic environment, sustainable public finances, and moderate inflation levels; prioritisation of public investment in economic and social infrastructure and other growth-enhancing expenditures, has been good. This reflects the achievement of fiscal surpluses over the period and the publication of the National Development Plan, which sets clear priorities for public investment in infrastructure. More limited progress has been made in taking concrete measures to ensure that the economy will be able to meet anticipated long-run fiscal pressures arising from population ageing.

9. The Council highlighted the need to focus on developments in the housing market and on pension reforms. In relation to the former, the Implementation Report and the recently published Pre-Budget Outlook (PBO) show that the national authorities are closely monitoring the prospects for the housing market and its implications for the broader economy. In particular the PBO (which provides an updated economic outlook for the medium term) states that *"lower output and employment in the construction sector highlight the need to find alternative sources of growth to drive the economy forward"*.

10. A green paper on pensions was published in mid-October by the Irish government, setting out the objectives of the pension system and a discussion of possible reforms. The green paper invites Social Partners and interested parties to provide their views on reform. The broad objectives of reform are: the improvement of pension coverage and access to pensions through modernisation of the pension system; ensuring the adequacy of benefits and; addressing further the financial sustainability of the pension system over the longer-term. The green paper starts from the observation that the existing system is not sustainable without adjustments to the overall policy mix and that to safeguard the pension system in the future, a combination of measures aimed at financing and reducing the size of the projected funding gap will be required. The consultation process is expected to last until summer 2008 and decisions about specific reform measures might not therefore be expected until the second half of 2008 at the earliest. The publication of the green paper is a welcome important step forward in the development of policy but falls short of identifying specific reform measures.

11. In general, Ireland has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. In view of the risks of a greater than expected slowdown of activity in the housing sector, this point to watch remains relevant. In the pensions area, the national authorities should move rapidly after the consultation period to the identification and implementation of specific measures. This point to watch therefore also remains relevant.

Micro-economic policies

12. Over the past year Ireland has achieved good progress in implementing the micro economic policies set out in the NRP. Progress is also good over the full 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges faced by Ireland, notably improving competitiveness, infrastructure, regulation and social inclusion, increasing R&D investment and efficiency, encouraging greater innovation and entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

13. The Council highlighted the need to focus on: further emission reduction measures and the setting of an intermediate target for R&D investment for 2010. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007–2012, published in April 2007, details the measures by which Ireland will meet its 2008-2012 commitment under the Kyoto Protocol, and how these measures will position Ireland for the post 2012 period. It is projected that, through existing policies, Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks, Irish emission levels will be slightly below the Kyoto target. With only 6.8% of electricity generated from renewable energy sources in 2005, and a modest growth in this rate, the 2010 target of 15% is still relatively far off. Investment in R&D on clean renewable energy is also low. However, the recently introduced feed-in tariff mechanism (an incentive structure that boosts the adoption of renewable energy) is expected to provide positive investment conditions and together with other policy initiatives is expected to give Ireland a good opportunity of meeting the 2010 target.

14. Ireland has made good progress towards the 2013 research investment target, but intermediate investment levels, notably for 2010, have yet to be established. Gross expenditure in R&D increased from 1.10% of GDP in 2002 to 1.32 % in 2006. Nearly 60% of overall R&D expenditure comes from the business sector. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy provides an adequate framework to build a world-class research base by concentrating on higher education, links between research institutions and business and increasing R&D efforts by indigenous companies. There is, however, concern about the regional balance in implementation. There are a number of noteworthy new initiatives this year including the introduction of an Innovation Vouchers system, a grant scheme for Centres for Science, Engineering and Technology and a new round of venture capital funding.

15. Under most of the SME priority areas, Ireland has performed well over the last year. The Implementation Report addresses all of the SME priorities with the exception of first employee recruitment. Nevertheless, in relative EU terms, Ireland performs well in this area. Start-up procedures are relatively fast, with most businesses generally being set up within a week, but further simplification is still possible. SME access to public procurement could also be improved, although initial steps have been taken with the May 2007 publication of a consultation document. Impact assessments are now routinely applied to ensure better regulation, alongside statute law reform, and efforts to reduce administrative burdens. Ireland has not yet set a specific target for

the reduction of administrative burdens. On ICT policy, Ireland progresses but still lags behind in some information society areas. The Knowledge Society Action Plan, expected to be in line with the EU i2010 initiative, will be crucial to stimulate further progress. Ireland has improved its performance with regard to the transposition of EU legislation. However, Ireland has an above average number of infringement procedures.

16. In general, Ireland has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been a good policy response to reducing emissions and the Commission considers this point to watch is no longer valid. It is now important to continue this approach and to take action. There has been good progress shown towards reaching Ireland's 2013 R&D targets but neither a target nor indicative expenditure forecasts have been given for 2010 and therefore the Commission considers this point to watch as still valid.

Employment policies

17. Ireland has sustained a strong labour market performance over the 2005-07 period, with employment rates having risen close to or above the EU employment targets, employment growth maintained, including significant inward migration, and unemployment rates which remain amongst the lowest in the EU**.** Progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the key labour market challenges, notably the challenge of sustaining high employment and low unemployment and ensuring an adequate labour supply identified by Ireland in the 2005 NRP, is generally good while the challenge of ensuring a high skilled adaptable workforce, including a focus on lifelong learning, remains substantial.

18. The Council highlighted in the employment area to the need to focus on: accelerating progress in increasing labour market participation, including by establishing a comprehensive childcare infrastructure, further developing the policy framework for the labour market and social integration of migrants and placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers.

19. Ireland has initiated some small-scale pilot projects aimed at extending the preventive approach, which has been effective in addressing the needs of the registered unemployed, to other groups (against a background where employment rates amongst lone parents, people with disability and other inactive groups needs to increase) but there is no clear timetable for implementation. The National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 continues to be rolled out while a Community Childcare Subvention Scheme to take effect from 2008 has been announced. This scheme should help to address issues of affordability of childcare for the lowest-income families but the cost of childcare generally remains comparatively high.

20. A Minister with specific responsibility for Integration Policy has been appointed and there are plans to launch a Task Force on Integration in 2008 but substantive measures in areas such as language training are yet to materialise.

21. The appointment of a Minister with responsibility for overseeing a coordinated approach to Life-Long Learning is a welcome development since this is an area where Ireland's performance lags behind many other EU member states. A National Skills Strategy to 2020, published in March 2007, sets out high-level objectives covering upskilling, second level education completion levels and progression to

third level education but the necessary detailed implementation plan for this Strategy has yet to be developed, and it remains to be seen whether the response will be sufficient to bring the level of participation in life-long learning, 7.5% in 2006, up to the EU target of 12.5%.

22. Overall, Ireland addresses flexicurity in an integrated way. Skills segmentation is a problem but is recognised by the government. The National Skills Strategy endeavours to address the significant upskilling and below EU average participation in life-long learning. Active labour market programmes are generally seen to be effective. The social partners are fully involved, with most developments in this area emerging from the consensus approach embodied in the latest Social Partnership Agreement, 'Towards 2016'.

23. In general, Ireland has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. Ireland addressed the points to watch in the employment area in some respects, but there is a need to establish clear timetables in key areas, including activation, integration and life-long learning in order to ensure that the pace of reforms is stepped up.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

24. In the light of the 2007 Irish Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

25. Ireland has been making very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Ireland has been showing good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

26. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the areas identified by the Council as requiring attention. The Implementation Report does not however specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

27. Among the strengths of the Irish National Reform Programme and its implementation is the comprehensive and coherent national strategy. The document also highlights the usefulness of the Lisbon process through its role in focussing on the prioritisation and implementation of specific actions, and emphasising its key role in addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with globalisation.

28. It will be important for Ireland over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges for the future: speeding up progress in formulating concrete measures to reform pension arrangements; an intermediate target for R&D investment should be set for 2010; accelerating progress in increasing labour market participation, including by establishing a comprehensive childcare infrastructure; further developing the policy framework for the labour market and social integration of migrants and placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers; and developments in the housing market, affecting short and medium-term growth, should be carefully monitored.

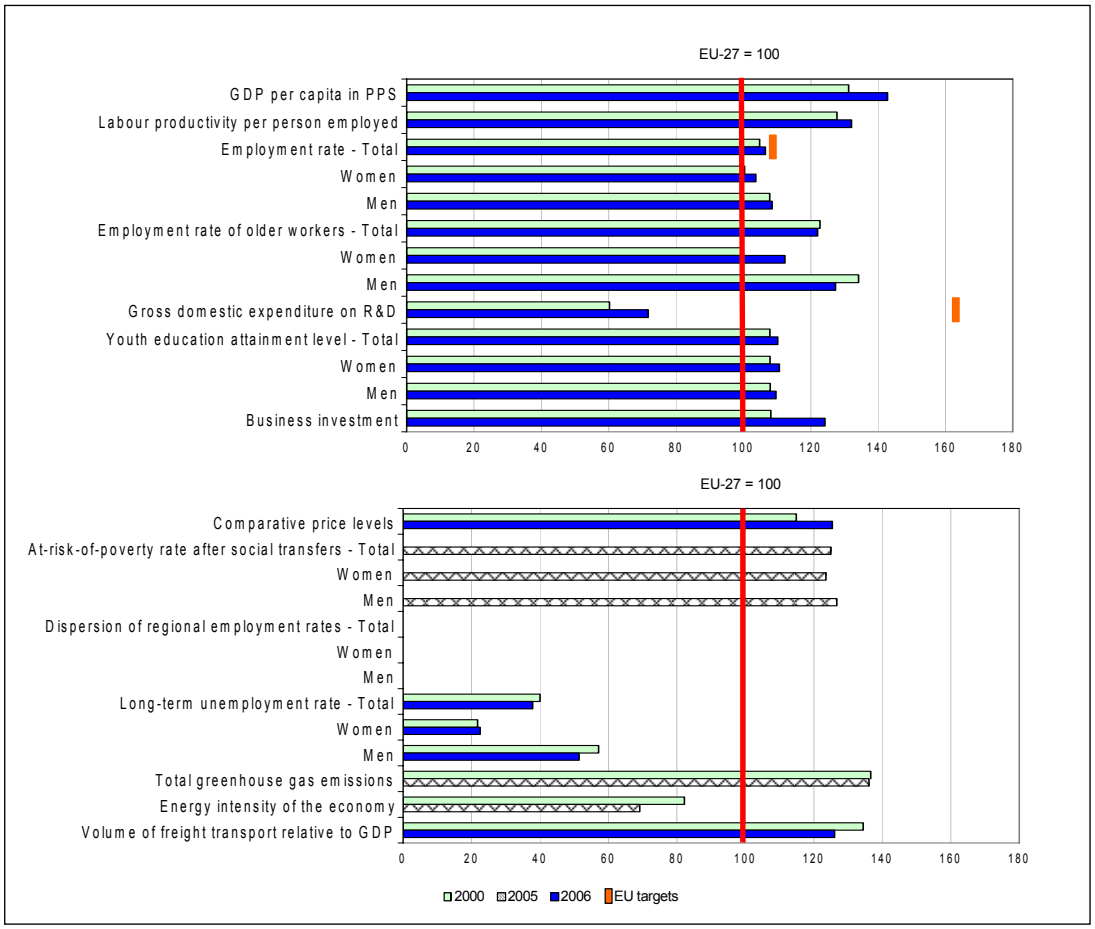
PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

IRELAND

		IE						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		131.2	141.1	142.4	144.0	142.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		127.8	135.1	134.9	133.8	132.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	65.2	65.5	66.3	67.6	68.6	70.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	53.9	55.7	56.5	58.3	59.3		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	76.3	75.2	75.9	76.9	77.7		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	45.3	49.0	49.5	51.6	53.1		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	27.2	33.1	33.7	37.3	39.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	63.2	64.6	65.0	65.7	67.0		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.12e	1.17	1.24	1.26	1.32p	*	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	82.6	85.1p	85.3p	85.8p	85.7		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	85.6	88.5p	88.4p	88.9p	89.3		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	79.7	81.6p	82.3p	82.6p	82.0		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		114.9	126.4	125.6	124.9	125.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		19.9	18.5	20.0	22.6	22.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	20.0	20.0b	21.0	20.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	21.0	21.0b	23.0	21.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	19.0	19.0b	19.0	19.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.4		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		123.9	123.4	123.1	125.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		175.1	155.2	158.8	143.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		133.2	143.1	149.8	146.7	134.5		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

* National target: 2,5% (2013) of the Gross National Product (GNP)

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Greece

1. Greece has experienced strong economic growth, averaging 4% in the years 2005-2007, with labour productivity growth clearly above the EU average. GDP per capita stands at 96.9% of the EU average. With job creation generally low, the employment rate (61% in 2006) remains far below the Lisbon target, particularly for women and older workers. Unemployment is decreasing (8.9% in 2006), but remains high, particularly for young people. The government deficit was reduced to 2½% of GDP in 2006 from 5.1% of GDP in 2005.

2. Greece faces high inflation pressures originating from a mixture of growth above potential and product market rigidities, while the worsening competitive position of the country creates high external imbalances. Despite labour shortages in specific sectors, unemployment remains high suggesting labour market rigidities and possible skill mismatches. Social security and pension reforms, a more efficient and transparent tax system, and the tackling of administrative malpractice could release resources which could be used to invest in human capital and active labour market policies. Efforts to transform undeclared work into formal employment would enhance the quality and sustainability of public finances and market efficiency.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Greek 2007 Implementation Report has shown steady progress on implementing the 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP). The pace of progress in some fields appears to have accelerated slightly over the last year.

4. There has been some progress in responding to the four country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council. In the macro-economic domain, good progress has been made to consolidate public finances but more progress is needed to ensure its long-term fiscal sustainability. Progress in the micro-economic and employment areas has been partial. With regard to public administration reform, the initial steps taken are encouraging.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Greece should focus, as well as on the 2006 Spring European Council commitments, there has been some progress.

6. The Implementation Report does not specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries, but there have been relevant developments. Greece has made good progress with budgetary consolidation, but less progress improving the quality of public finances. Additional action is necessary to strengthen competition in professional services, to promote labour mobility and improve flexibility and security in the labour market.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP by central and local governments and the social partners have been reinforced. The NRP and the 2007 Implementation Report appear to be the result of substantial dialogue between government bodies, and social partners. The Greek Parliament has also been involved. A Lisbon observatory has been set up and delivered a report in 2007. Links

between the governance of the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds are very strong. Earmarking of Structural Funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily, with the Structural Funds being the driving force behind important reforms in employment and education, public administration reform, improvements to the business environment, competitiveness and regional development, and environmental protection.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Over the 2005-2007 period, Greece has made good progress on its macro-economic challenge of fiscal consolidation. The newly elected Greek government emphasises fiscal balance and the long-term fiscal sustainability of public finances. However, more is needed to ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of its public finances. Moreover, Greece's inflation rate and current account deficit are both amongst the highest in the euro area.

9. The Council recommended Greece to: ensure the continuation of fiscal consolidation and debt reduction and fix a timetable for the implementation of pension reform with a view to improving long-term fiscal sustainability. Fiscal consolidation began in 2004 and has made good progress - the excessive deficit procedure against Greece was abrogated in June 2007 and the government deficit has shrunk nearly 5 percentage points of GDP, to 2½% of GDP in 2006. However, use of temporary revenue measures and poor control over some items of public expenditure, particularly current primary expenditure, is a weakness. According to the Implementation Report, fiscal consolidation will continue and lead to a balanced budget by 2010. The 2008 draft budget projects that the general government deficit in 2008 will be 1.6% of GDP. Measures have been put in place to improve tax collection, intensify the fight against tax evasion and broaden the tax base. However, progress to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances has been limited. Although Greece has declared it a high priority, the implementation of relevant reforms has been postponed. The Implementation Report stresses that the new government now has the opportunity to make good progress; public consultation and the Advisers Committee established to study the social security and pension system are expected to deliver first results and proposals before the end of 2007. The government has announced that reform of the pension system will begin by summer 2008.

10. In general, Greece has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been good fiscal consolidation, but Greece still has to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances. There has therefore been some progress meeting the country-specific recommendation on fiscal consolidation, debt reduction and pension reform for long-term fiscal sustainability. Inflationary pressures and external imbalances are a cause for concern.

Micro-economic policies

11. The 2005-2007 NRP considered the following to be key micro-economic challenges: strengthening its business environment, developing a knowledge society, environmental and sustainable development, and public administration modernisation. Progress in addressing these challenges has been mixed.

12. Energy sector reform is progressing well. The EU legislative framework has been transposed into national law and infrastructure is improving. However, the electricity incumbent has a strong market position. Transposition of the regulatory framework for electronic communications has been completed and competition in fixed telephony reinforced. Competition and lower prices have led broadband penetration to take off, facilitated by the government's Digital Strategy initiatives. The Competition Authority has been reinforced and progress made with privatisations. However, implementation of the Services Directive is slow and regulations covering professional services remain amongst the most restrictive in the EU. There are some important delayed measures, including the national land use plan.

13. Some progress has been made to set up a regulatory framework for the environment and the sustainable use of resources; however, infrastructure and enforcement of integrated waste management, waste water and biodiversity protection is needed. Strong private interest is responding to a more favourable framework and developing renewable energy sources. Climate changing emissions were already above the Kyoto target in 2005 and are growing fast. Additional measures to meet Greece's Kyoto target are needed.

14. The Council recommended Greece to modernise its public administration by building up effective regulatory, control and enforcement capacities, and ensuring an effective use of Structural Funds. A specific Structural Funds Operational Programme is now in place to assist Greece in this task. Better regulation is being improved by the gradual introduction of impact assessment, codification and simplification of legislation, as well as actions to reduce administrative burdens, for which a 25% reduction target has been set for 2013. Development of e-Government is more advanced, supported by a comprehensive Digital Strategy.

15. The Council also highlighted the need to focus on R&D, the transposition of internal market legislation and progress towards the 2006 Spring European Council SME policy targets. Actions to foster R&D and innovation depend significantly on Structural Funds financing over 2007-2013. The emphasis on innovation poles is promising but, and in spite of some encouraging signs, the predominance of family-owned SMEs and the economy's service orientation does not facilitate a rapid increase of private R&D investment. The R&D expenditure target of 1.5% of GDP has been postponed from 2010 to 2015. A bill has been submitted to parliament to improve R&D governance, but it still has to be adopted. Implementation of internal market legislation has improved remarkably, but the transposition deficit remains high. Some reform of public procurement has been achieved, but many problems remain which hamper projects financed by the Structural Funds.

16. Greece has not fully addressed the Spring 2006 European Council priority area aimed at improving the business environment. Key measures (e.g. creation of the

General Commercial Registry) have not been completed and the average business start-up time is estimated at around one month. Simplification in setting up and licensing has taken place in some sectors and a new bankruptcy code and an update of company law have been adopted. Access to finance has been improved.

17. Greece has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The response to the country specific recommendation on modernising public administration is in a preparatory phase. Progress regarding the promoting R&D, improving the transposition of internal market legislation, and in reaching the SME policy targets set by the Spring 2006 European Council is limited, pointing to the need to accelerate reform implementation. Moreover, additional action is necessary to strengthen competition in professional services, to protect the environment and to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Employment policies

18. Good macro-economic performance has helped the employment rate increase to 61% in 2006 from 59.4% in 2004. Nevertheless, employment is well below EU employment targets. Unemployment, while declining, disproportionably affects the young and women. Initiatives to strengthen active labour market policies, enhance skills and promote employment are reported, but progress is mixed.

19. The Council recommended Greece to reinforce active labour market measures, fight undeclared work and speed up education and lifelong learning reforms. Current active labour policies are more focused on specific target groups and responsive to labour market needs, but efforts are needed to improve quality and coverage and transform public employment services into high quality one-stop shops for employment promotion. A 'Special Solidarity Fund' has been established to address long-term unemployment amongst older workers, but more comprehensive action is needed, including to help retain older workers in the labour market. A series of measures are planned to fight undeclared work, including reinforced controls on labour and the creation of a national committee against tax evasion. However, the magnitude of the problem requires better coordination of actions. Low wage earners appear to be taxed at a rate below the European average, but the adjusted implicit tax rate on employed labour is above the average. Tax policy aims to become more employment friendly: a recently announced tax reform package should reduce the tax burden for middle income brackets. However, the social security component of non-wage labour costs remains high. Employment protection is higher than the EU average, particularly for temporary workers. The Implementation Report refers to the establishment of a committee to study employment legislation and make proposals to ensure it is more adaptable.

20. Greece has set itself the target of allocating 5% of GDP to education by 2008, but it is not clear that expenditure on education is increasing. Policy aims to introduce ICT in schools, modernise the syllabi, and fight early school leaving. The share of early school leavers is slightly higher than the EU average. There has been progress in terms of developing legislation for higher education. On lifelong learning, a target has been set for reaching 6% of adult participation by 2015 and a dedicated agency for the promotion of continuous vocational training in enterprises will be set up. In

the Commission's opinion, the policies developed are a satisfactory response but now need to be implemented.

21. The Council also highlighted the need to implement policies to encourage women's participation in employment, and put in place a coherent active ageing strategy. Greece has taken action to promote female employability and reconcile work and family life, including targeted training and counselling measures. Nevertheless, the situation for the young and for older women continues to be difficult, suggesting more support may be needed for these groups, supported by the fact that employment and unemployment gender gaps remain significant. Further efforts are also needed to develop policies designed to help retain older workers stay in the labour market.

22. The pursuit of 'flexicurity' represents a major challenge for Greece; it has just begun to be addressed in an integrated way. The government has engaged in a broader dialogue with social partners, who approach this subject with caution. Expenditure on active labour market policies is low and decreasing. In this context the Greek authorities have set an expenditure target of 0.5% of GDP for 2015 and attention is now given to better matching labour supply with demand. Part-time work remains limited, despite recent measures to promote it in local government. The adult participation rate in life-long learning is extremely low. To address this, initial steps have been taken to implement a law linking education and training to employment. Progress so far seems modest, however, so implementation should be accelerated. Reform of the social security and pension systems to address weaknesses is the subject of public debate.

23. In general, Greece has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP and in addressing the country specific recommendations and points to watch.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

24. In the light of the 2007 Greek Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

25. Greece has made steady progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the period 2005-2007. Greece has shown some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

26. The Implementation Report shows there has been some policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been some response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report does not however specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

27. Amongst the strengths shown by the 2007 Greek Implementation Report are: good progress made to consolidate public finances, promoting female employment, implementing internal market legislation, and improving the business environment.

There are promising signs of progress to fix a timetable to implement pension reforms designed to improve long-term fiscal sustainability.

28. Policy areas in the Greek National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: long-term fiscal sustainability, implementation of the public administration reform agenda, the consolidation of active labour market policies, tackling high youth unemployment, tackling undeclared work and acceleration of education and life-long learning reforms. Against this background it is recommended that Greece:

- pursue fiscal consolidation and debt reduction, and proceeds rapidly with the implementation of the pension reform, with a view to improving long-term fiscal sustainability;

- implement the reform of its public administration, by building up effective regulatory, control and enforcement capacities, by modernising its human resources policy; and through effective use of the Structural Funds;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, modernise employment protection including legislation, reduce the tax burden on labour, strengthen active labour market policies and transform undeclared work into formal employment;

- accelerate the implementation of reforms on education and lifelong learning, in order to improve quality and responsiveness to labour market needs, increase participation, and allow for a smooth transition into employment, particularly for the young.

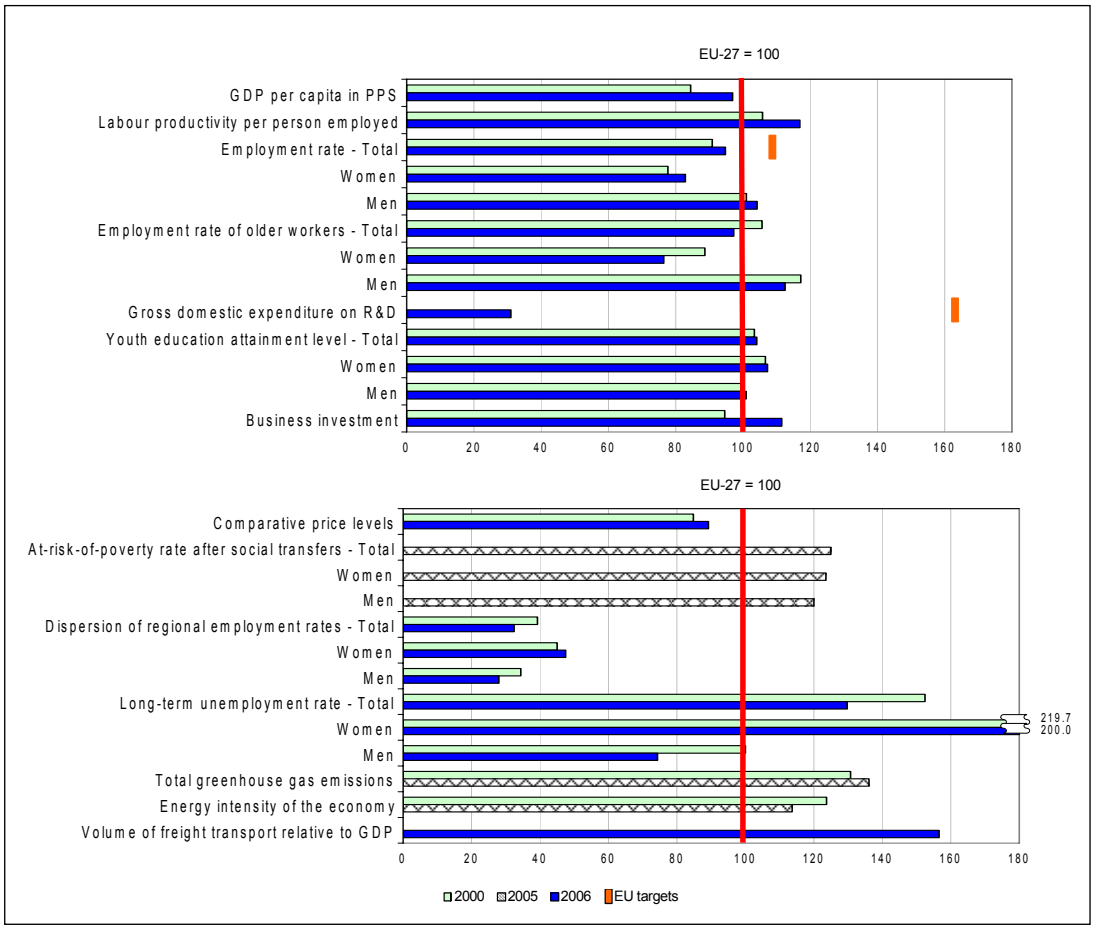
29. In addition, it will be important for Greece over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: contain inflationary pressures and the current account deficit; accelerate efforts to set up a research and innovation strategy and increase investment in R&D; improve further the transposition of internal market legislation; speed up progress towards meeting the SME policy targets set by the 2006 Spring European Council; strengthen competition in the area of professional services; protect the environment by prioritising effective solid and water waste management and curb greenhouse gas emissions; encourage further female participation in employment; reduce early school leaving and put in place a coherent active ageing strategy.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

GREECE

		GR						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		84.4	92.4	93.4	95.4	96.9f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		105.8e	114.6e	112.8e	114.9e	116.9f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	56.5	58.7	59.4	60.1	61.0	64.1	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	41.7	44.3	45.2	46.1	47.4		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	71.5	73.4	73.7	74.2	74.6		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	39.0	41.3	39.4	41.6	42.3		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	24.3	25.5	24.0	25.8	26.6		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	55.2	58.7	56.4	58.8	59.2		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		:	0.58	0.55p	0.58	0.57	1.5	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	79.2	81.7	83.0	84.1	81.0p		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	84.6	86.8	86.8	88.5	86.6p		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	73.6	76.6	79.2	79.7	75.5p		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		84.8	85.9	87.3	88.3	89.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		17.4	19.3	19.2	18.6	20.3f		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	20.0	21.0b	20.0	20.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	20.0	21.0b	21.0	21.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	19.0	20.0b	19.0	18.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	5.1	3.2	4.1	4.3	3.7		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	9.0	6.5	8.3	8.4	7.7		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	3.3	2.1	2.5	2.9	2.6		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	6.1	5.3	5.6	5.1	4.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	10.1	8.9	9.4	8.9	8.0		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.6		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		118.6	123.6	123.9	125.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		263.6	247.8	240.6	236.5	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		:	108.0e	:	120.8	167.1		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Spain

1. The Spanish economy has been growing strongly at an average annual rate of 3.75% since the mid-1990s. Domestic demand has been strong, and employment growth highly dynamic, with Spain contributing almost half of the total job creation in the euro area since the mid-nineties. As a result, the unemployment rate has halved, to close to the EU average of around 8%. The employment rate has been rising steadily to 66%.

2. In parallel, a number of imbalances have emerged. The current account deficit reached 8.5% of GDP in 2006, reflecting, in part, insufficient export growth. Inflation remains high, due in part to structural factors related to the functioning of product and services markets. Inflation and low productivity growth continue to affect Spain's competitive position. In order to enhance productivity, the quantity and quality of physical, human, and knowledge capital will need to increase. Finally, strong job creation remains coupled with persistent labour market segmentation.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Spain has made good progress with implementing the 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period.

4. Spain has responded to the country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been a limited response to increasing competition in the energy sector, although some progress has been made in addressing the security of supply. Progress in integrating training systems to provide a better response to labour market needs, and on modernising employment protection has been good but progress in reducing early school leaving is still insufficient.

5. With regard to the other areas on which Spain was asked to focus, there has been a some response in the macro-economic domain. The points to watch in the micro-economic and employment domains have been partially addressed. Better results are evident in raising skill levels and productivity. Despite measures put in place, progress towards the reduction of CO2 emissions may not be sufficient for Spain to meet the Kyoto target.

6. The Council concluded that Spain had adequately responded to the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been good progress on the commitments in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship and employment but limited progress in the area of energy.

7. Spain addresses the euro area recommendations in its latest Implementation Report. Examples include measures reported to improve the efficiency of public expenditure and measures to enhance competition in the services sector.

8. Consultation of the NRP at the level of regional and local governments and the social partners has been reinforced but ownership of the NRP remains limited. The involvement of stakeholders continues to be limited outside the employment field,

where there has been some cooperation with social partners. More information on timetables and budgetary implications of reforms would be welcome. The links between the governance of the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds are strong but the earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives needs to be reinforced particularly in Competitiveness regions. Significant support is foreseen for R&D, active labour policies, and improvement of human capital.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. Spain has made good progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the macro-economic key challenges of macro-economic and budgetary stability in order to support real GDP convergence and reach the EU-25 average by 2010. In spite of some signs of deceleration, the growth rate of the Spanish economy remains above that of the euro area. Nevertheless, given the rapid increase of Spain's population, full convergence with the EU-25 in terms of per capita GDP will require additional efforts.

10. No macro-economic recommendations were issued for Spain. However, the Council referred to the need to contain inflation in the medium-term, as well as implementing the foreseen housing market measures so as to gradually reduce house price pressures in the medium-term, and pension and healthcare reforms which also impact favourably on long term fiscal sustainability.

11. There has been some progress in these areas. Measures have been designed to tackle the structural factors behind excessive inflation, namely prioritising public spending on R&D, education and infrastructure, ensuring budgetary stability, and increasing competition in certain sectors. Recent fluctuations of the inflation differential can be largely explained by exogenous factors of rather a transitory nature such as the effect associated with oil prices, which have a stronger impact on the Spanish economy than in other euro area countries. With regard to the reduction of pressure on housing prices, Spain has adopted a new law on Urban Land and implemented the Housing Plan 2005-2008 as well as approved several measures aiming at developing the rental market from the demand side. However, the current deceleration of housing prices seems to be more related to a drop in demand than to the measures implemented by the government in the rental market. Reforms have taken place to the pension system. The volume of the Social Security Reserve Fund has again been increased. The reform of the system adopted in 2006, will be implemented in January 2008, and aims at a better alignment between contributions and benefits. This has had a limited effect thus far on long-term fiscal sustainability. There has been a limited response in the area of the health care reform consisting of a reduction of spending on medicines but health care spending continues to increase at a rate well above of that of nominal GDP.

12. In general, Spain has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been limited progress in addressing the points to watch issued to Spain, with some progress on addressing the structural factors affecting the inflation differential, but more limited progress in the

other area. The Commission therefore considers that these issues merit additional focus. In addition, the increasing current account deficit is a matter for concern. With regard to the euro area recommendations in the macro-economic domain Spain's progress has been good.

Micro-economic policies

13. Progress on the implementation of measures in response to the micro-challenges identified by the Spanish NRP has continued over the last year. Good progress has been recorded in the area of R&D, business environment, and infrastructure, with more limited progress in the areas of competition, better regulation, and the environment.

14. The Council recommended Spain takes further measures to increase competition in the energy sector, notably by improving cross-border interconnection capacity to ensure security of supply. The measures planned now need to be fully implemented. However, a fundamental competition problem in the electricity market remains as the elimination of tariffs (in real terms) is not being pursued with sufficient urgency. The tariff increase in 2007 has been too modest to reflect the real cost of electricity generation and distribution, and to absorb the deficit accumulated in the regulated system. There has been good progress in enhancing the security of supply via an agreement to reinforce interconnection capacity with Portugal, but problems persist regarding interconnection capacity with France.

15. The Council also referred to the need to focus on raising competition in professional services and retail markets; improving the regulatory framework; and implementing environmental measures, in particular to reduce CO_2 emissions.

16. With regard to environmental measures, the recent national climate change strategy defines the framework for policy action to comply with the Kyoto Protocol. The significant number of planned initiatives will help contribute towards reaching the Kyoto targets but it appears further measures will also be required. On the need to raise competition in retail markets, no new information has been reported. Spain should sustain its on-going efforts to implement the Services Directive. Progress to increase competition in professional services has been limited. On better regulation, Spain has set a target for a 25% reduction in the administrative burden by 2012 and an Action Plan to facilitate this is envisaged.

17. Efforts to increase both the level and efficiency of R&D and innovation spending continue to be a strong point of the Spanish reform agenda, and in particular the improved coordination between central and regional government. All regions have R&D intensity targets for 2010. The achievement of the overall R&D target of 2% of GDP depends on whether the significant public funding effort will stimulate business spending. There are doubts concerning the return in terms of innovation output. Spain’s innovation system still needs substantial strengthening in areas like knowledge transfer between science and industry, fostering entrepreneurship, and on access to risk capital. Investment levels are increasing in the aim to develop an information society, but weak IT adoption rates persist, particularly among enterprises.

18. Spain is implementing policies to promote entrepreneurship education, to facilitate administrative processes for starting a business and to provide information on access to public procurement. Among Spain's regions the progress achieved on developing SME policies varies. Spain needs to address the high number of infringement cases and continue to decrease its transposition deficit.

19. Overall progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges identified by Spain in the 2005 NRP is good. The country specific recommendations and points to watch in the micro-economic area have been only partially addressed and therefore remain valid. Progress with regard to the euro area recommendation on competition was limited.

Employment policies

20. There has been some progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address Spain's labour market challenges. Spain has already met its overall employment rate target of 66% three years early. Spain should now focus on attaining the EU employment rate target of 70% by 2010. While the female employment rate has risen, the employment gender gap remains one of the largest in the EU. The unemployment rate (8.5% in 2006) has fallen, and converged towards the EU27 average. The early school leaving rate has barely declined, and youth education attainment levels continue to be among the lowest in the EU.

21. The Council recommended Spain to modernise employment protection with a view to fostering flexibility and security in the labour market and counter segmentation. An agreement with the social partners in mid-2006 has helped bring down the number of fixed-term contracts by 2.6%. This is a welcome move which however will only have short-term effects. In the longer term, further measures may be needed, in particular to promote indefinite contracts and part time work.

22. The Council also recommended Spain to ensure the effective implementation of education reforms to reduce early school leaving and to integrate training systems. The new education law aims at fully integrating immigrant pupils, at reducing the rate of early school leaving, and improving some key competencies. However, the target set in the 2006 Implementation Report of almost halving the rate of early school leavers to 15% in 2010 is unlikely to be met. Legislation adopted in March 2007 to regulate the integration of occupational and vocational training systems should help raise quality and improve access to lifelong learning.

23. The Council highlighted the need for Spain to focus on: raising skill levels and productivity and integrating immigrants into the labour market; and increasing access to childcare. In spite of recent progress in productivity growth (0.8% in 2006) it remains well below the EU27 average. The number of workers participating in continuous training has increased from 10% in 2005 to 11.2% in 2006. To integrate immigrants into the labour market, Spain has a strategic plan for 2007-2010 that foresees a broad array of measures under four pillars. Measures have been announced to extend childcare services to all children aged 0-3 years which should help to bring Spain closer to meeting the EU target. However, the percentage of children under 3 years in childcare has risen only slightly (16.6%), and is well below the EU 33% target. Important regional disparities also persist in this field.

24. Spain partly addresses flexicurity in an integrated way. Some progress has been made to ensure training or job offers for all the unemployed, with activation rates increasing significantly. The social security system has been reformed by strengthening the link between contributions and benefits received, and extending the working life. Whereas there is good progress on active labour market policies and modern social security systems, implementation is still ongoing on lifelong learning legislation, and only moderate short-term effects are visible concerning contractual arrangements.

25. In general, Spain has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. Measures have been taken to address the country specific recommendations. The points to watch have been partially addressed. It is encouraging that labour market reforms have been approved in the framework of the social dialogue with a high degree of agreement of all social partners. Some progress was achieved with regard to the euro area recommendation in the employment domain.

PART III. CONCLUSIONS

26. In the light of Spain's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

27. Spain has made good progress with implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Spain has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in three of the four priority action areas.

28. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. With regard to the other areas on which Spain was asked to focus, there has been a limited response in the macro-economic domain. The points to watch in the micro-economic and employment domains have been partially addressed. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

29. Among the strengths shown by Spain’s 2007 Implementation Report are: a faster than targeted reduction of government debt; good progress on implementation of the R&D and innovation plan; and satisfactory progress towards the employment rate objective, in particular for female employment.

30. The policy areas in the Spanish National Reform Programme where challenges now need to be tackled with the highest priority are improving competition in electricity markets and further improvements to education and training. Against this background it is recommended that Spain:

- take further measures to increase competition in the energy sector, notably by eliminating the distorting price setting mechanisms and improving cross-border interconnection capacity to ensure security of supply;

- ensure the effective implementation of education reforms, also at regional level, to reduce early school leaving.

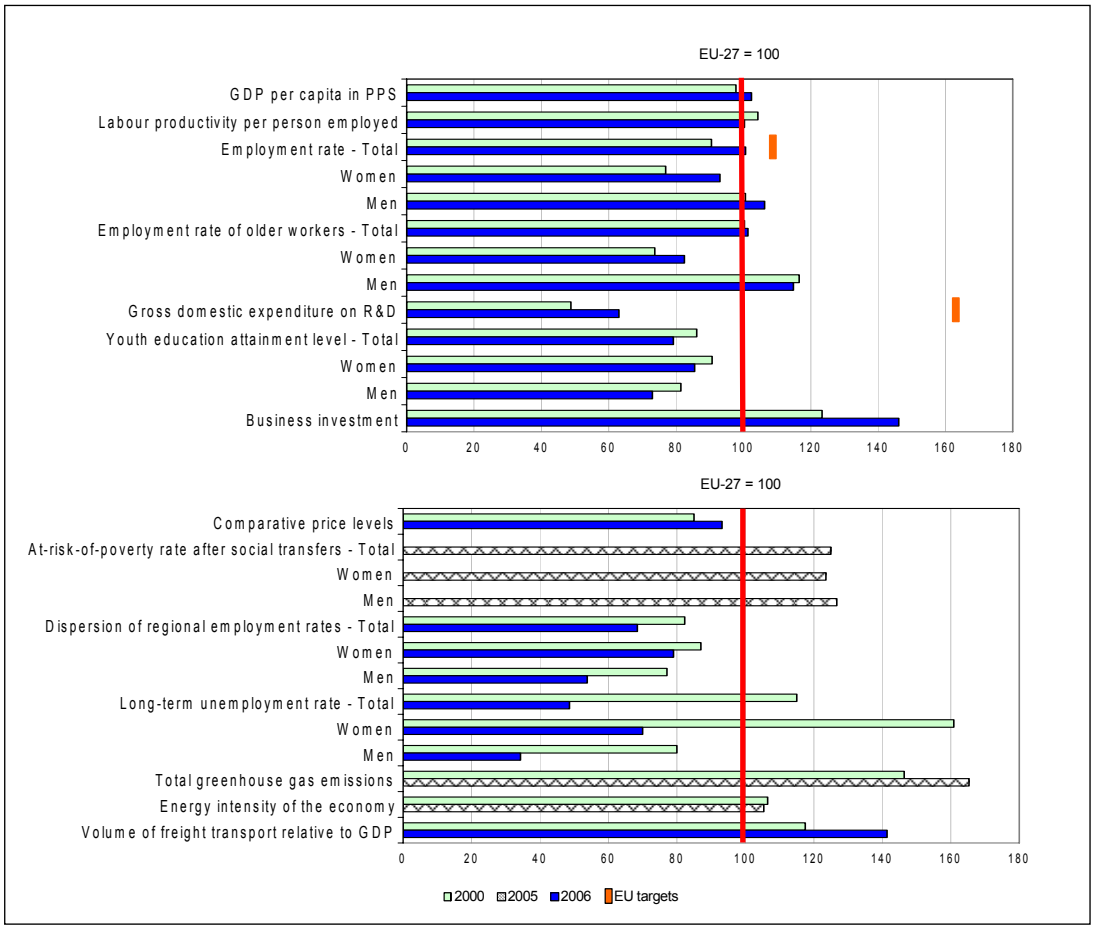
31. In addition, it will be important for Spain over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: contain the current account deficit and inflationary pressures and monitor developments in the housing market; raising competition in professional services and retail markets; improving the regulatory framework; implementing environmental measures, in particular to reduce CO2 emissions; further modernise employment protection, including legislation, in order to foster flexicurity in the labour market to counter segmentation and promote the attractiveness of part-time work; raising productivity by raising skill levels and innovation; integrating immigrants into the labour market; further increase of access to childcare; and implement pension and healthcare reforms so as to improve long term fiscal sustainability.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

SPAIN

		ES						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		97.8	101.4	100.9	102.5	102.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		104.3	103.7	101.5	101.3	100.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	56.3	59.8	61.1	63.3b	64.8	66.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	41.3	46.3	48.3	51.2b	53.2		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	71.2	73.2	73.8	75.2b	76.1		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	37.0	40.7	41.3	43.1b	44.1		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	20.2	23.3	24.6	27.4b	28.7		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	54.9	59.2	58.9	59.7b	60.4		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.91	1.05	1.06	1.12	1.16p	2.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	66.0	62.2	61.2	61.8	61.6		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	71.9	69.2	68.4	68.5	69.0		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	60.1	55.5	54.4	55.4	54.6		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		85.0	88.3	90.9	92.0	93.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		22.7	23.6	24.7	25.8	26.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	18.0	19.0	20.0b	20.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	19.0	20.0	21.0b	21.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	17.0	18.0	19.0b	19.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	10.7	9.0	8.7	8.3	7.8		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	17.4	14.5	14.8	13.8	12.8		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	7.4	6.1	5.5	5.3	5.0		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	4.6	3.7	3.4	2.2b	1.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	7.4	5.7	5.0	3.4b	2.8		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	2.8	2.4	2.2	1.4b	1.2		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		132.8	141.5	146.9	152.3	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		227.0	219.7	222.2	219.2	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		116.4	135.2	149.1b	151.4	150.9		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



France

1. In 2006 GDP grew by 2.0%, lower than the 2.7% growth in the euro area. Growth is expected to be 1.9% in 2007. Growth continues to be supported by domestic demand, especially private consumption, and hampered by a negative contribution of net exports over the past five years. The employment rate (63% in 2006) remains low, particularly for the young (29.3%) and older workers (37.6). Unemployment (9.1% in 2006) has improved markedly over the year to a forecasted 8.6% but remains well above the euro area average.

2. Reforms under discussion address key challenges that France has to face in a context of an ageing population, high unemployment and a lack of competitiveness. These reforms aim at increasing potential growth and may, in the long term, improve the sustainability of public finances. However, the measures thus far adopted (including tax cuts in the summer 2007 "fiscal package") will slow down consolidation in public finances, and the envisaged structural reforms entail significant short term costs. Achieving a balanced budget has been delayed until 2012 in the case of GDP growth below 2.5%, despite France's commitment to reach this goal by 2010.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the French 2007 Implementation Report shows steady progress in implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period, but more significantly some key policy orientations have been, or are in the process of being revised. Following presidential and legislative elections, France has stated its commitment to boost economic growth and job creation through structural reforms covering a wide range of areas including the labour market, pension system, social security financing, environmental sustainability, and competition in goods and services. The new French government presents a noticeably modified strategy to modernise micro-economic and labour market policies to increase growth and to reduce unemployment.

4. The response to the country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council has been limited. Progress on public finance has not been in line with the path set out in the latest Stability Programme update. Progress in opening up competition in the energy sector is faltering because of regulated tariff systems on the domestic market. The response to the need to enhance lifelong learning and modernise employment protection, has been addressed in policy announcements committing to a major reform on labour law and the vocational training system. These measures now require implementation.

5. With regard to the other areas on which France was asked to focus, an important reform has been undertaken with regard to stimulating and supporting entrepreneurship and young businesses. There has been some progress in strengthening competition in regulated trades and professions but further relaxing of restrictions is necessary. Although policies for better regulation have been enhanced, a wider use of impact assessments is needed. Measures to increase activation and

help the return to work need to be sustained in order to further increase labour supply.

6. There has been progress on some of the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council with an end 2007 deadline, in particular concerning investment in knowledge and innovation, unlocking the business potential of SMEs, and in the field of energy. The Implementation Report does not specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries, but there have been relevant developments. France has improved its framework for public finances monitoring through the full implementation of the LOLF (*Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finances*) with positive effects on the quality of public finances, while progress in terms of sustainability of public finance has been more limited. Progress in response to the euro area recommendations in the areas of competition in services and of improving flexibility and security on labour markets inter alia by promoting labour mobility is limited.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of reform at the level of local government and the social partners have been reinforced. The social partners have been invited to negotiate on sensitive labour market reforms, on which outcomes are awaited. Links between the governance and implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural funds are fairly strong. Earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is satisfactory. However, the NRP and its Implementation Report do not provide a comprehensive overview of all announced reform measures.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The structural public deficit improved from 3.5% of GDP in 2005 to 2.5% of GDP in 2007. Both the fiscal package adopted in August 2007, largely consisting of tax reductions, and the draft Finance Act for 2008, indicate that in 2007 and 2008 the reduction with regard to the public deficit and the debt-to-GDP ratio will stall compared to the path defined in the December 2006 update of the Stability Programme.

9. The Council recommended that France should ensure the sustainability of its public finances, notably through continued budgetary consolidation and debt reduction. France has taken a number of actions in this area. A tighter set of rules for state expenditure has been established (a decrease in volume by 1% in volume in 2008), to be followed by a stabilization in volume in 2008 (but applied to a broader category of expenditure). Furthermore, France has launched a general revision of public policies based on the implementation of the LOLF, which entails annual assessments of the efficiency of public policies, ministerial reform strategies, as well as audits for modernising the State. However, the state finance rule may not be fully achieved, and the expenditure rules in the other administration sub-sectors (local government and social security) are either, limited, nonbinding or not fully implemented. In addition, the 2007 Implementation Report, while underlining that the consolidation of public finances is necessary in order to create budgetary margins for growth-supporting expenditures, envisages broad structural reforms on pensions, healthcare

financing, global taxes, and administration organisation. Some of these reforms carry short-term budgetary costs and will have a positive impact only in the medium to long term.

10. France has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. However, in 2007, the budgetary consolidation drive has slowed. The tax decreases and the measures in the draft budget imply that consolidation will not significantly progress in 2008. Achieving a balanced budget has been delayed until 2012 in the case of GDP growth below 2.5%, despite France's commitment to reach this goal by 2010.

Micro-economic policies

11. Over 2005-2007 France has made progress to address the micro-economic challenges outlined in its NRP.

12. The Council recommended that France improves the framework for competition in the gas, electricity and rail freight sectors. Despite some positive steps, the actual degree of liberalisation remains limited. Despite the full legal opening on 1st July 2007 of the domestic gas and electricity market, a regulated tariff system remains imposed by law. As a consequence real prices are below market prices, favouring incumbents, and limiting possibility for successful market entry. In the rail freight sector the market share of new operators increased from less than 1% in 2006 to between 3% and 5% in 2007, but more effective unbundling between infrastructure and operations should be vigorously pursued. Further measures to promote a greater liberalisation are not yet in place and the legal competences and administrative means of the regulator remain insufficient. Therefore the announcement of an independent railway regulator is an initial step.

13. The Council also underlined that it was important to improve regulation, to strengthen competition in the regulated trades and professions, and to encourage entrepreneurship. In the field of better regulation, France has set an administrative burden reduction target of 20% and is planning to finalize a mapping exercise in March 2008. Its codification activities are progressing well but progress on simplification remains quite slow. An explicit and comprehensive better regulation strategy is needed, in particular in view of greatly increasing the use of impact assessments and of developing more uniform consultation mechanisms.

14. Despite the relaxation of restrictions in some professions, the legal professions, especially notaries and pharmacies, remain heavily regulated, and the most serious restrictions (fixed prices and quantitative entry restrictions) are contained in state law. Some measures have recently been announced to promote competition in the retail sector. There has been a good policy response on entrepreneurship and SME policy. Many measures have been taken over the last 3 years, such as the simplification of procedures, the removal of some taxes, and financial schemes to support the creation and development of SMEs. Particularly relevant is the recent emphasis put on the encouragement of the growth of SMEs, the promotion of ICT use, the increase of financial means for small innovative companies, and measures supporting internationalisation. France has improved its performance with regard to the timely transposition of internal market legislation, but needs to reduce the high number of infringement proceedings. France should continue implementing

entrepreneurship promotion measures and to tackle more vigorously the issue of business transfer.

15. Over the past two years R&D and innovation strategies have undergone considerable reform with good progress being made. Public spending on research has increased in nominal terms since 2004. Fiscal incentives and conditions for developing public-private partnerships have been improved. Regions are also encouraged to establish their own innovation strategies. In view of the recent reforms, which give more autonomy to universities, and complement the reforms in the research domain, the role and functioning of public research organizations and better career opportunities for researchers in the private sector should be examined.

16. Industrial policy remains an important priority in the NRP with a focus on the activity of the 71 *Pôles de Compétitivité.* Measures in the ICT field have begun to yield concrete results.

17. In general, France has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on micro-economic challenges and commitments expressed in the NRP. Greater efforts are needed to increase competition in the gas, electricity and rail freight sectors and thus this recommendation remains valid. France has introduced significant reforms in R&D and innovation, and has supported entrepreneurship and SMEs. Therefore this point to watch is no longer merited. However, further reforms are needed in the fields of better regulation and the regulated trades and professions.

Employment policies

18. Relatively low employment, high structural unemployment, rigid labour legislation, and labour market segmentation (with employment turnover concentrated on particular groups) have remained key challenges over the 2005-2007 period. Limited progress has been made in addressing these issues. Low skilled young people have been hit hardest by labour market segmentation, with high unemployment rates as a result. Older workers continue to retire early. Labour market policy has targeted those vulnerable in the labour market through a social cohesion programme (for example continued reductions in social security contributions on low paid work), with uneven policies to ease employment protection legislation and improve the access to and efficiency of lifelong learning. Reflecting the lag with which employment reacts to economic recovery, record unemployment has now started to come down but employment performance remains unsatisfactory. In this context, France recently announced a global labour market reform that embraces structural revision of labour law, public employment services, unemployment insurance and vocational training.

19. The Council recommended that France should modernise its employment protection and improve lifelong learning. Previously introduced reforms of labour contracts seem to have been superseded by the new government's announced global flexicurity reform which respond to the Council recommendations. In order to tackle labour market segmentation and modernise employment protection, the government has asked the social partners to consider a review of labour contracts. It has also proposed the merger of the job seekers placement and reimbursement services, in order to improve efficiency. Alongside existing measures aiming to make work pay such as the "Prime pour l'emploi" and the "Revenu de solidarité active", a revision of

the unemployment insurance system is anticipated. A shake-up of the vocational training system has been announced for 2008. This entails a review of the 2004 law on lifelong learning and the currently non-transferable individual right to training. It involves the social partners and the regions, who have gained responsibilities in the field of training, and is to remedy the fact that in spite of important investments and an individual right to training, 60% of French workers do not participate in vocational training.

20. The Council also highlighted the need for France to focus on further steps to increase labour supply. This remains relevant, given the low number of hours worked in the economy and the persistent low employment rate. France has reduced taxes on overtime work and exempted working students from income taxes. As part of the social security budget review, it is proposed to make company early retirement schemes more expensive and to phase out the exemption of job-seeking obligations for older unemployed workers. The Implementation Report acknowledges the need for sustained activation of people on benefits, and the government has established new pilot exercises.

21. Since the beginning of 2007, France has been moving towards an integrated flexicurity approach, with a number of initiatives. The weak points remain the differentiated and complex employment legislation which provides for a segmented labour market with insiders and outsiders and that expenditure on active labour market policies has been decreasing since 2000. A recent revision of the unemployment insurance system, with the aim of making work pay, has been announced. Efforts are being made to reform the lifelong leaning system in order to improve the currently non-transferable individual right to training. Social partners are now increasingly being consulted on, for example, measures to address employment legislation and transitions on the labour market.

22. In general, France has not yet succeeded reducing labour market segmentation, or achieved a more efficient and inclusive system of lifelong learning. However, the Implementation Report does announce major labour market reforms and sets 2012 targets for full employment and social inclusion. By embracing a comprehensive flexicurity approach to labour market reform, France has advanced new policy orientations that respond well to the recommendations, with reform of contractual arrangements currently under negotiation by the social partners and dialogue on a renewed vocational training system scheduled for 2008. This constitutes a promising policy response.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of France's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementation of key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

24. France has made steady progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. France has shown some progress in fulfilling the commitment agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows a limited policy response to the recommendations issued to France by the Council. There has been some policy response on the other areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention in particular an important reform has been undertaken with regard to stimulating and supporting entrepreneurship and young businesses. The Implementation Report does not however specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

26. Among the strengths shown by French 2007 Implementation Report are: the reform of R&D and innovation strategies, the concrete results of measures in the area of ICT, and the announced, comprehensive set of measures to improve the functioning of the labour market, including through changes in legislation.

27. The Implementation Report presents a noticeably modified strategy in which employment is to become a factor of economic policy aiming at enhanced growth. The extent to which increased competition is integrated in this new policy framework is, as yet, less clear. It is important that France strengthens its budgetary efforts in order to simultaneously implement a concerted reform strategy and further consolidates public finances. Significant or sustained further measures are needed to achieve budgetary consolidation, to increase competition in network industries and to improve labour market performance. Against this background, it is recommended that France:

- ensures the sustainability of public finances, taking into account the ageing of the population, by considerably strengthening budgetary consolidation and debt reduction, and with a view to achieving a balanced budget in 2010. The negotiation on pension systems scheduled for 2008 will have to build on the gains made following the introduction of the 2003 reform;

- improves the framework for competition in the gas, electricity and rail freight sectors;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, improves the efficiency of lifelong learning and modernises employment protection, in order notably to combat labour market segmentation among contract types, and make it easier to switch between fixed term contracts and permanent contracts.

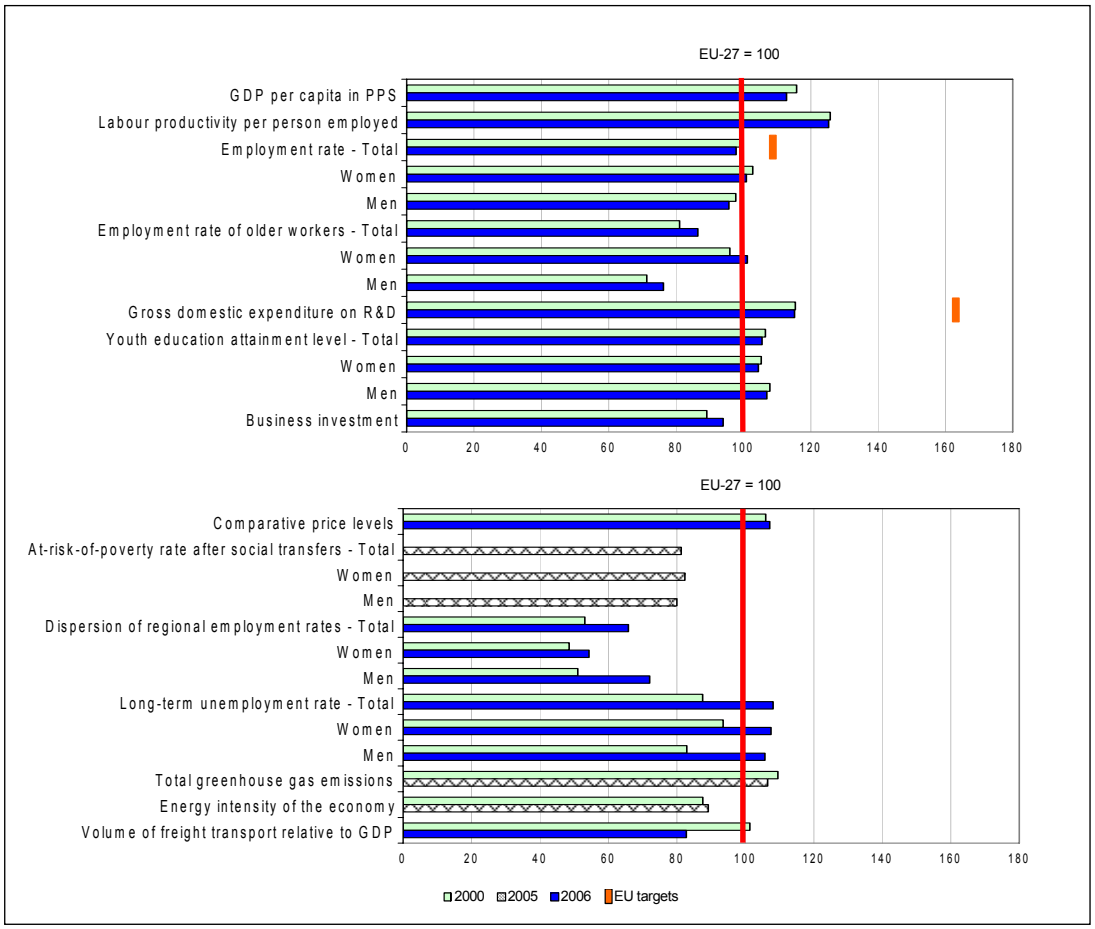
28. In addition, it will be important for France over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: further strengthening competition in regulated trades and professions, further enhancing better regulation policies by including impact assessments; continuing to increase labour supply and making work pay.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

FRANCE

		FR						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		115.8	112.3	112.1	114.2	112.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		125.8	121.5	122.2	125.4	125.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	62.1	63.3	63.1	63.1	63.0p	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	55.2	57.2	57.4	57.6	57.7p		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	69.2	69.4	68.9	68.8	68.5p		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	29.9	36.8	37.3	37.9	37.6p		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	26.3	32.9	33.8	35.2	35.2p		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	33.6	40.9	41.0	40.7	40.1p		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		2.15	2.17	2.15	2.13p	2.12p	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	81.6	81.8b	81.4	82.6	82.1p		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	83.5	83.3b	83.0	85.0	84.3p		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	79.6	80.4b	79.7	80.1	80.0p		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		105.9	110.0	110.5	107.6	107.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		16.4	15.8	16.2	16.5	17.1		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	16.0	12.0	13.0b	13.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	16.0	13.0	14.0b	14.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	15.0	12.0	13.0b	12.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	6.9	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.5		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	9.7	8.9	8.7	9.4	8.8		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	4.9	6.2	5.9	5.8	6.7		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	3.5	3.7p	3.9p	4.0p	4.0p		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.3	4.1p	4.3p	4.5p	4.3p		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	2.9	3.4p	3.5p	3.5p	3.7p		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		99.3	98.6	98.6	98.1	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		186.6	188.5	187.0	185.5	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		100.4	92.9	93.2	87.9	88.3		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Italy

1. After a period of protracted slow growth, the situation of the Italian economy improved in 2006. Real GDP grew by 1.9%, the highest rate since 2000, but still below the euro area average. Prospects for 2007 appear still favourable, even though the growth momentum is losing vigour. Employment continues to rise and the unemployment rate decreased to 5.7% in June 2007. Nevertheless, the employment rate, at 58.9% in the first half of 2007, remains well below the EU average and is much lower in the South. In fact, over the last three years, the regional divide has widened.

2. Medium-term prospects for the Italian economy remain challenging under the strain of structural weaknesses feeding into low productivity growth and high public indebtedness. Reversing this requires an economic policy strategy founded on micro-economic reforms to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of domestic production and on measures aimed at raising labour market participation and employment, including by enhancing human capital. Tackling regional disparities requires particular attention. Consolidation of public finances is a necessary pre-condition for this strategy, as it helps to create more favourable conditions for investment and to make room for enhanced expenditure on knowledge, human capital and infrastructure.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Implementation Report shows good progress on implementing the revised National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. Italy has responded to the country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council. Some progress has been made with regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Italy should focus (R&D performance, the sustainability of healthcare, the sustainable use of resources, infrastructure, and impact assessments).

4. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas was mixed. This assessment remains valid this year. Progress is most visible in the area of unlocking the business potential. Italy specifies the efforts it is taking to meet the euro area recommendations. Although the response in the area of public finances is substantial, Italy could have done more given the favourable cyclical and budgetary developments. Some initial steps have been taken to develop an integrated flexicurity approach, and to encourage more decentralised wage bargaining.

5. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local governments and the social partners is substantial, although there is still room for improvement in co-ordinating with regions. Italy's 2007 Implementation Report confirms the main priorities within the NRP, and provides a clear overview of progress in implementing the strategy. It also correctly highlights the importance of improving the efficiency of the judicial system throughout the country, as having an across-the-board impact in terms of the competitiveness and economic context of the

country. Links between governance and monitoring of the NRP and the structural funds are strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily, with significant support to foster employability and human capital, to boost research and innovation, and fight climate change.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

6. Given the high level of public debt and the considerable pressure from an ageing population, ensuring the long-term sustainability of public finances remains a key challenge for Italy, as was highlighted in the 2005 NRP. In line with this, the Council recommended that Italy rigorously pursues fiscal consolidation in order to place the debt-to-GDP ratio on a declining path, and fully implements pension reforms with a view to improving the long-term sustainability of public finances.

7. The result of Italy's fiscal consolidation strategy over the 2006-2007 period is substantial. The general government deficit has been reduced below 3% of GDP, with the larger part of the structural correction occurring in 2006. Notwithstanding this positive result, Italy has not fully utilised the favourable cyclical and budgetary developments, missing the opportunity to further accelerate the reduction of the public debt ratio. The adjustment has been achieved through an increase in the tax burden, and thanks to measures to increase tax compliance. In the Commission's opinion, the draft 2008 Budget Law, due to be approved by Parliament by the end of 2007, implies that fiscal consolidation efforts will stall in 2008.

8. Italy is continuing its efforts to pension reform and to limit increases in age-related public expenditure in the long term. A protocol agreement with the trade unions, adopted by the government in July 2007 and confirmed by a draft law, is a further step in this direction. However, it relaxes the eligibility conditions for seniority pensions for a specific group of workers and leaves some crucial issues open (for instance the definition of the actuarial coefficients in line with increases in life expectancy). More importantly, implementation remains crucial in order to ensure long term financial sustainability.

9. The Council also referred to the need to improve the sustainability of healthcare provision, while preserving quality and accessibility. Stringent expenditure control mechanisms are to be implemented consistently as the Commission considers them a good response. However there remains a need to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of expenditure.

10. Italy has partially succeeded in implementing a strategy aimed at ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability, including in the area of healthcare. Given that more progress is still required, the Commission considers that the Council recommendation remains valid and stresses the importance of the euro area recommendation to make use of the favourable cyclical conditions to pursue a more ambitious budgetary consolidation. More attention should also be paid towards improving the quality of public finances by containing growth in expenditure and improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Micro-economic policies

11. Italy made mixed progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges identified in the 2005 NRP. Notably by extending competition, granting incentives for scientific research and technological innovation, and upgrading infrastructure and protecting the environment.

12. The Council recommended Italy to pursue the implementation of recently announced reforms aimed at increasing competition in product and service markets. Italy has taken important steps in this area and the implementation of the reforms adopted in June 2006 is progressing. A second package, introduced in January 2007 which includes a mix of competition and consumer protection measures in the areas of financial services, mobile telecommunication, retail and wholesale distributions. Significant decreases in prices have been recorded, including in the telecom and pharmaceutical sectors. Since July 2007, SMEs and households now have access to an open electricity market. A number of draft laws have been presented on energy, liberalisation of local public services, reform of competition authorities, measures for consumers and to facilitate commercial and productive activities, and on class action. These are still being discussed in parliament. These are welcome steps in the right direction, but more is needed given the scale of the competition challenge and the need to modernise Italy's industrial base. It is important that draft laws are both adopted and implemented in a timely manner, including those on energy and the liberalisation of local public services. Italy has recently significantly improved its transposition deficit of EU legislation. It is important to continue these efforts while also bringing down the number of infringement cases.

13. The Council highlighted the need to focus on: R&D, a sustainable use of resources, implementing plans to improve infrastructure, and strengthening and fully implementing the system of impact assessment for proposed regulation.

14. In the area of R&D, Italy has made some progress in implementing a number of measures. These include public-private partnerships measures at local level, a tax credit scheme to support innovation, and a streamlining of the existing support schemes. New measures are being introduced in the context of the "Industria 2015" initiative to accompany structural change of industry. An independent evaluation agency for university and research is being set up to improve the governance of the research and innovation system. However, overall research spending remains low and the Implementation Report does not indicate to what extent the measures foreseen will allow progress towards meeting the 2.5% of GDP target for R&D. Further efficiency-enhancing measures are required in the public sector, where productivity is comparably low internationally.

15. The Implementation Report sets out detailed information on priorities, budget appropriations and deadlines with regard to infrastructure projects. It is now important that Italy vigorously implements the plans. Further efforts are needed to expand broadband to rural areas.

16. In the area of the business environment, Italy has made important progress to strengthen one-stop shops and reduce the time and costs for starting an enterprise. A target has been set for cutting administrative costs by 25% by 2012. A streamlined

procedure for impact assessment is being introduced, but its scope is limited and its application across all new regulation is only expected in the medium term.

17. Italy's CO2 emissions are significantly above 1990 levels, and policies and measures implemented have so far produced only limited effects on curbing emissions. In the wider environmental field the Implementation Report details measures to improve the sustainable use of resources, notably aimed at protecting water and soil (including remediation of contaminated sites), and improving waste management.

18. Italy has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The recommendation on competition and the points to watch have been addressed to some extent, but the Commission considers them to remain valid.

Employment policies

19. Italy's labour market performance in terms of employment growth and reduction in unemployment continues to improve. Female participation in the labour market has increased but important gender gaps in terms of activity, employment and unemployment remain. The employment rate of older workers, and women, remain significantly lower than the EU average, affecting the adequacy of future pensions. Some progress has been registered on early school leaving and youth educational attainment levels. Regional disparities remain significant and additional efforts are required to address underlying structural weaknesses.

20. The Council recommended Italy to reduce regional disparities in employment by tackling undeclared work, increasing childcare provision and ensuring the efficient operation of the employment services throughout the country. Italy has adopted a number of measures in response. It has increased action against illegal and undeclared work, such as intensification of inspections and tighter administrative sanctions. To better reconcile work and family life, Italy has committed to improving the quality and availability of childcare services. Although employment services have been reformed, differences in the quality and efficiency of services between the south and the north persist, in particular in the way these services are tailored to individual needs. Taxes on labour have been cut for those on permanent contracts, but the impact is not yet known. The "protocol agreement on welfare" envisages some measures to promote decentralised wage bargaining, but a more comprehensive approach is needed to allow a better alignment between wage and productivity developments. The policy measures undertaken so far should help reduce regional disparities, but implementation is slow and more incisive action is needed.

21. The Council also recommended Italy to develop a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy and improve the quality and labour market relevance of education. The Implementation Report does not set out a comprehensive strategy, but progress is however being made towards the preparation of a national qualifications framework. The consolidation of reforms of the education and training system and the improvement of quality of education by filling the gap in school performance across regions remains crucial.

22. Italy has taken initial steps to address the flexicurity concept. The "Protocol agreement" on welfare reform increases the level and duration of unemployment

benefits, limits the use of fixed term contracts, and strengthens employment services. These measures are yet to be implemented and in parallel Italy needs to implement measures to increase flexibility. A lifelong learning system needs to be put in place.

23. Italy has partially succeeded in implementing its NRP commitments in the employment domain. There has been some progress in addressing undeclared work, but further efforts are needed to tackle regional disparities, including the further reform of employment services, improving the quality and labour market relevance of education, and establishing a lifelong learning system. Therefore the Commission considers the recommendation dealing with these issues to remain valid. Italy should also pay particular attention to the development of an active ageing strategy.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

24. In the light of the 2007 Italian Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

25. Italy has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. There has been some response in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority areas.

26. The Implementation Report shows some policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. Given the scale of the challenge, significant further reforms are needed. There has been some policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

27. Amongst the strengths shown by the 2007 Italian Implementation Report are the initial steps to improve the business environment, measures to enhance competition in professional and financial services and retail distribution, recent improvements in its transposition deficit of EU legislation; and e-government actions to modernise the public sector.

28. The policy areas in the Italian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: fiscal sustainability, where efforts need to be pursued and the pension reform process needs to be completed; enhanced competition in product and service markets and pursuing the full implementation of announced reforms; further fighting regional disparities in the employment; and improving education and lifelong learning. Against this background it is recommended that Italy:

- rigorously pursues fiscal consolidation, in particular by curbing growth in current primary expenditure, and completes the pension reform process with a view to improving the long-term sustainability of public finances;

- continues the progress made to enhance competition in product and services markets and vigorously pursues the implementation of announced reforms;

- improves the quality and labour market relevance of education, promotes lifelong learning, tackles undeclared work and ensures the efficient operation of employment services, within a flexicurity approach and with a view to reducing regional disparities.

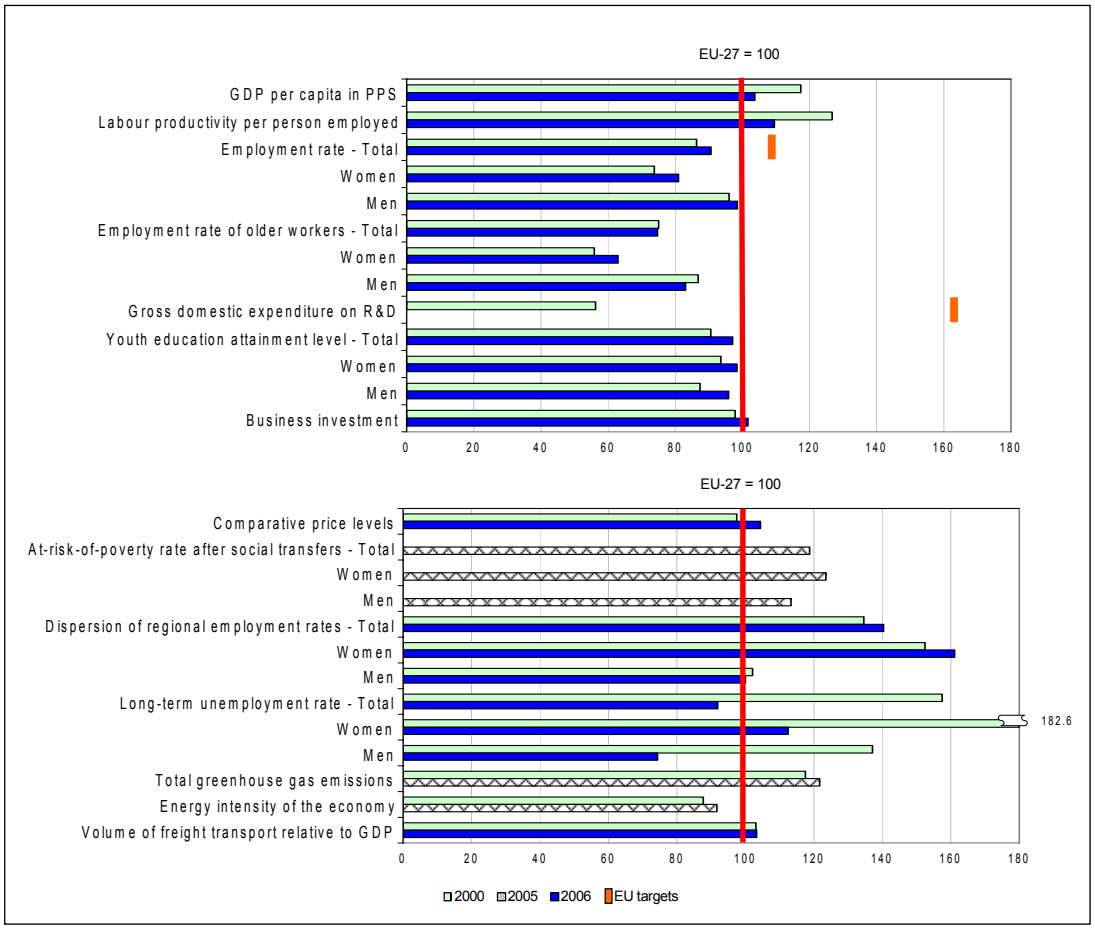
29. In addition, it will be important for Italy to focus over the period of the National Reform Programme on the following challenges: increasing R&D investment and efficiency, where despite welcome policy developments, further efforts are needed to reach the 2010 target and to enhance the efficiency of public spending; increasing efforts to meet the CO2 emission reduction targets; improving the quality of regulation by strengthening and fully implementing the system of impact assessment, notably for SMEs; implementing plans to improve infrastructure; increasing childcare provision with a view to reconciling work and family life and fostering labour market participation of women; and putting in place a consistent active ageing strategy to increase employment of older workers, and with a view to improving pension adequacy.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

ITALY

		IT						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		117.4	111.2	107.6	105.4	103.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		126.7	115.4	112.6	111.4	109.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	53.7	56.1	57.6b	57.6	58.4	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	39.6	42.7	45.2b	45.3	46.3		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	68.0	69.6	70.1b	69.9	70.5		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	27.7	30.3	30.5b	31.4	32.5		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	15.3	18.5	19.6b	20.8	21.9		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	40.9	42.8	42.2b	42.7	43.7		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.05	1.11	1.10	1.10	:	2.5	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	69.4	71.0	73.4	73.6	75.5		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	74.2	75.1	78.6	78.1	79.4		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	64.5	66.8	68.2	69.2	71.7		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		97.5	103.6	105.2	104.4	104.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		18.0	17.9	18.1	18.2	18.5		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	18.0	:	19.0b	19.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	19.0	:	20.0b	21.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	18.0	:	18.0b	17.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	17.5	17.0	15.6	16.0	16.0		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	30.5	29.7	25.7	26.6	26.1		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	9.8	9.1	8.7	8.9	9.3		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	6.3	4.9	4.0b	3.9	3.4		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	8.4	6.6	5.5b	5.2	4.5		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	4.8	3.8	2.9b	2.9	2.6		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		106.6	110.8	111.7	112.1	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		186.9	189.2	188.8	190.7	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		102.2	93.7	104.3	111.6	110.2e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Cyprus

1. Over the last decade, Cyprus sustained robust economic growth with an average GDP increase of about 3.75% per year, more than the EU27 average. It is estimated that in 2007, Cyprus's GDP per capita will be 93% of the EU average. In 2007 the total employment rate is estimated to have reached 70%, equalling the EU target, and the unemployment rate to have inched further down to 4.3%.

2. Cyprus is converging both in nominal and real terms with the EU. As a result, the Council decided last July in favour of Cyprus' adoption of the euro on 1 January 2008. Cyprus is a small open economy enjoying buoyant economic growth, high employment and stable prices. It also faces a long-term fiscal challenge resulting from an ageing population. Cyprus is mainly a services oriented economy. In 2006 services accounted for 77.6% of GDP and 71.0% of employment. Human capital is therefore the main economic resource. In recent years, there has been a substantial increase of foreign workers, who are mainly employed in unskilled or low-skilled occupations, accounting for 17.7% of total employment.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Cyprus has made good progress with the implementation of its National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The NRP provided a clear and comprehensive overview of numerous specific measures and linked them well to final objectives.

4. Cyprus made some progress in addressing the Council recommendations. With a view to ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability there has been satisfactory initial progress in reforming the health care system. Progress on pension reform has been limited. A lifelong learning strategy and a reform plan of the vocational education, and training systems have been developed, but are not yet implemented.

5. With regard to the additional areas on which the Council concluded that Cyprus should focus on, there has been progress in planning alternatives to private venture capital funds. Some progress has been achieved in stimulating competition.

6. Last years' Annual Progress Report concluded that Cyprus had made good progress in meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then progress has remained good for instance on administration of business start ups.

7. Efforts to develop ownership of the Growth and Jobs Strategy have been strengthened. All stakeholders are involved in the consultation and implementation process. In order to increase public awareness, the government organised a number of seminars, public events, and other activities that were extensively covered in the media. The considerable efforts made by the Cypriot authorities to strengthen the relevant administrative bodies are very welcome, given that the absorption of EU Funds remains a concern, especially in the light of the considerably larger allocations for the 2007-2013 programming period.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The macro-economic focus in the NRP is on fiscal consolidation and debt reduction, improvement of fiscal management, including restructuring of government expenditure and enhancing transparency. The NRP also addresses long-term sustainability of public finances, in particular through reforms in the health care and pension systems. Labour flexibility and wage moderation measures have also been launched. Fiscal consolidation has progressed well.

9. In 2006, the general government deficit fell to 1.2% of GDP from 2.4% of GDP the previous year. While wage and recruitment policy in the public sector remained restrictive, current expenditure increased, notably for social transfers. The gross government debt-to-GDP ratio continued to fall, to 65.25% of GDP from 69.25% in 2005. A further improvement is expected in 2007 when the medium-term objective is estimated to have been comfortably achieved, mainly due to better than expected revenues and despite the continuation of extra budgetary expenditure.

10. The Council recommended that Cyprus take steps to implement reforms of the pension and health care systems. On health care reform, progress was made on the implementation of the National Health Insurance System. In particular, thematic teams work with a specific time table and monitoring system, to prepare the different aspects of the system. The vetting of the law process is progressing. However, the transformation of hospitals into autonomous units does not seem to have progressed, despite government efforts. Discussions between the government and social partners on reforming the pension system have begun. The aim is to reach an agreement shortly, and adopt the reform in early 2008. However, the precise adjustments and timetable are yet to be agreed, meaning the budgetary impact is uncertain.

11. Overall, the progress made on the macro-economic reform measures outlined in the NRP is good. However, the need for action to secure the long term sustainability of public finances while ensuring adequacy in view of the population ageing remains crucial. In this respect, the recommendation remains valid while the continuation of a prudent fiscal policy and further debt reduction should be sustained.

Micro-economic policies

12. Key micro-economic challenges addressed by the NRP in 2005-2007 include promoting R&D, innovation and ICT, strengthening competition, improving the business environment, enhancing environmental sustainability, and upgrading basic infrastructure.

13. There has been some progress on R&D and innovation, and Cyprus still aims to reach 1.0% of GDP by 2010 though this would require an average annual growth rate of 23.5%. In view of the small size of most firms in Cyprus, additional measures are needed to overcome obstacles and boost the collaboration on innovation between the private sector and knowledge institutions. Fiscal measures are being studied, and new innovation networks and incubators start to engage business more in R&D. On ICT, significant progress has taken place in particular in terms of the availability of eGovernment services and digital literacy. Broadband penetration is catching up, but

take-up is still low and requires attention. Furthermore, there are delays in the implementation of a National Information Society Strategy. Additional efforts will be needed to speed up ICT uptake.

14. In the area of competition, a series of measures to strengthen the enforcement capacity of the Competition Authority and to improve competition conditions in the markets for energy, postal and telecom markets have produced first results, but it is important to maintain the pace of implementation of these measures. Cyprus is simplifying its business environment through various initiatives, but has not made much progress to date on measuring and reducing administrative burdens, or on developing a better regulation strategy. No target for a reduction in the administrative burden has been set. The 2007 National Action Plan foresees various steps to be taken in these areas, but impact assessment is only to be addressed during a second phase. It is important to ensure that equal attention is paid to improve both existing and new legislation and that these ambitious plans are carried out. Cyprus also needs to enhance its efforts to ensure timely implementation of the Services Directive. On environmental sustainability Cyprus has taken effective steps in the context of the Cyprus Strategic Plan for Reducing Green House Gas Emissions, in order to increase energy efficiency, to achieve savings in the areas of building and transport. Cyprus has set targets for the increase of renewable energy use. Cyprus plans to boost the use of public transport from the current 2% to 10 % in 2015, but implementation is still at an early stage.

15. The Council referred to the need to focus on measures to encourage venture capital investments and to improve competition in the regulated trades and professions. Cyprus has plans to develop a public venture capital fund and a loan guarantee mechanism in collaboration with the Cyprus Development Bank, which draws on the new Risk Sharing Financing Facility. This is a satisfactory policy response. On competition in professional services, Cyprus has confirmed the existence of serious regulatory restrictions on competition in the professions which are having a detrimental effect on price competition. A reform of business structure regulations and legislation is planned for lawyers, engineers and architects. The policy response has improved since 2006 but is confined to relaxing business structure restrictions. The Commission considers this a limited response to the challenges, and it is important to step up the pace of reform by doing away with much of the restrictive regulation especially on pricing.

16. Overall progress in 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges identified by Cyprus in the NRP is good. The micro-economic points to watch have been well covered in the area of venture capital, but less so on competition in professional services.

Employment policies

17. Over the 2005-2007 period, Cyprus has made good progress in implementing the policies set out in its NRP. Active labour market policies have helped increase employment and enabled Cyprus to close in on ambitious national employment targets. The Public employment services have been strengthened. Further initiatives are envisaged in 2008 (with European Social Fund support) to promote flexible but secure forms of employment for older workers, women, young persons, people with a disability, and migrants. The relatively high youth unemployment as compared to

total unemployment points to the need to facilitate the transition from school to work.

18. The aim to increase the labour supply is held back by the persistence of important gender imbalances across occupations and in qualifications. A national action plan on gender equality was adopted in 2007 and a preliminary draft report has put forward a number of suggested policy measures to address a gender pay gap that is substantially higher than the EU average. The Cypriot authorities have put in place an appropriate legal framework to encourage part-time work. An economic migration strategy has been established and immigration legislation amended. The main thrust of the new strategy is to discourage the inflow of unskilled non-EU nationals and attract highly skilled EU workers.

19. The Council recommended that Cyprus should enhance life long learning, and increase employment and training opportunities for young people by accelerating the reforms of the vocational, education, training and apprenticeship system. Participation of adults in lifelong learning increased in 2006 but is still short of the EU target for 2010. This increase is mainly due to the higher participation of young adults and highly skilled people. Participation rates in training of older people, the low skilled and the unemployed have stagnated. Cyprus has developed a strategic plan on educational reform, for consultation with relevant stakeholders. External evaluations of technical and vocational education programmes are now in progress, with a view to improving the curricula, and to increase their attractiveness especially to female students. An action plan for the new apprenticeship system has been finalised, and its full introduction by 2010 is foreseen. The development of a vocational qualifications certification system is advancing and a training providers' certification system is expected to become operational in 2010. A national lifelong learning strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers in November 2007. In the Commission's opinion an acceleration of these welcome policy reforms is now needed.

20. Cyprus is initiating a process to address flexicurity in an integrated way by setting up an interdepartmental committee on flexicurity within the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. The social partners are involved. A number of schemes are being implemented in the policy areas of contractual arrangements and active labour market policies, while the implementation of lifelong learning measures needs to be accelerated.

21. In general, Cyprus has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The recommendation in the employment area has been addressed to a limited extent, due mainly to the delayed implementation of a comprehensive lifelong learning policy framework to further developing human capital. In addition, Cyprus needs to pay particular attention to tackling gender imbalances and reducing the high pay gap.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

22. In the light of the 2007 Implementation Report for Cyprus and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on

the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

23. Cyprus has made good progress in the implementation of its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Cyprus had made good progress in fulfilling the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority areas.

24. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. With a view to the long term sustainability of public finances there has been a satisfactory initial response in reforming the health care system but a limited response on pension reform, enhancing lifelong learning and reforming the vocational education and training system. There has been some policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention.

25. Amongst the strengths of the Implementation Report is progress in the field of fiscal consolidation, in both deficit and debt reduction; a new policy to develop a comprehensive research and innovation system; and the maintenance of a good overall employment performance supported by a broad range of active labour market measures.

26. The policy areas in the Cypriot National Reform Programme where weaknesses need to be tackled with the highest priority are: addressing ageing-related expenditure; implementing a lifelong learning strategy and increasing training and labour market opportunities for young people. Against this background, it is recommended that Cyprus:

- take steps to implement reforms of the pension and health care systems and sets a timetable for their implementation with a view to improving fiscal sustainability;

- enhance life long learning, and increase employment and training opportunities for young people by implementing the reforms of the vocational, education, training and apprenticeship system.

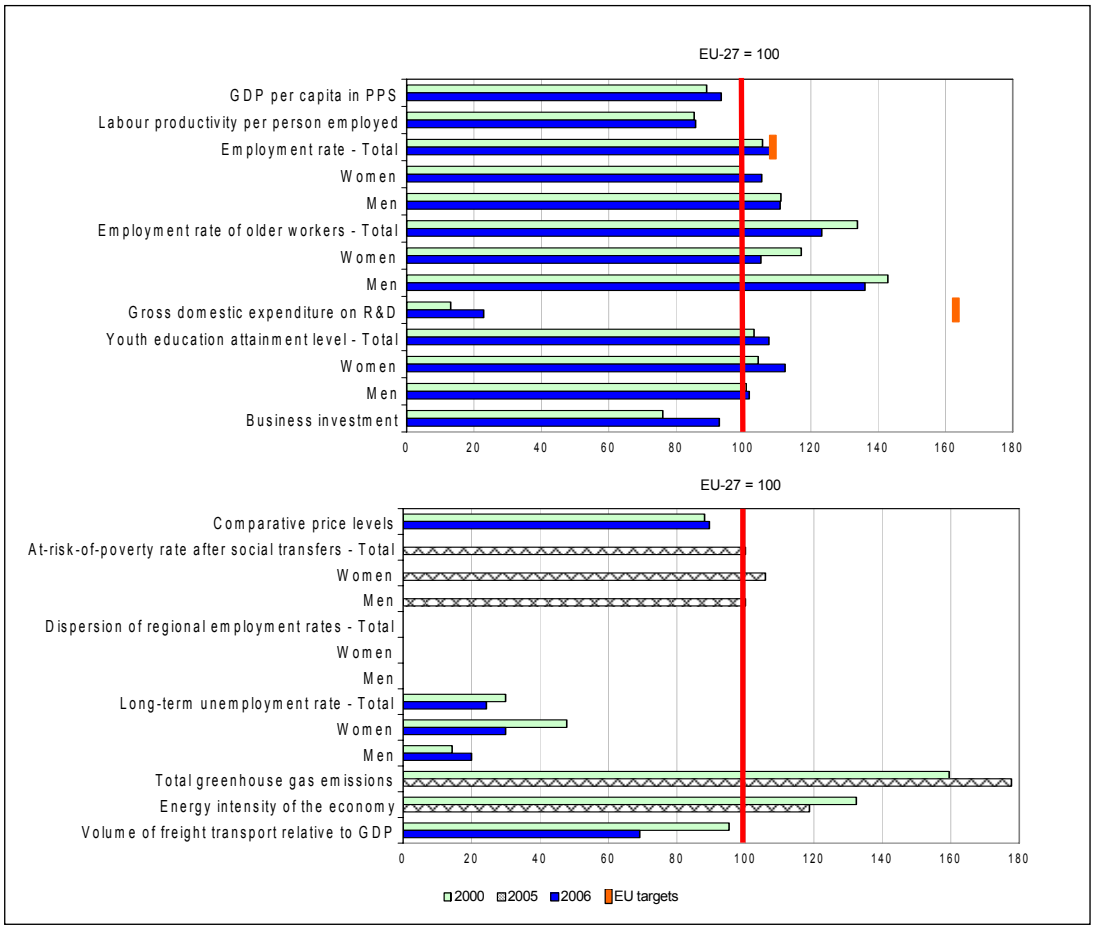
27. In addition, it will be important for Cyprus over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on measures to: improve competition in the area of professional services; further stimulate private sector R&D; and address the very high gender pay gap.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

CYPRUS

		CY						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		89.1	89.3	91.5	93.8	93.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		85.4	82.4	83.6	85.1	85.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	65.7	69.2	68.9	68.5	69.6	71.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	53.5	60.4	58.7	58.4	60.3		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	78.7	78.8	79.8	79.2	79.4		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	49.4	50.4	49.9	50.6	53.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	32.1	32.7	30.0	31.5	36.6		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	67.3	68.9	70.8	70.8	71.6		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.24	0.35	0.37	0.40	0.42	1.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	79.0	79.5	77.6	80.4	83.7p		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	82.8	87.0	83.8	89.1	90.7p		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	74.4	71.3	70.7	71.1	76.1p		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		88.1	90.9	90.6	89.1	89.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		14.0	14.2	14.7	16.4	16.9		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	:	15.0	:	16.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	17.0	:	18.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	14.0	:	15.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	0.9		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	2.2	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.2		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.7		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		144.7	158.4	163.4	163.7	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		282.3	287.9	254.3	246.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		94.4e	99.6	76.4	91.5	73.8		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Latvia

1. In the three years to 2006 Latvia's real GDP increased on average by 10.4% annually. Growth in 2007 is expected to be similar. After a slight deficit in 2006 the budget is expected to record a modest surplus in 2007 with higher surplus in prospect for 2008-2010. However, growth has primarily been driven by a credit boom in private consumption and residential investment. As the supply-side of the economy was unable to respond adequately, the external imbalance has reached very high levels. Employment is increasing rapidly (from 63.3% in 2005 to 66.3% in 2006), and unemployment shrinking (from 8.9% in 2005 to 6.8% in 2006). Labour shortages, aggravated by significant emigration, have contributed to the emergence of a wage-price spiral, with increasingly rapid wage growth outstripping productivity; inflation has risen to very high levels. From mid-2007 some limited slowdown of domestic consumption and the housing market has begun to set in, but this has been insufficient to remove the downside risks to medium-term prospects.

2. The main economic policy challenge is thus to secure macro-economic stability in the face of persistent inflationary pressures and a very large external deficit, and to transform the economy away from its dependence on low-technology, labour-intensive goods. Economic policy is confronted with the task of simultaneously stepping up fiscal consolidation in order to contain demand pressures, addressing tight labour market conditions, and fundamentally improving productivity growth.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Latvia has made some progress with the implementation of its National Reform Programme (NRP), both in the period 2005-2007 as a whole and over the last year. Reforms in general are progressing, but their pace could be stepped up.

4. There has been some progress in responding to the three country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council. On maintaining economic and budgetary sustainability, the government's anti-inflation plan adopted in March 2007 has begun to yield some results in cooling excessive demand, although much more is required to form an adequate response to this challenge. Latvia has made some progress with the implementation of research and innovation policy reforms and in efforts to increase labour supply. However, persistent labour market bottlenecks give reasons for concern and stronger efforts are needed to implement a lifelong learning strategy and improve education and training.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Latvia should focus, a single contact point has been established for the administrative formalities involved in hiring the first employee and sufficient progress made in promoting education in entrepreneurship. Some progress has been made as regards active labour market policies and access to childcare.

6. The Commission's 2006 Annual Progress Report concluded that Latvia had made modest progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been some progress on those

commitments with an end-2007 deadline. In the area of knowledge and innovation, Latvia has made some progress but leveraging more private investment into R&D remains a challenge. Progress has also been achieved on issues related to SMEs and entrepreneurship. A one-stop shop for starting up a company within one week has been established.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local governments and social partners have continued over the past year. Discussions have been held with parliament and social partners on relevant topics and improvements in the social dialogue are foreseen. A clear internal governance structure ensures inter-ministerial coordination, but a monitoring of progress remains limited. Links between the governance of the implementation of the NRP and programmes under the Structural and Cohesion Funds are strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily. Particular attention to administrative capacity is paid in the National Strategic Reference Framework.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Latvia's recent economic growth has been extremely high and medium-term prospects remain positive. However, booming domestic demand, labour market shortages and rapid credit growth has resulted in serious overheating pressures and threats to macroeconomic stability. Progress over 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of policies to address the macro-economic challenges faced by Latvia has thus been limited.

9. The Council recommended Latvia to maintain economic and budgetary sustainability by pursuing a more restrictive fiscal policy. The government adopted wide ranging counter-inflationary proposals in March 2007. More ambitious fiscal targets have been set, medium-term budget planning has improved and taxation changes have helped to lessen pressures in the real estate market. However, while there are some recent signs that domestic demand is gradually slowing and the real estate market is stabilizing, the external deficit widened further in 2007 and inflation increased. This was driven primarily by overheating pressures but also factors such as energy and food costs. Wage growth in 2007 reached critical rates and urgently needs to be reduced. The breaking of the wage-price spiral, essential to curb inflation and avoid the ongoing deterioration of external competitiveness, will require strong commitment from the government and society at large. Increased competition in services, distribution and construction sectors could also help.

10. After a slight deficit in 2006 the budget is expected to record a modest surplus in 2007 with higher surpluses in prospect for 2008-2010. While this represents some progress compared with targets set earlier in 2007, the background of booming demand and risks to stability indicates that the current stance of fiscal policy remains far short of that required. A more prudent fiscal policy is needed to dampen demand pressures and to reduce the external deficit. The revenue structure could also be examined to redirect demand away from real estate, while public expenditure should aim for a strengthening of the supply side to contribute to external sustainability. To

help in this regard, the government aims to produce proposals focused on improving export competitiveness, productivity and labour supply. The authorities will need to show determination to steer the economy towards higher-productivity and more technology-intensive sectors.

11. Latvia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to fulfil the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP and in addressing the recommendation, which therefore remains valid.

Micro-economic policies

12. Latvia has made mixed progress with the implementation of policies to address its micro-economic challenges. There has been recent progress in the field of knowledge and innovation, whilst gradual improvements in the regulatory environment have taken place over 2005-2007. Financing in support of electricity generation from renewable energy sources has been considerably increased in 2007. The Competition Authority has raised the frequency of market surveillance in individual sectors. Creditable efforts have been made in transposing internal market legislation and in measures for administrative simplification. However, a more systematic approach to better regulation and practical implementation of the associated tools is encouraged, and a target for reducing administrative burdens should be set. Strong efforts are needed to improve the supply of online public services and their use by enterprises. The effective implementation of the "Information and Communication Technology for Quality Education" 2007-2013 should be considered a priority.

13. The Council recommended Latvia to make faster progress in the implementation of the research and innovation policy reforms in order to meet effectively the ambitious targets set out in its NRP. There have been some positive developments in this area, mainly due to the substantial increase of public investment. The link between research and education has been strengthened and the first steps have also been taken towards better linking these with industry. However, the number of private R&D actors remains small, largely due to the lack of incentives for private investment. The new market-oriented research programme is a welcome step, but a more focused approach in line with identified economic growth areas is needed. Latvia has allocated substantial amounts of Structural Fund financing for this area and successful implementation will require close monitoring to avoid crowding out private investment. R&D and innovation policies should serve the purpose of establishing favourable conditions for investment by the private sector including: appropriate infrastructure, effective protection of intellectual property rights, sufficient human resources and additional incentives for business investment. The Council's recommendation thus remains valid.

14. The Council also asked Latvia to focus on faster progress on establishing a single contact point for the administrative formalities involved in hiring the first employee and on promoting entrepreneurship education. Latvia has taken steps to establish a single contact point. An employer has to register every employee with the State Revenue Service until the fifth day of the month following a person’s recruitment. The State Revenue Service passes this information on to the State Social Insurance Agency. Latvia has also made good progress in promoting education in entrepreneurship. In addition to other measures, there is now a mandatory subject on

business basics in the curriculum of all secondary schools. The Commission considers this a good policy response.

15. In general, Latvia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to fulfil the micro-economic reform commitments set in the NRP. Despite some progress, the country-specific recommendation remains valid. There has been a good policy response to the two points to watch, and the Commission is of the opinion that these are no longer merited.

Employment policies

16. Labour market performance over the 2005-2007 period has continued to improve with good progress towards meeting national employment targets for 2010. The increase in labour supply is primarily in response to strong growth of demand, although there has also been a positive contribution of active labour market policies. However, levels of adult participation in lifelong learning have decreased, and numbers of pupils leaving school early have increased. Latvia has focused on implementing measures such as establishing a labour market forecasting system, supporting business start-ups and self-employment. Measures in place to strengthen labour market institutions and social partnership go in the right direction.

17. The Council recommended Latvia to intensify efforts to increase labour supply and productivity. Labour shortages remain a major challenge, although recent legislation on support to jobseekers will help to reach new target groups. Preventive measures such as training for the employed and self-employed and promotion of regional mobility are envisaged. Latvia has finally moved towards formulating its approach to the economic migration challenge by putting forward a policy paper on the issue. Criteria for managing short-term migration from third countries are still to be established and clear plans to introduce integration measures are lacking. Measures providing a better working environment and access to education, training and health care are important as they could help to counteract emigration. The adoption of a lifelong learning strategy needs to be followed by a plan for implementation. Plans are in place to invest in improving vocational and higher education and to boost human resources in education and science. However the responsiveness of education and training systems to labour market needs is still low.

18. The Council also asked Latvia to focus on pursuing active labour market policies and improving access to childcare. Given the decrease in European Social Fund support and the need to reach new target groups, careful monitoring is needed to ensure adequate funding and coverage. Latvia has made some progress by committing funds to enhance access to childcare. Due to efforts at local level, some improvements in the situation are already taking place. However, progress is currently too slow to make an impact and plans need to be more speedily implemented.

19. In recent years the concept of flexicurity has emerged in the Latvian policy debate, but is not yet treated in an integrated way. Social partners are involved. Envisaged measures relate to all the components and also tackle undeclared work. The focus now must be on their implementation, especially as regards facilitating regional and vocational mobility and putting in place incentives for employers and workers to participate in lifelong learning.

20. Latvia has made some progress in implementing measures to fulfil its employment policy commitments. The Commission welcomes the announced measures but the focus now must be on their effective delivery. An effective system for managing economic migration needs to be put in place and plans for implementing lifelong learning should be finalised. The country specific recommendation and the points to watch in the employment area have only been partially addressed and therefore remain valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

21. In the light of Latvia's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

22. Latvia has made some progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period and some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

23. The Implementation Report shows that there has been some progress in responding to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been a mixed response to the additional areas identified by the 2007 Spring European Council as requiring attention.

24. Among the strengths shown by the Implementation Report are: the first positive steps in the field of knowledge and innovation; the progress achieved on certain SME and entrepreneurship issues; the strengthened role of the Competition Authority in market surveillance; and further measures to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources. Latvia has also implemented a set of measures that have successfully supported labour market performance.

25. The policy areas in the Latvian National Reform Programme where weaknesses need to be tackled with the highest priority are: more concrete measures to secure macroeconomic stability in the face of overheating pressures; further development of the R&D strategy to improve prioritisation and increase private sector involvement; and stronger measures to increase labour supply and strengthen the skills of the labour force. Against this background, it is recommended that Latvia:

- pursue a more restrictive fiscal policy, with a careful prioritisation of expenditures and wage developments that are in line with productivity, in order to contribute to correcting overheating pressures and reducing the risk of macroeconomic instability;

- make faster progress in the implementation of the research and innovation policy reforms, in order to meet the ambitious targets set. This concerns especially policies to stimulate partnerships between research and education institutions and businesses;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, intensifies efforts to increase labour supply and productivity by improving regional mobility and, enhancing the

responsiveness of education and training systems to labour market needs, by putting in place a lifelong learning system and pursuing active labour market policies.

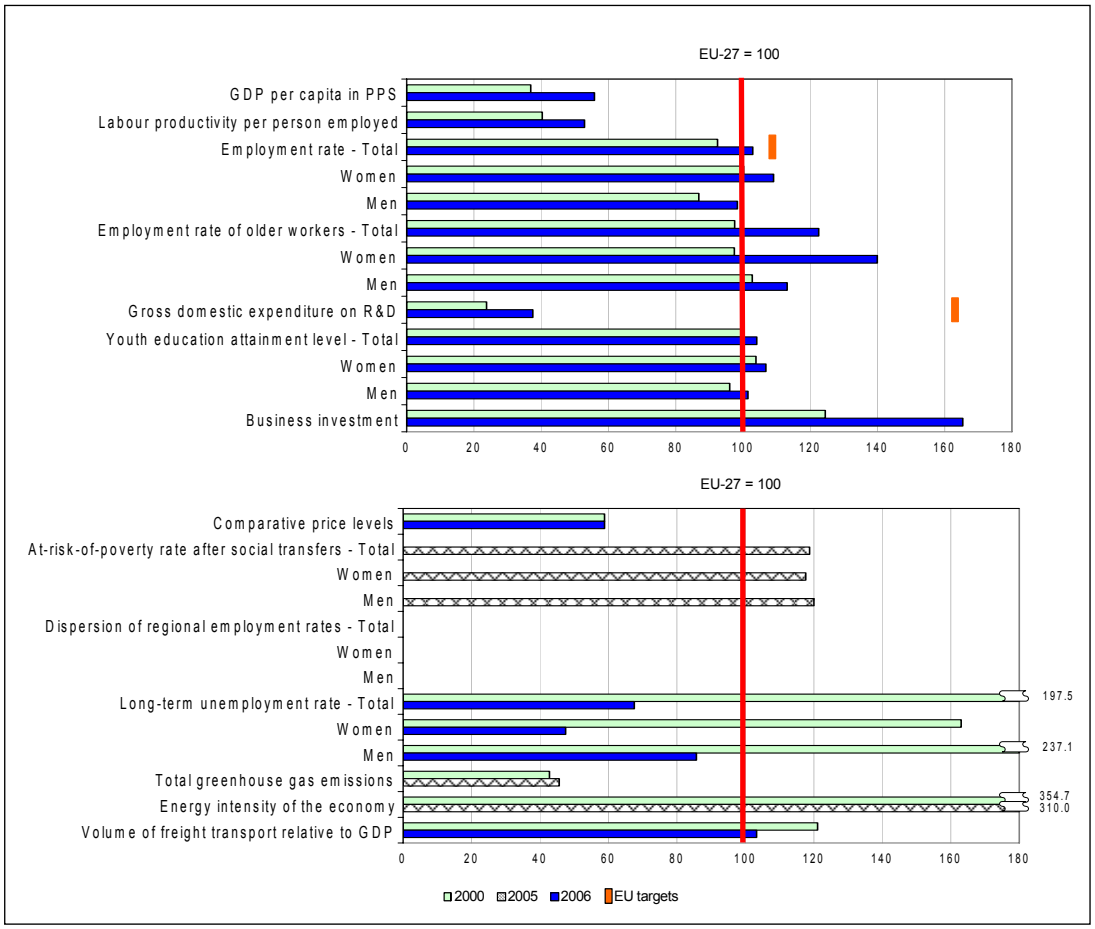
26. In addition, it will be important for Latvia over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on: improving further the regulatory environment, notably by means of an explicit better regulation policy; and improving access to childcare.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

LATVIA

		LV						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		36.9	43.5	45.5	50.2	55.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		40.3	44.2	45.5	49.4	52.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	57.5	61.8	62.3	63.3	66.3	67.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	53.8	57.9	58.5	59.3	62.4		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	61.5	66.1	66.4	67.6	70.4		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	36.0	44.1	47.9	49.5	53.3		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	26.7	38.8	41.9	45.3	48.7		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	48.4	51.3	55.8	55.2	59.5		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.44	0.38	0.42	0.56	0.69	1.5	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	76.5	75.4	79.5	79.9	81.0		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	82.4	80.9	85.1	85.2	86.2		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	70.9	70.1	74.2	74.7	75.9		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		58.8	54.4	55.5	56.3	58.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		22.9	22.0	24.4	27.2	30.1		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	16.0	:	:	19.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	16.0	:	:	20.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	17.0	:	:	18.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	7.9	4.4	4.6	4.1	2.5		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	7.5	4.4	4.3	3.7	1.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	8.3	4.3	4.8	4.4	3.0		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		38.8	41.7	41.4	42.0	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		756.0	725.1	692.3	644.8	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		120.0	133.1	128.6	126.0	110.2		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Lithuania

1. Lithuania's economic growth has continued to be very strong. In 2004-2006 real GDP increased on average by 7.6%, and it is forecast to be higher at 8½% in 2007. GDP per capita is an estimated 61% of the EU average in 2007. The employment rate has been rising (63.6% in 2006) and unemployment falling (5.6% in 2006, and estimated at 4.2% in 2007). Growth has mostly been driven by private consumption and construction. Rapid credit expansion, income tax cuts and wage increases in excess of productivity growth have boosted household demand, including for housing. The supply side is struggling to match demand, and labour market constraints have become evident. Excess demand has resulted in mounting imbalances: the current account deficit is forecast to be 13.9% of GDP and inflation around 5½% in 2007.

2. The main economic policy challenge for Lithuania is to preserve macroeconomic stability: containing inflationary pressures, the large external deficit and the credit growth. Strengthening the supply side of the economy would help stabilising imbalances while maintaining robust growth. Tightened labour markets, demonstrated by skills gaps, wage pressure, and increased labour shortages should be addressed by containing wage increases, mobilising labour reserves, increasing flexibility, and improving education and training.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Lithuania has made good progress in implementing its 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have slowed down over the last year.

4. There has been some progress in responding to the recommendation issued by the Council on strengthening research and innovation. There has been a limited response to the recommendation on increasing the supply of skilled labour, but Lithuania is committed to implementing relevant measures in the near future.

5. With regard to other areas on which the Council concluded Lithuania should focus, there has been a very good response on environmental protection, a good response on facilitating business start-ups, and a limited response in the other areas.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Lithuania had made moderate progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas. Since then, progress has been good in unlocking business potential but limited in other areas.

7. Lithuania has continued efforts to increase the visibility of the NRP and the Lisbon strategy, supported by the creation of a Lisbon internet portal. An inter-ministerial commission ensures coordination of the NRP within the government. A special framework has been set up for stakeholder consultation on the NRP, which can be considered as good practice. The Implementation Report covers all relevant areas highlighted as challenges, but would have benefited from more of a focus on the country specific recommendations and points to watch. Links between the NRP and

the structural and cohesion funds are strong, with substantial support earmarked for R&D, innovation and information society as well as for the improvement of transport networks.

8. Lithuania's 2007 Implementation Report confirms the main priorities within the NRP as: sustaining rapid economic growth, a stable macroeconomic environment and seeking full-fledged membership in the EMU; promoting the competitiveness of Lithuanian enterprises; promoting employment and investment in human capital.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. Progress over 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of policies to address the macro-economic challenges faced by Lithuania, is limited and stronger efforts to achieve macro-economic stability are needed.

10. In the face of mounting macro-economic imbalances, the Medium-term Price Stability Strategy and the Law on Fiscal Discipline were adopted in 2007. The latter aims at strengthening the multi-annual expenditure framework and providing a firm commitment to fiscal restraint, however, the law does not as such introduce a binding medium-term budgetary framework. Nevertheless, a more active role should be played by the government to contain overheating. Although strong growth has boosted tax revenue, the government still runs a small budget deficit and fiscal policy does not take advantage of the good economic climate and remains expansionary. Moreover, the target to reduce the deficit from 0.9% of GDP in 2007 to a balanced budget in 2009 could be difficult to achieve in the light of planned tax reforms, including reductions in personal income tax, and the abolition of the temporary social tax on corporate profits, and expenditure increases due to the ongoing pension reform. Fiscal policy should play a stronger role in mitigating the risks from strong demand by stepping up fiscal consolidation in general and by scaling back tax incentives, particularly those for real estate.

11. In spring 2007, the Council invited Lithuania to focus on containing inflationary pressures. Inflation was 3.8% in 2006 and is expected to rise to 5.5% in 2007. It seems unlikely to decline quickly without more effective policy action. A wage-price spiral risks adding further to overheating. Further price increases stem from food, the harmonisation of indirect taxes, and increases in regulated prices such as heating, gas and electricity. The 2007 Medium-term Price Stability Strategy would benefit from being more concrete. Stronger commitment by the government and social partners is needed to ensure that wage growth is better aligned with productivity gains.

12. Lithuania was also invited to focus on increasing foreign direct investment (FDI). Despite some increase, Lithuania's progress in creating a more attractive environment for foreign investment has been limited. The investment promotion programme, which the Lithuanian authorities intend to implement in 2008, contains a wide range of measures to attract FDI. In the Commission's opinion, it is vital to ensure that this programme is coherent and rapidly implemented.

13. Lithuania has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. Improving macro-economic stability and containing inflation remain major challenges. A more determined fiscal policy aimed at containing inflationary pressures and to signal the need for more realistic growth expectations is warranted.

Micro-economic policies

14. Lithuania has made some progress over 2005-2007 in implementing policies to address its micro-economic challenges. The policy response to e-government policy is adequate and now needs to be sustained and set alongside a comprehensive strategy. More emphasis needs to be placed on the implementation of all the foreseen ICT measures. There has been limited progress in finalising the Better Regulation Programme, as implementation of the policy measures to improve the regulatory framework, and in particular measures to reduce the administrative burden, is still pending. Measures related to legislative simplification seem to have been discarded and no specific target for reducing administrative burdens has been set. When designing new legislation, Lithuania needs to increase the use of impact assessments and consultation tools.

15. The Council recommended Lithuania to strengthen its R&D system to reach its ambitious target for overall investment in R&D. Despite the considerable increase in public R&D expenditure over recent years, the R&D share of GDP has remained virtually stagnant due to a rapid GDP growth, and private R&D intensity has remained at a very low level (0.2% of GDP). Major efforts are thus needed to progress towards the target of 2% of GDP by 2010, particularly in order to achieve the 1% target from private sources.

16. In 2007 political parties signed an agreement on the principles of research and higher education reform. The reform should develop R&D capacity of the public sector, improve conditions for business R&D, and facilitate knowledge transfer between public and private R&D, thus help to raise the efficiency of public R&D investment. Lithuania should now urgently move to implementation by creating the two agencies to administer funds competitively, and develop stronger cooperation between science and business in the Integrated Research, Study and Innovation Centres. It should adopt the law enhancing conditions for creating spin-offs from research institutions and monitoring programmes to prevent brain drain, and make PhD studies and researchers careers more attractive. Due account should also be taken of traditional and low-tech sectors which are important in the Lithuanian economy, but where growth potential is hampered by low levels of innovation. Innovation support services should therefore ensure that these sectors are appropriately targeted.

17. The Council invited Lithuania to focus on environmental protection and facilitating business start-ups. Lithuania is implementing a series of measures to address issues of climate change, green public procurement, sustainable energy use and drinking water resources. This represents a very good policy response. On business start-ups, Lithuania has now established a one-stop-shop, shortened the time needed to start-up a company to 6 days, lowered the cost of starting a private limited company, and established one contact point for the recruitment of the first employee. This represents a good response.

18. Lithuania has partially responded to the recommendation on implementing measures to deliver on its research and innovation commitments. Further implementation of the outlined R&D reform is needed. Good progress was made on environmental protection and business start-ups and these points to watch are no longer merited. However, more focus is needed on efforts to finalise and implement the Better Regulation Programme.

Employment policies

19. Lithuania has made some progress in 2005-2007 regarding policies to address its labour market challenges. Important policy measures include the approval of the laws on Employment Support and Vocational Training. However, preparations to increase the statutory retirement age and the introduction of compulsory pre-school education are still pending. Health care reform needs more impetus to improve access to services and to ensure its financial sustainability.

20. The Council recommended Lithuania to increase the supply of skilled labour. Lithuania has conducted a study on the reasons for labour force emigration and launched information campaigns on working and living conditions in Lithuania. There has been no progress in promoting internal labour mobility but the government is committed to prepare and implement relevant measures in 2007-2008. Participation in lifelong learning remains very low (4.9% in LT, 9.6% in the EU). A number of European Social Fund co-financed projects are on-going and a study on the training needs for older workers has been launched. The Lifelong Learning Strategy is to be revised by the end of 2007. These policy measures and pace of their implementation represent a limited response, and it is important to speed up the implementation of the plans. Furthermore, substantial efforts are needed to ensure that the skills and qualifications provided by the education and training systems are of sufficient quality and relevance for the labour market.

21. The Council also invited Lithuania to focus on improving youth employability, expanding entrepreneurship education, increasing the availability of childcare, and strengthening occupational health and safety. The Law on Vocational Training adopted in 2007 sets the basis for the national qualification system and apprenticeships. This is a limited policy response and it is important to reform higher education and promote flexible working arrangements for young people. The adoption and implementation of the National Youth Entrepreneurship Programme should be speeded up to promote entrepreneurship.

22. On childcare, Lithuania has established a number of pre-school education groups and drafted a Compulsory Pre-school Education Programme, which still needs to be approved and implemented. The Commission considers this a limited response. To improve occupational health and safety, the 2007 Law on Health and Safety at Work was extended with provisions governing the prevention of accidents at work and occupational disease, and by specifying that the liability for the creation of a safe and healthy work environment lies with employers. This is a welcome step but tackling the issue requires an integrated policy response based on a thorough analysis of the situation and covering the increase of the availability and capacity of occupational physicians.

23. There is no integrated flexicurity approach in Lithuania, although a number of flexicurity-related measures have been taken. The involvement of social partners is increasing. Active labour market policy has been improved and work is ongoing to prepare the basis for flexible contractual arrangements. More effort is needed to raise the participation in lifelong learning.

24. Lithuania has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the NRP employment policy commitments. The recommendation and points to watch have been addressed to a limited extent and therefore remain valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

25. In the light of the 2007 Lithuania's Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

26. Lithuania has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over 2005-2007. Lithuania has also been showing some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

27. The Implementation Report shows a limited policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been some policy response on the additional areas identified by the Council as requiring attention.

28. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Lithuania's Implementation Report are: approval of priority areas for R&D development and adoption of the Vocational Training Law.

29. The policy areas in the Lithuanian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are implementing measures: increasing and improving the efficiency of investment in R&D and support for innovation; to increase internal mobility of labour, promote adult participation in lifelong learning, especially among older workers, and reform the education and training systems to ensure quality and labour market relevance. Against this background it is recommended that Lithuania:

- accelerates the implementation of the structural reform of its R&D and innovation system so as to raise the efficiency of public spending and create conditions favourable to increased private investments in this area, including for innovation in traditional and low-tech sectors;

- intensifies efforts to increase the supply of skilled labour, with a special focus on the participation of older workers by: improving the regional mobility, reforming the education and training systems to ensure their quality and relevance to the labour market needs and implementing the revised lifelong learning strategy.

30. In addition, it will be important for Lithuania to focus over the period of the National Reform Programme on the following challenges: improving macro-economic

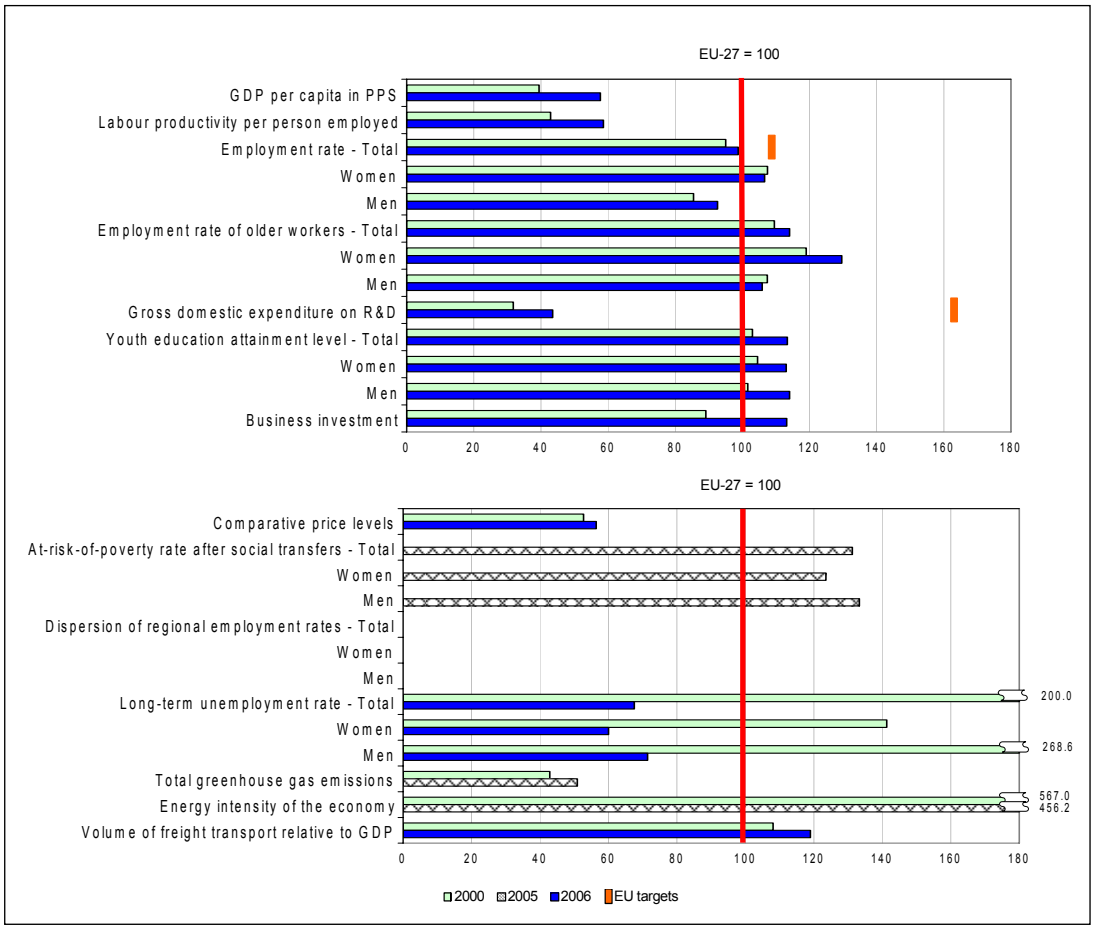
stability and containing inflation; increasing foreign direct investment; improving the efficiency of regulatory environment with particular focus on legislative simplification; improving youth employability; expanding entrepreneurship education; increasing the availability of childcare; and strengthening occupational health and safety.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

LITHUANIA

		LT						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		39.4	49.2	51.1	53.8	57.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		42.9	51.8	53.7	55.2	58.6		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	59.1	61.1	61.2	62.6	63.6	68.8	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	57.7	58.4	57.8	59.4	61.0		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	60.5	64.0	64.7	66.1	66.3		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	40.4	44.7	47.1	49.2	49.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	32.6	36.7	39.3	41.7	45.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	50.6	55.3	57.6	59.1	55.7		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.59	0.67	0.76	0.76	0.80	2.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	78.9	84.2	85.0	87.8	88.2		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	82.9	87.9	88.5	91.8	91.2		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	75.0	80.6	81.5	83.9	85.3		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		52.7	52.3	53.1	54.6	56.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		16.4	18.2	18.9	19.4	20.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	17.0	:	:	21.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	17.0	:	:	21.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	17.0	:	:	20.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	8.0	6.0	5.8	4.3	2.5		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	6.5	6.0	6.2	4.5	2.4		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	9.4	6.0	5.5	4.2	2.5		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		38.9	41.7	43.8	46.9	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		1208.4	1194.8	1086.2	949.1	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		107.1	116.9	113.7	124.9	127.0e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Luxembourg

1. Since the end of the 2001-2003 slowdown, Luxembourg has experienced another period of growth well above the EU average. Real GDP growth reached 6.1% in 2006 but decelerated to about 5% in 2007. While in 2006 it was mostly driven by foreign trade, in 2007 the contribution of domestic demand became more important. Although likely to remain above the EU average, GDP growth should continue to slow down to about 4.5% in 2008 and 2009.

2. Despite high growth and low unemployment, Luxembourg needs to continue to prepare for future challenges. The longer-term growth potential could be affected by the deterioration of competitiveness induced by a relatively rapid increase of wage costs. The employment rate of the resident population remains below the EU average, and it is particularly low among older workers. Youth unemployment also remains a problem. Micro-economic challenges persist in the areas of start-up procedures, the transposition of EU legislation, and certain competition issues.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Implementation Report shows very good progress in implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have accelerated slightly over the last year.

4. No country specific recommendations were addressed to Luxembourg. With regard to the areas on which the Council concluded that Luxembourg should focus, there has generally been some progress, the notable exceptions being the employment of older workers and further reform of early retirement systems, as well as some measures for improving the economic environment.

5. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Luxembourg had made very good progress in meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council, but that additional measures were necessary for facilitating the recruitment of the first employee and speeding up the establishment of new businesses. Since then, there has been some progress on most of the commitments with an end 2007 deadline. Luxembourg describes efforts it is taking to address the euro area recommendations in its latest Implementation Report.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP within government and the social partners continue to be very substantial. Social partners were involved in drafting the 2007 Implementation Report. The regular publication of the "Observatoire de la Compétitivité" helps increase the visibility of the Lisbon Process. Links between the governance and implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural funds are fairly strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Lisbon priorities is being applied satisfactorily with 82% of ERDF and 100% of ESF budgets devoted to achieving these objectives. The ESF input focuses on increased labour supply by ensuring adequate skills for people at work and better integration of disadvantaged groups. The ERDF contribution emphasises support for innovation, R&D and entrepreneurship.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

7. The main macro-economic challenges identified for Luxembourg in the coming years were the deterioration in public finance as well as the risks of accelerating inflation and worsening competitiveness. It now appears that the deterioration in government finances, though substantial, was more limited than at first suggested. Revised data indicates that the deficit already peaked in 2004 at 1.2% of GDP and fell to only 0.1% of GDP in 2005 (rather than the 2.3% of GDP that was suggested by initial estimates. In 2006, government finance recorded a surplus of 0.7% of GDP, which is likely to have widened to about 1.25% in 2007. Wage increases seem to have been strong in 2006 and 2007 (around 4.5%) despite the partial de-indexation agreed in April 2006.

8. Further reforms are needed to ensure the long-term viability of the pension system. Luxembourg faces an aging population, and the employment growth observed since the early 1980s will inevitably be matched in the future by a comparable increase in the number of pensioners. Despite this, little has been done to reform the pensions system and no significant progress was recorded in 2007.

9. There has been good progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the short-term macro-economic challenges facing Luxembourg, although this improvement is probably for a part due to favourable incidental factors. There has been little progress in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the pension system.

Micro-economic policies

10. Implementation of micro-economic policies over 2005-2007 focussed on integrating the economy into the European and international context, creating an attractive economic environment, and complying with the principles of sustainable development. Good progress has been made on the integration of the economy, especially in the field of rail and electronic infrastructure. To foster an attractive economic environment, an extensive simplification policy focuses on business needs and includes ex ante checks for administrative burdens. However, a target for reducing the administrative burden should be set and some informal consultations embedded in formal policy.

11. Luxembourg promotes ICT take up, addresses digital security issues and enhances the supply of e-Government services. The public research budget has significantly increased and is to double from 2005 to 2009. Whilst reaching the 3% expenditure target is important, the focus on efficient governance is appropriate to increase absorption capacity. Public-private collaboration needs to be strengthened, especially to increase relatively low levels of research investment by SMEs. Luxembourg has undertaken a number of measures in a wide range of areas to promote sustainable development, and is committed to a Kyoto target of a 28% reduction in greenhouse gases. However, reporting on progress towards the Kyoto goals should be improved, and meeting the target will require implementing additional measures.

12. The Council concluded that in order to render the economic environment more attractive Luxembourg should focus on: greater support for competitive markets, for

the transposition of EU directives and for SMEs. A recent legislative proposal aims at merging and reinforcing the competition authorities and widening their mandate. Despite this the authorities remain clearly understaffed, and widening their mandate. Despite the high importance of the professional services' sector in Luxemburg the level of competition remains low in a international context. Luxembourg should therefore take clear steps to increase competition in this sector.

13. The transposition deficit of EU legislation remains high, though the situation has improved significantly since 2005. Luxembourg should consolidate the procedures introduced in 2006 and set a deadline for achieving the 1% target agreed by the Council. Key directives awaiting transposition include those on public procurement, the enforcement of intellectual property rights, and the Financial Services Transparency Directive.

14. Entrepreneurship education needs to become more routine in secondary schools. Luxembourg already set up one-stop shops for businesses. However, further improvements should be made in order to remove lengthy and often expensive procedures for setting up an enterprise and recruiting the first employee.

15. In general, Luxembourg has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP, although a number of challenges remain. The point to watch in the area of fostering an attractive economic environment has been addressed to some extent. More efforts are needed to facilitate start-up procedures, including the recruitment of the first employee, to speed up the transposition of EU directives, and to strengthen market competition, in particular in the professional services sector. The Commission considers this a mixed policy response to the challenges Luxemburg faces for improving the economic environment.

Employment policies

16. Recent structural reforms launched by the government and the social partners focus on measures for retaining people in employment, flexible contractual arrangements, activation policies for young people and reducing numbers leaving school early. The employment of women has improved since 2003, facilitated by an expansion of childcare facilities. However, more initiatives are needed to increase the employment rate of older workers and to tackle unemployment amongst the young.

17. The Council referred to the need to focus on: raising the employment rate of older workers and further reform early-retirement systems: to reduce school drop-out rates and remove artificial barriers between different types of education; and to closely monitor the impact of recent measures on youth unemployment. There has been little policy response to support active ageing, and no progress in changing culture towards longer working lives, improving incentives to remain in work and discouraging early retirement. However, the recent law on vocational training may have a positive impact on the employment rate of older workers. Increasing the employment rate of older workers is also closely linked to the modernisation of social protection systems and their financial sustainability.

18. A broad set of measures to improve education and training and lifelong learning have been approved in order to fight worsening trends in early school leaving and the

completion of upper secondary education, with recent legislation including new measures to assist early school leavers to re-enter education and vocational training. A further law reorganizes vocational training and helps to support young people in the transition from school to work. Steps have been taken to improve the recognition and validation of qualifications and competences, and enrich training opportunities. However, as implementation is still in its initial phase, it remains to be seen whether these reforms will be sufficient.

19. Luxembourg is taking appropriate measures to improve activation and professional guidance, especially for young people. The introduction of a personal mentor will help re-integrate the young unemployed into the labour market and improve their employability. However, as implementation has only just begun, it remains important to closely monitor the impact of the new measures.

20. Overall, Luxembourg has a balanced approach towards flexicurity and is taking steps towards addressing it in an integrated way. Recently social partners have reached a consensus on the introduction of a single status for private sector employees, which should increase labour market flexibility. Recent reforms of active labour market policies concentrate on the rapid insertion of young people, and a new law aims to anticipate restructuring and support career transition. Life long learning considerably improved in 2007 and a right to individualized training will take effect on 1st January 2008. However, there is no visible progress on the continued adaptation of the social security system.

21. In general, Luxembourg has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The points to watch in the employment area have been addressed, with the notable exception of active ageing. Although progress is evident, implementation is now the key and therefore the Commission considers these points to watch as remaining valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

22. In the light of the Luxembourg 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

23. Luxemburg has made very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Luxembourg has shown some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

24. The Implementation Report shows a mixed policy response to the areas identified by the Council as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

25. Among the strengths shown by the Luxembourg's 2007 Implementation Report are: investments to integrate the economy into the international context, efforts to develop an extensive simplification policy focussed on business needs, the

development of childcare infrastructures, reform of professional training, and the introduction of new forms of employment.

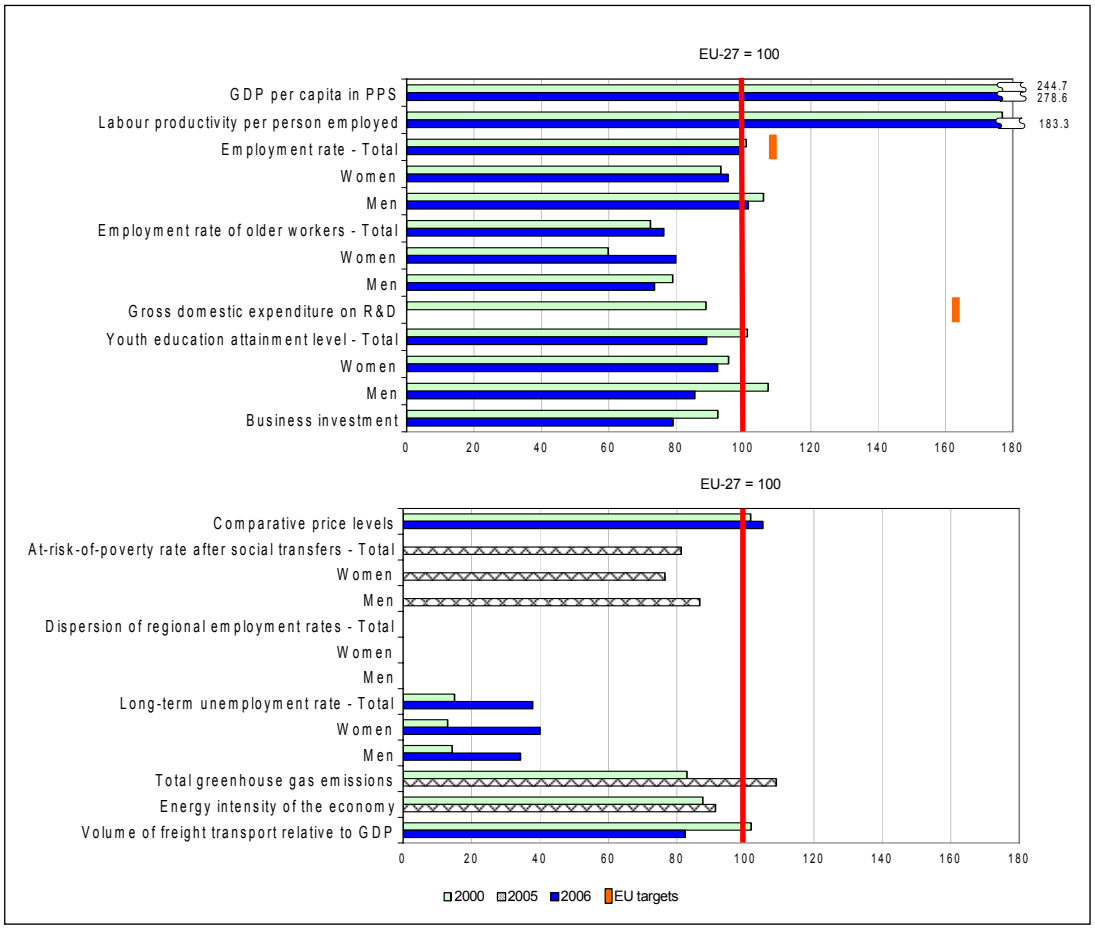
26. It will be important for Luxembourg over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at increasing the employment rate of older workers, in particular through reform to discourage early retirement; take further measures to reduce the number of early school leavers, and to remove the artificial barriers between different types of education; closely monitoring the impact of recently adopted measures to reduce unemployment amongst the young; and in order to deliver a more attractive economic environment, greater support is needed to deliver competitive markets, improve the transposition of EU legislation, and support SMEs.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

LUXEMBOURG

		LU						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		244.7	247.7	252.7	263.0	278.6		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		176.9	166.4	168.9	174.4	183.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	62.7	62.2	62.5	63.6	63.6	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	50.1	50.9	51.9	53.7	54.6		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	75.0	73.3	72.8	73.3	72.6		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	26.7	30.3	30.4	31.7	33.2		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	16.4	20.6	22.2	24.9	27.8		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	37.2	39.7	38.3	38.3	38.7		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.65	1.66	1.63	1.57p	:	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	77.5	72.7b	72.5	71.1	69.3		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	75.8	75.6b	73.4	75.8	74.5		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	79.2	69.7b	71.6	66.6	64.0		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		101.5	103.2	105.1	104.6	105.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		17.0	17.0	16.5	15.5	14.4		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	12.0	11.0b	12.0	13.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	12.0	12.0b	12.0	13.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	12.0	11.0b	12.0	13.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.4		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	0.6	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.6		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	0.5	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.2		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		75.2	88.6	100.8	100.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		186.6	181.8	193.5	189.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		100.8	111.8	107.2	92.4	87.9e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Hungary

1. Economic growth started to slow down in 2006. GDP is projected to expand by 2% in 2007, down from 3.9% in 2006. The growth profile reflects to a large extent the correction of the unsustainable path of fiscal policy over the last few years. Employment and participation rates are still far below average EU levels, despite slightly improving to 57.3% and 62% respectively in 2006. After rising to 9.2% of GDP in 2006, the budget deficit is expected to fall below 6.5% of GDP in 2007, and the increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to slow down.

2. The overriding priority for Hungary is to continue its fiscal consolidation programme underpinned by sound structural reforms, and a comprehensive reform of fiscal governance. Progress in fiscal consolidation will underpin an expected return to a robust growth path. At the same time, long-term sustainability of public finances, which is at high risk, should be ensured. Institutional and regulatory measures to improve the functioning of labour markets, and the micro-economic environment should also be implemented, but without jeopardising fiscal consolidation.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Hungarian Implementation Report shows limited progress on implementing the revised National Reform Programme (NRP) over 2005-2007. Hungary is making strong efforts and the pace of progress has accelerated over the last year.

4. There has been some progress on responding to the four country-specific recommendations addressed to Hungary by the Council. The fiscal consolidation programme is likely to result in a better-than-targeted budgetary outturn in 2007. However, the deficit is still high and the medium-term public finance situation remains fragile. Further incentives to work and to remain in the labour market have been introduced and good progress has been made towards the establishment of the integrated employment and social services system. As Hungary's priority is on fiscal consolidation, progress has been limited in relation to education, training and active labour market policies.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded that Hungary should focus, progress has been most substantial on developing a coherent strategy for R&D, innovation and ICT and transforming undeclared work into formal employment.

6. Last year's Annual Progress Report concluded that Hungary had made limited progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. There has again been limited progress on most of the commitments with an end-2007 deadline.

7. Government and ownership of the NRP seems somewhat strengthened. The report was discussed by Parliament and stakeholders before submission. Although clear timetables were presented for the reform steps, systematic information on the

budgetary impacts of the adopted and planned measures is missing. The operational programmes co-financed by the structural and cohesion funds play a key role in the implementation of the NRP and their common governance is ensured. However, the earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives could be stronger.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The NRP identified reducing the fiscal deficit and improving the sustainability of public finances as key macro-economic challenges. Progress in this respect over 2005-2007 is mixed. After years of loose fiscal policy which had induced serious macroeconomic imbalances, the re-elected government started a major fiscal consolidation and reform programme in the second half of 2006. The first results are starting to bear fruit but further progress is needed. Wage developments and the evolution of non-wage labour costs should also be continuously monitored as there is a need to improve wage responsiveness to economic changes.

9. The Council recommended Hungary to address the government deficit and public debt ratio; and to improve long-term fiscal sustainability and economic efficiency. Wide-ranging tax increases and expenditure control measures, including budgetary freezes until the end of 2008 limited the deficit in 2006 to 9.2% of GDP, still very high but almost 1% of GDP less than targeted. Hungary is likely to outperform its 2007 target of 6.8% of GDP by about half a percentage point. However, this reduction could have been around one percentage point if no additional spending measures had been taken. The debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to stabilise at around 66% in 2007-2008. An important blueprint for the comprehensive reform of public finances was adopted in 2007, introducing fiscal rules and institutional changes. The implementation of these proposals is however, dependant on related constitutional amendments being passed. A reinforcement of the budgetary framework has just begun, essential, given that the budget deficit, although declining, remains the highest in the EU.

10. Following the adoption of laws in 2006 to reform the public administration, health care, pension and education systems, the Government has implemented measures in these areas in 2007. Significant spending cuts in price subsidies were achieved, in particular for pharmaceuticals and gas. Moreover, the public administration and hospital systems have been further streamlined, although follow-up steps, such as the improvement of outpatient care, are still missing. Thanks to a series of financial incentives, the provision of joint services at local government level has also been substantially strengthened. On pension reform, in addition to the revision of disability pension schemes in 2007, several other steps have been adopted which will impact on the long-term pension costs. These include a lower starting level for new pensions, actuarially fair pension calculation and stricter eligibility regulation in early retirement. The expert group set up by government will further review the reform of the key parameters (indexation, retirement age). Overall, the sustainability of Hungarian public finances remains at high risk, given the expected rise in long-term age-related expenditures. Further actions are needed in all areas, also in view of ensuring social adequacy.

11. Hungary has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. Following the lack of fiscal discipline in the past, the recent policy responses have been fairly strong. However, the public finance situation remains fragile. Hungary needs to maintain the momentum with fiscal adjustment and structural reforms and therefore the recommendations remain valid.

Micro-economic policies

12. The revised NRP of 2006 identified R&D and innovation, business environment, competition, infrastructure development, and energy policy and environment as key micro-economic challenges. In its conclusions, the Council also referred to reducing and redirecting state aids; develop a more coherent strategy for R&D, innovation and ICT; and further reduction of the administrative burden on enterprises.

13. Concerns remain about the absence of concrete measures to reduce state aid and redirect funds towards horizontal objectives, and in particular whether the phasing-out of aid will suffice. On R&D and innovation, the recently adopted strategy is welcome but further progress is needed. Following previous reforms, the adoption of the science, technology and innovation strategy, which seeks to co-ordinate public and private R&D and innovation, and to stimulate the creation and utilisation of knowledge, represents a significant step. However, reaching 1.4% of GDP (changed from 1.8%) for total R&D expenditures by 2010 depends on the availability of resources and the efficient implementation of a recently adopted action plan. Concerns remain about how to integrate the Academy of Science in the research and innovation system and how to improve the links between research and business. In addition to simplifying the legal framework for e-business, ICT initiatives focus on infrastructure development and increasing ICT use. This heads in the right direction, but implementation should be accelerated. Faster progress can now be expected as EU structural funds will increasingly be used. Obstacles continue to hinder entrepreneurial activities and the targets set in the 2006 Spring European Council conclusions were only partially achieved.

14. Better regulation policies focus on simplification and on reducing the administrative burden, but no specific target has been set for the later. Preparatory work for improving impact assessments is being carried out but implementation remains inadequate. There has however been a significant shortening of the setting-up time for businesses, and, as of 2008, the electronic registration of a company should require less than one hour. Newly adopted measures to improve access to finance for enterprises should benefit SMEs. However, only limited progress can be seen in promoting education in entrepreneurship and the establishment of a single contact point for recruiting the first employee.

15. The opening of the rail freight market has been delayed and the development of the Coherent Transport Development Strategy needs to be accelerated given the composition of infrastructure spending and the dispute over the feasibility of rail infrastructure financing via access charges. Hungary should continue its efforts to ensure timely and full implementation of the Services Directive.

16. Regarding environment and energy, new legislation to promote green electricity is a welcome step. Hungary has also announced a National Climate Change Strategy, but

concrete measures have still to be devised. The liberalisation of network industries is on course. However, since the ownership of electricity transmission networks reverted to the previous owner in 2006, there is some concern about the effective separation of infrastructure and operations.

17. Overall, despite encouraging signs in some areas, the progress over 2005-2007 is mixed with regard to policies addressing the challenges set out in the NRP. Hungary needs to maintain the pace and scope of microeconomic reforms if it is to achieve the growth and job creation necessary to underpin rapid economic improvements. The points to watch in the micro-economic area therefore remain valid.

Employment policies

18. In 2006, the revised NRP set the priorities of: strengthening the role of active labour market policies; targeted support for the employment of disadvantaged people; promoting lifelong learning; and improving the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of education.

19. The Council recommended a focus on: improving active labour market policies and incentives to work, integrating the employment and social services system, and reforming education and training, to improve skills and the responsiveness to labour market needs.

20. Active labour market policies increasingly aim at enhancing job-search activity and improving employability, with measures targeted on the most disadvantaged groups. The scope and effectiveness of these policies needs to be improved. A number of incentives to work and to remain on the labour market have been introduced, including recent measures reforming the social benefit system. Further reforms to reduce early retirement and revise the system of disability benefits are also welcome. Given the very low rate of return to employment of women after childbirth, further measures are required to reconcile work and family life, including the extension of childcare provision and reforming lengthy parental leaves. The integration of employment and social services is in progress and the public employment service has coordinated rehabilitation services since 2007.

21. The integration of schools, and restrictions on them in the selection of students, together with the introduction of new national curricula focusing on key competencies, are among recent measures to reduce school segregation and to provide pupils with skills which better respond to labour market needs. Higher education quotas in natural sciences, IT and technology were also increased to ensure the provision of a sufficient number of graduates in these fields. Despite these welcome steps, the existence of a clear strategy to achieve systemic changes to improve the quality, openness and efficiency of education and training is not evident.

22. The Council also highlighted the need to focus on improving the labour market situation of the disadvantaged; tackling undeclared work; reducing regional disparities in employment; and implementing the lifelong learning strategy. Although a number of measures were launched to improve the labour market situation of disadvantaged groups, the result of these measures remains to be seen. In certain areas progress is limited. Besides helping career-starters, older workers and women, further efforts are required to improve the employment chances of the low skilled,

people with disabilities, and the Roma. Strong coherent measures, focused on incentives and sanctions have led to visible progress in reducing undeclared work. However, given the gravity of the problem, it is important to continue this approach. There has been no visible progress in reducing persistent regional disparities in employment. A coherent policy approach to tackle this challenge, including the low mobility of the labour force is still missing. The implementation of the lifelong learning strategy, although it has started, remains a considerable challenge, requiring stronger coordination and monitoring.

23. Hungary has started to address flexicurity in an integrated way. Strengthening active labour market policies, the modernisation of social security systems and combating undeclared work have been given particular attention. Increasing participation in lifelong learning is a challenge. The government, with the involvement of the social partners, aims at a comprehensive revision of the Labour Code to reflect the diversity of employment forms and ensure adaptability.

24. Despite clear improvements in certain areas, there has been partial progress over 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of policies to address the labour market challenges. The policy response to the recommendations and points to watch has also been partial. It is important to deepen and step up the pace of reforms, in particular in education and training.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

25. In the light of the 2007 Hungarian Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

26. Hungary has made limited progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over 2005-2007. Hungary has shown limited progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

27. The Implementation Report shows a mixed policy response to the recommendations adopted at the Council. There has been some policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring more attention.

28. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Implementation Report are: strong improvements on fiscal consolidation, the adoption of various structural reform steps, the shortening of the setting-up time for businesses and the efforts to reduce administrative costs, the introduction of further incentives to work and to remain on the labour market and the transformation of undeclared work into formal employment.

29. The policy areas in the Hungarian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: correcting the excessive deficit as planned, further improving the sustainability of public finances, improving the labour market situation of disadvantaged groups, reducing persistent regional disparities in employment and reforming the education and training systems. Against this background, it is recommended that Hungary:

- continues to implement the necessary measures to ensure a durable reduction of the government deficit and of the public debt ratio, with increased reliance on the expenditure side, including through the establishment of more thorough and comprehensive expenditure rules;

- continues to reform the public administration, health care, pension and education systems with a view to ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability and improving economic efficiency. This should include steps to further limit early retirement, reduce the number of new recipients of disability pensions and further restructure health care;

- reinforces active labour market policies to improve the labour market situation of disadvantaged groups; and reduces persistent regional disparities in employment;

- ensures access to high quality education and training for all, upgrade skill levels, and increases responsiveness of education and training systems to labour market needs.

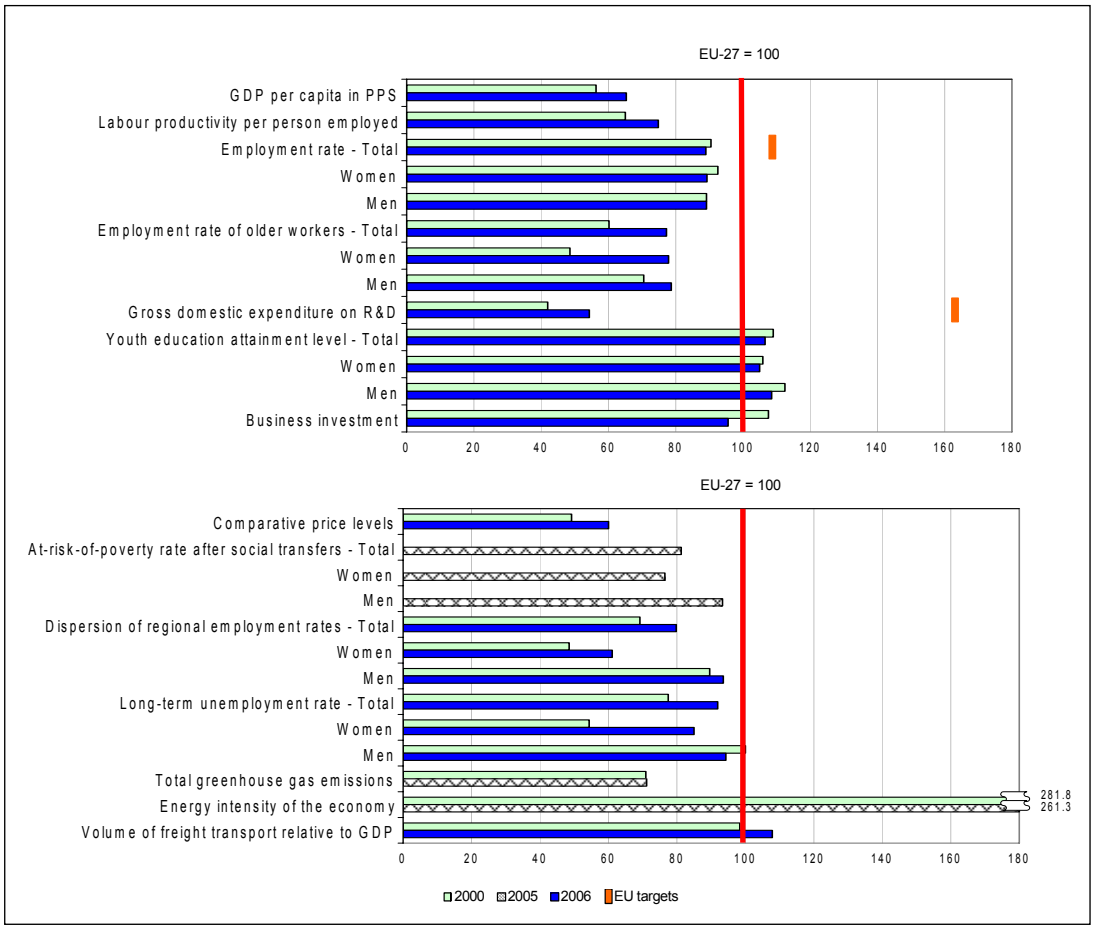
30. In addition, it will be important for Hungary over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges for the future: further reforming the public research system, increasing the effectiveness of public R&D expenditure and improving linkages between public and private R&D; reducing and redirecting state aids; improving the regulatory environment through further reducing administrative burden and legislative simplification; introducing further incentives to work and to remain in the labour market; ensuring better reconciliation of work and private life; completing the establishment of the integrated employment and social services system; transforming undeclared work into formal employment; and implementing the lifelong learning strategy.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

HUNGARY

		HU						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		56.3	63.6	63.9	64.8	65.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		65.0	71.7	72.7	73.9	74.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	56.3	57.0	56.8	56.9	57.3	58.7	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	49.7	50.9	50.7	51.0	51.1		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	63.1	63.5	63.1	63.1	63.8		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	22.2	28.9	31.1	33.0	33.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	13.3	21.8	25.0	26.7	27.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	33.2	37.8	38.4	40.6	41.4		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.78	0.93	0.88	0.94	1.00	1.8	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	83.5	84.7b	83.5	83.4	82.9		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	84.0	86.1b	84.9	84.9	84.7		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	83.0	83.4b	82.0	81.9	81.2		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		49.2	58.2	61.6	63.2	60.0		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		19.8	18.6	18.9	18.8	17.4		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	11.0	12.0	:	13.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	12.0	12.0	:	13.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	11.0	12.0	:	14.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	9.0	8.5	9.4	9.9	9.1		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	9.7	9.2	10.6	10.8	9.9		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	8.6	8.1	8.6	9.4	8.7		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	3.1	2.4	2.7	3.2	3.4		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	2.5	2.3	2.6	3.2	3.4		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.5	2.5	2.8	3.3	3.3		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		64.3	66.8	64.7	65.5	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		600.5	566.6	533.6	543.6	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		97.5	85.1	91.5	102.1	115.1		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Malta

1. Following a slowdown in the early 2000's, Malta's economic growth has recovered since 2004, with GDP growth reaching 3.2% in 2006. The turnaround was mainly driven by domestic demand. In relation to the EU-27 average, labour productivity has been declining in recent years but stabilised in 2006. GDP per capita amounted to 75.5% of the EU-27 average in 2006. Malta's employment rate (54.8% in 2006) remains well below the Lisbon target, particularly for women and older workers. The general government deficit has been reduced to 2.5% of GDP in 2006 from 3.1% in 2005 and Malta's general government debt declined from 72.7% of GDP in 2004 to 64.7% in 2006.

2. The structural weaknesses of Malta's economy necessitate a continuing reform policy to bolster competitiveness and exploit long-term growth potential. The continued implementation of structural expenditure reforms would contribute to sounder public finances in the medium-term and help release more public funds for growth-enhancing spending such as R&D and innovation. The continuation of efforts to reform health care as well as to pursue the further review of the benefit system could improve the long-term sustainability of public finances, and simultaneously facilitate moves into regular employment. Growth and employment are expected to benefit from the implementation of recent initiatives as well as from reducing and redirecting state aid towards horizontal objectives and strengthening competition.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. The Maltese 2005-2008 National Reform Programme (NRP) identified the sustainability of public finances, competitiveness, the environment, employment and education and training as key challenges. In addition, the Commission focussed on competition, the quality of the regulatory system, and making work more attractive.

4. Overall, the Implementation Report shows good progress on implementing the NRP over 2005-2007 in many key areas. Malta has followed a steady reform policy over the period. The most prominent result of this policy is the Council decision in favour of Malta's adoption of the euro on 1st January 2008.

5. However, Malta has shown only limited progress in addressing the recommendations adopted by the Council to reinforce the competition authority and to attract more people into the labour market.

6. The Council also concluded that Malta should focus on health care reform, speeding up progress on improving and simplifying the regulatory environment, measuring R&D expenditure more accurately, introducing systematic impact assessment, connecting Malta to Europe's energy network, raising educational attainment and increasing the employment rate of older workers. The response in these areas has also been limited.

7. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Malta was partly responding to the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since

then Malta has made some further progress, on better regulation, ICT and innovation. However, more concrete steps are needed to meet all commitments in the area of improving competition.

8. The governance of the NRP has been very good, involving all relevant ministries and an extensive consultation with stakeholders. The links between the NRP and the Structural Funds' programmes are good: 45% of the total NSRF budget is earmarked for implementing the Lisbon strategy (up from 20% in the previous programming period). This limited share of funds devoted to improving competitiveness, in comparison to other Member States, stems from plans for strong investment in environmental infrastructures to ensure the environmental sustainability of tourism. Cohesion Policy funding will amount to 2.4% of GDP in the 2007-2013 period.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. Malta made good progress over 2005-2007 in addressing the macro-economic challenge of restoring the fiscal balance. The fiscal consolidation process, initiated in 2004, has shown good progress. Although some part of this progress has been because of one-off measures, budgetary adjustment has been achieved mostly through expenditure restraint. The general government deficit declined to 2.5% of GDP in 2006, and the debt-to-GDP ratio followed a downward trend. As a result, the Council decided to abrogate the Excessive Deficit Procedure, paving the way for Malta's adoption of the euro on 1st January 2008. The Implementation Report underlines the Maltese government's continued commitment towards further fiscal consolidation through public expenditure restraint.

10. There has been some progress in the area of long-term sustainability of public finances. The main provisions of the new pension system, which came in force in January 2007, include a progressive increase in the retirement age, a longer reference period used for the calculation of pensions and a change in the indexation of pensions.

11. During 2005-2007 some progress was achieved in re-directing public expenditure towards growth-enhancing spending. In particular, increased attention has been devoted to upgrading Malta's human capital. However, the reallocation of additional public funds towards innovation, research, and development was less ambitious. Such a restructuring could support the achievement of the objective to attract high-technology investment and bolster Malta's competitiveness and growth potential.

12. The Council referred to the need to implement and reinforce delayed measures in healthcare reform. The financial sustainability of the healthcare system depends on reversing past spending trends. New legislation, announced in the NRP, that would separate the regulation and delivery of the healthcare system, has not been fully implemented. The Maltese authorities have put in place the required administrative steps for implementation. Moreover, the authorities regard the full implementation of these measures essential to improve the public healthcare system's financial management and control systems and ensure value for money and the efficient use of resources.

13. In general, Malta is making good progress in improving public finances and some progress in re-directing public expenditure towards growth-enhancing spending. Malta is making limited progress in addressing the financial sustainability of the healthcare system and therefore the Commission considers that the point to watch in this area remains valid.

Micro-economic policies

14. Competitiveness and the environment were identified as key micro-economic challenges in the Maltese NRP. These challenges include the business environment and better regulation, R&D, innovation and ICT, tourism, infrastructure and competition. Malta has, overall, made good progress over 2005-2007 through better regulation initiatives, a broad-based approach to strengthen R&D, ICT, and some steps towards liberalisation.

15. The Council recommended that Malta should strengthen competition, notably by reinforcing the Competition Authority, liberalising professional services and reducing and redirecting state aids. The Maltese authorities are developing measures to strengthen the enforcement capabilities of the competition authority and to amend the Competition Act but these measures are yet to be implemented. Consultation and dialogue with regard to professional services is still ongoing but has not yet resulted in reform measures. Malta needs to enhance its efforts to ensure a timely implementation of the Services Directive. The level of state aids (2.25% of GDP in 2006) and the share of sectoral aid (93%) in Malta are still the highest in the EU. Malta needs to progress in this area given that there has also has been an increase of infringement cases. Malta should improve the quality of the transposition of internal market legislation.

16. The Council also asked Malta to focus on impact assessment and simplification. Malta shows strong political support for the better regulation agenda and is making progress in improving the regulatory environment. All of the public sector is now involved in the Simplification Action Plan and Malta has appointed a better regulation co-ordinator in every ministry. Malta could do more to enhance the regulatory framework by continuing ongoing simplification, making a systematic use of impact assessments, and ensuring a transparent better regulation strategy. Regarding the reduction of the administrative burden, Malta has planned several measures for 2008 and 2009. However, no specific target has yet been set. Malta also reports on the introduction of one stop shops for business start-ups but it appears that they are not yet fully operational.

17. The Council highlighted the need of measuring R&D expenditure more accurately. The Implementation Report reaffirms Malta's commitment to an R&D intensity target of 0.75% for 2010. The level of public investment in R&D has increased to 0.20% of GDP in 2006. Steps have also been taken to increase the number of researchers, through funds for postgraduate studies, by facilitating access to Malta for researchers from other countries, and by promoting the attractiveness of science to students. Selected government entities will implement Research and Innovation programmes and spend at least 0.25% of their budgets for 2008 on this. Links between industry and academia are being encouraged. However, the report does not inform on developments in private sector R&D, a sector which accounts for almost 65% of the R&D expenditure.

18. The Council also asked Malta to look into the issue of connecting Malta to Europe's energy network. As a response, Malta is currently seeking advice on the feasibility of this. This would improve the functioning of the energy market, and reduce the current complete dependency on imported oil. Additional steps could include an increased emphasis on energy efficiency and on renewable energy.

19. Malta considers ICT as crucial for the modernisation of its economy and has made significant progress in the past three years. Policy attention mainly focuses on e-Government, e-Inclusion and ICT take-up and enhancing employment in the sector by promoting ICT skills and competencies. There have been strong advances in the online availability of public services but more attention needs to focus on ICT usage, both of e-services and of broadband. The recent National ICT Strategy for 2008-2010 is expected to stimulate further progress in the area, alongside the SmartCity project. Malta reports increases in tourism due, in part from a growing importance of cruise ships and low cost airlines, and on strategic initiatives to develop this sector further. It highlights that ensuring environmental sustainability is a precondition for a successful tourism strategy which remains a challenge for the future.

20. Overall, Malta has made good progress in implementing measures to tackle its micro-economic key challenges. However, more could be done to stimulate competition, including further reducing state aid and redirecting it towards horizontal objectives. Therefore, the Commission considers the country-specific recommendation in this area to remain valid. Given the limited progress with regard to the points to watch on the regulatory environment, simplification, impact assessment, one stop shops for business start-ups, and on the diversification of energy sources, the Commission considers them to remain valid.

Employment policies

21. The Council recommended Malta to increase efforts to attract more people into the labour market and addressed also the low employment rate of older workers, educational attainment and reducing early school leaving. There has been some progress in 2005-2007 with regard to employment and education performance. The overall employment rate increased slightly, reaching 54.8% in 2006, alongside a female employment rate of 34.9%, which is still the lowest in the EU. Malta's target of a 40% female employment rate by 2010 seems some way off. The employment among older workers remains a problem (30% in 2006 and decreasing), and is especially problematic for older women (only 11.2%). Malta has the lowest secondary school attainment levels and the highest numbers of early school leavers in the EU.

22. Malta is implementing fiscal measures to attract more people, in particular women, into the labour market. These measures include a revision of income tax bands, tax credits for women returning to work, fiscal support for part-time workers, and recognition of people working in family business. Other initiatives aim at an increased use of childcare services and the provision of training. To increase the effectiveness it seems that the implementation of some measures could be extended. In addition, more could be done to improve the match between labour supply and demand and the Implementation Report does not set out any changes to the benefit system. Efforts to tackle undeclared work and to reduce social benefit fraud have

begun to show some positive results. However, their impact on the labour market is not yet clear.

23. Efforts are also in place to improve the education system, in particular by improving infrastructure and the quality of teaching, the implementation of compulsory education system, and the extension of post-secondary and tertiary education courses. Offers of post-secondary and tertiary education courses have increased, with particular attention given to scientific and IT subjects. The government strategy to reduce the numbers of students leaving school early does not appear to target specific groups at risk. It appears that continued reform of education and training systems is necessary to raise the qualification level of the population, to reduce early school leaving, and to increase the number of students staying on in further and higher education.

24. The recent pension reform is an important initiative aiming at an increase of the average retirement age. There are no foreseen measures to increase employment opportunities for older workers to complement the increase in the retirement age. Isolated redeployment schemes that assist the long term unemployed and people over 40 to re-enter the labour market are present but these are not part of a comprehensive approach to active ageing.

25. Malta is not yet addressing flexicurity in an integrated way, although it is implementing some policies under its different components. Some progress has been achieved on fostering part-time work, and on active labour market policies. The government is taking different initiatives to improve lifelong learning but a coherent strategy has not been implemented. This is important to avoid increasing differences in the skills level of the labour force and to prevent unemployment among unskilled young people.

26. Malta has made some progress in implementing measures to deliver on its employment and education challenges. While access to education and training improved, and the social protection system has been modernised, progress was limited on the revision of the benefit system and on employment for older workers. Efforts to tackle undeclared work are promising, but measures to make work pay, especially for women, are limited. Therefore, the Commission considers that the country-specific recommendation remains valid. The Commission also confirms the importance for Malta to focus on raising educational attainment and reducing early school leaving as well as increasing the employment rate of older workers.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

27. In the light of the 2007 Maltese Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

28. Malta has made good progress in the implementation of its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Malta has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

29. The Implementation Report shows a limited policy response to recommendations adopted by the Council. There has also been a limited policy response to the additional areas identified by the Council as requiring attention.

30. Among the strengths of the Maltese National Reform Programme and its implementation are its governance and the progress achieved in fiscal consolidation as well as progress in strengthening the business environment, liberalising certain markets (e.g. ports), reforming education and increasing ICT use.

31. The policy areas in the National Reform Programme where weaknesses need to be tackled with the highest priority are competition policy and persistent labour market problems. Against this background, it is recommended that Malta:

- strengthens competition, notably by reducing state aids and redirecting them towards horizontal objectives as well as by reinforcing the competition authority and by further steps in opening up professional services;

- steps up efforts to attract more people into the labour market, particularly women and older workers; maintain efforts to tackle undeclared work and take further action on the benefit system to make declared work more attractive.

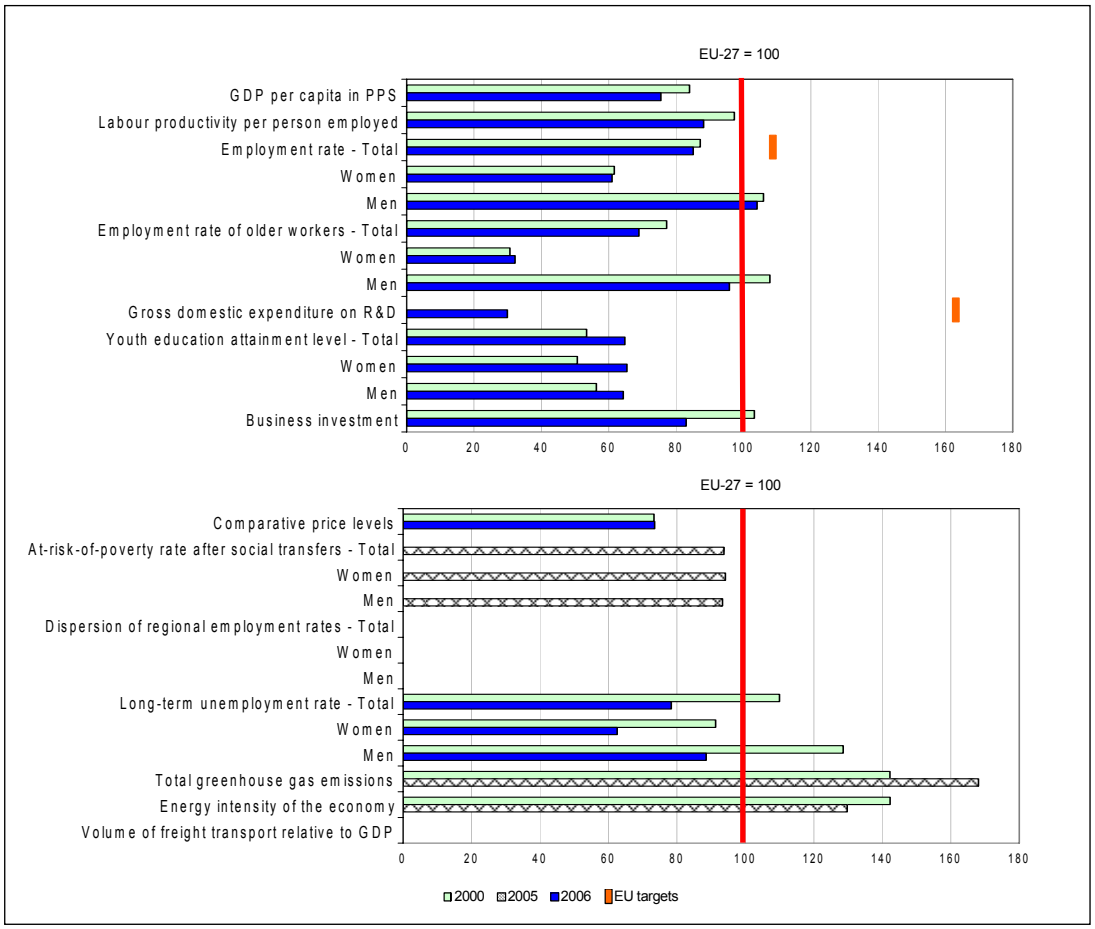
32. In addition, it will be important for Malta over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on: continue implementing and reinforcing measures on health care reform; further improving the regulatory environment by continuing simplifying legislation, by introducing systematic impact assessments and effective one stop shops for business start-ups; diversifying its energy sources, including enhancing energy efficiency and renewable energy and connecting Malta to Europe's energy networks; continuing efforts to raise educational attainment and reduce early school leaving.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

MALTA

		MT						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		84.0	78.7	75.9	75.9	75.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		97.3	90.2	88.4	87.9	88.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	54.2	54.2	54.0	53.9	54.8	57.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	33.1	33.6	32.7	33.7	34.9		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	75.0	74.5	75.1	73.8	74.5		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	28.5	32.5	31.5	30.8	30.0		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	8.4	13.0	11.5	12.4	11.2		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	50.8	53.8	53.4	50.8	50.4		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		:	0.26	0.54	0.54	0.55p	0.75	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	40.9	45.1b	51.0	53.7	50.4		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	40.2	48.8b	52.4	57.0	52.8		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	41.6	41.3b	49.8	50.5	48.1		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		73.3	72.0	72.8	72.8	73.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		19.0	14.9	15.4	14.6	15.1		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	15.0	:	:	15.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	15.0	:	:	16.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	15.0	:	:	14.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	4.4	3.2	3.4	3.4	2.9		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.2	2.4	3.0	3.2	2.5		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	4.5	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.1		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		129.0	140.0	145.9	154.8	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		303.2	284.2	261.0	269.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		:	:	:	:	:		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



The Netherlands

1. After a slow start of the economic recovery in both 2004 and 2005, economic growth gathered pace in 2006. GDP growth was 3% in 2006 supported by both exports and domestic sources. In line with the early stage of the economic upturn, private investment growth was strong, growing by 7% in real terms. GDP per capita stands at 125% of the EU average in 2006. Buoyant economic growth has led to high labour demand, which has been met by a reduction of unemployment to a rate of slightly above 3% in 2007, and an increase in the overall employment rate. Nevertheless, the average number of hours worked per person is relatively low in comparison to other Member States, partly because of the relatively high share of part-time employment.

2. Implementation of the 2008 budget will restore a positive budgetary position. However, further measures are needed to increase long-term fiscal sustainability, including by raising labour market participation and the number of hours worked. The largest potential of labour supply lies with women, disadvantaged groups and older workers. Growth can also be further enhanced by promoting innovation and the knowledge intensity of the economy.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. The 2007 Implementation Report, presented by the new Dutch government, shows significant progress in implementing the 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have slowed down over the last year. In the report renewed ambitions in the area of sustainability and energy are announced. There has been some progress in responding to the country specific recommendation adopted in 2007 in the area of labour supply.

4. The Council concluded that special attention should be given to raising the overall number of hours worked in the economy and raising private R&D expenditure. Progress on these issues has been limited, although many policy measures are being implemented. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that the Netherlands had not fully met commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action area of unlocking of business potential. Since then, there has been good progress on most of the commitments in the priority action areas with an end 2007 deadline. The Netherlands specifies efforts it is taking to meet euro area recommendations in its latest Implementation Report. It foresees a significant improvement of the headline government deficit and it has strengthened active labour market policies.

5. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local governments and the social partners continue to be substantial. The Implementation Report provides the budgetary information for planned and implemented reform policies. Links between the governance of the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the Structural Funds are fairly strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily with almost the entire ESF-budget and 63% of the ERDF-budget devoted to these goals.

6. The 2007 Implementation Report confirms the main priorities within the NRP as: improving labour supply; achieving faster growth in labour productivity, in particular by strengthening R&D, innovation and education; and improving price competitiveness, in particular by containing labour costs. The Implementation Report also underlines the importance of a sustainable living environment. The Commission agrees with these priorities.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

7. The Implementation Report reiterates the challenges in the macro-economic domain: promoting a stable macro-economic environment and well-functioning markets as well as attaining a sustainable budgetary position. In 2007, corporate taxes were lowered and legislation for the monitoring of proper conduct of pension funds has been implemented.

8. The Netherlands has committed itself to a structural budget surplus of 1% of GDP in 2011, which will help improve the sustainability of public finances. From a surplus of 1% of GDP in 2006, the structural balance worsened markedly in 2007, to a small deficit of 0.2% of GDP. For 2008 a surplus of 0.5% of GDP is projected. The long-term fiscal position benefits somewhat from planned measures to further increase labour participation, such as tax incentives and measures that aim to simplify the combination of work and care. However, more should be done to ensure sustainable public finances in the long term. The Implementation Report indicates that in recent years, wages have been in line with macro-economic conditions. However, given the labour market shortages in some sectors and the fact that no agreements with social partners are currently foreseen, stronger than expected wage increases in the coming years may affect competitiveness. Further increases in household indebtedness may have an effect on medium-term growth prospects.

9. In conclusion, the Netherlands is progressing in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. However, strong growth and a tightening labour market are expected to exert upward pressure on wages. In response to the euro area recommendation, progress is more limited in the area of fiscal consolidation.

Micro-economic policies

10. Improving labour productivity growth by boosting innovation and R&D remains one of the key challenges for the Dutch economy. The Commission welcomes the policy objective of the new government to strengthen the innovative capacity in order to better address societal challenges. The Council referred to the need to focus on: measures to increase private sector R&D expenditure and further action to create a single administration point for the recruitment of the first employee.

11. To improve its R&D and innovation performance, the Netherlands is implementing new measures that in particular promote excellence in higher education and research, facilitate innovative start-ups, and stimulate innovation in SMEs and key sectors. Other measures include the identification and development of innovative clusters

("hot spots"), increasing the number of highly educated people, and to attract foreign knowledge workers. The public contribution to the 3% R&D target remains significant. To promote private R&D expenditure, the Netherlands is strengthening a number of existing policy measures (such as the innovation vouchers scheme and the WSBO fiscal incentives scheme), launching a comprehensive SME strategy, setting up new innovation programmes driven by societal demand (such as water management, sustainable energy, eco-efficient innovations, and health care), and committing to increased accessibility and transparency of policy measures. Generally, the Netherlands is advancing well with the implementation of these measures although there is limited progress on increasing the involvement of the public research base and the level of foreign R&D investment is still relatively low. This needs to be addressed. Given that private R&D has remained stagnant over recent years and that the 3% R&D target for 2010 is very challenging, it will be essential to continue coordination at the highest political level of the R&D and innovation policies which are implemented by many different bodies.

12. The Netherlands has achieved good progress in implementing measures to improve the business environment and to strengthen competition, e.g. by unbundling energy companies. The new government has set ambitious targets with a package of accompanying measures within the "Clean and Green" working programme to counter climate change and to promote renewable energy. Good progress has been made in facilitating the recruitment of the first employee. The number of procedures has decreased considerably, and in most cases the tax authorities are the single point of contact. The Netherlands has made some progress towards the establishment of one-stop-shops for setting up a new business but nation-wide implementation has been delayed, although efforts are announced for the next two years. Lastly, good progress has been made in promoting entrepreneurship education. Although entrepreneurship education is not part of the standard curriculum, a promising programme has begun with implementation on a voluntary basis at all levels of education. Increasingly, the road network in the Netherlands suffers from heavy congestion. To avoid a further worsening of road congestion in the near future, the timely implementation of a comprehensive strategy, including road pricing, appears necessary.

13. As one of the frontrunners in the area of better regulation, the Netherlands aims to build upon the reduction of 20% in administrative costs imposed on business already achieved with an additional net 25% reduced aimed at by 2011. This will be accompanied by a series of monitoring tools to verify if the reduction is noticeable to companies. Although the focus on administrative burden is very positive, the 2007 Implementation Report would have benefited from more specific details on simplification and consultation. The Consumer Authority charged with informing consumers about their rights and obligations started its work in 2007.

14. In general, the Netherlands has made good progress in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The points to watch in the area of business climate and entrepreneurship education have been addressed and good progress has been achieved. These points to watch are therefore not maintained. Progress in the area of private R&D expenditure remains moderate and therefore the Commission considers that the point to watch on this issue remains relevant. In response to the euro area recommendations, good progress has been

made to strengthen competition and to promote the full integration of financial markets.

Employment policies

15. Implementation of labour market policies in the 2005-2007 period focused on reforming benefit schemes, discouraging early retirement, improving childcare provisions and lowering its costs and increasing funding to tackle early school leaving. These policies together with existing labour market institutions have contributed to higher overall employment rates and very low unemployment rates. Progress has been more limited with regard to increasing the number of hours worked by part-time workers and increasing employment rates for disadvantaged groups. Thus, progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to improve labour supply identified by the Dutch 2005 NRP, is mixed.

16. The Council concluded that the Netherlands must take further measures to improve labour supply, notably of older workers, women and disadvantaged groups. In addition, the Netherlands was also asked to focus on raising overall hours worked in the economy. In its response, the Netherlands has set a new overall employment target of 80% for 2016 (in 2006 73%) and announced new policies orientations. These include an action plan to reduce unemployment of older workers and a new tax on pensions - to be progressively introduced from 2011- in case of retirement before the statutory retirement age of 65. In addition, extra funding for improving quality childcare has been announced. New tax incentives directed at women, representing approximately 75% of unused labour potential in the Netherlands, aim at increasing their participation and number of hours worked. Although in the short term the impact of individualising the general tax credit (to be introduced in 2009) will be modest given the long transition period (15 years), it is a step in the right direction. Widening its narrow scope and significantly reducing the marginal tax on second incomes would, however, contribute to removing barriers for increasing the number of hours worked.

17. The Project “Everyone Participates” aims at, amongst others, providing guidance for 200 thousand people at the lower end of the labour market to work by 2011, in particular to foster the long-term (re)-integration of disadvantaged groups which remains a challenge. Lowering the age limit for reassessing disability benefit recipients may have reduced labour supply. Measures to tackle language learning and school drop-out rates have been planned to increase the employment rate of young immigrants. This will be complemented by a strategy for tackling discrimination and a new Integration Plan. The need for an integrated approach to the challenges has been emphasized with the appointment of a Minister for Youth and Family. The national target for reducing early school leaving to 8% has been postponed to 2012.

18. The Implementation Report refers to flexicurity and supports an integrated approach. While until recently the focus has been on reforms increasing back-to-work incentives within the social security system, emphasis is now on improving lifelong learning systems. Active labour market policies are developed and implementation need to further focus on disadvantaged groups. To maintain the current strong performance in terms of employment rates and unemployment of the Dutch labour market, continued efforts to further strengthen flexicurity policies are necessary, for

example by decisions on employment protection legislation. A Committee will be installed to look at all policy options to further increase labour participation.

19. In general, the Netherlands progressed in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. Many employment measures are announced in the Implementation Report. Because the measures, although positive, remain modest for tackling the challenges ahead and implementation is still in its early stages, the Commission considers the recommendation on labour supply to remain relevant.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

20. In the light of the 2007 Dutch Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

21. The Netherlands has made significant progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. The Netherlands has shown a good response to fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

22. The Implementation Report shows some policy response to the recommendation adopted by the Council. There has been a limited policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

23. Among the strengths of the National Reform Programme and its implementation are: the efforts to reduce administrative burden and to improve the business climate; the ambitious plans in the area of energy and climate change; and incentives to improve childcare provision.

24. The policy area in the Dutch National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority is in improving labour supply. Against this background it is recommended that the Netherlands:

- take further measures to improve labour supply of women, older workers and disadvantaged groups with a view to raising overall hours worked in the economy.

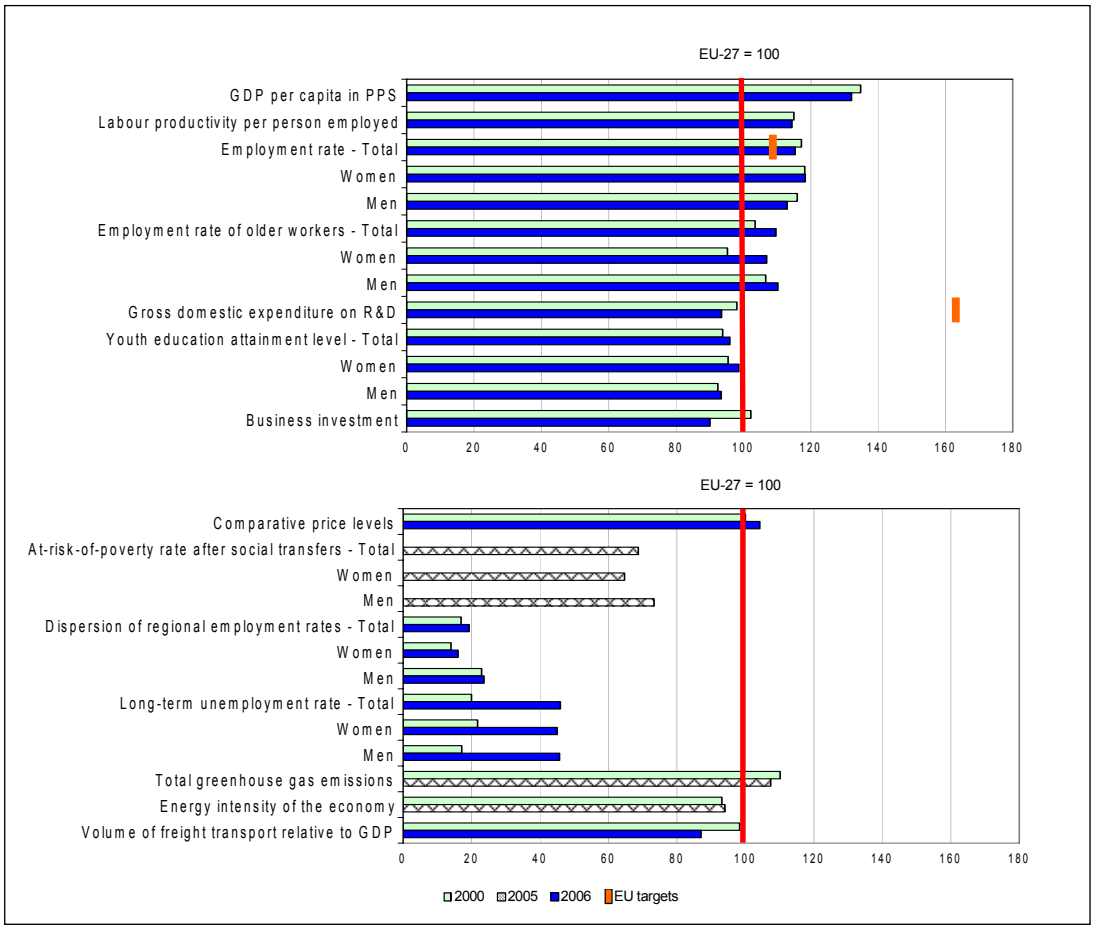
25. In addition, it will be important for the Netherlands over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: stepping up efforts aimed at increasing private sector R&D expenditure by avoiding fragmented policy governance structures and putting in place a coherent strategy for R&D and innovation which addresses the interaction between private R&D and public research as well as foreign R&D investment.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

NETHERLANDS

		NL						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		134.8	129.9	130.3	131.9	132.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		115.0	110.7	112.7	114.7	114.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	72.9	73.6	73.1	73.2	74.3	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	63.5	66.0	65.8	66.4	67.7		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	82.1	81.1	80.2	79.9	80.9		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	38.2	44.3	45.2	46.1	47.7		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	26.1	31.8	33.4	35.2	37.2		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	50.2	56.7	56.9	56.9	58.0		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.82	1.76	1.78p	1.73p	1.72p	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	71.9	75.0	75.0	75.6	74.7		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	75.7	78.0	78.9	79.9	79.6		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	68.2	72.0	71.2	71.4	69.9		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		100.0	107.8	106.0	104.6	104.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		18.8	15.9	15.6	15.7	16.4		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	11.0p	12.0p	:	11.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	11.0p	12.0p	:	11.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	10.0p	12.0p	:	11.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.2		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	2.8	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.6		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.9	1.7		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	1.0	1.1	1.6	1.9	1.8		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	0.6	1.0	1.5	1.9	1.6		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		99.9	101.1	101.8	98.9	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		198.5	202.2	202.0	195.6	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		97.4	93.7	102.4	101.0	92.9e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Austria

1. Austrian GDP is expected to grow at 3.3% in 2007, exceeding the growth in the euro area by about 0.5 percentage point, as was the case during 2005-2006. The main contributions to growth came from net exports and gross fixed capital investment; private consumption was more moderate. The unemployment rate has declined since 2005 and is expected to stabilize just above 4% in 2007. At 70.2% in 2006, the overall employment rate is relatively high, but the employment rate for older workers (35.5%) still remains well below the EU average (43.5%), even though it increased considerably over the past year.

2. Austria's strong economic performance has been bolstered by its generally consistent and mutually reinforcing mix of policies. There are a small number of shortcomings whose removal could further strengthen its growth potential. In particular, more could be done to better use labour resources, notably older workers, and to improve the integration of vulnerable young people. Sustainable growth will also depend on stronger fiscal consolidation.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, Austria has made significant progress in implementing its 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. However, the Council country-specific recommendation concerning older workers and vulnerable youth has only been addressed to some extent. With regard to other areas on which the Council concluded Austria should focus, namely competition in services and emission reduction, there has been some progress. Austria has not moved adequately towards achieving a balanced budget in 2008. Progress in strengthening the entrepreneurial culture and tackling gender segregation in the labour market is limited.

4. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that, overall, Austria had given an adequate response to the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Austria is close to fulfilling the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

5. The Implementation Report specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries. Austria has delivered well regarding the flexicurity recommendation. Some steps have been taken to improve the quality of public finances and competition, whereas progress in budgetary consolidation is less substantial.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP continue to be substantial. Responsibility for national co-ordination is at ministerial level. A wide range of stakeholders are consulted, including parliament, the social partners, regions, municipalities and economic research institutes. Progress is monitored by an Austrian research institute. Links between the governance of the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds are strong, with an earmarking of above 90% of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives, among the highest in the EU.

7. Following the formation of a new government at the beginning of the year, Austria's 2007 Implementation Report places a new emphasis on the social system while confirming the main priorities within the 2005 NRP. Financial resources have been increased for R&D and innovation, infrastructure and education. A new focus on 'decent work' complements the aim of full employment. The Commission broadly agrees with these priorities.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Thanks to the recent reform of the pension system, the risk to the long-term sustainability of Austria's public finances is considered relatively low. However, in order to further improve the situation, the authorities committed themselves in the 2005 NRP to some expenditure cuts. These were to come mainly from general expenditure restraint, and the continued reform of the public administration and health care, but they did not materialize to the expected degree. Progress over the 2005-2007 period, in terms of enhancing the sustainability of public finances has therefore been limited.

9. The Council highlighted the need to focus on achieving a balanced budget in 2008. The budget deficit is projected to decline from 1.4% of GDP in 2006 to 0.8% of GDP in 2007. However, in the March 2007 update of the Stability Programme, achieving a balanced budget was postponed until 2009/2010. In its Opinion on the update, the Council invited Austria, after achieving a lower-than-targeted deficit in 2006, to further exploit good economic conditions, strengthen adjustment in 2008, and continue fiscal consolidation thereafter. In its response, Austria has spelt out in the updated NRP a series of measures (public administration and health care reform) contributing to the consolidation of public finances. More detailed information on the budgetary impact of these measures would be welcome. The long-awaited introduction of the medium-term budgetary framework, initially planned for 1 January 2007, was finally adopted by Parliament in December 2007. It is expected to significantly enhance the predictability of the budgetary process from 2009 on

10. In the opinion of the Commission Austria has made limited progress in responding to the point to watch on achieving a balanced budget in 2008, and on the two macro-economic euro area recommendations. Steps have been taken towards improving the quality of public finances by increasing R&D and education spending, and reforming administration, but full use has not been made of the favourable cyclical conditions to approach its medium-term objective.

Micro-economic policies

11. Austria has taken further steps to strengthen innovation capacity and improve the framework conditions for business. R&D expenditure continues to increase, and is expected to reach 2.5% of GDP in 2007, well above the EU average. Besides support for technology development, increased funding aims to develop human resources. However, Austria faces a challenge to meet the demand for science and engineering graduates. Austria remains highly ranked on many indicators of innovation, with the notable exception of venture capital availability. It has introduced a number of

schemes targeting SMEs, including the promotion of collaboration with research organisations, and measures to improve protection and exploitation of intellectual property rights. Innovation policy also focuses on the demand side, with the release in July 2007 of a guideline on public procurement to encourage innovation.

12. In terms of improving the business environment, numerous schemes are now in place, with a strong focus on SMEs. Austria remains committed to reducing the administrative costs incurred by enterprises by 25% by 2010. There are now one-stop-shops for setting up a new company, although these are not yet available country-wide.

13. Infrastructure plays a key role in securing Austria's attractiveness as a business location. The implementation of the information society i2010 initiative has made excellent progress since 2006 and Austria is the first Member State to have achieved full online availability of e-government services. The targets for broadband availability have been met in most regions. Additional resources are being allocated to transport infrastructure, and important projects brought forward to relieve bottlenecks. Priority is being given to improving road and rail connections to the new Member States.

14. The Council referred to the need for Austria to focus on increasing competition in services, strengthening the entrepreneurial culture, and identifying further emission reduction policies and measures. Austria has taken steps to increase shop opening times, and is exploring further measures to increase competition in the electricity and gas markets. In the area of professional services, some reforms have been implemented: entry regulation for architects has been relaxed and recommended fees for accountants, auditors, tax advisors and architects have been removed. However, a number of significant restrictions still remain, in particular in the notary and pharmacy professions, and in legal services.

15. Surveys indicate that the overall entrepreneurial mindset of young people in Austria is low. Entrepreneurship education forms part of the curriculum in some schools, but not all, and this is often at the technical level. The promotion of entrepreneurial skills has been the focus of a number of targeted initiatives. This goes some way towards addressing the challenges Austria faces in this field but a more comprehensive and substantial initiative, particularly targeting entrepreneurial attitudes, remains to be developed.

16. Austria has introduced a number of policy measures directly aimed at reducing CO2 emissions. These include the 2007 revision of the 2002 climate strategy, the creation of a climate and energy fund, the continued implementation of a green electricity act, a climate protection initiative (Klima:aktiv), and the national energy efficiency action plan. In addition, measures such as improving railway infrastructure, and increasing lorry tolls and fuel tax should lead to reduced emissions. Austria continues to be well placed in terms of both the use and export of environmental technologies, and these have contributed to economic growth and job creation. However, thorough implementation of all existing and announced measures is needed because most recent projections indicate that Austria will not meet the Kyoto target with existing policies, including Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks.

17. In general, Austria has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments in its NRP, notably R&D and innovation, infrastructure and the business environment. In the Commission's opinion, there has been a limited response to the points to watch, and euro area recommendation, and they therefore remain valid.

Employment policies

18. Due to good economic developments and the successful overall implementation of employment policies, positive results in labour market performance were achieved over the 2005-2007 period. Active labour market policy was strengthened and the public employment service (AMS) made substantial efforts to integrate groups at the margins of the labour market, although the effectiveness of some measures could be further enhanced. Rising youth unemployment has been tackled effectively through a range of important measures. A newly designed programme to prevent a skilled labour shortage includes more training courses for skilled workers. The recently extended Universities of Applied Sciences have helped increasing the relatively low rate of graduates from tertiary education.

19. The Council recommended Austria to improve incentives for older workers to continue working and enhance the conditions for the education of the vulnerable youth. Active ageing has been supported by a number of measures including awareness raising campaigns, vocational skills development and company-based training, supported by the European Social Fund. However, more emphasis should be placed on encouraging enterprises to adapt working conditions to the needs of older workers, including schemes aimed at preventing health problems. As a result of pension reforms and several tax benefit measures, the actual retirement age has substantially increased. However, the recent reduction of discount rates for early retirement applicable during a long transition period gives the wrong signal. Furthermore, the take-up of early retirement on disability grounds has been increasing. The support of young people with a migrant background through German language acquisition, and the planned introduction of a compulsory year of kindergarten for migrant children are positive steps, but a more comprehensive strategy, including reform of the education system in order to remove early selection, is needed.

20. The Council also referred to the need to focus on tackling the gender segregation of the labour market, including by improving the availability of childcare. Austria has now reformed the childcare benefit scheme, which favours a faster reintegration into the labour market. Childcare facilities have not been significantly expanded thus far, but some additional funding will be made available as of January 2008. A sufficiently ambitious national target has not been set. The new minimum wage will benefit women in particular but it will not be sufficient to substantially reduce the gender pay gap. Austria's policy response in this area has thus been limited.

21. Austria's approach to flexicurity combines considerable flexibility in contractual arrangements with appropriate social benefits, accompanied by active labour market measures and strong reliance on social partnership. A number of measures to enhance flexibility but also increase security have recently been implemented. These include the introduction of more flexible working times, stricter eligibility rules for unemployment benefits, enhanced training leave, improved social protection for

atypically and self-employed people, and an obligation for temporary work agencies to pay contributions for further training of their employees. Moreover, a modernized legal definition of an employee is currently in preparation. More efforts are needed to improve the skills and employability of older workers and the least qualified section of the workforce.

22. Austria has generally succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments in its NRP and on the euro area recommendation on flexicurity. The country specific recommendation and point to watch in the employment area have been addressed to some extent and therefore remain valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

23. In the light of the 2007 Austrian Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

24. Austria has made significant progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Austria has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

25. The Implementation Report shows a limited policy response to the employment recommendation adopted by the Council. There has been some response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

26. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Austrian Implementation Report are: good practices to boost innovation, such as the innovation voucher; increased budgets for R&D in line with the 3% target; the creation of a climate and energy fund; the successful implementation and further development of its flexicurity model.

27. The policy areas in the Austrian National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: increasing labour supply of older workers and improving the skills and employability of disadvantaged young people. Against this background it is recommended that Austria:

- further improve incentives for older workers to continue working by implementing a comprehensive strategy including enhanced job-related training, adaptation of working conditions and tightening the conditions for early retirement; and improve education outcomes for vulnerable youth.

28. In addition, it will be important for Austria to focus over the period of the National Reform Programme on the following challenges: strengthening the fiscal adjustment in order to achieve a balanced budget before 2010; increasing competition in services, in particular in professional services; strengthening entrepreneurship education; identifying further emission reduction policies and measures; tackling the

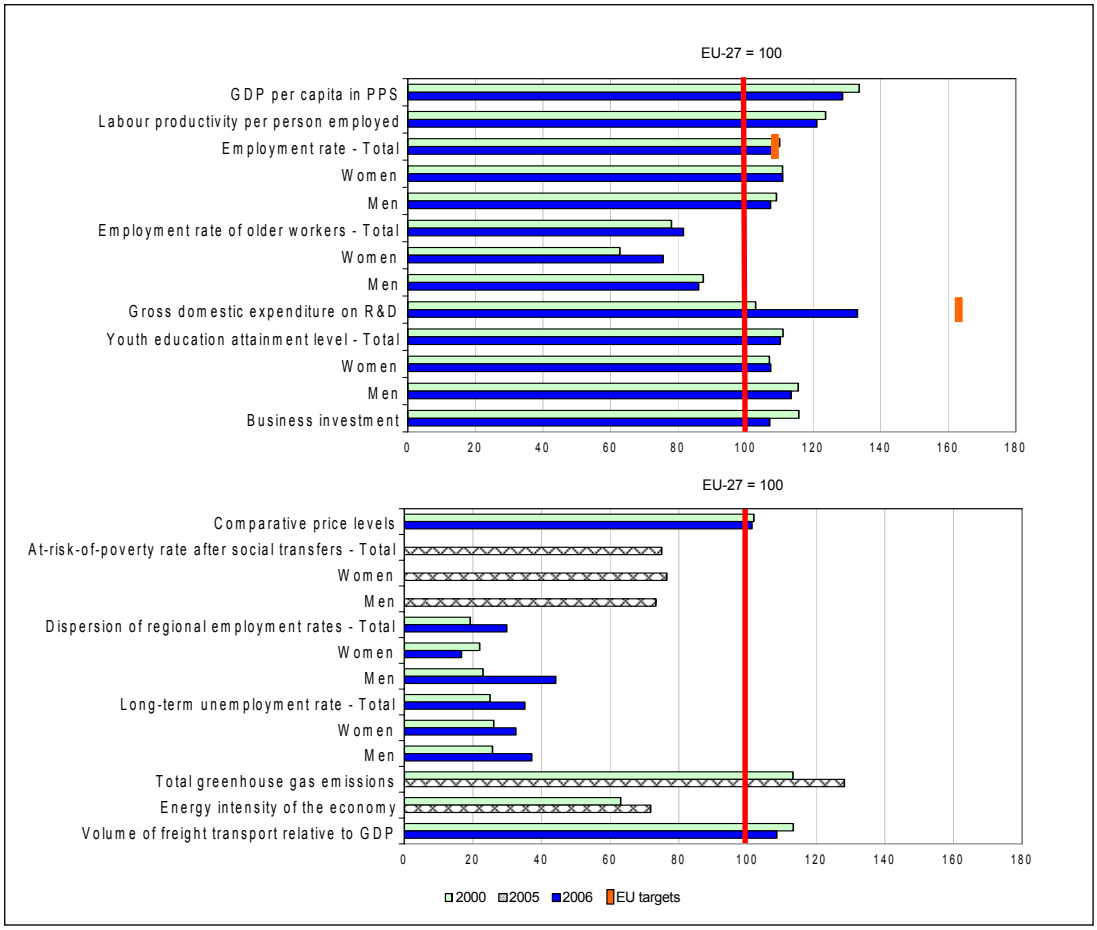
gender segregation of the labour market, including by further improving the availability of childcare.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

AUSTRIA

		AT						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		133.7	129.0	128.8	128.6	128.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		123.7	120.0	120.2	119.9	121.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	68.5	68.9	67.8b	68.6	70.2	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	59.6	61.6	60.7b	62.0	63.5		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	77.3	76.4	74.9b	75.4	76.9		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	28.8	30.3	28.8b	31.8	35.5		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	17.2	20.8	19.3b	22.9	26.3		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	41.2	40.4	38.9b	41.3	45.3		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.91e	2.23	2.22	2.41	2.45	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	85.1	84.2	85.8	85.9	85.8		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	84.9	83.4	86.5	87.3	86.7		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	85.3	85.1	85.1	84.6	84.9		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		101.9	103.3	103.1	101.9	101.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		21.3	20.1	19.6	19.2	19.5		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	12.0	13.0b	13.0	12.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	14.0	14.0b	14.0	13.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	9.0	12.0b	11.0	11.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.1	3.4		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	4.4	3.8	3.2	3.4	2.7		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	2.2	3.6	3.9	4.9	4.1		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.0	1.1	1.3b	1.3	1.3		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	1.2	1.1	1.4b	1.4	1.3		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	0.9	1.1	1.3b	1.2	1.3		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		102.7	117.7	115.5	118.1	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		134.4	149.0	147.1	149.3	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		112.3	118.2	117.5b	112.2	115.8		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Poland

1. Over the 2005-2007 period, the Polish economy expanded at an annual rate of 5.4%. In 2007, GDP per capita is expected to reach 55% of the EU average. Growth has been driven primarily by domestic demand, in particular by investment and private consumption. The government deficit has been reduced from 4.3% of GDP in 2005 to 3.8% of GDP in 2006, and is expected to reach 2.7% of GDP in 2007. Labour market conditions have improved markedly, with the unemployment rate projected to be less than 10% in 2007 compared with 17.7% in 2005. Nevertheless, serious labour market problems persist, including the lowest employment rate in the EU (estimated at 54% in 2007), and a falling activity rate (62.3%).

2. Poland's growth and jobs performance is constrained by a number of interconnected structural problems, including the low level of labour utilisation, slow progress in economic restructuring, underinvestment, and imbalances in public finances. Removing disincentives to work and shifting the expenditure from the social benefits system towards growth enhancing measures could contribute to a stronger performance of the labour market, and improve the sustainability of public finances.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Polish Implementation Report shows limited progress in implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over 2005-2007. The pace of progress appears to have accelerated slightly over the last year and the new Polish government should ensure continued implementation.

4. There has been some progress in response to the four country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council. Progress has been insufficient on fiscal consolidation and control over expenditure, improving the competition in network industries, boosting R&D, increasing employment of older workers and increasing participation in lifelong learning. Although further steps are required, initial progress has been made on decreasing the tax burden on labour, reforming employment services and reinforcing active labour market policy.

5. With regard to the other areas on which the Council concluded Poland should focus, there has been some progress on reducing and redirecting state aids, ensuring an effective framework for competition in the financial sector and improving environmental protection. There has been good progress on linking the cohesion policy instruments with the NRP measures and setting a more realistic target for investment in R&D. Insufficient progress has been made in upgrading transport infrastructure, continuing the process of the liberalisation of energy markets and speeding-up the business registration process.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Poland had made limited progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been limited progress on most of the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local governments and with Parliament, and the social partners have been reinforced. In order to increase public awareness, the government organised a number of seminars and public events. Links between the governance of the NRP and the cohesion policy programmes are strong. The earmarking of the structural funding for the Growth and Jobs objectives amounts to 64% of the available funds.

8. The Commission, recognising the formation of a new government, would stress the importance of tackling the structural weaknesses outlined in the country specific recommendations and points to watch the Council issued to Poland.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. The NRP identified the consolidation and better management of public finances as the key challenge in the macro-economic area. Poland has planned a range of measures to address this challenge, but their implementation has been abandoned due to the parliamentary election. The improvement in the fiscal balance is mainly the result of strong growth yielding windfall tax revenues, data revisions, lower-than-planned expenditure and also budgetary discipline.

10. The Council recommended that Poland should pursue actions to continue fiscal consolidation and supplement the nominal state budget deficit "anchor" (a deficit ceiling) with further mechanisms to enhance control over expenditure. While fiscal consolidation has proceeded, Poland has not taken any steps to introduce an expenditure rule. Furthermore, a range of planned actions, such as uniform operational principles in the pension and retirement benefit systems for defining benefit levels, a new public finance act, the introduction of "bridge pensions" (temporary pensions for people working in difficult conditions), the creation of a network of hospitals, and defining a "basket" of guaranteed healthcare services have not been implemented.

11. In general, Poland has not implemented measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP, despite the government's broad approach towards making public finance more sustainable. In the opinion of the Commission, the announced policy measures to address challenges facing Poland were promising and necessary, but since none of them has been fully implemented, the recommendation remains valid.

Micro-economic policies

12. The NRP identified four micro-economic challenges: developing entrepreneurship; increased innovation by companies; upgrading and developing infrastructure; and ensuring a competitive environment in networks sectors. Developing entrepreneurship has been well addressed, but further efforts on business registration and on overcoming delays in the implementation of the better regulation programme are still necessary and there is no specific target for reducing administrative burdens.

13. The Council recommended Poland to improve the framework for competition in network industries, pursue the reform of the public research sector to boost R&D and innovation and improve the framework for private sector R&D to maximise the benefits from foreign direct investment. The Council also asked Poland to set a firm and realistic R&D target for 2010 and to continue the liberalisation of energy markets.

14. Poland has opened the electricity and gas markets to all customers and implemented the relevant directives. Further actions are devoted to restructuring or increasing security of supply. However, Poland is facing a large numbers of infringement procedures related to EU legislation in the electricity, gas and telecommunications sectors.

15. The reform of public sector R&D, with its focus on a limited number of large projects and on the best performing institutions, is welcome. However, progress is mainly limited to adoption of legislation. A new, more realistic R&D target of 0.92% of the GDP by 2010 has been adopted. To increase Poland's innovation potential, a number of measures are foreseen in the document "Increasing innovation over the 2007-2013", but its implementation is awaited. Targeted tax breaks will help address a lack of business innovation, together with pilot projects on clusters and technology start-ups. Reform of public procurement rules could stimulate innovative products and services. Alongside this, a comprehensive strategy for attracting foreign direct investment in medium and high-tech industries is needed. In the quest to generate innovation, some progress is visible, but the key now is to implement and continuously evaluate these measures.

16. The Council highlighted a number of areas in the micro-economic domain on which Poland needs to focus. An environment protection policy strategy for 2007-2010 has been adopted and a number of actions developed to address the issue. This approach needs to be maintained in order to meet the accession commitments and apply the environmental *acquis* (e.g. NATURA 2000). The upgrading of infrastructure has focused on planning and institutional issues, with the rapid implementation now a priority. A new transport strategy for 2007-2020, has been approved, but the investment plans within this strategy now need implementing. The effective use of structural funds to support these plans is particularly important, alongside the use of public private partnerships, and a continued simplification of the investment procedures.

17. State aids are being monitored better and more are devoted towards horizontal goals, and this trend needs to continue. Transposition of financial sector legislation has improved, although some important pieces of legislation are still missing. New regulatory institutions have been established. Their independence needs to be assured. The transposition deficit of internal market legislation has doubled over recent times and contains a high number of related infringements, now demanding urgent action. A prompt and well co-ordinated implementation of ICT plans will help the establishment of a one-stop shop for business registration and other delayed e-government projects. The link between the NRP and the use of structural funds has been strengthened and it is now important to continue this trend during implementation.

18. In general, Poland has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The policy measures to address the country specific recommendations may not prove sufficient and therefore in the opinion of the Commission they remain valid. The Commission considers that there has been some response to the points to watch for Poland but they remain valid and it is now important to step up the pace of reform.

Employment policies

19. The NRP identified two employment challenges: creating and sustaining jobs and reducing unemployment; and improving the adaptability of workers and enterprises. Labour market performance has continued to improve, with good progress towards meeting national employment targets for 2010, and a rapid fall in the unemployment rate. However, given the increase in the poverty rate (from 17% in 2003 to 21% in 2005), now the highest in the EU, Poland faces the challenge of placing more emphasis on early prevention programmes and on building an inclusive labour market for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

20. The Council recommended that Poland should introduce a range of reforms in order to improve the functioning of the labour market. New legislative acts have been enacted to improve the operation of public employment services, and legislative amendments have been introduced to offer every unemployed person a job-counselling within 7 or 30 days (depending on the unemployment benefit rights). Alongside this, new programmes have been launched to support the integration of disadvantaged groups. Poland has cut the non-wage labour costs by lowering the disability pension premium paid by the employer (from 13% to 6%) and the employee (from 6.5% to 4.5%). This should have a positive effect on the attractiveness of employment of low-skilled workers.

21. Poland has the lowest employment rate for older workers and one of the lowest average exit ages from the labour force in the EU. Tackling this requires a comprehensive active ageing strategy, with strong incentives to work longer, better access to training, and incentives for employers to recruit. This needs to be backed-up by a revision of the early retirement and disability benefits system to make-work pay and shift resources from passive to active labour market policies. Increasing the extremely low level of childcare provision would help to increase one of the lowest female employment rates in the EU. The implementation of a lifelong learning strategy has again been delayed, and there are still problems with the quality of training programmes and their relevance to labour market needs.

22. Poland partly addresses flexicurity in an integrated way. The Labour Code has been amended to encourage flexible forms of work organisation. Expenditure on active labour market policy has increased, but needs to be complemented by better-targeted programmes that prevent long-term unemployment. Participation in lifelong learning is one of the lowest in the EU, and too little is invested in the vocational training of workers. The reform of the social security system, offering various forms of early withdrawal from the labour market, has not been brought forward. Social partners are partly involved in some of the flexicurity components.

23. In general, Poland has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The country specific

recommendation has been addressed to some extent with measures going in the right direction, but that may not prove sufficient considering challenges Poland is facing. The Commission therefore considers that this recommendation remains valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

24. In the light of the 2007 Poland's Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

25. Poland has made limited progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period and has shown limited progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

26. The Implementation Report shows a mixed policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. There has been some policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention.

27. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Poland's Implementation report are: the attention paid to developing entrepreneurship; initial steps to bring down the tax burden on labour; the priority and funding allocated to active labour market measures; and the strong linkage of the National Reform Programme priorities with EU funding.

28. The policy areas in the Polish National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: a stronger commitment to address the sustainability of the public finances; vigorous actions to improve regulation and to promote opening of markets in network industries; rapid implementation of the R&D reforms; further measures to address the low employment rate of older workers; better focusing of active labour market policy on the most vulnerable groups; and putting in place the lifelong learning strategy. Against this background Poland is recommended to:

- strengthen the fiscal consolidation and supplement the nominal state budget deficit "anchor" (deficit ceiling) with further mechanisms to enhance control over expenditure;

- improve the framework for competition in network industries, including through a review of the role of regulators, and vigorously continue the process of the liberalisation of energy markets;

- pursue the reform of the public research sector with a view to R&D and innovation being boosted, and implementing the framework for private sector R&D, thereby maximising the benefits from foreign direct investment;

- with a view to developing an integrated flexicurity approach, increase the level and efficiency of active labour market policy, notably for older persons and groups vulnerable to poverty, review benefit systems to improve the incentive to

work, put in place the lifelong learning strategy, and modernise education and training systems in view of labour market needs.

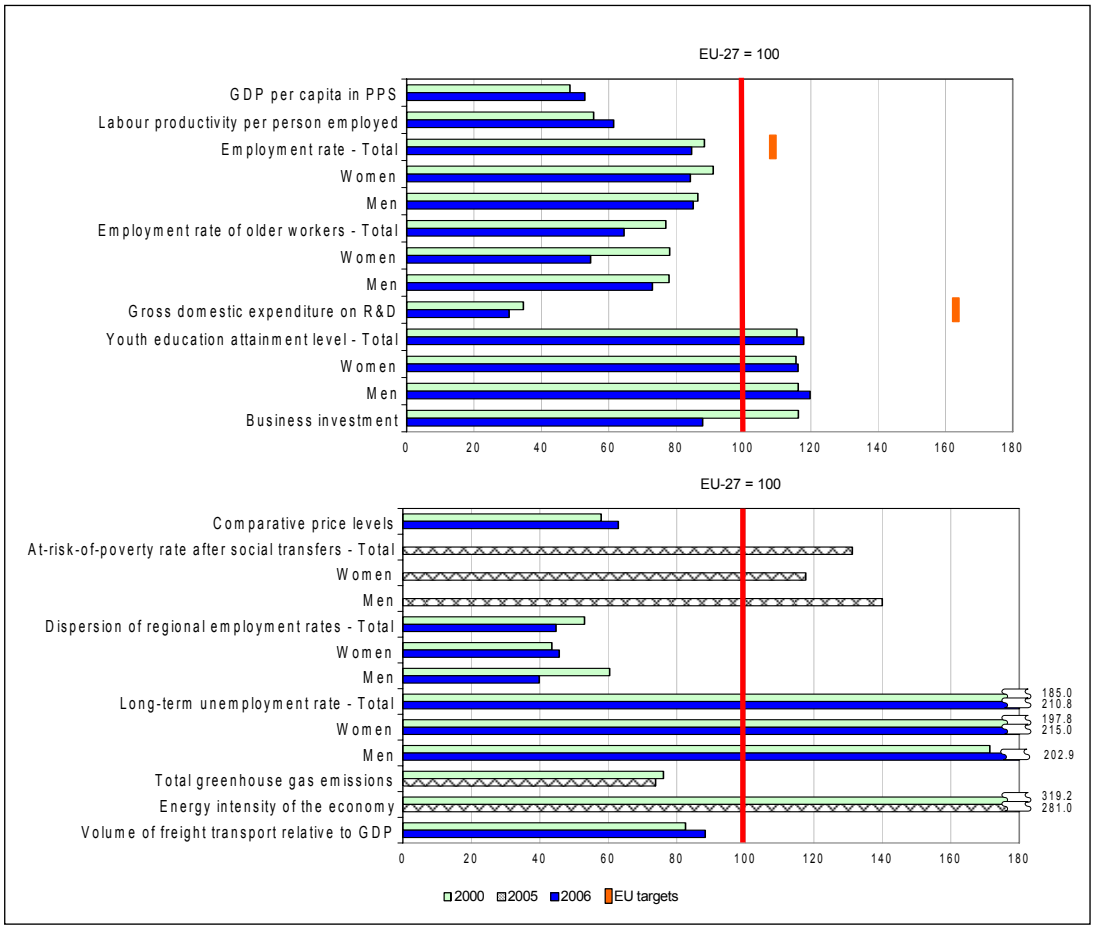
29. In addition, it will be important for Poland over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: upgrading transport infrastructure; speeding-up the business registration process; ensuring timely implementation of the e-government programmes; improve the transposition of internal market legislation; and increasing the provision of childcare facilities.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

POLAND

		PL						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		48.5	49.1	50.8	51.0	52.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		55.5e	59.9e	61.4e	60.4e	61.5e		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	55.0	51.2	51.7	52.8	54.5	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	48.9	46.0	46.2	46.8	48.2		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	61.2	56.5	57.2	58.9	60.9		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	28.4	26.9	26.2	27.2	28.1		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	21.4	19.8	19.4	19.7	19.0		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	36.7	35.2	34.1	35.9	38.4		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.64	0.54	0.56	0.57	0.56	1.65 (2008)	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	88.8	90.3	90.9	91.1	91.7		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	91.7	92.8	93.1	93.3	93.8		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	85.8	87.9	88.7	88.9	89.6		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		57.9	54.4	53.2	61.7	62.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		21.4	14.9	14.7	14.8	16.0		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	16.0	:	:	21.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	16.0	:	:	20.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	16.0	:	:	21.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	6.9	7.2	6.4	5.6	5.1		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	8.7	8.7	7.6	7.0	7.4		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	5.8	6.4	6.0	5.1	3.7		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	7.4	11.0	10.3	10.2	7.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	9.1	11.7	11.0	11.4	8.6		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	6.0	10.3	9.6	9.3	7.1		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		69.0	68.4	67.6	68.0	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		680.2	623.1	596.4	584.7	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		81.8	81.7	88.4b	89.0	94.2		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Portugal

1. In 2007, the Portuguese economy GDP grew at an estimated rate of 1.8% compared with 1.3% in 2006. In the face of slow economic growth, the unemployment rate has been rising from 4% in 2001 to 8% in 2007. The employment rate has remained close to 68%, above the EU average. Portugal still has a current account deficit of close to 9% of GDP, reflecting insufficient external competitiveness. Nevertheless, exports showed strong growth (8.9% in 2006 and 6.7% in 2007). Developments on public finances are more positive, with a falling general government deficit, which is estimated at 3% of GDP in 2007 compared with 6.1% of GDP in 2005. It is expected to decline further in 2008.

2. Whereas the recent economic growth has been led by the external sector, which is sound in view of the large external imbalances, the competitive position of the economy remains fragile. Domestic demand has remained weak. However, given the prospects of sounder public finances and ongoing structural reforms, economic performance should recover gradually, albeit at a moderate pace. Furthermore, economic growth has been hampered by weaknesses of a more structural nature. Productivity is low, due mainly to low levels of human capital as a result of deficiencies in the educational and training system. It would benefit from stronger competition in some markets.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Portuguese Implementation Report shows good progress with the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress has remained the same over the last year.

4. There has been good progress responding to the country specific recommendations adopted by the Council. Further steps have been taken towards a sustainable reduction of the government deficit, to reform public administration and pension systems, and to restructure the public sector. Progress has been less evident on redirecting public spending towards growth enhancing activities. There has been some progress in reforming educational and vocational training systems and in modernising employment legislation and countering labour market segmentation.

5. There has been some progress with regard to the other areas upon which the Council concluded that Portugal should focus. Measures have been taken to foster competition in energy and financial services markets, although problems remain. The measures to reduce green house gas emissions are not likely to be sufficient for Portugal to meet its Kyoto target. Portugal has not progressed in transposing EU legislation into national law. Some of the factors undermining social cohesion were addressed, but levels of persistent poverty and disparities in income distribution remain the highest in EU.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Portugal had made generally good progress regarding the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been good progress on the

commitments in most of the priority action areas. Portugal describes efforts it is taking to address the euro area recommendations in its latest Implementation Report. However, it is unlikely to reach its medium-term objective by 2009.

7. Political ownership over the Lisbon strategy and the NRP is very strong. The Lisbon coordinator reports directly to the Prime Minister, is in charge of the Technological Plan, and is actively involved in the coordination of Structural Funds. The implementation of the NRP is closely monitored through an active network involving all relevant government departments. The Implementation Report is discussed in parliament, and with social partners and other stakeholders prior to adoption. With over 200 public events at national and regional level, much has been done to raise public awareness of the Lisbon Strategy. The links between the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural funds have been reinforced with the approval of the new National Strategy Reference Framework for 2007-2013. The earmarking of structural funding for the Growth and Jobs objectives is satisfactory (82% of the Portuguese structural funds 2007-2013).

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The NRP considered Portugal's commitment to fiscal consolidation as a key macro-economic driver. A target to reduce the general government deficit to below 3% of GDP has been set for 2008. After a second consecutive year of impressive progress the deficit has been reduced from 6.1% of GDP in 2005, to 3.9% in 2006, and an estimate 3% in 2007. This is the result of both revenue increase and expenditure restraint. On the basis of current policies, the continuation of this downward path over the near future seems plausible. The upward trend in the government debt ratio in terms of GDP seems to have halted. Overall, good progress has been achieved in correcting fiscal imbalances in the period covered by the NRP.

9. The reform of public administration, one key instrument for controlling government spending and raising its efficiency, has been progressing well. Reforms cover the restructuring of central administration services and the streamlining of administrative procedures and internal procedures. The implementation of these reforms has been facilitated by a wider use of ICT. In 2007, the approval of new legislation and further implementation of these measures continued at a sustained pace. Many important implementation steps lie ahead, but progress has so far been good.

10. Portugal has generally made good progress in correcting public finance imbalances in a sustained way, for example, on rationalising the education and health services networks. This has been supported by public sector wage and employment restraint. The tightening of eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits is keeping expenditure growth under control and new rules for the indexation of social payments should help in keeping expenditure growth under control. Public finances have also benefited from buoyant tax revenue growth.

11. Major pension reforms were adopted in 2007 to tackle the long-term costs of an ageing population. These build on four main measures: the inclusion of a "sustainability factor"; automatically adjusting outlays for new pensioners to the

evolution of life expectancy; a new indexation rule for pensions as a function of growth and consumer price inflation; additional penalties for early retirement and a relative bonus for work beyond retirement age; and a different rule for pension calculation accounting for contributions over the entire career. Additional steps were taken to bring the rules for government employees in line with those in the private sector. This should significantly contribute towards improving the sustainability of spending on pensions.

12. Portugal has made good progress in addressing the macro-economic challenges set out in its NRP. Most progress has been made in correcting fiscal imbalances and on public administration reform, with less progress on redirecting public spending towards growth enhancing activities. The current account deficit remains high. The Commission therefore considers the recommendation as remaining valid and adds a new point to watch on external imbalances.

Micro-economic policies

13. In the micro-economic domain the Council referred to the need for Portugal to focus on: ensuring that the promising Technological Plan is fully implemented, consolidating the linkages between research and industry, and strengthening the involvement of the private sector; as well as ensuring effective competition in energy and financial services markets; reducing emissions; and reducing the deficit in transposing EU legislation into national law.

14. Portugal has strengthened its science, technology and innovation measures on the basis of the "Technological Plan" but the implicit national R&D target of 1.8% of GDP by 2010 will be a challenge to achieve. Signs of improvement are visible: the public budget for science and technology for 2008 has reached 1% of GDP and monthly figures for the technological balance of payments showed systematic surpluses. A number of measures have been taken to strengthen inputs into knowledge production, especially human resources in public and private sectors, increased networking and internationalisation. The continued implementation of the Technological Plan, alongside further initiatives to stimulate the linkages between research, higher education and industry, and to foster private R&D, is now essential to ensure enough absorption capacity.

15. Problems remain in competition in energy and financial services markets. Access to the electricity market remains difficult for new entrants, partly due to regulated tariffs, with the liberalised (non-regulated tariff) electricity supply representing a very modest share of the market. Some promising steps have been either announced or implemented, but progress will take time. In the financial services market, despite some earlier positive developments in the credit cards market, more steps are needed to address concerns raised by the Commission's sector inquiry. The transposition rate of the Financial Services Action Plan directives has improved but is not yet complete. Portugal has recently improved its transposition deficit of EU legislation, however it is still much above the interim target and still has a high number of infringement cases. It has yet to implement some of the directives in the fields of public procurement and intellectual property rights, and prepare for the implementation of the services directive on time.

16. Portugal set new policy goals on renewable energy sources in 2007. Several measures have been taken to achieve the 2010 target of 45% of electricity produced from renewable sources and some important initiatives have been taken to improve energy efficiency. The most recent projections indicate that Portugal will reach the Kyoto targets coupling existing policies, Kyoto mechanisms, carbon sinks and additional measures.

17. Portugal shows considerable progress in terms of improving the business environment. The SIMPLEX programme has improved e-Government and helped generate administrative simplification across a wide spectrum of business activities. Portugal has a good record in e-Government and is amongst the front-runners in the provision of public services to enterprises and citizens, but lags behind in several aspects of ICT take-up. In particular, more is needed to stimulate take-up among households and enterprises, even though broadband penetration in households doubled from December 2005 to December 2007, 98% of large enterprises and 90% of medium enterprises have broadband connections. A range of initiatives to facilitate access to capital for SMEs have been implemented. Plans to teach entrepreneurship education in secondary schools have yet to be implemented. Despite some progress, the implementation of policies to ensure better regulation is limited in areas like impact assessment and stakeholder consultation, there is no specific target for reducing administrative burdens, and a comprehensive approach is still required.

18. Portugal has been implementing measures to address the micro-economic challenges set out in its NRP. There has been a response to strengthening and implementing measures in science, technology and innovation, and in developing the business environment. Despite some progress in the areas of competition in energy and financial markets, and in addressing energy-related environmental challenges, problems remain. The transposition of EU legislation remains a problem. Therefore the Commission considers the points to watch as remaining valid.

Employment policies

19. The NRP identified five keys priorities in the employment area: enhancing education and qualifications, job creation, managing restructuring, promoting flexibility and security, and modernising social security. All of planned measures have now been implemented, complemented by new measures. Overall there has been some progress in implementation of policies.

20. The Council recommended Portugal to implement measures to strongly improve the education attainment levels of the young, and develop a vocational training system that is relevant to labour market needs and based on a "National Qualifications Framework". Reforms at all levels of the education system are strengthening educational and vocational training and improving relevance to labour market needs. In particular, the "Novas Oportunidades" initiative is a significant response aimed at reducing school drop-outs and increasing qualifications. A 7% reduction in the number of drop-outs from secondary education is recorded. However, Portugal still has a high number of early school leavers (36.3% in 2006) and low youth education attainment (49.6%), both demanding further action. The policy response to these challenges needs to generate improvements in the overall quality and efficiency of

the education and training system, in order to ensure better educational achievements and an enhanced employability of the population.

21. The Council also recommended Portugal to modernise employment protection, including legislation to foster flexibility and security to reduce the high levels of labour market segmentation. Portugal has taken action to pursue the modernisation of employment protection with an independent working group set up to evaluate the existing legal framework. Its final report will be published by late 2007, and a revision of the Labour Code is expected in 2008. Further steps are needed to deliver an effective reduction of labour market segmentation.

22. The Council also referred to the need to focus on factors undermining social cohesion. Priority has been given to upgrading qualification levels and enlarging social infrastructures for childcare and elderly. Vulnerable groups, especially the disabled and immigrants, are targeted for specific policy measures. It is important to strengthen the links with the National Action Plan for Inclusion, as well as with macro and micro economic policies.

23. Portugal partially follows an integrated approach on flexicurity. A number of measures have been taken to stimulate life long learning, especially through the "Novas Oportunidades" and a proposal to reform active labour market policies was presented in June 2007. Measures were also adopted to promote the modernisation of social protection and unemployment benefit systems. Further efforts are needed in particular concerning employment protection legislation. Social partners are involved and have been consulted on the major reforms taking place.

24. Portugal has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. There has been a good policy response to the recommendations and point to watch in the employment area. However, important challenges remain, including a sustained improvement in educational achievements and an integrated approach on flexicurity, with special focus on reducing labour market segmentation. The Commission therefore considers the recommendation and points to watch in this area remaining valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

25. In the light of the 2007 Portuguese Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

26. Portugal has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Portugal has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

27. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the recommendations issued by the Council. There has also been some policy response on the additional areas identified by the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The

Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

28. Some of the strengths shown by the 2007 Portuguese Implementation Report are: the progress achieved in correcting fiscal imbalances and promoting sustainable reforms of the public administration, on pension and health-care reform, progress on unlocking business potential and the implementation of the Technological Plan.

29. The policy areas in Portugal's National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: consolidating public finances, whilst improving its quality and sustainability, and gearing public spending towards raising Portugal's growth potential; improving the efficiency of the educational system notably by improving attainment levels and reducing early school leaving; modernising employment protection to curb the segmentation of the labour market. Against this background it is recommended that Portugal:

- in the context of the on-going correction of fiscal imbalances and public administration reform, redirect public spending towards uses more supportive to potential economic growth, while maintaining firm expenditure control overall;

- further implement measures to strongly improve the efficiency of the educational system notably by improving attainment levels of the young, fighting early school leaving and developing a vocational training system that is relevant to the labour market needs and based on the National Qualifications Framework;

- continue efforts to modernise employment protection, including legislation to reduce the high levels of labour market segmentation, within the flexicurity approach.

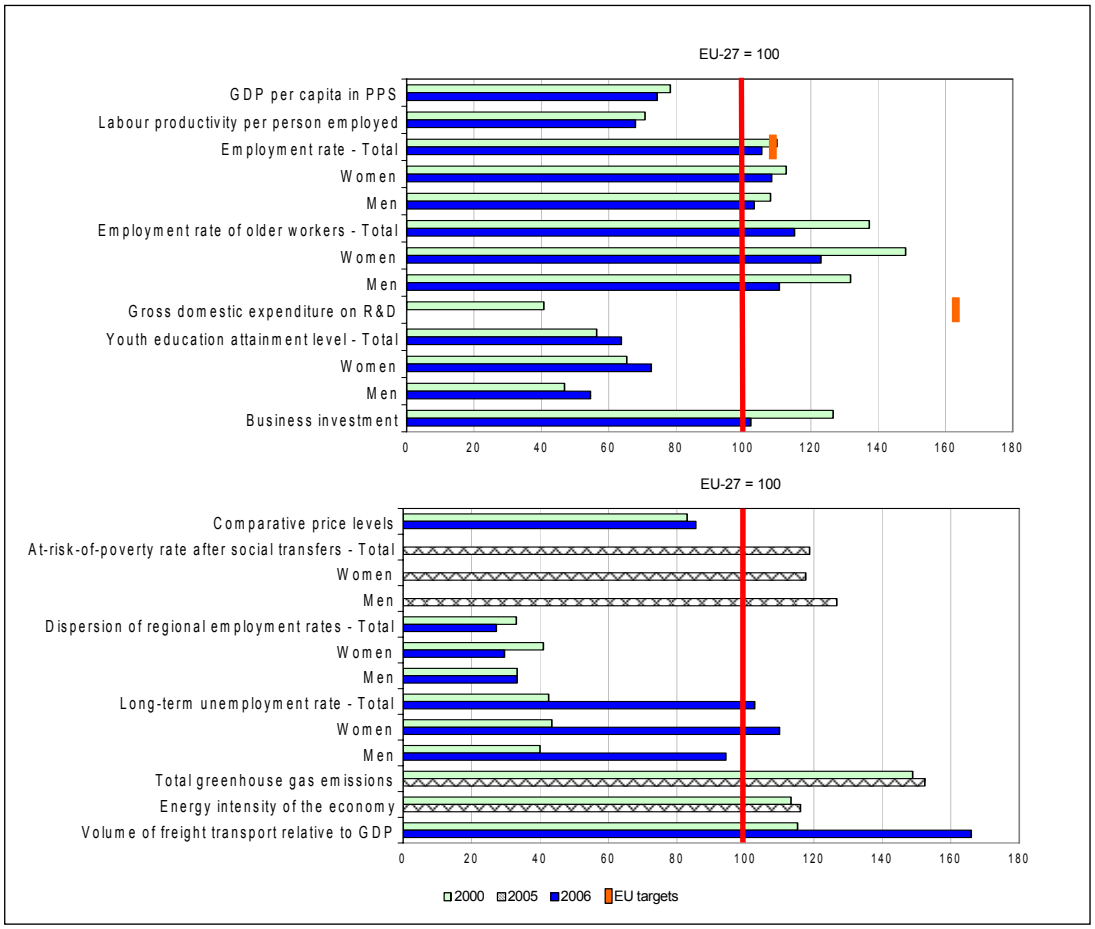
30. In addition, it will be important for Portugal over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges for the future: narrowing its current account deficit in a sustained way; pursuing the implementation of the Technological Plan, consolidating the linkages between research, higher education and industry, and involving the private sector further; ensuring effective competition, notably in energy and financial services markets; further implement a better regulation programme and in particular strengthen the impact assessment system; reducing the deficit in transposing EU legislation into national law; devising and implementing the measures needed to reduce green house gas emissions; and continuing to address factors undermining social cohesion.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

PORTUGAL

		PT						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		78.3	77.0b	75.2	75.4	74.4f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		70.8	69.8f	67.3f	68.1f	67.9f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	68.4	68.1	67.8	67.5	67.9	70.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	60.5	61.4	61.7	61.7	62.0		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	76.5	75.0	74.2	73.4	73.9		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	50.7	51.6	50.3	50.5	50.1		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	40.6	42.4	42.5	43.7	42.8		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	62.1	62.1	59.1	58.1	58.2		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.76e	0.74	0.77	0.81	:	1.8	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	43.2	47.9	49.6	49.0	49.6		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	51.8	55.5	58.7	57.5	58.6		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	34.6	40.4	40.8	40.8	40.8		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		83.0	86.0	86.7	85.0	85.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		23.3	19.8	19.5	18.7	18.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	21.0	19.0p	20.0b	19.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	22.0	:	22.0b	20.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	19.0	:	19.0b	19.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	4.3	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.1		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	8.2	6.3	5.9	5.6	4.8		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.7	2.2	2.9	3.7	3.8		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	2.0	2.7	3.4	4.2	4.4		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	1.4	1.8	2.6	3.2	3.3		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		135.0	136.1	138.9	140.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		241.5	234.7	238.0	241.4	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		114.2	113.7	163.7b	171.2	177.1e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Romania

1. Romania has experienced strong economic growth averaging 6.4% annually from 2003 to 2006, and it is expected to be 6% in 2007 and 5.9% in 2008. Growth has been driven largely by foreign investment and fast growing domestic demand, creating a widening current account deficit (13.3% of GDP in the last 12 months to August 2007) and rising inflation. GDP per capita is low, about 38% of the EU-average in 2006. Unemployment was 7.3% in 2006 and is expected to decrease to 7.1% in 2007. The employment rate (58.8%) is far below both the Lisbon target of 70% and the current EU average. Romanian youth unemployment is over 20%, amongst the EU's highest.

2. Romania joined the European Union on 1st January 2007. Its strongly performing economy is showing clear signs of overheating with a very high and growing external account deficit, growing labour shortages in spite of a significant share of untapped labour, strong wage growth and rapid increases in household borrowing; these have, in turn, fuelled inflationary pressures. The challenge for Romania is to tackle these macro-economic vulnerabilities urgently whilst speeding up structural reforms to strengthen its competitiveness and, with its low-cost advantages gradually eroding, move the economy towards more innovative and higher value activities.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. The Romanian National Reform Programme (NRP), submitted at the end of July 2007, identifies 6 key challenges which need to be tackled to lay the foundations for the successful implementation of further reforms: improving the quality and management of government expenditure in the context of prudent macroeconomic policies; improving the functioning of markets; further improving the business environment; increasing employment and activity rates on the labour market; sustainable management of resources; and an overarching challenge of improving administrative capacity. The Commission fully agrees with this analysis of the main priorities and Romania's proposed approach to sequence its reforms.

4. The NRP's ultimate aim - to catch up with the rest of the EU by growing robustly and increasing its employment rate - appears realistic; however, a high degree of political focus, continuity and determination will be required to implement the reforms necessary. Success will require the different political actors - the national parliament and stakeholders – to rally behind an ambitious structural reform agenda for which the NRP is a good basis. The NRP should be further developed so that it presents a truly strategic vision; one that explains sufficiently how the reforms in various areas are integrated and what possible synergies they have; and that includes sufficient detail about time-tables, budgetary implications and monitoring and evaluation procedures to assess the feasibility of the proposed policy responses.

5. In spite of some progress achieved so far, Romania's economic and social development is still hampered by weak public administration. Reinforcement of administrative capacity is particularly urgent in budget planning and execution, enforcement of competition rules, supervisory and regulatory authorities (particularly

in network industries and financial markets), modernising public employment services and ensuring a coherent judiciary system. The NRP recognises that administrative capacity must be strengthened both at national and local level, but proposes few concrete actions. Corruption still affects the business environment and access to and quality of public services, so this is also an issue that needs significant improvement. Progress on these aspects is monitored through the Commission's co-operation and verification mechanism.

6. The NRP foresees several measures to meet the 2006 Spring European Council conclusions in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. However, greater effort is needed to ensure adequate simplification of the business environment. There is little information provided on making it easier to recruit the first employee or measures for the young unemployed.

7. Efforts to build political ownership during the NRP's formulation have been substantial; a national Lisbon coordinator has been appointed and the Prime Minister's Office has been closely involved. Consultation of stakeholders, particularly parliament, the social partners and local authorities, needs to be strengthened. Monitoring needs more effort, particularly by improving inter-ministerial coordination.

8. Romania is eligible for €19.67 billion of funding from the Structural and Cohesion Funds in the period 2007-2013. Links between NRP priorities and structural and cohesion fund programmes are strong. Of the total programme allocation, 56% is earmarked for Lisbon objectives. While some steps have been taken to strengthen administrative capacity, more efforts are needed, particularly at local level, to ensure their effective use and absorption.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. Romanian fiscal policy is not yet sufficiently predictable; frequent budgetary amendments during the year result in expenditure increases and shifts of some investment expenditures to current spending. The NRP identifies improvements to the quality and management of government expenditure as the key macro-economic priority so as to ensure productive investments in a prudent macro-economic framework and enhance the credibility of its fiscal policy. The Commission fully agrees with this focus.

10. According to the NRP, budgetary policy will be oriented towards maintaining macroeconomic stability and disinflation. Introduction of a medium-term expenditure framework and (partial) programme-based budgeting is an important step in the right direction; to produce its full impact, it should be generalised across all departments. Efforts should be stepped up to effectively implement such instruments and ensure they bear fruit. This would help the restructuring of, expenditure to improve the quality of public finances, where more progress is needed.

11. The NRP foresees the budget deficit improving to 2% of GDP in 2009-2010. If achieved, that would tighten the rather loose pro-cyclical fiscal policy conducted

since 2006, helping contain the widening current account deficit that poses an increasing risk to macro-economic stability. However, the NRP does not make sufficiently clear how the budget deficit will be sustainably reduced, particularly given pressures arising from demographic developments. For instance, pension and health care reforms underway are described, but their long-term impact on the sustainability of public finances is not examined. Still, pension reform has helped increase the statutory retirement age; however, further steps will be needed in this area.

12. Tightening labour market and skills shortages, in no small part due to large outward migration, have contributed to private sector wages increasing much faster than productivity growth. At the same time, the public sector wage bill has risen by some 30% on average over 2006-2007. This fuels inflation and means higher public expenditure, which threaten to erode Romania's competitiveness rapidly. This makes it all the more urgent to implement ambitious structural reforms in the micro-economic and employment areas to tap into new more durable sources of growth and promote more innovation.

13. Overall, the NRP broadly addresses Romania's key macro-economic challenges. But while the NRP shows good intentions, the credibility and effectiveness of the approach largely depends on the authorities' ability to improve budget planning and execution as well as restructure the composition of public spending towards growth potential enhancing investments. Further measures will also be needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances; these include increasing the number of people in work contributing to social security, gradually raising the retirement age and further reforming health care and pension systems.

Micro-economic policies

14. Romania's NRP identifies increasing economic competitiveness, improving the business environment and the sustainable use of renewable resources as its key micro-economic challenges. The Commission subscribes to these priorities.

15. The NRP sets out in general terms a range of initiatives, most of which will draw on structural funds investments, to improve transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure; however, the anticipated results sometimes seem overstated. In any event, different departments and levels of government will need to coordinate closely to achieve maximum benefits. Opening up network markets and the services sector, as presented in the NRP, will increase competition. However, the detail provided is insufficient to assess its likely impact, particularly in electricity and telecommunications where the staffing and independence of the regulator remains a concern. Total state aid (as a percentage of GDP) is much higher than the EU average, and Romania should continue to reduce and reorient its state-aid towards horizontal objectives, such as innovation.

16. Onerous regulation, long delays in obtaining authorisations and legal insecurity are serious obstacles to growth and innovation, particularly for SMEs. Whilst the NRP proposes some positive measures to improve the business environment, such as e-government applications and the introduction of impact assessments on some new measures, as well as some simplification of legislation, it shies away from tackling deeper problems. Given Romania's starting position, the NRP could have been much

more ambitious, particularly with regard to reducing administrative burdens and cutting red tape. Romania should enhance its efforts to ensure a timely implementation of the Services Directive and use this opportunity to streamline its authorisation and licensing systems.

17. Key factors constraining Romania's innovation capacity include a very fragmented research activity (with many institutions producing low-quality outputs), weak links between business and research institutions, and a low R&D content in foreign direct investment. The NRP foresees a significant increase of public spending in R&D from 0.19% of GDP in 2005 and 0.5% in 2007 to 1% by 2010; budgetary plans reflect this increase up to 2008. The NRP sets an overall R&D target of 3% of GDP by 2015. In order to achieve this objective and avoid absorption problems, Romania should do more to increase the number of researchers, strengthen management capacity and set up intermediary funding bodies.

18. Implementation of a new National Research, Development and Innovation Strategy for 2007-2013 is underway. This foresees a broad range of measures to stimulate excellence and co-operation, technology transfer and investments in human resources and provides for a wide use of competition-based funding. The latter, fully implemented, could accelerate the much-needed consolidation of Romanian research institutions. However, the overall policy response could benefit from a clearer identification of strengths, and more targeted use of public funding, including structural funds, to leverage greater private sector R&D investments. To facilitate the move towards a knowledge-based society, inefficiencies in Romania's education system need to be tackled. The NRP fully recognises the importance of spreading the use of ICT, but says little how this could be done.

19. Sustainable resource use is high on Romania's reform agenda. Some measures are foreseen to increase energy efficiency by 2.5 to 3% annually during the period of the NRP. More should be done; the high energy-intensity of the economy (six times above the EU average) and fast rising energy costs are increasingly undermining competitiveness and social cohesion. For example, more structural funds could be devoted to energy-efficiency. The NRP emphasises the importance of the environment in its own right, but also to tourism, whose importance for the economy is growing.

20. The effects of Romania's micro-economic policies are unclear given the absence of details on concrete measures, time-tables and budgetary impacts. The proposed steps to improve the regulatory environment and cut red tape are insufficient to address the challenges

Employment policies

21. The Romanian economy is facing increased labour shortages, due to fast growth and large outward migration. Nonetheless, employment rates remain low and under-employment high so that there is, in principle, still a large source of untapped labour. Against this backdrop, the Romanian NRP focuses on attracting and retaining more people in employment, by addressing the high level of non-wage labour costs, making contractual arrangements more flexible, developing vocational education and training and increasing the capacity of public employment services. The Commission subscribes to this.

22. Agricultural activities represent nearly one third of total employment, but contribute less than 10% of GDP. Policies are needed to modernise agricultural production and help (re-)integrate subsistence farmers into other sectors of economic activity. More resolute steps are needed to reduce the very large number of inactive people, especially the long-term unemployed, youth and vulnerable groups. Some measures are proposed to integrate Roma into employment and education, but it remains a major challenge.

23. The NRP recognises that education and labour market needs are relatively weakly linked. Early school leaving is a serious problem; policy should focus more on the students most likely to leave school early due to their social or geographical background. The NRP refers to draft legislation for both pre-university and university education and to ongoing efforts to increase education quality, but it is not clear when measures will be taken, nor whether they will be sufficient to tackle the problems.

24. The NRP sets an ambitious target for increasing adult participation in training which, at 1.5%, is the EU's lowest. This should be achieved by implementing a national qualification framework and increasing investment in continuing vocational training, including with European Social Fund support. Social partners should be more closely involved in the design and implementation of training, so that efforts target sectors where skill deficits are most pressing.

25. Efforts to increase participation in lifelong learning are not combined with measures to modernise social security systems and employment legislation or reinforce active labour market policies within an integrated flexicurity approach. Further action is envisaged to improve contractual arrangements, but more resolute steps are needed to strengthen the link between contributions and benefits and enforcement capacity, if the significant share of undeclared work is to be addressed properly. The effectiveness and geographical scope of public employment services needs further improvement, particularly at regional and local levels. Romania has proposed measures in all four policy areas, but a wide discussion on flexicurity between policy makers and social partners is still needed.

26. Overall, some initial steps have been taken on specific aspects of employment policy, but there is as yet no coherent overall approach or sustained integration of education and employment policies. Stronger action is required to improve the employment prospects of vulnerable groups, especially Roma, youth and older workers, by upgrading the skills of the current and future workforce, by strengthening incentives to work and by tackling undeclared work. Extending active life and reducing early retirement should contribute to both the adequacy and long-term sustainability of the pension system and increase the labour supply.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

27. In the light of Romania’s 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of the National Reform Programme and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

28. Overall, the National Reform Programme focuses on the right challenges. However, in some critical areas, such as strengthening administrative capacity and improving the business environment, the programme lacks ambition. In other areas, information about the content of measures, their timelines and budgetary support is sometimes lacking which makes it difficult to assess whether measures will bring solutions to the problems and challenges identified.

29. The programme's strengths include initiatives aimed at implementing a medium-term expenditure framework, reducing non-wage labour costs and reforming research structures.

30. The policy areas in the Romanian National Reform Programme where weaknesses need to be tackled with the highest priority are: strengthening administrative capacity, addressing overheating and improving budget planning and the quality of expenditure; cutting red tape and activating labour supply and raising skill levels. Against this background, it is recommended that Romania:

- urgently strengthen administrative capacity at both central and local levels of government by building up effective regulatory, control and enforcement capacity;

- avoid pro-cyclical fiscal policy to contain the growing current account deficit and inflationary pressures, keep wage developments in line with productivity growth and improve budget planning and execution as well as the quality of public finances by reviewing the composition of public spending and by reducing and redirecting state aid to horizontal objectives;

- take rapid measures to reduce substantially administrative procedures and delays to obtain authorisations as part of a coherent better regulation policy in order to improve the business environment, which will also help in the fight against corruption;

- implement an integrated approach to increasing employment, activity rates and productivity levels, especially by accelerating reforms of the education system to respond better to labour market needs, by reducing early school leaving, by significantly increasing adult participation in education and training; and by transforming subsistence/semi-subsistence farming into sustainable employment.

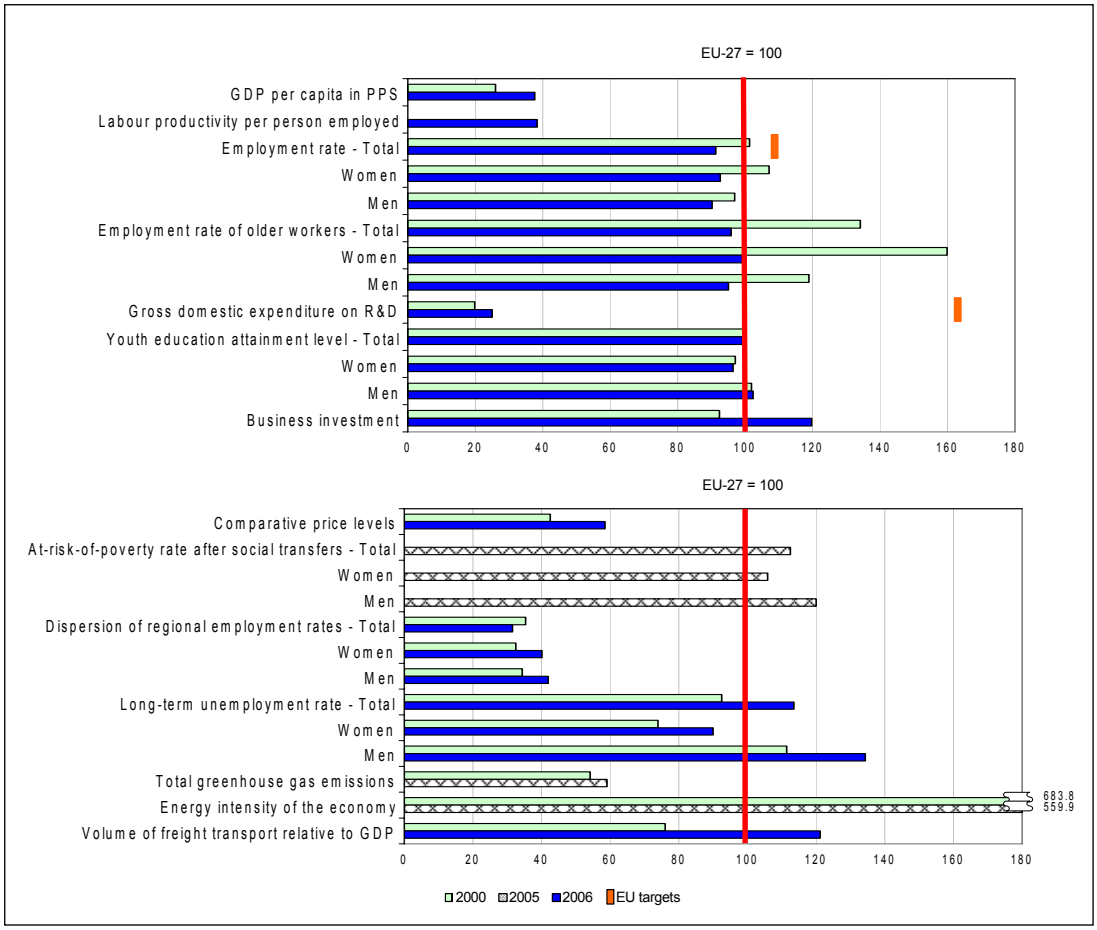
31. In addition it will be important for Romania over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on: taking further measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances, in particular with regard to potential risks in terms of adequacy and sustainability of pensions; reinforcing measures to tackle fragmentation of the research base whilst ensuring that planned increases in public research funding yield effective returns by vigorously implementing the national R&D and innovation strategy and by regularly monitoring its results; pursuing a more integrated approach to infrastructure development and roll-out of ICT; intensifying efforts to tackle undeclared work; improving the effectiveness and geographical scope of public employment services, particularly to assist vulnerable groups.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

ROMANIA

		RO						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		26.0	31.5	33.6	34.4	37.6f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		:	32.1	34.7	35.6f	38.3f		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	63.0	57.6	57.7	57.6	58.8	63.0	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	57.5	51.5	52.1	51.5	53.0		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	68.6	63.8	63.4	63.7	64.6		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	49.5	38.1	36.9	39.4	41.7		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	43.8	33.3	31.4	33.1	34.5		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	56.0	43.5	43.1	46.7	50.0		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.37	0.39	0.39	0.41	0.46	1.8	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	76.1	75.0	75.3	76.0	77.2		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	77.0	75.7	76.1	76.8	77.8		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	75.2	74.3	74.6	75.2	76.6		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		42.5	43.4	44.3	55.5	58.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		17.0	18.2	18.9	19.3	21.8		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	17.0	17.0	18.0	18.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	17.0	17.0	18.0	18.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	4.6	3.5	4.9	4.5	3.6		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	6.5	6.1	7.7	8.2	6.5		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	3.3	2.6	3.1	2.8	3.9		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	3.7	4.3	4.8	4.0	4.2		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	3.4	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.6		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.9	4.6	5.5	4.6	4.7		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		49.1	55.8	56.7	54.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		1457.2	1353.7	1226.9	1164.9	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		75.3	95.6	104.3b	131.1	129.3		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Slovenia

1. The Slovenian economy has shown strong growth performance over the entire last decade, most notably during the 2005-2007 period when GDP increased at an average annual rate of above 5%. In 2006, GDP growth reached a high at 5.7%, while GDP per capita in purchasing power standard reached 89% of the EU-27 average, with domestic demand as the main growth driver. Inflation was at 2.5% in 2006, but has increased markedly in 2007, with the average rate forecast to reach the highest rate in the euro area at 3.5%. Unemployment stood at 6% in 2006 and it is continuing to decline. However, structural challenges in the labour market persist and a gender gap in employment is increasing.

2. On 1 January 2007, Slovenia was the first new Member State to join the euro area, thus achieving one of the key objectives of its economic policy. Euro area membership reinforces the need for fiscal consolidation and for removing structural rigidities in the labour and product markets. Improvements in these areas will help Slovenia absorb country-specific shocks and strengthen the adjustment capacity of its economy. In this context, the challenges to the long-term fiscal sustainability related to population ageing remain highly relevant. Containing national inflationary pressures in the euro area is also essential to ensure competitiveness and sustained growth.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the 2007 Slovenian Implementation Report shows good progress in implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period.

4. Slovenia has addressed the two country specific recommendations adopted by the Council to some extent. However, efforts need to be substantially increased with regard to the reform of the pension system and promotion of active ageing, as well as enhancement of employment services.

5. With regard to the other issues in the micro-economic and employment domains, on which the Council concluded Slovenia should focus on, some progress has been recorded. However, reforms need to be strengthened, especially in some of the micro areas.

6. Last year's Annual Progress Report concluded that Slovenia had made rather limited progress on meeting the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been some progress in some areas, such as shortening start-up times for businesses.

7. The Implementation Report does not specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries. Nevertheless, relevant developments include an ongoing comprehensive tax reform which has improved the quality of public finances, although challenges remain to be tackled. Slovenia has not taken sufficient advantage of the favourable cyclical conditions to make more rapid progress towards the medium-term objective, in line with the Stability and Growth Pact. The structural

budget deficit is projected to remain unchanged in 2007, despite the good economic times. Moreover, there continues to be a lack of competition, especially in the utilities sector. The financial system remains small and inefficient, with a limited degree of openness. Steps have been taken in the labour market to introduce the flexicurity system, but more needs to be done.

8. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the central and regional level have been enhanced and the involvement of social partners is substantial. The responsibility for national co-ordination is at ministerial level. There is a high level of parliamentary involvement. There is also a strong public debate on the reforms in the media. However, the monitoring process needs some improvement. Slovenia took a progressive approach towards the programming of its cohesion policy spending for the 2007-2013 period. Its National Strategic Reference Framework indicatively allocates more than 60% of the structural and cohesion funds for Lisbon objectives.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. In the 2005-2007 period, there has been good progress on some of the commitments made in the NRP. Slovenia has successfully adopted the euro, thus achieving one of the primary goals set out in the NRP. A major tax reform has reduced the fiscal burden on labour and capital, while improving the quality of public revenues. Slovenia is on track to achieve the envisaged reduction in the expenditure-to-GDP ratio, due to lower expenditure on social transfers and interest payments, as well as lower cost of government operations. However, progress in other areas has been less satisfactory. The rigidity of the budget remains a concern, especially since the high share of non-discretionary spending commitments leaves little scope for shifting expenditure towards growth enhancing activities. The recent Collective Agreement for Public Sector wages poses some risks to both fiscal consolidation and price stability. Membership in the euro area indeed points to the continued need for Slovenia to place considerable emphasis on price stability as an important contribution to a growth friendly environment.

10. The Council recommended that Slovenia should continue reforming its pension system and promote active ageing, in order to increase the employment rate of older workers and improve long-term sustainability. The employment rate of older workers at 32.6% (2006) is still low compared to the euro area average, but shows an increasing trend due to various support measures, including incentives for private sector employers and the gradual increase of the retirement age stipulated by the 1999 pension reform. However, the government backtracked on the sustainability-oriented pension indexation element of the reform in 2005. No new measures have been introduced in 2007 in response to the recommendation, even though the expected increase in the age-related expenditure threatens the long-term sustainability of public finances. An active ageing strategy is still under preparation.

11. In general, Slovenia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. However, progress is limited regarding the country specific recommendation.

Micro-economic policies

12. Slovenia has made some progress over the 2005-2007 period in tackling the micro-economic challenges identified in its NRP. It has been successful in exploiting the positive business climate in Europe: exports grew by 25% between August 2006 and August 2007. However, it has been less successful in attracting foreign direct investment. While there are delays in the privatisation process, particularly in the banking and insurance sectors, the privatisation of the second largest bank is currently underway. The issue of competition has often been raised in public debate, following the unexpectedly high price increases in the food retail sector, retail banking, tourism (restaurant services) and utilities (communal services). Regulation of the network industries has brought about good results, particularly in the telecommunication sector, which saw many new entrants and decreasing prices. Liberalisation of the energy sector has started on time in mid-2007. Better regulation remains high on the political agenda. Good progress has been made in cutting the administrative burden, and a 25% target has been set for some priority fields. However, Slovenia has not yet established a comprehensive framework for impact assessment.

13. The Council referred to the need to focus on: setting realistic targets for R&D investment; improving competition, notably in professional services, and strengthening the Competition Protection Office; promoting environmental technologies and energy efficiency; and shortening business start-up times and reducing the related costs. Slovenia has set an ambitious goal of reaching 3% of GDP in R&D investment by 2010. Nevertheless, public sector investment has been lagging behind the growing investment by the private sector. Thus, the aggregate R&D investment has remained stable at approximately 1.5% of GDP for the last five years, highlighting the lack of appropriate R&D strategy with a clear allocation of tasks amongst the responsible institutions. The Implementation Report indicates that some deregulation is underway in the professional services: notaries, pharmacists and architects are under review. However, the responsibility for action lies solely with a single ministry without any coordination with the relevant actors (e.g. professional bodies etc.). The effectiveness of the Competition Protection Office has been improved with the adoption of a new law that gives it powers to impose fines. The Implementation Report recognises that the implementation of measures on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, cleaner fuels and curbing of CO_2 emissions have been insufficient. Without additional measures Slovenia is unlikely to meet its Kyoto targets. As regards business environment, a one-stop-shop electronic registration system has significantly reduced the costs and time needed for self-employed persons to start business activities. In early 2008, the system will be extended to enable setting up a private limited company in four days. This has been accompanied by a business-friendly tax reform, a tax break for R&D activities, venture capital investments by local firms, and improved access to finance for early-stage SMEs. Further measures need to be taken on entrepreneurship education, the "Think Small First" principle and the one-stop shop for recruiting the first employee.

14. In general, Slovenia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The point to watch on business environment has been addressed satisfactorily. However, the points to watch on appropriate R&D investment strategy and energy efficiency, in particular

with regard to CO_2 emissions, have been addressed only in a limited manner. The Commission welcomes the improvements to the effectiveness of the Competition Protection Office, but considers the progress on deregulating professional services as limited.

Employment policies

15. In 2005-2007, Slovenia has launched most of the major employment reforms set out in the NRP. Activation policies helping people into employment have been enhanced and conditions for receiving social benefits have been tightened. A consensus on revised contractual arrangements has recently been reached with the social partners to improve labour market flexibility. Nevertheless, the reforms in relation to flexicurity fell short of what was announced in 2005. New legislation and funding are intended to complement the reforms in the education system and to improve its link with the economy. Although the employment rate of older workers has somewhat increased, the Pensions and Disability Act has not been amended to promote active ageing, which remains a fundamental challenge. Progress with the implementation of policies that address the labour market challenges identified in the 2005 NRP is, therefore, mixed.

16. The Council recommended that Slovenia should enhance its employment services to support the move towards more flexible contractual arrangements and increased conditionality of benefits, giving high priority to early stages of unemployment. Cooperation between public and private labour market institutions is being enhanced, helping to improve the efficiency of the job-brokering service. However, in spite of modernisation and additional training, the employment service of Slovenia still faces capacity constraints, making it difficult to deliver an effective, personalised service. Therefore, improvements to the effectiveness of the service should continue, especially in relation to persons with low employment prospects.

17. The Council also referred to the need to strengthen the link between the education system and the labour market, to reduce segmentation and better integrate young people into the labour market. The NRP set an ambitious goal that by 2008 every young person with a university or higher level of education should find employment within six months after their studies. The Implementation Report is not explicit on whether this target is met. Nonetheless, the overall goal is being pursued through active labour market policy measures and a promotion campaign on education areas that offer better employment opportunities. A new law on scholarships has been adopted and additional funding provided, in order to increase the number of scholarship recipients and to ensure a better link with the labour market needs. The reforms of vocational and higher education are continuing. The Commission considers this an appropriate response to the challenges Slovenia faces. Further efforts should pursue the same line of action, whilst increasing the supply of higher education programmes should not compromise their quality.

18. Slovenia has demonstrated its intention to develop a flexicurity system, but further efforts are necessary to achieve an appropriate combination of labour market flexibility and employment security. The social security system is relatively effective and efforts have been made to strengthen the implementation of active labour market policies. Lifelong learning has improved remarkably. The respective amendments to the Labour Relations Act were negotiated with the social partners who are fully

involved in the reform process. However, the amendments do not go far enough in terms of increased flexibility for those in permanent employment, rather increasing flexibility for the outsiders. In addition, there has been no progress in integrating "student work" into the mainstream labour market. Therefore, there is a risk that segmentation will persist, mainly affecting young people. The new tripartite Social Agreement 2007-2009 is an important basis for further measures.

19. In general, Slovenia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The country specific recommendation and points to watch have been addressed to some extent.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

20. In the light of the 2007 Slovenian Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

21. Slovenia has made good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Slovenia has also been showing some progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council.

22. The Implementation Report shows some policy response to the recommendations issues by the Council. There has also been some policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention. The Implementation Report does not however specifically address the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

23. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Implementation Report are: the involvement of social partners in drafting all major labour market reforms; efforts to strengthen the link between education and scholarship systems and the economy; the shortening of business start-up times and the reduction of administrative burden. Slovenia's entry into the euro area is the central achievement in the macro field.

24. The policy areas in the National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are: further pension reform and effective implementation of the active ageing strategy; and a more flexible labour market combined with a more effective personalised approach in the implementation of active labour market policies. Against this background it is recommended that Slovenia:

- take further steps to strengthen the reform of the pension system and promote active ageing, with a view to increasing the employment rate of older workers and improving long-term sustainability;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, promotes more flexible contractual arrangements and improves the effectiveness of employment services, particularly in relation to persons with low employment prospects, in order to counter labour market segmentation mainly affecting young people.

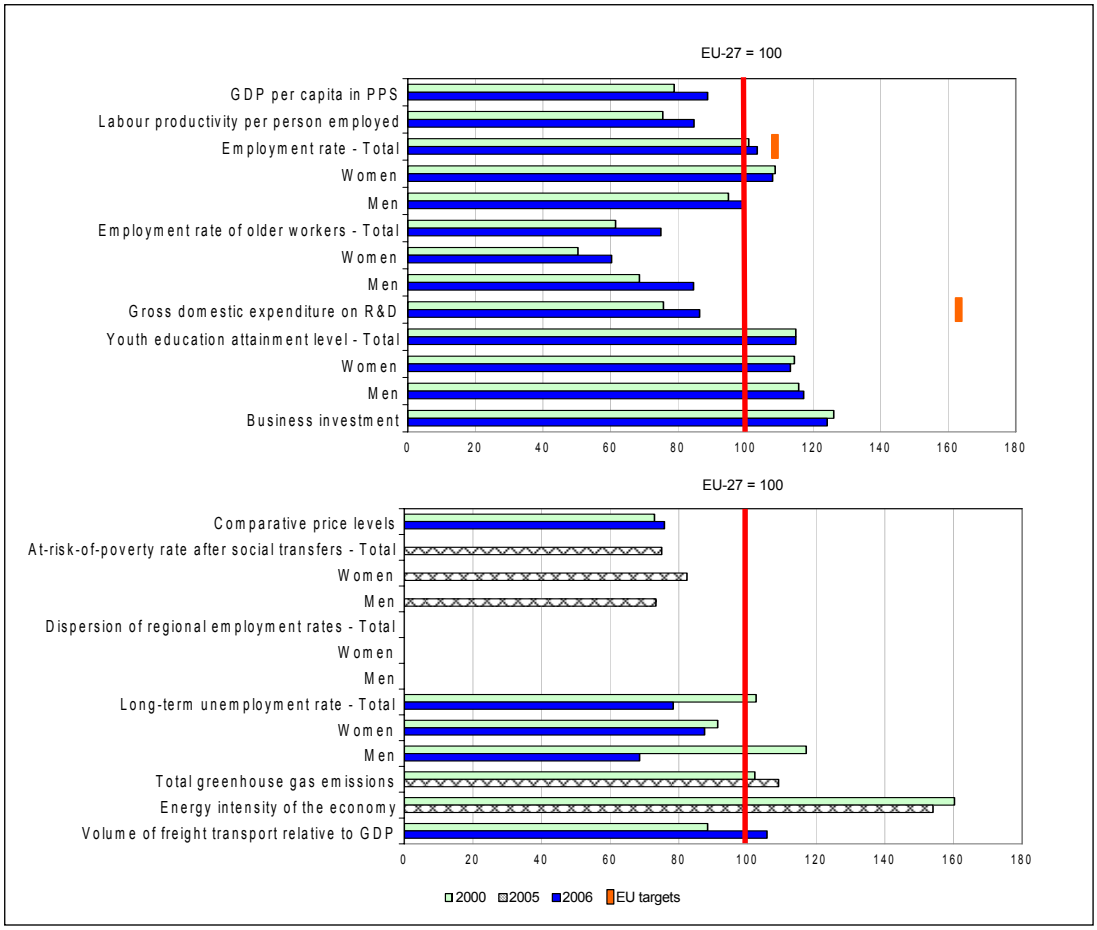
25. In addition, it will be important for Slovenia to focus over the period of the National Reform Programme on the following challenges: develop an effective research and innovation strategy and ensure its effective implementation; also with a view to containing inflation, improve competition in the services sector, with particular emphasis on retail, financial services, utilities and professional services; improve implementation of energy efficiency measures, particularly with regard to CO_2 emissions and unfulfilled Kyoto targets; implement the ambitious plans to strengthen the link between the education system and the labour market.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

SLOVENIA

		SI						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		78.9	82.5	85.0	86.6	88.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		75.5	77.9	80.3	82.3	84.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	62.8	62.6	65.3	66.0	66.6	67.0 (2008)	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	58.4	57.6	60.5	61.3	61.8		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	67.2	67.4	70.0	70.4	71.1		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	22.7	23.5	29.0	30.7	32.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	13.8	14.6	17.8	18.5	21.0		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	32.3	33.2	40.9	43.1	44.5		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.41	1.29	1.42	1.46	1.59	3.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	88.0	90.8	90.5	90.5	89.4		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	90.8	94.0	94.1	93.2	91.4		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	85.4	87.7	87.1	88.0	87.7		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		72.9	76.2	75.4	75.6	75.8		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		23.2	20.8	22.0	22.2	22.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	11.0	10.0	:	12.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	12.0	11.0	:	14.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	11.0	9.0	:	11.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	4.1	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.9		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.2	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.5		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	4.1	3.4	3.1	2.9	2.4		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		92.6	96.8	98.4	100.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		341.7	341.1	324.7	320.5	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		87.6e	86.5	97.5	110.0	112.8		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Slovakia

1. Real GDP growth, driven by both domestic and external demand is expected to remain high at 8.7% in 2007, up from 8.5% in 2006. Employment increased to 59.4% in 2006 compared with 57.4% a year earlier, with increases across all groups and ages, but particularly for older workers (which has increased from 30.3% in 2005 to 33.1% in 2006). However, this is still below the EU average. Unemployment has also fallen rapidly from 16.3% in 2005 to 13.4% in 2006. It is projected to fall further to 11.2% in 2007. However this remains considerably above the EU average. Thanks mainly to lower increases in regulated prices in the energy sector at the beginning of 2007 and the impact of exchange rate appreciation, inflation is expected to decrease from 4.3% in 2006 to below 2% in 2007. The government deficit is foreseen to fall below 3% of GDP in 2007 and to around 2.3% in 2008.

2. Large-scale reforms of social, labour market and health care policies implemented in recent years have helped accelerate GDP and employment growth. However, large regional differences persist and the unemployment rate remains one of the highest in the EU. Despite one of the highest productivity growth rates in the EU, Slovakia continues to lag behind the EU average GDP per capita, due mainly to lower labour productivity and low labour resource utilisation.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. The 2005-2008 National Reform Programme (NRP) was revised slightly in 2006 by the new government, but the key challenges remain: information society; R&D and innovation; business environment; education and employment. Overall, the 2007 Slovak Implementation Report shows some progress on implementing the NRP over the period 2005-2007. The pace of progress appears to have remained the same as last year.

4. Slovakia has made some progress in responding to the country specific recommendations adopted by the Council. Expenditure on R&D and education has not increased sufficiently and, notwithstanding the adoption of some strategy documents, the R&D sector still lacks a coherent reform connecting research institutions and business. A life long learning strategy has been adopted, but more is needed to improve participation by adults and marginalised groups in education and training. Revision of labour market policies has not yet addressed the very high long term unemployment, including the soaring share of low skilled people.

5. The Council also concluded that Slovakia should focus on a range of further issues. There has been some progress on developing a legislative framework to address the gender pay gap, although further efforts are needed to improve its enforcement. However, Slovakia has not moved forward significantly on ICT take-up, broadband infrastructure, improving the better regulation system and developing an active ageing strategy.

6. Last year's Commission Annual Progress Report concluded that Slovakia made mixed progress meeting the commitments made at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority actions areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment

and energy. In the past year, there has been limited progress on a few of the commitments with a 2007 deadline. Entrepreneurship education and the Think Small First principle have not yet been addressed. Further efforts are also needed to implement one stop shops and support the young unemployed.

7. The NRP and subsequent Implementation Reports have been prepared under the auspices of the Government Office and the Ministry of Finance, in cooperation with other stakeholders. An intensified reporting mechanism and a set of indicators were put in place in 2007 to improve monitoring and overall policy co-ordination. New mechanisms are applied to national and structural fund allocations to support Lisbon objectives. Links between the governance of NRP implementation and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds are fairly strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. To achieve long-term sustainability of public finances by 2010, Slovakia committed itself to reduce the headline general government deficit to below 3% of GDP in 2007 and the structural deficit to below 1% of GDP by 2010.

9. The government adopted an expansionary fiscal stance in 2006 which, together with non-discretionary deficit-increasing factors (an increase in pension reform costs from 0.8% of GDP in 2005 to 1.2% in 2006), increased the general government deficit from 2.8% of GDP in 2005 to 3.7% in 2006. Nevertheless, the policy measures implemented by the government are foreseen to decrease the deficit below 3% of GDP in 2007 and to around 2.3% in 2008. As a result some progress has been made over the period 2005-2007 to meet fiscal targets set in the 2005 NRP.

10. The Council recommended that Slovakia should reallocate expenditure towards R&D and education. The Slovak authorities clarified their 2010 target for R&D investments between public (0.8% of GDP) and private expenditure (1%). Planned increases in resources devoted to education in the 2007 and the 2008 budgets have lagged behind expected nominal GDP growth. The share of public expenditure as a percent of GDP assigned to universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences is also projected to decline in 2007 and 2008. Hence, in the Commission's opinion, there has been limited policy response in this area.

11. In general, Slovakia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the macro-economic commitments expressed in its NRP. The country-specific recommendation in the macro-economic area has been addressed only to a limited extent and therefore remains valid.

Micro-economic policies

12. Over the period 2005-2007, progress with the implementation of key challenges identified by Slovakia in its 2005 NRP, notably on the business environment, R&D

and innovation, and information society has been mixed. There has been limited progress over the past year.

13. The Council recommended that Slovakia should complete the preparation of a coherent national R&D and innovation strategy, with strong interconnections between research institutions and businesses. During 2007, the Slovak government has adopted a number of strategy documents for R&D and innovation for the period 2007-2013. However, they do not tackle the need for reform of the public research system. A coherent R&D and innovation strategy with adequate human resources and finance for its operational structures should be implemented.

14. The Council also referred to the need for continued efforts on ICT policies, especially on broadband infrastructures and improvements in the Better Regulation system. Despite some advances in e-Government and digital literacy, Slovakia's development of an Information society still lags behind. The roadmap for public administration electronic services has faltered and the electronic signature is yet to be adopted. Additional targeted measures are needed to further ICT take-up and broadband deployment.

15. Limited progress characterises better regulation efforts to improve the business environment. Consolidation of various impact assessment methodologies is foreseen, but no implementing structures have been designed yet. The Action Plan for Reducing Administrative Burdens sets a 25% reduction target for administrative burdens, but does not provide general principles for good regulation and effective coordination. Furthermore, while efforts have been made to implement one-stop-shops for setting up a new business for sole traders, many steps remain to be taken to extend the system to registered companies. The current reform of the education and training system should be used to introduce entrepreneurship education into the curricula for secondary and higher education. Slovakia remains very successful at transposing EU internal market legislation into national law.

16. Despite identifying the energy industry as a new priority in its revised NRP, Slovakia still needs to develop competition in the power supply market. The main hindrance remains the dominance of the incumbent companies with negative price effects for consumers. Slovakia has temporarily decided to mitigate these effects using comprehensive price regulation. However, together with the decreasing independence of the Regulatory Office for Network Industries, this policy mix might prevent the development of competition in these sectors.

17. Slovakia has introduced a number of climate protection, energy efficiency, and adopted a "Strategy for greater use of renewable energy sources in Slovakia". Its energy intensity has declined consistently since 2001, but remains about four times above the EU-27 average. Strengthening the Ministry of Economy's horizontal role in monitoring energy efficiency and implementing the Energy Efficiency Concept, along with its Energy Efficiency Action Plan, would further improve efficiency and help achieve the target set for electricity production from renewable sources by 2010.

18. Slovakia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the micro-economic commitments in its NRP. The country specific recommendation on Slovakia's R&D strategy has been address to some extent by the adoption of a number of strategy documents, but these now need to be implemented. The point to

watch of ICT polices has been addressed to some extent, however there has been only a limited response to the need to improve the better regulation system.

Employment policies

19. Economic growth and extensive labour market reform triggered employment growth in 2005-2007. Despite this several concerns emerged, including high rates of long-term unemployment (10.2% compared with the EU average of 3.7%) that coincide with a shortage of skilled workers, a low employability of certain social groups, and a decrease in youth employment.

20. The Council recommended that Slovakia develop a comprehensive approach to tackling long-term unemployment, notably by developing targeted active labour market policies for the most vulnerable groups. Several steps have been taken to address this problem including revised active labour market policy measures that better target disadvantaged jobseekers, the preparation of a new legislative framework for employment policy, and a plan to introduce in-work benefits. However, long-term unemployment, which includes a very high proportion of the low skilled and the Roma minority, remains extremely high, and thus a stronger policy response is merited.

21. The Council also recommended that Slovakia adopt a lifelong learning strategy and complete reform of its education and training system. The lifelong learning strategy was adopted in 2007. Its implementation is now the key challenge given the skills mismatch that persists and that adult participation in lifelong learning remains critically low. However, the adoption of the Educational Act for primary and secondary education has been postponed. In higher education, the core legislative framework has been revised, but raising the quality of higher education and reinforcing links between education, research and business remain key challenges. The inclusion of marginalised Roma communities into education and training, despite some successful initiatives, also continues to be a high priority.

22. The Council also referred to the need to address the gender pay gap and develop an active ageing strategy to increase employment of older workers. Despite a reinforced legal definition of equal remuneration and a ban on gender discrimination, the gender pay gap still remains very high (22%). In addition, the gender gap in both employment and unemployment has significantly increased over recent years. The recently adopted strategy for reconciling work with family life has not sufficiently increased female employability, or access to flexible work organisations. Employment of older people has increased, mainly due to the progressively rising retirement age and incentives to remain in employment. These measures should be complemented by an active approach creating favourable labour market conditions for this age group which would include labour legislation, active labour market policies, increase training provision, and health care. The Commission considers this a limited policy response to these challenges and further action is necessary to improve the employment situation of women and older workers.

23. Slovakia has not built an integrated model of flexicurity, but a number of flexicurity-related measures have been introduced. The last revision of the Labour Code introduced new forms of work organisation, while tightening the contractual arrangements with increased employees' protection. Implementing the new lifelong

learning strategy should increase the very low participation rate in education and training. In spite of active labour market policies for disadvantaged jobseekers, their employability remains low and they are unable to fill the emerging shortage of skilled workers. The social partners' involvement in policy-making has slightly improved, notably consultation of trade unions.

24. In general, Slovakia has partially succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The country specific recommendations and points to watch have been addressed to some extent, but further initiatives and implementation of adopted strategies is now required. The Commission therefore considers the recommendation and the points to watch remaining valid.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

25. In the light of the 2007 Slovak Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

26. Slovakia has made some progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the period 2005-2007. There has been a limited response in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority areas.

27. The Implementation Report shows a mixed policy response to the recommendations adopted by the Council. Further reforms are necessary to increase R&D and education expenditure, implement strategies in the micro-economic area, to tackle long-term unemployment and to complete education and training reform. There has been a mixed response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention.

28. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Slovak Implementation Report are: the foreseen reduction of the public finance deficit to below 3% of GDP in 2007; the adoption of a number of strategy documents in the area of R&D and innovation, energy efficiency and renewably energy; the partial implementation of a one-stop-shop for start-up companies; the revision of employment legislation; the adoption of the lifelong learning strategy; and efforts to revise active labour market policies to better comply with labour market developments.

29. The policy areas in the Slovak National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with highest priority are: increasing expenditure to education, R&D and innovation, improving the regulatory environment, tackling long-term unemployment, completing the reform of the education and training system and raising its quality in line with labour market needs. Against this background, it is recommended that Slovakia:

- reallocate resources to education, R&D and innovation, and duly implement a coherent R&D and innovation strategy with a particular focus on the institutional reform of the public research sector and substantial improvement of business-research cooperation;

- improve the regulatory environment, notably by implementing a comprehensive better regulation strategy covering both impact assessment and simplification of existing legislation;

- within an integrated flexicurity approach, ensures implementation of the lifelong learning strategy addressing the needs of the labour market, completes the reforms of primary, secondary and tertiary education to improve qualification and skill levels, and enhance access to employment, notably for the long-term unemployed and vulnerable groups.

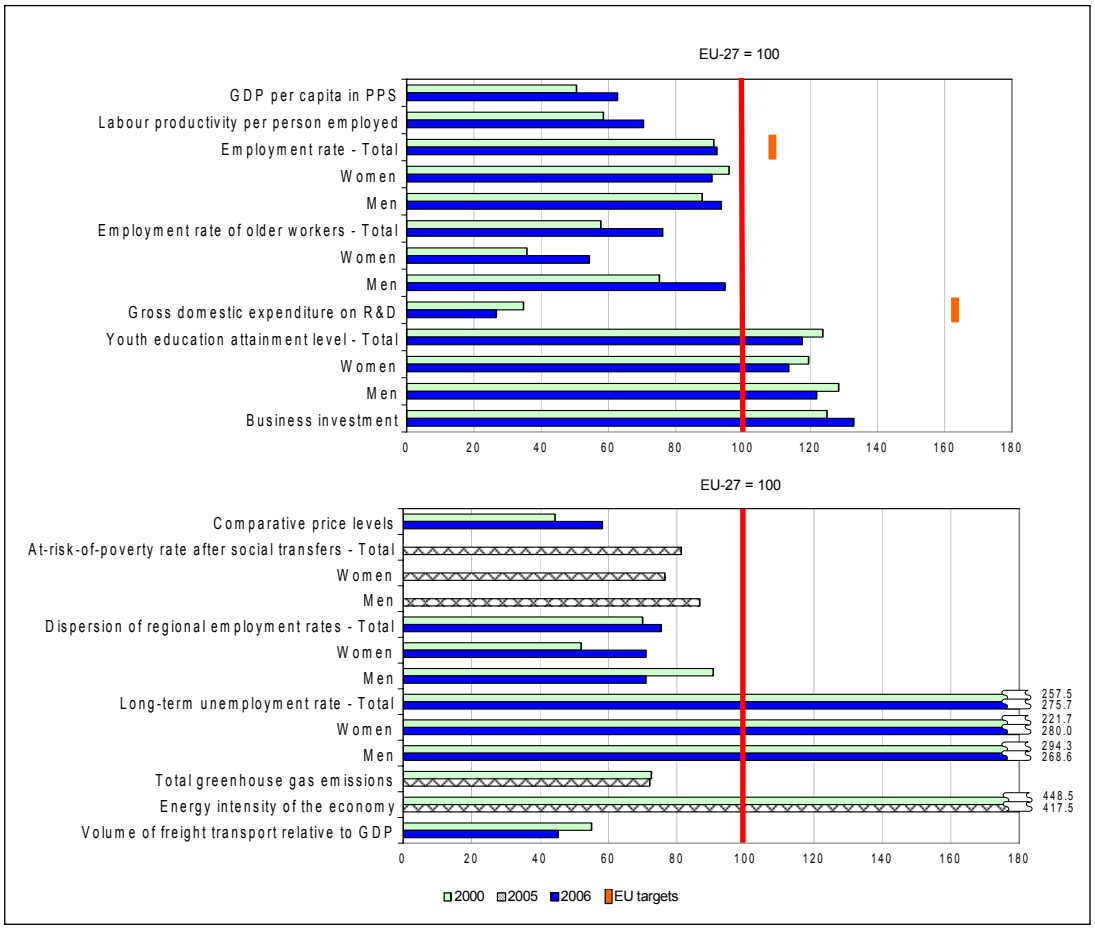
30. In addition, it will be important for Slovakia over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on: further developing ICT policies, especially for broadband infrastructure; full implementation of one-stop shops for start-up companies; introducing entrepreneurship education; increasing competition in power supply; addressing the gender gap in pay and employment; developing an active ageing strategy; and creating job opportunities for young people.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

SLOVAKIA

		SK						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		50.5	55.2	56.7	59.8	62.7		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		58.5	62.7	64.7	67.8	70.4		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	56.8	57.7	57.0	57.7	59.4	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	51.5	52.2	50.9	50.9	51.9		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	62.2	63.3	63.2	64.6	67.0		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	21.3	24.6	26.8	30.3	33.1		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	9.8	11.2	12.6	15.6	18.9		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	35.4	41.0	43.8	47.8	49.8		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		0.65	0.58	0.51	0.51	0.49	0.8	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	94.8	94.1	91.7	91.8	91.5		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	94.8	94.5	92.0	92.6	91.7		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	94.8	93.7	91.3	91.0	91.2		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		44.4	50.7	54.9	55.8	58.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		23.0	22.4	21.7	24.7	24.2		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	:	:	:	13.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	:	:	13.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	:	:	13.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	9.1	7.6	9.0	9.8	8.6		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	10.4	9.0	10.5	11.7	11.5		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	8.7	6.7	8.1	8.5	6.6		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	10.3	11.4	11.8	11.7	10.2		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	10.2	11.7	12.4	12.3	11.2		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	10.3	11.3	11.3	11.2	9.4		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		65.8	68.0	67.5	66.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		955.9	929.6	910.2	868.6	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		54.6	48.8	48.6	52.0e	48.3		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Finland

1. Over recent years, the Finnish economy has enjoyed an extended upswing. GDP growth peaked at 5% in 2006, and will decelerate only moderately in 2007. Growth has remained broad-based, with a strong contribution from foreign demand. Employment has grown at an annual rate of 2% over 2006-2007. Unemployment declined rapidly to 7.7% in 2006 and should decline by a further percentage point in 2007. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate is still at only the euro area average.

2. Notwithstanding the relatively high unemployment rate, there are increasing labour shortages in many sectors, which points to structural labour market weaknesses. Stepping up the government's current labour market response and maintaining on-going improvements to the business environment could improve the situation. Moreover, such improvements could counterbalance the effects on the sustainability of public finances of a declining working age population.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. The 2007 Implementation Report shows that Finland is in general making very good progress on implementing its National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. Progress is steady in most areas.

4. The Council concluded that Finland should focus on implementing reforms to improve competition and productivity in some service sectors, simplify recruitment procedures for businesses, encourage local wage bargaining systems, and address labour market bottlenecks to tackle high structural unemployment, especially unemployment of low skilled workers, including young people. Finland has good progress on simplifying recruitment procedures and local wage bargaining. Some progress has been achieved in the area of competition and service sector productivity. Only limited progress has been made to tackle continuing bottlenecks in the labour market and persistently high structural unemployment.

5. In last year’s Annual Progress Report, the Commission concluded that Finland had generally responded well to the commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, this good progress has been maintained.

6. The Implementation Report specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries, although further progress is necessary with regard to competition and the balance between flexibility and security on labour markets.

7. A new government took office in spring 2007. The 2007 Implementation Report confirms the main priorities within the NRP and builds on exploiting policy complementarities. The Finnish government also announced several new policy measures. Consultation between government officials and a wide range of stakeholders and representatives of NGOs is extensive. An integrated approach is further strengthened by the concentration of some important policy areas within the planned new Ministry of Labour and Industry. The new generation of Finnish Structural Fund programmes shows strong commitment to the Lisbon agenda, with some 88% of total programme financing earmarked for activities supporting the

competitiveness of regions and the creation of growth and jobs, well above the 75% minimum requirement set by the Commission. The Finnish Structural Fund strategy for 2007-2013 is largely consistent with the priorities identified in the NRP.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. The overarching policy goal identified in the NRP is to ensure the sustainability of public finances in the face of demographic change. Despite Finland's very strong overall macro-economic performance, this will be a main key challenge in the medium and long term. Key priorities to tackle it are the control of public expenditure, ensuring the capacity to fund welfare services and improving public sector productivity.

9. The new government has revised the system of central government spending ceilings; the main principles of medium term expenditure planning remain intact, but various adjustments to the spending ceilings system imply some increased flexibility. Central government spending limits will remain a crucial tool for containing government expenditure.

10. Reforms to boost public sector productivity and the quality of its service provision are progressing well - horizontal central government functions (administrative affairs, human resources, IT, etc.) are being consolidated. Central government intends to reinforce its productivity programme with new measures to be decided in connection with its spring 2008 spending limits decision. Reform efforts targeting local governments continue; the Act on Restructuring Municipalities and Services entered into force in early 2007. While the bulk of the anticipated positive effects will only be visible in the medium to long term, some progress in municipal mergers and improved service provision structures is already visible.

11. The phasing in of pension reform is advancing according to initial plans and targets. The principal aim is to defer retirement by around 3 years in the long run, and clear progress has been made, helped by pension reform incentives and the economy's cyclical upswing. Legislative changes to the investment and management of employment pension funds entered into force at the beginning of 2007; these allow such funds to increase their investments in stocks, which should increase investment returns.

12. Finland has in general made very good progress over the 2005-2007 period in implementing the specific macro-economic measures outlined in its NRP. The measures should help secure the long-term sustainability of public finances and address long-term challenges due to population ageing. Finland has used the present cyclical upswing in the economy to further strengthen its public finances, in line with the first euro-area recommendation.

Micro-economic policies

13. Finland's national innovation system is a role model for a technology-driven economic reform programme. Finland spends 3.5% of GDP on R&D investment. However, given R&D investment is stagnating, it will be challenging to increase this

figure to the 4% objective in 2011 (2010 in last year's Implementation Report). Public R&D dropped slightly below 1% of GDP in 2007 (partly due to the increase in GDP). New knowledge needs to find its way into practical applications more often. Some sectoral reform programmes have been implemented, including reform of the public research sector, modernisation of the university sector, establishment of strategic centres of excellence in science, technology and innovation, as well as the creation of clusters of centres of expertise. In 2007, the new government launched the preparation of a new National Innovation Strategy and the setting up of a new Ministry for coordinating innovation policy. This should result in a pioneering model for a broad based innovation policy, beyond the traditional science and technology domain, which will engage all organisations to promote innovation in a co-ordinated, mutually reinforcing way.

14. The increasing number of businesses is encouraging, and the business environment is favourable for start-ups. However, the limited growth of existing SMEs is a concern. The government intends to increase the availability of venture capital in cooperation with pension institutions. While the administrative burden is already low, further improvements could be achieved by committing to a specific target, as agreed at the Council. In order to further limit bureaucracy related to entrepreneurship, the government is encouraged to swiftly adopt and implement its national action plan for better regulation and the new impact assessment guidelines. Finland is among the leading information society countries in Europe. Over the past three years, it has met its main objectives in terms of ICT infrastructure (e.g. on the use of broadband). The public administration productivity programme foresees the provision of 100 million euros to overhaul the core IT system so as to improve the quality of services and make better use of ICT through central and local governments.

15. Finland is projected not to meet its Kyoto emissions target unless additional policies and measures are implemented. These policies are under preparation, but Finland is encouraged to give special consideration to climate change to ensure that these policies are implemented as soon as possible. The Finnish economy is highly energy-intensive, and climate, environmental and energy policies may affect competitiveness. A timely announcement of policies is therefore necessary to give the economy time to adjust to the new commitments, though it should be noted that the required measures may create new market opportunities.

16. The Council referred to the need to focus on implementing reforms to improve competition and productivity in services. While productivity is higher in many services than previously thought, and competition has become fiercer, service sector prices still exceed the EU average by about 30%, and productivity differences across different services are substantial. While sector-specific regulations impeding competition are largely dismantled, some regulations remain in certain services, for example covering pharmacies and shop opening hours. Competition enforcement has been strengthened throughout the period. However, the effective implementation of competition policies is sometimes hindered by the length of court proceedings. New legislation which came into force in June 2007 should promote competitive tendering in public procurement. The access of SMEs to public tenders is an important issue in Finland, as the share of SMEs in government procurement is one of the lowest in the EU (around 31% of the number of contracts and only 8% of the value). Finland has been performing well in terms of less and better state aid (excluding aid to

agriculture which remains high). After an initial increase Finland has managed to reduce its transposition deficit and is approaching the 1% target.

17. The Council also referred to the need for Finland to focus on simplifying recruitment procedures for businesses, including through specific measures regarding the recruitment of the first employee. Several improvements have been made, including progress towards a virtual one-stop-shop for hiring employees. As part of the new government programme a similar procedure should be introduced to create new companies. In addition, the government is considering subsidising businesses the hiring of the first employee, which could support firm growth. The Commission therefore considers that Finland has responded appropriately to this issue.

18. Finland has made good progress with the implementation of measures responding to its micro-economic key challenges and has sufficiently addressed the point to watch covering recruitment procedures. However, while competition and productivity in services is improving, welfare gains in terms of lower price levels are still largely unexploited, and continued action remains necessary. A sustainable growth strategy will require some bold policy interventions, putting to the test the economy's capacity to adjust. Timely actions would limit these adjustment costs.

Employment policies

19. Finland achieved the 70% employment rate target in 2007, and female employment has increased to 67.3%, one of the highest in the EU. The growth in female participation is partly explained by increased part-time work. Further improvements can be made if gender pay gaps are addressed; the unadjusted pay gap between men and women is about 20%. The pension reform aiming at extending working life has increased the employment rate of older people. The unemployment rate remains relatively high with persisting structural unemployment, while recruitment problems are growing. Progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the functioning of the labour market is mixed and still requires a strong policy response.

20. The Council referred to the need to encourage local wage bargaining systems and address bottlenecks in the labour market, with a particular view to increasing the low participation of youth and tackling high structural unemployment. There has been an increase in local level wage bargaining and the Commission therefore considers that Finland has made an appropriate response to the challenge of setting the right framework for wage bargaining to reflect regional productivity differences and labour market challenges. It is important to continue this approach.

21. Labour supply shortages are a major risk to future economic growth. Some economic sectors already have acute recruitment problems; one third of employers have difficulties finding staff with appropriate skills. So far, there has been limited progress in solving structural unemployment, although the reform of employment services has improved the activation of long term unemployed. The immigration policy introduced in 2006 has not yet boosted international mobility, but the authorities indicate that the issue is being addressed at the political level with the nomination of a minister for migration. Further measures to promote work-based immigration are expected. Early school drop out is being tackled. Efficient measures are still needed to attract people outside the labour market into employment.

22. Finland addresses flexicurity in an integrated way, with measures being implemented across the four components of flexicurity. The social partners are fully involved in policy level programmes. A high level tripartite working group was established in 2007 to reconsider flexibility and security in the Finnish labour market. Lifelong learning has been promoted through workplace development programmes. The comprehensive social security reform initiated in 2007 is welcomed in order to thoroughly review the incentives to work. Legislative reform is being introduced on fixed term employment and attention should be paid to the particularly high number of fixed-term contracts for women. A system has been in force for a year helping employees facing redundancy to find new jobs.

23. In general, Finland has shown good progress meeting most of the NRP's employment policy commitments and has sufficiently addressed the point to watch regarding local wage bargaining. Persistent labour market bottlenecks, however, are an ongoing concern. In light of the growing inefficiency in matching job vacancies to the unemployed, the Commission considers that Finland has made only a limited response to the challenges it faces in addressing its labour market bottlenecks. It is important to increase the pace of reform in order to improve the balance of labour supply and demand.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

24. In light of the 2007 Implementation Report for Finland and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

25. Finland has made very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Good progress has been shown in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

26. The Implementation Report shows some policy response on the additional areas identified by the Council as requiring attention. The Implementation Report also specifically addresses the recommendations issued to the euro area countries.

27. Among the strengths of the 2007 Implementation Report are the ongoing reforms to further improve the functioning of the national innovation system and the observed increase in the employment rate of older workers.

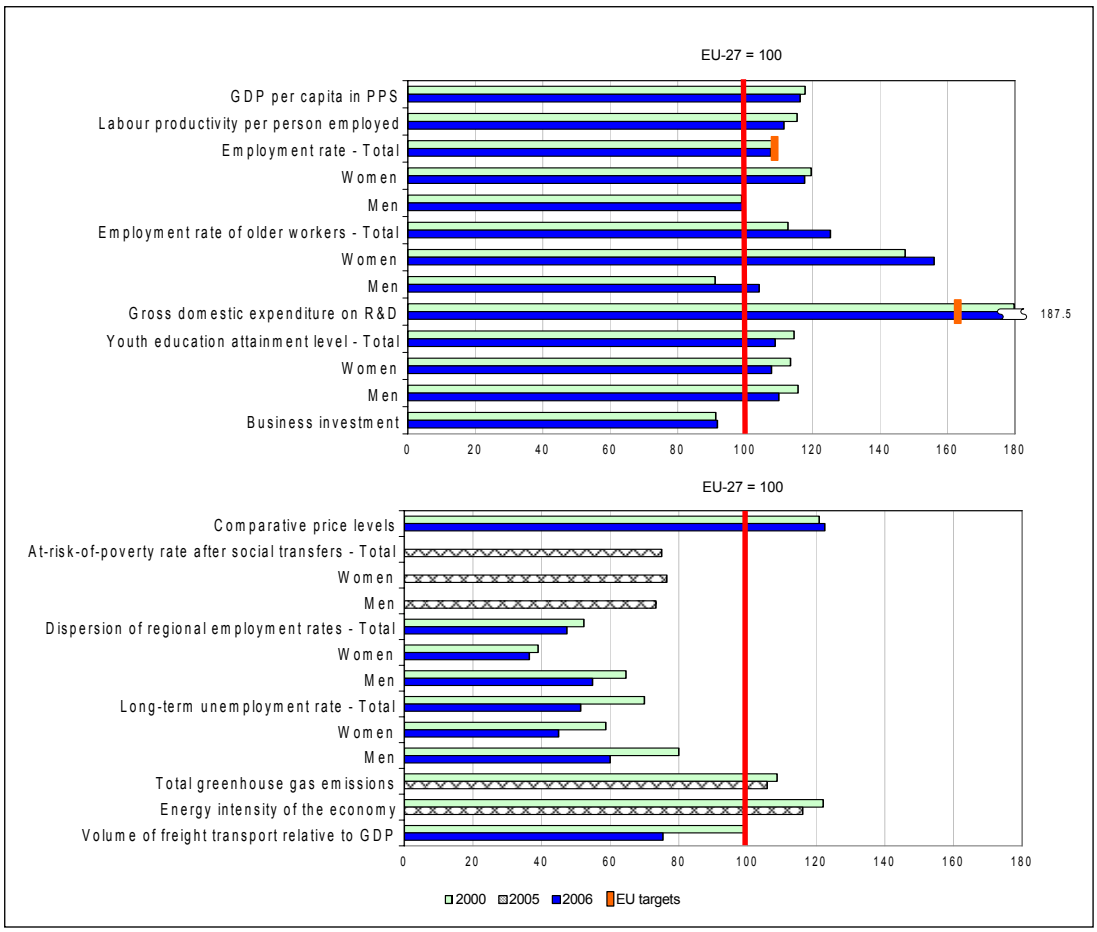
28. It will be important for Finland over the period of the National Reform Programme to focus on the following challenges: continue reforms to improve competition and productivity in services, and create the necessary leverage to reduce high price levels; implement announced measures to reach its Kyoto target; continue reforms to address bottlenecks in the labour market, with a particular view to tackling high structural unemployment, especially unemployment of low skilled workers, including young people, and taking into account the contribution economic migration can make.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

FINLAND

		FI						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		117.8	113.5	115.9	114.5	116.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		115.4	109.3	111.8	109.8	111.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	67.2	67.7	67.6	68.4	69.3	75.0 (2011)	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	64.2	65.7	65.6	66.5	67.3		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	70.1	69.7	69.7	70.3	71.4		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	41.6	49.6	50.9	52.7	54.5		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	40.4	48.3	50.4	52.7	54.3		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	42.9	51.0	51.4	52.8	54.8		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		3.34	3.43	3.45	3.48	3.45	4.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	87.7	85.3	84.5	83.4	84.7		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	90.0	87.6	87.0	85.7	87.0		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	85.4	83.0	81.9	81.0	82.3		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		120.9	126.6	123.8	123.5	122.5		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		16.8	15.2	15.3	16.3	16.7		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	11.0	11.0	11.0b	12.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	13.0	12.0	11.0b	13.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	9.0	11.0	10.0b	11.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	6.8	6.1	5.5	5.5	5.4		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	7.8	6.7	6.2	6.1	5.9		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	6.2	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.1		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	2.8	2.3	2.1	2.2	1.9		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.1		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		98.5	119.9	114.1	97.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		260.1	280.1	268.9	241.5	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		98.7	90.5	90.3	86.0	80.4e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Sweden

1. Over the period 2005-2007, the Swedish economy has been experiencing strong and broad-based economic growth, averaging 3½% a year. External demand has been an important driving force, but owing to the recent deceleration of global economic activity, export growth has entered a weaker phase. Domestic demand remains buoyant, supported by robust consumption growth and booming investment. Employment rates are high, and there have recently been strong increases for all age groups, especially young people, while unemployment has fallen to below 6%.

2. The strong domestic economy is partly a result of various policy measures taken by the government, including lower taxes on labour and other labour market measures that have contributed to strong employment growth, a marked reduction of unemployment and rising household disposable income. This has provided an impulse to private consumption growth, part of which is still to materialise.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the Swedish 2007 Implementation Report has shown very good progress in implementing the updated National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have accelerated significantly over the last year.

4. No country specific recommendations were addressed to Sweden, but it was concluded that special attention should be paid to increasing competition, improving the impact assessment system, taking a more coherent approach to better regulation, and strengthening the strategy to increase labour supply and hours worked. There has been a good response with regard to better regulation and on impact assessment, and on measures aimed at increasing labour supply and hours worked. However, Sweden has not moved forward sufficiently on increasing competition.

5. Last year's Annual Progress Report concluded that Sweden had made good progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been very good progress on most of the commitments with an end 2007 deadline.

6. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP continue to be substantial. The political visibility of the Strategy for Growth and Jobs has increased, following the assignment of responsibility at ministerial level. The Implementation Report presents a thorough coverage of all the guidelines and addresses the challenges highlighted in last year's assessment. Consultation with the social partners, civil society and young people has been thorough. Efforts to include local authorities have been further stepped up, with the creation of a national forum, for political dialogue between national and regional level, to consider regional development issues and implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. Links between the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the Structural Funds are fairly strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily (ERDF 79.5% and for ESF 96% of funds). The ESF priorities focus on

increased labour supply by ensuring adequate skills for people at work and better integration of disadvantaged groups. The ERDF emphasises support for R&D, innovation, entrepreneurship and risk capital.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

7. Sweden is coping well with the key macro-economic challenges of maintaining sound public finances and safeguarding fiscal sustainability. The general government budget has recorded successive surpluses well above 2% of GDP a year, contributing to a further consolidation of public finances. In 2007, the government has further enhanced the rules-based budgetary framework supporting the overall strategy, notably by clarifying and improving the credibility of the objectives on which it is based. The implementation of a range of labour market reforms as well as improvements in tax and benefit systems have contributed to increasing employment growth and to lower unemployment. Increased employment and high resource utilisation has, however, contributed to higher wage agreements. Wage growth is set to exceed the rate implied by recent productivity trends over the next few years. The inflation rate has remained low, though it is gradually rising.

8. Progress over 2005-2007 with regard to the implementation of macro-economic policies identified by Sweden in the NRP, notably the challenge of sound fiscal policies and safeguarding fiscal sustainability, and of increased labour supply, employment and number of hours worked, is good.

Micro-economic policies

9. Sweden confirms the micro-economic challenges notably as regards creating a better environment for entrepreneurship and SMEs, strengthening the linkage between academic R&D and industry, and encouraging the sustainable use of resources.

10. R&D expenditure as a share of GDP was 3.82% in 2006. More public funds have been allocated to R&D since 2005 and additional resources for research and postgraduate education are planned over 2007-2009. There is scope for stronger emphasis on the role of SMEs in the R&D and innovation system, notably by focusing on research-driven and innovative firms, and by encouraging links with larger firms and universities. Efforts to promote cooperation between public and private actors should continue. Fiscal efforts have been made to promote entrepreneurship in the service sector, especially in the welfare sector, but private undertakings still face having to compete on unequal terms with public authorities. Appropriate improvements have been introduced to simplify the regulatory and fiscal framework for small entrepreneurs. However, SMEs' participation in public procurement is still hindered by the extensive use of large framework contracts.

11. Sweden is likely to comfortably achieve its Kyoto target for a reduction of carbon emissions and the move towards a sustainable economy has been a high priority for Sweden over the last three years. The government plans to spend SEK 1 billion to combat climate change over 2008-2010. In 2007 the government presented a

programme to further develop environmental technology capacity with significant financing for 2007 and 2008.

12. The Council referred to the need for Sweden to rapidly implement planned improvements to the impact assessment system and to take a more coherent approach to better regulation. In June 2007, the Swedish government presented a first phase of a solid and encompassing action plan for regulatory simplification, including general guidelines and significant number of measures aimed at alleviating the administrative burdens. The widespread introduction of e-government throughout the public administration, since 2005, may help achieve the ambitious administrative burden reduction target of 25% by 2010. The government is committed to adopting an ordinance on impact assessments and to dedicating additional human resources to better regulation, notably by creating a regulatory council in charge of ensuring the quality of impact assessment.

13. The Council also underlined that Sweden should take further regulatory measures to increase competition, notably in services. Several initiatives set out in the Implementation Report head in the right direction. In the public procurement area, the merger of the Public Procurement Board with the Competition Authority is a positive step, but the transposition of the EU legislation should be completed without further delay, and the recommendations of the Competition Authority in this area implemented. Planned measures regarding competition between public and private undertakings should be adopted. It remains to be seen whether the foreseen revision of the Competition Act will sufficiently improve competition law enforcement, notably by strengthening the Competition Authority's powers and mechanisms to deter competition infringements.

14. In general, progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the micro-economic challenges faced by Sweden is good. The Commission considers there has been a good response to the challenges Sweden faces in ensuring better regulation. It is now important to continue this approach in 2008 and 2009. The point to watch in the competition area has been partially addressed and it is important to step up the pace of reform.

Employment policies

15. The government continues to place emphasis on increasing labour supply and employment, and on reducing the number of people outside the labour force. Employment rates are high across all groups, with the overall rate standing at 73.1%. Unemployment has recently fallen to below 6%. Labour supply has started to grow after the decreases over the last few years, with signs of enhanced integration of groups previously outside the labour market. Young people account for half of the recent expansion in employment, but despite this youth unemployment remains high, at over 18%. In addition employment rate gaps between foreign-born and native people are still a concern at more than 14 percentage points, and there are still 551 000 people on disability pension (about 9% of the working age population). Recent reforms focus on increasing incentives to work, reforming active labour market policy and the education system. Progress over 2005-2007 with regard to addressing the challenge faced by Sweden to increase labour supply is good.

16. The Council referred to the need to strengthen the strategy to increase labour supply and hours worked, including through the implementation of proposals to increase incentives to work, as well as stronger measures to increase the employment rate of immigrants and young people, and to reintegrate people on sickness-related schemes.

17. Sweden has introduced a number of measures that address work incentives, in particular subsidised jobs in the private sector (lower social contributions), an in-work tax credit and stricter controls of the social security systems. The reform packages for young people and immigrants focus on incentives to work and other targeted measures. For young people intensified counselling is followed by further training or work experience, more resources are given to the public employment services for job matching, and the cost of social contributions for employers have been halved when employing young people. This should all help the integration process. The planned reforms of the education system (improved quality, up-dating of teachers' skills, modernising upper secondary schools, and a new apprenticeship programme) should help reduce early school drop-outs.

18. To better integrate immigrants in the labour market, subsidised jobs combined with language courses are now being implemented. Alongside this, the validation of qualifications from outside Sweden, and supplementary university courses for people with a foreign training in law, teaching, and public administration are being introduced. Municipalities now receive financial compensation if they provide jobs for refugees. The recent reform to reintegrate people on sickness-related schemes includes measures for rehabilitation, restrictions of the sickness insurance system and large reductions of the social contributions. For disabled persons, about 3000 new jobs will be created through wage subsidies and sheltered work. There are a number of new measures planned for 2008, for example a reinforced in-work tax credit.

19. Overall, Sweden has a balanced approach towards flexicurity and addresses it in an integrated way. The government has facilitated the use of fixed-term contracts which should work as a stepping stone into the labour market. Recent reforms of the unemployment and sickness insurance systems imply restrictions, but they still provide adequate income security. Active labour market policy has been reformed focusing on improved matching and reforming the National Labour Administration. Measures devoted to lifelong learning concentrate on the initial education system and less on adult education. The social partners are fully involved in most of the flexicurity components.

20. In general, Sweden has succeeded in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments expressed in its NRP. The points to watch in the employment area have been well addressed and it is now important to focus on implementation and impact evaluation. Important challenges remain, in particular with regard to the high youth unemployment, the high employment gap between immigrants and native Swedes, and the high number of people on disability pension.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

21. In the light of Sweden's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on

the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate.

22. Sweden has made very good progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over the 2005-2007 period. Sweden has also shown very good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

23. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the areas identified by the Council as requiring attention.

24. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Sweden's Implementation Report are: the action plan for regulatory simplification and the commitment to improve the impact assessment system; the progress with increasing labour supply and reducing unemployment; the sustainable use of energy; and the progress made on increasing public investment in R&D.

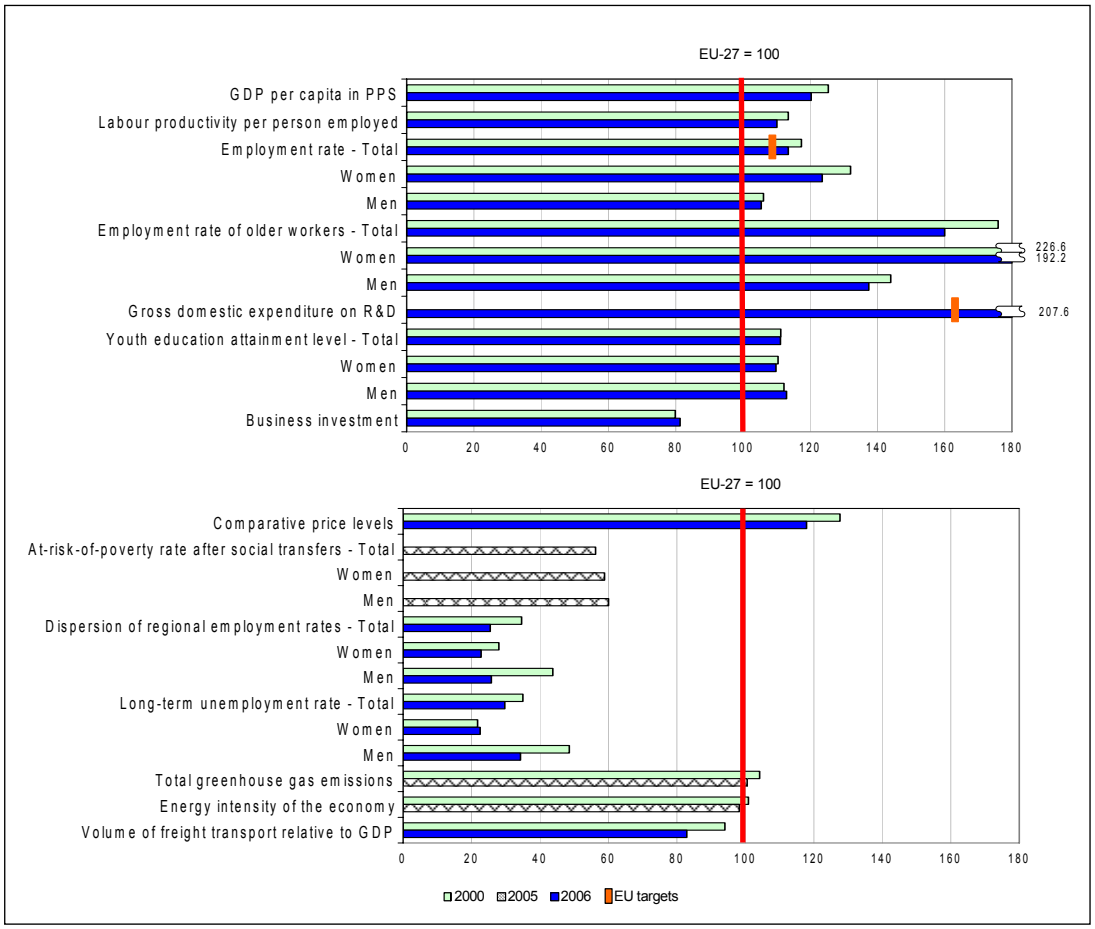
25. It will be important for Sweden to take further regulatory measures to increase competition, notably in services; and to focus on the implementation and impact evaluation of recent reforms to increase work incentives, to tackle youth unemployment, to raise the employment rate of immigrants and to reintegrate people on sickness-related schemes.

PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

SWEDEN

		SE						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		125.4	120.5	120.4	119.1	120.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		113.5	108.3	109.6	109.0	110.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	73.0	72.9	72.1	72.5b	73.1	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	70.9	71.5	70.5	70.4b	70.7		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	75.1	74.2	73.6	74.4b	75.5		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	64.9	68.6	69.1	69.4b	69.6		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	62.1	66.3	67.0	66.7b	66.9		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	67.8	70.8	71.2	72.0b	72.3		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		:	3.95	3.71	3.89	3.82	4.0	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	85.2	85.8	86.0	87.5	86.5		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	87.6	87.2	87.2	88.7	88.6		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	82.8	84.3	84.8	86.4	84.5		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		127.6	123.5	121.8	118.5	117.9		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		14.7	12.9	13.2	14.2	14.8		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	:	:	11.0b	9.0	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	:	12.0b	10.0	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	:	10.0b	9.0	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	4.5	4.3	4.4	3.0	2.9		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	5.6	4.8	4.3	3.5	3.7		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	4.2	4.1	4.8	2.8	2.4		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.4b	1.1		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.2b	0.9		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	1.7	1.2	1.4	1.5b	1.2		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		94.5	97.9	96.4	92.6	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		215.0	217.1	214.7	204.3	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		93.2	90.6	88.6	89.7	88.4e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



United Kingdom

1. Real GDP growth in the UK is expected to reach 3.1% in 2007. Robust output growth the last two years has been driven by domestic demand, accompanied by a sizeable external imbalance. The general government deficit narrowed to 2.6% of GDP in financial year 2006/2007 from 3.2% of GDP in the previous year. The employment rate (71.5% in 2006) is above the EU target. Labour supply has been growing, partly owing to immigration and increased participation from female and older workers. The unemployment rate has remained stable at around 5.3% in 2007.

2. Labour, capital and product markets are very flexible but, despite steady growth and good employment performance and some narrowing of the productivity gap with other Member States, the UK still faces a productivity challenge. While the UK has focussed on the development of policies to improve skills, R&D intensity, better regulation and the competition regime, further improvements are still needed to support future productivity growth. The planned reform of the pensions system should result in both improving the adequacy of retirement income and increasing incentives for participation in the labour market.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3. Overall, the UK's 2007 Implementation Report shows significant progress in implementing the National Reform Programme (NRP) over the 2005-2007 period. The pace of progress appears to have accelerated slightly over the last year.

4. There has been good progress in response to the country specific recommendation that the UK should increase basic and intermediate skills in order to raise productivity and further improve employment prospects for the most disadvantaged. However, it will be some time before the new skills package is fully implemented.

5. With regard to the other areas for the UK to concentrate upon: there has been good progress on the implementation of the pension reform; and on improved access to childcare. In R&D and innovation policy some progress has been made. Concerning increasing the supply of housing, some measures have been taken, but it is too early to judge whether these will be effective.

6. Last year's Annual Progress Report concluded that the UK had made good progress on meeting the specific commitments agreed at the 2006 Spring European Council in the priority action areas of knowledge, entrepreneurship, employment and energy. Since then, there has been further good progress on all of the commitments.

7. Consultation and efforts to develop ownership of the NRP at the level of central and local governments and amongst the social partners continue to be good. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were involved in preparing the Implementation Report concerning their own policy responsibilities. There has also been consultation on many individual policy elements. Specific consultation in preparing the Implementation Report has included a stakeholder seminar and web-based consultation.

8. Governance links between the implementation of the NRP and the programmes under the structural and cohesion funds are strong. The earmarking of structural funding for Growth and Jobs objectives is being applied satisfactorily. The overall objectives for future Structural Funds Programmes are strengthening the drivers of regional productivity and employment, responding to the increasing pace of economic change and the expanding reach of global markets, and improving the sustainability of communities and the environment.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

9. The UK's NRP identified macro-economic stability and long-term fiscal sustainability as the government's overall macro-economic priorities. Over the programme period inflation has been contained; some pronounced increases in early 2007 have subsequently been reversed. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review has set departmental spending allocations for the three financial years beginning in April 2008, with total public spending increasing by 2.1% per year on average in real terms. Although the government deficit is foreseen to remain close to the reference value of 3% of GDP in the financial years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, the Implementation Report does not highlight the need for ensuring fiscal consolidation. It focuses mainly on the quality of public finances, pension reform and housing supply. Progress over the 2005-2007 period with regard to the implementation of policies to address the macro-economic challenges faced by the UK is thus mixed.

10. The Council referred to the importance for the UK of ensuring that the current proposals on pension reform were effectively implemented. The government's plans, partly already enacted by Parliament, involve increasing the value and coverage of the state-pension by linking pension payments to average earnings from 2012 (subject to affordability), and increasing the state pension age in line with average life expectancy. Moreover private pension saving will be encouraged through the introduction of automatic enrolment of employees into a work placed pensions, mandatory employer contributions, and a new scheme of personal accounts. The impact will only be fully evident in the long term.

11. The Council also referred to the importance for the UK of progressively increasing housing supply to reduce house price pressures in the medium-term. The government released a Housing Green Paper in July 2007 setting a target of building 240,000 new additional homes per year in England by 2016 (2 million new homes in total) – about 30% higher than would be generated by recent construction rates – and a 50% increase in social housing supply by 2010/2011. The 2007 Pre-Budget Report and the Comprehensive Spending Review announced an increase in spending on housing in the period 2007/2008 to 2010/2011. Whilst some measures have already been implemented, further measures have been announced, such as the government's plan for a new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant to reward those councils who are achieving a high level of housing supply. These policies are steps in the right direction , but most of the reforms are still in the early stages of implementation so the actual impacts will clearly take much longer to judge.

12. In general, the UK has partially succeeded in implementing measures to achieve the macro-economic objectives expressed in its NRP. The Commission considers the measures taken to reform the pension system to be a very good response, addressing the adequacy of retirement income, while limiting the risks to the sustainability of public finances. However, the fiscal position needs improving and further consolidation in the medium term is required.

Micro-economic policies

13. The UK NRP identified promoting R&D and innovation and building an enterprising and flexible business sector as key micro-economic challenges. Progress has been made on R&D and innovation, notably by ensuring the sustainability of the public research base, promoting technology transfer, stimulating private R&D investment through a strengthening of the R&D tax credit, and the setting up of the Technology Strategy Board, at arm's length from government. The UK continues to provide a business-friendly regulatory environment and competition regime. Progress has also been made in moving towards creating one-stop-shops for business start-ups and support services, as well as in improving SMEs' access to public procurement contracts. Strengths in entrepreneurship training and in improving regulation for small businesses have been reinforced, and the UK is committed to reduce administrative burdens by 25%. On energy policy, the UK is already advanced in energy market opening. The White Paper on energy policy published in May 2007 set out a strategy for tackling climate change and ensuring energy security. Consultations are currently taking place on aspects of this policy.

14. The Council referred to the need to focus on: implementing its science and innovation strategy, in the context of which an intermediate R&D target for 2010 should be set and measures should be taken to further strengthen investment incentives and to increase private sector engagement. The government aims to implement the recommendations of the recent Sainsbury review. This will result in a more active engagement in stimulating R&D and innovation activity, including a leadership role and increased funding for the Technology Strategy Board, explicit knowledge transfer targets for the Research Councils, and increased efficiency and coordination of public R&D spending. However, the foreseen increases in government spending on R&D (including substantial Structural Fund financing) and forecasts for private spending are insufficient to advance towards the UK's 2014 R&D intensity target. Therefore raising private R&D investment and innovation further continues to be an important challenge for the UK in an increasing knowledge based economy. The UK should capitalise upon the strength of its services sector by developing further policies for stimulating R&D and innovation and improving skills in this sector, including assessing the challenges and existing policy framework as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for the science and innovation framework.

15. The Commission considers there has been some response to the challenge the UK faces in the micro-economic field. It is now important to implement the recommendations from the recent Sainsbury review of science and innovation policy, ensuring a greater focus on increasing R&D and innovation, especially in services.

Employment policies

16. The NRP identified two major employment-related challenges: raising the skill levels in the workforce and increasing employment opportunities, by removing barriers for people from groups characterised by low employment rates. Progress has been made on both fronts. Over the period 2005-2007, employment has increased, although the employment rate has changed little since the population has also grown. Inactivity rates have generally fallen. Employment gaps for women, lone parents, older workers and ethnic minorities have narrowed but have widened for those without qualifications. Progress over the period 2005-2007, with regard to the implementation of policies to address the labour market challenges in the NRP is good.

17. The Council recommended the UK to increase basic and intermediate skills in order to raise productivity and further improve employment prospects for the most disadvantaged. In July 2007, the government presented plans to implement the Leitch Report's recommendations on skills in England, with the devolved administrations also having welcomed the report. This was accompanied by a green paper setting out the next steps in welfare reform. The reforms on skills are designed to make training more demand-led. To stimulate demand the government has launched a "Skills Pledge" by which employers make a public commitment to provide training opportunities for their workers with low level qualifications while the programme to subsidise this training is expanded. There will be institutional changes that give employers a greater role: including the creation of a Commission for Employment and Skills. One task for this new Commission will be to advise the government on the strategy needed to increase employment an skills rates, as well as assessing progress.
Some new measures are already being implemented; others are to be implemented over the next three years or so. The steps taken so far show a substantial new impetus to reach the targets set. The success depends upon a greater commitment by employers to training and their acceptance of the new qualifications framework being developed. The moves to give a greater role for the private sector in the delivery of services for the unemployed will have to ensure a balance between giving incentives for greater innovation and ensuring that the complex needs of the more disadvantaged are met.

18. The Council also referred to the need to further improve access to childcare. The measures in the Childcare Act 2006 introduce a duty on local government to ensure that sufficient childcare is available especially for parents on low incomes or with disabled children came into force in April 2007. Progress in implementing England's ten year childcare strategy is on course, including the creation of children centres, out-of-school childcare places, a free weekly entitlement to 15 hours of pre-school provision for 3 and 4 year olds by 2010, and rights for parents to time off work, and statistics are beginning to show the impact of the measures taken. However, there is some way to go to reach the government's targets, and some concerns remain over affordability and the choice available to parents.

19. The UK addresses the aspects of flexicurity in a broadly integrated way. Active labour market programmes could do more for sustainable employment by giving more attention to promoting retention and progression, and a better integration of

employment and skills services would enhance learning opportunities and career progression. The social partners are not directly involved in the preparation of reforms but are routinely consulted.

20. In general, the UK has made good progress in implementing measures to deliver on the employment policy commitments in its NRP and in addressing the country specific recommendation and the point to watch. On skills and on improving the employment prospects of people from disadvantaged groups, the government has set out a comprehensive and well-balanced strategy, and has begun to implement measures that signal the new impetus given to policy in this area. However, it will be some time before the whole package is implemented and measurable results are available.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

21. In the light of the UK's 2007 Implementation Report and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

22. The UK has made significant progress in implementing its National Reform Programme over 2005-2007. The UK has shown good progress in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the 2006 Spring European Council in the four priority action areas.

23. The Implementation Report shows a good policy response to the recommendation issued by the Council. There has also been a good policy response on the additional areas identified in the Council conclusions as requiring attention.

24. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 UK Implementation Report are: the plans to provide an integrated approach to employment and skills, moves towards the creation of a business-friendly regulatory environment, and the forward-looking plans on energy policy.

25. The policy areas in the UK National Reform Programme where challenges need to be tackled with the highest priority are improving skills levels to increase productivity and reduce disadvantage in the labour market. Against this background it is recommended that the UK:

- implement recent plans to substantially improve skill-levels and establish an integrated approach to employment and skills in order to improve productivity and increase opportunities for the disadvantaged.

26. In addition, it will be important for the UK to focus on the following challenges for the future: progressively increase housing supply in order to meet medium term demand pressures; ensure progress towards the UK's R&D intensity target through full implementation of the recent review of R&D and innovation policy, particularly taking fuller account of the specific needs of the services sector.

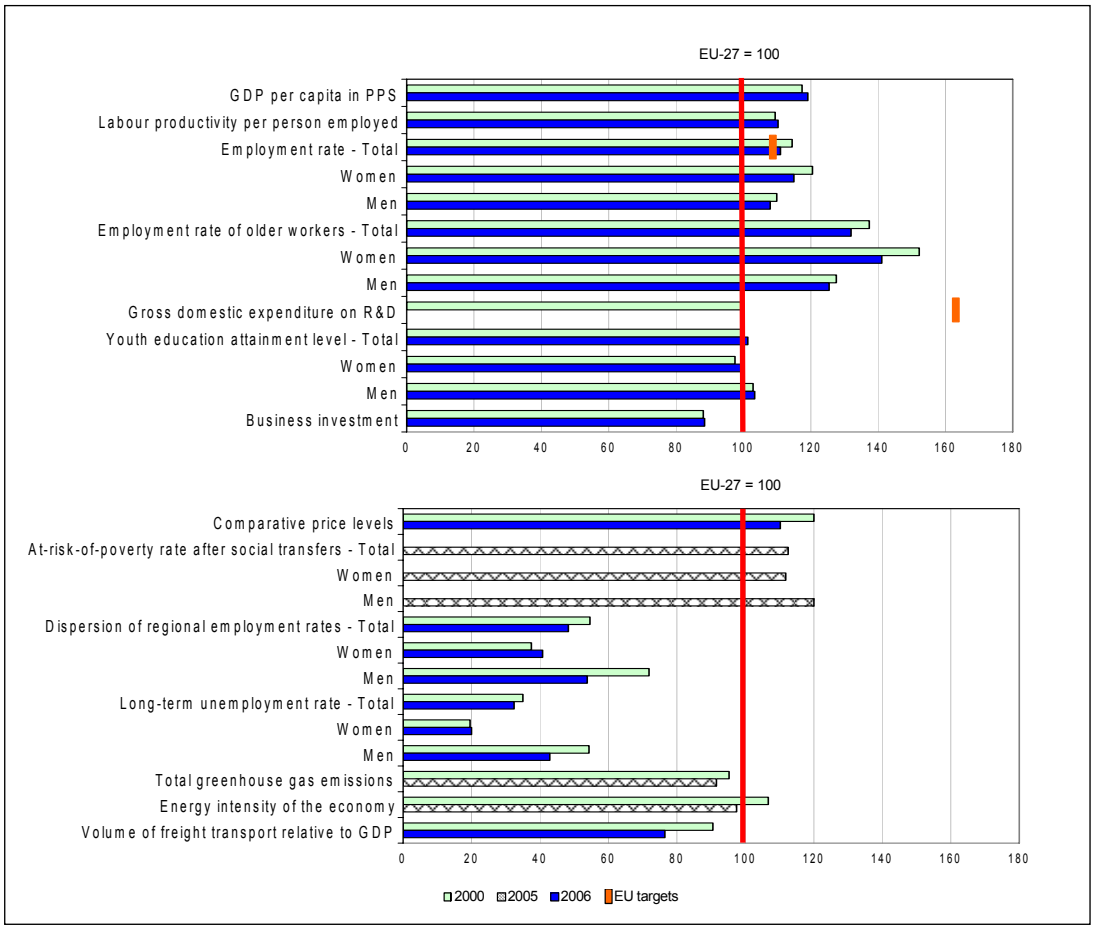
PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

UNITED KINGDOM

		UK						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		117.4	120.0	121.8	119.6	119.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		109.4	110.3	111.7	109.8	110.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	71.2	71.5	71.6	71.7	71.5	*	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	64.7	65.3	65.6	65.9	65.8		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	77.8	77.7	77.8	77.6	77.3		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	50.7	55.4	56.2	56.9	57.4		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	41.7	46.3	47.0	48.1	49.1		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	60.1	64.8	65.7	66.0	66.0		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.85	1.78	1.72	1.76	:	2.5 (2014)	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	76.6	78.7	77.0	78.2	78.8		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	77.3	78.9	78.0	78.9	80.3		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	75.9	78.4	76.0	77.4	77.3		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		120.0	107.8	107.9	109.2	110.2		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		16.2	15.1	15.3	16.5	16.1		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	19b	18.0	:	18.0b	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	21b	19.0	:	19.0b	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	16b	17.0	:	18.0b	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	7.1	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.5		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	7.5	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.6		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	6.9	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.0		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.2		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	1.9	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.5		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		86.4	85.0	84.7	84.3	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		227.3	212.1	206.0	202.6	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		89.7	84.5	83.9e	82.1e	81.6e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

* National target: 80% following the national definition

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27



Euro Area Member States

1. The economic performance of the euro area has improved since the Lisbon Strategy was renewed in 2005. GDP growth rebounded to 2.8% in 2006 and is forecast to decelerate slightly to 2.6% in 2007. The estimated potential growth rate of GDP has increased by some ¼ percentage points since 2005 to some 2¼ % in 2007. Employment increased by 4.3 million between 2005 and 2007, whilst the rate of unemployment declined from 8.9% in 2005 to 7.3% in 2007. The recent output growth has had a particularly strong positive effect on employment and part of the acceleration of labour productivity growth might be more than just cyclical in nature. Interdependence of the euro area economies is large with annual intra-area trade at 20% of euro area GDP.

2. The fiscal and monetary developments in the euro area have contributed to stability while supporting the economic recovery. With deficits and debt levels going down to more sustainable levels, overall fiscal performance has made significant steps to confront the ageing challenge. The implementation of structural reforms has improved fundamentals and increased the resilience of the economy. Inflation in the euro area Member States has been contained despite increasing energy prices and food prices. Such favourable outcome could be attained at interest rates that are low in a historical perspective, which should be conducive to continued capital formation.

3. The number of euro area Member States is growing. While in 2007 Slovenia adopted membership of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), 2008 will see Malta and Cyprus join. This brings the total euro area membership to a level of about 320 million people and fifteen Member States.

PART I: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

4. The euro area Member States have engaged in substantive structural reforms to tackle their economic, social and environmental challenges, although some have responded more robustly to some challenges than others. To stimulate Member States, the Council adopted country specific recommendations in the macro-economic, micro-economic and employment domain.

5. Stability oriented macro-economic policies foster favourable growth conditions and, especially relevant in the current juncture, are key to reduce uncertainty. Although important for all EU Member States, structural reforms are especially relevant for the economies in the euro area. Primarily aimed at creating more growth and jobs, structural reforms also enhance integration and the adaptability of euro area economies and synchronise its business cycles. Against the background of changing global economic conditions, well-functioning labour, product and service markets and more investment in skills are particularly important because they facilitate the reallocation of resources. Better integrated economies and the single currency stimulate competition, intra-EU trade in the internal market, promote innovation, and give consumers better value for money. Moreover, regional differences in demand can more easily be met through increased supply from elsewhere in the euro area, thus avoiding price pressures. In the absence of the exchange-rate instrument for

individual Member States, flexible labour markets and healthy government budgets are key to preventing strong downward (recession) and upward (overheating) fluctuations in growth. More synchronised business cycles will make it possible to have a monetary policy better geared to the needs of the EMU as a whole and Member States individually.

6. By tackling the euro area's common challenges in a coordinated manner, the benefits will be more substantial given the important spillovers across Member States. The Council therefore recommended that the euro area Member States aim at more ambitious budgetary consolidation, improving the quality of public finances, improving competition, especially in (financial) services and better balancing flexibility and security in labour markets. Evidently, there are differences across Member States in the degree of relevance of these recommendations. The Commission (in its October 2007 communication to the Informal European Council and the Council, highlighted the importance of effective policy co-ordination, especially in the context of the Eurogroup, and where appropriate in international fora.

7. In addressing the call for more effective policy coordination in the euro area, a positive development has been that the Eurogroup stepped up its analysis and monitoring of structural reforms. Over the last year, it held discussions on all the issues highlighted by the euro area recommendations, enabling Ministers to be better informed about the strategies, choices and challenges outstanding in the individual Member States and for the euro area as a whole, and to foster consensus on the importance of policies that improve adjustment in the euro area. A further notable development is that ten participating Member States (AT, BE, DE, ES, FI, IT, LU, NL, PT, SI) included details on their response to the euro area recommendations in their Implementation Reports. Although both developments are steps in the right direction, there is more scope for effective policy co-ordination.

PART II: ASSESSMENT BY POLICY AREA

Macro-economic policies

8. Macro-economic stability and sound fiscal policies enhance growth, create leeway to withstand adverse cyclical conditions, and help maintain price stability and low interest rates. The budget deficit in the euro area has come down from 2.5 % of GDP in 2005 to a forecast 0.8 % in 2007. Gross debt has declined from over 70% of GDP in 2005 to an expected 66.5 % in 2007. This has supported the monetary policy objective of maintaining price stability and, together with the implemented pension reforms, contributed to the sustainability of public finances, thereby helping tackle the budgetary consequences of ageing populations. Wage growth has remained contained in the period 2005-2007, despite tightening labour markets and a considerable fall in unemployment. Due to sound domestic fundamentals, the euro area economy was in a relatively good position to weather the continued rise in oil and commodity prices, and the turmoil in the financial markets that began during the summer of 2007. However, looking forward, the effect of the changed international economic climate, notably concerning financial markets, is likely to take its toll. The impact is likely to be differentiated, as shown by a correction already underway in Member States which experienced a housing boom in the recent past.

9. In their response to the recommendation to pursue ambitious budgetary consolidation, the euro area Member States committed, in April 2007, to implement their 2007 budgets as planned, avoiding expenditure overruns, and using unexpected extra revenue for deficit and debt reduction. They also committed to carefully designing fiscal policy plans for 2008 so as to accelerate adjustment towards the medium-term objective for Member States which had not reached it and for those which have reached it to avoid feeding macro-economic imbalances overall. Against this background, recent information suggests that budget balances would improve by 0.7 percentage points of GDP in the euro area in 2007. Structural balances in the euro area (i.e. government budgets adjusted for cyclical factors and one-off and temporary measures) are expected to improve by almost ½ a percentage point of GDP in 2007, a results of improved underlying balances in ten euro area Member States. Although a significant improvement of the headline government deficit is foreseen for some Member States (AT, EL, NL, PT), overall fiscal consolidation for the euro area is forecast to stall in 2008 and 2009. Most euro area Member States which have not yet achieved their medium term objective (AT, EL, FR, IT, PT, SI), are unlikely to reach it by 2009.

10. The recommendation to improve the quality of public finances refers to the role of public expenditures, revenues, and the institutional framework, in boosting potential growth and in helping adjustment to changing economic circumstances. A shift of public expenditure from consumption to productive investment (such as R&D, education, and skills) could contribute to this goal. These issues are of particular importance in the euro area because both the share of public expenditure to GDP, and levels of labour taxation are relatively high. In the context of a high share of expenditure on social protection in many euro area Member States, the observed differences in the effectiveness of social spending, suggests a considerable scope for efficiency gains. In their Implementation Reports, some Member States (e.g. DE, ES, FI) reported on measures aimed at improving the composition and size of public expenditure, including the flexibility to free up resources. Important revenue side measures announced by Member States (AT, DE, FI, SI) concern the reduction of, distortions arising from the tax system, and of compliance and administrative costs. The improvement of institutional elements has been on the agenda in some Member States (DE, ES, FR). There is a consensus that the methodology for analysing and measuring the quality of public finances needs to be developed further. To this end, more effort is required in the provision of detailed data on the composition of public spending and revenues.

11. In general, the euro area has succeeded in fostering stability and creating conditions more conducive to growth. The recommendations in the macro-economic area have been addressed to some extent. Achieving the goal of sustainable public finances relies on continuing budgetary consolidation where medium term objectives are not met yet. Moreover, the quality of public finances can be further improved, along with policy co-ordination, through an enhanced exchange of best practice.

Micro-economic policies

12. A well functioning internal market is important to ensure competition, productivity growth and lower prices. It also improves the capability of euro area economies to adjust to changes in the external environment, and increased competitive pressures from third Member States. It appears that the continued efforts to improve the

functioning of the internal market and the introduction of the euro have both boosted trade, foreign direct investment, and cross-border mergers within the euro area. Euro area Member States would benefit from further product and service market reform that remove obstacles to cross-border trade in services and knowledge diffusion, tackle the low expenditures of R&D, and the lack of business dynamism and competition in network industries. Further financial integration and stronger competition in the financial retail service would also be helpful in this respect.

13. The Council recommended euro area Member States to enact measures that lead to more competition, especially in services, and to step up the integration of financial markets and competition in retail financial services. A full and timely implementation of the Service Directive by December 2009 is essential for the well functioning of the internal market. Uneven progress in this area restricts the full economic potential of the services sector from being exploited. Costly, given that this sector accounts for 70% of euro area GDP. Progress at national level to implement further actions to enhance competition in services is visible in a limited number of euro area Member States. In network services only a limited number of significant measures have been carried out in the rail (NL), telecom (EL, SI, FI) and energy (NL) sectors. Measures have been taken (ES, IT) or are expected (FR) in the retail sector. Last year's Annual Progress Report assessed that competition in professional services was insufficient in nine euro area Member States. Despite measures taken in some of these Member States (BE, ES, FI, IT, NL), the situation has not significantly improved.

14. Progress on financial integration has been notable at the EU level. The European parliament has adopted the proposal for the Payment Services Directive, with the Commission proposing two further directives. Implementation of the Financial Services Action Plan at the Member State level is close to completion, but several Member States have yet to transpose both the Transparency Directive and the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive. Legislative measures have mainly focussed on the integration of wholesale markets, with the European retail banking markets remaining significantly more fragmented. While the existing financial surveillance mechanisms have been effective in addressing the financial turmoil in the summer of 2007, there is a need to further develop financial stability arrangements, including common principles for cross-border financial crisis management.

15. In general, the euro area Member States have partially succeeded in implementing measures to improve competition in services. Euro area Member States have also taken measures to accelerate financial integration. The Commission considers that these policy measures are going in the right direction, but fall short of leading to integrated and competitive service markets with a visibly higher degree of price flexibility and stronger productivity growth. The recommendation in the micro-economic area has been addressed at least in part, although the benefits from policy co-ordination have not yet been exploited.

Employment policies

16. There are indications that the employment growth recorded over the last years is resulting from structural reforms undertaken in the past, especially from reforms that targeted increasing labour supply and making work pay. However, the evidence of

wage rigidities and persistently high unemployment among some social groups suggest that labour market structures are not yet sufficiently flexible and adaptable, in particular since the mobility of labour across borders, regions and occupations is low in the euro area.

17. Euro area Member States have addressed the recommendation to improve flexibility and security in labour markets. As a result, wage bargaining systems in some Member States are gradually moving in the direction of more wage and working time flexibility and differentiation, while achieving aggregate price stability and competitiveness through enhanced bargaining coordination. For example, signs of more decentralised wage bargaining have emerged in some Member States (AT, ES, FI, IT), more differentiated agreements were observed in other Member States (PT, SI), and in IE an anti-inflation group has been established. Some Member States (e.g. AT, FI, IE, NL) have progressed towards an integrated flexicurity approach, with others taking steps towards this (FR, IT, SI). There has reform across the four flexicurity components. On contractual arrangements, progress is seen in AT and LU; there is an increasing adoption of lifelong learning strategies, but effective implementation remains limited, active labour market policies have been strengthened (e.g. AT, BE) and social security systems improved (e.g. BE, DE). Labour mobility has been the focus of EU initiatives (the Recommendation on "European Qualifications Framework" and the European Job Mobility Action Plan). However, with some exceptions (e.g. AT, BE, FI, IT), there has been limited progress on cross-border mobility.

18. In general, the euro area Member States have partially succeeded in implementing measures to review the wage setting mechanisms and to improve the financial incentives for labour market participation. In the Commission's opinion, these are useful steps in the right direction. It is necessary to spread the results achieved in some Member States and areas to others. The concept of flexicurity has not yet been used to design a comprehensive policy strategy. Overall, the euro area Member States have partly complied with the recommendation, but further areas need reform, and Member States that have not yet taken measures should do so. Stronger policy co-ordination, in particular through common learning from successful previous reforms, could stimulate much needed further reform.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

19. In the light of the 2007 Implementation Reports of the euro area Member States, and the Commission's assessment of progress made in implementing key structural reforms and based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, the following conclusions are appropriate:

20. Based on their Implementation Reports, the euro area Member States have been making some progress in implementing policy measures that improve the functioning of the euro area.

21. Significant further reforms are necessary to fulfil the micro-economic and employment recommendations. The progress recorded in 2007 concerning the macro-economic area needs to be sustained.

22. Among the strengths shown by the 2007 Implementation Reports of the euro area Member States are: budgetary adjustment in 2007, the implementation of legislation to foster financial market integration, and wage bargaining systems more conducive to wage flexibility in some Member States.

23. The policy areas in the euro area where challenges now need to be tackled with the highest priority are: the sustainability of public finances and their contribution to growth; competition in product and service markets, especially in services, financial integration and competition in financial retail services, in order to facilitate adjustment and more flexible prices; adequate wage developments at the aggregate, sector, regional and occupational level; flexicurity in labour markets; and more labour mobility in order to foster labour market adjustment.

24. Against this background it is recommended that the euro area Member States together with their country specific recommendations:

- pursue budgetary consolidation towards their medium-term objectives in line with the Stability and Growth Pact, hence striving to achieve an annual structural adjustment of at least 0.5% of GDP as a benchmark;

- improve the quality of public finances by reviewing public expenditures and taxation, with the intention to enhance productivity and innovation, thereby contributing to economic growth and fiscal sustainability;

- effectively implement measures that improve competition, especially in services, and step up measures that promote the full integration of financial markets and the competition in retail financial services, whilst strengthening stability and supervisory arrangements;

- improve flexibility and security on labour markets inter alia by implementing "flexicurity" strategies, better aligning wage and productivity developments, and enacting measures to promote labour mobility across borders and between occupations.

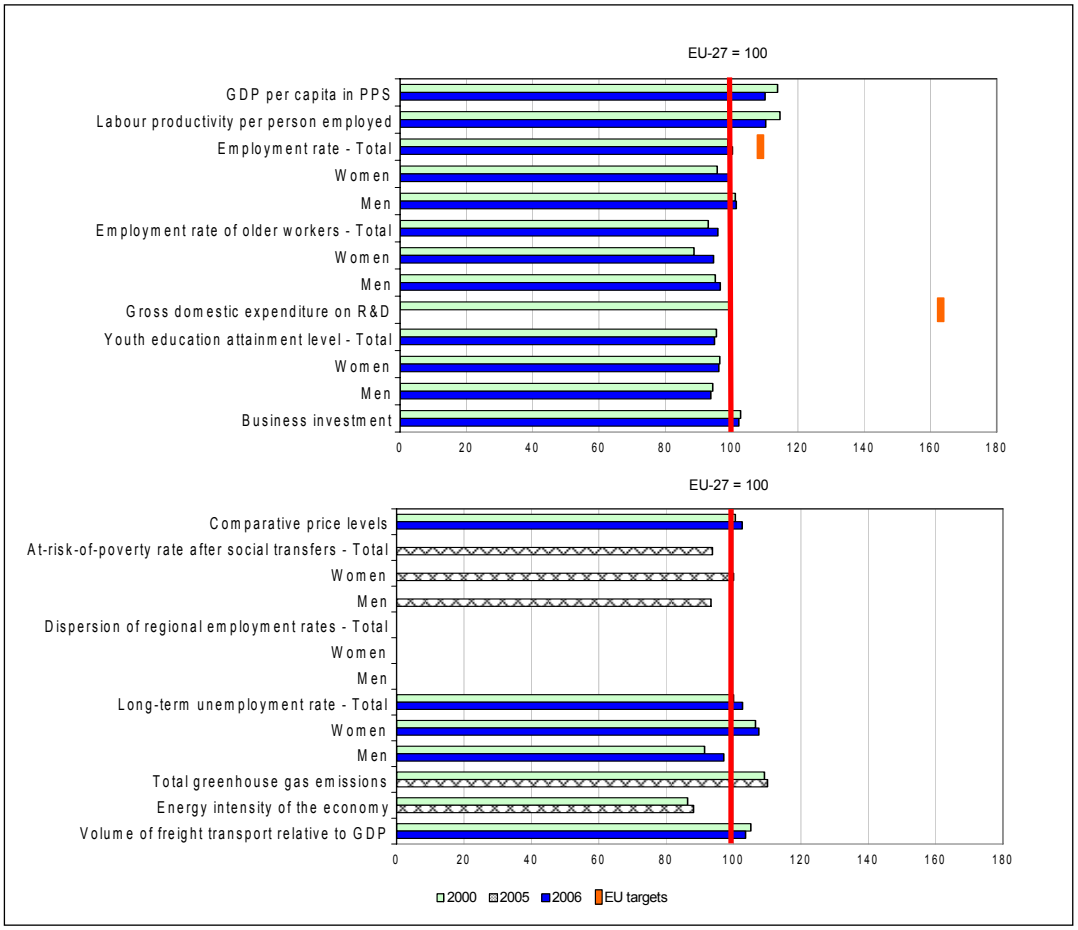
25. For the future it will also be important for euro area to further strengthen governance to maximise policy synergies, which are stronger in a monetary union, and enhance political ownership of reforms. The Eurogroup's April 2007 Berlin orientations on public finances are a welcome step in this regard and a similar approach should be extended to other fields. A strengthening of the euro's representation in international financial institutions and fora would be in line with its potential as a pole of stability and growth in the global economy.

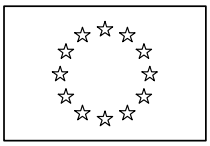
PART IV: STATISTICAL GRAPHS AND DATA

EURO AREA

		EURO AREA						EU27			
		2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2010 National target	2000	2005	2006	2010 EU target
GDP per capita in PPS		113.9	111.9	110.9	110.9	110.1		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Labour productivity per person employed		114.6	111.5	110.6	110.8	110.3		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Employment rate	Total	61.5	62.6	63.0	63.7p	64.6p	:	62.2	63.4p	64.4p	70.0
	Women	51.4	53.6	54.5	55.6p	56.7p		53.7	56.2p	57.2p	
	Men	71.6	71.5	71.5	71.8p	72.6p		70.8	70.8p	71.6p	
Employment rate of older workers	Total	34.3	37.8	38.6	40.4p	41.7p		36.9	42.3p	43.5p	
	Women	24.3	27.9	29.0	31.5p	32.9p		27.4	33.5p	34.8p	
	Men	44.8	48.1	48.5	49.7p	50.8p		47.1	51.5p	52.6p	
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D		1.85e	:	:	:	:	:	1.86e	1.84e	1.84e	3.0
Youth education attainment level	Total	73.1	73.1	73.5	73.6	73.8		76.6	77.4	77.8	
	Women	76.5	76.3	77.2	77.2	77.6		79.3	80.1	80.7	
	Men	69.6	69.8	69.9	70.1	70.1		73.8	74.7	74.8	
Comparative price levels		100.5	103.5	103.7	102.7	102.6		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Business investment		18.9	17.6	17.8	18.1	18.6		18.4	17.8	18.2	
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers	Total	:	:	:	15.0e	:		:	16.0e	:	
	Women	:	:	:	17.0e	:		:	17.0e	:	
	Men	:	:	:	14.0e	:		:	15.0e	:	
Dispersion of regional employment rates	Total	:	:	:	:	:		13.0	11.9	11.4	
	Women	:	:	:	:	:		20.0	16.8	16.2	
	Men	:	:	:	:	:		9.6	9.7	9.3	
Long-term unemployment rate	Total	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.0p	3.8p		4.0	4.1p	3.7p	
	Women	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.5p	4.3p		4.6	4.5p	4.0p	
	Men	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.5p	3.4p		3.5	3.8p	3.5p	
Total greenhouse gas emissions		99.0	101.7	102.1	101.4	:		90.7	92.1	:	
Energy intensity of the economy		184.2	186.7	185.7	183.4	:		213.1	208.1	:	
Volume of freight transport relative to GDP		104.2e	102.8e	109.3be	109.7e	110.5e		99.1e	105.4e	106.7e	

PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO EU-27





COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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PART III

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new cycle (2008-2010)

Companion document

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Macro-economic part 5

Summary and conclusions 5

1. Economic performance during the 1st Lisbon cycle (2005-07) and prospects for the 2nd cycle (2008-10) 7

2. Assessing progress with reforms that contribute to macroeconomic stability 14

II. Micro-economic part 27

Summary and conclusions 27

1. Economic effects of microeconomic reforms 29

2. Three years in the new reform agenda: an assessment of progress by policy area 30

3. Implementing priorities for action 48

III. The Commission Draft of the Joint Employment Report 2007/8 51

Summary and conclusions 51

1. Progress in achieving the objectives of the European Employment Strategy 52

2. Implementing priorities for action 55

IV. THE GENERAL APPROACH USED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO ASSESS PROGRESS WITH STRUCTURAL REFORMS 63

V. THE EUROPEAN GROWTH INITIATIVE 65

1. The improved framework for investment – Preliminary results 66

2. The Growth Initiative within the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs 68

INTRODUCTION

In March 2005, the Lisbon strategy was re-launched placing growth and jobs at the top of European political priorities. This focus stemmed from the recognition that economic growth in Europe had been disappointing relative to the most dynamic economies in the world, and that the Union faced major challenges in coping with globalisation and ageing populations. Euro area countries faced the additional challenge of improving the capacity of their economies to adjust to economic shocks in the absence of national monetary or exchange rate policies.

The re-launched Lisbon strategy provides a comprehensive framework for reform efforts to raise growth and jobs potential, encompassing measures which promote macroeconomic stability, increase labour utilisation and enhance labour productivity: The Lisbon strategy places considerable emphasis innovation and promoting a knowledge-based economy, through policies which enhance market entry and flexibility, plus higher investment in education, training and R&D.

The end of the revised strategy's first-three year cycle is an appropriate moment to draw some conclusions about how well it is succeeding. Europe's economic situation has improved considerably since the Lisbon Strategy was re-launched in 2005, although recent months have witnessed growing downside risks. Average annual real GDP growth since 2005 has been 2.6%. Growth has been increasingly driven by domestic demand, leaving Europe better placed to cope with adverse external shocks. Budget deficits have been reduced from 2.5% of GDP in 2005 to a forecasted 1.1% in 2007, whilst public debt has declined from 62.7% in 2005 to just below 60% in 2007. Almost 6.5 million extra jobs have been created in EU27 in the last two years, with 5 million more projected to be created by 2009. Unemployment is expected to fall below 7%, the lowest level since the mid-80s. For the first time in a decade, robust employment increases have gone hand in hand with robust productivity growth. In some Member States, improving growth conditions have been accompanied by a gradual build-up of imbalances with signs of overheating, as witnessed by large current account deficits, a loss of competitiveness, increasing household indebtedness and rapidly increasing house prices.

The business environment has benefited from a series of structural reforms. The EU's better regulation agenda is gradually being put into place, although many Member States still need to implement the necessary instruments, including impact assessments and methods to measure and reduce administrative burdens. It is now much easier and cheaper to start a business in almost all Member States. Europe, as a whole, however does not yet have a dynamic, entrepreneurial culture. Too often, efforts to improve the business environment are made in a piecemeal way as opposed to being part of an integrated approach geared towards the growth of SMEs. Whilst Member States have set targets committing themselves to significantly increasing R&D investments which would help the EU approach its 3% of GDP target by 2010, the evidence does not yet reflect this ambition. The EU has made the first steps towards transforming itself into a low carbon society. There is progress in meeting the overall EU Kyoto target and at the Spring 2007 European Council the EU committed itself to ambitious targets for greenhouse gas reduction and increasing the share of renewable energies by 2020.

In some countries, unfortunately, reform seems to be slowing down. However, it is imperative that reforms continue. Most Member States still lag behind leading economies, for example in labour utilisation and labour productivity, and the challenges of globalisation and population

ageing will continue into the next decades. Moreover, structural reforms will not only help enhance growth and jobs potential over the medium-run, they also play an essential role helping economies adjust and cope with the shocks and pressures that sparked the recent financial turmoil and heightened economic uncertainty.

A crucial question on the threshold of a new three-year Lisbon cycle is what part structural reforms played in the improved economic performance. Commission analysis has found evidence of structural improvement in the functioning of labour markets. In particular, sustained increases in the employment rates of women and older workers seem partially due to previously enacted policy reforms. The trend decline in productivity growth that entrenched itself in the early 1990s seems to have halted in recent years; since mid-2005, labour productivity growth has accelerated.

This Companion Document accompanies the Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new three-year-cycle. It aims at providing further detail on the underlying rationale for carrying out coordinated policy reforms. It also takes stock of the main developments in policy reform since the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy in 2005.

The paper is divided in five sections. The first, second, and third sections take stock of the main progress, in terms of policy reforms, in the macroeconomic, microeconomic and employment pillars of the Lisbon strategy. The fourth section outlines the Commission's methodology in assessing structural reforms and the Implementation Reports. The fifth provides a mid-term evaluation of the European Growth Initiative.

I. MACRO-ECONOMIC PART

Summary and conclusions

Overall, over the period 2005-2007, there has been some progress with macro economic reforms, although the pace has slowed in the last 12 months.

Consolidation of public finances has advanced, though it remains a challenge in several Member States. The nominal EU27 budget deficit was 2.5 % of GDP in 2005 and it is forecast to drop to 1.1 % in 2007. This mainly reflects reduced government expenditures (as a share of GDP), although revenues (as a share of GDP) have increased. At the start of 2006, twelve countries were in excessive deficit, but only six by end-2007. However, fiscal adjustment seems to have slowed somewhat in the last year; the opportunity to use relatively strong growth conditions to reduce structural deficits by the 0.5% of GDP benchmark in the Stability and Growth Pact (applicable to euro area and ERM II countries) has not been fully taken in all Member States. Indeed, most countries still have some way to go to achieve medium-term budgetary positions that would allow the budget to fully play its stabilising role.

Stability-oriented policies have made some positive contributions. Headline inflation in the EU27 has hovered just above 2% over the last 3 years and is expected to remain at this level. However, in some Member States, improving economic growth has been coupled with a gradual build-up of imbalances with large current account deficits and signs of overheating: poor competitiveness developments, increasing household indebtedness and rising house prices. There is therefore a strong case for macro-economic policies to restrain demand in several Member States as well as further reforms to improve adjustment capacity to shocks and the functioning of the supply side of the economy.

The significant challenge in most countries of keeping intact the long-term sustainability of public finances and the urgency takeoff taking additional measures has increased. At the same time, better budgetary positions and several important pension and health care reforms in some countries have improved the situation in the last few years. The EU27 debt/GDP ratio has declined, from 63 % of GDP in 2005 to just below 60 % in 2007. Pressing ahead with ambitious reform plans and avoiding damaging policy reversals is important**.**

A primary EU policy objective is to bring more of the working age population into work. Policies need to support wages developing in line with productivity so as to achieve high employment and contain inflation. In the aggregate, wage moderation has continued to support price stability over the period 2005-2007, including the last 12 months, despite a tightening labour market and the closing of output gaps. However, the situation varies across countries. Within countries, across sectors and regions only partial progress has been made to make wage dispersion reflect productivity differentials.

It is important to continue with policies that improve incentives to become employed. Several Member States have indeed taken measures to improve incentives to work, from reforms in the benefit system (both levels of benefits and availability criteria) to labour taxation. However, less has been done to relax employment protection legislation. While many countries have taken measures that go in the right direction, the overall impact is relatively limited in many cases and thus there is a need to further pursue such strategies along the

principles of flexicurity. A challenge is how to lower labour taxes without endangering fiscal consolidation.

This part of the annex focuses on the Integrated Guidelines package that addresses policies to ensure a stable and sustainable macroeconomic environment. A first section takes a closer look at economic developments during the three years of the 1st Lisbon cycle (2005 to 2008). It examines whether the economic upturn is cyclical (transitory) or structural (potentially due to the positive impact of past structural reforms) in nature. It also considers the reform agenda facing the EU for the next three year cycle (2008-2010) in the face of challenges resulting from globalisation and ageing populations, as well as the urgent need to address climate change. A second part of the annex reviews progress with structural reforms in several key macroeconomic domains, with a particular emphasis placed on reform efforts over the past year.

1. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE DURING THE 1ST LISBON CYCLE (2005-07) AND PROSPECTS FOR THE 2ND CYCLE (2008-10)

Economic performance has improved since 2005

Economic performances have improved considerably since the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005. Economic growth was 3.0% in the EU27 in 2006 compared with 1.8% in 2005, and is forecast to remain at 2.9% and 2.4% in 2007 and 2008. Thirteen million jobs have been created since 2000, and more than half of that after 2005, and unemployment has fallen steeply from 8.6% to 6.9% over the 2005-2007 period. An especially welcome development is that for the first time since 1997, job creation and productivity improvements have occurred simultaneously[1]. As a result of the improved growth performance, the Commission estimates the output gap is merely -0.1 p.p. % in 2007 compared with 1 p.p. negative gap in 2005. Moreover, the gap in GDP per capita with the US has closed slightly, from 65.4% of the US-level for EU-27 and 72.1% in the euro area in 2005 to 67.1% and 73.5% respectively in 2007. Although it is difficult to disentangle the impact of cyclical and structural factors on growth, it is an encouraging sign that the Commission's calculations suggest that potential GDP growth, i.e. net of cyclical factors, has improved from 2.3% in 2005 to 2.5% in 2007 for the EU-27, and from 2.0 to 2.2% for the euro area. The three Baltic states, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic have experienced an especially rapid convergence. The recovery has also spread to EU15 countries, most remarkably to Germany, which seems to have overcome its role as growth laggard in the EU.

In addition to higher growth rates, the composition of growth has become more favourable to domestic drivers over time, which bodes well for increased resilience to adverse external factors. As shown in Table 1, the contribution to growth of fixed capital investment had been particularly weak in the first half of the decade. Since 2005, it has strengthened, returning to growth rates comparable to the ones observed in the late 1990s which raise hopes that firms' higher investment, through the diffusion of technological progress, translates into higher productivity growth. Though private consumption contributed less to growth in 2005-2007 than in the late 1990s, an upward shift in the contribution of private consumption spending is now clearly evident from the data on consumer expenditures as well as from the recovery in consumer confidence underpinned by the declining rates of unemployment. Moreover, as can be seen from a more detailed breakdown of the growth performance (Graph 1) productivity gains accounted for more than half of the average economic growth recorded in EU27 2005-2007, with labour inputs accounting for the remaining part. Labour inputs benefited from net migration, and to a lower extent an increasing native population, while the rise in participation rates, especially of women and older workers, was partly offset by the decline in average hours worked per person employed and the decline in youth participation. As regards

[1] A recent Commission publication entitled Moving Europe's productivity frontier reviews different explanations of the trade-off between productivity and employment growth and provides an empirical assessment of the size of this trade-off and of how it has been changing over time, see the EU Economy 2007 Review: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2007/the_eu_economy_review2007_en.htm

labour productivity, technical progress appears to have been a stronger driving force than capital accumulation and rise of labour initial education. Compared to the 2000-2004 period a key difference is the positive contribution to growth from the reduction in unemployment rates, which should be partly attributed to the cyclical recovery.

Due to sound economic fundaments, most Member States are in a good position to withstand the strains from the financial turbulence witnessed in summer 2007. According to the autumn 2007 forecast of the European Commission[2], growth in the EU-27 is predicted to be 2.9% in 2007 and 2.4% in 2008. For a few Member States (LV, LT, EE), however, accumulated macroeconomic imbalances such as high inflation, large current account deficits and excess housing price increases bear important risks in the current juncture. Also in BG and RO, external deficits are large and inflation high. In other countries such as EL, ES and PT deteriorating economic growth is likely to jeopardise the sustainability of competitiveness, foreign debt or households' indebtedness. Such countries need to closely survey financial stability and, in case of a further widening of the external deficit, vigorous structural reforms to restore cost competitiveness.

Table 1. Economic developments 2000-2009, key figures, EU27

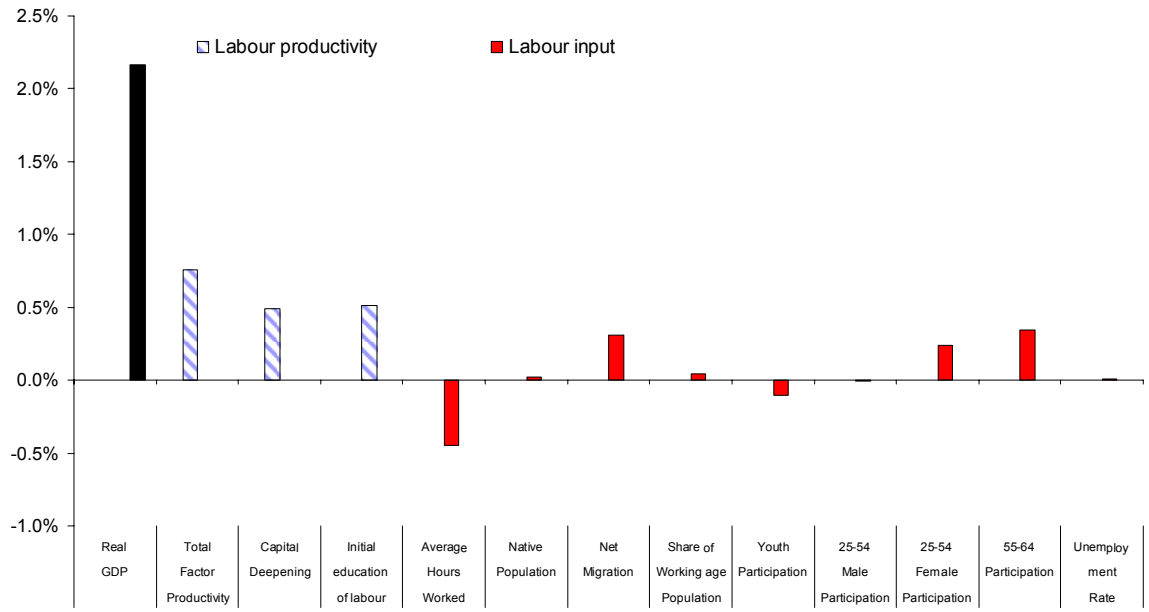
	2000-04	2005-2007	2007	2008-09
GDP growth	2.2	2.6	2.9	2.4
Consumption growth	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.2
Investment growth	1.6	4.8	5.6	3.4
Employment growth	0.9	1.4	1.6	1.0
Unemployment rate (% labour force)	8.8	8.1	7.1	6.7
Inflation rate	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.3
Government balance (% of GDP)	-1.8	-1.7	-1.1	-1.1
Government debt (% of GDP)	61.5	61.4	59.7	57.8
Current Account (% of GDP)	0.0	-0.6	-0.8	-0.9

Source: Commission Autumn Forecast

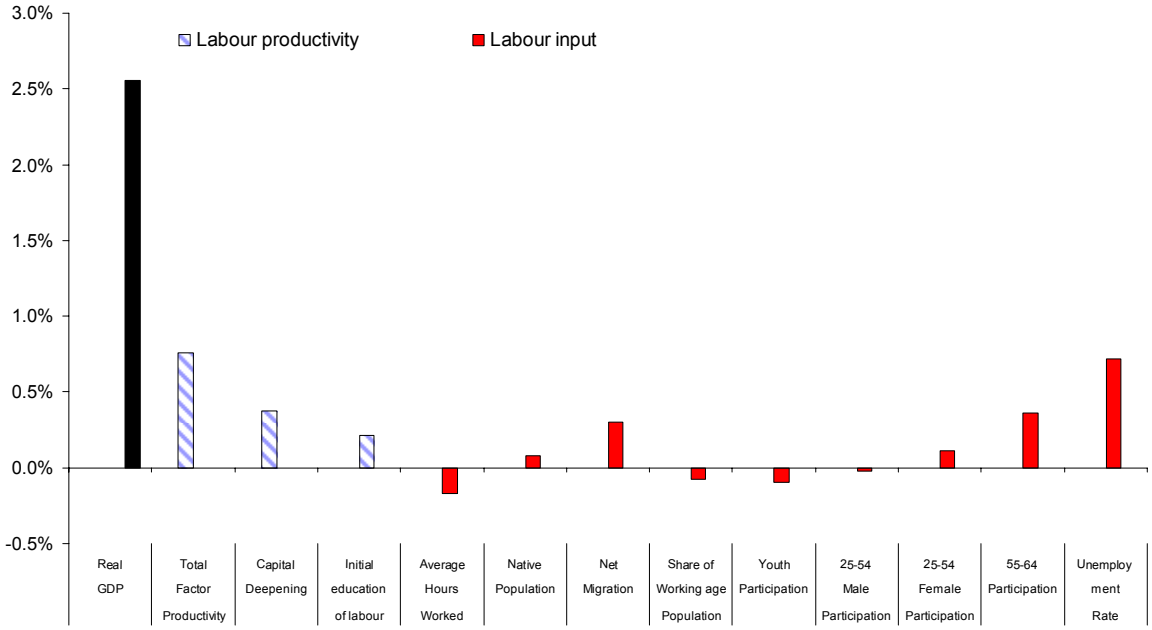
[2] See the 2007 Autumn Economic Forecast of the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/forecasts_en.htm

Graph 1. Real GDP growth and its components in EU27, 2000-2004 and 2005-2007

EU-27 , 2000-2004



EU-27 , 2005-2007

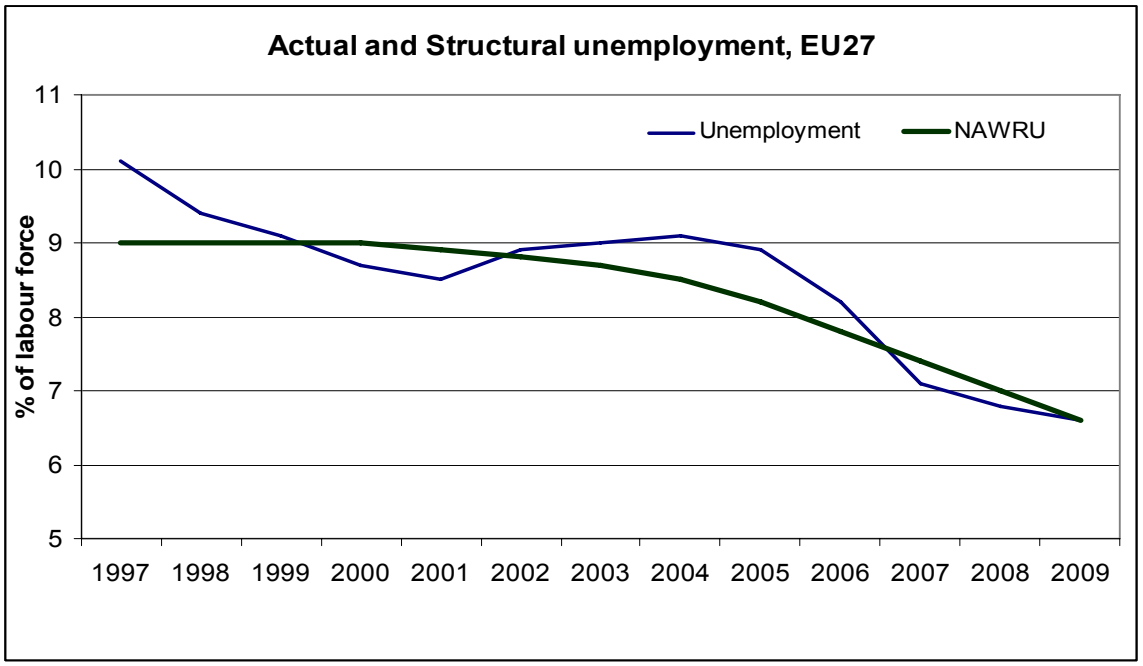


Are past reforms starting to pay dividends?

One of most important questions as the EU enters a new three-year Lisbon cycle is whether the improved economic performance is in part due to the effects of structural

reforms. Establishing a causal link between the progresses made in the Lisbon agenda and economic performance is not straightforward. This is because the observed changes in economic variables can be due to several factors, some of which are beyond the direct or immediate influence of government policies, e.g. the economic cycle, globalisation, technological developments and demographic changes. Also, analysis suggests that reforms need a considerable time before their benefits become visible in growth numbers, and thus relevant reforms may pre-date the revision of the Lisbon strategy. Moreover, it is difficult to establish the extent the new Lisbon governance structures have contributed to overcome reform resistance in individual Member States, as many reforms have a clear domestic rationale and governments may have undertaken them independently of co-ordination efforts at EU level.

Graph 2: Employment and labour productivity growth, actual and structural, 1997-2009



Notwithstanding the caveats mentioned above, analysis by the Commission suggests that, there is a structural component linked to past structural reforms enacted by EU Member States and in a number of policy areas there are a visible EU level dimension which is expressed through common targets and actions.

There is evidence of structural improvement in the functioning of labour markets[3]. As regards labour utilisation, employment grew by more than 1% each year since 2005, leading to almost 6.5 million new jobs in the EU by 2007. Although sustained efforts will be required to bring the employment rate of 70% by 2010 closer, female employment rates have increased from 54% in 2000 to 56% in 2005 to about 58%[4] in 2007, and the Lisbon employment target of 60% is within reach. There has also been a substantive increase in the employment rates of older workers (aged 55 to 64) from 37% in 2000 to 42% in 2005 and 44%[4] in 2007. Moreover, the effective retirement age has increase by 1 year between 2001 and 2005, which is welcome reversal of long standing historical trends. Analysis suggests that part of this is due to lagged effects of pension reforms: preliminary econometric estimates[5] suggest that the participation rates of older workers (55-64) increased by about 1.5 percentage point after 5 years that a pension reform has been enacted.

Employment has not increased on average in the group of low-skilled workers, with the employment rate being around 55% over the 2000-2006 period. Given the fact that this labour market segment performs rather badly in comparison to other skill groups (employment rates of medium- and highly-skilled workers stand at around 73% and 84% respectively) many Member States have nevertheless focused their policies in this direction. In particular, there has been a general trend towards reducing the tax burden for low skilled workers. As a result, there has been a drop in the total tax wedge (including social security contributions by employees and employers) for the low-skilled workers of almost 4 percent over the period 2000 to 2006[6].

Further evidence of ongoing structural improvements in the functioning of labour markets emerges from an analysis of unemployment rates. The rate of unemployment declined from 8.7% in 2005 to 6.9 % in 2007. This is in stark contrast to previous economic cycles when unemployment rates increased sharply and took a long time to decline: it not only contributes to economic growth, but is equally important for equity and welfare considerations as having a job is the single most important factor in avoiding poverty and social exclusion. When only cyclical forces are at work, the reduction in unemployment typically leaves a clear trace in higher wage growth. In the current upturn, wage growth has hardly accelerated, implying also reduction in the structural rate of unemployment. Structural unemployment, captured as the non-accelerating wage rate of unemployment, NAWRU, is estimated to have been reduced from 8.2% in 2005 to 7.4% in 2007. Similar calculations suggest that the reforms between 2001 and 2006 that aimed at increasing the employability of marginally attached people increased employment rates by 0.8 percentage points one year after the reforms were enacted.

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3 For an encompassing description on EU labour market and wage developments See report "Labour market and wage development in 2006", European Economy no.4, 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/labour_mkt_wage2007_en.htm

4 2007 estimate based on the average of data for the first two quarters.

5 Arpaia, A.F. Pierini and P. Braila "Tracking labour market reforms in the European union using the LABREF database" paper presented at the IZA-Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti Workshop "Measurement of Labour Market Institutions".

6 Based on EuroStat data on single earner without children (EU27 minus CY, EE, MT, LV, SI, BG, RO) and OECD Working paper (2004-5) on 2004 distribution on family types and earning levels for selected countries.

Positively, since mid-2005 productivity growth in the EU has picked up. Labour productivity growth is estimated at 1.4% in EU-27 in 2007, slightly lower than the 1.5% in 2006 but better than the 1.0% recorded in 2005. An additional positive feature of this is that in 2006, rising employment took place in an environment of accelerating productivity growth: this was the first time since 1997 that both employment and labour productivity accelerated in tandem. Indeed, a central policy goal of the Lisbon strategy is higher structural labour productivity growth given the need to close the gap in the productivity performance vis-à-vis the USA that emerged since mid 1990s. For now, however, it is early to assess whether the welcome acceleration in productivity growth is not only due to cyclical factors, but also linked to structural improvements. .

Aggregated data suggest that the trend decline in productivity growth, which has become entrenched since the early 1990s, has come to a halt in the last years. While statistical tests broadly confirm the bottoming out of the decline in trend productivity growth at the start of this decade, evidence of a turning point beyond that date indicating a recent pick-up in trend productivity growth remain weak.

The challenges for the 2nd Lisbon cycle, 2008-10

The Lisbon strategy is now entering a new three year cycle to cover the period 2008 to 2010. Notwithstanding the progress made since 2005, the diagnosis of the underlying structural challenges facing the Union as regards growth and jobs remains valid. As illustrated in Graph 4, large income per-capita gaps remain across countries. In 2007, based on the Commission Autumn forecast figures, the average per capita GDP of the EU27 was 10% below that of EU15 (and 33% below that of the US). For EU15 and euro area countries, the gap is mainly due to lower labour utilisation (i.e. the numbers of hours worked in the economy), whereas lower labour productivity (measured in terms of output per hour) is the main explanatory factor for Member States which joined in 2004 and 2007. The final column in Graph 3 indicates that over the 2005-2007 period, EU10 countries in particular have further narrowed the income gap benefiting from the process of real convergence. However, progress has been mixed, with some larger euro area countries doing less well.

These challenges may indeed become even more pertinent in the coming years as short- and long-term pressures become more explicit. In the short term, based on the Commission autumn forecast, the outlook for 2008-2009 indicates (see Table 1) a slow-down in growth albeit moderate, towards potential rates at around 2.5% per year. The projected slowdown mainly finds its roots in a slower forecasted pace of investment growth, while employment growth is also forecasted to decelerate (even though unemployment rates will continue to decline somewhat). In the longer term, pressures both from demographics and increased international competition are set to strengthen:

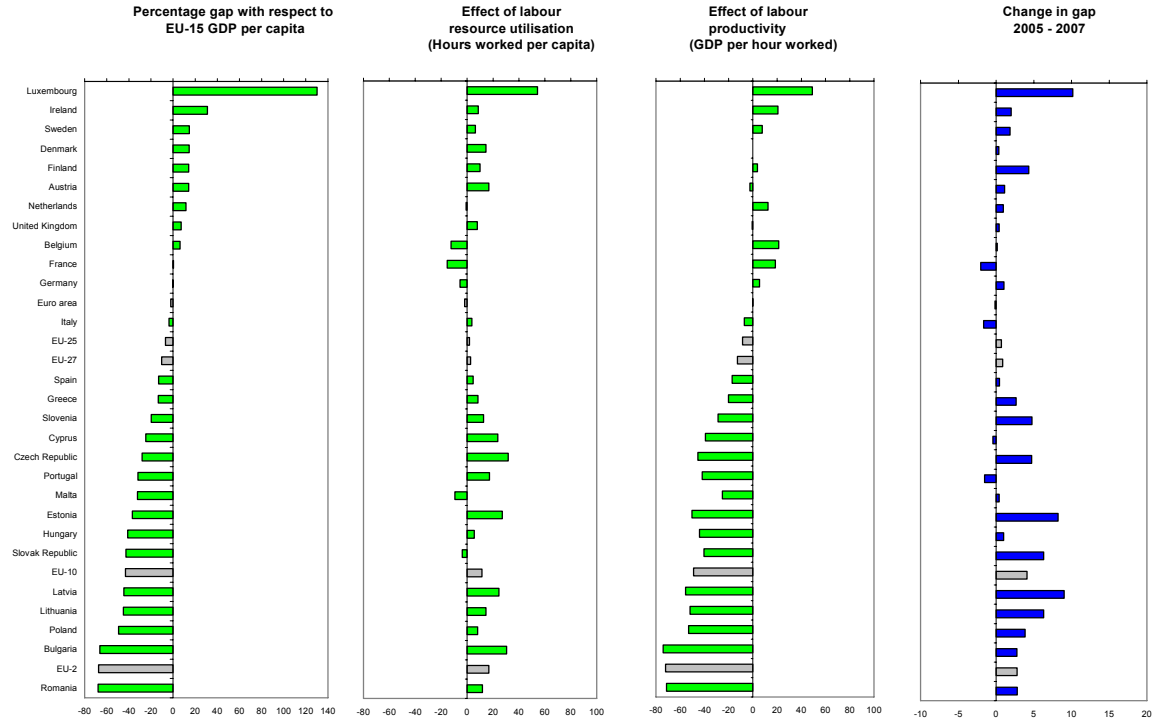
- projections indicate that in the coming decades potential GDP growth rates is set to gradually decline and to reach, by 2050, levels of about half of today's[7]. This

[7] See "Long-term labour productivity and GDP projections for the EU25 Member States: a production function framework", European Economy, Economic Papers, No 253, June 2006, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_papers/2006/economicpapers253_en.htm

downward trend results from the future negative contributions to growth from the working age population due to demographic factors, leaving labour productivity as the key growth driver. The implication is that reform efforts contributing to an increase in labour productivity rates will become increasingly important over time;

- the trend towards increased competition through globalisation is set to continue. While deeper international trade links is expected to be beneficial for growth and employment in the aggregate, it will nevertheless risk in the short term to increase pressures on certain groups of the labour force and thus require a high degree of adaptability for a successful response[8].

Graph 3: Overview of the income gap in the EU25 Member States



***Note**: the gap is measures relative to the average of EU15 Member States*

2. ASSESSING PROGRESS WITH REFORMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MACROECONOMIC STABILITY

2.1. Securing economic stability for sustainable growth

Macroeconomic stability is a key framework condition for sustainable growth as expressed in Integrated Guideline N°1. Macroeconomic stability is secured by a

8 For an extensive analysis of globalisations by the Commission, see 'Rising international economic integration: opportunities and challenges', in the EU Economy: 2005 Review", http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/the_eu_economy_review2005_en.htm

sound mix of stability-oriented macro-economic measures and well designed structural reforms in product and factor markets. Monetary policy contributes by pursuing price stability. Sound budgetary positions allow the full and symmetric play of the budgetary stabilisers over the cycle. Fiscal restraint, effective financial supervision and the promotion of competitiveness help to contain external and internal imbalances. Moreover, budgetary and wage restraint limit the risk of domestic demand causing persistently higher inflation, potentially causing swings in real exchange rates and a protracted loss of competitiveness. Against this background, to assess how countries fare, and have made progress, in terms of macro-economic stability and budgetary policies, it is useful to look at budgetary positions, the fiscal stance and the extent to which medium-term budgetary positions provide enough safety margins to allow automatic stabilisers to play freely. Similarly, when looking at possible emerging macroeconomic imbalances it is relevant to examine external balances of countries together with domestic inflationary pressures, wage and labour market developments as well as asset price developments.

Over the 2005-2007 period, the consolidation of public finances has moved forward, even if further consolidation remains a challenge in several countries. The EU27 nominal budget deficit has been reduced from 2.5 % of GDP in 2005 to 1.1 % in 2007. According to the Commission forecast, on a "no policy change assumption", it is expected to remain at this level over the coming two years. The same trend is also reflected in structural budget positions which for 2007 are estimated to be -1.1% of GDP in EU27 and -0.7% of GDP in the euro area. This improvement is mainly driven by a reduction in government expenditures to GDP, although revenues as a share of GDP have also increased. At the start of 2006 twelve countries found themselves in a position of excessive deficit while at the end of 2007 only six countries are still there (CZ, HU, IT, PL, PT, SK). However, the pace of fiscal adjustment seems to have been reduced somewhat in the last year, and the opportunity to use the relatively strong growth conditions to reduce structural deficits by the 0.5% of GDP benchmark in the Stability and Growth Pact have not been fully taken in all Member States (applicable to euro area and ERM II countries). Moreover, a majority of countries still have some way to go to achieve medium-term budgetary positions that allows the budget to play fully its stabilising role[9].

Headline inflation in EU-27 has hovered just above 2% over the 2005-2007 period. In 2007, favourable energy-price base effects have contributed to reduce inflation. However, core inflation has continued to drift upwards and reached in 2007 levels close to 2%. This confirms on the one hand that a more mature cyclical position of the economy has been reached but on the other hand it also reflects some administrative measures (such as the VAT increase in DE) and strong increases in commodity prices. Service inflation continues to run at a relatively high rate. In the euro area, inflation in 2007 stood at 2%, somewhat lower than in 2006. The inflation differential between the three countries with highest inflation (IE, EL, SI) in the euro area and the three with lowest inflation (F, MT, FI) was 1.7%-points, similar to 2006.

[9] See the report "Public Finances in EMU-2007", European Economy No 3, 2007.

In 2007, five countries are projected to record an external deficit of at least 10% of GDP (LV, LT, EE, BG, RO). These countries display signs of overheating, characterised by excess aggregate demand evidenced by labour shortages, rapid increases in household borrowing, inflationary pressures and very high external imbalances. Among other Member States, EL, ES and PT have in 2007 external deficits between 8 and 10% of GDP; their external deficits owe mainly to structurally poor competitiveness, although robust growth in Greece and Spain is also a factor. In two other countries, HU and SK, the current account deficit was of a similar magnitude in recent years but has been on a declining trend, with the deficit expected to reach between 3 and 4% of GDP in 2007. It should be noted that in a catching-up country, even a widening external deficit need not be a cause for concern if there is a concomitant rise in productive potential in tradable goods and services and thus in the future export earnings generating capacity sufficient to service the external debt. However, to the extent that the widening external deficit reflects unrealistically optimistic expectations regarding future growth reflected in an excessively rapid increase in expenditure relative to income, an attitude of caution is warranted.

2.2. Safe-guarding economic and fiscal sustainability

Europe's ageing population poses a serious challenge to the long-term financial sustainability in EU countries, which is recognised in Integrated Guideline N°2. In the absence of appropriate reforms, this could lead to increasing debt burdens, lower potential output per capita due to the reduction in the working age population, and pressure for significant increases in public spending on pensions and health care. The economic, budgetary and social implications of ageing populations can be addressed by pursuing a three-pronged strategy, that encompasses an appropriate mix of policies to reduce debt at a fast pace, to raise employment rates especially amongst older workers (so that working lives are extended), and to reform pension and health care systems. Reforms to social protection need to be well designed so as to ensure that they are financially viable in the face of the population ageing and uncertain economic developments, while ensuring that social protection systems fulfil their goals in terms of access and adequacy.

In this context, when assessing how Member State's fare and have made progress in this regard it is relevant to look at debt and deficit developments and to what extent there has been consolidation efforts bringing medium-term budgetary positions in line with the medium-term budgetary objectives (MTO) within the Stability and Growth Pact. This should also take into account the projections of age related expenditures, carried out or planned reforms to pension and health care systems and how these are integrated in an overall assessment of budgetary sustainability.

In the EU over the 2005-2007 Lisbon cycle, some progress has been made to ensure sustainable public finances, although progress has been mixed across countries. The debt/GDP ratio has declined in EU27 over the 2005-2007 period, from 63 % of GDP in 2005 to just below 60 % in 2007. In the euro area, the debt ratio has been reduced from 70.4 % of GDP to 66.7% over the same period. The debt ratio both in Greece and Italy remains above 100% of GDP and in Belgium debt is close to 85% of GDP. Taking into account also projections of age related expenditures, a number of countries remains at what can be called high risk (CZ, EL, CY, HU, PT, SI). A number of countries progressed with the implementation of pension reforms. Rather comprehensive measures to reform the pension system have been conducted in recent years in some countries, in particular MT and PT.

Recently, additional measures, albeit at a lower scale, was introduced in some countries including progressing with on-going reforms (BE, DE, PL, UK). In other countries, where reforms are most needed, progress have been limited (EL, IT, CY, HU, SI). Health care measures were on the policy agenda in a number of countries (DE, CY, MT, LV, RO). In particular, in 2005 and 2006 progress has been shown in terms of increasing the participation rates for older workers which had increased by more than 3% over 2005-2006 in several countries (DE, EE, IE, CY, LV, AT, SI, SK, FI).

Overall, budgetary positions have improved since 2005, and there have been reforms to pension and health care systems in some countries. Nonetheless, important risks to the sustainability of public finances remain in many countries, and there is a need to press ahead with reform efforts, not least the effects of ageing on the size of the

working-age population will become more pronounced in the next three-year Lisbon cycle.

2.3. Ensuring that wage developments contribute to stability and growth.

Appropriate wage developments contribute to macro-economic stability and growth, highlighted in Integrated Guideline N°4. Provided that real wage increases are in line with the underlying rate of productivity growth over the medium term, they contribute to stable macroeconomic conditions and an employment friendly policy mix[10]. Variation in productivity caused by cyclical factors, or one off changes in the headline rate, should not cause an unsustainable shift in wage growth. In addition, relative wage developments that reflect local or sectoral labour market conditions help adaptability and counteract regional disparities. In this area, when assessing how countries fare and have made progress, it is necessary to examine wages and productivity developments, i.e. what this implies in terms of nominal unit labour costs (NULC) and to assess whether the latter are in line with price stability and competitiveness. It is also useful to look at real unit labour costs (RULC) and how these relate to labour market developments. Moreover, to the extent that regional unemployment is a serious problem, wage developments and measures that improve the adaptability to local conditions is relevant. Overall, the absence of wage pressure in the euro area and EU27 during the economic rebound has been a positive feature over the last few years. Wage moderation in the euro area and EU27 as seen in nominal and real unit labour costs has generally continued to support price stability over the 2005-2007 period, including the last 12 months, despite a tightening labour market and the closing of output gaps. In 2007, the annual growth rate in compensation per employee is forecast at 3.0% in EU27 and 2.5% in the euro area while the increase in labour productivity is 1.4% and 1.1% respectively. This implies that nominal unit labour costs increase by 1.7% in EU27 and 1.4% in the euro area which is somewhat higher than in 2005-2006 but in the aggregate remains in line with price stability objectives. More evidence of wage restraint in the face of stronger international competition is that real unit labour cost decreased by roughly 1% in 2006 and 2007, both in the euro area and in the EU as a whole. However, this may also reflect other structural factors, such as a gradual reallocation of value added towards sectors with a lower share of labour.

However, this overall assessment of favourable aggregate behaviour conceals sizeable differences between countries, with fairly divergent growth rates in nominal unit labour costs contributing to differing patterns in competitiveness and widening current account imbalances among EU members. At Member State level, two aspects warrant further attention:

- The catch-up process has triggered very high nominal wage growth, in excess of relatively high labour productivity, which has lead to deteriorating price competitiveness. This is particularly notable in EE, LT, LV, RO and BG (see also see section 3 on macro-economic stability where this is put in the context of external imbalances). Also, real unit labour costs have increased markedly over the last few years in EE, LV, RO and in 2007 in BG. Nevertheless, this has been coupled with above average employment growth and falling unemployment.

[10] Provided that they are also consistent with a rate of profitability allowing for productivity, capacity and employment-enhancing investments.

However, in HU increasing unit labour costs have been coupled with weak labour market developments.

- Wages adjust slowly over time to changing cyclical conditions, especially in some countries of the euro area, which means a long-lasting impact of shocks on economic activity. Indeed, the experience with adjustment to shocks in the early years of the euro area calls for flexibility despite a general background of marked wage moderation[11]. While wage moderation has been supportive of price stability in the aggregate, the continuously high-rates of long-term unemployment and the persistence of regional differences in employment performance suggest that there may be some lack of wage differentiation in some Member States (BE, DE, IT). Progress in terms of wage dispersion that reflects productivity differentials across sectors and regions has only been partial even though in some countries wage bargaining outcomes that better reflect local conditions can be observed. Additional flexibility seems however to have been achieved as regards working time organisation and greater opt-outs from collective agreements (AT, FR, DE, IE, NL, ES).

[11] See the "EU Economic review: 2006" which investigates how adjustment has been proceeding in the euro area and how the efficiency of adjustment could be improved. European Economy No 6, 2006.

2.4. Policies to make work pay

Policies to improve the financial incentives to work are largely recognised as being a key element of that comprehensive set of measures (macro, micro and employment), which is most needed to raise labour utilisation, and therefore contribute to the general objectives of the Growth and Jobs strategy (see in particular Integrated Guideline N°5). Improving the adaptability and adjustment capacity of economies helps respond to changes in both cyclical economic conditions and longer term trends such as globalisation and technology. In this regard, policies to "make-work pay" are particularly pertinent as they aim to attract more people into the labour market and to make the underlying incentive structure in the tax and benefit systems supportive to employment. This implies modernising tax (direct taxation on labour income and social security contributions paid by employers and employees) and benefit systems (unemployment insurance, in-work benefits, disability and sickness schemes, means-tested benefits and other forms of social assistance), so that they reduce benefit dependency and provide effective incentives to take up jobs, and remain in work, by making work economically attractive and rewarding relative to staying on benefits. Moreover, providing the right incentives to increase employment and hours worked is particularly important to improve labour utilisation, also in the light of budgetary challenges stemming from ageing populations.

Against this background, when assessing how Member States fare and have made progress in this regard, it is useful to look at performance indicators such as labour participation, employment and unemployment rates. Moreover, it is also important to take policy outcomes into account, measured by different tax wedges and marginal effective tax rates that give an indication of the size of unemployment, inactivity and low-wage traps.

In those Member States where employment and participation rates are relatively low (BE, BG, EL, MT, IT, PL, RO), or in those where labour market participation is higher but where generous welfare systems require extensive financing (SE, DK, NL), it is particularly challenging to improve incentives to work and hours worked. In other countries, the incentives to work embedded in their tax and benefit systems appear to be significantly low, as also results from their labour market situation (BE, PL). However, it can be observed that in several Member States a fair wealth of measures has been taken to improve the incentives to work, both as regards reforms in the benefit system, and in particular labour taxation, while in general much less has been done in the field of employment protection legislation.

In the area of unemployment and welfare-related benefits, some countries passed major reforms over the years of this Lisbon cycle (CZ, SE in 2007; BG, FR, SI in 2006; HU, NL in 2005; DE in 2004). In other Member States, policy action has been taken to promote labour market transition from unemployment and inactivity to work through stricter work availability criteria, the use of sanctions for non-compliance with rules, the strengthening of control mechanisms and streamlining the financing for labour market subsidies and income support (GR, NL, PT, SI in 2007). Many reforms that do not appear to directly target the financial incentives to work, such as strengthening the enforcement of rules and tightening up eligibility and work-availability requirements, may in fact well improve the overall incentive structure of the benefit system. However, risks remain of low-wage, unemployment and

inactivity traps for the unskilled and low income earners in a consistent number of Member States.

As regards labour taxes, many Member States have lowered the level of taxation on labour in recent years, either through general tax reductions, mainly focused on cutting the tax-wedge on low income groups (AT, FR, HU, SI, CZ, IT, MT, LT, SE), or by a straight reduction of the tax burden on low incomes (DK, FI, GR,NL, SL), there including extensions of the tax-free range of income or tax credits for low-income earners (LV, SE, FR, GR, IRL, NL, SK). In 2007, measures to this end was taken in FI, SI, BG, IT, CY, GR, LT, LV, IR, MT, NL and the UK. Also, a general trend towards reducing social security contributions for both employers and employees was recorded over recent years, often aimed at boosting labour demand and creating incentives to hire specific target groups (see for instance BE, SE, MT in 2007). Some convergence therefore appears to have taken place, as countries with highest tax rates in 2001 are those that have reduced most over the last years. Nonetheless, tax wedges on low wages remain high in a number of Member States (see in particular BE, DE, FR, AT, SE, HU, PL).

To favour labour attractiveness especially for the lowest earners, i.e. to prevent people from being discouraged to accept work because it could adversely affect their income, a consistent number of Member States have also introduced over recent years various sorts of in-work benefits schemes (BE, FR, PL, AT, CZ, SK, DK, UK). Other countries have taken actions to reduce the use of benefit schemes – either unemployment or disability schemes – as an alternative route for early retirement (see HU in 2007 and UK in 2006). The sickness system was also largely reformed in CZ and SE in 2007 and in the NL in 2006.

Overall, many countries have taken measures that go in the right direction, but the overall impact remains limited in many cases and thus there is a need to further pursue "making work pay" strategies along the principles of flexicurity. A further challenge in this respect is how to lower labour taxes further without endangering fiscal consolidation.

Table 2. Overview of situation in EU Member States on securing economic stability

	Performance				Areas where CSR have been proposed				
	Budget balance 2007	Fiscal stance 2005-07	Infla-tion rate 2007	External balance, 2005-07	2005 NRP	March 2007 Council		Dec. 2007 Comm. Prop.	
					Key chall-enge	CSR	PTW	CSR	PTW
BE	-0.3	-0.2	1.7	3.1					
BG	3.0	1.1	6.7	-14.3	X			X	
CZ	-3.4	-1.9	3.0	-2.7	X				
DK	4.0	-1.3	1.7	2.4					
DE	0.1	2.4	2.2	5.3		X			X
EE	3.0	1.7	6.2	-11.2					X
IE	0.9	0.2	2.7	-4.0			X		X
EL	-2.9	2.4	2.8	-8.8	X	X		X	X
ES	1.8	0.6	2.6	-7.8			X		X
FR	-2.6	1.0	1.4	-2.0	X	X		X	
IT	-2.3	2.0	1.9	-1.5	X	X		X	
CY	-1.0	2.1	1.8	-5.9*					
LV	0.9	0.6	9.5	-17.8	X	X		X	
LT	-0.9	-0.4	5.7	-9.2	X		X		X
LU	1.2	0.6	2.4	10.9*	X				
HU	-6.4	2.9	7.6	-5.2	X	X		X	
MT	-1.8	0.8	0.7	-3.4					
NL	-0.4	-1.0	1.6	6.9					
AT	-0.8	-0.1	1.9	3.6			X		X
PL	-2.7	1.1	2.3	-2.0	X	X		X	
PT	-3.0	2.8	2.4	-8.3	X	X		X	
RO	-2.7	-1.7	4.5	-10.3	X			X	
SI	-0.7	-0.3	3.4	-2.6					
SK	-2.7	-1.9	1.6	-6.7					
FI	4.6	0.7	1.5	5.4					
SE	3.0	0.6	1.6	6.4					
UK	-2.8	0.5	2.4	2.8	X		X		X

Note: CAB: cyclically-adjusted budget balance; Fiscal stance: measured as the change in the structural budget balance over 2005-2007 (a positive figure implies tightness, a negative looseness); CSR: country-specific recommendation; PTW: point to watch

Table 3. Overview of situation in EU Member States on securing long-term sustainability.

	Policy Performance				Areas where CSRs have been proposed				
	Debt ratio	Sustainability gap	Sustainability risk classification	Empl. rate older worker	2005 NRP	March 2007 Council		Dec. 2007 Comm. Prop.	
	2007	2007	2007	2006	Key Challenge	CSR	PTW	CSR	PTW
BE	85	2.7	Medium	32	X		X		X
BG	19	n.a.	-	-	X				X
CZ	30	8.0	High	45	X	X		X	
DK	25	0.3	Low	61	X				
DE	65	3.3	Medium	48	X	X			X
EE	3	-3.2	Low	59					
IE	25	2.4	Medium	53			X		X
EL	94	1.3	High	42	X	X		X	
ES	36	2.8	Medium	44			X		X
FR	64	3.2	Medium	38	X	X		X	
IT	104	3.0	Medium	33	X	X		X	
CY	61	7.0	High	54	X	X		X	
LV	10.	1.2	Low	53					
LT	18	2.4	Low	50					
LU	7	9.3	Medium	33			X		X
HU	66	12.3	High	34	X	X		X	
MT	63	-0.1	Medium	30	X		X		X
NL	47	2.4	Low	48					
AT	60	-0.1	Low	36	X				
PL	47	-1.4	Low	28					
PT	64	8.3	High	50	X				
RO	13	n.a.	-	-					X
SI	26	7.0	High	33		X		X	
SK	31	4.1	Medium	33					
FI	36	-0.7	Low	55	X				
SE	41	-1.5	Low	70					
UK	45	4.2	Medium	57	X		X		

Note: the S2 indicator measures the budget adjustment necessary to ensure sustainability given government debt and projections of age related expenditures. The sustainability risk class takes the S2 indicator into account as well as additional information: ource: Public Finances in EMU 2007, European Economy N°. 3, 2007. CSR: country-specific recommendation; PTW: point to watch.

Table 4. Overview of situation in Member States on wage developments and bargaining systems

	Policy Performance			Areas where CSRs have been proposed				
	Nominal Unit Labour Cost 2007	Real Unit Labour Cost 2007	Diversity of regional unem-ployment	2005 NRP Key Chall-enge	March 2007 Council		Dec. 2007 Comm. Prop.	
					CSR	PTW	CSR	PTW
BE	1.1	-1.0	47	*	*		*	
BG	10.5	2.8	47				X	
CZ	2.2	0.1	47	*		*		*
DK	4.4	2.0	20					
DE	0.8	-1.0	45					
EE	12.7	3.7	34					
IE	3.6	1.5	17					
EL	2.6	-0.4	30					
ES	2.0	-1.0	33					
FR	2.1	0.2	36					
IT	1.3	-1.3	63	*	*		*	
CY	1.1	-1.4	n.a.					
LV	21.0	4.6	23				X	
LT	7.9	0.1	21					
LU	3.3	-0.3	n.a.					
HU	3.0	-2.8	30			*	*	
MT	1.1	-1.4	n.a.					
NL	1.8	0.4	26	X				
AT	0.8	-1.4	41					
PL	4.2	1.3	22	*				
PT	1.1	-1.7	30					
RO	10.2	2.3	42				X	
SI	2.3	-0.5	31					
SK	0.4	-2.1	42	*				
FI	0.8	-1.2	29	X		X		
SE	2.8	0.4	16					
UK	1.7	-1.4	34					

Note: Diversity of regional unemployment is measured by the coefficient of variation of 2005 regional unemployment (source Eurostat). as a benchmark, 44% equals the EU average plus one standard deviation. CSR: country-specific recommendation; PTW: point to watch.***** in "policy orientations" column refers to a policy orientation dealing with regional unemployment disparities rather than directly mentioning wages *per se*.

Table 5. Overview of situation in Member States regarding policies for "making work pay".

	Policy Performance					Areas where CSRs have been proposed				
	Partici-pation rate 2006	Unempl oyment trap 2005	Inact-ivity trap 2005	Tax wedge 2006		2005 NRP Key Chall-enge	March 2007 Council		Dec. 2007 Comm. Prop.	
							CSR	PTW	CSR	PTW
BE	66.5	85	65	49		X	X	X	X	X
BG	64.5	74	n.a.	31						
CZ	70.0	66	56	40		X	X			
DK	80.6	90	88	39		X		X		X
DE	75.0	75	67	47		X	X		X	
EE	72.4	65	48	40*						
IE	71.8	74	74	16		X		X		X
EL	67.0	62	16	35		X	X		X	
ES	70.9	80	43	36		X				
FR	69.4	82	62	44		X		X		X
IT	63.0	72	23	41		X				X
CY	73.0	63	63	19*						
LV	71.3	87	61	42		X				
LT	67.4	80	39	41						
LU	66.6	88	69	31		X				
HU	62.0	55	44	43			X			X
MT	59.2	59	59	18*		X	X		X	
NL	77.4	83	83	41		X	X		X	
AT	73.7	67	65	44		X	X		X	
PL	63.0	81	58	42		X	X		X	
PT	73.9	81	38	32						
RO	64.1	61	n.a.	42		X				
SI	70.9	93	60	36		X	X		X	
SK	75.0	75	67	36						
FI	75.6	77	74	39		X				
SE	78.8	87	78	46		X		X		X
UK	75.5	68	68	30						

Note: Unemployment and Inactivity traps are calculated on the basis of marginal effective tax rates The "tax wedge" is the difference between the costs of a worker earning 67% of the average wage and the amount of net earnings received (* =2005 figure): sources: Eurostat CSR: country-specific recommendation; PTW: point to watch

II. MICRO-ECONOMIC PART

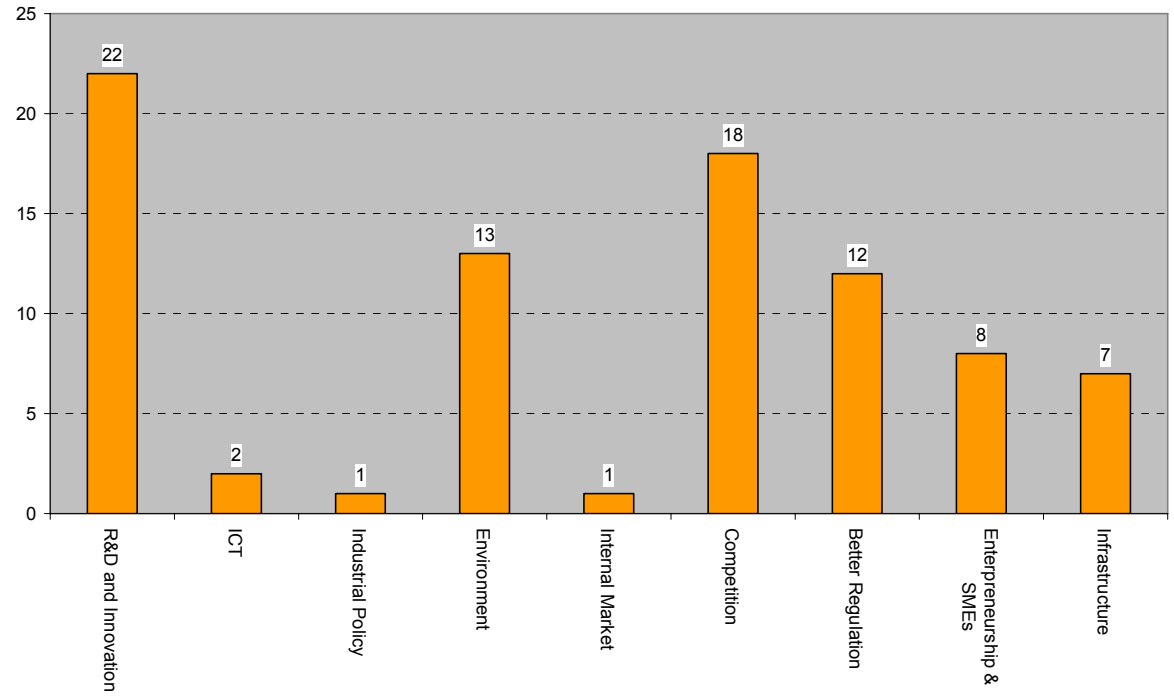
Summary and conclusions

Micro-economic reforms are the heart of the reform efforts of the Member States under the revised Growth and Jobs Strategy. Half of the main challenges, as identified by the Member States themselves in their National Reform Programmes for 2005-2008, are in the micro-economic area. Nearly half of the country specific recommendations and 'points to watch' which the Commission proposed and which the Council adopted in spring 2007, relate to micro-economic reforms (Graph 2).

The key challenges and country specific recommendations in the micro-economic area are strongly concentrated on research and innovation; competition; the regulatory environment and entrepreneurship/SMEs. Despite the focus on several micro-pillar issues, it is important to keep in mind that they form part of an integrated strategy: microeconomic reforms will be deprived of much of their effectiveness if complementary measures are not taken within the macroeconomic and employment pillars.

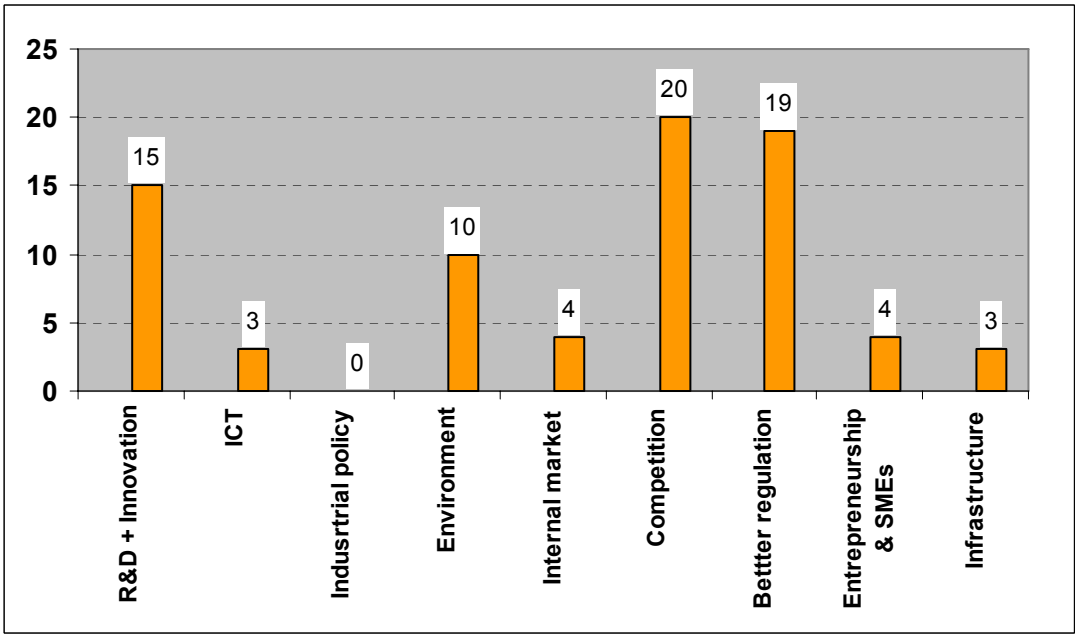
This chapter takes stock of the reform efforts under the microeconomic pillar of the Growth and Jobs strategy. Section 1 presents some of the theoretical and empirical evidence in support these efforts and Section 3 overviews progress achieved so far in the various policy areas. Section 4 draws some forward looking conclusions. This section shows that significant progress has been made in a number of areas with the implementation of the microeconomic reform agenda. Around half of all Member States have shown a strong policy response in the areas of R&D and ICT, and most others have at least made some progress in these areas. Regarding the aim to unlock the business potential, particularly of SMEs, where concrete objectives have been targeted for end-2007, a clear majority of Member States have shown at least a fairly good or strong policy response. About a third of Member States show a strong policy response with regard to energy and climate change. However, the uneven implementation record across Member States implies that progress overall could still be better. This stock-taking exercise concludes that measures in different policy areas call for a higher degree of policy coordination and integration, in order to maximise positive externalities. This does not apply only to the micro-pillar policies – where an integrated approach to the 'knowledge triangle' of research, innovation and education policies is called for – but also to the reform design across the three pillars of the renewed Lisbon strategy.

Graph 1. Number of key challenges in the microeconomic pillar in the National Reform Programmes of the Member States



Note: Number of EU27 Member States having identified the issue as a key challenge.

Graph 2. Number of country-specific recommendations and points to watch in the policy areas of the microeconomic micro-pillar



Note: Number of Member States for which the Council made a specific recommendation or raised a 'point to watch'.

1. ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MICROECONOMIC REFORMS

Raising the long-term economic potential by increasing productivity growth is one of the fundamental objectives of the renewed Lisbon strategy. A large part of the reforms, in pursuit of this objective, are being undertaken in the microeconomic policy pillar of the strategy.

Given what is known about the relationship between microeconomic structural reforms and productivity growth, the present section undertakes a broad assessment of whether the types of reforms engaged by Member States since 2005 are likely to have the desired effects on growth in total factor productivity[12]. Some estimates of the size of these effects are presented in a separate staff working paper on spillovers and complementarities in the context of the Lisbon Strategy[13]. However, as the results of productivity-enhancing structural reforms can rarely be captured in the short term and since the measurement of their effects is complex and fraught with both methodological and empirical problems, a note of caution is in order.

Europe's success in achieving sustained economic growth during the post WWII era is associated mainly with capital accumulation and the imitation or adaptation of innovations made elsewhere. Once the catching up process was complete by the 1980s, this strategy was no longer sufficient to boost growth; increasing home-grown innovation had become a necessity. The required transition can be described as moving from the investment-driven phase of economic development to the innovation-driven phase. Which policies are likely to support this transition?

The adoption and use of ICTs are regarded as salient among the factors determining productivity growth. Against this background, detailed analyses have attributed the widening of the gap in productivity growth between the United States and Europe since the mid-1990s mainly to innovations in the ICT sector and their rapid spread across all sectors of the economy. Contrary to the United States, Europe has failed to keep up with regard to both the production and the use of ICT. ICT investment, in order to bring the desired productivity gains, needs to be accompanied by organisational change and the retraining of the workforce.

Many economic studies indicate that there is a significant relationship between market structure, and hence competition, and innovation. In general, competition is found to have a positive effect on innovation[14].

The design of growth-enhancing policies may need to change once countries move closer to the technological frontier. For instance, stringent protection of intellectual property can be more important for productivity growth in countries close to the frontier which are more heavily engaged in innovation rather than imitation.

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12 This section draws on the analysis developed in Chapter 2 of the European Competitiveness Report 2007 - SEC(2007) 1444, 31.10.2007.

13 Spillovers and complementarities in the context of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy including economic effects of the Community Lisbon Programme - SEC(2007) 1689.

14 See OECD - Economic Policy Reforms: "Going for Growth"; of 9th February 2006; by Jean Philippe Cotis; at http://www.oecdwash.org/PDFILES/gfg2006_cotis_washington.pdf#search=%22OECD%202006%20Going%20for%20Growth%22

Most empirical evidence suggests a negative relationship between the intensity of regulation and indicators of economic performance such as innovation or productivity. Reducing administrative burdens can boost GDP by freeing resources for more productive uses. This also underlines the importance of structural reforms in the labour market to facilitate the reallocation of production factors.

Studies on the links between regulation and productivity suggest that labour productivity has accelerated since the mid-1990s in lightly-regulated economies while it either grew more slowly or declined in highly-regulated countries. In addition, lower barriers to trade and less regulation appear to have increased the level and rate of productivity growth by stimulating business investment and promoting innovation. Studies on the impact of product market reforms on innovation in the EU find that intensifying competition tends to increase R&D investment, but mainly through increased innovative activity by incumbents rather than by new entrants.

Policy synergies

Claims that labour market reforms and product market reforms are complementary have been corroborated by simulations which indicate clear synergies between product and labour market policies. As an example, increasing skills and R&D raises real wages, which in turn is expected to lead to an increase in participation rates. The reduction of administrative burdens, through lower mark-ups, has synergies with the employment target due to a reduction in equilibrium unemployment. There are also clear synergies between the skills policy and R&D policies: without a sufficient supply of graduates in mathematics, science and technology, additional R&D expenditures will increase wages for these workers but will not impact output substantially.

2. THREE YEARS IN THE NEW REFORM AGENDA: AN ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS BY POLICY AREA

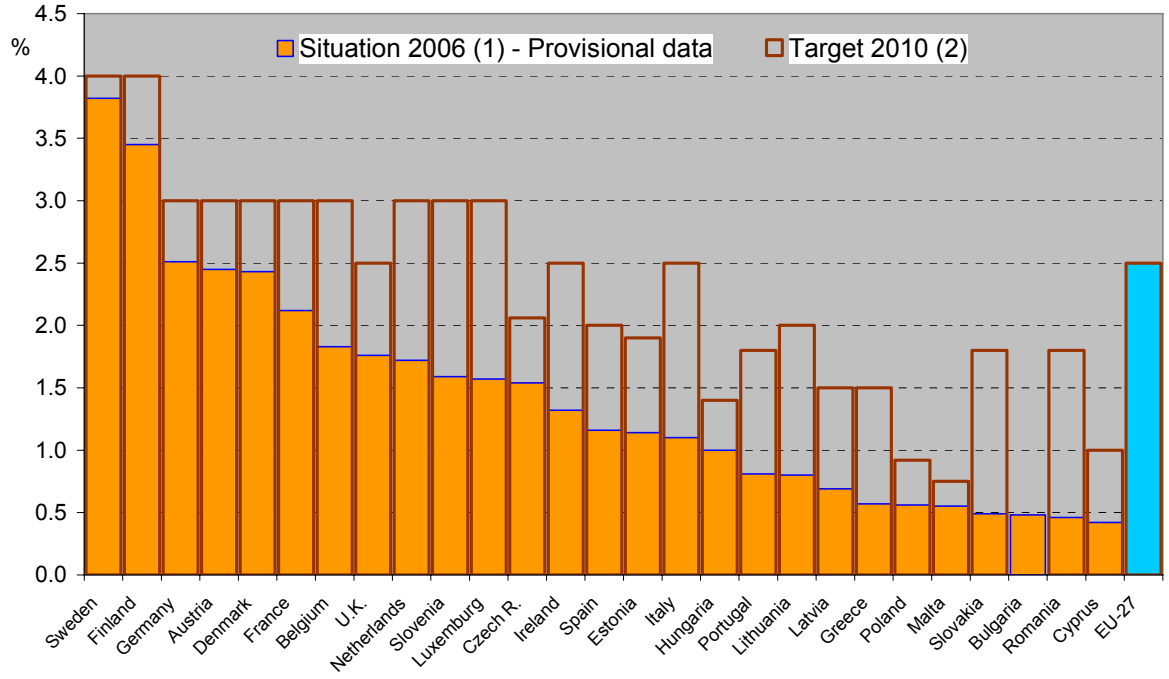
2.1. Knowledge and innovation

2.1.1. Research and innovation

Investment in knowledge (R&D and education) is the basis of innovation and technological progress. Raising the level and effectiveness of expenditure on knowledge is crucial for the EU to make the shift towards a knowledge based society. Following the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy in 2005, all Member States except BG have set national targets for R&D intensity and most of them have developed ambitious R&D and innovation strategies and accompanying measures to increase R&D intensity and the innovative capacity of their economy.

However, progress as concerns EU R&D intensity has so far been unsatisfactory, standing in 2006 at 1.84% GDP, a considerable way off the 3 % R&D target (see graph 3). Moreover, in 2007, France and Greece postponed their 2010 targets whereas Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Poland revised their targets towards lower levels of ambition. Should all Member States achieve their national targets, EU R&D expenditure is now forecasted to be 2.5% of GDP by 2010.

Graph 3: Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) as % of GDP – 2006 levels[1] (provisional data) & targets



Notes:

(1) IT, LU, PT, UK: 2005.

(2) EL: 2015; FI: 2011; FR: 2012; IE: 2013-GNP; SK: 2015; UK: 2014; EU27 = DG RTD est. for EU26

(3) Member States have been ranked according to the current level of R&D intensity from left to right.

Source: Eurostat, Member States

In general, Member States have followed up on their commitments by announcing increases in government budgets for R&D in nominal terms; however, concurring increases in GDP have led to budgets remaining either stable for many Member States or even slowly decreasing (FR, IT, NL, SK) in % GDP terms. On the other hand, public R&D spending has significantly increased in several Member States (CZ, EE, IE, ES, LT, SL, RO, LU, PT), showing that progress can be made when effectively prioritising R&D investment. Business R&D remains low in the EU and has seen no positive evolution since 2000, clearly indicating that improving the framework conditions for private R&D investments and the leverage of public R&D policy should remain policy priorities.

Tax incentives continue to be a major instrument for governments to stimulate private R&D investment. Over the past years, a clear EU wide shift has taken place in the direction of strengthened fiscal incentives. This trend continued throughout 2007 with a number of Member States (NL, UK, BE, FR, CZ, IE, PT, AT, RO, IT)

further developing their incentive systems while others undertook to evaluate their effectiveness.

In this context, the increasing role of Cohesion Policy in financing R&D can be clearly noticed, especially in some of the new Member States. The effective use of Structural Funds earmarked for research is an important opportunity for many countries that still have a low level of funding.

Assuring adequate levels of human resources will be a critical factor in raising R&D expenditure and is being addressed through measures such as increasing the number of scholarships or making researchers' career prospects more attractive. A recent trend has seen the setting up of programmes aimed at stimulating the recruitment and re-integration of excellent expatriate and foreign researchers. The planned Structural Funds interventions should provide an important contribution to develop the European human potential for research and innovation.

Reforms in R&D policies have up to now been designed almost exclusively from a national perspective. As R&D systems are, however, increasingly interconnected, it is important that national policy makers take explicit account of the European perspective in their national policies, in order to maximise the benefits from synergies and spillovers. This would increase the effectiveness of national systems and would, in the context of the European Research Area initiative, make a significant contribution towards developing the EU's research system as a whole to be a competitive player on the global scene.

However, increasing investments in research is not enough for bolstering the innovative capacity of the economy as around half of innovative firms in the EU do not conduct any formal R&D. At national level, improving science-industry linkages continues to receive significant policy attention. Setting up public-private partnerships to stimulate innovation is the most prominent approach. Measures range from improving the legal framework governing science-industry interaction, to networking, the establishment of technology transfer mechanisms, or the promotion of inter-sector mobility of researchers. Policy focus has recently shifted from traditional 'technology push' -type measures towards a more systemic approach to build innovation support mechanism. However, Member States still give a low priority to demand side issues, such as public procurement, faster commercialisation of innovative ideas and faster growth of innovative start-ups. In particular, better access to domestic and international finance by innovative SMEs remains an important challenge in most EU Member States.

There has been some progress in the EU's innovation strategy. In 2006, the Commission outlined an innovation strategy[15] for the years 2006 to 2008. This strategy is broad-based in that it brings together policies and measures from several different areas, and is complementary to regional and national measures foreseen in the context of the National Reform Programmes of the Lisbon process. On this basis, the December 2006 Competitiveness Council adopted nine strategic priorities for innovation action at EU level. Initiatives so far have covered areas of Intellectual

[15] Commission communication "Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for Europe" - COM(2006) 502.

Property Rights, standardisation in support of innovation,, public procurement in support of innovation. Joint Technology Initiatives, lead markets, the European Institute of Technology (EIT), clusters, innovation in services and risk capital markets**.**

2.1.2. Information Society

Throughout the first three years of the revised Lisbon agenda, there has been an increasing focus on mainstreaming ICT policies. The most frequent initiatives in the Implementation Reports relate to the spread of eGovernment, broadband and digital skills in education.

Member States have seen e-Government and the use of ICT in administrations as instrumental in improving government efficiency and service delivery. Online public services in the EU are moving rapidly towards the stage where a whole process can be conducted on-line.

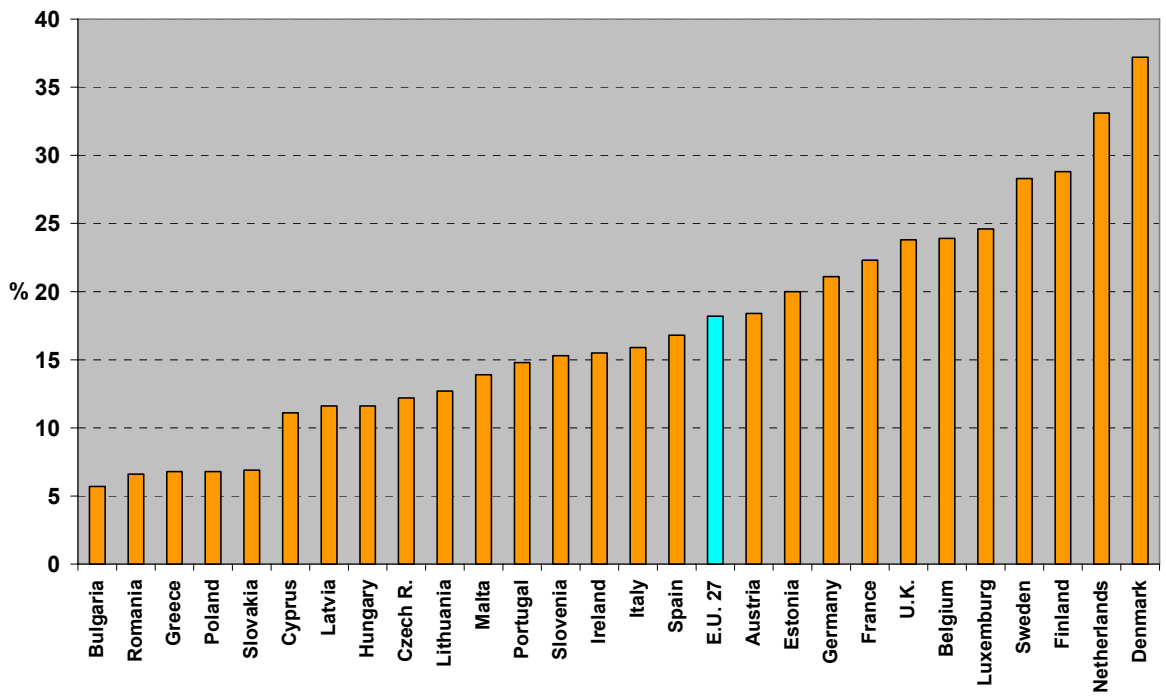
Austria has been leading the online public service league. Other top performers are Malta and Slovenia, while Portugal has made major progress since 2006. Businesses are still being better served than citizens, although the gap between the two is closing. In general, Implementation Reports show continued commitment to the development of e-government policy, with increasing attention devoted to one-stop shop government portals in all countries, digital signature, electronic identity cards, and the use of e-government for back-office re-organisation with a view to the modernisation of the public sector. The trend is very strong in the new Member States but also in large countries like Italy which need to catch up with the most advanced Member States.

In the area of **broadband**, take-up is progressing fast. The average penetration rate (number of subscribers per population) has increased from 10.5% in July 2005 (EU25) to 18.2% in July 2007 (EU27) (see graph 4 below). Although some European countries are world leaders in terms of broadband access, there is a growing gap between the best and worst performers. The main reasons for this are the lack of infrastructures in some Member States and the need for a more consistent and effective implementation of the existing e-communications regulatory framework.

Most Member States are stimulating take-up through the implementation of the regulatory framework and are extending broadband coverage in rural areas. The most significant gaps can be found in the rural areas of PL, EL, LV, SK but also in IT and DE. Actions in these areas are mostly funded through Cohesion policy programmes (mostly in the new Member States) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development[16] (EAFRD).

[16] About one-third of the Rural Development Programs 2007–2013 take on board broadband initiatives.

Graph 4: EU Broadband penetration rate (July 2007)



Source: Communications Committee

In general, there is a need to bring forward more concrete and innovative policies, speeding up action on the interoperability of cross-border eGovernment services, stimulating business take-up and including e-skills strategies in life-long learning and skills policies.

2.1.3. Industrial competitiveness

The industrial competitiveness of Europe depends to a great extent on setting the appropriate framework conditions for the entire economy. Therefore, actions undertaken in other policy areas, such as R&D and innovation, reinforce industrial competitiveness in Europe. Yet, industrial competitiveness can require industry specific horizontal and sectoral initiatives.

The majority of Member States addressed industrial competitiveness over the period, notably through measures to increase the technological content of industry, to address the sustainability of industry, to promote sectoral competitiveness and to favour the internationalisation of companies by supporting exports or attracting foreign investments. In 2007 more emphasis was put on investment in environmental technologies.

2.2. Energy and climate change

The Lisbon strategy aims at strengthening the link between sustainable use of resources, environmental protection, climate and energy policies and growth. Many Member States have included environmental sustainability among their key priorities or challenges and report important new policy measures. However, recent analysis shows that tackling climate change, improving resource and energy efficiency, and halting biodiversity loss will remain key challenges for the period until 2011 and more efforts will be needed. Recognising this, new cohesion policy programmes plan a total investment of €50.6 billion under the heading of environmental protection and risk prevention. Further investment of €9.6 billion is planned in the area of energy.

Energy efficiency and conservation is a key issue in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and curbing energy demand. A majority of Member States is reporting progress in this area and outline a number of policy measures already implemented or in the planning stage. In addition, the EU average energy intensity had decreased at 0.4% annually from 2002 to 2005. While the data suggest general room for improvement in this area, notably through gains in energy generation or in buildings, a direct comparison of performance between Members States is hindered by the unique structure of the economy in each Member State. Improvements of performance against sectoral benchmarks are a key requirement for the future.

Renewable energy has an important role in reducing CO_2 missions, improving sustainability and the security of energy supply as well as creating new job opportunities, in particular in rural areas. According to the most recent data, nine Member States (DE, DK, ES, FI, HU, IE, LU, NL, SE) are on track to meet existing indicative targets for renewable electricity in 2010[17]. As a result of support schemes, including feed-in tariffs, the share of wind power and biomass in electricity production has increased significantly in some Member States. The corresponding industries have become world-class, allowing not only an improvement of the energy situation inside the EU but also exporting equipment and know-how.

Also promotion of **eco-innovations and environmental technologies** could have received more attention in the implementation reports. Most of the Member States reporting new, specific measures have already a strong competitive edge in the development and application of environmental technologies such as Sweden, Denmark, Austria, or Finland. Some Member States also report measures under consideration, for example, the expansion of the Environmental Fund in Slovenia for financing high risk investments in environmental technologies. Further promotion of environmental technologies would increase competitiveness in one of the fastest growing markets and has the potential to promote efficiency across all industries and generate new employment.

Some Member States report on measures to halt **biodiversity loss**, taking into account environmental and economic role of ecosystems. These measures include adoption and implementation of national biodiversity strategies, completion of

[17] Directive 2001/77/EC.

Natura 2000 network, providing economic incentives to biodiversity protection and rural development policies.

Efforts to break existing trends in **resource use and unsustainable consumption patterns** have generally not been highlighted in the Member States reports. However, some Member States report progress in implementation on green public procurement and resource management (e.g. waste, water and forestry) as well as on internalising the environmental costs through market-based instruments. Nevertheless, the average policy response on internalisation appears weak and slow, with a number of countries lagging behind expectations. Even when internalisation and the "polluter pays" principle are mentioned by Member States as policy priorities, concrete measures are missing in terms of environmental reform initiatives. Positive examples in this area include the environmental tax and fee systems of Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands and UK as well as a new environmental tax in Belgium partially offsetting the tax reduction on labour. An environmental tax reform shifting the tax burden from welfare-negative taxes (e.g. on labour) to welfare-positive taxes (e.g. on environmentally damaging activities) can be a win-win option to address both environmental and employment issues, and could be explored further by all Member States. Tax exemptions to promote biofuels, incentives for low emission vehicles, road charging reforms, use of market-based instruments, traffic management and shifts to more environmentally friendly modes of transport by several countries will help reduce external costs from the transport system.

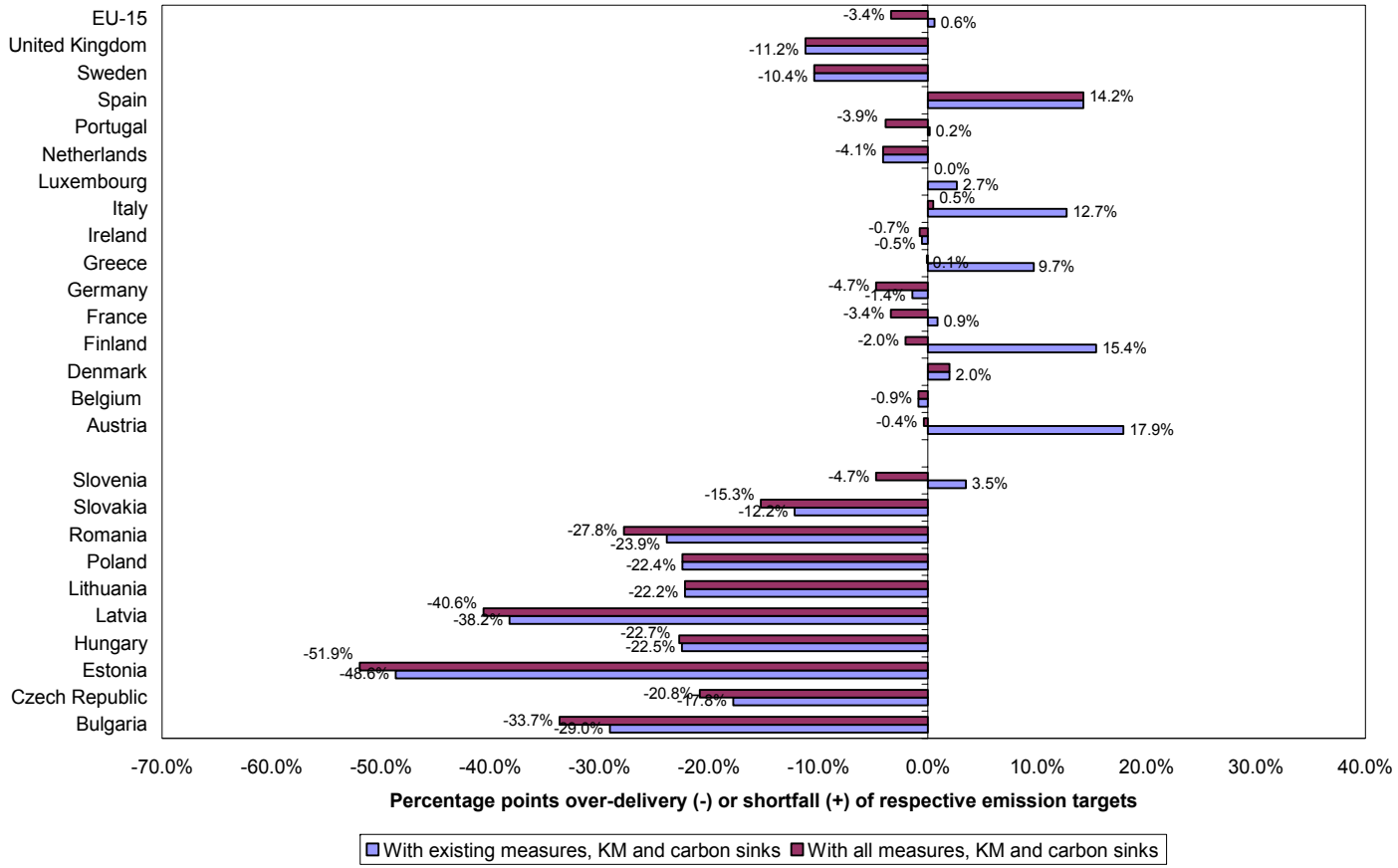
The issue of **climate change** represents a long-term challenge which, if left unaddressed, would bring about major economic costs for the European Union. According to the Stern Report[18] the overall costs and risks of climate change could be as much as 5-20% of global GDP, with the costs of strong and early action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change estimated at 1% of global GDP.

The EU has committed itself early to lead the global combat against climate change. Under the Kyoto Protocol, the European Community (EC) has agreed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 8% by 2008–12, from base year levels. Through the burden sharing agreement this joint target has been distributed to individual Kyoto targets for the EU 15 Member States. All new EU Member States, except for Cyprus and Malta, also have agreed on targets for reducing greenhouse gases. While the EU overall has made progress in reaching the targets set the fight for climate change continues to be a real challenge, involving significant investments and potentially structural changes.

Progress in the implementation of measures against climate change so far is mixed. Several Member States will have to implement additional policies to comply with Kyoto targets (Austria, Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia), while most recent projections indicate that Italy, Spain and Denmark may not meet their targets even with additional policies (Graph 5).

[18] Stern (2006).

Graph 5: Relative distance between GHG projections for 2010 and the respective 2010 targets based on 'existing' and 'additional' domestic policies and measures, the use of Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks



Note: A negative sign (-) indicates an overachievement of the Kyoto target while a positive sign (+) a shortfall
Source: Draft Kyoto progress report 2007 pg. 9 Fig. 5

Several EU-wide common and coordinated policies and measures have been implemented, most notably the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), the RES-E directive, the directives on the energy performance of buildings and on biofuels, the promotion of co-generation (combined heat and power), and energy taxation. On average 10,800 installations participated in the first two years of the trading scheme (2005 and 2006) emitting approximately 2,020 Mt CO_2/yr. Two thirds of all installations are classified as combustion installations and are responsible for 72% of overall emissions. The assessment process for the second National Allocation Plans (NAP) started in 2006. On average, the proposed caps were reduced by 7% compared to the 2005/2006 verified emissions, which should bring an estimated emission reduction of 2.4% for the EU-27 compared to base year.

For the future, tackling climate change needs a long-term view. The European Council has set ambitious targets for 2020 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% and to increase the share of renewables in energy consumption to 20%. In addition, energy efficiency is to increase by 20% compared to the base trend and the share of biofuels in overall transport petrol and diesel consumption is to reach to 10%. This confirms the EU leadership in internalising the adverse effects of CO_2 emission at the global level. It is essential to reach these targets in a cost-effective way to maintain the competitiveness of the EU economy. Furthermore early action on adaptation to climate change will minimize risks to economic development, health, property, and infrastructure. If managed well, the challenge can create additional opportunities for innovative EU businesses that lead in developing new technologies and strategies.

2.3. Making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work

2.3.1. Internal Market and Competition

Internal Market and competition are complementary policies: the former focuses on the regulatory framework of the Internal Market and its effective implementation while the latter aims to ensure open and competitive markets, thereby enhancing consumer welfare. Since 2005, the policy attention given to these two areas has varied widely across the Member States.

As regards the Internal Market, the Member States in general have not identified concrete policy actions in their National Reform Programmes. Nonetheless, the transposition deficit of Internal Market legislation has improved considerably over the last period in a number of Member States.

As regards competition, the measures were often general in scope and rarely linked to quantitative indicators; often (in particular as regards network industries) references were simply made to the implementation of the existing *acquis*. The second most frequent measures – after network industries – were reforms relating to the enforcement of competition policy.

2.3.1.1. Progress on particular internal market and competition issues

- **Transposition of internal market directives** is mentioned as a specific issue in a number of NRPs but in the majority of cases it is not being dealt with in an operational way. There is however a considerable improvement in a number of

Member States of the transposition deficit over the last two years; but at the same time the number of infringements is increasing, indicating a deteriorating quality of transposition. As a follow up to the 2007 Spring Council conclusions the Member States concerned will need to address the question of how they intend to reduce their deficit to 1% by 2009 at the latest. There is also a need for a more qualitative approach, including by reinforcing the problem solving capacity of Member States in addressing incorrect application of internal market law.

- In spite of their economic importance, only very few NRPs address at present the issue of better functioning of **public procurement** markets. The key challenge is to make sure that Member States comprehensively transpose and implement the new public procurement framework adopted in 2004 in a correct, timely and coherent way.

- Experience so far is largely positive in the field of **competition policy enforcement**. Several Member States have taken measures contained in their NRPs strengthening national enforcement regimes (e.g. extending the powers and resources of national competition authorities) in line with the Modernisation of EC competition law in 2004[19]. Also, most if not all Member States and their national competition authorities are engaged in the screening of markets with the aim of removing obstacles to competition (a fact which is reflected in several NRPs). DK has a particularly advanced system in this respect. Rather large divergences in terms of ambition seem to exist. Less emphasis seems to have been put on the actual removal of obstacles identified.

Looking forward, ensuring convergence and uniformity in the application of EC competition rules through the European Competition Network (ECN)[20] remains a challenge. In programmes foreseeing immunity from or reduction in fines for undertakings revealing cartels (leniency) convergence is of key importance[21]. The role of national courts in ensuring convergent enforcement of EC competition law should be stressed. Further efforts should be undertaken to accelerate judicial proceedings in competition cases. Member States could in line with the existing case law of the Court[22] be encouraged to undertake procedural reforms facilitating antitrust damages actions.

- In its APRs the Commission has attached particular importance to the need for national action to remove unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions on competition in **professional services**. While some Member States are taking positive steps to remove restrictions, in some cases yielding rapid positive effects (IT), significant reforms are still needed on the part of other Member States (reflected in a number of country specific recommendations and points to watch).

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19 Regulation No 1/2003.

20 Comprising the Commission and the national competition authorities of the EU Member States.

21 See e.g. the ECN Model Leniency Programme. The OECD (see "Hard Core Cartels – Third Report on the Implementation of the 1998 Recommendation") refers to recent research estimating that the average overcharge is somewhere in the 20-30% range (with higher overcharges for international cartels).

22 The case law of the Court of Justice already today obliges Member States to guarantee effective procedures for obtaining damages in case of an antitrust infringement (see e.g. C-295/04 to C-298/04, Manfredi, paragraph 62).

The reforms should focus on the most severe restrictions (e.g. price regulation and unjustified barriers to entry).

- The persistence of barriers to competition combined with the economic significance of this sector justify that professional services remains a priority for the upcoming Lisbon cycle. Indeed, roughly one fifth of cases concerning infringements of competition results reported within the framework of the European Competition Network has related to professional services. Moreover, the Services Directive will oblige Member States to review and to assess the proportionality of their national legislation on requirements affecting inter alia professional service activities (e.g. fixed tariffs, multidisciplinary partnerships, numerus clausus) in addition to ongoing screening by national competition authorities of existing regulation and practices.

- Some NRP contain measures aimed mainly at removing public barriers to market entry and expansion in the **retail sector** (e.g. opening hours). Some measures have already produced positive effects in terms of prices in this area (IE). Given the economic importance of the retail sector (not least as a productivity driver) there would seem to be more scope for action (e.g. zoning laws, planning restrictions). Improving entry to and competition at the retail and distribution levels would also be helpful in ensuring that trade liberalisation agreed to by the EU feeds through to end consumers[23].

- Generally speaking Member States are making progress in shifting **state aid** to horizontal purposes (e.g. environment, R & D) ("better aid") while efforts to reduce the overall aid level has stagnated in recent years ("less aid"). As far as the NRPs are concerned, only a few Member States have included specific measures to reduce State aid or have reported on progress in reducing overall levels and shifting aid towards horizontal objectives[24]. Important complementary Community level measures under the State Aid Action Plan has been undertaken to promote better aid while reducing burdens on companies and Member States.

- The main challenge ahead is the timely and consistent implementation of the Services Directive, which will contribute to achieving a genuine **Internal Market in services.** By removing legal and administrative barriers to the development of services activities, it will facilitate the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide cross-border services. The implementation process is a complex and challenging task both for the Member States and the Commission. Close cooperation is required, and the Commission has taken the commitment to provide guidance and to coordinate Member States' efforts until the December 2009 implementation deadline. To ensure that the necessary legislative measures can be adopted in 2009, Member States should aim at completing the screening and assessment of national legislation before end 2008. In parallel, the setting up of

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23 See '4. Conclusion – lessons to be drawn from the Irish experience of globalisation. European Economy No 6.

24 The overall level of State aid less agriculture, fisheries and transport stood at € 45 billion for the EU in 2005. There is a slight downwards trend from an annual average of € 52 billion in the period 2001-2003 to an annual average of € 47 billion in the period 2003-2005. There is a clear move towards "better targeted aid" with more than half of Member States now awarding more than 90% of their aid to horizontal objectives.

points of single contact, procedures by electronic means and of an effective system of administrative cooperation will require Member States to make a number of decisions and preparations in 2008.

- The importance of integration of **financial markets** is underlined in a number of NRPs; however in most of the cases without setting out concrete actions. Nevertheless, the transposition of the Financial Services Action Plan measures is well under way, even if the process should be accelerated in some Member States. As explained in the post-FSAP White Paper, the focus has now to be put from adopting new regulation to ensuring correct implementation and effective enforcement of existing measures and to removing remaining barriers to the further integration of financial markets.

2.3.1.2. Network industries

While many Member States address competition in network industries, notably in gas and electricity and electronic communications, from a growth and jobs perspective greater efforts (going beyond existing legal commitments) are needed in many countries in respect of issues such as unbundling (notably in the gas, electricity and rail sectors) as well as the need for clearly mandated and independent regulatory authorities with adequate levels of resources.

The focus on improving the functioning of network industry markets should be sharpened. The importance of network industries from a competitiveness perspective as well as from the point of view of citizens/consumers extends well beyond their 6-8% share of EU value added).

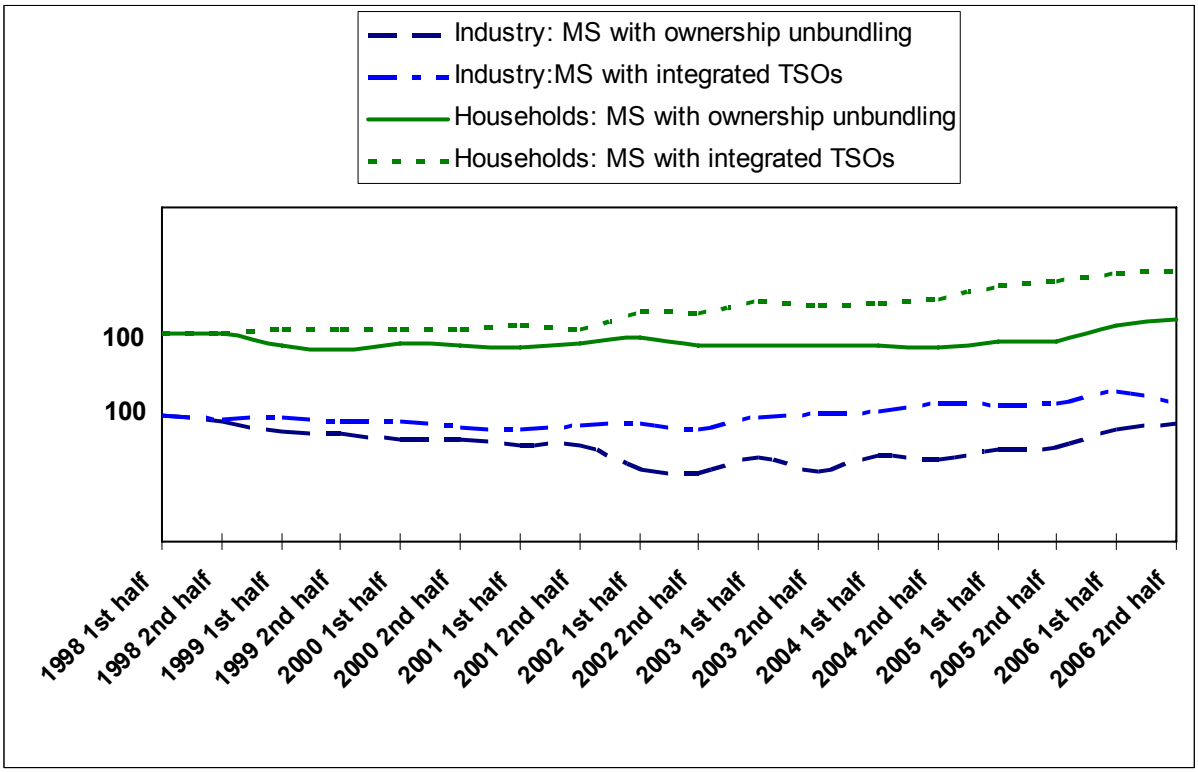
A common key challenge (in particular for gas, electricity, rail and electronic communications) is the need to ensure independent, clearly mandated and well resourced regulators (as well as intensified cooperation between the regulators themselves and with the Commission.

Continuous efforts should be made at finding the optimal balance between sector-specific regulation on the one hand, and general competition and internal market policy principles on the other hand. To the extent that competition intensifies, regulation may be progressively lifted.

Developments in the various network industries are as follows:

- Promoting competition in gas and electricity markets remains a key challenge and concern for most Member States. While it is undeniable some progress in opening up gas and electricity markets has been made in recent years, it is also true that in many Member States a real competitive European market for electricity and gas still needs to develop. Yet, the benefits to consumers and users of an effective liberalisation are clear (see a comparison of price developments between unbundled and integrated transmission system operators (TSOs) in graph 6). High levels of market concentration, vertical foreclosure and lack of transparency continue to characterise gas and electricity markets.

Graph 6: Electricity price evolution in EU-27 for the period 1998-2006 according to ownership structure of TSO



Source: Eurostat, European Commission calculations

The key problems to be addressed are well known (vertical integration and the need for more effective unbundling (preferably ownership unbundling). A particular problem is a tendency for Member States to maintain or impose price regulation.

- Competition in **electronic communications markets** is governed by the regulatory framework adopted in 2002. This is an innovative construction involving harmonisation legislation based on competition policy principles. The experience with the regulatory framework during its first three years of operation is positive. More competition has led to innovation and investment by both new entrants and incumbent operators as well as to significant retail price declines, for example, of around 40% for local fixed telephony costs on average. The independence of the national regulatory authorities both from ownership interests in the sector and from undue political interference, and transposition issues (in particular secondary legislation and amendments of existing laws) remain an issue.

- While competition in the **rail sector** is addressed in some National Reform Programmes, few Member States envisage concrete measures to tackle the key problems limiting competition (such as the insufficient separation between the infrastructure manager and the incumbent rail operator) and to ensure that the rail

regulators are independent and adequately endowed with resources. The major event in terms of Internal Market and competition regulation in the railway sector was the complete market opening for all kinds of rail freight services on the EU railway network on 1 January 2007 according to Directive 2004/51/EC of 30 April 2004 (part of the second railway package). The legal possibility of open access traffic has led to new market entry and the development of competition in rail freight services in a number of Member States. The number of new entrants and their market share has risen, for instance, in Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and France. Strengthening the power of institutions on which the organisation of the sector depends, i.e. the rail infrastructure manager, the rail regulatory body and the safety authority, will be of crucial importance. On 23 October 2007, the European Parliament and the European Council adopted the 3rd railway package, which includes Community law on market opening for international rail passenger services by 2010, passenger rights in rail transportation and on the certification of train drivers.

- While all Member States have transposed the current directives, only a number of Member States have addressed **postal services** in their National Reform Programmes. Liberalisation has progressed well. Member States have embraced liberalisation as agreed thus far and most of them have taken steps to prepare their postal services sectors for further liberalisation. The actual level of competition in the sector however remains low. Looking ahead, the Commission proposal for liberalisation is expected to be adopted by EP and Council first semester of 2008. Objectives of the proposed action are to achieve an internal market for postal services through the removal of exclusive and special rights in the postal sector, safeguard a common level of universal services for all users in all EU countries and set harmonised principles for the regulation of postal services in an open market environment, with the aim of reducing other obstacles to the functioning of the internal market. The transposition and effective implementation of the directive will be an important challenge.

2.3.2. Better Regulation

In general, Member States have expressed their commitment to the key Better Regulations objectives in their National Reform Programmes, while implementation in the daily policy making processes has stalled. Moreover, Better Regulation has been treated as a reform measure rather than as an underlying principle of efficient public administration delivering effective, coherent and less burdensome legislation[25]. So far, action at national level has been limited to the eventual setting up of better regulation tools, without a real change in regulatory conditions and with limited impact on the business environment. The lack of specific targets, compliance incentives and monitoring and enforcement mechanisms has taken its toll in slowing down the implementation of announced measures as well as the process of cultural change in policy making.

The European Council has invited Member States to set their own national **administrative burdens** reduction targets by 2008 of comparable ambition to the

[25] BG and RO have not been included in the analysis, as they are at the very beginning of developing their approach to Better Regulation.

target set by the Commission, i.e. a 25% reduction. To this date, ten Member States (AT, DE, DK, EL, ES, IT, NL, SE, SK, UK) have set a 25% national reduction target, while another two Member States (CZ, FR) set a target of 20%. In comparison with last year this is considerable progress as the number of Member States with a quantitative target has doubled. However, there is still a considerable effort to be done in this regard by the end of next year.

The Commission and Member States will be entering a crucial phase next year when first results from the measurement will provide indications of how administrative burdens can actually be reduced. The key step was taken when most Member States opted for the same measurement methodology (standard cost model). Four Member States have so far carried out baseline measurement of administrative burdens (CZ, DK, NL, and UK); while another four are currently conducting them (AT, DE, FR, SE).

However, reduction of administrative burdens is only one of the **regulatory simplification** elements. Despite initial progress in developing systematic simplification programmes, the pace has slowed down with only two Member States advancing in this area in the course of last year (PL and LU). It is worth mentioning that in fourteen Member States (BE, CZ, CY, DK, IE, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK and UK), stakeholders are involved in setting regulatory simplification priorities under existing programmes or ad-hoc measures.

Limited progress has been made in implementing **impact assessment** systems. Rigorous impact assessments analysing economic, social and environmental impacts of new legislative proposals are being carried out by a handful of Member States, (AT, DK, DE, IE, NL and UK). Moreover, only two out of these six Member States make their impact assessments publicly available (DK and UK). Overall, impact assessment quality among Member States varies widely and there is room for substantial improvement. Rather worrying remains the fact that very few institutional structures which would allow for a rigorous implementation of the impact assessment system and its quality control have been created (DE, IE and UK), while promising steps in this direction are being taken (EL, LT and LV).

Regular **consultation of stakeholders** remains the least developed Better Regulation tool in Member States. Even for those Member States which report on a formal obligation incorporated in their law making procedures (AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, FI, IE, LT, LU, PL, SE, SI and UK), there is still scope for further improvement towards a systematic implementation of clear, consistent and transparent consultation rules across the board. Moreover, the understanding of the contribution that stakeholders could bring into the policy making process substantially differs across the Member States, as evidenced by the differences with regard to the stage in the law making process at which the stakeholders become involved and with regard to the methods used to reach them.

Lastly, progress in developing **Better Regulation strategies** has decelerated, with only one Member State (CZ) developing a strategy in 2007. Some of the originally promising plans have not yet resulted in explicit Better Regulation programmes which would ensure a coherent approach to policy making. This stalemate, in conjunction with the above mentioned lack of progress in the area of impact assessments and legislative simplification, holds back progress in increasing the

efficiency of public administration and in creating favourable regulatory conditions for businesses.

2.3.3. Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Overall, the measures and initiatives in the area of SME policies undertaken by Member States since the re-launch of the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs in 2005 are going in the right direction. Progress has been particularly visible in improving the start-up procedures but also in the integration of the "think small first" principle into the policy-making process. In the area of entrepreneurship education, SME access to public procurement and recruitment of the first employee, policy actions have been initiated in almost all Member States while their results have not yet materialised. Most of the priorities set at the Spring European Council 2006 – start-ups, recruiting the first employee, entrepreneurship education, think small first – need to be seen in a long term perspective, and related policy actions need to be intensified.

Average time and cost to **start up** a private limited company is 12 days and cost is € 485 (see Table 1). This is substantially lower than the 24 days and € 830 for an equivalent company in 2002. Many Member States have established a one-stop-shop or equivalent arrangement even though in some cases they do not cover all types of companies: only 2 out of 3 one stop shop systems offer the possibility to register a private limited company. Member States that fully comply with all three objectives (one-stop-shop, time and cost) are BE, DK, EE, FR, HU, PT, RO, SI and UK. In general registration times have improved and in 13 Member States, it is now possible to register a company within one week. It should be noted, however, that this analysis only looks at the steps to get a company registered. In many countries there are further administrative steps and more time is required before a new SME can start its business operations[26].

Table 1: Results of the objectives set by the Spring 2006 Spring Council conclusions - One stop shop to start-up a company (1)

	Name	Fully operational	Time required to start-up a company	Cost to start-up a company**
Belgium	Guichet agreé d'entreprises	YES	1,5	€ 517
Bulgaria		NO*	12-30	€ 155
Czech Republic	Central Registration Offices (CRO)	NO*	42-56	€ 345 €
Denmark	Danish Commerce and Companies Agency (DCCA)	YES	3	€ 0
Germany	Starter-Center	NO*	6,5	€ 783
Estonia	Notaries	YES	2	€ 190
Ireland	Companies Registration Office (CRO)	NO*	2-5	€ 50
Greece	Directorate of Development at the prefectures (KYE)	NO*	30	€ **1.366**
Spain	Ventanilla Única Empresarial (VUE) + PAIT for Ltd.	YES	30-40	€ 617

[26] In this context, the timely implementation of the points of single contact foreseen in the Services Directive, to be implemented by end 2009, will also be an important task for Member States.

France	Centres de formalités des entreprises (CFE)	YES	4	€ 84
Italy	"Sportello unico"	YES	4	€ **2.673**
Cyprus	OSS at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism	YES	7	€ 265
Latvia	Register of Enterprises	NO*	4	€ 205
Lithuania	Centre of Registers	YES	6	€ 130-€ 289
Luxembourg	Guichet unique d'entreprises	YES	14	€ **1000**
Hungary	County Courts	YES	2-3	€ 392
Malta	Registrar of Companies – Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA)	NO*	7-10	€ 450
Netherlands	Chambers of Commerce	NO*	3	€ **1.040**
Austria	WKO Gründerservice	YES	7-30	€ 400
Poland	Tax Offices	NO*	30	€ 735
Portugal	Enterprise Formality Centres (CFE)	YES	1	€ 300-€ 360
Romania	Counties Trade Registers	YES	3	€ 100-€ 125
Slovenia	VEM	YES	3	€ 250
Slovakia	Trade licence offices, companies register	NO*	14	€ 330
Finland	Trade Register	YES	14	€ 330
Sweden	Företagsregistrering	YES	21	€ 222
United Kingdom	Companies House & Business Link	YES	1	€ 54
AVERAGE			12 days	€ 485

Notes
(1) All figures on cost and time based on information provided by Member States which have not been fully validated. Calculation methods as described in Commission Staff Working Document SEC(2007)129.
*NO means that the services offered by the one-stop-shop are not sufficient to consider it a fully functional one-stop-shop.
**Cost: numbers in bold for countries with cost above the threshold.

Member States are increasingly integrating the **"think small first"** principle into the policy-making process. While only few have set up a specific body to represent SMEs interests, almost all of them consult SMEs representatives. A number of Member States (for example BE, DK, ET, MT, NL, SE, FI, UK) evaluates or is planning to evaluate the impact of new legislation on SMEs. Examples of specific provisions to alleviate the administrative burden on SMEs go from the simplified conditions for accessing subsidised finance (FR) to longer payment time for VAT (DK) or development of dedicated electronic services (FI). However, further national efforts are needed in the application of this principle in order to meet the specific needs of micro and small enterprises but also to maximise its positive contribution to the target of reducing by 25%, at EU level, the administrative burden by 2012.

Awareness of the need to enhance **entrepreneurship education** at school is constantly increasing in the Member States and in the last couple of years new plans and individual initiatives have been flourishing in this area. However reforms planned in a number of countries are sometimes described in rather generic terms and their implementation in practice will have to be monitored. In a few Member States, entrepreneurship is already a recognised objective of the education systems and is embedded explicitly in national framework curricula (ES, FI, IE, CY, PL, UK) but implementing means (teacher training, teaching materials) still need to be stepped up.

In some cases, elements of entrepreneurship are found horizontally throughout the curriculum, or entrepreneurship forms part of economic subjects (LV). Other Member States are starting to implement or are planning reforms in the same direction. However, Member States where entrepreneurship is well established in the curricula are still a small minority.

Almost all Member States have already taken or are currently introducing measures to raise SMEs' awareness on public tenders and to provide them with easy access to tender information (single electronic access points or electronic procurement, training and counselling, etc.). However, only a handful of Member States report on more specific measures to help SMEs' to participate in **public procurement** (use of prior information notices, dividing contracts into small lots) and only very few have put in place a strategy or specific measures to help SMEs to participate in public procurement (e.g. UK, IT, FR). A study published by the Commission in November 2007[27] showed that 42% of the value of public procurement contracts above the EU Directives' thresholds goes to SMEs. This share is smaller than the economic importance of SMEs in the EU, but above the SME quota for federal public procurement in the US (23%).

Since 2005, some limited progress has taken place in the simplification of procedures for recruiting a first employee. Overall, the average number of mandatory external contacts (social security organisations, tax offices, labour offices, etc.) has been reduced from 3 to 2.5 and the average number of procedures (filing forms, etc.) from 3.5 to 3. However, the target of having no more than one public administration point in that process is still far and the situation varies significantly from a Member State to another. Only three Member States (e.g. ES, MT, and PT) have a special one-stop-shop system for recruitment of first employee or one-stop-shops for start-ups that can also take care of recruitment. Several other Member States have procedures that are so simple that only one contact with a public administration is required (e.g. BG, FR, IE, LV, LT, SE). In others, at least the social security registration is organised as a one-stop-shop or one-window-system, i.e. one branch of the social security collects the registration and distributes the information to the other branches (e.g. DE, SK or the UK). BE is a special case where "social secretariats" take care of all employment related procedures for businesses, including the registration of new employees etc. but have to be paid by businesses.

2.3.4. European infrastructures in the transport sector

In 2007 the rate of progress towards the key objective of completing the Trans-European transport network has been high. The measures taken jointly by the Member States and the Community in support of the TEN-T and the 30 priority projects in particular, have resulted in an annual investment (EU 27) of € 40 billion, with approximately € 20 billion of this going to priority projects. PP 4, the High-speed railway axis east (section Paris-Bodrecourt) and PP6, the dedicated rail freight Betewe line, were completed during 2007, and PP 2 the High-speed railway axis - Paris-Brussels-Cologne-Amsterdam-London is now almost complete, while

[27] *Evaluation of SME Access to Public Procurement Markets in the EU,* Final Report by GHK and Technopolis, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/public_procurement.htm

substantial progress has been made on other projects including PP 3 the High-speed railway axis of south-west Europe - Madrid-Barcelona, Madrid-Valladolid.

Looking to the future, the Community institutions support the introduction of a higher Community co-financing rate, in particular for cross-border projects, for those having a transit function, or those involving the crossing of natural barriers. The Multi-annual Programme will allocate between 80 and 85 % of the TEN-T financial reference amount of € 8,013 million for the period 2007-2013 to projects presenting the highest value to the Community (in particular cross-border projects), to the deployment of the European rail signalling system ERMTS/ETCS and to the development of Intelligent Transportation Systems. In the same period, new cohesion policy programmes plan to invest for the development of railways more than EUR 22 billion and more than EUR 17 billion for the development of TEN-T motorways.

3. IMPLEMENTING PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The potential contribution of microeconomic structural reforms to the European Union's long-term economic performance through achieving stronger productivity growth is well established in the theoretical and empirical literature. An important part of the task to enhance total factor productivity growth consists of bringing about more propitious framework conditions. Well functioning markets and competition are a key condition for higher R&D spending to translate into innovation and better results in terms of productivity.

The previous section summarises the evidence on the implementation of micro-economic reforms since 2005, drawing on Member States' implementation reports throughout the first cycle of the strategy for Growth and Jobs. It shows that the types of reforms engaged by Member States in the last years have the potential to strengthen Europe's productivity performance and thereby make a key contribution to the objectives of the growth and jobs strategy. Full implementation of the reforms in the microeconomic area remains the most important condition for realising their potential in terms of productivity growth.

The analysis shows that significant progress has been made in a number of areas with the implementation of the microeconomic reform agenda. Around half of all Member States have shown a strong policy response in the areas of R&D and ICT, and most others have at least made some progress in these areas. Regarding the aim to unlock the business potential, particularly of SMEs, where concrete objectives have been targeted for end-2007, a clear majority of Member States have shown at least a fairly good or strong policy response. About a third of Member States show a strong policy response with regard to energy and climate change. However, the uneven implementation record across Member States implies that progress overall could still be better.

There are also important policy areas where overall progress across Member States has been not satisfactory and where significant implementation deficits remain despite the strong performance of some Member States. In the area of R&D, current efforts will probably not be sufficient to reach the established target. In the area of competition policy only few Member States have registered a good policy response, while overall progress has been limited. At the start of a new cycle these

implementation deficits give rise to concern. Member States commitment to the full implementation of their National Reform Programmes is important for the credibility of the strategy overall. It will be important to take any implementation deficits from the first cycle into account when defining the ambition of the National Reform Programmes for the new three-year cycle.

- In the area of R&D, innovation and industrial policy, Member States have given a high priority to the measures to enhance research and innovation. While all Member States have set a target for research spending and despite progress made in many Member States, important implementation gaps remain overall. The slight decline in R&D expenditure in 2006 after broadly stagnating levels in the years before is a sore reminder that one of the flagship objectives of the renewed Lisbon strategy—the 3% R&D expenditure target—may not be reached by 2010. More than insufficient public spending on R&D, this outcome reflects weaknesses in the existing framework conditions and in policy design. Going forward it will therefore be crucial to set up coherent R&D and innovation strategies where they are not yet in place and to address issues such as innovation in services organisational innovation, intellectual property rights, ensuring the availability of qualified researchers, and overcoming skills shortages.

- Regarding ICT, implementation gaps remain regarding the availability of digital content and related policies (IPRs), digital skills requirements, standardisation, next generation networks, and security of electronic payments, privacy, and interoperability.

- The implementation record in the areas of functioning markets and competition policy has been mixed across the Member States. While there is clear progress with transposition of internal market legislation, more attention to the quality of transposition, implementation and enforcement of internal market legislation is needed. More also needs to be done to ensure the good functioning of public procurement markets and, at the Community level, the development of a well balanced framework for intellectual property rights. The integration of financial markets, in particular in the area of retail financial services, has so far remained inadequate.

- State aid and competition in professional services have not been prominent on the Member States' reform agenda. Particular implementation deficits remain in the area of external openness, professional services and some network industries, in particular gas, electricity, and rail. It is telling that the more country-specific recommendations and points to watch have been proposed in the field of competition policy than in any other micro-economic area. This shows that this policy area constitutes a key challenge for most Member States also for the new three-year cycle.

- In the area of Better Regulation, the main progress has been reaching consensus on prioritising this policy area and in creating the necessary tools to serve it. However, implementation has been slow and the objective of embedding Better Regulation in every-day policy making is far from secured. Despite the recent progress, there is a need for more action to achieve the SME start-up targets set by

the 2006 Spring European Council. Improving SMEs' access to finance and mainstreaming of SME issues into other policy areas deserve more attention.

- Implementation of policies to address climate change and sustainable use of resources has been insufficient. Also, more action is needed to improve the interconnections of national energy networks and to integrate the energy markets. In the area of transport policy, interoperability and interconnection of the national networks remain priorities, while not enough has been done to promote the efficient use of infrastructure.

A general conclusion of this stock-taking exercise is the recognition that policy measures in the different policy areas need to be better integrated, so as to maximise their positive externalities. This does not apply only to the micro-pillar policies – where an integrated approach to the 'knowledge triangle' of research, innovation and education policies is called for – but also to the reform design across the three pillars of the renewed Lisbon strategy, i.e. the macro-economic, micro-economic and employment policy areas.

In order to ensure continued progress toward bringing about a better productivity performance in the European Union, it will be important that Member States in their National Reform Programmes for the new three-year cycle of the strategy take account of the microeconomic implementation deficits of the first cycle that have been outlined here. R&D and innovation policies as well as enhancing competition, market functioning and sustainable use of resources will remain key challenges in the period ahead both for both most Member States and the European Union as a whole. A sustained effort will be needed to narrow the EU's productivity gap vis-à-vis the global top performers.

III. THE COMMISSION DRAFT OF THE JOINT EMPLOYMENT REPORT 2007/8

Summary and conclusions

The favourable economic environment has left positive traces on the European labour markets. 2006 saw employment–intensive growth for the first time in almost a decade. The laast two year have seen the creation of almost 6.5 million new jobs and unemployment has reached the lowest levels in years. Part of this is cyclical but there are good reasons to believe that the European Employment Strategy and the integrated Lisbon strategy are showing results and that structural reform are starting to pay off. One of the most obvious sign of this is the recent decline in structural unemployment.

Despite the relatively favourable labour market outlook a number of serious concerns persist The most pressing is youth unemployment that continues to be a severe problem in many Member States. Young people have not benefited proportionately from the economic upswing; in 2006 they still remained exposed to unemployment more than twice as much as the overall work force. Today nearly one in six young people in the EU, or almost 7 million, still leave the education system prematurely and there has been virtually no increase in levels of educational attainment.

Further efforts are needed to reach the European employment targets. Moreover, the responsiveness of European labour markets to the challenges of globalisation and ageing remains insufficient. Structural unemployment still remains too high and more needs to be done within comprehensive flexicurity approaches to improve the functioning of European labour markets and to facilitate transitions with the aim of eliminating barriers to employment.

It is very encouraging that about half of the Member States have now developed or are developing comprehensive flexicurity approaches but the performance within the various underlying components is less positive. Labour market segmentation remains a significant problem in many Member States and the focus of the policy response still tends to be more on easing labour market regulation for new entrants and facilitating more contractual diversity than on reforming existing mainstream labour legislation. Reforms of social security systems have tended to be limited to pension reforms. Active labour market policies, although becoming more personalised, have been subject to a decline in expenditures since 2000 both as a share of GDP and per worker. Finally, participation in lifelong learning in the EU barely increased between 2005 and 2006, while it has actually decreased in half of the Member States, and adult training remains unevenly distributed. These figures are disappointing and worrying for the future. A substantial rise in the investments in human capital better targeted towards labour market needs is essential to close the productivity gap with our key global competitors.

Europe must continue labour market reforms for more and better jobs. People not working and in precarious work need special attention. An ageing Europe in an intensely competitive world needs more people working more productively.

1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

1.1. Full Employment

Employment targets

Helped by the strong economic expansion employment growth picked up in 2006 and recorded the strongest increase since the nineties with nearly 4 million jobs being created during the year and the overall employment rate climbing to 64.3%. This employment expansion notably took place in an environment of accelerating productivity growth, not seen in a decade. Progress has been widespread but was in particular driven by a handful of Member States. Labour market performance is projected to continue at least next year and should lead to further progress towards reaching the employment targets.

Despite the positive performance in 2006 Europe remains short of the 2010 employment targets. The current employment rate implies that another 20 million jobs will have to be created by 2010 if the target is to be reached. Forecasts already suggest that another 5.5 million new jobs could be created by 2008[28]. With sustained efforts, the 2010 overall target of a 70% employment rate becomes closer.

Older workers still represent one of the largest target groups for raising employment. With a current employment rate of 43.5%, (6.5 pp from the 2010 target), there is still significant untapped potential among older workers and their numbers will continue to grow during the coming decades. Regarding gender, the employment rate for women has increased in almost all Member States reaching 57.2 % in 2006, and stands relatively close to the 2010 target of 60 %. With an employment rate of only 50%, people with disabilities also remain a potentially large untapped resource of additional labour supply.

Unemployment dropped significantly from 8.9% in 2005 to 8.2% in 2006 and almost all Member States contributed to this trend. Both women and men benefited as the unemployment rate fell to respectively 9% and 7.6%. A notable indicator of the robustness of the current labour market performance is that the long-term unemployment rate fell for the second year in a row, from 4% to 3.6%.

Youth unemployment remains a severe problem in many Member States. The overall youth unemployment rate did decrease over the last year but this was mainly attributable to significant reductions in a small number of Member States. The unemployment rate amongst young people has actually increased since 2004 in a number of other Member States. So far young people have not benefited enough from the favourable economic environment; they remain more than twice as exposed to unemployment as the overall work force. Finally, many Member States still fall short of the new activation targets. Despite also being a Lisbon priority since 2006, and given the importance of the young generations in addressing the future demographic challenges, these trends remain disappointing.

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[28] European Commission, Economic forecast, Spring 2007.

Structural reforms

There are a number of signs that structural labour market reforms in recent years are having an impact[29]. The strongest evidence however, is the significant reduction in structural unemployment throughout Europe[30]. While the period 1997-2003 was characterised by rather stable and high structural unemployment, it has been reduced by about one third since 2004 and is forecast to drop further in 2007. The level, however, is still significantly higher than that of our principal competitors.

Together this points to the existence of significant barriers to employment. European labour markets are not sufficiently responsive to the challenges of globalisation and ageing. More needs to be done to improve their functioning and to facilitate labour market transitions.

1.2. Quality and productivity at work

Productivity

One of the most striking challenges of globalisation is the enhanced requirements for productivity gains in order to ensure sustainable employment growth. Since the eighties, average labour productivity growth in the EU has been decreasing from around 2% a year in the second half of the 1990s, to around 1% between 2001 and 2003. Over the same time frame the US has sustained productivity growth rates of some 2% on average. Since 2003 however, there has been evidence that the decline in productivity growth in Europe is being reversed.

Table 1. GDP, employment and labour productivity growth (annual averages)

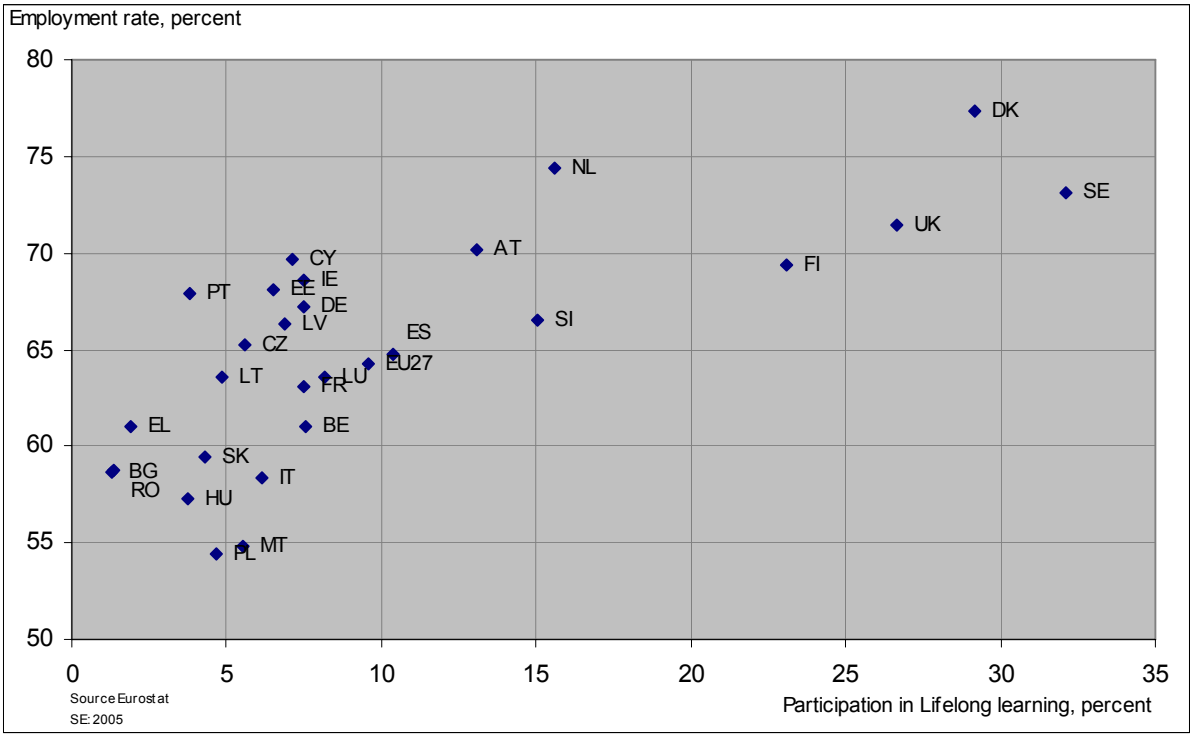
	1997-2000		2001-2003		2004-2006	
	EU27	US	EU27	US	EU27	US
1. GDP	3.1	4.2	1.5	1.6	2.4	3.2
2. Employment	1.1	2.1	0.3	0.0	1.1	1.6
3. Labour Productivity (per worker)	2.2	2.1	1.1	2.0	1.5	2.1
4. Hourly Labour Productivity		2.1	1.6	2.7	1.4	2.3

One important means of improving labour productivity is through investment in human capital, in particular by establishing comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning throughout the life cycle. In this regard, Europe is behind schedule.

[29] One of them is the development in wages. In the current economic upturn, there has been no significant pressure on wages which has been typical for cyclical driven expansions.

[30] European Commission, AMECO database, DG ECFIN.

Graph 2: Employment rates and participation in lifelong learning 2006



The graph indicates that there may be some correlation between employment rates and participation in lifelong learning. The graph might also indicate that to achieve very high employment rates it is necessary to exceed a certain level of participation in lifelong learning.

Clear progress has been made in recent years on reducing early school leaving, but in 2006, almost 7 million young people still left education prematurely. Progress is too slow in increasing youth educational attainment levels; figures have only improved moderately since 2000. The level of adult participation has remained stable or has even decreased in 20 out of 27 Member States since 2004. Participation levels are particularly low in Southern European countries and in most of the new Member States. The lowest participation rates throughout the EU continue to be those of older workers.

It is imperative that Europe steps up its investments in human capital[31]. Adequate incentives and cost sharing mechanisms for enterprises, public authorities and individuals must be developed.

Quality at work

Progress in the quest to increase quality at work again remains mixed[32] and implementation of policies to this aim is limited. In-work poverty still affects 8% of workers in the EU. While 2006 saw some further improvements in youth education

31 Currently US and Japan are for example spending twice as much as the EU on tertiary education.

32 For details of the 10 dimensions of quality at work see: Improving quality in work: a review of recent progress - COM(2003) 728, 26.11.2003.

levels there has been limited progress in other elements of quality at work, including in particular the transitions from insecure to secure jobs, and the issue of reducing labour market segmentation, the level of which is currently on the rise in many Member States. Adult participation in lifelong learning, one of the key indicators for quality at work shows stagnating or even declining trends.

1.3. Social and territorial cohesion

Social cohesion is crucial for sustainable employment growth. In 2007 in the framework of the open method of coordination in social protection and social inclusion, Member States have continued focusing their policies on fighting and preventing child poverty and promoting the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market through an approach combining income support with activation policies.

In spite of the positive economic environment, in most countries there was no reduction of relative poverty and employment rates increases for vulnerable groups have been more limited than those for the labour force in general. In the EU, the percentage of adults and children living in jobless households has remained unchanged since 2000 at nearly 10%. Social protection reforms should in particular improve, where required, the adequacy of social benefits linked to employment activity. This is a pre-condition for a well functioning flexicurity approach.

The favourable economic environment has had significant impact on the magnitude of regional disparities which continued to narrow in 2006, especially as concerns unemployment. It is still characteristic that regional disparities on unemployment are markedly larger than on employment, but the former has been reduced by one third since 2001. Although this trend is observed in most Member States there is a handful recording a strong negative trend in regional disparities.

2. IMPLEMENTING PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

2.1. Attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems

Promote a lifecycle approach to work

Still only very few Member States have a comprehensive lifecycle approach to work.

There has been some recent progress in encouraging active ageing strategies especially through restricting eligibility conditions, while compensating for particularly demanding or hazardous jobs, by increasing incentives to work longer for employees and employees (AT, FR, ES, DK), by enhancing work opportunities for older and particularly disabled workers and by improving working conditions while and providing opportunities for skills upgrading and retraining. The current average exit age from the labour market (60.9) still remains well below the 2010 target.

The progress in the field of gender equality has been mixed. The female employment rate has increased strongly but is still under 50% in 4 Member States (EL, IT, MT and PL). Only some countries (AT, CY, FR, EL, IE, LV, MT, PL, SE, SI)

systematically use statistics broken down by sex for reporting on employment. The gender pay gap shows no sign of reduction over the last few years and is still at 15 % overall in the EU. Few countries have taken concrete actions in this field (AT, BE, FI, FR, LU, NL, SE, SK, UK) and no new targets have been set following the Commission Communication on gender pay gap.

Box: Promoting the labour market integration of young people remains a key challenge

Only about half of the Member States have seen an improvement in youth unemployment between 2000 and 2006. There are still 17.5% of young men and 13.2 % of young women leaving school with at most a lower secondary education. Only six Member States have reached the target of no more than 10%.

Despite relatively poor results, increased efforts to fight youth unemployment are reported by many countries. Policy measures are pursued along 4 axes: Firstly, through improved vocational education and training pathways (AT, BE, LU), specific guidance and pathways for at-risk school leavers (BE, FR, DE, LU) and specific contract schemes with a training component (LU). Secondly, through intensified and personalised guidance and job-search support (PT) and creation of employment pathways (MT). Thirdly, through reduction of employers' social security contributions (BE, HU, SE), tax promotion for apprenticeship places (AT, FR), wage support for recruitment of long-term unemployed (DE). Fourthly, through strengthening the conditionality of social or unemployment benefits (CZ) and reduced taxation of students' jobs (FR)

At the 2006 Spring European Council Member States agreed that they should provide a "new start" for the young unemployed within 6 months by 2007 and 4 months by 2010. . According to the most recent EU data, only 15 countries manage to have a timely new start offered to at least two thirds of young unemployed. In a small lead group of countries nearly all young unemployed are offered a new start during their first months of unemployment (AT, FI, SE). Seven countries have reached an 80-90 % coverage (BE, FR, DE, IE, LT, NL, ES) while 4 countries only provide a 70-80% coverage (HU, LV, LU, PT). For the remaining countries no EU data are available.

The issue of reconciliation between work and private life is gaining some impetus in Member States, mostly through the commitment to improve the provision of childcare facilities (AT, DE, EL, LU, NL, PT, UK). However, many Member States are far from reaching the childcare targets and most do not even refer to them in their national strategies.

Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive

Efforts have increased in integrating people at the margins of the labour market and in an "active inclusion" approach. Low-skilled job seekers are subject to specific activation measures or support for placement from the employment services (UK), while financial incentives are created for employers to hire them (BG, DE) and train them (NL). Some measures aim at providing specific training opportunities, organised either through public employment services or on-the-job (AT, LT, BG, EE,

BE). A number of Member States have taken steps to develop and improve the programmes for basic literacy and numeracy of adults (FR, DK).

Specific training measures and language courses are being offered to migrants (SE, CY, DK, ES, AT, BE) and activation measures coupled with support from the employment services (DK, ES, DE, AT, EE, UK) are specifically aimed at this group. Wage subsidy schemes for employment of migrants and their descendents have been introduced in SE and DK. Some Member States are taking steps to better integrate children of immigrants into the educational system (LU, NL), while others with large shares of immigrants are launching specific programmes for geographic areas where migrants are highly concentrated (FR, UK). In a number of countries, immigration is seen as an important element in answering labour market needs (ES, DK, IE), and some Member States are planning to develop plans to attract highly skilled migrants (NL, CY, DK, LT), and to simplify the procedures for work and residence permits in sectors where there are labour shortages (SE, IE, AT, FI, EE, MT, BE, CY, DK, ES, LU, SI).

Some Member States have increased spending and raised the effectiveness of their active labour market policies (AT), notably by tightening eligibility conditions for unemployment benefits (EL), increasing the effectiveness of job-search assistance (BE, SK), providing targeted training for the unemployed (AT) and introducing "in-work" benefits (SE). Some Member States also subsidize self-employment (DE, LT, EL, SK, LV). An increasing focus is on the individual responsibility of job seekers (BE, MT, NL, SI, LU, UK, SE, DK, HU), with increased conditionality of unemployment benefits, increased monitoring of their job searching activities and in some cases their contracts concluded between job seeker and employment service defining rights and mutual obligations. The local or regional dimension of activation is often emphasized, and many Member States aim at improving the internal cooperation between the different agencies serving job seekers (NL, MT, HU, IE, SK). However, Member States rarely report on the "new start" target for unemployed, nor the activation target for long-term unemployed.

Some countries have lowered tax wedges in order to foster participation rates and job creation either through general tax reductions, mainly focused on cutting the tax-wedge on low income groups (AT, FR, HU, SI, CZ, IT, MT, LT, SE), or by a straight reduction of the tax burden on low incomes (DK, FI, GR,NL, SL). Also, a general trend towards reducing social security contributions for both employers and employees was recorded over recent years (BE, SE, MT). .

Financial incentives are being created to increase the readiness of people with a disability to take up work (IE, EE, SK), while subsidies are given to employers to hire disabled people and to adapt their workplace to their needs (NL, SE, PL, IE, SI, AT, BG, LV). Measures are also being taken to establish and develop guaranteed jobs and supported employment opportunities (CZ, DK, ES, SE, SI, DE, LT, SK).

Improve the matching of labour market needs

Adaptation to economic change is stated as a relevant priority for all Member States, although addressed through different tools at the level of the Public Employment Services. Different areas have seen particular investments: training and vocational qualifications (EE, IE, SI); skills upgrades (DK, PT, CY, IE) and involvement of

employers (EL, IT, UK); taxation measures to address disadvantaged social groups (FR, FI); targeted services according to age group, education/qualification levels and greater exposure to the risk of exclusion (PT); extension to a personal assistance scheme and reinforcement of services for people with disabilities (SK); work-life balancing (CY); actions for female and senior workers (LT) or young people (PL, SE); public-private partnerships (BE, IT[33]).

However, with very few exceptions (BE, IT in particular), not much progress on trans-national mobility has been achieved across Member States. Conversely, concerning the anticipation of skills needs, several Member States (AT, EL, LT, LV, MT, PT) are building infrastructures to forecast labour market needs and skills shortages.

2.2. Improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises

Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners

Whereas promoting the adaptability of workers and enterprises received little attention in the first year of the new cycle launched in 2005, a careful examination shows that the political prioritisation by the European Council and the wide debate since then on flexicurity has brought about an important turn-around, and increased the awareness of the benefits that flexicurity policies can bring. Flexicurity is now acknowledged throughout the EU as a key approach to make labour markets more responsive to the changes resulting from globalisation, as well as to reduce labour market segmentation.

Box 2: The increasing role of flexicurity

About half of the Member States have now developed or are developing comprehensive flexicurity approaches, and combining efforts on contractual arrangements, lifelong learning, active labour market policies and social security systems. This is a considerable improvement from only a handful in 2006. Various Member States are reporting on their intentions, including initiatives to develop national flexicurity pathways, seeking cooperation with or input from their social partners (for example AT, FI, IE, IT, SI, FR).

On July 23rd 2007, the **Italian** Government signed an agreement with the Social Partners on social protection, employment, competitiveness and sustainable growth. The agreement covers the areas of pensions, social benefits, contractual arrangements, work incentives, labour cost, and training. The agreement includes steps towards a more universal coverage of social protection, independent of the specifics of work contracts. It envisages limiting repetitive fixed term contracts, promoting 'long' part-time contracts and improving protection of workers on on-call contracts.

[33] The Italian NRP dedicates a specific section to PES and to the assessment of their reform process over the last 7 years.

Flexicurity measures are being implemented along two lines. On the one hand, measures are being pursued to strengthen flexibility in order to make labour markets more dynamic and responsive to change, both through internal and external flexibility instruments. SI, EL, BG, RO for instance report on how they wish to promote part-time employment. SK, PL, LU, LT, RO introduced tele-working as a new form of work providing more flexibility. In some countries, the regulation of permanent work contracts is allowing for more flexibility. Changes in employment protection legislation (EPL) for workers on open-ended contracts are relatively scarce. In LV, BG, NL, RO, attempts are being made to simplify EPL although political outcomes are sometimes uncertain.

Initiatives are also underway in several countries to extend security. Labour code reviews are quite frequent (AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SI, SE) but their character seems to be gradually changing. They are tending to move away from focusing on increased flexibility through the introduction of new types of contracts, and towards a more balanced approach including more security for workers on temporary contracts. MT, SK, HU, NL, CY, IE, IT are improving social protection provisions for workers in part-time or fixed-term contracts. The regulation of temporary agency work is a policy focus in FI, AT, BG. Some countries aim to limit the consecutive use of fixed-term contracts (CZ, FI, IT, NL).

A move from passive to active labour market policies is slowly taking shape (e.g. by increasing job search support, benefit conditionality or by reforming tax and benefit systems to "make work pay"). Transition security for workers on open-ended contracts is not really recognised as an issue. The traditional attitude, concentrating on job security rather than on a broader concept of employment security, is still very much alive though policy efforts are restricted to the management of larger company restructurings. Standardised support for all workers faced with dismissal still remains to be implemented (SE, FI, LU).

Targeting segmentation is also an explicit goal in some countries, with for instance ES creating incentives for employers to transform time-limited contracts into permanent ones. On the whole, however, segmentation of labour markets remains to be addressed, especially for female workers, still affected by low quality jobs and weaker employment and social security. Between 2000 and 2006, the share of workers on temporary contracts in EU27 rose from 12.2% to 14.1%, whereas the share of workers on part time contracts rose from 16.4% to 18.1%. A high level of undeclared labour is another aspect of segmentation (IT, EL, SK, HU, LV, LT, SI, RO, BG). Most countries suffering from high levels of undeclared work are paying attention to this concentrating on reinforcing labour inspectorates or other control or surveillance measures and incentives to legalise labour relations (HU).

Policies aiming to modernise work organisations receive rather little attention in Member States (e.g. FI, IE, SE, LT, and LU). Innovations in working time management are most widespread (DE, LU). Only few countries are developing a comprehensive vision of high quality workplaces, combining greater demands and responsibilities on workers with increased autonomy at work (FI, SE).

Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage setting mechanisms

Employment-friendly policies should support wage developments in line with productivity in order to achieve high employment and contain inflation. Member States are largely successful in ensuring this balance. Wage flexibility is not widely addressed, although some countries, in cooperation with their social partners, promote wage settlements that reflect productivity differentials at company level. Efforts to reduce non-wage labour costs are widespread, and focus in particular on young people and workers with disabilities.

2.3. Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

Expand and improve investment in human capital

Investing in human capital to achieve efficient and equitable outcomes is still a challenge in most Member States. Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP increased in the EU between 2000 and 2003 from 4.7% to 5.2%, but then decreased again to 5.1% in 2004. Similarly, progress on private expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP slowed down in 2004. The European Social Fund (ESF) will invest around 34.3 billion EUR in improving human capital and life-long learning systems in the current programming period.

Most countries have made progress in defining comprehensive lifelong learning strategies covering all systems and levels of education and training. It is essential that those countries that have not yet adopted a lifelong learning strategy do so urgently. All countries have measures addressing the areas for which EU benchmarks have been set: reducing the number of early school leavers, and improving secondary attainment and increasing adult participation in lifelong learning. However, most countries have not set quantitative national targets (BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, RO have) and the modest progress visible since 2000 is not sufficient to reach the EU targets set for 2010.

Every sixth young person (15.3%) aged 18-24 in the EU-27 still leaves school with no more than lower secondary education (male: 17.5%, female: 13.2%) and does not participate in any kind of education and training after this. Progress has so far not been sufficient to reach the EU benchmark of 10% by 2010. Several countries (ES, IT, MT, PT) still had very high levels (above 20%) in 2006 and in some countries performance has actually worsened since 2000 (ES, LU, SE, SK). Similarly, there has been some progress in improving upper secondary attainment levels, but not enough to achieve the objective of at least 85% of 22-years-olds to complete at least upper-secondary education by 2010.

Also adult participation in lifelong learning is no longer on track to achieve the EU benchmark of 12.5% by 2010. In 2006, an average of 9.6% of Europeans aged 25-64 was participating in education and training activities (men: 8.8%, women 10.4%), which is slightly less than in 2005. The participation rate remains lower for inactive and unemployed persons, for older persons, and for persons with low educational attainment. The participation of older workers is still only half of the overall rate and adults with a high level of education are still more than six times as likely to participate in lifelong learning as the low skilled.

A large part of the policy-making is focused on finding ways to encourage employers to invest in training and motivate employees to take part in it. Several Member States also see it as a particular challenge to motivate the less-educated and middle-aged part of the workforce to acquire new skills. Many measures imply financial incentives through tax reduction or grants for employers investing in training (MT, EE, BG, DE, NL, IE, DK, BE, LV), but some countries have also taken initiatives to simplify the conditions for educational leave (AT, LU). The role of agreements among social partners about the implementation of lifelong learning strategies is emphasized and stressed by some Member States (DK, FR, PL, NL).

Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements

There is evidence suggesting that early education is receiving increasing attention in many Member States particularly in establishing the basis for learning throughout life and in facilitating access to education of citizens with a less favourable socio-economic background, and migrants. Some are working on teaching content (DE, DK), quality assessments (ES, LT), building the capacity of pre-primary teachers (CZ) and increasing their numbers (DK, HU, MT, NL, SE, SK, UK). Others are extending compulsory schooling to parts of the pre-primary level (CY, DK, EL, PL). Strengthening pre-primary education is a key measure to improve the efficiency and equity of education and training systems.

National qualifications frameworks in line with the European Qualifications Framework are being developed by the majority of countries (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, HR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PT, SI, SK), with a view to facilitating international mobility as well as the transition between different education and training sectors . They are an important means for ensuring flexible learning pathways which are also facilitated by many countries setting up systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (AT, BE, CZ, ES, IT, LT, LU, PL, RO, SE, SK, UK). The challenge here is to move from experiment to full application of such systems in national qualifications systems, including in access to higher education

These improvements are running in parallel with a greater focus on learning outcomes in learning programmes and qualifications which increases the relevance of both vocational education and training and higher education for the labour market. Despite renewed emphasis on apprenticeship and work-based learning, further work must be done to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training.

Little progress is visible in forecasting future skills and qualifications needs, despite the efforts made by some countries to improve their infrastructures (AT, EL, LT, LV, MT, PT). More also needs to be done by Member States to facilitate international mobility. Mobility is still much more widespread in higher education than in vocational education and training.

Given that the quality of teacher education is a prime factor influencing student performance, more attention must also be given to teacher education and training, in particular to continuing teacher training and professional development.

Finally, a number of countries are developing centres of excellence in higher education (DE, EE, EL, FI, UK), but more needs to be done to address education alongside research and knowledge transfer in the context of such initiatives, and to improve university-business cooperation.

IV. THE GENERAL APPROACH USED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO ASSESS PROGRESS WITH STRUCTURAL REFORMS

The renewed Lisbon strategy marked a major change in the approach to the co-ordination of structural reforms in the EU. A "partnership approach" between EU and national authorities has been pursued to tackle the implementation gap between reform commitments and concrete actions. Based on 24 Integrated Guidelines, Member States in a bottom up exercise adopted National Reform Programmes covering the period 2005-07 period in which they themselves identified their "key challenges" to raise the growth potential. There is also an annual reporting and peer review process, which led to the adoption of policy recommendations in February 2007 by the Council which pointed to areas where good progress has been made as to areas where reform efforts as lagging. The recommendations were graduated with "country-specific recommendations" (CSRs) addressed to countries on policy areas where little progress was made and "points to watch" on policy areas where only some progress was made.

The main focus of attention within the current Strategic Report is on implementation. While account is taken of overall progress achieved since the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005, the assessment mainly considers 2007 with a particular emphasis on tracking Member States' responses to country-specific recommendations (CSRs) or points to watch (PTWs) adopted by the Council in April 2007. The Commission attaches considerable importance is attached to having a robust and transparent framework for assessing progress with structural reforms which is comparable across policy areas and Member States. The main elements of the approach used by the Commission to arrive at its policy recommendations are outlined in the box below.

It should be underlined that given the relatively short period since the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy, and given the inevitable time lags in adopting reforms and for them to have an impact on the real economy, the assessment essentially remains a tracking exercise which catalogues planned and enacted reform actions. There is only limited scope to evaluate in-depth the significance of reform measures or to quantify their impact on growth and jobs (although this is part achieved via a thematic review exercise on specific policy areas carried out by the Economic Policy Committee and the Employment Committee) Over time, the Commission will strive to enhance the evaluation exercise upgrade so that there are more multi-annual in character, and include a greater reliance on quantitative as well as qualitative analysis that is supported by modelling results.

The Commission services are investing considerable resources in developing robust methodologies for systematically identifying the key policy challenges facing Member States and for evaluating the impact of structural on growth and jobs. Much of this work is being carried out jointly together with national authorities via a Lisbon methodology working group (LIME) attached to the Economic Policy Committee[34]. Progress has already been made which has supported the assessment in the Strategic Report. In particular, most Member States have attached "streamlined reporting tables" to their National Implementation Reports submitted to the Commission in October 2007: these tables systematically report the relevant reform measures that according to the Member State contribute to the Lisbon process, and offer the

[34] See European Economy Research letter No 1., April 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/researchletter_en.htm

potential of greater transparency on structural reform developments in real time. In addition, the Commission has made considerable progress in developing institutional databases that catalogue enacted structural reforms in a comprehensive and comparable manner across Member States. The LABREF database, which records information on enacted labour market reforms, has been backdated to 2000 and is starting to be actively used for analytical and surveillance purposes[35]. The MICREF database collects similar information on reforms falling under the microeconomic pillar of the Integrated Guidelines.

The approach used by the Commission to assess progress with structural reforms in the Strategic Report

In assessing progress with structural reforms, the European Commission took account of all relevant information at its disposal, including the information contained in the National Implementation reports submitted to the European Commission in 2007 along with the streamlined reporting tables. In broad terms, three considerations were taken into account when arriving at policy conclusions, and in particular whether a CSR or PTW should be issued to a Member States to signal the need for more progress in a specific policy area. They are:

- the ***performance of a Member State in different policy areas***: more weight will be attached to countries where the starting level of performance is poor or lagging. In doing so, relevant policy and performance indicators are considered

- the ***adequacy of the policy response***. This is the core element making use of information on structural reforms gathered from Lisbon missions and the National Implementation Reports. In doing so, the *degree of responsiveness* (whether a policy response has been approved and passed all the necessary legislative/administrative procedures to start being implemented) is considered, the *significance of a policy measure* (e.g. do they address core underlying problems, does the reform imply a significant change relative to existing institutional settings, has an adequate allocation of financial and personnel resources been foreseen to implement the policy, are targets/goals realistic), and the *degree of follow-up* (e.g. whether the design of the policy response foresees monitoring mechanisms);

- the ***relative priority of a policy area in terms of its potential contribution to growth and jobs in the country concerned***. The aim is to have a rounded view on the overall economic policy challenges facing a country, and to concentrate on those policy areas where countries are especially lagging behind the best-performer and which can contribute most to raising growth and jobs. In most instances, the priorities are well defined in the key challenges identified by Member States.

Overall, by looking at performance, policy responses and priorities, a robust and transparent assessment is arrived at which is comparable across policy areas and Member States. Naturally, all other relevant qualitative considerations, including wider political issues, are also taken into account.

[35] For access to the LABREF database, follow:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/indicators/labref_en.htm
The information in LABREF has been used to feed into economic analysis on the impact of labour market reforms, see papers from a Commission conference in March 2007on tracking and evaluating the impact of labour market reforms in Europe
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/events/2007/events_brussels_1403_en.htm .

V. THE EUROPEAN GROWTH INITIATIVE

The European Action for Growth (or European Growth Initiative[36]) is an action plan endorsed by the European Council in December 2003. It aims at stimulating the long-term growth potential and the innovative capacity of the European Union by mobilising investment in transport, energy and electronic communication networks, and in research, development and innovation, with a particular focus on growth-enhancing technological areas.

At the European level, the initiative is supported by non-financial measures to improve the regulatory, administrative and financial environment for investment, as well as Community financial support, lending from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and venture capital from the European Investment Fund (EIF)[37], and innovative financing tools to mobilise private investment. At the Member States' level, it relies on supporting national actions to promote private investment, and on significantly redirecting public funding towards the areas of the initiative with a special emphasis on infrastructure investments.

In order to focus efforts on key investment projects of European interest, the Commission identified a list of TEN infrastructure projects and R&D technological areas, considered as sufficiently mature to be turned into action in the short run. This process was carried out in close collaboration with the EIB and was based on the explicit intentions of the Member States. The selection criteria included, in addition to project maturity, their trans-frontier dimension, the impact on growth and on innovation in an enlarged EU, and benefits for the environment. The "Quick Start programme" was endorsed by the European Council in December 2003. It was foreseen that the list might be updated, in the framework of the annual cycle for reporting to the Spring European Council, if other projects fulfilled the same criteria[38].

The Commission and the EIB were asked to provide a mid-term evaluation of the initiative by the end of 2007, on the basis of the following criteria: (i) effects on growth; (ii) impact on the internal market and cohesion in the enlarged EU; (iii) mobilisation of private sector capital, (iv) acceleration of the implementation of TENs and innovation and R&D projects including environment projects; (v) progress in reducing regulatory barriers; (vi) the impact on the environment and employment."

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36 This is an extract of the Commission Staff Working Paper "Mid-term review of European Action for Growth - Stocktaking on progress of the implementation of the European Action for Growth" - SEC(2007) 1695, 11.12.2007

37 The European Investment Fund (EIF) is part of the EIB group

38 The 31 Quick Start projects in the area of transport and the 17 projects in the area of energy are key sections of the TEN-T and TEN-E priority projects whilst the 8 projects related to electronic communications and knowledge reflect R&D, innovation and eEurope priorities within the Lisbon strategy for Growth and Jobs.

1. THE IMPROVED FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTMENT – PRELIMINARY RESULTS

1.1. Developments at European level

Almost all legislative measures identified by the Growth Initiative as necessary to improve the conditions for investment have been adopted and have entered into force (e.g. the TEN guidelines and financing rules, the Euro-vignette and cross-border mergers directives). They aim at facilitating investment in large-scale or complex cross-border infrastructure projects, and in research and innovation partnerships.

The Growth Initiative has given some initial impetus to set up new instruments and initiatives coordinating better funding from public sources and encouraging private investment in networks and R&D and innovation (e.g. nominating European coordinators for transport and energy priority projects, establishing Joint Technology Initiatives on nano-electronics and hydrogen and fuel cells).

The areas highlighted by the Initiative have benefited from significant funding over 2000-2006 and from increased budgets for the 2007-2013 period via the TEN-T and TEN-E programmes, the Structural and Cohesion funds, the 6th and 7th research framework programmes and the eTEN and Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

The EIB has been actively engaged in supporting the Growth Initiative as well as the Lisbon reforms through increased lending facilities, the strengthening and development of financial instruments (e.g. the TEN investment facility), and the provision of technical expertise.

The EIB and the Commission have jointly developed new financial instruments, at least in part as a result of the commitments made in the Growth Initiative (e.g. the Loan Guarantee Instrument for TEN-transport LGTT, the Risk Sharing Finance Facility RSFF and the JEREMIE and JASPERS funds). The Member States look forward to using these new instruments to leverage private investments and improve access to risk capital.

1.2. Developments at national level

20 Member States replied to the Commission information request on the Growth Initiative and related infrastructure investments (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, and the UK). The information provided is mostly qualitative but gives an insight on the national investment context onto which the Growth Initiative has developed its effects. As public infrastructure spending is commonly included in long-term strategies, it was difficult to analyse the influence of the Growth Initiative with a limited hindsight.

Public investment in transport infrastructure has accelerated in recent years in most Member States.

Investment in energy infrastructure is mainly market-driven. The need to modernise energy infrastructures and to better integrate national networks into the EU market is

prompting investments in most Member States. The promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energies, a new priority in many countries, also steadily necessitates high investment level. Increased demand for mobile communication services enables the private sector to invest in upgrading the networks to provide innovative high speed mobile services.

Investment into ICT networks serving scientific needs presenting important public good characteristics continue to be partly financed by national budget. The Member States have renewed their commitment to develop spatial technologies from which a wealth of applications with commercial or public services purposes will grow. Hydrogen technologies and nanoelectronics have also gained a priority position in the list of projects up for public R&D investment at the national level and national research capacities in these key areas for long term growth and sustainability have been reinforced.

1.3. Progress on the implementation of the Quick Start Projects

The improved enabling framework both at the European and the Member States level including the availability of financing has had significant knock-on effects on the implementation of the Quick Start projects. However, these effects fell significantly short of expectations voiced back in 2003, namely with respect to transport infrastructure projects.

The Quick Start transport projects are sections of the TEN-T large priority projects identified by the TEN Guidelines. They are spread over the entire territory of the EU, including a majority of railway links, some road and waterway links, as well as motorways of the sea, and the Galileo system. Some progress has been made in the implementation of these projects, but the overall picture remains mixed. The new instruments put in place by the TEN-T guidelines and financial regulations have played a role in unlocking some problematic areas. The new financial instruments have just become operational in 2007, so their effects on the implementation of TENs and mobilisation of private investment will be felt in the coming years only.

Progress in completion of electricity connections has remained generally slow, hampering the development of an efficient internal market, as shown in the Commission Communication on the Priority Interconnection Plan adopted in January 2007. This overall assessment applies to the Quick Start projects as well as to other projects of European interest. The main cause for delay is often not the lack of financing but the complexity of coordinating planning and authorisation procedures between several Member States. Conversely, the completion of the Quick Start gas pipelines has proceeded satisfactorily, and none suffers from significant delays.

The substantial financial support mobilised on Quick Start ICT projects from a combination of different sources of funding is one of the actions making tangible the commitment of the EC and the Member States to speed up the delivery and the use of high capacity communication networks. This continued commitment is already living up to its expectations: creating improved access to ICT networks offering new ways of creating and sharing knowledge for work, research and leisure.

For all Quick Start R&D projects, investments decisions proceed according to the initial plans, while a tight integration of funding from different sources is clearly

taking place. The support to Nanoelectronics projects is in line with the original targets of the Initiative. Adequate funding has been made available to set up the next generation laser infrastructures key for Europe's research. Funding hydrogen and fuel cell research at European level is playing, as expected, an important role reinforce coordination between various sources of funding. Finally it is at least partly due to the Growth Initiative if the critical mass of public and private resources (both financial and technological) has been quickly and timely assembled to finalise the design of the GMES satellites and to install a new spatial launch site.

2. THE GROWTH INITIATIVE WITHIN THE LISBON STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

The European Growth Initiative operates on an instrumental level but within the Lisbon Strategy's comprehensive approach.

The measures proposed in the European Growth Initiative are now being brought at full speed by the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. To name but a few examples, improving the patent system in Europe, as longed for by the European Growth Initiative, was taken over in 2005 as a key policy issue of the Strategy for Growth and Jobs. The i2010 initiative, a European Information Society for Growth and Employment addresses the challenges also mentioned in the European Growth Initiative, but it is fully developed under the Lisbon Strategy. The European Growth Initiative emphasised the need for updating the rules applied to State aid for R&D and innovation to make them more conducive to investments. The new framework on state aid for R&D and innovation has been adopted under the impetus of the Lisbon Strategy where state aid control is a prominent issue. The Growth Initiative hinted at the need for measures on risk capital investment to improve SMEs' access to finance especially for innovation. These measures have actually been launched under the main thrust of the Lisbon Strategy. In future, the instruments and projects of the Growth Initiative will be merged even further in the Lisbon Strategy, with corresponding repercussions for reporting on progress of implementation.

EUROOPAN YHTEISÖJEN KOMISSIO

Bryssel 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 803 lopullinen
IV OSA

Suositus:

NEUVOSTON SUOSITUS

jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajojen suuntaviivojen tarkistamisesta vuonna 2008 ja jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikkojen täytäntöönpanosta

(komission esittämä)

PERUSTELUT

Vuonna 2005 Lissabonin strategiaa rationalisoitiin ja uudistettiin ja painopisteitä – kasvua ja työllisyyttä – korostettiin. Samalla luotiin uudet ohjausjärjestelmät, joissa yhteisön ja jäsenvaltioiden väliset vastuut jaettiin selkeästi. Tässä yhteydessä kaikki jäsenvaltiot laativat kolmevuotiset kansalliset uudistusohjelmat, joissa ne esittivät vastauksensa niitä koskeviin erityishaasteisiin.

Komissio arvioi vuoden 2006 seurantaraportissaan[1] kansalliset uudistusohjelmat, osoitti niiden vahvuudet ja heikkoudet sekä pyysi jäsenvaltioita tekemään tarvittavia parannuksia. Kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvosto suhtautui myönteisesti tähän arviointiin ja kehotti jäsenvaltioita panemaan kansalliset uudistusohjelmansa tehokkaasti täytäntöön. Se myös määritti neljä ensisijaista alaa: suurempi panostus osaamiseen ja koulutukseen, erityisesti pk-yritysten liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen, ensisijaisten ryhmien työllistymismahdollisuuksien lisääminen ja yhdennetty Euroopan energiapolitiikka. Kullekin alalle sovittiin tietyistä toimista, jotka jäsenvaltioiden edellytettiin panevan täytäntöön vuoden 2007 loppuun mennessä.

Jäsenvaltiot toimittivat lokakuussa 2006 ensimmäiset raporttinsa kansallisten uudistusohjelmien täytäntöönpanosta. Näiden täytäntöönpanoraporttien perusteella komissio laati vuoden 2007 seurantaraportin[2]. Siinä arvioitiin yksityiskohtaisesti uudistusohjelmien täytäntöönpanon edistymistä ja otettiin huomioon toimet, joita neuvosto on toteuttanut tiettyjen teemojen osalta. Tämän arvioinnin perusteella ja ottaen huomioon neuvoston pyynnöt tukeutua uudistetun strategian toteuttamisessa entistä enemmän perustamissopimukseen pohjautuviin välineisiin komissio päätti vuonna 2007 ehdottaa jäsenvaltioille tarkoitettuja ohjeita, jotka annettaisiin perustamissopimuksen 99 artiklan 2 kohdassa ja 128 artiklan 4 kohdassa tarkoitettuina maakohtaisina suosituksina. Ne hyväksytiin 27. maaliskuuta 2007 pidetyssä Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa.

Rakenneuudistusten toteuttaminen edellyttää kohdentamista ja jatkuvuutta. Koska maakohtaiset suositukset ja seurattavat asiat on hyväksytty vasta äskettäin ja koska rakenneuudistusten toteuttaminen ja tulosten saaminen vie aikaa, komissio ehdottaa, että nykyiset suositukset pidetään lähes entisellään ja että niitä hienosäädetään ottaen huomioon edistyminen, jota on tapahtunut suositusten vahvistamisen jälkeen.

Romania ja Bulgaria ovat yhdentyneet täysin Lissabonin strategiaan liityttyään Euroopan unioniin 1. tammikuuta 2007. Kumpikin on esittänyt kansallisen uudistusohjelman. Näin ollen molemmat maat ovat mukana komission ehdotuksessa neuvoston suosituksiksi.

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[1] KOM(2006) 30.

[2] KOM(2006) 816.

Suositus:

NEUVOSTON SUOSITUS

jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajojen suuntaviivojen tarkistamisesta vuonna 2008 ja jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikkojen täytäntöönpanosta

EUROOPAN UNIONIN NEUVOSTO, joka

ottaa huomioon Euroopan yhteisön perustamissopimuksen ja erityisesti sen 99 artiklan 2 kohdan ja 128 artiklan 4 kohdan,

ottaa huomioon komission suosituksen,

ottaa huomioon 8 ja 9 päivänä maaliskuuta 2007 kokoontuneen Eurooppa-neuvoston päätelmät,

ottaa huomioon työllisyyskomitean lausunnon,

sekä katsoo seuraavaa:

(1) Neuvosto antoi heinäkuussa 2005 suosituksen jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajoiksi suuntaviivoiksi (vuosiksi 2005–2008)[3] ja teki päätöksen jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikkojen suuntaviivoista[4]. Nämä yhdessä muodostavat ”kasvun ja työllisyyden yhdennetyt suuntaviivat”. Jäsenvaltioita pyydettiin ottamaan kasvun ja työllisyyden yhdennetyt suuntaviivat huomioon kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissaan.

(2) Jäsenvaltiot toimittivat lokakuuhun 2005 mennessä kansalliset uudistusohjelmansa, jotka komissio arvioi ja joista se raportoi keväällä 2006 kokoontuneelle Eurooppa-neuvostolle.

(3) Keväällä 2006 kokoontunut Eurooppa-neuvosto otti huomioon nämä asiakirjat ja määritti neljä ensisijaista alaa (T&K ja innovointi, liiketoimintaympäristö, työllistymismahdollisuudet ja yhdennetty energiapolitiikka), joille neuvosto sopi muutamista erityistoimista ja edellytti jäsenvaltioiden toteuttavan ne ennen vuoden 2007 loppua.

(4) Jäsenvaltiot toimittivat keväällä 2006 kokoontuneen Eurooppa-neuvoston päätelmien mukaisesti vuotuiset raporttinsa kansallisten uudistusohjelmien täytäntöönpanosta (täytäntöönpanoraportit). Komissio analysoi ne ja esitti havaintonsa vuoden 2007 seurantaraportissa[5].

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[3] EUVL L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 28.
[4] EUVL L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 21.
[5] KOM(2006) 816, II osa.

(5) Jäsenvaltioille annettiin vuonna 2007 tämän analyysin perusteella maakohtaisia suosituksia. Jotta kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskeva Lissabonin strategia toteutettaisiin johdonmukaisella ja yhtenäisellä tavalla, suositukset annettiin yhdessä asiakirjassa[6]. Tällä lähestymistavalla painotettiin kansallisten uudistusohjelmien ja täytäntöönpanoraporttien yhdennettyä rakennetta samoin kuin työllisyyttä koskevien suuntaviivojen ja perustamissopimuksen 99 artiklan 2 kohdassa tarkoitettujen talouspolitiikan laajojen suuntaviivojen välille tarvittavaa johdonmukaisuutta, kuten perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan 2 kohdassa korostetaan.

(6) Komissio on analysoinut suositusten perusteella toteutettavat toimet, jotka jäsenvaltiot esittivät vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraporteissa, ja esittänyt analyysinsä näistä toimista strategiaraportissa[7]. Koska rakenneuudistusten toteuttaminen vie aikaa, tässä asiakirjassa ehdotetaan tämän analyysin mukaisesti, että nämä suositukset pidetään lähes entisellään ja että niitä hienosäädetään ottaen huomioon edistyminen, jota on tapahtunut sen jälkeen, kun ne keväällä 2007 vahvistettiin.

(7) Kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevan Lissabonin strategian panemiseksi kokonaisuudessaan täytäntöön tämän suosituksen olisi sisällettävä myös erityisiä suosituksia euroalueeseen kuuluville jäsenvaltioille.

(8) Jotta uudistusten koordinointia voidaan vahvistaa ja neuvoston toteuttamaa monenvälistä seurantaa parantaa, jäsenvaltioiden olisi sisällytettävä vuotuisiin täytäntöönpanoraportteihinsa toimintasuunnitelmat, joissa esitetään maakohtaisiin suosituksiin ja seurattaviin asioihin vastaamiseksi tarvittavat toimet.

(9) Euroopan parlamentti on antanut tätä suositusta koskevan päätöslauselman,

SUOSITTAA, että jäsenvaltiot toteuttavat liitteen mukaisia toimia ja raportoivat edistymisestään seuraavissa täytäntöönpanoraporteissa, jotka ne laativat kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevan uudistetun Lissabonin strategian puitteissa.

Tehty Brysselissä

Neuvoston puolesta
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LIITE

SISÄLLYSLUETTELO

PERUSTELUT 2

NEUVOSTON SUOSITUS 3

BELGIA 7

BULGARIA 8

TŠEKKI 10

TANSKA 11

SAKSA 12

VIRO 13

IRLANTI 14

KREIKKA 15

ESPANJA 17

RANSKA 18

ITALIA 19

KYPROS 21

LATVIA 22

LIETTUA 23

LUXEMBURG 24

UNKARI 25

MALTA 27

ALANKOMAAT 28

ITÄVALTA 29

PUOLA 30

PORTUGALI 31

ROMANIA 32

SLOVENIA 34

SLOVAKIA 35

SUOMI 37

RUOTSI 38

YHDISTYNYT KUNINGASKUNTA 39

EUROALUEEN JÄSENVALTIOT 40

BELGIA

1. Belgian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Belgia on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Belgia on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu joitakin toimia, mutta tarvitaan vielä lisäuudistuksia. Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään lisäksi erikseen euroalueen maille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Belgian vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea päästöjen vähentämistoimet ja lupaavat tulokset, joita on saatu työttömien ohjaus- ja seurantajärjestelmästä.

5. Belgian kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla todettuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat työhön kohdistuvan verorasituksen keventäminen, julkisen talouden vakauttamisen vahvistaminen ja työmarkkinoiden toimivuuden parantaminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Belgia:

   - pyrkii edelleen keventämään työhön kohdistuvaa verorasitusta naapurimaidensa keskiarvon suuntaan, erityisesti pienentämällä heikon ammattitaidon omaavien työntekijöiden verokiilaa, vahvistaen samalla julkisen talouden vakauttamista;

   - vahvistaa integroitua joustoturva-ajattelutapaa noudattaen kattavaan strategiaan perustuvia toimenpiteitä työmarkkinoidensa toiminnan parantamiseksi, jotta voidaan lisätä osallistumista työmarkkinoille, kaventaa alueellisia eroja ja lisätä elinikäistä oppimista.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Belgian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: toteutetaan kokonaisuudessaan strategia, jolla pyritään julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden varmistamiseen sekä menojen hillitsemiseen, julkisen talouden ylijäämiin ja valtion velan jatkuvaan supistamiseen; toteutetaan kiireellisesti lisätoimenpiteitä kaasu- ja sähkömarkkinoiden kilpailun parantamiseksi, myös itsenäisten ja tehokkaiden sääntelyviranomaisten avulla ja siirto- ja jakelutoimijoita koskevin lisätoimenpitein; lisätään huomattavasti sitoutumista T&K:n ja innovoinnin edistämiseen erityisesti lisäämällä julkisen rahoituksen määrää ja parantamalla sen vaikutusta ja koordinoimalla toimia kaikilla tasoilla; jatketaan toimia ikääntyvien työntekijöiden ja heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien työllisyysasteen nostamiseksi, seurataan toimien vaikutusta ja toteutetaan tarvittaessa uusia aktivointitoimia.

BULGARIA

1. Bulgarian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, kansallista uudistusohjelmaa koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Kaiken kaikkiaan kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa keskitytään oikeisiin haasteisiin, mutta joiltakin alueilta puuttuu konkreettisia ja tuntuvia toimia erityisesti hallinnollisten valmiuksien vahvistamiseksi. Kansallinen uudistusohjelma ei myöskään sisällä toimia, joilla pyrittäisiin vähentämään pikaisesti byrokratiaa dynaamisemman ja kilpailullisemman liiketoimintaympäristön aikaansaamiseksi. Talouden epätasapainon lisääntymisen vuoksi on erityisen tärkeää, että Bulgaria nopeuttaa kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteuttamista, jotta kestävälle kasvulle ja työllisyydelle voidaan keskipitkällä aikavälillä luoda tarvittavat olosuhteet.

3. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman vahvuuksia ovat ongelmien selkeä analysointi ja uudistusten oikea priorisointi ja toteutusjärjestys sekä vahva poliittinen sitoutuminen. On annettu tärkeitä säännöksiä edistymisen tiukasta seurannasta korkeimmalla poliittisella tasolla. Tämä osoittautunee tehokkaaksi välineeksi, jolla varmistetaan kansallisen uudistusohjelman nopea ja tehokas toteuttaminen. Lisäksi kansallisen uudistusohjelman tukena on tiukka finanssipolitiikka, joka tarjoaa vankan perustan niiden rakenneuudistusten nopeuttamiseksi, joilla varmistetaan pitkäaikainen kasvu.

4. Bulgarian kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi ensi tilassa puututtava ja esitettävä toteutettavien toimenpiteiden budjettivaikutukset sekä seuranta- ja arviointimenettelyjä koskevat tiedot: hallinnon valmiudet, makrotalouden epätasapaino byrokratia ja työmarkkinoiden toimivuus. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Bulgaria:

   - vahvistaa kiireellisesti hallinnon valmiuksia, sääntelyviranomaiset ja oikeuslaitos mukaan lukien, keskittyen erityisesti hallinnon päätoimintoihin;

   - pysäyttää vaihtotaseen alijäämän kasvun ja hillitsee inflaatiopaineita erityisesti tiukan finanssipolitiikan avulla parantamalla julkisten menojen laatua ja edistämällä maltillista palkkakehitystä, joka vastaa tuottavuuden kasvua;

   - toteuttaa byrokratian huomattavaan vähentämiseen suunnattuja pikaisia toimia ja lyhentää menettelyjen kestoa liiketoimintaympäristön parantamiseksi (erityisesti pk-yritysten eduksi ja yritysten perustamisen helpottamiseksi), mikä edistää myös korruption torjuntaa;

   - parantaa työvoiman tarjonnan laatua ja nostaa työllisyysastetta parantamalla aktiivisten työmarkkinatoimien tehoa ja vaikuttavuutta, uudistaa edelleen koulutusjärjestelmää osaamistason nostamiseksi niin, että se vastaa paremmin työmarkkinoiden tarpeita ja vähentää koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Bulgarian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: toteutetaan lisätoimia julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden varmistamiseksi, erityisesti eläkkeiden riittävyyteen ja kestävyyteen liittyvien potentiaalisten riskien osalta; luodaan ennakkoedellytykset, joita tarvitaan verkkotoimialojen vahvaan kilpailuun; laaditaan yhdennetty T&K- ja

innovaatiopolitiikka, jolla pyritään erityisesti uudistamaan julkinen T&K-järjestelmä, siirrytään julkisesta T&K-tuesta – vuotta 2010 koskevan T&K-tavoitteen perusteella – kohti kilpailullisempaa rahoitusta, jossa keskitytään ensisijaisiin tavoitteisiin; puututaan pimeään työhön vahvistamalla institutionaalisia valmiuksia suorittaa tarkastuksia ja varmistaa lakien noudattaminen; viimeistellään elinikäisen oppimisen strategia ja lisätään osallistumista.

TŠEKKI

1. Tšekin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Tšekki on edistynyt jonkin verran kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Tšekki on edistynyt jonkin verran kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvostossa sovittujen erityisten sitoumusten täyttämisessä ensisijaisilla aloilla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan joitakin toimia on toteutettu neuvoston suositusten noudattamiseksi. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia.

4. Tšekin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan vahvuuksia ovat johdonmukainen strategia yritysten sääntely-ympäristön parantamiseksi, uudistukset, jotka koskevat työn tekemistä kannattavaksi, peruskoulutuksen ja keskiasteen koulutuksen oppisuunnitelmaa ja korkea-asteen koulutukseen osallistumisen lisäämistä, sekä elinikäistä oppimista koskevan strategian hyväksyminen.

5. Tšekin kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla haasteisiin olisi vastattava ensi tilassa, ovat julkisen talouden kestävyys pitkällä aikavälillä väestön ikääntyessä, julkisia T&K-menoja koskevien sitoumusten täyttäminen ja T&K-menojen käytön tehostaminen, turvallisuuden ja joustavuuden lisääminen työmarkkinoilla, tehokkuuden ja tasavertaisuuden parantaminen koulutuksessa ja elinikäiseen oppimiseen osallistumisen lisääminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Tšekki:

   - parantaakseen julkisen talouden kestävyyttä pitkällä aikavälillä panee viipymättä täytäntöön ilmoitetun eläkejärjestelmän uudistusohjelman ja toteuttaa ilmoitetut terveydenhuoltojärjestelmän uudistukset;

   - saavuttaa julkisille T&K-menoille asetetut tavoitteet ja lisää niiden käytön tehokkuutta erityisesti edistämällä yhteistyötä yritysten, yliopistojen ja julkisten T&K-laitosten välillä ja varmistaa tarvittavat henkilöresurssit tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen;

   - yhdennetyn joustoturvamallin puitteissa nykyaikaistaa entisestään työsuhdeturvaa, myös lainsäädäntöä, parantaa koulutuksen tehokkuutta ja tasavertaisuutta, erityisesti mukauttaa koulutusta työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin, kannustaa investoimaan erityisesti ikääntyneiden ja heikosti koulutettujen työntekijöiden koulutukseen ja monipuolistaa korkea-asteen koulutuksen tarjontaa.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Tšekin on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: parannetaan teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien suojaa; nopeutetaan tieto- ja viestintätekniikan alan kehitystä, muun muassa panemalla täytäntöön sähköisten viranomaispalveluiden kattava lainsäädäntökehys ja seuraamalla sen kehittymistä; parannetaan innovatiivisten yritysten rahoituksensaantimahdollisuuksia, erityisesti kehittämällä edelleen pääomasijoitusmarkkinoita; parannetaan yrittäjyyskoulutuksen kattavuutta; integroidaan heikommassa asemassa olevat ryhmät paremmin työmarkkinoille; vähennetään alueellisia eroja; sovitetaan työ- ja perhe-elämä yhteen; supistetaan sukupuolten välisiä palkkaeroja; ja pannaan täytäntöön aktiivista ikääntymistä koskeva strategia.

TANSKA

1. Tanskan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Tanska on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Tanska on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan monia toimia on toteutettu niillä aloilla, joiden neuvosto totesi vaativan huomiota.

4. Tanskan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan vahvuuksiin kuuluu kattava ja yhdennetty lähestymistapa uudistusten suunnitteluun ja toteuttamiseen, minkä yhteydessä varmistetaan julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyys ja sidosryhmien aktiivinen osallistuminen.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Tanskan on keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: jatketaan energian liitäntäverkkoja koskevien toimenpiteiden toteuttamista sähkö- ja kaasumarkkinoiden toiminnan parantamiseksi; lisätään työvoiman tarjontaa ja työtuntien määrää keskipitkällä aikavälillä, mukaan lukien lisäaloitteet työnteon lisäämiseksi ja lisätoimet ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden sekä maahanmuuttajien ja heidän jälkeläistensä integroimiseksi työmarkkinoille; parannetaan perus- ja keskiasteen koulutusta ja vahvistetaan ylemmän keskiasteen tai korkea-asteen koulutuksen suorittavien opiskelijoiden lukumäärän lisäämiseen tähtääviä toimenpiteitä kustannustehokkaalla tavalla, jotta asetetut kunnianhimoiset tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa.

SAKSA

1. Saksan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Saksa on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007 ja noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan kevään 2007 Eurooppa-neuvoston suositusten noudattamiseksi on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Julkisen talouden vakauttamisen alalla on toteutettu monia toimia kun taas palvelualojen kilpailua ja rakenteellisen työttömyyden poistamista koskevia toimia on toteutettu vähemmän. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään myös erikseen euroalueen maille osoitettuja suosituksia.

4. Saksan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat julkisen talouden vakauttaminen, korkealuokkaisen tutkimus- ja innovointitoiminnan vahvistaminen, edistyminen nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentämisessä ja määrätietoinen toiminta lastenhoitopalvelujen lisäämiseksi.

5. Saksan kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla haasteisiin olisi vastattava ensi tilassa, ovat palvelualojen kilpailu ja rakenteellinen työttömyys. Tämän perusteella suositellaan, että Saksa:

   - parantaa palvelualojen kilpailuympäristöä, erityisesti lieventämällä edelleen säänneltyjä elinkeinoja ja ammatteja koskevia rajoittavia sääntöjä, parantamalla julkisia hankintoja koskevia menettelyjä, pitämällä uudet televiestintämarkkinat sääntelyn piirissä ja sääntelemällä tehokkaasti tukkutason bittivirtayhteyksiä;

   - vähentää rakenteellista työttömyyttä jatkamalla kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa määriteltyjen uudistusten toteuttamista. Tässä yhteydessä olisi keskityttävä heikosti koulutettujen henkilöiden integroimiseen työmarkkinoille soveltamalla joustoturvamallia, jonka puitteissa parannetaan ammattipätevyyden hankkimismahdollisuuksia, toteutetaan ilmoitetut vero- ja etuusjärjestelmien uudistukset ja tarjotaan tehokkaampia työvoimapalveluja perustoimeentulotukea saaville työttömille.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Saksan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: taataan julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyys pitämällä tiukasti kiinni julkisen talouden vakauttamisessa ja liittovaltiojärjestelmän julkisen talouden instituutioiden meneillä olevassa tarkistuksessa jo saavutetusta edistyksestä ja seuraamalla huolellisesti terveydenhuollon uudistuksen vaikutuksia, jotta voidaan hillitä menojen kasvua ja vahvistaa terveydenhuoltoalan tehokkuutta; parannetaan kilpailuympäristöä rautatieliikenteen alalla sekä kaasu- ja sähköverkoissa, joissa kilpailu on edelleen rajoitettua suuren keskittymisasteen vuoksi; jatketaan keskitettyjen palvelupisteiden perustamista ja yritysten perustamiseen tarvittavan ajan lyhentämistä; ja parannetaan ammatillista jatko- ja täydennyskoulutusta elinikäisen oppimisen edistämiseksi suunniteltujen toimenpiteiden puitteissa.

VIRO

1. Viron vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Viro on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Viro on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan joitakin toimia on toteutettu aloilla, joiden neuvosto totesi vaativan huomiota. Joitakin toimia on toteutettu kilpailupolitiikan, aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan ja koulutuspolitiikan aloilla. Eniten toimia on toteutettu T&K- ja innovaatiopolitiikan alalla. Viro ei ole edennyt merkittävästi työmarkkinalainsäädännön uudistamisessa.

4. Viron täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan vahvuuksia ovat kunnianhimoisen ja järjestelmällisen uuden pitkän aikavälin T&K- ja innovaatiostrategian luominen, uusien yritysten perustamista ja innovatiivisten pk-yritysten rahoitusta helpottavat toimenpiteet, työllisyysasteen voimakas nousu ja toimenpiteet korkea-asteen ja ammatillisen koulutuksen laadun parantamiseksi.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla haasteisiin olisi vastattava ensi tilassa, on työllisyys, jonka alalla edistys työmarkkinalainsäädännön uudistamisessa on ollut vähäistä.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Viron on keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: parannetaan makrotalouden vakautta ja pidetään inflaatio kurissa riittävillä rakenteellisilla uudistuksilla ja määrätietoisella finanssipolitiikalla; vahvistetaan toimia, joiden tarkoituksena on varmistaa, että T&K-tulokset johtavat innovatiivisiin palveluihin tai tuotteisiin; edistetään yliopistojen ja yritysten välistä tiiviimpää yhteistyötä; otetaan käyttöön uusi sakoista vapauttamista ja sakkojen lieventämistä koskeva ohjelma ja tehostetaan kilpailusääntöjen noudattamisen valvontaa; vahvistetaan aktiivista työmarkkinapolitiikkaa ja lisätään ammattitaitoisen työvoiman tarjontaa panemalla täytäntöön kattava elinikäistä oppimista koskeva strategia, joka vastaa työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin; lisätään työmarkkinoiden joustavuutta etenemällä välittömästi työmarkkinalainsäädännön uudistamisessa ja edistämällä joustavia työntekomuotoja.

IRLANTI

1. Irlannin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Irlanti on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Irlanti on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan monia toimia on toteutettu niillä aloilla, joiden neuvosto totesi vaativan huomiota. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa ei kuitenkaan käsitellä erikseen euroalueen maille osoitettuja suosituksia.

4. Irlannin kansallisen uudistusohjelman ja sen täytäntöönpanon vahvuuksiin kuuluu kattava ja johdonmukainen kansallinen strategia. Raportissa korostetaan myös Lissabonin prosessin hyödyllisyyttä ja otetaan huomioon sen puitteissa tapahtuva erityistoimien priorisointi ja täytäntöönpano sekä painotetaan sen keskeistä roolia globalisaatioon liittyviin haasteisiin vastaamisessa ja globalisaation tarjoamien mahdollisuuksien hyödyntämisessä.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Irlannin on keskityttävä seuraaviin tulevaisuuden haasteisiin: nopeutetaan eläkejärjestelyjen uudistusta koskevien konkreettisten toimenpiteiden määrittämistä; asetetaan T&K-investointeja koskeva välitavoite vuodeksi 2010; lisätään nopeammin työmarkkinoille osallistumista esimerkiksi perustamalla kattava lastenhoitoinfrastruktuuri; kehitetään edelleen työmarkkinoita ja maahanmuuttajien sopeutumista yhteiskuntaan koskevaa politiikkaa painopisteenä ikääntyneiden ja heikosti koulutettujen työntekijöiden tukeminen; ja seurataan huolellisesti kasvuun lyhyellä ja keskipitkällä aikavälillä vaikuttavaa kehitystä asuntomarkkinoilla.

KREIKKA

1. Kreikan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Kreikka on edistynyt tasaisesti kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Kreikka on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten noudattamiseksi on toteutettu jonkin verran toimia. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa ei kuitenkaan käsitellä erikseen euroalueen maille osoitettuja suosituksia.

4. Kreikan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan vahvuuksia ovat hyvä edistyminen julkisen talouden vakauttamisessa, naisten työllisyyden edistämisessä, sisämarkkinalainsäädännön täytäntöönpanossa ja liiketoimintaympäristön parantamisessa. On lupaavia merkkejä edistymisestä toteuttamisaikataulun määrittelyssä eläkeuudistuksille, joiden tarkoituksena on parantaa julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyttä.

5. Kreikan kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla haasteisiin olisi vastattava ensi tilassa, ovat julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyys, julkishallinnon uudistusohjelman toteuttaminen, aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan vahvistaminen, korkean nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentäminen, pimeän työn vähentäminen sekä koulutusta ja elinikäistä oppimista koskevien uudistusten nopeuttaminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Kreikka:

   - jatkaa julkisen talouden vakauttamista ja velan supistamista ja etenee nopeasti eläkeuudistuksen täytäntöönpanossa julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden parantamiseksi;

   - panee täytäntöön julkishallintonsa uudistuksen luomalla tehokkaat sääntely-, valvonta- ja täytäntöönpanovalmiudet, uudistamalla henkilöresursseja koskevan politiikkansa ja käyttämällä tehokkaasti rakennerahastoja;

   - uudistaa yhdennetyn joustoturvamallin puitteissa työsuhdeturvaa, myös lainsäädäntöä, keventää työhön kohdistuvaa verotaakkaa, vahvistaa aktiivista työmarkkinapolitiikkaa ja muuttaa pimeän työn tekemisen virallisiksi työsuhteiksi;

   - nopeuttaa koulutusta ja elinikäistä oppimista koskevien uudistusten toteuttamista, jotta voidaan parantaa koulutuksen laatua ja ottaa paremmin huomioon työmarkkinoiden tarpeet, lisää työmarkkinoille osallistumista ja mahdollistaa erityisesti nuorten pehmeän siirtymisen työ-elämään.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Kreikan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: hillitään inflaatiopaineita ja vaihtotaseen alijäämää; laaditaan tutkimus- ja innovaatiostrategia ja nopeutetaan T&K-investointien lisäämiseen tähtääviä toimia; edistytään sisämarkkinalainsäädännön saattamisessa osaksi

kansallista lainsäädäntöä; nopeutetaan kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston asettamien pk-yrityspoliittisten tavoitteiden saavuttamista koskevia toimia; vahvistetaan kilpailua asiantuntijapalveluiden alalla; suojellaan ympäristöä asettamalla etusijalle tehokas jäte- ja jätevesihuolto ja hillitsemällä kasvihuonepäästöjä; edistetään naisten aktiivisempaa työelämään osallistumista; vähennetään koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä ja kehitetään johdonmukainen aktiivista ikääntymistä koskeva strategia.

ESPANJA

1. Espanjan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Espanja on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Espanja on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten noudattamiseksi on toteutettu monia toimia. Muilla aloilla, joihin Espanjaa pyydettiin keskittymään, makrotaloutta koskevia toimia on toteutettu vain vähän. Mikrotalouden ja työllisyyden alalla on toteutettu jonkin verran asianmukaisia toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään myös euroalueen maille osoitettuja suosituksia.

4. Espanjan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat julkisen velan supistaminen tavoitetta nopeammin, hyvä edistyminen T&K- ja innovaatiosuunnitelman toteuttamisessa ja tyydyttävä edistyminen työllisyysastetavoitteen saavuttamisessa, erityisesti naisten työllisyyden osalta.

5. Espanjan kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla haasteisiin olisi nyt vastattava ensi tilassa, ovat kilpailun parantaminen sähkömarkkinoilla ja koulutuksen kehittäminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Espanja:

   - ryhtyy lisätoimiin energia-alan kilpailun lisäämiseksi, erityisesti poistamalla kilpailua vääristävät hinnoittelujärjestelmät ja parantamalla valtioiden rajat ylittävää yhteenliittämiskapasiteettia toimitusvarmuuden varmistamiseksi;

   - varmistaa koulutusuudistusten tehokkaan toteuttamisen, myös alueellisella tasolla, koulunkäynnin keskeyttämisen vähentämiseksi.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Espanjan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: hillitään vaihtotaseen alijäämää ja inflaatiopaineita sekä seurataan asuntomarkkinoiden kehitystä; lisätään kilpailua asiantuntijapalveluissa ja vähittäiskaupan markkinoilla; parannetaan sääntelykehystä; toteutetaan ympäristötoimenpiteitä erityisesti CO_2-päästöjen vähentämiseksi; uudistetaan työsuhdeturvaa, myös lainsäädäntöä, joustoturvan edistämiseksi työmarkkinoilla, jotta voidaan vähentää työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumista ja lisätä osa-aikatyön houkuttelevuutta; nostetaan tuottavuutta parantamalla ammattitaitoa ja lisäämällä innovointia; integroidaan maahanmuuttajat työmarkkinoille; parannetaan lastenhoitopalvelujen saatavuutta; ja toteutetaan eläke- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmien uudistukset julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden parantamiseksi.

RANSKA

1. Ranskan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Ranska on edistynyt tasaisesti kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Ranska on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston Ranskalle osoittamien suositusten noudattamiseksi on toteutettu vain vähän toimia. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä muilla huomiota vaativilla aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Erityisen merkittävä näistä toimista on uudistus, joka koskee yrittäjyyden ja vasta perustettujen yritysten kannustamista ja tukemista. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa ei kuitenkaan käsitellä erikseen euroalueen maille osoitettuja suosituksia.

4. Ranskan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat T&K- ja innovaatiostrategioiden uudistus, tieto- ja viestintätekniikan alalla toteutetuista toimenpiteistä saavutetut konkreettiset tulokset sekä ilmoitettu kattava toimenpidekokonaisuus työmarkkinoiden toiminnan parantamiseksi, lainsäädännön muutokset mukaan luettuina.

5. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa esitellään merkittävästi muutettu strategia, jossa työllisyydestä tehdään yksi kasvun lisäämiseen tähtäävän politiikan väline. Tällä hetkellä ei ole yhtä selvää, missä määrin kilpailun lisääminen on sisällytetty tähän uuteen politiikkaan. On tärkeää, että Ranska vahvistaa finanssipoliittisia toimiaan voidakseen samanaikaisesti toteuttaa yhtenäisen uudistusstrategian ja vakauttaa entisestään julkista taloutta. Julkisen talouden vakauttaminen, kilpailun lisääminen verkkotoimialoilla ja työmarkkinoiden toiminnan tehostaminen edellyttävät merkittäviä ja pitkäaikaisia lisätoimenpiteitä. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Ranska:

   - varmistaa julkisen talouden kestävyyden ottaen huomioon väestön ikääntymisen ja lisää merkittävästi julkisen talouden vakauttamista ja velan supistamista tavoitteena budjettitasapainon saavuttaminen vuonna 2010. Eläkejärjestelmiä koskevissa neuvotteluissa vuonna 2008 on pidettävä kiinni vuoden 2003 uudistuksilla aikaansaaduista säästöistä;

   - parantaa kilpailuympäristöä kaasun, sähkön ja rautatierahdin aloilla;

   - parantaa yhdennetyn joustoturvamallin puitteissa elinikäisen oppimisen tehokkuutta ja uudistaa työsuhdeturvaa, jotta se voisi erityisesti torjua erityyppisiin työsopimuksiin perustuvaa työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumista ja helpottaa siirtymistä määräaikaisista työsopimuksista vakituisiin sopimuksiin.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Ranskan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: vahvistetaan kilpailua säänneltyjen elinkeinojen ja ammattien alalla, parannetaan sääntelypolitiikkaa sisällyttämällä siihen vaikutusten arviointi, lisätään työvoiman tarjontaa ja tehdään työ kannattavaksi.

ITALIA

1. Italian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Italia on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Italia on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Kun kuitenkin otetaan huomioon haasteen mittavuus, uudistuksia tarvitaan vielä tuntuvasti enemmän. Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään lisäksi erikseen euroalueen maille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Italian vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea ensimmäiset toimet liiketoimintaympäristön kehittämiseksi, toimenpiteet asiantuntija- ja rahoituspalvelujen sekä vähittäiskaupan kilpailun tehostamiseksi; viimeaikaiset toimet EU:n lainsäädännön täytäntöönpanovajeen parantamiseksi sekä sähköiset viranomaispalvelut julkisen sektorin nykyaikaistamiseksi.

5. Italian kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa: julkisen talouden kestävyyteen tähtääviä toimia on jatkettava ja eläkeuudistus on saatettava päätökseen; kilpailua hyödyke- ja palvelumarkkinoilla on tehostettava ja ilmoitetut uudistukset on saatava toteutettua kokonaisuudessaan; alueellisia työllisyyseroja on pyrittävä edelleen vähentämään ja koulutusta ja elinikäistä oppimista on kehitettävä. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Italia:

   - jatkaa päättäväisesti julkisen talouden vakauttamista, erityisesti hidastamalla juoksevien menojen (pl. korkomenot) kasvua, ja saattaa eläkeuudistukset päätökseen julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden parantamiseksi;

   - tehostaa edelleen hyödyke- ja palvelumarkkinoiden kilpailua ja jatkaa päättäväisesti ilmoitettujen uudistusten toteuttamista;

   - parantaa koulutuksen laatua työmarkkinoiden tarpeita vastaavasti, edistää elinikäistä oppimista, puuttuu pimeään työhön ja varmistaa työvoimapalvelujen tehokkaan toiminnan osana joustoturvaa, sekä pyrkii vähentämään alueellisia eroja.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Italian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: lisätään ja tehostetaan T&K-investointeja, sillä vaikka alalla on toteutettu tervetulleita toimia, siihen on vielä panostettava enemmän, jotta vuoden 2010 tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa ja julkisten varojen käyttöä tehostaa; toteutetaan lisää toimia hiilidioksidipäästöjen vähentämistavoitteen saavuttamiseksi; parannetaan sääntelyn laatua lujittamalla vaikutustenarviointijärjestelmää ja ottamalla se kokonaisuudessaan käyttöön, erityisesti pk-yritysten osalta; toteutetaan infrastruktuurin parantamista koskevat suunnitelmat; lisätään lastenhoitopalveluja, jotta työ- ja perhe-elämän yhteensovittamista voidaan helpottaa, ja edistetään naisten osallistumista työmarkkinoille sekä laaditaan aktiivista ikääntymistä koskeva

johdonmukainen strategia, jolla lisätään ikääntyvien työntekijöiden työllisyyttä ja samalla voidaan myös parantaa eläkkeiden riittävyyttä.

KYPROS

1. Kyproksen vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Kypros on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Kypros on edistynyt hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjen erityissitoumusten noudattamisessa ensisijaisilla aloilla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu monia toimia. Julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden parantamiseksi toteutetut alustavat toimet ovat olleet tyydyttäviä terveydenhuoltojärjestelmän uudistamisen osalta. Eläkeuudistuksen toteuttamiseksi, elinikäisen oppimisen edistämiseksi sekä ammatillisen ja yleissivistävän koulutuksen kehittämiseksi on kuitenkin toteutettu vähän toimia. Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia.

4. Kyproksen vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea edistyminen julkisen talouden vakauttamisessa sekä alijäämän että velan supistamisessa, kattavan tutkimus- ja innovointijärjestelmän kehittäminen uuden politiikan avulla ja hyvän työllisyyskehityksen säilyttäminen monenlaisten aktiivisten työmarkkinatoimenpiteiden avulla.

5. Kyproksen kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin ongelmiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa: väestön ikääntymiseen liittyvien menojen hallinta; elinikäistä oppimista koskevan strategian toteuttaminen ja nuorten kouluttautumis- ja työllistymismahdollisuuksien lisääminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Kypros:

   - ryhtyy toimiin eläke- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmien uudistusten täytäntöönpanemiseksi ja asettaa toteuttamiselle aikataulun julkisen talouden kestävyyden parantamiseksi;

   - kehittää elinikäistä oppimista ja lisää nuorten työllistymis- ja kouluttautumismahdollisuuksia uudistamalla ammatillista ja yleissivistävää koulutusta ja oppisopimusjärjestelmää.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Kyproksen on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: parannetaan kilpailua asiantuntijapalvelujen alalla, edistetään lisää yksityissektorin T&K-toimintaa ja supistetaan sukupuolten välisiä huomattavia palkkaeroja.

LATVIA

1. Latvian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Latvia on edistynyt jonkin verran kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007 ja keväällä 2006 kokoontuneen Eurooppa-neuvoston määrittelemien ensisijaisten sitoumusten täytäntöönpanossa.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Eurooppa-neuvoston kevään 2007 kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on edistytty vaihtelevasti.

4. Latvian vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea ensimmäiset edistysaskeleet osaamisen ja innovoinnin alalla; edistyminen eräissä pk-yrityksiä ja yrittäjyyttä koskevissa aiheissa; kilpailuviranomaisen roolin vahvistuminen markkinoiden valvojana ja lisätoimenpiteet energiatehokkuuden ja uusiutuvien energialähteiden käytön edistämiseksi. Latvia on myös pannut täytäntöön useita toimenpiteitä, joilla on onnistuttu tukemaan työmarkkinoiden toimintaa.

5. Latvian kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin ongelmiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa: konkreettisemmat makrotalouden vakauden turvaamistoimenpiteet ylikuumenemispaineiden helpottamiseksi; T&K-strategian kehittäminen priorisoinnin parantamiseksi ja yksityisen sektorin osallistumisen lisäämiseksi sekä tehokkaammat toimenpiteet työvoiman tarjonnan lisäämiseksi ja ammattitaidon vahvistamiseksi. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Latvia:

   - harjoittaa rajoittavampaa finanssipolitiikkaa, jossa priorisoidaan menot tarkasti ja varmistetaan tuottavuuden kasvua vastaava palkkakehitys. Näin voidaan alentaa ylikuumenemispaineita ja vähentää makrotalouden epävakauden riskejä;

   - toteuttaa nopeammin tutkimus- ja innovaatiopolitiikan uudistukset, jotta kunnianhimoiset tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa. Tämä koskee erityisesti politiikkaa, jonka tarkoituksena on edistää tutkimus- ja koulutuslaitosten ja yritysten välisiä kumppanuuksia;

   - pyrkii tehokkaammin lisäämään työvoiman tarjontaa ja tuottavuutta osana joustoturvaan perustuvaa yhdennettyä lähestymistapaa, parantaa alueellista liikkuvuutta, kehittää koulutusjärjestelmien mahdollisuuksia vastata työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin, ottaa käyttöön elinikäisen oppimisen järjestelmän ja harjoittaa aktiivista työmarkkinapolitiikkaa.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Latvian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: kehitetään edelleen sääntely-ympäristöä, erityisesti harjoittamalla parempaan lainsäädäntöön tähtäävää selkeää politiikkaa, ja parannetaan lastenhoitopalvelujen saatavuutta.

LIETTUA

1. Liettuan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Liettua on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Liettua on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu vain vähän toimia. Eurooppa-neuvoston nimeämillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia.

4. Latvian vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea painopisteiden hyväksyminen T&K-alan kehittämiseksi ja ammatillista koulutusta koskevan lain säätäminen.

5. Liettuan kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa: lisätään ja parannetaan T&K-toimintaan tehtyjen investointien vaikuttavuutta ja tukea innovoinnille; lisätään työvoiman sisäistä liikkuvuutta, edistetään aikuisväestön ja erityisesti ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden osallistumista elinikäiseen oppimiseen ja uudistetaan ammatillista ja yleissivistävää koulutusta sen laadun parantamiseksi ja työmarkkinoiden tarpeiden huomioimiseksi. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Liettua:

   - vauhdittaa T&K- ja innovointijärjestelmänsä rakenneuudistuksen toteuttamista, jotta julkisten varojen käyttöä voidaan tehostaa ja luoda suotuisat olosuhteet yksityisten investointien lisäämiseksi tällä alalla, myös perinteisten ja matalan teknologian alojen innovaatioille;

   - pyrkii tehokkaammin lisäämään ammattitaitoisen työvoiman tarjontaa ja keskittyy erityisesti ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden osallistumiseen seuraavin toimin: parantamalla työvoiman alueellista liikkuvuutta, uudistamalla ammatillista ja yleissivistävää koulutusta sen laadun parantamiseksi ja työmarkkinoiden tarpeiden huomioimiseksi sekä toteuttamalla tarkistettua elinikäisen oppimisen strategiaa.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Liettuan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: lisätään makrotalouden vakautta ja hillitään inflaatiota; lisätään ulkomaisia suoria sijoituksia; tehostetaan sääntely-ympäristöä ja keskitytään erityisesti lainsäädännön yksinkertaistamiseen; parannetaan nuorten työllisyyttä; laajennetaan yrittäjyyskoulutusta; lisätään lastenhoitopalvelujen saatavuutta ja parannetaan työterveyttä ja -turvallisuutta.

LUXEMBURG

1. Luxemburgin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Luxemburg on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Luxemburg on myös noudattanut jossain määrin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu vaihtelevasti toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään lisäksi erikseen euroalueen maille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Luxemburgin vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea investoinnit talouden kansainvälistämiseen, panostus yritystoiminnan tarpeisiin keskittyvän laaja-alaisen yksinkertaistamispolitiikan kehittämiseen, lastenhoitoinfrastruktuurin kehittäminen, ammatillisen koulutuksen uudistaminen ja uudenlaisten työsuhteiden käyttöönotto.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Luxemburgin on keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: vauhditetaan täytäntöönpanotoimia, joilla pyritään ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden työllisyysasteen nostamiseen, ja toteutetaan erityisesti uudistus varhaiseläkkeelle siirtymisen ehkäisemiseksi; toteutetaan tarvittavat lisätoimet koulunkäynnin keskeyttämisten vähentämiseksi ja poistetaan keinotekoiset esteet eri koulutusmuotojen väliltä; seurataan tiiviisti viimeaikaisten nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentämiseen tähtäävien toimenpiteiden vaikutusta; jotta taloudellisen ympäristön houkuttelevuutta voidaan lisätä, tarjotaan lisää tukea kilpailukykyisille markkinoille, kehitetään direktiivien saattamista osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä ja tuetaan pk-yrityksiä.

UNKARI

1. Unkarin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Unkari on edistynyt vain vähän kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Unkarin edistyminen on ollut vähäistä myös kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjen sitoumusten noudattamisessa neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten perusteella on toteutettu vaihtelevasti toimia. Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia.

4. Unkarin vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea selkeä edistyminen julkisen talouden vakauttamisessa, erilaisten rakenneuudistusvaiheiden toteuttaminen, yritysten perustamiseen tarvittavan ajan lyhentäminen ja pyrkimys hallintokulujen supistamiseen, uusien kannustimien käyttöönotto työnteon ja työmarkkinoilla pysymisen edistämiseksi sekä pimeän työn tekemisen muuttaminen virallisiksi työsuhteiksi.

5. Unkarin kansallisen uudistusohjelman perusteella seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa: korjataan liiallisen alijäämän tilanne suunnitelmien mukaan, kehitetään edelleen julkisen talouden kestävyyttä, parannetaan heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien työmarkkinatilannetta, kavennetaan jatkuvia alueellisia työllisyyseroja ja uudistetaan yleissivistävää ja ammatillista koulutusta. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Unkari:

   - jatkaa tarvittavien toimenpiteiden toteuttamista varmistaakseen julkisen talouden alijäämän ja velkasuhteen kestävän supistamisen sekä kiinnittää menopuoleen entistä enemmän huomiota esimerkiksi laatimalla tarkemmat ja kattavammat menosäännöt;

   - jatkaa julkishallinnon sekä terveydenhuolto-, eläke- ja koulutusjärjestelmien uudistamista julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden varmistamiseksi ja talouden tehokkuuden parantamiseksi. Uudistusten olisi sisällettävä toimia, joilla rajoitetaan varhaiseläkkeelle siirtymistä, vähennetään uusien työkyvyttömyyseläkettä saavien määrää ja jatketaan terveydenhuollon rakenneuudistusta;

   - vahvistaa aktiivista työmarkkinapolitiikkaa, jolla parannetaan heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien työmarkkinatilannetta, ja kaventaa pitkään jatkuneita alueellisia työllisyyseroja;

   - varmistaa korkeatasoisen yleissivistävän ja ammatillisen koulutuksen saatavuuden kaikille, parantaa pätevyystasoa ja muuttaa yleissivistävän ja ammatillisen koulutuksen vastaamaan paremmin työmarkkinoiden tarpeita.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Unkarin on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: uudistetaan edelleen julkista tutkimusjärjestelmää, tehostetaan

julkisia T&K-menoja ja parannetaan julkisen ja yksityissektorin T&K-toiminnan yhteyksiä; vähennetään ja kohdennetaan uudelleen valtiontukia; kehitetään sääntely-ympäristöä vähentämällä edelleen hallintorasitteita ja yksinkertaistamalla lainsäädäntöä; otetaan edelleen käyttöön uusia kannustimia työnteon ja työmarkkinoilla pysymisen edistämiseksi; varmistetaan työ- ja yksityiselämän parempi yhteensovittaminen; saatetaan päätökseen yhdennetyn työllisyys- ja sosiaalipalvelujärjestelmän perustaminen; muutetaan pimeän työn tekeminen virallisiksi työsuhteiksi ja toteutetaan elinikäisen oppimisen strategiaa.

MALTA

1. Maltan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Malta on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Malta on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston antamien suositusten johdosta on toteutettu vain vähän toimia. Myös neuvoston kokouksessa nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu vain vähän toimia.

4. Maltan kansallisen uudistusohjelman ja sen täytäntöönpanon vahvuuksiin kuuluvat ohjelman hyvä hallintotapa ja julkisen talouden vakauttamisessa saavutettu edistys sekä edistys liiketoimintaympäristön vahvistamisessa, tiettyjen markkinoiden (esim. satamien) vapauttamisessa, koulutusjärjestelmän uudistamisessa ja tieto- ja viestintätekniikan käytön lisäämisessä.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla havaittuihin heikkouksiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat kilpailupolitiikka ja jatkuvat ongelmat työmarkkinoilla. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Malta:

   - edistää kilpailua erityisesti vähentämällä valtiontukia ja kohdistamalla ne horisontaalisiin tavoitteisiin sekä vahvistamalla kilpailuviranomaisten toimintaa ja ryhtymällä lisätoimiin asiantuntijapalveluiden avaamiseksi kilpailulle;

   - nopeuttaa toimia työntekijöiden, erityisesti naisten ja vanhempien työntekijöiden, määrän lisäämiseksi työmarkkinoilla; pyrkii vähentämään pimeästi tehtyä työtä ja uudistaa etuusjärjestelmää, jotta laillisesti tehdystä työstä tulisi houkuttelevampaa.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Maltan on keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: jatketaan terveydenhuoltojärjestelmän uudistamista koskevien toimenpiteiden toteuttamista ja tehostamista; parannetaan edelleen sääntely-ympäristöä jatkamalla lainsäädännön yksinkertaistamista, ottamalla käyttöön järjestelmälliset vaikutustenarvioinnit ja luomalla yritysten perustamista koskeva keskitetty järjestelmä; monipuolistetaan energialähteitä, lisätään energiatehokkuutta ja uusiutuvien energialähteiden käyttöä sekä kytketään Malta Euroopan energiaverkkoihin; parannetaan koulutustasoa ja vähennetään koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä.

ALANKOMAAT

1. Alankomaiden vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Alankomaat on edistynyt huomattavasti kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Alankomaat on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston antamien suositusten johdosta on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu vain vähän toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään myös erityisesti euroalueen jäsenvaltioille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman ja sen täytäntöönpanon vahvuuksia ovat: pyrkimykset vähentää hallinnollista taakkaa ja parantaa liiketoimintaympäristöä; kunnianhimoiset suunnitelmat energian ja ilmastonmuutoksen alueella; ja kannustimet parantaa lastenhoitopalveluja.

5. Alankomaiden kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alue, johon sisältyviin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, on työvoiman tarjonnan parantaminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Alankomaat:

   - ryhtyy lisätoimenpiteisiin työvoiman tarjonnan parantamiseksi, erityisesti naisten, vanhempien työntekijöiden ja muita heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien osalta, lisätäkseen tehtyjen työtuntien kokonaismäärää.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Alankomaiden on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: vauhditetaan yksityissektorin T&K-menojen lisäämistä välttämällä hajanaisia politiikan ohjausjärjestelmiä ja ottamalla käyttöön johdonmukainen T&K- ja innovaatiostrategia, jossa käsitellään yksityisen T&K-toiminnan ja julkisen tutkimuksen välistä vuorovaikutusta sekä ulkomaisia T&K-investointeja.

ITÄVALTA

1. Itävallan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Itävalta on edistynyt huomattavasti kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Itävalta on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston antaman työllisyyttä koskevan suosituksen johdosta on toteutettu vain vähän toimia. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään myös erityisesti euroalueen jäsenvaltioille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Itävallan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat: tehokkaat toimet innovoinnin edistämiseksi, esimerkiksi innovaatiotositteen käyttö; T&K-toimintoihin suunnattujen varojen lisääminen 3 prosentin tavoitteen mukaisesti; ilmasto- ja energiarahaston perustaminen; joustoturvamallin onnistunut toteuttaminen ja kehittäminen.

5. Itävallan kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat: vanhempien työntekijöiden määrän lisääminen työmarkkinoilla ja heikommassa asemassa olevien nuorten taitojen ja työllistettävyyden parantaminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Itävalta:

   - parantaa edelleen kannustimia vanhempien työntekijöiden pitämiseksi työelämässä toteuttamalla kattavan strategian, johon sisältyy ammatillinen jatkokoulutus, työolojen mukauttaminen ja varhaiseläkkeelle siirtymistä koskevien edellytysten tiukentaminen; ja parantaa heikommassa asemassa olevien nuorten koulutuksen tuloksia.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Itävallan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: tehostetaan julkisen talouden sopeuttamista budjettitasapainon saavuttamiseksi ennen vuotta 2010; lisätään kilpailua palveluissa, erityisesti asiantuntijapalveluissa; edistetään yrittäjyyskoulutusta; laaditaan uusia toimintalinjoja ja määritetään toimenpiteitä päästöjen vähentämiseksi; toteutetaan toimia, joilla vähennetään työmarkkinoiden eriytymistä sukupuolen mukaan, esimerkiksi parantamalla lastenhoidon saatavuutta.

PUOLA

1. Puolan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Puola on edistynyt vain vähän kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007 ja on noudattanut rajallisesti kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston antamien suositusten johdosta on toteutettu toimia vaihtelevasti. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia.

4. Puolan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat: yrittäjyyden kehittämiseen panostaminen; alustavat toimet työhön kohdistuvan verorasituksen vähentämiseksi; aktiivisten työmarkkinatoimenpiteiden asettaminen etusijalle ja niihin kohdistettu rahoitus; ja kansalliseen uudistusohjelmaan sisältyvien painopistealueiden vahva kytkös EU:n rahoitukseen.

5. Puolan kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat: vahvempi sitoutuminen julkisen talouden kestävyyden parantamiseen; tehokkaat toimet sääntelyn parantamiseksi ja verkkotoimialojen markkinoiden avaamisen edistämiseksi; T&K-uudistusten nopea toteuttaminen; lisätoimenpiteet vanhempien työntekijöiden alhaisen työllisyysasteen parantamiseksi; aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan keskittäminen paremmin heikoimmassa asemassa oleviin ryhmiin; ja elinikäistä oppimista koskevan strategian käyttöönotto. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Puola:

   - tehostaa julkisen talouden vakauttamista ja ottaa nimellisen alijäämän ylärajan lisäksi käyttöön muita mekanismeja menojen hillitsemiseksi;

   - parantaa verkkotoimialojen kilpailun puitteita, muun muassa sääntelyviranomaisten roolia tarkistamalla, ja tehostaa energiamarkkinoiden vapauttamista;

   - jatkaa julkisen tutkimussektorin uudistamista T&K- ja innovaatiotoiminnan tehostamiseksi ja panee yksityisen sektorin T&K-toiminnan puitteet täytäntöön suorien ulkomaisten sijoitusten hyödyntämiseksi täysimääräisesti;

   - yhdennetyn joustoturvaa koskevan lähestymistavan kehittämiseksi parantaa aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan tasoa ja tehokkuutta erityisesti vanhempien henkilöiden ja köyhyysvaarassa olevien ryhmien osalta, tarkistaa etuusjärjestelmiä työnteon kannustimien parantamiseksi, laatii elinikäistä oppimista koskevan strategian ja uudistaa koulutusjärjestelmiä työmarkkinoiden tarpeet huomioiden.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Puolan on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: parannetaan liikenneinfrastruktuuria; nopeutetaan yritysten rekisteröintimenettelyä; varmistetaan sähköisiä viranomaispalveluja koskevien ohjelmien nopea toteuttaminen; parannetaan sisämarkkinalainsäädännön saattamista osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä; ja lisätään lastenhoitopalvelujen tarjontaa.

PORTUGALI

1. Portugalin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Portugali on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Portugali on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa päätettyjä sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston antamien suositusten johdosta on toteutettu monia toimia. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa käsitellään myös erityisesti euroalueen jäsenvaltioille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Portugalin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin vahvuuksia ovat: julkisen talouden epätasapainon korjaamisessa saavutettu edistys ja julkisen hallinnon sekä eläke- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmien kestävien uudistusten edistäminen, liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttamisessa saavutettu edistys ja teknologiasuunnitelman täytäntöönpano.

5. Portugalin kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla havaittuihin haasteisiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat: julkisen talouden vakauttaminen ja vakauttamisen laadun ja kestävyyden parantaminen sekä julkisten menojen kohdistaminen Portugalin kasvupotentiaalin edistämiseen; koulutusjärjestelmän tehostaminen erityisesti parantamalla koulutustasoa ja vähentämällä koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä; työsuhdeturvan uudistaminen työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen hillitsemiseksi. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Portugali:

   - suuntaa julkiset menot käyttötarkoituksiin, jotka tukevat talouden kasvua paremmin, ja valvoo tarkasti julkisia menoja korjatessaan julkisen talouden epätasapainoa ja toteuttaessaan julkishallinnon uudistusta;

   - toteuttaa edelleen toimenpiteitä, joilla koulutusjärjestelmän tehokkuutta voidaan huomattavasti parantaa, erityisesti kohottamalla nuorten koulutustasoa, vähentämällä koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä ja kehittämällä kansalliseen tutkintojen viitekehykseen pohjautuvan ammattikoulutusjärjestelmän, jossa otetaan huomioon työmarkkinoiden tarpeet;

   - jatkaa työsuhdeturvan uudistamista joustoturvaa koskevan lähestymistavan pohjalta, mukaan lukien lainsäädäntö, jonka avulla vähennetään työmarkkinoiden huomattavaa segmentoitumista.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Portugalin on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin tulevaisuuden haasteisiin: supistetaan vaihtotaseen alijäämää kestävällä tavalla; pannaan teknologiasuunnitelma täytäntöön, vahvistetaan tutkimuksen, korkea-asteen koulutuksen ja teollisuuden välisiä yhteyksiä ja lisätään yksityisen sektorin osallistumista; varmistetaan tehokas kilpailu erityisesti energia- ja rahoituspalvelumarkkinoilla; pannaan sääntelyn parantamista koskeva ohjelma täytäntöön ja vahvistetaan erityisesti vaikutustenarviointijärjestelmää; supistetaan vajetta EU:n lainsäädännön saattamisessa osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä; suunnitellaan ja toteutetaan toimenpiteet kasvihuonekaasupäästöjen vähentämiseksi; ja poistetaan sosiaalista yhteenkuuluvuutta haittaavat tekijät.

ROMANIA

1. Romanian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, kansallista uudistusohjelmaa koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät:

2. Yleisesti ottaen kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa keskitytään oikeanlaisiin haasteisiin. Ohjelma ei ole kuitenkaan kovin kunnianhimoinen eräiden kriittisten alojen osalta, kuten hallinnollisten valmiuksien lujittaminen ja liiketoimintaympäristön parantaminen. Muilla aloilla toimenpiteiden sisältöä, aikataulua ja budjettivaroja koskevia tietoja ei aina ole, minkä vuoksi on vaikeaa arvioida, tuovatko toimenpiteet ratkaisun havaittuihin ongelmiin ja haasteisiin.

3. Ohjelman vahvuuksiin kuuluvat aloitteet, joiden tavoitteena on keskipitkän aikavälin menokehyksen täytäntöönpano, välillisten työvoimakustannusten vähentäminen ja tutkimusrakenteiden uudistaminen.

4. Romanian kansallisen uudistusohjelman osa-alueita, joilla havaittuihin heikkouksiin olisi puututtava ensi tilassa, ovat: hallinnollisten valmiuksien vahvistaminen, talouden ylikuumentumisen estäminen sekä talousarviosuunnittelun ja menojen laadun parantaminen; byrokratian vähentäminen, työvoiman tarjonnan edistäminen ja osaamistason parantaminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Romania:

   - vahvistaa kiireellisesti hallinnollisia valmiuksia sekä keskus- että aluehallinnon tasolla luomalla toimivia sääntely-, valvonta- ja täytäntöönpanovalmiuksia;

   - välttää myötäsyklistä finanssipolitiikkaa, jotta vaihtotaseen alijäämän ja inflaatiopaineiden kasvua voidaan hillitä, pitää palkkakehityksen tuottavuuden kasvua vastaavana ja parantaa talousarvion suunnittelua ja toteutusta sekä julkisen talouden laatua tarkistamalla julkisten menojen kokoonpanoa ja vähentämällä valtiontukia ja kohdistamalla ne horisontaalisiin tavoitteisiin;

   - ryhtyy nopeasti toimenpiteisiin hallinnollisten menettelyiden ja lupien myöntämisessä aiheutuvien viipeiden vähentämiseksi osana johdonmukaista paremman sääntelyn politiikkaa liiketoimintaympäristön parantamiseksi, mikä tukee myös korruption torjuntaa;

   - panee täytäntöön yhdennetyn lähestymistavan työllisyyden, työvoimaosuuksien ja tuottavuuden lisäämiseksi erityisesti nopeuttamalla koulutusjärjestelmän uudistuksia, jotta työmarkkinoiden tarpeet otettaisiin paremmin huomioon, vähentämällä koulunkäynnin keskeyttämistä ja lisäämällä merkittävästi aikuisten osallistumista koulutukseen; ja muuntamalla omavaraisviljelyn ja osittaisen omavaraisviljelyn kestäväksi työllisyydeksi.

5. Kansallisen uudistusohjelman toteutuskaudella Romanian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: ryhdytään lisätoimenpiteisiin julkisen talouden pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden varmistamiseksi erityisesti ottaen huomioon eläkkeiden riittävyyteen ja kestävyyteen liittyvät mahdolliset riskit; vahvistetaan tutkimuspohjan hajautumisen estämiseen kohdistuvia toimenpiteitä varmistaen samalla, että tutkimuksen julkisen rahoituksen suunnitellut lisäykset johtavat todellisiin tuloksiin panemalla tehokkaasti täytäntöön kansallisen T&K- ja innovaatiostrategian ja seuraamalla säännöllisesti sen

tuloksia; toteutetaan yhdennetty lähestymistapa infrastruktuurin kehittämisessä ja tieto- ja viestintätekniikan käyttöönotossa; tehostetaan pimeän työn vähentämiseen tähtääviä toimia; parannetaan julkisten työvoimapalvelujen tehokkuutta ja maantieteellistä kattavuutta erityisesti heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien auttamiseksi.

SLOVENIA

1. Slovenian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Slovenia on edistynyt hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Slovenia on myös edistynyt jonkin verran kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvostossa sovittujen sitoumusten täyttämisessä.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten mukaisia toimia on toteutettu jonkin verran. Myös neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Täytäntöönpanoraportissa ei kuitenkaan erikseen käsitellä euroalueen maille annettuja suosituksia.

4. Vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella Slovenian vahvuuksia ovat työmarkkinaosapuolten osallistuminen kaikkien keskeisten työmarkkinauudistusten laatimiseen; pyrkimykset vahvistaa koulutus- ja apurahajärjestelmien ja talouselämän välisiä yhteyksiä; yrityksen perustamiseen kuluvan ajan lyhentäminen ja hallinnollisten rasitteiden keventäminen. Makrotaloudessa suurin saavutus oli Slovenian liittyminen euroalueeseen.

5. Slovenian olisi ensi tilassa paneuduttava seuraavilla kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa nimetyillä osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin: eläkejärjestelmän uudistamista ja aktiivista ikääntymistä koskevan strategian täytäntöönpanoa on jatkettava; työmarkkinoista on tehtävä joustavammat, ja aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan täytäntöönpanossa on sovellettava olosuhteiden mukaan määriteltyä tehokkaampaa lähestymistapaa. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Slovenia

   - toteuttaa lisätoimia, joilla tehostetaan eläkejärjestelmän uudistamista ja edistetään aktiivista ikääntymistä vanhempien työntekijöiden työllisyysasteen nostamiseksi ja eläkejärjestelmän pitkän aikavälin kestävyyden parantamiseksi;

   - edistää työmarkkinoiden joustoturvaan perustuvan yhdennetyn lähestymistavan puitteissa joustavampia sopimusjärjestelyjä ja tehostaa työvoimapalveluja erityisesti niiden henkilöiden osalta, joilla on heikot työllistymismahdollisuudet. Näin voidaan vähentää työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumista, joka haittaa pääasiassa nuorten työllistymistä.

6. Slovenian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa toteutuskaudella: maan on laadittava asianmukainen tutkimus- ja innovaatiostrategia ja varmistettava sen toteuttaminen käytännössä; inflaation hillitsemiseksi kilpailua on lisättävä palvelualoilla keskittyen erityisesti vähittäiskauppaan, rahoituspalveluihin, julkisiin palveluihin ja asiantuntijapalveluihin; energiatehokkuutta lisäävien toimien toteuttamista on tehostettava erityisesti hiilidioksidipäästöjen vähentämisen ja jäljellä olevien Kioton tavoitteiden saavuttamisen osalta; Slovenian on lisäksi toteutettava kunnianhimoiset suunnitelmat, joilla vahvistetaan koulutusjärjestelmän ja työmarkkinoiden välistä yhteyttä.

SLOVAKIA

1. Slovakian vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Slovakia on edistynyt kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007 jonkin verran. Slovakia on toteuttanut vähän toimia kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa sovittujen sitoumusten täyttämiseksi neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston suositusten mukaisia toimia on toteutettu vaihtelevasti. Slovakian on toteutettava lisäuudistuksia, joilla lisätään T&K- sekä koulutusmenoja, toteutetaan mikrotaloutta koskevia strategioita, vähennetään pitkäaikaistyöttömyyttä ja saatetaan päätökseen yleissivistävän ja ammatillisen koulutuksen uudistaminen. Neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu vaihtelevasti toimia.

4. Vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella Slovakian vahvuuksia ovat julkisen talouden alijäämän ennustettu supistuminen alle 3 prosenttiin suhteessa BKT:hen vuonna 2007; useiden strategia-asiakirjojen laatiminen tutkimuksen ja kehittämisen, innovaatioiden, energiatehokkuuden ja uusiutuvien energialähteiden aloilla; vasta perustetuille yrityksille tarkoitettujen keskitettyjen palvelupisteiden osittainen käyttöönotto; työmarkkinalainsäädännön tarkistaminen; elinikäistä oppimista koskevan strategian laatiminen; pyrkimykset tarkistaa aktiivista työmarkkinapolitiikkaa, jotta se vastaa paremmin työmarkkinoiden kehitystä.

5. Slovakian olisi ensi tilassa paneuduttava seuraavilla kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa nimetyillä osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin: koulutukseen, tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen sekä innovaatioihin on osoitettava enemmän varoja; sääntely-ympäristöä on kehitettävä; pitkäaikaistyöttömyyttä on vähennettävä; yleissivistävän ja ammatillisen koulutuksen uudistaminen on saatettava päätökseen, ja koulutuksen laatua on parannettava työmarkkinoiden tarpeiden mukaisesti. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Slovakia

   - osoittaa uusia resursseja koulutukseen, tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen sekä innovaatioihin ja panee asianmukaisesti täytäntöön johdonmukaisen T&K- ja innovaatiostrategian, jossa keskitytään erityisesti julkisen tutkimuksen institutionaalisiin uudistuksiin sekä yritys- ja tutkimussektorin välisen yhteistyön merkittävään parantamiseen;

   - parantaa sääntely-ympäristöään erityisesti toteuttamalla parempaa sääntelyä koskevan kattavan strategian, johon sisältyvät sekä vaikutusten arviointi että voimassa olevan lainsäädännön yksinkertaistaminen;

   - varmistaa, että työmarkkinoiden joustoturvaan perustuvan yhdennetyn lähestymistavan puitteissa pannaan täytäntöön elinikäisen oppimisen strategia, jossa otetaan huomioon työmarkkinoiden tarpeet; saattaa päätökseen perus-, keski- ja korkea-asteen koulutuksen uudistamisen koulutustason ja ammattipätevyyden parantamiseksi; lisäksi on helpotettava erityisesti

pitkäaikaistyöttömien ja heikossa asemassa olevien väestöryhmien pääsyä työmarkkinoille.

6. Kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa toteutuskaudella Slovakian on lisäksi keskityttävä seuraaviin toimiin: jatketaan tieto- ja viestintätekniikkaan liittyviä toimia etenkin laajakaistainfrastruktuurin osalta; otetaan vasta perustetuille yrityksille tarkoitetut keskitetyt palvelupisteet kokonaisuudessaan käyttöön; perustetaan yrittäjyyskoulutusohjelma; lisätään kilpailua energiahuollon alalla; puututaan naisten ja miesten välisiin palkka- ja työllisyyseroihin; kehitetään aktiivisen ikääntymisen strategia; luodaan työllistymismahdollisuuksia nuorille.

SUOMI

1. Suomen vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Suomi on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen toimenpideohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Suomi on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa sovittuja sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston nimeämillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu joitakin toimia. Euroalueen maille annettuja suosituksia käsitellään täytäntöönpanoraportissa erikseen.

4. Vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella Suomen vahvuuksia ovat käynnissä olevat uudistukset, joilla jatketaan kansallisen innovaatiojärjestelmän kehittämistä, ja ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden työllisyysasteen kasvu.

5. Kansallisen toimenpideohjelmansa toteutuskaudella Suomen on keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: jatketaan uudistuksia, joilla lisätään kilpailua ja parannetaan tuottavuutta palvelualoilla, ja luodaan korkeita hintoja alentava vipuvaikutus; toteutetaan ilmoitetut toimet Kioton tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi; jatketaan uudistuksia, joilla poistetaan työmarkkinoiden pullonkaulat, vähennetään suurta rakennetyöttömyyttä etenkin vähän koulutettujen työntekijöiden ja nuorten osalta ja otetaan huomioon taloudellisista syistä tapahtuvan maahanmuuton tarjoamat mahdollisuudet.

RUOTSI

1. Ruotsin vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Ruotsi on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Ruotsi on myös noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa sovittuja sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan neuvoston nimeämillä aloilla on toteutettu monia toimia.

4. Ruotsin vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea seuraavat toimet: sääntelyn yksinkertaistamista koskeva toimintasuunnitelma ja sitoutuminen vaikutusten arviointijärjestelmän kehittämiseen; edistyminen työvoiman tarjonnan lisäämisessä ja työttömyyden vähentämisessä; energian kestävä käyttö; edistyminen tutkimukseen ja kehittämiseen tehtävien julkisten investointien lisäämisessä.

5. Ruotsin on toteutettava lisää sääntelytoimia kilpailun lisäämiseksi erityisesti palvelualoilla; maan on lisäksi keskityttävä työnteon kannustimiin, nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentämiseen, maahanmuuttajien työllisyysasteen nostamiseen ja työkyvyttömyysetuuksia saavien työelämään paluuseen liittyvien viimeaikaisten uudistusten täytäntöönpanoon ja niiden vaikutusten arviointiin.

YHDISTYNYT KUNINGASKUNTA

1. Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta on edistynyt erittäin hyvin kansallisen uudistusohjelmansa täytäntöönpanossa vuosina 2005–2007. Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta on noudattanut hyvin kevään 2006 Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa sovittuja sitoumuksia neljällä ensisijaisella alalla.

3. Täytäntöönpanoraportin mukaan Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta on toteuttanut monia neuvoston suositusten mukaisia toimia. Myös neuvoston päätelmissä nimetyillä täydentävillä aloilla on toteutettu monia toimia.

4. Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraportin perusteella lukea suunnitelmat yhdennetyn lähestymistavan soveltamisesta työllisyyteen ja ammattitaidon kehittämiseen, pyrkimys luoda yritystoimintaa suosiva sääntely-ympäristö sekä tulevaisuuteen suuntautuneet energiapolitiikkasuunnitelmat.

5. Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan olisi ensi tilassa paneuduttava seuraavilla kansallisessa uudistusohjelmassa nimetyillä osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin: tuottavuutta lisäävä ammattitaidon parantaminen ja heikossa asemassa työmarkkinoilla olevien henkilöiden tukeminen. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta

   - toteuttaa viimeaikaiset ammattitaidon huomattavaan parantamiseen tähtäävät suunnitelmat sekä soveltaa työllisyyteen ja ammattitaidon kehittämiseen yhdennettyä lähestymistapaa, jolla parannetaan tuottavuutta ja lisätään heikossa asemassa olevien henkilöiden mahdollisuuksia työmarkkinoilla.

6. Lisäksi Yhdistyneen kuningaskunnan olisi tulevaisuudessa keskityttävä seuraaviin haasteisiin: asuntotarjontaa on lisättävä asteittain, jotta kysyntäpaineita voidaan helpottaa keskipitkällä aikavälillä; maan on varmistettava edistyminen kohti T&K-toiminnan yleistä tavoitetta toteuttamalla tutkimus-, kehittämis- ja innovaatiopolitiikkaa koskeva tarkastelu kokonaisuudessaan, erityisesti ottamalla palvelualojen tarpeet kokonaisvaltaisemmin huomioon.

EUROALUEEN JÄSENVALTIOT

1. Euroalueen jäsenvaltioiden vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraporttien, tärkeimpien rakenneuudistusten edistymistä koskevan komission arvion ja kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevien yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen perusteella voidaan tehdä seuraavat päätelmät.

2. Euroalueen jäsenvaltiot ovat täytäntöönpanoraporttiensa perusteella edistyneet euroalueen toimintaa parantavien toimien täytäntöönpanossa jonkin verran.

3. Mikrotaloutta ja työllisyyttä koskevien suositusten noudattaminen edellyttää merkittäviä lisäuudistuksia. Makrotaloudessa vuonna 2007 saavutettua edistymistä on jatkettava.

4. Euroalueen vahvuuksiin voidaan vuoden 2007 täytäntöönpanoraporttien perusteella lukea julkisen talouden sopeuttamistoimet vuonna 2007, rahoitusmarkkinoiden yhdentymistä edistävän lainsäädännön täytäntöönpano ja työehtosopimusneuvottelujärjestelmien muuttaminen palkkajoustoa suosivammiksi joissakin jäsenvaltioissa.

5. Euroalueen jäsenvaltioiden olisi ensi tilassa paneuduttava seuraavilla osa-alueilla havaittuihin haasteisiin: julkisen talouden kestävyys ja sen kyky edistää talouskasvua; kilpailu hyödyke- ja palvelumarkkinoilla (erityisesti palveluissa), rahoitusalan yhdentyminen ja kilpailun lisääminen vähittäisrahoituspalveluissa sopeuttamisen helpottamiseksi ja hintojen joustavuuden lisäämiseksi; asianmukainen palkkakehitys kokonaistalouden tasolla sekä eri aloilla, maantieteellisillä alueilla ja ammattiryhmissä; joustoturva työmarkkinoilla; työvoiman lisääntynyt liikkuvuus, jolla edistetään työmarkkinoiden sopeuttamista.

6. Tällä perusteella suositellaan, että euroalueen jäsenvaltiot noudattavat maakohtaisia suosituksiaan ja

   - jatkavat julkisen talouden vakauttamista kohti keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitteitaan vakaus- ja kasvusopimuksen mukaisesti ja pyrkivät saavuttamaan vuotuisen rakenteellisen sopeutuksen, jonka viitearvo on vähintään 0,5 prosenttia suhteessa BKT:hen;

   - parantavat julkisen talouden laatua tarkistamalla julkisia menoja ja verotusta tavoitteenaan parantaa tuottavuutta ja lisätä innovaatioita sekä edistää talouskasvua ja julkisen talouden kestävyyttä;

   - toteuttavat toimia, joilla lisätään kilpailua erityisesti palvelualoilla, ja tehostavat toimia, joilla edistetään rahoitusmarkkinoiden täydellistä yhdentymistä ja kilpailua vähittäisrahoituspalveluissa, samalla kun lujitetaan rahoitusalan vakautta ja valvontaa;

   - parantavat joustavuutta ja turvaa työmarkkinoilla muun muassa toteuttamalla ”joustoturvastrategioita”, suhteuttamalla palkkakehityksen paremmin tuottavuuden kasvuun sekä toteuttamalla toimia, joilla edistetään valtioiden ja ammattiryhmien rajat ylittävää työntekijöiden liikkuvuutta.

7. Tulevaisuudessa euroalueen jäsenvaltioiden on myös jatkettava talouspolitiikan ohjausjärjestelmien lujittamista. Näin voidaan maksimoida toimista saatavat synergiat, joita rahaliitto osaltaan vahvistaa, ja lisätä poliittista sitoutumista uudistuksiin. Euroryhmän Berliinissä huhtikuussa 2007 antamat julkisen talouden suuntaviivat ovat askel oikeaan suuntaan, ja vastaavaa lähestymistapaa olisi sovellettava muillakin aloilla. Euron aseman vahvistuminen kansainvälisissä rahoituslaitoksissa ja muilla foorumeilla tukisi sen mahdollisuuksia tarjota vakautta ja kasvua maailmantaloudessa.

EUROPEISKA GEMENSKAPERNAS KOMMISSION

Bryssel den 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 803 slutlig
DEL IV

Rekommendation till

RÅDETS REKOMMENDATION

om 2008 års uppdatering av de allmänna riktlinjerna för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik och om genomförandet av medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik

(framlagt av kommissionen)

MOTIVERING

Under 2005 rationaliserades och förnyades Lissabonstrategin, varvid tyngdpunkten tydligt lades på tillväxt och sysselsättning. Nya styrningsstrukturer inrättades, med en klar ansvarsfördelning mellan gemenskapen och medlemsstaterna. Som en del av detta upprättade alla medlemsstaterna treåriga nationella reformprogram i vilka de redovisade hur de hade för avsikt att möta de utmaningar som de stod inför.

Kommissionen gjorde i sin lägesrapport 2006[1] en bedömning av de nationella reformprogrammen, i vilken de starka och svaga sidorna i dessa redovisades och medlemsstaterna vid behov uppmanades att förbättra programmen. Europeiska rådet välkomnade vid sitt vårmöte 2006 denna bedömning och uppmanade medlemsstaterna att med kraft genomföra de nationella reformprogrammen. Europeiska rådet fastställde dessutom fyra prioritetsområden (större investeringar i kunskap och innovation, frigörande av företagens potential, särskilt de små och medelstora företagens, ökade tillfällen till sysselsättning för prioriterade kategorier samt fastställande av en energipolitik för Europa) inom vilka man enades om ett antal specifika åtgärder som medlemsstaterna uppmanades att vidta före utgången av 2007.

Medlemsstaterna lade i oktober 2006 fram sina första rapporter om genomförandet av de nationella reformprogrammen. Kommissionen har på grundval av dessa genomföranderapporter utarbetat sin lägesrapport 2007[2]. I lägesrapporten fanns en utförlig bedömning av de framsteg som gjorts, och det arbete som rådet lagt ned på vissa områden beaktades. Kommissionen har mot bakgrund av denna bedömning, och med anledning av rådets krav på att fördragsbaserade rättsakter ska utnyttjas i större utsträckning i samband med genomförandet av den förnyade Lissabonstrategin, under 2007 beslutat att föreslå medlemsstaterna vägledning i form av landsspecifika rekommendationer enligt artiklarna 99.2 och 128.4 i EG-fördraget. Dessa godkändes därefter av Europeiska rådet och antogs av råden den vid mötet den 27 mars 2007.

Att genomföra strukturreformer kräver koncentration och kontinuitet. Eftersom de landsspecifika rekommendationerna och ”frågorna att ge akt på” (*points to watch*) inte antogs förrän helt nyligen, och med tanke på att det tar tid att genomföra strukturreformer och se resultat, föreslår kommissionen att de nuvarande rekommendationerna i stort sett behålls oförändrade och finjusteras mot bakgrund av de framsteg som gjorts sedan de antogs.

Rumänien och Bulgarien har integrerats helt i Lissabonstrategin efter sin anslutning till Europeiska unionen den 1 januari 2007. De har båda lagt fram nationella reformprogram. Kommissionens förslag till rådets rekommendationer omfattar följaktligen båda länderna.

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1 KOM(2006) 30.
2 KOM(2006) 816.

Rekommendation till

RÅDETS REKOMMENDATION

om 2008 års uppdatering av de allmänna riktlinjerna för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik och om genomförandet av medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik

EUROPEISKA UNIONENS RÅD HAR UTFÄRDAT DENNA REKOMMENDATION

med beaktande av fördraget om upprättandet av Europeiska gemenskapen, särskilt artikel 99.2 och 128.4,

med beaktande av kommissionens rekommendation,

med beaktande av slutsatserna från Europeiska rådets möte den 8–9 mars 2007,

med beaktande av sysselsättningskommitténs yttrande, och

av följande skäl:

(1) Europeiska unionens råd antog i juli 2005 en rekommendation om de allmänna riktlinjerna för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik (2005–2008)[3] och ett beslut om riktlinjerna för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik[4]. Riktlinjerna i fråga utgör tillsammans de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning. Medlemsstaterna uppmanades att ta de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning i beaktande i sina nationella reformprogram.

(2) I oktober 2005 hade medlemsstaterna lagt fram sina nationella reformprogram. Kommissionen gjorde en bedömning av dessa program och lade fram en rapport om dem inför Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

(3) Europeiska rådet noterade dessa dokument vid sitt vårmöte 2006 och fastställde fyra prioritetsområden (FoU och innovation, företagsklimat, sysselsättningsmöjligheter samt integrerad energipolitik) inom vilka det enades om ett begränsat antal specifika åtgärder som uppmanade medlemsstaterna uppmanades vidta före utgången av 2007.

(4) Medlemsstaterna lade i enlighet med slutsatserna från Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006 fram sina årsrapporter om genomförandet av de nationella reformprogrammen (genomföranderapporter). Kommissionen analyserade dessa och redovisade resultatet av sin analys i lägesrapporten 2007[5].

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3 EUT L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 28.
4 EUT L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 21.
5 KOM(2006) 816, del II.

(5) På grundval av denna analys avgavs ett antal landsspecifika rekommendationer till medlemsstaterna under 2007. I syfte att sörja för att Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning genomförs på ett konsekvent och integrerat sätt antogs dessa rekommendationer i form av en enda rättsakt[6]. Detta tillvägagångssätt återspeglade såväl den integrerade strukturen hos de nationella reformprogrammen och genomföranderapporterna som den enligt artikel 128.2 i EG-fördraget erforderliga överensstämmelsen mellan riktlinjerna för sysselsättningspolitiken och de allmänna riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken som avses i artikel 99.2 i EG-fördraget.

(6) Kommissionen analyserade svaret på rekommendationerna enligt 2007 års genomföranderapporter från medlemsstaterna, och lade fram sin analys av detta svar i en strategisk rapport[7]. På grundval av denna analys och med insikt om att det tar tid att genomföra strukturreformer, innebär detta dokument ett förslag om att i stort sett behålla dessa rekommendationer och finjustera dem mot bakgrund av de framsteg som gjorts sedan de antogs våren 2007.

(7) I syfte att sörja för att Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning genomförs till fullo bör denna rekommendation även omfatta särskilda rekommendationer till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

(8) För att förbättra samordningen och stärka den multilaterala övervakningen i rådet bör medlemsstaterna inkludera handlingsplaner i sina årliga genomföranderapporter i vilka de redovisar sina särskilda politiska ansträngningar för att ta itu med de landsspecifika rekommendationerna och ”frågorna att ge akt på”.

(9) Europaparlamentet har antagit en resolution om denna rekommendation.

HÄRIGENOM REKOMMENDERAS att medlemsstaterna vidtar åtgärder i enlighet med vad som anges i bilagan och redogör för åtgärderna i de nästkommande genomföranderapporterna inom ramen för den förnyade Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning.

Utfärdad i Bryssel den

På rådets vägnar
Ordförande

[6] KOM(2006) 816.
[7] KOM(2007) 803.

BILAGA

INNEHÅLLSFÖRTECKNING

MOTIVERING 2

RÅDETS REKOMMENDATION 3

BELGIEN 8

BULGARIEN 9

TJECKIEN 11

DANMARK 13

TYSKLAND 14

ESTLAND 16

IRLAND 17

GREKLAND 18

SPANIEN 20

FRANKRIKE 21

ITALIEN 23

CYPERN 25

LETTLAND 26

LITAUEN 27

LUXEMBURG 28

UNGERN 29

MALTA 31

NEDERLÄNDERNA 32

ÖSTERRIKE 33

POLEN 34

PORTUGAL 36

RUMÄNIEN 38

SLOVENIEN 40

SLOVAKIEN 41

FINLAND 43

SVERIGE 44

FÖRENADE KUNGARIKET 45
MEDLEMSSTATERNA I EUROOMRÅDET 46

BELGIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Belgiens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Belgien har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Belgien har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer, men ytterligare reformer behövs. Den visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Belgiens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas politiken för minskade utsläpp och de lovande resultaten för vägledning- och övervakningssystemet för arbetslösa.

5. Belgien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: minskning av skattebördan på arbete, parallellt med stärkt budgetkonsolidering och förbättring av arbetsmarknadssituationen. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Belgien

   - att vidta fortsatta åtgärder för att minska skattetrycket på arbete till en nivå som ligger närmare genomsnittet för grannländerna, särskilt genom att minska skattekilen för lågutbildade arbetstagare, samtidigt som budgetkonsolideringen stärks,

   - att stärka de politiska åtgärderna för att förbättra arbetsmarknadssituationen genom en genomgripande strategi, enligt en integrerad flexicurityprincip, för förbättrat deltagande på arbetsmarknaden, minska regionala skillnader och öka deltagandet i åtgärder för livslångt lärande.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Belgien att inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att helt genomföra den strategi som syftar till att slå vakt om de offentliga finansernas långsiktiga hållbarhet, bl.a. utgiftskontroll, årliga överskott och en ständig minskning av den offentliga skulden; att vidta ytterligare brådskande åtgärder för förbättrad konkurrens på gas- och elmarknaderna, bl.a. genom oberoende och effektiva regleringsmyndigheter och ytterligare insatser för ökad konkurrens i överförings- och distributionsleden; att avsevärt stärka sitt åtagande att stimulera FoU och innovation, särskilt genom att öka såväl nivån som effekten av offentlig finansiering och utveckla en samordnad kombination av politiska åtgärder på alla nivåer; att fortsätta åtgärderna för att förbättra sysselsättningsgraden för äldre arbetstagare och utsatta grupper, övervaka deras verkan och, vid behov, vidta ytterligare aktiveringsåtgärder.

BULGARIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Bulgariens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av landets nationella reformprogram samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Generellt sett inriktar sig det nationella reformprogrammet på de rätta utmaningarna, men på vissa områden saknas konkreta och omfattande åtgärder, särskilt för att stärka den administrativa kapaciteten. Vidare saknas i det nationella reformprogrammet åtgärder för att omedelbart och i betydande grad minska onödig byråkrati så att företagsklimatet blir mera dynamiskt och konurrenskraftigt. Med tanke på den växande ekonomiska obalansen är det särskilt viktigt att Bulgarien skyndar på genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet för att skapa de villkor som krävs för hållbar tillväxt och sysselsättning på medellång till lång sikt.

3. Bland de positiva inslagen i det nationella reformprogrammet bör särskilt nämnas en klar problemanalys och rätt prioritering och tidsplanering av reformerna samt ett starkt politiskt engagemang. Det har införts viktiga bestämmelser för strikt övervakning av framstegen på högsta politiska nivå, vilket torde vara ett effektivt verktyg för att säkerställa ett snabbt och effektivt genomförande av det nationella reformprogrammet. Det nationella reformprogrammet stöds vidare av en stram finanspolitik som ger en fast grund för att påskynda de strukturreformer som krävs för att garantera långsiktig tillväxt.

4. De policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet där utmaningarna bör mötas med högsta prioritet och där budgetkonsekvenserna av åtgärder och detaljerna om övervaknings- och bedömningsförfaranden bör vara särskilt tydliga, är följande: den administrativa kapaciteten, makroekonomiska obalanser, onödig byråkrati och arbetsmarknadens funktion. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Bulgarien

   - att omedelbart stärka den administrativa kapaciteten med särskild inriktning på centrala myndighetsfunktioner, bl.a. tillsynsmyndigheter, och rättsväsendet,

   - att hålla tillbaka bytesbalansunderskottet och inflationstrycket, särskilt genom en stram finanspolitik, som förbättrar kvaliteten på de offentliga utgifterna och främjar en återhållsam löneutveckling för att hålla löneutvecklingen i linje med produktivitetstillväxten,

   - att snabbt vidta åtgärder för att och i betydande grad minska onödig byråkrati och minska förseningarna i handläggningen av ärenden för att förbättra företagsklimatet (i synnerhet för små och medelstora företag och för att förenkla nyetablering av företag), vilket även kommer att bidra till att bekämpa korruptionen,

   - att öka arbetskraftens kvalitet och sysselsättningsgraden genom att förbättra de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärdernas effektivitet och ändamålsenlighet och ytterligare reformera utbildningssystemet för att höja kompetensnivån till nivåer som bättre motsvarar arbetsmarknadens behov och för att motverka att ungdomar lämnar skolan i förtid.

5. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Bulgarien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande: att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att slå vakt om de offentliga finansernas långsiktiga hållbarhet, i synnerhet med avseende på potentiella risker när det gäller tillräckliga och hållbara pensioner; att skapa alla nödvändiga förutsättningar för stark konkurrens inom nätverksindustrierna; att utarbeta en integrerad politik för FoU och innovation som särskilt syftar till att reformera det offentliga FoU-systemet, och flytta det offentliga stödet till FoU – på grundval av ett övergripande mål för FoU-intensiteten för 2010 – mot mer konkurrensbaserad finansiering inriktad på huvudprioriteringar; att bekämpa problemet med odeklarerat arbete genom att stärka den institutionella kapaciteten för att utföra inspektioner och garantera rättsskyddet; att färdigställa strategin för livslångt lärande och öka deltagandet.

TJECKIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Tjeckiens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Tjeckien har gjort vissa framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Tjeckien har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Tjeckiens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas en sammanhängande strategi för att förbättra regelverket för företag, reformer för att göra arbete lönsamt, reform av primär- och sekundärutbildningen för att få fler att söka in till universitets- och högskoleutbildning, samt antagandet av strategin för livslångt lärande.

5. Tjeckien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: den långsiktiga hållbarheten i de offentliga finanserna mot bakgrund av befolkningens åldrande, uppfyllande av åtagandena beträffande FoU-anslag och ett effektivare utnyttjande av dessa, ökad trygghet och flexibilitet på arbetsmarknaden, förbättrad effektivitet och rättvisa i utbildningen och ökat deltagande i åtgärder för livslångt lärande. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Tjeckien

   - att, med tanke på målet med hållbara offentliga finanser, utan dröjsmål genomföra det aviserade reformprogrammet för pensionssystemet och de aviserade reformerna av sjukvårdssystemet,

   - att uppfylla målen beträffande FoU-anslag och utnyttja dessa mer effektivt, särskilt genom att främja ett bättre samarbete mellan näringsliv, universitet och offentliga FoU-organ, och genom att tillhandahålla de personalresurser som krävs för forskning och utveckling,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, ytterligare modernisera systemet för anställningstrygghet, bland annat genom ny lagstiftning, samt förbättra effektiviteten och rättvisan i utbildningen, särskilt för att svara mot arbetsmarknadens behov, ge incitament för att investera i utbildning, särskilt för äldre arbetstagare och lågutbildade, samt öka diversifieringen i utbudet när det gäller högre studier.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Tjeckien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att förbättra skyddet av immateriell äganderätt; att arbeta för att påskynda utvecklingen inom informations- och kommunikationsteknik (bl.a. genom att införa regler som fullt ut möjliggör e-förvaltning och bevaka den vidare

utvecklingen av dessa regler); att förbättra tillgången till finansiering för innovativa företag, särskilt genom vidareutveckling av riskkapitalmarknaden; att öka andelen kurser i företagande; att öka integrationen av utsatta grupper på arbetsmarknaden; att utjämna regionala olikheter; att underlätta för människor att kombinera arbets- och familjeliv; att minska den stora löneklyftan mellan kvinnor och män; att genomföra strategin för aktivt åldrande.

DANMARK

1. Mot bakgrund av Danmarks genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Danmark har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Danmark har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på de områden som rådet angav att landet borde inrikta sig på.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Danmarks genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas en genomgripande och integrerad strategi för planering och genomförande av reformer, inom en ram som säkerställer långsiktigt stabila offentliga finanser, kombinerat med ett aktivt deltagande av de berörda parterna.

5. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Danmark att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att fortsätta att vidta åtgärder för att länka ihop energinäten och på så sätt bidra till bättre fungerande el- och gasmarknader; att öka tillgången på arbetskraft och antalet arbetstimmar på medellång sikt, inklusive ytterligare insatser för arbete och för att integrera äldre arbetstagare, invandrare och deras barn och barnbarn på arbetsmarknaden; att på ett effektivt sätt fortsätta att utveckla åtgärderna för att förbättra primär- och sekundärutbildningen och öka antalet studenter som slutför gymnasieutbildning eller högre utbildning, för att uppnå de högt satta målen.

TYSKLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Tysklands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Tyskland har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007 och goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en god respons när det gäller budgetkonsolideringen, och en mer begränsad respons när det gäller konkurrensen i tjänstesektorn och åtgärder för att minska strukturarbetslösheten. Den visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Tysklands genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas budgetkonsolideringen, stärkandet av högklassig forskning och innovation, framstegen när det gäller att minska ungdomsarbetslösheten och det beslutsamma tillvägagångssättet för att bygga ut barnomsorgen.

5. Tyskland bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn och strukturarbetslösheten. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Tyskland

   - att förbättra de generella villkoren för konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn, särskilt genom att fortsätta lätta på de strikta bestämmelserna inom de reglerade branscherna och yrkena, förbättra förfarandena för offentlig upphandling utan att bevilja nya telekommarknader undantag från reglering, och införa effektiva regler för bitströmsanslutning på grossistnivå,

   - att bekämpa strukturarbetslösheten genom att genomföra reformerna i det nationella reformprogrammet, med inriktning på att integrera de lågutbildade på arbetsmarknaden genom en strategi för flexicurity som kombinerar bättre tillgång till vidareutbildning med genomförandet av den aviserade omfattande skatte- och bidragsreformen och effektivare service från arbetsförmedlingarna till arbetslösa som erhåller grundläggande inkomstbidrag.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Tyskland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att säkerställa de offentliga finansernas långsiktiga hållbarhet genom att säkra den uppnådda budgetkonsolideringen, inklusive den pågående granskningen av budgetinstitutionerna i det federala systemet, och genom noggrann övervakning av effekterna av hälso- och sjukvårdsreformen i syfte att bättre kontrollera utgiftsutvecklingen och öka effektiviteten inom sektorn; att förbättra de generella villkoren för konkurrensen inom järnvägs-, gas- och elsektorerna, där konkurrensen fortfarande är otillräcklig på grund av hög koncentration; att gå vidare med

inrättandet av kontaktställen (*one-stop shops*) och förbättringen av den tid det tar att starta företag; att, i samband med de planerade åtgärderna för att främja livslångt lärande, förbättra den yrkesinriktade fortbildningen.

ESTLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Estlands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Estland har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Estland har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på de områden som rådet angav att landet borde inrikta sig på. Den visar en viss policyrespons när det gäller konkurrenspolitik, aktiv arbetsmarknadspolitik och utbildningspolitik. Responsen har varit mest betydande inom FoU och innovation. Estland har inte gjort några särskilda framsteg när det gäller moderniseringen av arbetslagstiftningen.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Estlands genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas upprättandet av en ambitiös långsiktig och systematisk ny FoU- och innovationsstrategi, åtgärderna för att förenkla nyetablering av företag och finansiering av innovativa små och medelstora företag, den starkt ökade sysselsättningsgraden och åtgärderna för att förbättra kvaliteten inom den högre utbildningen och yrkesutbildningen.

5. Estland bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområde i det nationella reformprogrammet: sysselsättningsområdet, där framstegen när det gäller moderniseringen av arbetslagstiftningen har varit begränsade.

6. Det kommer att vara viktigt för Estland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att förbättra den makroekonomiska stabiliteten och hålla tillbaka inflationen genom lämpliga strukturreformer och en beslutsam finanspolitik; att göra ytterligare insatser för att omsätta FoU-resultat i innovativa produkter eller tjänster; att uppmuntra till ett ökat samarbete mellan universitet och företag; att lansera den nya modellen för immunitet och förmånlig behandling och skärpa tillämpningen av konkurrensreglerna; att vidareutveckla den aktiva arbetsmarknadspolitiken och öka utbudet av kvalificerad arbetskraft genom att genomföra en omfattande strategi för livslångt lärande som svar på arbetsmarknadens behov; att minska stelheten på arbetsmarknaden genom att snabbt modernisera arbetslagstiftningen och främja flexibla arbetsformer.

IRLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Irlands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Irland har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Irland har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på de områden som rådet angav att landet borde inrikta sig på. Rapporten tar emellertid inte specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Irlands nationella reformprogram och dess genomförande bör särskilt nämnas en övergripande och samordnad nationell strategi. Dokumentet belyser också nyttan med Lissabonprocessen genom dess betydelse för fokuseringen på prioriteringar och genomförande av specifika åtgärder, och betonar dess nyckelroll för hanteringen av de utmaningar och möjligheter som är förbundna med globaliseringen.

5. Det kommer att vara viktigt för Irland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar för framtiden: att skynda på utformandet av konkreta åtgärder för en reform av pensionssystemen; att fastställa ett mellanliggande FoU-mål för 2010; att skynda på framstegen för att öka arbetsmarknadsdeltagandet, t.ex. genom att inrätta en omfattande barnomsorgsstruktur; att vidareutveckla policyramen för arbetsmarknaden och den sociala integrationen av invandrare; att lägga särskild vikt vid stöd till äldre och lågutbildade arbetstagare; att noga bevaka utvecklingen på fastighetsmarknaden, som påverkar tillväxten på kort och medellång sikt.

GREKLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Greklands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Grekland har gjort stadiga framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Grekland har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar emellertid inte specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Greklands genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas goda framsteg med budgetkonsolideringen, främjandet av kvinnors deltagande på arbetsmarknaden och genomförandet av lagstiftningen rörande den inre marknaden. Det finns lovande tecken på framsteg när det gäller att fastställa en tidsplan för genomförandet av pensionsreformer i avsikt att förbättra de offentliga finansernas långsiktiga hållbarhet.

5. Grekland bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: den finanspolitiska hållbarheten på lång sikt, genomförandet av reformen av den offentliga förvaltningen, konsolideringen av de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna, arbetet för att minska ungdomsarbetslösheten, åtgärderna mot odeklarerat arbete och påskyndande av reformerna för utbildning och livslångt lärande. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Grekland

   - att fortsätta arbetet med budgetkonsolideringen och skuldminskningen, och snabbt gå vidare med pensionsreformens genomförande i syfte att stärka de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet på lång sikt,

   - att genomföra reformen av landets offentliga förvaltning genom att bygga upp effektiva funktioner för reglering, kontroll och tillsyn, genom att modernisera sin politik för mänskliga resurser och genom att utnyttja strukturfonderna effektivt,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, modernisera systemet för anställningstrygghet, bland annat genom ny lagstiftning, minska skattetrycket på arbete, stärka den aktiva arbetsmarknadspolitiken och omvandla odeklarerat arbete till formella anställningar,

   - att påskynda genomförandet av reformerna av utbildning och livslångt lärande för att förbättra kvaliteten och förmågan att svara upp mot arbetsmarknadens behov, öka deltagandet och möjliggöra en smidig övergång till sysselsättning, särskilt för ungdomar.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Grekland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande

utmaningar: att hålla tillbaka inflationstrycket och bytesbalansunderskottet; att påskynda arbetet med att utforma en forsknings- och innovationsstrategi och öka FoU-investeringarna; att ytterligare förbättra införlivandet av inremarknadslagstiftningen; att påskynda processen för att uppnå de mål avseende små och medelstora företag som fastställdes av Europeiska rådet vid dess vårmöte 2006; att förbättra konkurrensen för tjänster inom de fria yrkena; att skydda miljön genom att prioritera effektiv avfalls- och avloppsvattenhantering och minska utsläppen av växthusgaser; att ytterligare öka kvinnors deltagande på arbetsmarknaden; att motverka att ungdomar lämnar skolan i förtid och införa en sammanhållen strategi för aktivt åldrande.

SPANIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Spaniens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Spanien har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Spanien har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. När det gäller de övriga områden som Spanien uppmanades att inrikta sig på har responsen på det markroekonomiska området varit begränsad. ”Frågorna att ge akt på” på det mikroekonomiska området och sysselsättningsområdet har delvis åtgärdats. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Spaniens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas minskningen av den offentliga skulden, som har gått snabbare än förutsett, de goda framstegen med genomförandet av planen för FoU och innovation, och de tillfredsställande framstegen i riktning mot målet för sysselsättningsgraden, inte minst vad gäller kvinnors deltagande på arbetsmarknaden.

5. Spanien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: ökad konkurrens på elmarknaderna samt fortsatt förbättrad utbildning. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Spanien

   - att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att öka konkurrensen inom energisektorn, särskilt genom att undanröja de snedvridande prissättningsmekanismerna och förbättra möjligheterna till sammanlänkning av nät över nationsgränserna för bättre försörjningstrygghet,

   - att se till att utbildningsreformerna genomförs korrekt (även på regional nivå), för att motverka att ungdomar lämnar skolan i förtid.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Spanien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att hålla tillbaka bytesbalansunderskottet och inflationstrycket och övervaka utvecklingen på bostadsmarknaden; att öka konkurrensen inom fria yrken och inom detaljhandeln; att förbättra regelverket; att genomföra miljöskyddsåtgärder (särskilt för att minska koldioxidutsläppen); att ytterligare modernisera systemet för anställningstrygghet, bl.a. lagstiftningen, i syfte att främja flexicurity på arbetsmarknaden för att motverka segmenteringen och göra deltidsarbete mer attraktivt; att öka produktiviteten genom höjd kompetensnivå och ökad innovation; att integrera invandrare på arbetsmarknaden; att ytterligare öka tillgången till barnomsorg; att genomföra reformer av pensions- och sjukvårdssystemen för att förbättra de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet på lång sikt.

FRANKRIKE

1. Mot bakgrund av Frankrikes genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Frankrike har gjort stadiga framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Frankrike har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en begränsad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de andra områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta; i synnerhet har en viktig reform genomförts för att stödja och stimulera företagande och unga företag. Rapporten tar emellertid inte specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Frankrikes genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas reformen av FoU- och innovationsstrategierna, de konkreta resultaten av åtgärder på informations- och kommunikationsteknikens område samt den aviserade omfattande åtgärdsplanen för att förbättra arbetsmarknadens funktion, även genom ändringar i lagstiftningen

5. I genomföranderapporten presenteras en märkbart modifierad strategi där sysselsättningen ska bli en faktor i den ekonomiska politiken i syfte att öka tillväxten. I vilken utsträckning ökad konkurrens är integrerad i denna nya politiska ram är ännu inte helt klart. Det är viktigt att Frankrike stärker sina budgetmässiga ansträngningar för att samtidigt genomföra en samlad reformstrategi och ytterligare konsoliderar budgeten. Ytterligare betydande eller oförminskade åtgärder krävs för att uppnå budgetkonsolidering, öka konkurrensen i nätverksindustrierna och förbättra arbetsmarknadssituationen. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Frankrike

   - att slå vakt om de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet med tanke på den åldrande befolkningen, genom att i hög grad stärka budgetkonsolideringen och skuldminskningen, i syfte att uppnå budgetbalans 2010; den översyn av pensionssystemen som planeras för 2008 måste bygga vidare på fördelarna av 2003 års reform,

   - att förbättra de generella villkoren för konkurrensen inom sektorerna för gas, elektricitet och järnvägstransport,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, förbättra effektiviteten i livslångt lärande och modernisera anställningsskyddet för att bekämpa segmenteringen av marknaden i olika typer av anställningskontrakt och göra det lättare att växla mellan visstidsanställningar och tillsvidareanställningar.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Frankrike att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att ytterligare stärka konkurrensen inom de reglerade branscherna och yrkena, att ytterligare stärka en bättre lagstiftning genom att inkludera

konsekvensbedömningar; att fortsätta att öka arbetsmarknadsutbudet och göra arbete lönsamt.

ITALIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Italiens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Italien har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Italien har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Med tanke på utmaningarnas omfattning behövs ytterligare betydande reformer. Rapporten visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Italiens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas de inledande åtgärderna för att förbättra företagsklimatet, åtgärder för att förbättra konkurrensen för tjänster inom fria yrken och finansiella tjänster och detaljhandelsdistribution, den senaste tidens minskning av förseningarna med införlivandet av EU-lagstiftning, samt åtgärder inom e-förvaltning för att modernisera den offentliga sektorn.

5. Italien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: hållbara offentliga finanser, där ansträngningarna måste fortsätta och pensionsreformerna fullföljas, ökad konkurrens på produkt- och tjänstemarknaderna och fullständigt genomförande av aviserade reformer, fortsatt kamp mot regionala skillnader i sysselsättningen samt förbättring av utbildning och livslångt lärande. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Italien

   - att principfast fortsätta med budgetkonsolideringen, särskilt genom att hålla tillbaka ökningen av de löpande primära utgifterna, och fullfölja pensionsreformerna, i syfte att förbättra de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet på lång sikt,

   - att gå vidare i ansträngningarna för att öka konkurrensen på produkt- och tjänstemarknaderna och ihärdigt fortsätta genomförandet av aviserade reformer,

   - att förbättra kvaliteten på utbildningen och verka för ett utbildningsutbud som bättre motsvarar arbetsmarknadens behov, främja livslångt lärande, ta itu med problemet med odeklarerat arbete och se till att arbetsförmedlingarna fungerar effektivt inom en strategi för flexicurity och i syfte att utjämna regionala skillnader.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Italien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att öka investeringarna i och effektiviteten hos FoU, där det, trots en positiv utveckling, behövs ytterligare insatser för att nå målet för 2010 och förbättra de offentliga utgifternas effektivitet; att öka ansträngningarna för att uppfylla målen

om att minska koldioxidutsläppen; att förbättra lagstiftningens kvalitet genom att stärka konsekvensbedömningssystemet och genomföra det helt, särskilt när det gäller små och medelstora företag; att genomföra planer för att förbättra infrastrukturen; att öka utbudet av barnomsorg i syfte att kombinera arbets- och familjeliv och främja kvinnors deltagande på arbetsmarknaden; att införa en sammanhållen strategi för aktivt åldrande för att få upp sysselsättningsnivån hos äldre människor och för att pensionerna ska räcka bättre.

CYPERN

1. Mot bakgrund av Cyperns genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Cypern har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Cypern har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Med tanke på de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet på lång sikt har den inledande responsen när det gäller reformering av hälso- och sjukvårdssystemet varit tillfredsställande, medan responsen när det gäller pensionsreform, ökat livslångt lärande och reformering av yrkesutbildningssystemet har varit begränsade. Rapporten visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Cyperns genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas framsteg när det gäller budgetkonsolideringen, genom minskning av både underskott och skulder, en ny strategi för utarbetandet av ett omfattande forsknings- och innovationssystem, samt den generellt sett goda sysselsättningsgraden som underbyggts med ett flertal olika aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder.

5. Cypern bör ge högsta prioritet åt att åtgärda bristerna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: hanteringen av åldersrelaterade utgifter, genomförandet av en strategi för livslångt lärande och förbättrade utbildnings- och arbetsmarknadsmöjligheter för unga. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Cypern

   - att vidta åtgärder för att genomföra reformer av pensions- och hälso- och sjukvårdssystemen och göra upp ett tidsschema för detta i syfte att förbättra de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet,

   - att stärka insatserna för livslångt lärande och öka möjligheterna till sysselsättning och utbildning för unga personer genom att genomföra reformerna av systemen för yrkesutbildning, allmän utbildning, fortbildning och lärlingsutbildning.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Cypern att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande åtgärder: att förbättra konkurrensen för tjänster inom de fria yrkena; att ytterligare stimulera den privata sektorns FoU; att ta itu med den mycket stora löneklyftan mellan män och kvinnor.

LETTLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Lettlands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Lettland har gjort vissa framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007 och vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en blandad respons på de ytterligare områden som Europeiska rådet vid sitt vårmöte 2007 angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Lettlands genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas de första positiva åtgärderna inom kunskap och innovation, framstegen i vissa frågor som rör små och medelstora företag och entreprenörskap, konkurrensmyndighetens förstärkta roll i marknadsövervakningen och ytterligare åtgärder för att främja energieffektivitet och användningen av förnybara energikällor. Lettland har även genomfört en rad åtgärder som har varit gynnsamma för arbetsmarknadssituationen.

5. Lettland bör ge högsta prioritet åt att åtgärda bristerna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: mer konkreta åtgärder för att säkra den makroekonomiska stabiliteten med tanke på risken för överhettning, fortsatt utveckling av FoU-strategin för att underlätta prioriteringar och öka den privata sektorns deltagande samt kraftigare åtgärder för att öka arbetsmarknadsutbudet och stärka arbetskraftens kunskaper och färdigheter. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Lettland

   - att driva en mer restriktiv finanspolitik, med en noggrann utgiftsprioritering och löneutveckling som är i linje med produktiviteten, för att bidra till att motverka överhettningstrycket och minska risken för makroekonomisk instabilitet,

   - att göra snabbare framsteg i genomförandet av reformer inom forskning och innovation för att uppnå de ambitiösa mål som fastställts; detta rör särskilt strategier för att stimulera partnerskap mellan forsknings- och utbildningsinstitutioner och företag,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, stärka insatserna för att öka arbetskraftsutbudet och produktiviteten genom att förbättra den regionala mobiliteten och tydligare anpassa utbildnings- och fortbildningssystemen till arbetsmarknadens behov genom att inrätta ett system för livslångt lärande och bedriva en aktiv arbetsmarknadspolitik.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Lettland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande: att ytterligare förbättra regelsystemet, särskilt genom en uttalad politik för bättre lagstiftning; att förbättra tillgången till barnomsorg.

LITAUEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Litauens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Litauen har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Litauen har också gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en begränsad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Litauens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas godkännandet av prioritetsområden för utveckling av FoU och antagandet av lagen om yrkesutbildning.

5. Litauen bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: effektivare investeringar i FoU och ett bättre innovationsstöd, förbättrad intern rörlighet hos arbetskraften, främjande av vuxnas deltagande i livslångt lärande, särskilt bland äldre arbetstagare, och reform av utbildningssystemen för att garantera kvalitet och ett utbud som bättre motsvarar arbetsmarknadens behov. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Litauen

   - att påskynda genomförandet av strukturreformen inom landets FoU- och innovationssystem för att förbättra de offentliga utgifternas effektivitet och skapa gynnsamma förutsättningar för ökade privata investeringar på detta område, bl.a. för innovationer i traditionella sektorer och sektorer med låg teknikнivå,

   - att intensifiera ansträngningarna för att öka tillgången på kvalificerad arbetskraft, med särskild inriktning på ett ökat deltagande för äldre arbetstagare, genom att förbättra den regionala mobiliteten, reformera utbildningssystemen för att säkerställa kvaliteten och ett utbud som bättre motsvarar arbetsmarknadens behov, och genomföra den reviderade strategin för livslångt lärande.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Litauen att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att förbättra den makroekonomiska stabiliteten och dämpa inflationen; att öka de utländska direktinvesteringarna; att förbättra regelsystemets effektivitet med särskild inriktning på förenkling av lagstiftningen; att förbättra ungdomars anställbarhet; att utöka entreprenörskapsutbildningen; att öka tillgången till barnomsorg; att förbättra arbetsskyddet.

LUXEMBURG

1. Mot bakgrund av Luxemburgs genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Luxemburg har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Luxemburg har gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en blandad policyrespons på de områden som rådet angav att landet borde inrikta sig på. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Luxemburgs genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas investeringar för att integrera ekonomin internationellt, satsningar på att utveckla en vittomfattande förenklingspolitik inriktad på näringslivets behov, utvecklingen av infrastruktur för barnomsorg, reformen av yrkesutbildningen och införandet av nya anställningsformer.

5. Det kommer att vara viktigt för Luxemburg att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att påskynda genomförandet av åtgärder för att höja sysselsättningsgraden bland äldre arbetstagare, i synnerhet genom reformer som motverkar förtida pension; att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att minska antalet ungdomar som lämnar skolan i förtid och för att ta bort de konstgjorda barriärerna mellan olika typer av utbildning; att noga övervaka hur de nyligen antagna åtgärderna inverkar på ungdomsarbetslösheten; att, i syfte att göra det ekonomiska klimatet mer attraktivt, öka insatserna för att skapa mer konkurrensutsatta marknader, förbättra införlivandet av EU:s lagstiftning och stödja små och medelstora företag,

UNGERN

1. Mot bakgrund av Ungerns genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Ungern har gjort begränsade framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Ungern har gjort begränsade framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3 Genomföranderapporten visar en blandad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta i högre grad.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Ungerns genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas betydligt större framgångar med budgetkonsolideringen, antagandet av olika åtgärder för strukturreform, minskningen av tiden för att starta företag och ansträngningarna för att minska de administrativa kostnaderna, införandet av ytterligare incitament att arbeta och stanna kvar på arbetsmarknaden samt omvandlingen av odeklarerat arbete till formella anställningar.

5. Ungern bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: den planerade korrigeringen av det alltför stora underskottet, ytterligare förbättring av de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet, förbättring av arbetsmarknadssituationen för missgynnande grupper, minskning av kvarvarande regionala skillnader i sysselsättningen och reformering av utbildningssystemen. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Ungern

   - att fortsätta genomförandet av de åtgärder som krävs för att säkerställa en varaktig minskning av det offentliga underskottet och av den offentliga skuldkvoten, med ökad tonvikt på utgiftssidan, t.ex. genom inrättandet av mer noggranna och omfattande utgiftsregler,

   - att fortsätta reformen av den offentliga förvaltningen, av hälso- och sjukvården samt av pensions- och utbildningssystemen, i syfte att säkerställa den finanspolitiska hållbarheten på lång sikt och förbättra effektiviteten i ekonomin; detta bör omfatta åtgärder för att fortsätta begränsa förtidspensioneringarna, minska antalet nya mottagare av invaliditetspension och fortsatt omstrukturering av hälso- och sjukvården,

   - att stärka de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna för att förbättra arbetsmarknadssituationen för missgynnande grupper och minska kvarvarande regionala skillnader i sysselsättningen,

   - att säkerställa tillträdet till utbildning av hög kvalitet för alla, höja kompetensnivån och tydligare anpassa utbildnings- och fortbildningssystemen till arbetsmarknadens behov.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Ungern att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar för framtiden: att ytterligare reformera systemet för offentligfinansierad forskning, utnyttja FoU-anslagen effektivare och förbättra kopplingarna mellan FoU inom den offentliga och den privata sektorn; att minska och omfördela statligt stöd; att förbättra regelsystemet genom att minska den administrativa bördan ytterligare och förenkla lagstiftningen; att införa ytterligare incitament att arbeta och stanna kvar på arbetsmarknaden; att säkerställa bättre balans mellan arbete och privatliv; att slutföra inrättandet av det integrerade sysselsättnings- och socialtjänstsystemet; att omvandla odeklarerat arbete till formella anställningar; att genomföra strategin för livslångt lärande.

MALTA

1. Mot bakgrund av Maltas genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Malta har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Malta har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en begränsad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar också en begränsad policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Maltas nationella reformprogram och dess genomförande bör särskilt nämnas styrningen av programmet och de framsteg som gjorts med budgetkonsolideringen samt framstegen med att förbättra företagsklimatet, liberaliseringen av vissa marknader (t.ex. hamnar), utbildningsreformen och den ökade användningen av informations- och kommunikationsteknik.

5. Malta bör ge högsta prioritet åt att åtgärda bristerna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: konkurrenspolitik och kvarvarande problem på arbetsmarknaden. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Malta

   - att stärka konkurrensen, särskilt genom att minska det statliga stödet och omfördela det till horisontella mål och genom att stärka konkurrensmyndigheten, och genom ytterligare åtgärder för att öppna tjänsterna inom de fria yrkena,

   - att öka ansträngningarna för att locka fler personer till arbetsmarknaden, och då särskilt kvinnor och äldre arbetstagare, fortsätta ansträngningarna för att bekämpa problemet med odeklarerat arbete och vidta ytterligare åtgärder i bidragssystemet för att göra deklarerat arbete mer attraktivt.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Malta att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande: att fortsätta att genomföra och stärka åtgärder inom reformen av hälso- och sjukvårdssektorn; att förbättra regelsystemet ytterligare genom att fortsätta att förenkla lagstiftningen; att genom att införa systematiska konsekvensbedömningar och effektiva kontaktställen (*one-stop shops*) för nyetablering av företag; att diversifiera sina energikällor, bl.a. genom bättre energieffektivitet och förnybar energi och genom att koppla upp Malta till energinäten i Europa; att fortsätta höja utbildningsnivån och minska antalet ungdomar som lämnar skolan i förtid.

NEDERLÄNDERNA

1. Mot bakgrund av Nederländernas genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Nederländerna har gjort betydande framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Nederländerna har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en begränsad policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Nederländernas nationella reformprogram och dess genomförande bör särskilt nämnas ansträngningarna för att minska den administrativa bördan och förbättra företagsklimatet, de ambitiösa planerna på området för energi och klimatförändringar och incitamenten för att förbättra tillgången till barnomsorg.

5. Nederländerna bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområde i det nationella reformprogrammet: att förbättra utbudet på arbetskraft. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Nederländerna

   - att vidta fortsatta åtgärder för att förbättra deltagandet på arbetsmarknaden bland kvinnor, äldre arbetstagare och missgynnande grupper i syfte att öka det totala antalet arbetstimmar i ekonomin.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Nederländerna att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att öka ansträngningarna i syfte att öka den privata sektorns utgifter för FoU genom att undvika fragmenterade politiska styrningsstrukturer och skapa en enhetlig FoU- och innovationsstrategi inriktad på samspelet mellan privat FoU och offentlig forskning och också på utländska investeringar inom FoU.

ÖSTERRIKE

1. Mot bakgrund av Österrikes genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Österrike har gjort betydande framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Österrike har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en begränsad policyrespons på rådets sysselsättningsrekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Österrikes genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas god praxis för att stimulera innovation, t.ex. genom innovationskuponger, ökad budget för FoU i linje med 3-procentsmålet, inrättandet av en klimat- och energifond samt det framgångsrika genomförandet och vidareutvecklingen av landets flexicuritymodell.

5. Österrike bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: ökning av deltagandet på arbetsmarknaden bland äldre arbetstagare och förbättring av mindre gynnande ungdomars färdigheter och anställbarhet. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Österrike

   - att ytterligare förbättra incitamenten för äldre arbetstagare att fortsätta arbeta genom att införa en omfattande strategi för bl.a. arbetsrelaterad fortbildning, anpassning av arbetsvillkoren och en uppstramning av villkoren förtidspensionering, samt att förbättra utsatta ungdomars utbildningsresultat.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Österrike att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att stärka den finanspolitiska anpassningen för att uppnå budgetbalans före 2010; att öka konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn, särskilt inom de fria yrkena; att stärka entreprenörskapsutbildningen; att fastställa ytterligare strategier och åtgärder för att minska utsläppen; att ta itu med könsuppdelningen på arbetsmarknaden, bland annat genom att förbättra tillgången till barnomsorg.

POLEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Polens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Polen har gjort begränsade framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007 och begränsade framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en blandad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Polens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas den vikt som lagts vid att främja entreprenörskap, de åtgärder som inletts för att minska skattetrycket på arbete, prioriterandet av aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder och de anslag som beviljats för detta, samt den starka anknytning som prioriteringarna i det nationella reformprogrammet har till EU-finansiering.

5. Polen bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: ett starkare engagemang för att ta itu med de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet, kraftfulla åtgärder för att förbättra lagstiftningen och främja öppnandet av marknaderna för nätverksindustrierna, ett snabbt genomförande av FoU- reformerna, ytterligare åtgärder för att ta itu med den låga sysselsättningsgraden bland äldre arbetstagare, bättre inriktning hos de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna på de mest utsatta grupperna och införande av strategin för livslångt lärande. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Polen

   - att stärka budgetkonsolideringen samt att komplettera det nominella "ankaret" för underskottet i de offentliga finanserna (dvs. "taket" för underskottet) med ytterligare mekanismer för att stärka kontrollen över utgifterna,

   - att stärka ramarna för konkurrens inom nätverksindustrierna och därvid även se över tillsynsmyndigheternas roll samt med kraft fortsätta liberaliseringen av energimarknaderna,

   - att fortsätta reformerna i den offentliga forskningssektorn i syfte att stimulera FoU och innovation och genomföra ramarna för FoU inom den privata sektorn för att på så sätt kunna dra största möjliga nytta av utländska direktinvesteringar,

   - att, i syfte att ta fram en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, bygga ut arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna, särskilt för äldre personer och de grupper som är mest sårbara för fattigdom, se över förmånssystemen för att stärka incitamenten att arbeta, införa strategin för livslångt lärande, och modernisera utbildningssystemen med hänsyn till arbetsmarknadens behov.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Polen att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande

utmaningar: att uppgradera transportinfrastrukturen; att påskynda förfarandena för registrering av nya företag; att säkerställa ett snabbt genomförande av e-förvaltningsprogrammen; att förbättra införlivandet av inremarknadslagstiftningen; att förbättra tillgången till barnomsorg.

PORTUGAL

1. Mot bakgrund av Portugals genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Portugal har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Portugal har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Portugals genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas de framsteg som gjorts med att rätta till obalanserna i de offentliga finanserna och främja hållbara reformer av den offentliga förvaltningen, med pensions- och sjukvårdsreformen och med frigörandet av företagens potential, samt genomförandet av teknologiplanen.

5. Portugal bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: konsolidering av de offentliga finanserna samtidigt som deras kvalitet och hållbarhet förbättras de offentliga medlen inriktas på att öka Portugals tillväxtpotential, förbättring av utbildningssystemets effektivitet, särskilt genom att höja utbildningsnivån och minska antalet ungdomar som lämnar skolan i förtid, samt modernisering av anställningsskyddet för att hålla tillbaka segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Portugal

   - att i samband med att landet fortsätter arbetet med att rätta till obalanserna i de offentliga finanserna och reformera den offentliga förvaltningen styra om offentliga utgifter i riktning mot mer tillväxtbefrämjande användningar, samtidigt som en fast kontroll bibehålls över utgifterna sammantaget,

   - att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att kraftigt höja utbildningssystemets effektivitet, särskilt genom att höja unga människors utbildningsnivå, bekämpa problemet med att ungdomar lämnar skolan i förtid och utveckla ett yrkesutbildningssystem som är anpassat till arbetsmarknadens behov och grundat på den nationella ramen för kvalifikationer,

   - att fortsätta arbetet med att modernisera systemet för anställningstrygghet, bland annat genom ny lagstiftning för att minska den kraftiga segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden, inom ramen för strategin för flexicurity.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Portugal att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar för framtiden: att på ett varaktigt sätt minska landets bytesbalansunderskott; att driva på genomförandet av teknologiplanen, befästa kopplingarna mellan forskning, högre utbildning och industri, och involvera den

offentliga sektorn i högre grad; att sörja för effektiv konkurrens, särskilt på energimarknaderna och marknaderna för finansiella tjänster; att fortsätta att genomföra ett program för bättre lagstiftning och särskilt stärka konsekvensbedömningssystemet; att minska förseningarna i införlivandet av EU-lagstiftning med den nationella lagstiftningen; att utforma och genomföra de åtgärder som krävs för att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser; att fortsätta att ta itu med faktorer som undergräver den sociala sammanhållningen.

RUMÄNIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Rumäniens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av landets nationella reformprogram samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Generellt sett inriktar sig det nationella reformprogrammet på de rätta utmaningarna. På vissa viktiga områden, t.ex. stärkandet av den administrativa kapaciteten och förbättring av företagsklimatet, saknas dock ambitioner i programmet. På andra områden saknas ibland information om åtgärdernas innehåll och tidsgränserna och budgetstödet för dessa, vilket gör det svårt att bedöma om åtgärderna kommer att resultera i några lösningar på de problem och utmaningar som konstaterats.

3. Bland de positiva inslagen i programmet bör särskilt nämnas initiativen för att införa utgiftsramar på medellång sikt, minska lönebikostnaderna och reformera forskningsstrukturerna.

4. Rumänien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att åtgärda bristerna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: stärkande av den administrativa kapaciteten, åtgärder mot överhettning, bättre budgetplanering och utgiftskvalitet, minskning av onödig byråkrati och aktivering av arbetskraftsutbudet samt höjning av kompetensnivån. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Rumänien

   - att snarast stärka den administrativa kapaciteten på både central och lokal förvaltningsnivå genom att bygga upp effektiva funktioner för reglering, kontroll och tillsyn,

   - att undvika en konjunkturförstärkande finanspolitik för att hålla tillbaka det växande bytesbalansunderskottet och inflationstrycket, hålla löneutvecklingen i linje med produktivitetstillväxten och förbättra budgetplaneringen och budgetutnyttjandet och de offentliga finansernas kvalitet genom att se över sammansättningen av de offentliga utgifterna samt minska det statliga stödet och omfördela det till horisontella mål,

   - att vidta brådskande åtgärder för att avsevärt minska de administrativa förfarandena och förseningarna i utfärdandet av tillstånd som ett led i en samordnad politik för bättre lagstiftning i syfte att förbättra företagsklimatet; detta kommer också att bidra till kampen mot korruption,

   - att genomföra en integrerad strategi för att öka sysselsättningen, förvärvsfrekvensen och produktiviteten, särskilt genom att påskynda reformerna inom utbildningssystemet så att det bättre motsvarar arbetsmarknadens behov, genom att minska antalet ungdomar som lämnar skolan i förtid, genom att kraftigt öka vuxenutbildningen och genom att omvandla självförsörjande/delvis självförsörjande jordbruk till hållbar sysselsättning.

5. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Rumänien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande: att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att slå vakt om de offentliga finansernas långsiktiga hållbarhet, i synnerhet med avseende på potentiella risker när det gäller tillräckliga och hållbara pensioner; att förbättra åtgärderna för att ta itu med splittringen inom

forskningen samtidigt som man ser till att planerade ökningar av den offentliga finansieringen av forskningen ger en verklig avkastning genom att beslutsamt genomföra den nationella FoU- och innovationsstrategin och regelbundet övervaka resultaten av denna; att sörja för en mera integrerad strategi för utveckling av infrastrukturen och införande av IKT; att öka ansträngningarna för att bekämpa problemet med odeklarerat arbete; att förbättra de offentliga arbetsförmedlingarnas effektivitet och geografiska räckvidd, särskilt för att bistå utsatta grupper.

SLOVENIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Sloveniens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Slovenien har gjort goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Slovenien har också gjort vissa framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar en viss policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar emellertid inte specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Sloveniens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas arbetsmarknadsparternas deltagande vid utarbetandet av alla stora arbetsmarknadsreformer, insatserna för att stärka kopplingarna mellan utbildnings- och stipendiesystem och ekonomin, förkortningen av den tid det tar att starta nya företag samt minskningen av den administrativa bördan. Sloveniens anslutning till euroområdet är ett centralt framsteg på det makroekonomiska området.

5. Slovenien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: fortsatt pensionsreform och effektivt genomförande av strategin för aktivt åldrande samt en mera flexibel arbetsmarknad kombinerat med en mera effektiv individanpassad strategi vid genomförandet av de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Slovenien

   - att vidta ytterligare åtgärder för att stärka reformerna av pensionssystemet och främja ett aktivt åldrande, med tanke på att få upp sysselsättningsnivån hos äldre människor och förbättra de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet på lång sikt,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, främja flexiblare anställningsavtal och förbättra arbetsförmedlingarnas effektivitet, särskilt i fråga om personer med dåliga utsikter till anställning, för att motverka en segmentering av arbetsmarknaden som huvudsakligen drabbar ungdomar.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Slovenien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att utforma en effektiv forsknings- och innovationsstrategi och säkerställa dess effektiva genomförande; att, även i syfte att hålla tillbaka inflationen, stärka konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn, med särskilt tonvikt på detaljhandeln, finansiella tjänster, försörjningstjänster och tjänster inom de fria yrkena; att förbättra genomförandet av energieffektivitetsåtgärder, särskilt med avseende på koldioxidutsläpp och ännu ej uppfyllda Kyotomål; att genomföra de ambitiösa planerna för att stärka kopplingarna mellan utbildningssystemet och arbetsmarknaden.

SLOVAKIEN

1. Mot bakgrund av Slovakiens genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Slovakien har gjort vissa framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Slovakien har gjort begränsade framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en blandad policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Ytterligare reformer är nödvändiga för att öka FoU- och utbildningsanslagen, genomföra strategier på det mikroekonomiska planet, ta itu med långtidsarbetslösheten och fullfölja utbildningsreformen. Rapporten visar en blandad policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Slovakiens genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas den förutsedda minskningen av underskottet i de offentliga finanserna till under 3 % av BNP under 2007, antagandet av ett antal strategidokument på områdena för FoU och innovation, energieffektivitet och förnybar energi, det partiella genomförandet av systemet med en enda kontaktpunkt *one-stop shop*) för nystartade företag, omarbetningen av arbetslagstiftningen, antagandet av strategin för livslångt lärande samt insatserna för att förändra de aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärderna så att de stämmer bättre överens med utvecklingen på arbetsmarknaden.

5. Slovakien bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: att öka anslagen till utbildning, FoU och innovation, förbättra regelsystemet, ta itu med långtidsarbetslösheten, fullfölja reformen av utbildningssystemet och höja kvaliteten på systemet i linje med arbetsmarknadens behov. Mot denna bakgrund rekommenderas Slovakien

   - att omfördela resurserna för utbildning, FoU och innovation, och vederbörligen genomföra en enhetlig FoU- och innovationsstrategi med särskild inriktning på institutionella reformer av den offentliga forskningssektorn och kraftig förbättring av samarbetet mellan näringsliv och forskning,

   - att förbättra regelsystemet, särskilt genom att införa en omfattande strategi för bättre lagstiftning som omfattar såväl en konsekvensbedömning som en förenkling av den gällande lagstiftningen,

   - att, inom ramen för en integrerad strategi för flexicurity, genomföra en strategi för livslångt lärande som är anpassad efter arbetsmarknadens behov, fullfölja reformen av utbildingssystemet såväl vad gäller grundskola och gymnasium som högre utbildning i syfte att förbättra kvalifikations- och kompetensnivån, samt öka tillträdet till arbetsmarknaden, särskilt för långtidsarbetslösa och utsatta grupper.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Slovakien att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande: att

fortsätta att utveckla strategin för informations- och kommunikationsteknik (särskilt för bredbandsinfrastruktur); att fullt ut genomföra systemet med en enda kontaktpunkt (*one-stop shop*) för nystartade företag; att införa utbildning i entreprenörskap; att öka konkurrensen inom energiförsörjningen; att ta itu med klyftorna mellan män och kvinnor när det gäller löner och sysselsättning; att ta fram en strategi för aktivt åldrande; att skapa sysselsättningsmöjligheter för ungdomar.

FINLAND

1. Mot bakgrund av Finlands genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Finland har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Finland har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en viss respons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta. Rapporten tar också specifikt upp de rekommendationer som rådet riktade till medlemsstaterna i euroområdet.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Finlands genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas de pågående reformerna för att ytterligare förbättra det nationella innovationssystemets funktion samt ökningen i sysselsättningsnivån för äldre människor.

5. Det kommer att vara viktigt för Finland att under perioden för genomförandet av det nationella reformprogrammet inrikta sig på följande utmaningar: att gå vidare med reformer som syftar till att stärka konkurrensen och förbättra produktiviteten i tjänstesektorn och därigenom få ned de höga priserna; att vidta sådana åtgärder som krävs för att landet ska nå sitt Kyotomål; att gå vidare med reformerna för att komma till rätta med flaskhalsarna på arbetsmarknaden, särskilt med tanke på att få ned den höga strukturarbetslösheten (i synnerhet arbetslösheten bland lågutbildade arbetstagare och bland ungdomar) och med beaktande av det bidrag som ekonomisk migration kan ge.

SVERIGE

1. Mot bakgrund av Sveriges genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Sverige har gjort mycket goda framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Sverige har också gjort mycket goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på de områden som rådet angav att landet borde inrikta sig på.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Sveriges genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas handlingsplanen för regelförenklingsarbetet och framstegen med att förbättra konsekvensbedömningssystemet, öka arbetskraftsutbudet, minska arbetslösheten, gå över till en hållbar användning av energi och öka de offentliga investeringarna i forskning och utveckling.

5. Det kommer att vara viktigt för Sverige att inrikta sig på följande: att vidta ytterligare regleringsåtgärder för att stärka konkurrensen, särskilt i tjänstesektorn; att inrikta sig på att genomföra – och bedöma konsekvenserna av – den senaste tidens reformer för att stärka incitamenten att arbeta, för att ta itu med ungdomsarbetslösheten, för att höja sysselsättningsgraden bland invandrare och för att verka för att personer som uppbär ersättningar som är relaterade till ohälsa återintegreras i arbetslivet.

FÖRENADE KUNGARIKET

1. Mot bakgrund av Förenade kungarikets genomföranderapport 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Förenade kungariket har gjort betydande framsteg i genomförandet av sitt nationella reformprogram under perioden 2005–2007. Förenade kungariket har gjort goda framsteg i riktning mot att uppfylla de åtaganden på de fyra områdena för prioriterade åtgärder som gjordes vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006.

3. Genomföranderapporten visar en god policyrespons på rådets rekommendationer. Den visar också en god policyrespons på de ytterligare områden som rådet i sina slutsatser angav att landet borde beakta.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i Förenade kungarikets genomföranderapport 2007 bör särskilt nämnas planerna på en integrerad strategi för sysselsättning och kompetens, ansatserna till att skapa ett företagsvänligt regelsystem och de långsiktiga energipolitiska planerna.

5. Förenade kungariket bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta utmaningarna på följande policyområden i det nationella reformprogrammet: behovet av en förbättring av kompetensnivån för att öka produktiviteten och stödja dem som är missgynnade på arbetsmarknaden. Mot bakgrund av detta rekommenderas Förenade kungariket

   - att genomföra de senaste planerna på att kraftigt öka kompetensnivån och fastställa en integrerad strategi för sysselsättning och kompetens för att öka produktiviteten och öka möjligheterna för missgynnade grupper.

6. Det kommer dessutom att vara viktigt för Förenade kungariket att inrikta sig på följande utmaningar för framtiden: att stegvis öka utbudet av bostäder för att på medellång sikt ta itu med efterfrågetrycket; att se till att utvecklingen går i riktning mot Förenade kungarikets mål för FoU-intensitet genom ett fullständigt genomförande av slutsatserna från den senaste översynen av FoU och innovation, särskilt genom ökad hänsyn till tjänstesektorns särskilda behov.

MEDLEMSSTATERNA I EUROOMRÅDET

1. Mot bakgrund av euroområdets medlemsstaters genomföranderapporter 2007 och kommissionens bedömning av framstegen i genomförandet av centrala strukturreformer samt på grundval av de integrerade riktlinjerna för tillväxt och sysselsättning är nedanstående slutsatser lämpliga.

2. Euroområdets medlemsstaters genomföranderapporter visar att staterna i fråga har gjort vissa framsteg i genomförandet av åtgärder avsedda att förbättra euroområdets funktion.

3. Ytterligare omfattande reformer krävs för att uppfylla rekommendationerna på det mikroekonomiska området och sysselsättningsområdet. Framstegen under 2007 på det makroekonomiska området måste upprätthållas.

4. Bland de positiva inslagen i euroområdets medlemsstaters genomföranderapporter 2007 bör särskilt nämnas budgetkonsolideringen under 2007, genomförandet av lagstiftning för att främja integrering av finansmarknaderna och införandet av löneförhandlingssystem som i högre grad bidrar till löneflexibilitet i vissa medlemsstater.

5. Medlemsstaterna i euroområdet bör ge högsta prioritet åt att möta följande utmaningar: hållbarhet i de offentliga finanserna (med tanke på hållbara offentliga finansers betydelse för tillväxten), stärkt konkurrens på produkt- och tjänstemarknaderna (särskilt på de senare), finansiell integration, stärkt konkurrens på området finansiella tjänster till privatpersoner och mindre företag i syfte att underlätta anpassningar och förbättra prisflexibiliteten, lämplig löneutveckling totalt sett och på sektors-, regions- och yrkesnivå samt flexicurity på arbetsmarknaderna och större arbetskraftsmobilitet i syfte att underlätta anpassningar på arbetsmarknaderna.

6. Vid sidan av de landsspecifika rekommendationerna rekommenderas medlemsstaterna i euroområdet mot denna bakgrund

   - att fortsätta budgetkonsolideringen i riktning mot sina mål på medellång sikt enligt stabilitets- och tillväxtpakten och att därvid sträva efter att uppnå en årlig strukturell anpassning motsvarande åtminstone 0,5 % av BNP som riktmärke,

   - att förbättra de offentliga finansernas kvalitet genom att se över de offentliga utgifterna och beskattningen i syfte att öka produktivitet och innovation och därigenom bidra till ekonomisk tillväxt och finanspolitisk hållbarhet,

   - att effektivt genomföra åtgärder för att stärka konkurrensen, särskilt i tjänstesektorn, och att bygga ut sådana åtgärder som syftar till att främja en fullständig integrering av finansmarknaderna och konkurrensen på området finansiella tjänster till privatpersoner och mindre företag, och stärka stabilitets- och övervakningsarrangemangen,

   - att öka flexibiliteten och tryggheten på arbetsmarknaden, bl.a. genom att genomföra flexicuritystrategier, genom att i högre grad anpassa löneutvecklingen

till produktivitetsutvecklingen och genom att vidta åtgärder för att främja arbetskraftsmobilitet över lands- och yrkesgränser.

7. Inför framtiden kommer det också att vara viktigt för euroområdet att ytterligare stärka styrningen, för att maximera synergin mellan olika åtgärder (som är kraftigare i en monetär union) och utveckla det politiska egenansvaret för reformerna. Riktlinjerna för de offentliga finanserna från eurogruppens möte i Berlin i april 2007 är ett välkommet steg i detta avseende och ett liknande tillvägagångssätt bör användas på andra områden. En stärkning av euroområdets representation i internationella finansinstitut och finansforum skulle ligga i linje med dess potential som ett centrum för stabilitet och tillväxt i den globala ekonomin.

EUROOPAN YHTEISÖJEN KOMISSIO

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KOMISSION TIEDONANTO EUROOPPA-NEUVOSTOLLE

KASVUA JA TYÖLLISYYTTÄ KOSKEVAT YHDENNETYT SUUNTAVIIVAT (2008–2010)

joihin sisältyy

KOMISSION SUOSITUS

jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajoiksi suuntaviivoiksi (EY:n perustamissopimuksen 99 artiklan nojalla)

ja

Ehdotus:

NEUVOSTON PÄÄTÖS

jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivoista (EY:n perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan nojalla)

(komission esittämä)

SISÄLLYSLUETTELO

PERUSTELUT 3

EU:N TALOUDEN TILA 4

1 osa – Komission suositus talouspolitiikan laajoiksi suuntaviivoiksi (2008–2010) 7

A jakso – Kasvua ja työllisyyttä edistävä makrotalouspolitiikka 8

A.1 Makrotalouspolitiikka kasvua ja työllisyyttä edistävien olosuhteiden luomiseksi 8

A.2 Dynaamisen ja toimivan euroalueen varmistaminen 11

B jakso – Euroopan kasvupotentiaalia lisäävät mikrotaloudelliset uudistukset 14

B.1 Osaaminen ja innovointi – kestävän kasvun veturit 14

B.2 Euroopasta houkuttelevampi paikka investoijille ja työntekijöille 19

2 osa – Työllisyyden suuntaviivat (2008–2010) 26

LIITE 29

1. Useampien ihmisten houkutteleminen työelämään ja pitäminen työelämässä, työvoiman tarjonnan lisääminen sekä sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmien nykyaikaistaminen 30

2. Työntekijöiden ja yritysten sopeutumiskyvyn parantaminen 33

3. Inhimilliseen pääomaan tehtävien investointien lisääminen parantamalla koulutusta ja ammattitaitoa 35

PERUSTELUT

Valtioiden ja hallitusten päämiehet uudistivat keväällä 2005 pidetyssä Eurooppa-neuvoston kokouksessa Lissabonin strategian ja asettivat kasvun ja työllisyyden keskeiselle sijalle. He jakoivat Lissabonin strategian kolmivuotiskausiin ja vahvistivat omistajuutta ja vastuuvelvollisuutta erottamalla selvästi toisistaan uudistukset, jotka jäsenvaltioiden olisi toteutettava, ja uudistukset, joita yhteisön olisi johdettava. Neuvosto hyväksyi yhdeksi strategian täytäntöönpanon välineeksi yhdennetyt suuntaviivat ja antoi tarvittavat säädökset EY:n perustamissopimuksen 99 ja 128 artiklan nojalla. Näiden suuntaviivojen tarkoituksena on ohjata jäsenvaltioita, kun ne toteuttavat kansallisia uudistuksia kansallisten uudistusohjelmien kautta. Yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen voimassaolo päättyy ensimmäisen kolmivuotiskauden lopussa, ja siksi ne on uudistettava seuraavaksi kaudeksi. Lissabonin strategian uudelleen käynnistämisellä keväällä 2005 Eurooppa käännettiin kohti kestävää kasvua ja työllisyyttä.

Uudistetun Lissabonin strategian (2005–2008) ensimmäisen kauden aikana jäsenvaltiot ovat nopeuttaneet rakenneuudistusten täytäntöönpanoa, vaikkakin uudistusvauhti ja uudistusten kattavuus vaihtelevat jäsenvaltioittain. Vaikka EU:n talouden paraneminen johtuu pääasiassa suhdannetekijöistä, Lissabonin strategian tapaiset uudistukset ovat lisänneet jäsenvaltioiden talouksien kasvumahdollisuuksia. Nämä uudistukset ovat vahvistaneet Euroopan taloutta suhteessa ulkoisiin häiriöihin, kuten energian ja hyödykkeiden hintojennousuihin ja vaihtokurssien vaihteluihin. Jäsenvaltioiden talouksien yhdentyminen edelleen ja taloussuhdanteiden lähentyminen erityisesti euroalueella mahdollistavat jäsenvaltioiden tarpeita paremmin vastaavan rahapolitiikan.

Tämän perusteella voidaan todeta, että strategia on yleisesti ottaen nopeuttanut uudistusvauhtia, auttanut jäsenvaltioita toteuttamaan joskus vaikeita mutta tarpeellisia muutoksia, jotta voitaisiin vastata globalisaation haasteisiin. Lissabonin strategian uusi hallintotapa, joka korostaa Euroopan ja jäsenvaltioiden välistä yhteistyötä, on osoittautunut onnistuneeksi. Yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen riippumattomassa arvioinnissa pääteltiin, että suuntaviivat muodostavat kattavat ja avoimet puitteet, joiden piiriin kuuluu kasvuun ja työllisyyteen Euroopassa liittyvä olennainen politiikan kehitys. Arvioinnissa pääteltiin myös, että sidosryhmät haluavat keskittyä täytäntöönpanoon, sillä suuntaviivat ovat edelleen tarkoituksenmukaiset. Yhdennetyt suuntaviivat täyttävät näin ollen tehtävänsä eikä niitä tarvitse tarkistaa.

EU:ta ja sen jäsenvaltioita on kuitenkin vielä valmennettava globalisaatioon ja vahvistettava taloudellisen menestyksen perustaa pitkällä ja keskipitkällä aikavälillä. Samalla niiden on pysyttävä nopeiden yhteiskunnallisten muutosten (pidempi työura, entistä monimuotoisemmat perherakenteet, uudet liikkuvuuden muodot ja monimuotoisuus) tahdissa. EU:n on mukautettava paremmin nykyisiä toimintalinjojaan ja välineitään ja käytettävä toimiensa pohjana myös uusia politiikkoja, kuten Euroopan globalisaatiorahastoa, voidakseen vastata paremmin niiden ihmisten oikeutettuihin huolenaiheisiin, joihin kauppavirtojen muutokset ja taloudelliset ja sosiaaliset muutokset vaikuttavat kielteisesti. Tavoite, jonka mukaan EU:sta kehitetään dynaaminen ja kilpailukykyinen osaamistalous, on edelleen ajankohtainen. Tämän perusteella sosiaalista ulottuvuutta, joustoturvaa koskevia politiikkoja, energiaa ja ilmastonmuutosta sekä koulutusta ja ammattitaitoa on pidettävä entistä tärkeämpinä tekijöinä Euroopan markkinoiden uudistamiseksi, innovoinnin edistämiseksi ja uusien mahdollisuuksien varmistamiseksi kansalaisille osaamisyhteiskunnassa. Lissabonin strategia on jo koonnut yhteen eri toimintalinjoja, minkä ansiosta se tarjoaa entistä kattavamman

näkemyksen EU:n ja jäsenvaltioiden mahdollisuuksista tehdä yhteistyötä Eurooppaa odottavien monimutkaisten ongelmien ratkaisemiseksi. Seuraavan kauden yhteisenä tavoitteena olisi oltava Lissabonin strategian mukaisten välineiden täysimääräinen käyttö, mukaan luettuina neuvoston vuonna 2007 antamat, yhdennettyihin suuntaviivoihin liittyvät maakohtaiset suositukset, jäljellä olevien uudistusten toteuttamisen nopeuttamiseksi.

Vuosien 2008–2010 yhdennetyt suuntaviivat esitetään kahdessa osassa yhdessä kattavassa asiakirjassa.

1 osa – Talouspolitiikan laajat suuntaviivat

A jaksossa käsitellään makrotaloudellisten politiikkojen vaikutusta. B jaksossa kiinnitetään huomiota toimenpiteisiin ja politiikkoihin, jotka unionin ja jäsenvaltioiden on toteutettava tehdäkseen Euroopasta houkuttelevamman paikan investoida ja työskennellä sekä lisätäkseen kasvun edellyttämiä osaamista ja innovointia.

2 osa – Työllisyyden suuntaviivat: Yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen tähän osaan sisältyy perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan mukainen työllisyyden suuntaviivoja koskeva neuvoston päätösehdotus, josta kuullaan Euroopan parlamenttia, Euroopan talous- ja sosiaalikomiteaa sekä alueiden komiteaa.

Sekä talous- että työllisyyspolitiikka ovat jäsenvaltioiden kannalta yhteistä etua koskevia asioita (perustamissopimuksen 99 ja 126 artikla). Monenvälisen valvonnan ja talous- ja työllisyyspolitiikkoja koskevan tiiviimmän yhteistyön varmistamiseksi jäsenvaltiot raportoivat näiden suuntaviivojen perusteella toteutetuista toimenpiteistä kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissa (ja vuotuisissa täytäntöönpanokertomuksissa). Näiden kertomusten perusteella neuvosto voi perustamissopimuksen 99 ja 128 artiklan suomia mahdollisuuksia käyttäen päättää jäsenvaltiolle annettavista suosituksista, jos todetaan, että kyseisen jäsenvaltion talous- tai työllisyyspolitiikka ei ole yhdennettyjen suuntaviivojen mukaista.

EU:N TALOUDEN TILA

Talouden tila on ollut suotuisampi vuodesta 2005, jolloin kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskeva Lissabonin strategia käynnistettiin uudelleen. Tosin viime kuukausina on ilmaantunut merkkejä riskien lisääntymisestä. Kasvu kiihtyi lähes 3 prosenttiin vuonna 2007 erityisesti kotimaisen kulutuksen ansiosta. Näin Eurooppa on paremmassa asemassa suhteessa ulkoisiin häiriöihin. Viimeaikainen rahoitusmarkkinoiden kuohunta ja Yhdysvaltain talouden hidastuminen ovat kuitenkin huomattavasti lisänneet riskejä, ja ennusteiden mukaan kasvu hidastuu vuosina 2008–2009. Rahoituksen kiristyminen hidastaa erityisesti rakennusalan investointien kasvua, kun taas työmarkkinoiden hyvä tilanne tukee yksityisen kulutuksen kasvua. Vaikka talouden tilan viimeaikainen koheneminen johtuu pääasiassa suhdannetekijöistä, on todisteita myös rakenteellisista tekijöistä, jotka liittyvät EU:n jäsenvaltioissa aikaisemmin toteutettuihin uudistuksiin. Rakenteelliset parannukset ovat olleet erityisen ilmeisiä työmarkkinoilla, sillä työttömyysaste on supistunut alle 7 prosenttiin ja työllisyysaste lähenee 65 prosenttia. Varsinkin naisten ja vanhempien työntekijöiden työllisyys on lisääntynyt voimakkaasti. Vuoden 2005 puolivälin jälkeen tuottavuus on kasvanut EU:ssa, ja vaikka suurin osa tästä kasvun nopeutumisesta johtuukin suhdannetekijöistä, näyttää siltä, että vuosikymmenen mittainen tuotannon kasvun supistuminen on keskeytynyt. On rohkaisevaa, että työpaikkojen luominen ja tuottavuuden parantuminen ovat tapahtuneet yhtä aikaa ensimmäisen kerran kymmeneen vuoteen.

Viime vuosien suotuisasta kehityksestä huolimatta viimeaikaisten kansainvälisten häiriöiden johdosta taloutta on vahvistettava ja olemassa olevaa liikkumavaraa on käytettävä työvoiman käytön ja tuottavuuden parantamiseksi. Näyttää valitettavasti siltä, että uudistusvauhti hidastuu eräissä maissa. EU:n työllisyysaste on edelleen alhainen kilpailijoihimme verrattuna. Lisäksi erityisesti pitkäaikais- ja nuorisotyöttömyys ovat aivan liian korkeita. Vaikka monet teollisuusyritykset ovat olleet riittävän tuotantokykyisiä vastatakseen kansainväliseen kilpailuun, tuottavuuden kasvu on pysähtynyt useilla palvelualoilla. Tulevaisuutta tarkastellen voidaan todeta, että väestön vanhenemisen aiheuttamat talous- ja talousarviovaikutukset lähenevät nopeasti suurten ikäluokkien tullessa eläkeikään monissa maissa. Tämän vuoksi on välttämätöntä supistaa nopeasti julkisen talouden velkaa ja uudistaa eläke- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmiä. Uutena haasteena on parantaa rahoitusjärjestelmän kykyä vastata häiriöihin vuonna 2007. Rahoitusmarkkinoiden avoimuus, tehokkaat kilpailusäännöt sekä asianmukainen sääntely ja valvonta ovat jatkossakin keskeisiä luottamuksen ja toimintakyvyn edellytyksiä. Samoin keskeisellä sijalla ovat työmarkkinaosapuolten neuvotteluihin perustuvat palkkaratkaisut, joissa on otettu huomioon työllisyyden kasvu ja makrotalouden vakaus.

EU:lla on nyt mahdollisuus toteuttaa ja jopa nopeuttaa rakenneuudistuksia. Poliittisena haasteena on välttää tyytymistä nykyiseen tilanteeseen ja jatkaa rakenteellisten heikkouksien ratkaisemista, sillä ne estävät työpaikkojen luomista, innovointia ja teknologian alan uudistusten omaksumista ja rajoittavat EU:n kykyä vastata kansainvälisiin häiriöihin. Samalla on toteutettava sellaisia makrotaloudellisia politiikkoja, joilla varmistetaan vakaus, hillitään inflaatiopaineita ja supistetaan julkisen talouden alijäämiä.

KASVUA JA TYÖLLISYYTTÄ KOSKEVAT YHDENNETYT SUUNTAVIIVAT (2008–2010)

Makrotaloudelliset suuntaviivat

(1) Talouden vakauden turvaaminen kestävän kasvun edistämiseksi.

(2) Talouden ja julkisen talouden kestävyyden turvaaminen perustana työllisyyden lisäämiselle.

(3) Kasvuun ja työllisyyteen suuntautuvan tehokkaan resurssien kohdentamisen edistäminen.

(4) Makrotaloudellista vakautta ja kasvua tukevan palkkakehityksen varmistaminen.

(5) Makrotalous-, rakenne- ja työvoimapolitiikkojen välisen johdonmukaisuuden parantaminen.

(6) Dynaamisen ja toimivan talous- ja rahaliiton edistäminen.

Mikrotaloudelliset suuntaviivat

(7) Erityisesti yksityissektorin T&K-investointien lisääminen ja parantaminen.

(8) Kaikentyyppisen innovoinnin helpottaminen.

(9) Tieto- ja viestintätekniikan leviämisen ja tehokkaan käytön edistäminen sekä osallistavan tietoyhteiskunnan luominen.

(10) Eurooppalaisen teollisuuspohjan kilpailuetujen vahvistaminen.

(11) Resurssien kestävän käytön edistäminen sekä ympäristönsuojelun ja kasvun välisen synergian lujittaminen.

(12) Sisämarkkinoiden laajentaminen ja syventäminen.

(13)	Avointen ja kilpailukykyisten markkinoiden varmistaminen Euroopassa ja sen ulkopuolella ja globalisaation hyödyntäminen.
(14)	Kilpailukykyisemmän toimintaympäristön luominen ja yksityisen aloitteellisuuden edistäminen paremman sääntelyn avulla.
(15)	Yrittäjähenkisemmän kulttuurin edistäminen ja pk-yrityksiä tukevan ympäristön luominen.
(16)	Eurooppalaisen infrastruktuurin laajentaminen, parantaminen ja yhdistäminen sekä etusijalle asetettujen rajat ylittävien hankkeiden loppuun saattaminen.
Työllisyyden suuntaviivat	
(17)	Täystyöllisyyteen, työn laadun ja tuottavuuden parantamiseen sekä sosiaalisen ja alueellisen yhteenkuuluvuuden lujittamiseen tähtäävien työllisyyspolitiikkojen täytäntöönpano.
(18)	Elämänkaariajattelun edistäminen työelämässä.
(19)	Osallisuutta edistävien työmarkkinoiden varmistaminen, työn vetovoiman parantaminen ja työnteon tekeminen kannattavaksi työnhakijoille, myös muita heikommassa asemassa oleville, sekä työelämän ulkopuolella oleville henkilöille.
(20)	Työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin vastaamisen parantaminen.
(21)	Joustavuuden edistäminen yhdessä työsuhdeturvan kanssa sekä työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen vähentäminen ottaen työmarkkinaosapuolten asema asianmukaisesti huomioon.
(22)	Työllisyyttä tukevien työvoimakustannusten kehittymisen ja palkanmuodostusmekanismien varmistaminen.
(23)	Inhimilliseen pääomaan tehtävien investointien laajentaminen ja parantaminen.
(24)	Koulutusjärjestelmien mukauttaminen uusiin pätevyysvaatimuksiin.

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Tämän perusteella komissio

– suosittelee EY:n perustamissopimuksen 99 artiklan 2 kohdan mukaisesti seuraavia jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajoja suuntaviivoja ja

– ehdottaa EY:n perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan 2 kohdan mukaisesti seuraavaa neuvoston päätöstä jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivoista.

1 osa

Komission suositus talouspolitiikan laajoiksi suuntaviivoiksi (2008–2010)

KOMISSION SUOSITUS

jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön talouspolitiikan laajoiksi suuntaviivoiksi

A jakso – Kasvua ja työllisyyttä edistävä makrotalouspolitiikka

A.1 Makrotalouspolitiikka kasvua ja työllisyyttä edistävien olosuhteiden luomiseksi

Talouden vakauden turvaaminen työllisyys- ja kasvupotentiaalin lisäämiseksi

Kun makrotalouden vakaus varmistetaan monien talouspolitiikkojen tasapainoisella yhdistelmällä, vakauttamisen haasteisiin olisi vastattava sekä makrotalouden toimenpiteillä että toteuttamalla rakenneuudistuksia hyödyke-, työvoima- ja pääomamarkkinoilla. Tähän voidaan vaikuttaa rahapolitiikalla pitämällä huolta hintavakaudesta ja, mainittua tavoitetta vaarantamatta, tukemalla muita kasvuun ja työllisyyteen liittyviä yleisiä talouspolitiikkoja. Uusille jäsenvaltioille on tärkeää, että raha- ja valuuttakurssipolitiikoilla edistetään lähentymistä. Valuuttakurssijärjestelmät ovat yleisen talous- ja rahapoliittisen kehyksen tärkeä osa, ja niiden avulla pitäisi pyrkiä saavuttamaan kestävä reaalinen ja nimellinen lähentyminen. Uusien jäsenvaltioiden pitäisi pystyä saavuttamaan tavoitteet helpommin osallistumalla ERM II:een asianmukaisessa vaiheessa EU-jäsenyyden alkamisen jälkeen.

Julkisen talouden rahoitusaseman vakauttaminen mahdollistaa automaattisten budjetinvakauttajien suhdanteen yli ulottuvan täyden ja symmetrisen vaikutuksen, mikä edistää tuotannon vakauttamista potentiaaliselle tasolle. Vakaan rahoitusaseman jo saavuttaneiden jäsenvaltioiden haasteena on säilyttää tämä asema. Muiden jäsenvaltioiden on tärkeää toteuttaa kaikki tarvittavat korjaavat toimenpiteet julkisen talouden rahoitusasemaa koskevien keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitteidensa saavuttamiseksi, erityisesti jos taloudelliset edellytykset parantuvat, ja välttää näin myötäsyklinen viritys sekä saavuttaa sellainen asema, jossa on riittävästi pelivaraa automaattisten vakauttajien suhdanteen yli ulottuvan täysimääräisen vaikutuksen varmistamiseksi ennen seuraavaa taloudellista laskukautta. Euroalueella ja ERM II -jäsenvaltioissa olisi saavutettava vuosittain 0,5 prosentin julkisen talouden sopeuttaminen suhteessa BKT:hen (enemmän suotuisamman suhdannetilanteen vallitessa). Vuonna 2005 toteutetun vakaus- ja kasvusopimuksen uudistuksen mukaisesti yksittäisten jäsenvaltioiden julkisen talouden rahoitusasemaa koskevat keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitteet on eriytetty niiden talous- ja budjettipoliittisten asemien monimuotoisuuden ja erilaisten kehityssuuntien sekä julkisen talouden kestävyyteen kohdistuvan riskin huomioon ottamiseksi myös odotettavissa olevia väestönkehitykseen liittyviä muutoksia ennakoiden. Eurooppa-neuvoston 22. maaliskuuta 2005 hyväksymän vakaus- ja kasvusopimuksen uudistamista koskevan kertomuksen mukaisesti kansallisten finanssipoliittisten sääntöjen ja instituutioiden käyttöön ottamisella tai vahvistamisella (seurantamekanismit mukaan luettuina) voidaan tarkoituksenmukaisesti täydentää sopimusta ja tukea sen tavoitteita.

Joillakin jäsenvaltioilla on edessään vielä yksi talouspoliittinen haaste eli toimiminen ympäristössä, jossa talous kuroo umpeen eroa muihin jäsenvaltioihin nähden. Tähän liittyvät eriasteiset vaihtotaseen alijäämät, nopea luottokannan kasvu ja rahoitusmarkkinoiden syventämiskehitys. Kurinalainen finanssipolitiikka, tehokas rahoitusalan valvonta ja kilpailukyvyn edistäminen ovat olennaisia tekijöitä talouden ulkoisen ja sisäisen epätasapainon hillitsemiseksi. Varovainen finanssipolitiikan viritys on tärkeä keino pitää ulkoinen alijäämä tasolla, joka varmistaa ulkoisen rahoituksen saatavuuden. Kurinalaisella finanssipolitiikalla voidaan myös rajoittaa kotimaisen kysynnän huomattavaa kasvua, joka johtaisi jatkuvaan nopeampaan inflaatioon, ja makrotalouden riskejä, jotka voivat aiheuttaa reaalisten vaihtokurssien vaihteluja ja kilpailukyvyn menetyksen pitkittymistä.

Suuntaviiva 1. Talouden vakauden turvaaminen kestävän kasvun edistämiseksi

1. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi noudatettava vakaus- ja kasvusopimuksen mukaisesti keskipitkän aikavälin finanssipoliittisia tavoitteitaan. Niin kauan kuin tavoitetta ei ole saavutettu, niiden olisi toteutettava kaikki tarvittavat korjaavat toimenpiteet sen saavuttamiseksi. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi vältettävä myötäsyklistä finanssipolitiikkaa. Lisäksi niiden jäsenvaltioiden, joilla on liiallinen alijäämä, on ryhdyttävä tehokkaisiin toimiin sen nopeaksi oikaisemiseksi.

2. Jäsenvaltioiden, joiden vaihtotaseen alijäämä on kestämättömällä pohjalla, olisi pyrittävä korjaamaan sitä toteuttamalla rakenteellisia uudistuksia ja edistämällä ulkoista kilpailukykyä sekä tarvittaessa korjaamaan sitä finanssipolitiikan avulla. Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Dynaamisen ja toimivan talous- ja rahaliiton edistäminen” (nro 6).

Talouden ja julkisen talouden kestävyyden turvaaminen perustana työllisyyden lisäämiselle

Euroopan väestön ikääntyminen aiheuttaa vakavia ongelmia Euroopan unionin talouden kestävyydelle pitkällä aikavälillä, sillä velkataakka suurenee, potentiaalinen tuotos henkeä kohti alenee työikäisen väestön vähenemisen vuoksi ja eläkkeiden, sosiaalivakuutusten ja terveydenhoitojärjestelmien rahoitus vaikeutuu. Kuten komission talouden kestävyyttä koskevassa kertomuksessa todettiin, on todennäköistä, että koko EU:n osalta syntyy huomattava julkisen talouden kestävyyttä haittaava kuilu. Useilla jäsenvaltioilla on suuri kestävyyteen liittyvä riski ja monilla muilla jäsenvaltioilla on keskisuuri riski.

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi puututtava ikääntymisen taloudellisiin vaikutuksiin pyrkimällä osana vakiintunutta väestön ikääntymisen vaikutuksia koskevaa kolmiosaista strategiaa vähentämään velkaa riittävän nopeassa tahdissa ja tarjoamaan kannustimia työllisyysasteen korottamiseksi ja työvoiman tarjonnan lisäämiseksi vastapainona työikäisten henkilöiden määrän tulevalle vähenemiselle. Tämän saavuttamiseksi julkista taloutta on vakautettava edelleen, ylittäen viimeaikaisen edistyksen, ja kaikkien jäsenvaltioiden on saavutettava keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitteet. On myös tärkeää nykyaikaistaa sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmiä sen varmistamiseksi, että ne ovat taloudellisesti elinkelpoisia ja toimivat työikäiselle väestölle kannustimina osallistua aktiivisesti työmarkkinoihin, ja pyrkiä samaan aikaan varmistamaan myös, että niiden saatavuutta ja asianmukaisuutta koskevat tavoitteet täyttyvät. Sairauksien ennaltaehkäisy ja terveyden edistäminen auttaisivat lisäämään terveitä elinvuosia ja varmistamaan terveydenhuoltojärjestelmien kestävyyden. Varsinkin sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmien ja työmarkkinoiden välisen vuorovaikutuksen parantaminen voi poistaa vääristymiä, ja kannustaa työssäoloajan pidentämiseen elinajanodotteen kasvun myötä.

Suuntaviiva 2. Talouden ja julkisen talouden kestävyyden turvaaminen perustana työllisyyden lisäämiselle

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi väestön ikääntymisestä aiheutuviin ennakoituihin kustannuksiin varautumiseksi

1. pyrittävä julkisen talouden vahvistamiseksi alentamaan julkista velkaa riittävästi;

2. uudistettava ja vahvistettava eläke-, sosiaaliturva- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmiä sen varmistamiseksi, että ne ovat taloudellisesti elinkelpoisia, sosiaalisesti asianmukaisia ja saatavilla;

3. toteutettava toimenpiteitä työmarkkinoille osallistumisen ja työvoiman tarjonnan lisäämiseksi erityisesti naisten, nuorten ja vanhempien työntekijöiden osalta ja edistettävä elämänkaariajattelun soveltamista työelämään tehtyjen työtuntien lisäämiseksi taloudessa.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Elämänkaariajattelun edistäminen työelämässä” (nro 18 ja 4, 19 sekä 21).

Kasvuun ja työllisyyteen suuntautuvan tehokkaan resurssien kohdentamisen edistäminen

Julkisella sektorilla on oltava hyvin suunnitellut verotus- ja menojärjestelmät, jotka tehostavat resurssien kohdentamista, jotta se voi edistää täysimääräisesti kasvua ja työllisyyttä vaarantamatta talouden vakauden ja kestävyyden tavoitteiden toteutumista. Tähän voidaan päästä suuntaamalla menoja kasvua edistäviin menoluokkiin, kuten tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen (T&K), fyysisiin infrastruktuureihin, ympäristöä säästäviin teknologioihin sekä inhimilliseen pääomaan ja osaamiseen. Jäsenvaltiot voivat myös paremmin valvoa muita menoluokkia menoja koskevien sääntöjen ja tulosbudjetoinnin avulla ja ottamalla käyttöön arviointimekanismeja, joilla varmistetaan, että yksittäiset uudistustoimet ja yleiset uudistuspaketit ovat hyvin suunniteltuja. EU:n talouden tärkeimpänä tavoitteena on varmistaa, että verotusrakenteet ja niiden vuorovaikutus etuusjärjestelmien kanssa lisäävät kasvua kasvattamalla työllisyyttä ja investointeja.

Suuntaviiva 3. Kasvuun ja työllisyyteen suuntautuvan tehokkaan resurssien kohdentamisen edistäminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi talouden vakautta ja kestävyyttä koskevia suuntaviivoja noudattaen ohjattava julkisia menoja kasvua edistäviin menoluokkiin Lissabonin strategian mukaisesti, mukautettava verotusrakenteitaan kasvupotentiaalin lisäämiseksi ja varmistettava, että käytettävissä on mekanismeja julkisten varojen käytön ja toimintapoliittisten tavoitteiden saavuttamisen välisen suhteen arvioimiseksi ja uudistuspakettien yleisen johdonmukaisuuden varmistamiseksi.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Resurssien kestävän käytön edistäminen sekä ympäristönsuojelun ja kasvun välisen synergian lujittaminen” (nro 11).

Kasvun ja vakauden edistäminen ja rakenteellisten uudistusten täydentäminen palkkakehityksen avulla

Palkkakehitys voi edistää vakaita makrotaloudellisia olosuhteita ja työllisyyttä tukevaa politiikkayhdistelmää. Tämä edellyttää, että reaalipalkkojen nousu vastaa keskipitkällä aikavälillä samanaikaista tuottavuuden kasvua ja kannattavuusastetta, joka mahdollistaa tuottavuutta, kapasiteettia ja työllisyyttä edistävät investoinnit. Tämä edellyttää kuitenkin sitä, etteivät tilapäiset tekijät, kuten suhdannevaiheen aiheuttamat vaihtelut tuottavuudessa tai pohjainflaation kertaluonteinen kasvu, johda palkkojen kestämättömään kasvuun ja että palkkakehitys vastaa paikallisten työmarkkinoiden olosuhteita. Maissa, joissa markkinaosuudet ovat laskussa, reaalipalkkojen kasvun olisi alitettava tuottavuuden kasvu kilpailukyvyn palauttamiseksi. Nämä kysymykset on otettava huomioon raha- ja finanssipolitiikasta vastaavien viranomaisten sekä työmarkkinaosapuolten välisessä jatkuvassa vuoropuhelussa ja tietojen vaihdossa makrotaloutta koskevan vuoropuhelun yhteydessä.

Suuntaviiva 4. Makrotaloudellista vakautta ja kasvua tukevan palkkakehityksen varmistaminen

Tätä tarkoitusta varten ja sopeutumiskyvyn parantamiseksi jäsenvaltioiden olisi tuettava oikeiden perusedellytysten luomista palkkaneuvotteluille puuttumatta kuitenkaan työmarkkinaosapuolten tehtäviin ja pyrittävä näin edistämään nimellispalkkojen ja työvoimakustannusten kehitystä, joka vastaa keskipitkällä aikavälillä hintavakautta ja tuottavuuden kehityssuuntaa, ottaen huomioon erot ammattitaidossa ja paikallisissa työmarkkinaolosuhteissa.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Työllisyyttä tukevien työvoimakustannusten kehittymisen ja palkanmuodostusmekanismien varmistaminen” (nro 22).

Johdonmukaisten makrotalous-, rakenne- ja työllisyyspolitiikkojen edistäminen

Terveen makrotalouspolitiikan tarkoituksena on luoda edellytykset työpaikkojen luomiselle ja kasvulle. Julkistalouden vakaan rahoitusaseman kannalta johdonmukaiset rakenneuudistukset ovat välttämättömiä tuottavuuden ja työllisyyden lisäämiseksi keskipitkällä aikavälillä ja auttavat saavuttamaan kasvupotentiaalin täysimääräisesti ja vahvistamaan sitä. Ne edistävät myös julkisen talouden kestävyyttä, vakaata makrotaloutta ja häiriöiden sietokykyä. Samalla on noudatettava asianmukaista makrotalouspolitiikkaa, jotta rakenneuudistuksista saadaan täysi hyöty kasvun ja työllisyyden kannalta. Jäsenvaltioiden yleisissä talousstrategioissa on keskeistä sen varmistaminen, että niillä on johdonmukaiset makrotaloudellisia puitteita tukevat rakennepolitiikat ja päinvastoin. Markkinauudistuksilla on erityisesti parannettava talouden kokonaisvaltaista mukautumis- ja sopeutumiskykyä sekä taloussuhdanteiden muutoksiin että globalisaation tai teknologioiden kehityksen kaltaisiin pitkän aikavälin kehityssuuntiin vastaamiseksi. Tämän takia on tärkeää uudistaa verotus- ja etuusjärjestelmiä työnteon tekemiseksi kannattavaksi ja vältettävä työmarkkinoille osallistumista mahdollisesti heikentäviä toimenpiteitä.

Suuntaviiva 5. Makrotalous-, rakenne- ja työvoimapolitiikkojen välisen johdonmukaisuuden parantaminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi toteutettava työ- ja hyödykemarkkinoiden uudistuksia, jotka samanaikaisesti lisäävät kasvupotentiaalia ja tukevat makrotaloudellisia puitteita lisäämällä työ- ja hyödykemarkkinoiden joustavuutta, tuotannontekijöiden liikkuvuutta ja sopeutumiskykyä vastauksena globalisaation, teknologioiden kehityksen, kysynnässä tapahtuvien muutosten ja suhdannevaihteluiden asettamiin haasteisiin. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi erityisesti vauhditettava vero- ja etuisuusjärjestelmien uudistamista kannustimien parantamiseksi ja työnteon tekemiseksi kannattavaksi, lisättävä työmarkkinoiden sopeutumiskykyä yhdistämällä joustava työllistäminen ja työsuhdeturva sekä parannettava työllistettävyyttä sijoittamalla inhimilliseen pääomaan.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Joustavuuden edistäminen yhdessä työsuhdeturvan kanssa sekä työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen vähentäminen ottaen työmarkkinaosapuolten asema asianmukaisesti huomioon” (nro 21 ja nro 19).

A.2 Dynaamisen ja toimivan euroalueen varmistaminen

Sen jälkeen, kun euroalue luotiin lähes kymmenen vuotta sitten, euro on tuonut taloudellista vakautta euroalueen maihin ja suojannut niitä valuuttakurssivaihteluilta. Kasvu on jatkunut

vaimeana ja maiden välillä on edelleen pitkään jatkuneita kasvu- ja inflaatioeroja. Tämä nostaa esille kysymyksen siitä, toimiiko sisäinen sopeutus euroalueella moitteettomasti, ja antaa ymmärtää, että talouspolitiikat ja hallintorakenteet eivät ehkä ole vielä sopeutuneet täysin, jotta rahaliitosta saataisiin täysimääräinen hyöty. Koska euroalueen maat eivät enää voi luoda riippumattomasti raha- tai valuuttakurssipolitiikkoja, lisäuudistukset ovat keskeisiä kehitettäessä vaihtoehtoisia mekanismeja, jotka auttaisivat maita sopeuttamaan taloutensa häiriötekijöihin ja kilpailukykyyn kohdistuviin haasteisiin.

Euroalueen politiikkayhdistelmän on tuettava talouden kasvua, mutta turvattava myös pitkän aikavälin kestävyys ja vakaus. Nykyisessä taloustilanteessa on tärkeää, että politiikkayhdistelmä lisää kuluttajien ja sijoittajien luottamusta, mikä tarkoittaa sitoutumista keskipitkän aikavälin vakauteen. Finanssipolitiikalla on varmistettava sellainen julkisen talouden rahoitusasema, joka tukee hintavakautta ja jonka pohjalta voidaan yhtäältä varautua väestön ikääntymisen vaikutuksiin ja toisaalta saavuttaa talouskasvua edistävä julkinen meno- ja tulorakenne. Euroalueen jäsenvaltiot sitoutuivat nopeuttamaan sopeutumista kohti keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitetta, jotta useimmat niistä saavuttaisivat keskipitkän aikavälin tavoitteensa vuonna 2008 tai 2009, ja kaikkien jäsenvaltioiden olisi saavutettava kyseiset tavoitteet viimeistään vuonna 2010. Koska julkisen sektorin osuus taloudellisessa toiminnassa on euroalueella suuri, julkisen talouden laadulla on huomattava vaikutus talouden suorituskykyyn. Tämän vuoksi on erittäin tärkeää, että resurssit käytetään kasvua tukevalla tavalla ja että julkisen toiminnan rahoittamisesta aiheutuvat vääristymät ovat mahdollisimman vähäiset. Kattavien rakenneuudistusten ansiosta euroalue voi ajan mittaan lisätä kasvupotentiaaliaan ja varmistaa, että vahvempi kasvu ei luo pohjaa nopeammalle inflaatiolle. Uudistukset, jotka tukevat sopeutumiskykyisempiä työmarkkinoita, lisäävät kilpailua hyödykemarkkinoilla ja nopeuttavat rahoitusmarkkinoiden yhdentymistä yhdessä kasvuun ja vakauteen tähtäävien makrotaloudellisten politiikkojen kanssa, ovat erityisen tärkeitä euroalueen jäsenvaltioille, sillä ne vaikuttavat merkittävästi jäsenvaltioiden kykyyn sopeutua häiriöihin.

Voidakseen edistää kansainvälisen talouden vakautta ja edustaa paremmin omia taloudellisia etujaan euroalueen on osallistuttava hyvin aktiivisesti kansainväliseen raha- ja talouspolitiikkaa koskevaan yhteistyöhön. Vaikka euroryhmän puheenjohtajan nimittäminen kaksivuotiskaudeksi vuonna 2005 on vakauttanut euroalueen ulkoista edustusta, tarvitaan lisätoimenpiteitä, joilla ulkoista edustusta parannetaan, jotta euroalue voi ottaa strategisesti johtavan aseman maailmanlaajuisen talousjärjestelmän kehittämisessä ja alueen asema on oikeassa suhteessa sen taloudelliseen painoarvoon.

Seurannaisvaikutukset ovat tuntuvimpia ja yhteisen toimintasuunnitelman tarve on suurin euroalueella. Yhteinen valuutta ja yhteinen rahapolitiikka tehostavat osaltaan koordinaatiota ja vahvistavat euroalueen roolia kasvun ja työllisyyden lisäämisessä koko EU:n alueella. Talous- ja rahaliiton kymmenvuotispäivän kunniaksi komissio aikoo esittää kattavan katsauksen sen toiminnasta. Tarkoitus on kuvata, miten euroaluetta voidaan auttaa toimimaan parhaalla mahdollisella tavalla politiikan, koordinoinnin ja hallinnon avulla.

Suuntaviiva 6. Dynaamisen ja toimivan talous- ja rahaliiton edistäminen

Euroalueen jäsenvaltioiden on huolehdittava talous- ja finanssipolitiikkojensa paremmasta koordinoinnista erityisesti siten, että niiden on

1. vakaus- ja kasvusopimusta noudattaen kiinnitettävä erityistä huomiota julkisen taloutensa finanssipolitiikan kestävyyteen;

2. edistettävä politiikkayhdistelmää, joka tukee talouden elpymistä eikä vaaranna hintavakautta ja siten lisää yritysten ja kansalaisten luottamusta lyhyellä tähtäimellä ja tukee kestävää kasvua pitkällä tähtäimellä;

3. vietävä eteenpäin rakenteellisia uudistuksia, jotka lisäävät euroalueen pitkän aikavälin kasvupotentiaalia ja parantavat sen tuottavuutta, kilpailukykyä ja talouden sopeutumista epäsymmetrisiin häiriöihin kiinnittäen erityistä huomiota työllisyyspolitiikkaan; sekä

4. varmistettava, että euroalueen vaikutus maailmanlaajuiseen talousjärjestelmään on oikeassa suhteessa sen taloudelliseen painoarvoon.

B jakso – Euroopan kasvupotentiaalia lisäävät mikrotaloudelliset uudistukset

Rakenteelliset uudistukset ovat välttämättömiä EU:n kasvupotentiaalin lisäämiseksi ja makrotalouden vakauden tukemiseksi, koska ne lisäävät Euroopan talouden tehokkuutta ja sopeutumiskykyä. Kilpailu, investoinnit ja innovointi edistävät tuottavuuden kasvua. Euroopan kasvupotentiaalin lisääminen edellyttää edistymistä niin työpaikkojen luomisessa kuin tuottavuuden kasvussa. EU:n tuottavuuden kasvu oli yli vuosikymmenen Yhdysvaltojen vastaavaa kasvua alhaisempi. Vuoden 2005 puolivälin jälkeen EU:n tuottavuuden kasvu on kuitenkin nopeutunut. Tämän kehityssuunnan säilyttäminen on unionin tärkeimpiä haasteita ottaen huomioon erityisesti väestön ikääntyminen. Pelkästään väestön ikääntymisen arvioidaan vähentävän lähes puolella nykyistä potentiaalista kasvuvauhtia. Tuottavuuden kasvua onkin jatkettava ja tehtyjä työtunteja lisättävä nykyisten elinolojen ylläpitämiseksi ja parantamiseksi ja sosiaalisen suojelun korkean tason turvaamiseksi.

B.1 Osaaminen ja innovointi – kestävän kasvun veturit

Tutkimukseen ja kehitykseen (T&K), innovaatioihin, koulutukseen ja elinikäiseen oppimiseen tehtyjen investointien kautta karttunut osaaminen on pitkän aikavälin kasvun keskeinen tekijä. Politiikat, joiden tavoitteena on lisätä osaamiseen suunnattuja investointeja ja parantaa EU:n talouden innovointikykyä, ovat keskeisessä asemassa kasvua ja työllisyyttä koskevassa Lissabonin strategiassa. Tästä syystä kauden 2007–2013 kansalliset ja alueelliset ohjelmat kohdistetaan entistä useammin näiden alojen investointeihin Lissabonin tavoitteiden mukaisesti.

T&K-investointien lisääminen ja parantaminen eurooppalaisen osaamisalueen luomiseksi

Runsas T&K-toiminta on erittäin tärkeää tulevaisuuden kilpailukyvyn kannalta. T&K vaikuttaa talouden kasvuun eri kanavien kautta. Ensinnäkin se voi edistää uusien markkinoiden ja tuotantoprosessien syntymistä. Toiseksi se voi parantaa jo olemassa olevia tuotteita ja tuotantoprosesseja. Kolmanneksi se lisää maan kykyä omaksua uusia teknologioita.

EU käyttää tällä hetkellä T&K:een noin 1,85 prosenttia BKT:sta (vaihtelee jäsenvaltioittain alle 0,5 prosentista lähes 4 prosenttiin). T&K-menot ovat supistuneet hieman vuoden 2000 jälkeen. Lisäksi elinkeinoelämä rahoittaa vain noin 55 prosenttia tutkimusmenoista EU:ssa. Yksityisten T&K-investointien pientä määrää pidetään yhtenä tärkeimmistä selityksistä Yhdysvaltojen innovaatioiden alalla EU:sta saamalle etumatkalle. Eurooppalaisen tutkimusalueen, mukaan lukien EU:n yhteinen tavoite eli tutkimusinvestointien lisääminen kolmeen prosenttiin BKT:sta, toteuttamisessa on sen vuoksi edistyttävä nopeammin. Jäsenvaltioita pyydetään raportoimaan vuotta 2010 koskevista kansallisista T&K-menotavoitteistaan ja niiden saavuttamiseksi toteutettavista toimenpiteistä kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissaan ja vuotuisissa edistymistä koskevissa kertomuksissa ja kiinnittämään erityistä huomiota eurooppalaisen ulottuvuuden sisällyttämiseen kansallisiin T&K-politiikkoihin. Suurimpana haasteena on luoda perusedellytykset, välineet ja kannustimet, jotka houkuttelevat yrityksiä lisäämään tutkimusinvestointeja.

Julkiset tutkimusrahat on käytettävä tehokkaammin ja julkisen tutkimuksen ja yksityisen sektorin välisiä yhteyksiä on parannettava. Osaamiskeskuksia ja -verkkoja olisi lujitettava,

yksityisen sektorin innovointitoimintaa olisi vauhditettava käyttämällä julkisen tuen mekanismeja kokonaisvaltaisemmin, julkisten investointien vipuvaikutusta olisi parannettava ja tutkimuslaitosten ja yliopistojen hallintoa olisi uudistettava. On myös tärkeää varmistaa, että yritykset toimivat kilpailukykyisessä ympäristössä, koska kilpailu kannustaa merkittävästi yksityissektoria investoimaan innovointiin. Lisäksi on ponnisteltava määrätietoisesti eurooppalaisten tutkijoiden määrän ja ammattitaidon lisäämiseksi erityisesti houkuttelemalla enemmän opiskelijoita tieteelliseen ja tekniseen ja insinöörialan koulutukseen sekä parantamalla tutkijoiden urakehitysmahdollisuuksia ja heidän kansainvälistä ja eri alojen välistä liikkuvuuttaan samoin kuin poistamalla opiskelijoiden ja tutkijoiden liikkuvuuden esteitä. T&K:n kansainvälistä ulottuvuutta olisi vahvistettava yhteisrahoituksella, lisäämällä rahoituksen vähimmäismäärää EU:n tasolla kriittisillä aloilla, joilla rahoituksen tarve on suuri, ja poistamalla tutkijoiden ja opiskelijoiden liikkuvuuden esteitä.

Suuntaviiva 7. Erityisesti yksityissektorin T&K-investointien lisääminen ja parantaminen

Yleiseksi investointitavoitteeksi vahvistetaan vuoteen 2010 mennessä 3 prosenttia BKT:sta siten, että se jakautuu asianmukaisella tavalla yksityisen ja julkisen sektorin kesken. Jäsenvaltiot määrittelevät tarvittavat välitasot. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi edelleen kehitettävä toimenpidekokonaisuuksia, joilla kannustetaan tutkimusta ja kehitystä, erityisesti yritysten T&K-toimintaa seuraavin tavoin:

1. parannettava perusedellytyksiä ja varmistettava, että yritysten toimintaympäristö on riittävän kilpailukykyinen ja houkutteleva;

2. lisättävä T&K:een tarkoitettujen julkisten menojen määrää ja vaikutusta ja kehitettävä julkisen ja yksityisen sektorin kumppanuuksia;

3. kehitettävä ja lujitettava jäsenvaltioiden koulutus- ja tutkimuslaitosten osaamiskeskuksia ja perustettava tarpeen mukaan uusia ja parannettava julkisten tutkimuslaitosten ja yksityisten yritysten välistä yhteistyötä ja teknologian siirtoa;

4. kehitettävä ja käytettävä paremmin hyväksi kannustimia yksityisen T&K-toiminnan aikaansaamiseksi;

5. uudistettava tutkimuslaitosten ja yliopistojen hallintoa;

6. varmistettava ammattitaitoisten tutkijoiden riittävä määrä houkuttelemalla enemmän opiskelijoita tieteelliseen, tekniseen ja insinöörikoulutukseen ja parantamalla tutkijoiden ja kehittämistyössä olevan henkilöstön urakehitysmahdollisuuksia ja eurooppalaista, kansainvälistä ja eri alojen välistä liikkuvuutta.

Innovoinnin helpottaminen

Euroopan talouden dynaamisuus riippuu sen innovointikyvystä. Tästä syystä on luotava innovointia suosivat taloudelliset perusedellytykset, joihin sisältyvät hyvin toimivat rahoitus- ja hyödykemarkkinat sekä tehokkaat ja oikeahintaiset keinot teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien täytäntöön panemiseksi. Innovaatioita tuovat usein markkinoille uudet yritykset, joilla voi olla erityisiä vaikeuksia rahoituksen saamisessa. Innovatiivisten yritysten perustamista ja kasvua samoin kuin rahoituksen saatavuutta edistävillä toimenpiteillä olisi tästä syystä lisättävä innovatiivista toimintaa. Teknologian levitystä ja kansallisten innovaatio- ja koulutusjärjestelmien parempaan yhdentämiseen tähtääviä politiikkoja voidaan edistää

kehittämällä innovaatiokeskuksia ja -verkkoja sekä tarjoamalla pk-yrityksille innovointia tukevia palveluja. Osaamisen siirtäminen tutkijoiden liikkuvuuden, suorien ulkomaisten sijoitusten (FDI) tai maahantuodun teknologian avulla on erityisen hyödyllistä kehityksessä jälkeen jääneille maille ja alueille. On myös tärkeää vahvistaa entisestään T&K-toiminnan, koulutuksen ja innovoinnin muodostaman osaamisen kolmion yhdentymistä.

EU:n laaja-alaisessa innovaatiostrategiassa käsitellään näin ollen seuraavia seikkoja: teollis- ja tekijänoikeudet, standardointi, julkisten hankintojen käyttö innovoinnin edistämiseksi, yhteiset teknologia-aloitteet, innovoinnin edistäminen edelläkävijämarkkinoilla, korkeakoulutuksen, tutkimustoiminnan ja liike-elämän välinen yhteistyö, innovoinnin edistäminen aluetasolla ja palvelualoilla, muiden kuin teknologian alojen innovointi ja yritysten riskipääoman saatavuuden parantaminen.

Nyt on välttämätöntä saada aikaan yhtenäinen, kohtuuhintainen yhteisöpatentti, perustettava EU:n laajuinen tuomioistuinjärjestelmä patentteja koskevia riita-asioita varten ja helpotettava teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien täytäntöönpanoa sisämarkkinoilla.

Suuntaviiva 8. Kaikentyyppisen innovoinnin helpottaminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi keskityttävä seuraavaan:

1. parannettava innovointia tukevia palveluja, erityisesti teknologian levitystä ja siirtoa;

2. luotava ja kehitettävä yliopistoja, tutkimuslaitoksia ja yrityksiä yhdistäviä innovaatiokeskuksia, verkkoja ja hautomoita, myös alueellisella ja paikallistasolla, alueiden välisten teknologiaerojen pienentämiseksi;

3. kannustettava rajat ylittävään osaamisen siirtoon, myös suorien ulkomaisten sijoitusten avulla;

4. kannustettava julkisten hankintojen kohdentamiseen innovatiivisiin tuotteisiin ja palveluihin;

5. parannettava kotimaisen ja kansainvälisen rahoituksen saatavuutta;

6. luotava tehokkaat ja oikeahintaiset keinot teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien täytäntöön panemiseksi.

Tieto- ja viestintätekniikan levittäminen i2010-aloitteen tavoitteiden ja toimien mukaisesti on myös tärkeä keino parantaa tuottavuutta ja sen seurauksena myös taloudellista kasvua. EU ei ole pystynyt saamaan täyttä hyötyä tieto- ja viestintätekniikasta. Tämä johtuu erityisesti siitä, että investoinnit tieto- ja viestintätekniikkaan, organisatorisiin innovaatioihin ja digitaalitekniikkaan ovat edelleen riittämättömiä. Tieto- ja viestintätekniikan laajempi ja tehokkaampi käyttö ja saumattomasti toimivien yhtenäismarkkinoiden toteuttaminen sähköisissä viestintäpalveluissa on erittäin tärkeää eurooppalaisten yritysten kilpailukyvyn kannalta tulevaisuudessa. Lisäksi on tärkeää vähentää niin sanottujen sähköisten yhtenäismarkkinoiden sirpaloitumista ja estää se ottamalla käyttöön jäsenvaltioiden väliset yhteentoimivat sähköiset palvelut.

Suuntaviiva 9. Tieto- ja viestintätekniikan leviämisen ja tehokkaan käytön edistäminen sekä osallistavan tietoyhteiskunnan luominen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. kannustettava tieto- ja viestintätekniikan käyttämiseen laajalti julkisissa palveluissa, pk-yrityksissä ja kotitalouksissa;

2. vahvistettava tarpeelliset puitteet tätä vastaavalle työn uudelleenorganisoinnille talouselämässä;

3. edistettävä eurooppalaisen teollisuuden vahvaa asemaa tieto- ja viestintätekniikan avainaloilla;

4. kannustettava vahvan tieto- ja viestintätekniikan ja sisältöteollisuuden sekä hyvin toimivien markkinoiden kehittämiseen;

5. huolehdittava verkko- ja tietoturvallisuudesta sekä lähentymisestä ja yhteentoimivuudesta tavoitteena luoda rajaton tiedon alue;

6. kannustettava laajakaistaverkkojen käyttöönottoon myös huonojen palveluyhteyksien alueilla tietoon perustuvan talouden kehittämiseksi.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Joustavuuden edistäminen yhdessä työsuhdeturvan kanssa sekä työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen vähentäminen ottaen työmarkkinaosapuolten asema asianmukaisesti huomioon” (nro 21).

Eurooppalaisen teollisuuspohjan kilpailuetujen vahvistaminen

Vahva teollisuuspohja on avainasemassa Euroopan talouden kannalta. EU:n kilpailukyky riippuu talouden kyvystä suunnata uudelleen toiminnot aloille, joilla tuottavuus on suurempi. Lähestymistapa, jossa yhdistyvät innovointi-, työllisyys-, alue- ja muut politiikat, tukee EU:n teollisuuspohjan parantamista.

Taloudellisen ja teknologisen johtoasemansa vahvistamiseksi ja säilyttämiseksi Euroopan on vahvistettava kykyään kehittää ja markkinoida uusia teknologioita mukaan lukien tieto- ja viestintätekniikka sekä ympäristötekniikka. Olisi analysoitava ja hyödynnettävä tutkimukseen, sääntelyyn ja rahoitukseen liittyvien haasteiden yhdessä ratkomisesta Euroopan tasolla syntyvää synergiaa silloin, kun haasteiden määrästä ja laajuudesta johtuen yksittäiset jäsenvaltiot eivät yksin pysty korjaamaan markkinoiden toiminnan puutteita. EU ei ole vielä pystynyt käyttämään teknologista potentiaaliaan täysimääräisesti. Eurooppalaisen osaamisen yhdistäminen sekä julkisen ja yksityisen sektorin kumppanuuksien ja jäsenvaltioiden välisen yhteistyön kehittäminen tapauksissa, joista yhteiskunnalle koituu suuremmat hyödyt kuin yksityiselle sektorille, auttavat hyödyntämään tätä potentiaalia.

Suuntaviiva 10. Euroopan teollisuuspohjan kilpailuetujen vahvistaminen

Euroopan koko alueella on oltava vakaa teollisuusrakenne. Nykyaikaista ja aktiivista teollisuuspolitiikkaa voidaan harjoittaa vain vahvistamalla teollisuuspohjan kilpailuetuja, mukaan lukien luomalla suotuisat puitteet sekä teollisuudelle että palveluille, huolehtien siitä,

että kansalliset, valtioiden väliset ja eurooppalaiset toimet täydentävät toisiaan. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. aloitettava keskeisten teollisuudenalojen lisäarvon ja kilpailukykytekijöiden määrittäminen ja käsiteltävä globalisaation haasteita;

2. keskityttävä myös uusien teknologioiden ja markkinoiden kehittämiseen.

a) Tämä tarkoittaa erityisesti julkisen ja yksityisen sektorin kumppanuuksiin ja jäsenvaltioiden väliseen yhteistyöhön perustuvien uusien teknologia-aloitteiden edistämiseen sitoutumista, mikä auttaa selviytymään aidoista markkinahäiriöistä.

b) Tämä merkitsee myös alueellisten tai paikallisten klusteriverkkojen luomista ja kehittämistä koko EU:ssa siten, että pk-yritykset ovat laajemmin mukana.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin vastaamisen parantaminen” (nro 20).

Kannustaminen resurssien kestävään käyttöön

Unionin jatkuva menestyminen riippuu myös siitä, kuinka resursseihin ja ympäristöön liittyviä haasteita käsitellään, sillä jos niihin ei puututa, ne jarruttavat tulevaa kasvua. Viimeaikainen kehitys on osoittanut energiatehokkuuden merkityksen ja sen, kuinka tärkeää on vähentää Euroopan talouden herkkyyttä öljyn hinnan vaihteluille. Ilmasto- ja energiapolitiikkaa koskeva yhdennetty lähestymistapa on tarpeen, jotta voidaan parantaa toimitusvarmuutta, varmistaa EU:n talouden kilpailukyky ja kohtuuhintaisen energian saatavuus sekä torjua ilmastonmuutosta. Sekä jäsenvaltioiden että yhteisön on pyrittävä saavuttamaan EU:n tavoitteet, joiden mukaan kasvihuonekaasupäästöjä on vähennettävä vähintään 20 prosenttia, uusiutuvien energialähteiden osuuden on oltava 20 prosenttia ja energiatehokkuutta on parannettava 20 prosenttia vuoteen 2020 mennessä. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi jatkettava ilmastonmuutoksen torjuntaa, jotta maapallon lämpötilan nousu ei ylitä 2 °C:ta esiteolliseen tasoon verrattuna, ja pantava täytäntöön Kioton tavoitteet kustannustehokkaalla tavalla. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi myös pysäytettävä biodiversiteetin köyhtyminen vuoteen 2010 mennessä, etenkin sisällyttämällä tämä vaatimus muihin politiikkoihin, ottaen huomioon biodiversiteetin merkitys tietyille talouden aloille. Markkinaehtoisten välineiden käyttö tässä yhteydessä on ensiarvoisen tärkeää, jotta hinnat heijastaisivat paremmin ympäristövahinkoja ja sosiaalisia kustannuksia. On kannustettava kehittämään ja käyttämään ympäristöystävällisiä teknologioita, ottamaan huomioon ympäristöarvot julkisissa hankinnoissa kiinnittäen erityistä huomiota pk-yrityksiin ja lakkauttamaan ympäristölle haitalliset tuet. Näillä toimilla ja muilla politiikan välineillä voidaan lisätä innovatiivista toimintaa ja vahvistaa kestävän kehityksen toteutumista. EU:n yritykset kuuluvat esimerkiksi maailman johtaviin uusiutuvia energialähteitä hyödyntävien teknologioiden kehittäjiin. Koska energian hinta on jatkuvasti nousussa ja ilmastoon kohdistuvat uhat lisääntyvät, on sekä kasvun että kestävän kehityksen edistämisen kannalta tärkeää pyrkiä parantamaan energiatehokkuutta.

Suuntaviiva 11. Resurssien kestävän käytön edistäminen sekä ympäristönsuojelun ja kasvun välisen synergian lujittaminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. painotettava energiatehokkuutta ja yhteistuotantoa, kestävien, mukaan lukien uusiutuvien, energiamuotojen kehittämistä ja ympäristöystävällisten ja ekotehokkaiden teknologioiden

nopeaa levittämistä a) sisämarkkinoille, eritoten energian ja liikenteen alalla muun muassa siksi, ettei Euroopan talous olisi niin herkkä öljyn hinnan muutoksille, b) muualle maailmaan siksi että tällä sektorilla on huomattavaa vientipotentiaalia;

2. edistettävä keinojen kehittämistä ulkoisten ympäristökustannusten huomioon ottamiseksi sekä talouskasvun ja ympäristön pilaantumisen välisen kytköksen katkaisemiseksi. Nämä painopistealueet olisi pantava täytäntöön voimassa olevan yhteisön lainsäädännön ja ympäristöteknologioita koskevassa toimintasuunnitelmassa ehdotettujen toimien ja välineiden mukaisesti, muun muassa a) käyttämällä markkinaehtoisia välineitä, b) käyttämällä riskirahoitusta ja T&K-rahoitusta, c) edistämällä kestäviä tuotanto- ja kulutusmalleja, mukaan lukien ympäristöarvojen huomioon ottaminen julkisissa hankinnoissa, d) kiinnittämällä erityistä huomiota pk-yrityksiin, ja e) uudistamalla tukijärjestelmät, joilla on huomattava haitallinen vaikutus ympäristöön ja jotka eivät ole yhteensopivia kestävän kehityksen kanssa, ja pyrkimällä poistamaan tällaiset tuet asteittain;

3. pyrittävä edelleen tavoitteeseen, jonka mukaan biodiversiteetin köyhtyminen pysäytetään vuoteen 2010 mennessä, erityisesti sisällyttämällä tämä vaatimus muihin politiikkoihin, ottaen huomioon biodiversiteetin merkitys tietyille talouden aloille;

4. jatkettava ilmastonmuutoksen torjuntaa panemalla täytäntöön Kioton tavoitteet kustannustehokkaalla tavalla, erityisesti pk-yritysten osalta.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Kasvuun ja työllisyyteen suuntautuvan tehokkaan resurssien kohdentamisen edistäminen” (nro 3).

B.2 Euroopasta houkuttelevampi paikka investoijille ja työntekijöille

Euroopan unionin houkuttelevuus investointipaikkana riippuu muun muassa sen markkinoiden koosta ja avoimuudesta, sen lainsäädännöstä, sen työvoiman laadusta ja sen infrastruktuurista.

Sisämarkkinoiden laajentaminen ja syventäminen

Tavaroiden sisämarkkinat ovat suhteellisen hyvin yhdentyneet, mutta palvelumarkkinat ovat edelleen oikeudellisesti tai tosiasiallisesti melko hajanaiset. Palveludirektiivin paneminen täytäntöön täysimääräisesti ja oikeaan aikaan on merkittävä askel kohti täysin toimivia palveluiden sisämarkkinoita. Poistamalla esteet rajat ylittävän toiminnan tieltä hallinnollista rasitusta vähentämällä voidaan vapauttaa palvelualan käyttämätöntä potentiaalia Euroopassa. Niin ikään rahoitusmarkkinoiden täydellinen yhdentyminen lisäisi tuotantoa ja työllisyyttä mahdollistamalla pääomien tehokkaamman kohdentamisen ja yritysrahoitukselle paremmat toimintaedellytykset.

Sisämarkkinadirektiivien saattamista osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä olisi parannettava ja tämän olisi edelleen oltava ensisijainen tavoite, jotta Euroopan yhtenäismarkkinoiden hyödyt saadaan käyttöön. Direktiivejä ei myös panna usein täytäntöön tai sovelleta asianmukaisesti, kuten komission käynnistämien rikkomisesta johtuvien menettelyjen suuri määrä osoittaa. Jäsenvaltioiden on tehtävä yhteistyötä positiivisemmassa hengessä keskenään ja komission kanssa varmistaakseen, että kansalaiset ja yritykset saavat sisämarkkinalainsäädännöstä täyden hyödyn. Esimerkiksi julkisia hankintoja koskevissa menettelyissä on edelleen huomattavasti parantamisen varaa. Tilanteen parantamiseksi olisi kasvatettava julkisesti

ilmoitettujen julkisten hankintojen osuutta. Lisäksi avoimemmalla hankintamenettelyllä saataisiin aikaan merkittäviä budjettisäästöjä jäsenvaltioille.

Suuntaviiva 12. Sisämarkkinoiden laajentaminen ja syventäminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. tehostettava sisämarkkinadirektiivien saattamista osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä;

2. asetettava etusijalle sisämarkkinalainsäädännön tiukempi ja parempi soveltaminen;

3. poistettava jäljellä olevat rajat ylittävää toimintaa haittaavat esteet;

4. sovellettava tehokkaasti julkisia hankintoja koskevia EU:n sääntöjä;

5. edistettävä palvelujen täysin toimivien sisämarkkinoiden toteuttamista niin, että samalla säilytetään Euroopan sosiaalinen malli;

6. nopeutettava rahoitusmarkkinoiden yhdentymistä rahoituspalveluja koskevan toimintasuunnitelman johdonmukaisella täytäntöönpanolla ja valvonnalla.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin vastaamisen parantaminen” (nro 20).

Avoimien ja kilpailukykyisten markkinoiden varmistaminen Euroopassa ja sen ulkopuolella

Avoin maailmanlaajuinen kauppajärjestelmä on tärkeä EU:lle. EU on maailman johtava kaupankävijä ja investoija. EU:n avoin politiikka merkitsee teollisuudelle alhaisempia kustannuksia, kuluttajille huokeampia hintoja sekä liike-elämälle tehokkaampaa kilpailua ja uusia investointeja. On tärkeää, että EU yrittää vaikutusvallallaan saada muut osapuolet sitoutumaan kansainvälisissä neuvotteluissa avoimuuteen. Näin ollen EU aikoo jatkaa kaupan ja sijoitusten esteiden poistamista ja samalla torjua epärehellisiä kauppa- ja sijoituskäytänteitä sekä kilpailun vääristymistä.

Kilpailupolitiikalla on ollut keskeinen asema tasapuolisten toimintaedellytysten varmistamisessa yrityksille EU:ssa. Voi myös olla hyödyllistä tarkastella markkinoita koskevaa laajempaa sääntelykehystä, jotta voidaan edistää yritysten tehokkaamman kilpailun edellyttämien olosuhteiden luomista. Euroopan markkinoita voidaan avata lisää kilpailulle alentamalla jäljellä olevien valtiontukien yleistä tasoa. Näitä ponnisteluja on tuettava ohjaamalla jäljelle jäävää valtiontukea tiettyihin horisontaalisiin tavoitteisiin. Valtiontukea koskevien sääntöjen tarkistaminen on edistänyt tätä kehitystä.

Markkinoille pääsyä helpottavat rakenteelliset uudistukset ovat erityisen tehokkaita kilpailun lisäämiseksi. Tällaiset uudistukset ovat erittäin tärkeitä markkinoilla, joilla kilpailu on aikaisemmin estynyt kilpailunvastaisen käyttäytymisen, monopolien, ylisääntelyn (esimerkiksi luvat, lisenssit, vähimmäispääomaa koskevat vaatimukset, oikeudelliset esteet, liikkeiden aukioloajat, säännellyt hinnat jne. voivat estää tehokkaan kilpailuympäristön kehittymistä) tai kaupan suojaamisen vuoksi.

Lisäksi verkkoalojen (sähkö- ja kaasu-, liikenne-, televiestintä- ja postipalvelualoilla) kilpailulle avaamiseksi sovittujen toimenpiteiden toteuttaminen auttaa varmistamaan alhaisemmat hinnat ja suuremmat valintamahdollisuudet sekä takaa, että yleistä taloudellista etua koskevat palvelut ovat kaikkien kansalaisten saatavilla. Kilpailu- ja

sääntelyviranomaisten olisi huolehdittava siitä, että vapautetuilla markkinoilla on kilpailua. On varmistettava, että laadukkaita yleistä taloudellista etua koskevia palveluja on saatavilla kohtuulliseen hintaan.

Kuluttajat, jotka tekevät tietoon perustuvia valintoja, palkitsevat nopeammin tehokkaat toimijat. Kuluttajansuojalainsäädännön täytäntöönpanoa on parannettava edelleen. Tämä antaa kuluttajille vaikutusmahdollisuuksia ja lisää kilpailua sisämarkkinoiden vähittäiskauppatasolla.

Avoimuuden edistäminen kaupan ja investointien alalla sekä vientiä että tuontia lisäämällä on merkittävä kasvun ja työllisyyden kannustin ja voi tehostaa rakenneuudistusta. Maailmanlaajuisten kaupan sääntöjen avoin ja vahva järjestelmä on Euroopan talouden kannalta välttämätön. Lisäksi kunnianhimoisen ja tasapainoisen sopimuksen menestyksekäs aikaansaaminen Dohan neuvottelukierroksella sekä kahdenvälisten ja alueellisten vapaakauppajärjestelyjen kehittäminen avaisi markkinoita kaupalle ja investoinneille, mikä puolestaan lisäisi kasvupotentiaalia.

Suuntaviiva 13. Avointen ja kilpailukykyisten markkinoiden varmistaminen Euroopassa ja sen ulkopuolella ja globalisaation hyödyntäminen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi asetettava etusijalle seuraavat seikat:

1. kilpailua perusteetta estävien lainsäädännöllisten esteiden, kaupan esteiden ja muiden esteiden poistaminen;

2. kilpailupolitiikan täytäntöönpanon tehostaminen;

3. kilpailu- ja sääntelyviranomaisten olisi valvottava valikoidusti markkinoita ja sääntelyä kilpailun ja markkinoille pääsyn tiellä olevien esteiden tunnistamiseksi ja poistamiseksi;

4. kilpailua vääristävien valtiontukien vähentäminen;

5. tuen ohjaaminen yhteisön puitteiden mukaisesti tiettyihin horisontaalisiin tavoitteisiin kuten tutkimukseen, innovointiin ja inhimillisen pääoman optimaaliseen käyttöön, sekä todettujen markkinahäiriöiden korjaamiseen;

6. avoimuuden edistäminen myös monenvälisissä yhteyksissä;

7. sovittujen toimenpiteiden täytäntöön paneminen verkkotoimialojen avaamiseksi kilpailulle, jotta varmistetaan tehokas kilpailu Euroopan laajuisilla yhdennetyillä markkinoilla. Samalla tehokkaiden ja kohtuuhintaisten yleistä taloudellista etua koskevien palvelujen saatavuudella on merkittävä asema kilpailukykyisessä ja dynaamisessa taloudessa.

Eurooppalaisen ja kansallisen sääntelyn parantaminen

Markkinoiden sääntely on keskeisessä osassa luotaessa ympäristöä, jossa liiketoimintaa voidaan harjoittaa kilpailukykyisin hinnoin. Sääntelyllä korjataan myös markkinahäiriöitä tai suojellaan markkinoiden toimijoita. Lainsäädännön ja sääntelyn kumulatiivinen vaikutus voi kuitenkin aiheuttaa huomattavia taloudellisia kustannuksia. Lainsäädännön olisi tästä syystä oltava hyvin suunniteltua ja oikeasuhteista ja sitä olisi tarkistettava säännöllisesti. Eurooppalaisen ja kansallisen sääntely-ympäristön laatu edellyttää yhteistä sitoutumista ja jaettua vastuuta niin EU:n kuin jäsenvaltioiden tasolla.

Paremman sääntelyn kulttuuri on alkanut juurtua EU:ssa. Parempaan sääntelyyn tähtäävässä komission lähestymistavassa uuden tai tarkistettavan lainsäädännön taloudelliset, sosiaaliset ja ympäristöön kohdistuvat vaikutukset arvioidaan huolellisesti, jotta voitaisiin tunnistaa mahdollisuudet tehdä kompromisseja ja saavuttaa synergiaa eri poliittisten tavoitteiden välillä. Lisäksi olemassa olevaa sääntelyä arvioidaan yksinkertaistamisen kannalta, hallinnollinen taakka mukaan luettuna, ja sen vaikutusta kilpailukykyyn arvioidaan. Lisäksi on sovittu yhteisestä lähestymistavasta uuden ja voimassa olevan lainsäädännön hallinnollisten kustannusten mittaamiseksi ja asetettu kunnianhimoinen tavoite, jonka mukaan tarkoituksena on vähentää EU:n lainsäädännöstä ja sen saattamisesta osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä aiheutuvaa taakkaa 25 prosenttia vuoteen 2012 mennessä.

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi asetettava yhtä kunnianhimoisia tavoitteita kansallisen lainsäädännön kaikilta tasoilta aiheutuvan hallinnollisen taakan vähentämiseksi. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi myös otettava käyttöön kattava ja selkeä paremman sääntelyn strategia, mukaan lukien asianmukaiset institutionaaliset rakenteet, seurantakeinot ja resurssit. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi arvioitava järjestelmällisesti lainsäädäntöaloitteista ja -tarkistuksista aiheutuvia kustannuksia ja niistä koituvia etuja. Niiden olisi parannettava sääntelyn laatua, säilyttäen kuitenkin tavoitteensa, ja yksinkertaistettava voimassa olevaa lainsäädäntöä. Niiden olisi kuultava laajalti sidosryhmiä lainsäädäntöaloitteiden kustannuksista ja hyödyistä, erityisesti jos niihin liittyy mahdollisuus tehdä kompromisseja eri poliittisten tavoitteiden välillä. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi myös varmistettava, että sääntelyn mahdollisia vaihtoehtoja tarkastellaan asianmukaisesti. Tämä on erityisen tärkeää pienille ja keskisuurille yrityksille (pk-yritykset), joilla on tavallisesti käytettävissään ainoastaan rajallisesti resursseja yhteisön ja kansallisen lainsäädännön edellyttämien sääntelyvaatimusten noudattamiseksi. Näin ollen olisi erityisesti harkittava, voitaisiinko pk-yrityksille myöntää täysimääräinen tai osittainen poikkeus hallinnollisista vaatimuksista.

Suuntaviiva 14. Kilpailukykyisemmän toimintaympäristön luominen ja yksityisen aloitteellisuuden edistäminen paremman sääntelyn avulla

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. vähennettävä yritysten ja erityisesti pk-yritysten ja uusyritysten hallinnollista rasitusta;

2. parannettava nykyistä ja uutta sääntelyä, tavoitteensa kuitenkin säilyttäen, arvioimalla järjestelmällisesti ja huolellisesti sääntelyn taloudellisia, sosiaalisia (myös kansanterveydellisiä) ja ympäristöön kohdistuvia vaikutuksia ja ottaen samanaikaisesti huomioon sääntelyn aiheuttama hallinnollinen rasitus ja parantamalla sen mittaamista sekä ottaen huomioon kilpailukykyyn kohdistuvat vaikutukset myös täytäntöönpanon osalta;

3. kannustettava yrityksiä kehittämään sosiaalista vastuutaan.

Euroopassa tarvitaan yhä enemmän yrittäjähenkeä ja enemmän uusia yrityksiä, jotka haluavat toteuttaa luovia tai innovatiivisia yritysideoita. Tiedon saamista yrittäjyydestä kaikessa koulutuksessa pitäisi tukea ja tarjota yrittäjyyteen tarvittavat taidot. Yrittäjyysulottuvuus olisi otettava osaksi elinikäistä oppimista jo koulusta alkaen. Olisi rohkaistava kumppanuuksia yritysten kanssa. Yritysten perustamista ja kasvua voidaan edistää helpottamalla rahoituksen saatavuutta ja parantamalla taloudellisia kannustimia. Näihin voivat kuulua verojärjestelmien mukauttaminen menestymistä paremmin palkitseviksi, välillisten työvoimakustannusten alentaminen ja uusyritysten hallinnollisen kuormituksen keventäminen ennen kaikkea tarjoamalla (erityisesti nuorille yrittäjille) asianmukaisia yritysten tukipalveluja ja

perustamalla yhteyspisteitä. Erityistä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä omistusoikeuden siirtymiseen sekä pelastamis- ja rakenneuudistusmenettelyjen parantamiseen erityisesti tehokkaamman konkurssilainsäädännön avulla. Ehdotukset ovat osa tulevaa EU:n pienyrityksiä koskevaa säädöstä ja niiden täytäntöönpanolla edistetään pk-yritysten kasvu- ja työllistämismahdollisuuksia.

Suuntaviiva 15. Yrittäjähenkisemmän kulttuurin edistäminen ja pk-yrityksiä tukevan ympäristön luominen

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. parannettava rahoituksen saatavuutta, erityisesti pienluottojen ja muiden riskipääoman muotojen osalta, pk-yritysten perustamisen ja kasvun edistämiseksi;

2. vahvistettava taloudellisia kannustimia, myös verojärjestelmiä yksinkertaistamalla ja välillisiä työvoimakustannuksia alentamalla;

3. lujitettava pk-yritysten innovointikykyä;

4. tarjottava asianmukaisia tukipalveluja ottamalla käyttöön keskitettyjä palvelupisteitä ja kansallisia yritysten tukiverkkoja yritysten perustamisen ja niiden kasvun edistämiseksi pienyrityksiä koskevan peruskirjan mukaisesti. Lisäksi jäsenvaltioiden olisi parannettava pk-yrityksille suunnattua yrittäjyyskoulutusta. Niiden olisi myös helpotettava omistusoikeuden siirtymistä, uudistettava tarvittaessa konkurssilainsäädäntöään sekä parannettava pelastamis- ja rakenneuudistusmenettelyjä.

Ks. myös yhdennetyt suuntaviivat ”Kasvuun ja työllisyyteen suuntautuvan tehokkaan resurssien kohdentamisen edistäminen” (nro 3) ja ”Kaikentyyppisen innovoinnin helpottaminen” (nro 8 sekä 23 ja 24).

Eurooppalaisen infrastruktuurin laajentaminen ja parantaminen

Nykyaikainen infrastruktuuri on merkittävä sijoittautumispaikkojen houkuttavuuteen vaikuttava tekijä. Se helpottaa henkilöiden, tavaroiden ja palvelujen liikkuvuutta unionissa. Nykyaikaiset liikenne-, energia- ja sähköisen viestinnän infrastruktuurit ovat tärkeitä tekijöitä Lissabonin strategiassa. Yhteenliitetyt ja -toimivat Euroopan laajuiset verkot edistävät kansainvälistä kauppaa ja tehostavat sisämarkkinoiden toimivuutta vähentämällä kuljetuskustannuksia ja laajentamalla markkinoita. Lisäksi Euroopan laajuisiin verkkoihin liittyvien toimialojen meneillään oleva vapauttaminen edistää kilpailua ja parantaa tehokkuutta näillä aloilla.

Eurooppalaisiin infrastruktuureihin tehtävien investointien kannalta etusijalle olisi asetettava parlamentin ja neuvoston liikenteen alan TEN-verkkoja koskevissa suuntaviivoissa määritettyjen 30 ensisijaisen liikennehankkeen toteuttaminen, Euroopan kasvualoitteen yhteydessä määritettyjen Quick-start -ohjelmaan kuuluvien liikennettä, uusiutuvia energialähteitä, laajakaistayhteyksiä ja tutkimusta koskevien rajat ylittävien hankkeiden saattaminen päätökseen sekä koheesiorahastosta tuettavien muiden liikennehankkeiden toteuttaminen. On pyrittävä ratkaisemaan myös infrastruktuurien pullonkaulat maiden sisällä. Asianmukainen infrastruktuurien hinnoittelu voi tehostaa niiden käyttöä ja edistää eri liikennemuotojen välisen kestävän tasapainon kehittämistä.

Suuntaviiva 16. Eurooppalaisen infrastruktuurin laajentaminen, parantaminen ja yhdistäminen sekä etusijalle asetettujen rajat ylittävien hankkeiden loppuun saattaminen

Erityisenä tavoitteena on lisätä kansallisten markkinoiden yhdentymistä laajentuneessa EU:ssa. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi

1. luotava asianmukaiset edellytykset tehokkaille liikenne-, energia- sekä tieto- ja viestintätekniikan infrastruktuureille – erityisesti Euroopan laajuisiin verkkoihin sisältyville – täydentämällä yhteisön mekanismeja ennen kaikkea ottamalla mukaan rajat ylittäviä osuuksia ja syrjäisiä alueita verkkotoimialojen avaamiseksi aidolle kilpailulle;

2. harkittava julkisen ja yksityisen sektorin välisten kumppanuuksien kehittämistä;

3. harkittava asianmukaisia infrastruktuurien hinnoittelujärjestelmiä infrastruktuurien tehokkaan käytön ja eri liikennemuotojen välisen kestävän tasapainon varmistamiseksi korostamalla teknologista kehittämistä ja innovaatioita ja ottaen asianmukaisesti huomioon ympäristökustannukset ja kasvuun kohdistuvat vaikutukset.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Tieto- ja viestintätekniikan leviämisen ja tehokkaan käytön edistäminen sekä osallistavan tietoyhteiskunnan luominen” (nro 9).

2 osa

Työllisyyden suuntaviivat (2008–2010)

Ehdotus:

NEUVOSTON PÄÄTÖS

jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivoista
(EY:n perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan nojalla)

2007/0300 (CNS)

Ehdotus:

NEUVOSTON PÄÄTÖS

jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivoista
(EY:n perustamissopimuksen 128 artiklan nojalla)

EUROOPAN UNIONIN NEUVOSTO, joka

ottaa huomioon Euroopan yhteisön perustamissopimuksen ja erityisesti sen 128 artiklan 2 kohdan,

ottaa huomioon komission ehdotuksen[1],

ottaa huomioon Euroopan parlamentin lausunnon[2],

ottaa huomioon Euroopan talous- ja sosiaalikomitean lausunnon[3],

ottaa huomioon alueiden komitean lausunnon[4],

ottaa huomioon työllisyyskomitean lausunnon,

sekä katsoo seuraavaa:

1. Lissabonin strategian uudistamisessa vuonna 2005 painopiste asetettiin kasvuun ja työllisyyteen. Euroopan työllisyysstrategiaan kuuluvat työllisyyden suuntaviivat ja talouspolitiikan laajat suuntaviivat on hyväksytty yhdennettynä kokonaisuutena[5], jossa Euroopan työllisyysstrategialla on keskeisin asema Lissabonin strategiaan sisältyvien työllisyys- ja työmarkkinatavoitteiden saavuttamisessa.

2. Komission vuosikertomukseen ja yhteiseen työllisyysraporttiin sisältyvä jäsenvaltioiden kansallisten uudistusohjelmien tarkastelu osoittaa, että jäsenvaltioiden olisi jatkettava toimia painopistealueilla, eli

   – pyrittävä houkuttelemaan useampia ihmisiä työelämään ja pysymään työelämässä, lisäämään työvoiman tarjontaa ja nykyaikaistamaan sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmiä,

   – parantamaan työntekijöiden ja yritysten sopeutumiskykyä ja

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1 EUVL C …, s...
2 EUVL C …, s...
3 EUVL C …, s...
4 EUVL C …, s...
5 EUVL L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 21 (työllisyyden suuntaviivat) ja s. 28 (talouspolitiikan laajat suuntaviivat).

– investoimaan enemmän inhimilliseen pääomaan parantamalla koulutusta ja taitoja.

3. Komission suorittama jäsenvaltioiden kansallisten uudistusohjelmien tarkastelu ja Eurooppa-neuvoston päätelmät huomioon ottaen nyt olisi keskityttävä tehokkaaseen ja ajallaan tapahtuvaan täytäntöönpanoon ja kiinnitettävä erityistä huomiota vahvistettuihin määrällisiin tavoitteisiin ja vertailuarvoihin Eurooppa-neuvoston päätelmien mukaisesti.

4. Työllisyyden suuntaviivat ovat voimassa kolme vuotta, ja välivuosina vuoteen 2010 asti niitä olisi päivitettävä vain erittäin rajoitetusti.

5. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi otettava työllisyyden suuntaviivat huomioon, kun ne käyttävät ohjelmoitua yhteisön rahoitusta, erityisesti Euroopan sosiaalirahaston rahoitusta.

6. Koska kyse on yhdennetystä suuntaviivapaketista, jäsenvaltioiden olisi pantava täysimääräisesti täytäntöön talouspolitiikan laajat suuntaviivat,

ON TEHNYT TÄMÄN PÄÄTÖKSEN:

1 artikla

Hyväksytään liitteenä olevat jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivat.

2 artikla

Suuntaviivat on otettava huomioon jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikassa, josta raportoidaan kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissa.

3 artikla

Tämä päätös on osoitettu kaikille jäsenvaltioille.

Tehty Brysselissä

Neuvoston puolesta
Puheenjohtaja

LIITE

Jäsenvaltioiden työllisyyspolitiikan suuntaviivat: Euroopan sosiaalisen mallin edistäminen

Jäsenvaltioiden on yhteistyössä työmarkkinaosapuolten kanssa harjoitettava politiikkaansa pannakseen täytäntöön alla esitetyt toiminnan tavoitteet ja painopisteet, jotta uusilla ja paremmilla työpaikoilla tuetaan osallisuutta edistäviä työmarkkinoita. Lissabonin strategian mukaisesti ja ottaen huomioon yhteiset sosiaaliset tavoitteet jäsenvaltioiden politiikassa on edistettävä tasapainoisella tavalla

– *täystyöllisyyttä:* Täystyöllisyyden saavuttaminen sekä työttömyyden ja työmarkkinoiden ulkopuolella olon vähentäminen lisäämällä työvoiman kysyntää ja tarjontaa integroitua joustoturva-ajattelutapaa noudattaen on elintärkeää talouskasvun ylläpitämiseksi ja sosiaalisen yhteenkuuluvuuden vahvistamiseksi. Tämä edellyttää toimintalinjoja, jotka kohdistuvat samanaikaisesti työmarkkinoiden joustavuuteen, työn organisointiin ja työmarkkinasuhteisiin sekä työllisyysturvaan ja sosiaaliturvaan;

– *työn laadun ja tuottavuuden parantamista:* Pyrkimykset työllisyysasteen nostamiseksi ovat kytköksissä työpaikkojen vetovoiman, työn laadun ja työn tuottavuuden kasvun parantamiseen sekä segmentoitumisen ja työtä tekevien köyhien osuuden vähentämiseen. Työn laadun, tuottavuuden ja työllisyyden välistä synergiaa olisi hyödynnettävä täysimääräisesti;

– *sosiaalisen ja alueellisen yhteenkuuluvuuden lujittamista*: Määrätietoisia toimia tarvitaan sosiaalisen osallisuuden edistämiseksi ja lujittamiseksi, köyhyyden – erityisesti lasten köyhyyden – torjumiseksi, työmarkkinoilta syrjäytymisen ehkäisemiseksi ja muita heikommassa asemassa olevien ryhmien työelämään integroitumisen tukemiseksi sekä työllisyyttä, työttömyyttä ja työn tuottavuutta koskevien alueellisten erojen vähentämiseksi erityisesti kehityksessä jälkeen jääneillä alueilla. Vuorovaikutusta sosiaalisen suojelun ja sosiaalisen yhteenkuuluvuuden avoimen koordinointimenetelmän kanssa on lujitettava.

Edistyminen edellyttää yhtäläisiä mahdollisuuksia ja syrjinnän torjuntaa. Sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon valtavirtaistaminen ja edistäminen olisi varmistettava kaikessa toiminnassa. Erityistä huomiota on kiinnitettävä myös kaikkien sukupuolierojen merkittävään kaventamiseen työmarkkinoilla Euroopan tasa-arvosopimuksen mukaisesti. Tämä auttaa jäsenvaltioita vastaamaan väestörakenteellisiin haasteisiin. Osana uutta sukupolvien välistä lähestymistapaa olisi kiinnitettävä erityistä huomiota nuorten asemaan siten, että pannaan täytäntöön eurooppalainen nuorisosopimus, sekä työhön pääsyn edistämiseen koko työelämän ajan. Erityistä huomiota on kiinnitettävä myös muita heikommassa asemassa olevien, mukaan lukien vammaisten ja vajaakuntoisten, sekä kolmansien maiden ja Euroopan unionin kansalaisten välisten työllisyyserojen merkittävään kaventamiseen kansallisten tavoitteiden mukaisesti.

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi pyrittävä aktiivisesti integroimaan kaikki yhteiskuntaan nostamalla työvoimaosuutta sekä torjumaan köyhyyttä ja yhteiskunnassa heikoimmassa asemassa olevien henkilöiden ja ryhmien syrjäytymistä.

Toimenpiteitä toteuttaessaan jäsenvaltioiden olisi huolehdittava työllisyys- ja sosiaalipolitiikassaan hyvästä hallintotavasta ja varmistettava, että myönteiset kehityssuuntaukset talouden, työvoiman ja sosiaaliasioiden alalla vahvistavat toisiaan. Niiden olisi luotava laajat muutoskumppanuudet, joihin otetaan mukaan parlamentaarisia elimiä ja sidosryhmiä, alue- ja paikallisviranomaiset sekä kansalaisjärjestöt mukaan luettuina. Eurooppalaisten ja kansallisten työmarkkinaosapuolten olisi oltava tässä keskeisessä asemassa. Tavoitteita ja vertailuarvoja, jotka on asetettu Euroopan unionin tasolla Euroopan työllisyysstrategian puitteissa vuoden 2003 suuntaviivoja laadittaessa, olisi seurattava edelleen indikaattorein ja tulostauluin. Jäsenvaltioita kannustetaan myös seuraamaan uudistusten sosiaalista vaikutusta ja määrittelemään omat sitoumuksensa ja tavoitteensa, joita varten niiden olisi otettava huomioon edellä mainitut tavoitteet ja vertailuarvot sekä Euroopan unionin tasolla sovitut maakohtaiset suositukset.

Hyvä hallintotapa edellyttää myös tehokkaampaa hallinnollisten ja taloudellisten resurssien kohdentamista. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi yhteisymmärryksessä komission kanssa kohdennettava rakennerahastojen ja erityisesti Euroopan sosiaalirahaston varat Euroopan työllisyysstrategian ja unionin sosiaalisten tavoitteiden täytäntöönpanoon ja raportoitava toteutetuista toimenpiteistä. Erityistä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä institutionaalisten ja hallinnollisten valmiuksien lujittamiseen jäsenvaltioissa.

Suuntaviiva 17. Täystyöllisyyteen, työn laadun ja tuottavuuden parantamiseen sekä sosiaalisen ja alueellisen yhteenkuuluvuuden lujittamiseen tähtäävien työllisyyspolitiikkojen täytäntöönpano.

Politiikkojen avulla olisi pyrittävä saamaan Euroopan unionin keskimääräiseksi kokonaistyöllisyysasteeksi 70 prosenttia, naisten työllisyysasteeksi vähintään 60 prosenttia ja ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden (55–64 vuotta) työllisyysasteeksi 50 prosenttia vuoteen 2010 mennessä sekä vähentämään työttömyyttä ja työmarkkinoiden ulkopuolella oloa. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi harkittava kansallisten työllisyysastetavoitteiden asettamista.

Näiden tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi toiminta olisi keskitettävä seuraaviin painopisteisiin:

– useampien ihmisten houkutteleminen työelämään ja pitäminen työelämässä, työvoiman tarjonnan lisääminen sekä sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmien nykyaikaistaminen

– työntekijöiden ja yritysten sopeutumiskyvyn kehittäminen

– inhimilliseen pääomaan tehtävien investointien lisääminen parantamalla koulutusta ja ammattitaitoa.

1. Useampien ihmisten houkutteleminen työelämään ja pitäminen työelämässä, työvoiman tarjonnan lisääminen sekä sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmien nykyaikaistaminen

Työllisyysasteen kohottaminen on tehokkain tapa lisätä taloudellista kasvua ja edistää sosiaaliseen osallisuuteen perustuvia talouksia sekä varmistaa turvaverkko niille, jotka eivät pysty työskentelemään. On entistäkin välttämättömämpää edistää elämänkaariajattelua työelämässä ja nykyaikaistaa sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmiä niiden riittävyyden, rahoituksen kestävyyden ja yhteiskunnan muuttuviin tarpeisiin mukautumisen varmistamiseksi, sillä työikäisen väestön määrän odotetaan vähenevän. Olisi kiinnitettävä erityistä huomiota

miesten ja naisten jatkuvien työllisyyserojen kaventamiseen, ikääntyneiden työntekijöiden ja nuorten työllisyysasteen nostamiseen uuden sukupolvien välisen lähestymistavan mukaisesti sekä työmarkkinoilta pahiten syrjäytyneiden aktiivisen työmarkkinoille osallistumisen edistämiseen. On myös lisättävä toimia nuorten aseman parantamiseksi työmarkkinoilla ja nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentämiseksi merkittävästi, sillä se on keskimäärin kaksinkertainen kokonaistyöttömyysasteeseen verrattuna.

Työllisyyden kasvun helpottamiseksi on luotava oikeanlaiset olosuhteet niin työelämään ensimmäistä kertaa tuleville ja työelämään tauon jälkeen palaaville kuin niille, jotka haluavat pidentää työuraansa. Niin ikään ratkaisevan tärkeitä tekijöitä joustoturva-ajattelutavan kannalta ovat työn laatu, palkka ja etuudet mukaan luettuina, työolot, elinikäinen oppiminen ja uramahdollisuudet sekä sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmien tarjoama tuki ja kannustimet. Jotta voidaan edistää elämänkaariajattelua työelämässä sekä työ- ja perhe-elämän yhteensovittamista politiikalla on varmistettava lastenhoitopalvelujen saatavuus. Käyttökelpoinen vertailuarvo on, että vuoteen 2010 mennessä tarjotaan hoitopaikka vähintään 90 prosentille kolmevuotiaista ja sitä vanhemmista alle kouluikäisistä lapsista ja vähintään 33 prosentille alle kolmevuotiaista lapsista. Vanhempien, erityisesti yksinhuoltajien, keskimääräisen työllisyysasteen nostaminen edellyttää toimenpiteitä perheiden tukemiseksi. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi erityisesti otettava huomioon yksinhuoltajien ja monilapsiperheiden erityistarpeet. Lisäksi työuran pidentäminen edellyttäisi tosiasiallisen työmarkkinoilta poistumisiän (59,9 vuotta vuonna 2001) nostamista viidellä vuodella Euroopan unionin tasolla vuoteen 2010 mennessä. Lisäksi jäsenvaltioiden olisi toteutettava toimenpiteitä terveyden suojelemiseksi, sairauksien ehkäisemiseksi ja terveiden elämäntapojen edistämiseksi tavoitteena pienentää sairauksista aiheutuvia kustannuksia, lisätä työvoiman tuottavuutta ja pidentää työuraa.

Eurooppalaisen nuorisosopimuksen täytäntöönpanon odotetaan myös edistävän elämänkaariajattelua työelämässä erityisesti helpottamalla siirtymistä koulutuksesta työmarkkinoille.

Suuntaviiva 18. Elämänkaariajattelun edistäminen työelämässä seuraavilla tavoilla:

- uusien työllistymispolkujen rakentaminen nuorille ja nuorisotyöttömyyden vähentäminen eurooppalaisen nuorisosopimuksen mukaisesti,

- määrätietoiset toimet naisten osallistumisen lisäämiseksi sekä työllisyyteen, työttömyyteen ja palkkoihin liittyvien sukupuolierojen kaventamiseksi,

- työn ja yksityiselämän sovittaminen yhteen aiempaa paremmin sekä edullisten lastenhoitopalvelujen ja muille huollettaville suunnattujen hoitopalvelujen tarjoaminen,

- aktiivisen ikääntymisen, myös asianmukaisten työolojen, tukeminen, (työ)terveystilanteen sekä asianmukaisten kannustimien, joiden avulla edistetään työntekoa ja ehkäistään varhaiseläkkeelle siirtymistä, parantaminen,

- nykyaikaiset sosiaalisen suojelun järjestelmät, mukaan lukien eläke- ja terveydenhuoltojärjestelmät; varmistetaan niiden sosiaalinen riittävyys, rahoituksen kestävyys ja kyky vastata muuttuviin tarpeisiin, jotta voidaan tukea osallistumista työelämään, työelämässä pysymistä ja pidempää työuraa.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Talouden ja julkisen talouden kestävyyden turvaaminen perustana työllisyyden lisäämiselle” (nro 2).

Aktiivisen osallisuuden politiikoilla voidaan lisätä työvoiman tarjontaa ja parantaa yhteenkuuluvuutta yhteiskunnassa, ja ne ovat tehokkaita keinoja parantaa kaikkein epäedullisimmassa asemassa olevien integroitumista yhteiskuntaan ja työmarkkinoille. Jokaiselle työttömäksi joutuvalle henkilölle on tarjottava uusi mahdollisuus kohtuullisessa ajassa. Nuorten henkilöiden tapauksessa tämän ajanjakson olisi oltava lyhyt, esimerkiksi korkeintaan neljä kuukautta vuoteen 2010 mennessä; aikuisten tapauksessa enintään 12 kuukautta. Pitkäaikaistyöttömille olisi tarjottava aktiivisia työvoimapoliittisia toimenpiteitä ottaen huomioon vertailuarvoksi asetettu 25 prosentin osallistumisaste vuonna 2010. Aktivoinnin olisi tapahduttava koulutuksen, uudelleenkoulutuksen, työharjoittelun, työpaikan tai muun työllistyvyyttä edistävän toimenpiteen muodossa, minkä lisäksi olisi tarvittaessa annettava jatkuvaa työnhakuapua. Osallistumista voidaan lisätä ja sosiaalista syrjäytymistä torjua helpottamalla työnhakijoiden työnsaantia, ehkäisemällä työttömyyttä ja varmistamalla, että työttömäksi joutuneet henkilöt pysyvät kiinteässä yhteydessä työmarkkinoihin ja työllistämiskelpoisina. Tämä noudattaa myös joustoturva-ajattelutapaa. Näiden tavoitteiden saavuttaminen edellyttää työmarkkinoilla olevien esteiden purkamista avustamalla tehokkaassa työnhaussa, helpottamalla koulutuksen ja muiden aktiivisten työvoimapoliittisten toimenpiteiden saatavuutta, varmistamalla kohtuuhintaisten peruspalvelujen saatavuus ja takaamalla riittävä vähimmäistoimeentulo kaikille. Valitussa lähestymistavassa olisi samanaikaisesti varmistettava, että työnteko on kannattavaa kaikille työntekijöille, sekä poistettava työttömyys-, köyhyys- ja työelämän ulkopuolella oloon liittyvät loukut. Erityistä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä muita heikommassa asemassa olevien henkilöiden, vähän koulutetut työntekijät mukaan lukien, työmarkkinoille osallistumisen edistämiseen muun muassa laajentamalla sosiaalipalveluja ja yhteisötaloutta sekä kehittämällä uusia työllistymismahdollisuuksia kollektiivisiin tarpeisiin vastaamiseksi. Erityisen tärkeitä ovat syrjinnän torjunta, vajaakuntoisten työhönpääsyn edistäminen sekä maahanmuuttajien ja vähemmistöjen integroiminen.

Suuntaviiva 19. Osallisuutta edistävien työmarkkinoiden varmistaminen, työn vetovoiman parantaminen ja työnteon tekeminen kannattavaksi työnhakijoille, myös muita heikommassa asemassa oleville, sekä työelämän ulkopuolella oleville henkilöille seuraavilla tavoilla:

- aktiiviset ja ennalta ehkäisevät työvoimapoliittiset toimenpiteet, joihin sisältyy tarpeiden tunnistaminen varhaisessa vaiheessa, avustaminen työnhaussa, ohjaus ja koulutus yksilöllisten toimintasuunnitelmien mukaisesti sekä sellaisten sosiaalipalvelujen tarjoaminen, joilla tuetaan kauimpana työmarkkinoiden ulkopuolella olevien ryhmien osallisuutta ja edistetään köyhyyden poistamista,

- verotus- ja etuusjärjestelmistä johtuvien kannustimien ja lannistimien, myös etuuksien hallinnoinnin ja ehdollisuuden, jatkuva tarkastelu sekä korkeiden efektiivisten marginaaliveroasteiden merkittävä alentaminen varsinkin pienituloisilla siten, että samalla varmistetaan riittävä sosiaalisen suojelun taso,

- uusien työllistymismahdollisuuksien kehittäminen henkilö- ja yrityspalveluissa erityisesti paikallisesti.

Jotta yhä useammat löytäisivät parempia työpaikkoja, on myös parannettava työmarkkinoiden infrastruktuuria, EURES-verkko mukaan luettuna, sekä kansallisella että Euroopan unionin

tasolla, niin että mahdollista yhteensopimattomuutta voidaan ennakoida ja ratkaista paremmin. Työpaikasta toiseen ja työelämään siirtymisen helpottaminen on olennainen osa joustoturvamallia, ja olisi edistettävä politiikkoja, joilla parannetaan liikkuvuutta ja työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin vastaamista. Työnhakijoiden olisi kaikkialla Euroopan unionissa voitava saada tietoa kaikista jäsenvaltioiden työnvälityspalvelujen ilmoittamista avoimista työpaikoista. Työntekijöiden liikkuvuus EU:ssa olisi varmistettava täysin perussopimusten mukaisesti. Kansallisilla työmarkkinoilla on otettava huomioon myös kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahanmuutosta seuraava työvoiman lisätarjonta.

Suuntaviiva 20. Työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin vastaamisen parantaminen seuraavilla tavoilla:

- työmarkkinainstituutioiden ja erityisesti työvoimapalvelujen nykyaikaistaminen ja lujittaminen, myös työllisyys- ja koulutusmahdollisuuksien avoimuuden varmistamiseksi kansallisella ja Euroopan tasolla,

- työntekijöiden Euroopan laajuisen liikkuvuuden esteiden poistaminen perussopimusten mukaisesti,

- tarvittavien taitojen, työvoimapulan ja pullonkaulojen parempi ennakointi,

- taloudellisista syistä tapahtuvan muuttoliikkeen asianmukainen hallinta.

2. Työntekijöiden ja yritysten sopeutumiskyvyn parantaminen

Euroopan on parannettava kykyään ennakoida ja käynnistää taloudellisia ja sosiaalisia muutoksia sekä sopeutua niihin. Tämä edellyttää työllisyyttä tukevia työvoimakustannuksia, työn organisoinnin nykyaikaistamista ja hyvin toimivia työmarkkinoita, joilla joustavuus yhdistyy työsuhdeturvaan siten, että voidaan täyttää sekä yritysten että työntekijöiden tarpeet. Tällä tavoin voitaisiin myös ehkäistä työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumista ja vähentää pimeää työtä. Näiden tavoitteiden saavuttaminen edellyttää integroitua joustoturva-ajattelutapaa, joka kattaa sopimusjärjestelyt, elinikäisen oppimisen, aktiivisen työmarkkinapolitiikan ja sosiaaliturvajärjestelmät (ks. myös suuntaviivat 18, 19 ja 23).

Tämän päivän yhä globaalimmassa taloudessa, jossa markkinat avautuvat ja uusia teknologioita otetaan jatkuvasti käyttöön, sekä yrityksillä että työntekijöillä on tarve ja myös tilaisuus sopeutua. Vaikka rakennemuutos yleisesti ottaen hyödyttää kasvua ja työllisyyttä, se tuo mukanaan myös muutoksia, jotka ovat vahingollisia joillekin työntekijöille ja yrityksille. Yrityksistä on tultava joustavampia, jotta ne voivat vastata kysynnän äkillisiin muutoksiin, sopeutua uusiin teknologioihin ja innovoida jatkuvasti kilpailukykynsä säilyttämiseksi. Yritysten on myös vastattava työntekijöiden henkilökohtaisten mieltymysten ja perhesuhteissa tapahtuvien muutosten ohjaamiin työn laatua koskeviin lisääntyviin vaatimuksiin, ja niiden on selviydyttävä ikääntyvään työvoimaan ja yhä harvempiin nuoriin työntekijöihin liittyvästä haasteesta. Työntekijöiden kannalta työelämä on monimutkaistumassa, sillä työn jaksotukseen tulee yhä enemmän erilaisia vaihtoehtoja ja siitä tulee epäsäännöllisempää, ja koko elämänkaaren aikana on pystyttävä hallitsemaan yhä suurempi määrä siirtymiä. Nopeasti muuttuvien talouksien vuoksi työntekijöiden on oltava valmiita ja saatava mahdollisuus elinikäiseen oppimiseen, jotta he voivat omaksua uusia työtapoja, tieto- ja viestintätekniikan lisääntyvä käyttö mukaan luettuna, ja selviytyä muutoksista työllisyysasemassaan, johon liittyviin väliaikaisten tulonmenetysten riskeihin on vastattava paremmin tarjoamalla asianmukaisia nykyaikaisia sosiaaliturvapalveluja.

Jäsenvaltioiden olisi suunniteltava oma toimintansa neuvoston hyväksymien yhteisten periaatteiden mukaisesti. Joustoturvaan sisältyy neljä keskeistä tekijää, jotka olisi otettava huomioon: joustavat ja luotettavat sopimusjärjestelyt nykyaikaisen työlainsäädännön, työehtosopimusten ja työn organisoinnin avulla; kattavat elinikäisen oppimisen strategiat, joilla varmistetaan työntekijöiden, erityisesti heikoimmassa asemassa olevien työntekijöiden, jatkuva mukautumiskyky ja työllistettävyys; vaikuttava aktiivinen työvoimapolitiikka, joka auttaa ihmisiä selviytymään nopeissa muutoksissa, lyhentää työttömyysjaksoja ja helpottaa siirtymisiä uusiin työpaikkoihin; ja nykyaikaiset sosiaaliturvajärjestelmät, jotka tarjoavat riittävän toimeentulotuen, kannustavat työllisyyttä ja helpottavat liikkumista työmarkkinoilla (tähän sisältyy laaja joukko sosiaaliturvasäännöksiä, työttömyysetuuksia, eläkkeitä ja terveydenhuoltopalveluja, jotka auttavat ihmisiä sovittamaan yhteen työssäkäynnin ja yksityis- ja perhe-elämän velvollisuudet, kuten lastenhoidon). Työmahdollisuuksien laajempi ja Euroopan unionin laajuinen hyödyntäminen edellyttää myös maantieteellistä liikkuvuutta.

Suuntaviiva 21. Joustavuuden edistäminen yhdessä työsuhdeturvan kanssa sekä työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen vähentäminen ottaen työmarkkinaosapuolten asema asianmukaisesti huomioon seuraavilla tavoilla:

- työllisyyslainsäädännön mukauttaminen, erilaisten työsuhde- ja työaikajärjestelyjen tarkistaminen tarpeen mukaan,

- pimeää työtä koskevan kysymyksen tarkastelu,

- muutosten, myös talouden rakenneuudistuksen, ja erityisesti kaupan avautumiseen liittyvien muutosten ennakoinnin parantaminen ja positiivinen hallinta, jotta voitaisiin minimoida niistä aiheutuvat sosiaaliset kustannukset ja helpottaa sopeutumista,

- innovatiivisten ja mukautuvien työn organisointimuotojen edistäminen ja levittäminen työn laadun ja tuottavuuden sekä myös terveyden ja turvallisuuden parantamiseksi,

- ammattiasemassa tapahtuvien siirtymien tukeminen, koulutus, itsenäinen ammatinharjoittaminen, yritysten perustaminen ja maantieteellinen liikkuvuus mukaan luettuina.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Makrotalous-, rakenne- ja työllisyyspolitiikkojen johdonmukaisuuden parantaminen” (nro 5).

Työpaikkojen luomisen maksimoimiseksi, kilpailukyvyn säilyttämiseksi ja talouden yleisten puitteiden vahvistamiseksi yleisen palkkakehityksen olisi vastattava tuottavuuden kasvua suhdannekierron aikana ja heijastettava työmarkkinatilannetta. Sukupuolten välisiä palkkaeroja olisi pienennettävä. Erityistä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä alhaiseen palkkatasoon naisvaltaisissa ammateissa ja toimialoilla, sekä syihin, joiden vuoksi palkat pienenevät naisvaltaisiksi muuttuvissa ammateissa ja toimialoilla. Jotta voidaan helpottaa uusien työpaikkojen luomista varsinkin matalapalkka-aloilla, voi myös olla tarpeen vähentää välillisiä työvoimakustannuksia ja tarkistaa verokiilaa.

Suuntaviiva 22. Työllisyyttä tukevien työvoimakustannusten kehittymisen ja palkanmuodostusmekanismien varmistaminen seuraavilla tavoilla:

- työmarkkinaosapuolten kannustaminen luomaan omilla vastuualueillaan palkkaneuvotteluille sellaiset puitteet, joissa tuottavuus ja työmarkkinoiden haasteet otetaan huomioon kaikilla asiaan kuuluvilla tasoilla ja vältetään sukupuolten väliset palkkaerot,

- välillisten työvoimakustannusten vaikutusta työllisyyteen tarkastellaan ja tarvittaessa niiden rakennetta ja tasoa mukautetaan erityisesti pienipalkkaisten verotaakan keventämiseksi.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Makrotaloudellista vakautta ja kasvua tukevan palkkakehityksen varmistaminen” (nro 4).

3. Inhimilliseen pääomaan tehtävien investointien lisääminen parantamalla koulutusta ja ammattitaitoa

Euroopan on lisättävä ja tehostettava inhimilliseen pääomaan kohdistuvia investointejaan. Liian monien työmarkkinoille pääsy, työmarkkinoilla eteneminen tai niillä pysyminen estyy, koska heillä ei ole riittävästi ammattitaitoa tai taidot eivät vastaa kysyntää. Kaikkien ikäryhmien työhönpääsyn edistämiseksi sukupuolesta riippumatta sekä tuottavuuden, innovoinnin ja työn laadun parantamiseksi Euroopan unionin on investoitava enemmän ja tehokkaammin inhimilliseen pääomaan samoin kuin yksilöitä, yrityksiä, taloutta ja yhteiskuntaa hyödyttävään elinikäiseen oppimiseen joustoturvamallin mukaisesti.

Osaamis- ja palvelutalous edellyttää erilaisia taitoja kuin perinteinen teollisuus, ja näitä taitoja on myös teknologisten muutosten ja innovaatioiden vuoksi jatkuvasti ajanmukaistettava. Jos työntekijät haluavat pysyä ja kehittyä työssään ja olla valmiita työpaikan vaihdoksiin ja muuttuviin työmarkkinoihin, heidän on lisättävä ja uudistettava taitojaan säännöllisesti. Yritysten tuottavuus riippuu sellaisen työvoiman kouluttamisesta ja ylläpitämisestä, joka kykenee sopeutumaan muutokseen. Hallitusten on varmistettava, että koulutustaso nousee ja että nuorilla on tarvittavat keskeiset taidot eurooppalaisen nuorisosopimuksen mukaisesti. Nuorten työmarkkinamahdollisuuksien parantamiseksi Euroopan unionin olisi asetettava tavoitteeksi, että keskimäärin enintään 10 prosenttia nuorista päättää koulunkäyntinsä varhaisessa vaiheessa ja että vähintään 85 prosentilla 22-vuotiaista olisi keskiasteen koulutus vuonna 2010. Politiikkojen tavoitteena olisi myös oltava, että keskimäärin vähintään 12,5 prosenttia työikäisistä aikuisista (25–64-vuotiaista) osallistuu Euroopan unionissa elinikäiseen oppimiseen. Kaikki sidosryhmät olisi saatava mukaan kehittämään ja edistämään jo varhaisesta iästä alkavaa todellista elinikäisen oppimisen kulttuuria. Jotta asukasta kohti laskettavia julkisia ja yksityisiä investointeja henkilöstövoimavaroihin saataisiin lisättyä merkittävästi ja investointien laatu ja tehokkuus voitaisiin taata, on tärkeää huolehtia siitä, että kustannukset ja tehtävät jakautuvat kaikkien toimijoiden kesken tasapuolisesti ja avoimesti, ja vahvistaa koulutuspolitiikkaa koskevaa näyttöä. Tätä varten jäsenvaltioiden olisi käytettävä paremmin hyväkseen rakennerahastojen ja Euroopan investointipankin tarjoamia mahdollisuuksia koulutusinvestointeihin. Näiden tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi jäsenvaltioiden on pantava täytäntöön johdonmukaiset ja kattavat elinikäistä oppimista koskevat strategiat, joihin ne ovat sitoutuneet.

Suuntaviiva 23. Inhimilliseen pääomaan tehtävien investointien laajentaminen ja parantaminen seuraavilla tavoilla:

- osallisuutta edistävät koulutuspolitiikat ja toimet, joilla helpotetaan merkittävästi pääsyä ammatilliseen peruskoulutukseen sekä toisen ja korkea-asteen koulutukseen, mukaan luettuina oppisopimukset ja yrittäjyyskoulutus,

- koulunkäyntinsä varhaisessa vaiheessa päättävien määrän merkittävä vähentäminen,

- kaikille avointen tehokkaiden elinikäistä oppimista koskevien strategioiden käyttöönotto kouluissa, yrityksissä, julkishallinnossa ja kodeissa eurooppalaisten sopimusten mukaisesti,

mukaan lukien asianmukaiset kannustimet ja kustannusten jakamista koskevat järjestelyt, joilla pyritään tehostamaan erityisesti heikon ammattitaidon omaavien ja ikääntyvien työntekijöiden osallistumista jatko- ja työpaikkakoulutukseen kaikissa elämän vaiheissa.

Ks. myös yhdennetty suuntaviiva ”Erityisesti yksityissektorin T&K-investointien lisääminen ja parantaminen” (nro 7).

Kunnianhimoisten tavoitteiden asettaminen ja kaikkien toimijoiden suorittamien investointien lisääminen ei vielä riitä. Jotta tarjonta käytännössä vastaisi kysyntää, elinikäisen oppimisen järjestelmien on oltava kohtuuhintaisia ja kaikkien saatavilla, ja niiden on pystyttävä vastaamaan muuttuviin tarpeisiin. Koulutusjärjestelmiä on mukautettava ja niiden valmiuksia kehitettävä, jotta ne vastaisivat paremmin työmarkkinoiden sekä tietoon perustuvan talouden ja yhteiskunnan tarpeita ja olisivat entistä tehokkaampia ja oikeudenmukaisempia. Tieto- ja viestintätekniikalla voidaan parantaa oppimismahdollisuuksia ja räätälöidä koulutus vastaamaan paremmin työntekijöiden ja työnantajien tarpeita. Työmahdollisuuksien laajempi hyödyntäminen Euroopan unionissa edellyttää myös laajempaa liikkuvuutta työnteko- ja opiskelutarkoituksessa. Euroopan työmarkkinoilla liikkuvuuden tiellä vielä olevat esteet, erityisesti tutkintotodistusten ja ammattipätevyyden tunnustamiseen ja avoimuuteen liittyvät esteet, olisi poistettava panemalla täytäntöön eurooppalainen tutkintokehys. Kansallisten koulutusjärjestelmien uudistamisen tukemiseksi on tärkeää käyttää hyväksi Euroopan tasolla sovittuja välineitä ja puitteita Koulutus 2010 -työohjelman mukaisesti.

Suuntaviiva 24. Koulutusjärjestelmien mukauttaminen uusiin pätevyysvaatimuksiin seuraavilla tavoilla:

- koulutuksen vetovoiman, avoimuuden ja laatuvaatimusten parantaminen ja varmistaminen, koulutusmahdollisuuksien tarjonnan laajentaminen, joustavien oppimisväylien takaaminen sekä opiskelijoiden ja harjoittelijoiden liikkuvuusmahdollisuuksien laajentaminen,

- koko väestön koulutus- ja tiedonsaantimahdollisuuksien helpottaminen ja monipuolistaminen työaikajärjestelyillä, perheiden tukipalveluilla, uraohjauksella sekä tarvittaessa kustannusten uudenlaisella jakamisella,

- uusiin ammatillisiin tarpeisiin, keskeisiin pätevyysvaatimuksiin ja tulevaisuuden taitovaatimuksiin vastaaminen parantamalla ammattipätevyyksien määrittelemistä ja avoimuutta, niiden tosiasiallista tunnustamista sekä epävirallisen oppimisen ja arkioppimisen tunnustamista.

EUROPEISKA GEMENSKAPERNAS KOMMISSION

Bryssel den 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 803 slutlig
DEL V

2007/0300 (CNS)

MEDDELANDE FRÅN KOMMISSIONEN TILL EUROPEISKA RÅDET

INTEGRERADE RIKTLINJER FÖR TILLVÄXT OCH SYSSELSÄTTNING (2008–2010)

med

KOMMISSIONENS REKOMMENDATION

om allmänna riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik (enligt artikel 99 i EG-fördraget)

och

Förslag till

RÅDETS BESLUT

om riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik (enligt artikel 128 i EG-fördraget)

(framlagda av kommissionen)

INNEHÅLLSFÖRTECKNING

MOTIVERING 3

LÄGET I EU:S EKONOMI 4

DEL 1 Kommissionens rekommendation om allmänna riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken (2008–2010) 7

KOMMISSIONENS REKOMMENDATION om allmänna riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik 7

Avsnitt A – En tillväxt- och sysselsättningsinriktad makroekonomisk politik 8

A.1. A.1 En makroekonomisk politik som skapar förutsättningar för ökad tillväxt och sysselsättning 8

A.2 Ett dynamiskt och väl fungerande euroområde 11

Avsnitt B - Mikroekonomiska reformer i syfte att öka Europas tillväxtpotential 13

B.1 Kunskap och innovation – redskap för hållbar tillväxt 13

B.2 Göra Europa mer attraktivt område att investera och arbeta i 18

Del 2 Sysselsättningsriktlinjer (2008-2010) 24

BILAGA 27

MOTIVERING

Vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2005 enades stats- och regeringscheferna om en förnyad Lissabonagenda, med förstärkt fokus på tillväxt och sysselsättning. Man beslutade att i fortsättningen inordna strategin i treårscykler, befrämja varje parts egenansvar och klargöra fördelningen av uppgifter genom att tydligt ange vilka reformer som bör genomföras av medlemsstaterna och för vilka gemenskapen bör ta en ledande roll. Som ett redskap för den förnyade strategin har rådet godkänt en uppsättning integrerade riktlinjer och antagit de rättsakter som krävs, på grundval av artiklarna 99 och 128 i fördraget. Riktlinjerna är avsedda att vägleda medlemsstaterna i arbetet med de nationella reformprogrammen. De integrerade riktlinjerna gäller för en treårscykel i taget, och kommer därför att behöva förnyas inför nästa cykel. De steg som vidtogs för att förnya Lissabonstrategin våren 2005 kommer att ge ny kraft åt EU:s arbete för hållbar tillväxt och sysselsättning.

Under den första treårscykeln (2005–2008) har medlemsstaterna strävat efter att påskynda genomförandet av strukturreformerna, även om intensiteten i detta arbete varierat något medlemsstaterna emellan. Även om uppsvinget i den europeiska ekonomin beror mycket på konjunkturen, har reformer i linje med Lissabonstrategin bidragit till att förstärka tillväxtpotentialen i de nationella ekonomierna.Reformerna har också ökat den europeiska ekonomins slagtålighet för externa chocker, t.ex. ökade energi- och råvarupriser och växelkursfluktuationer. En fortsatt integration av medlemsstaternas ekonomier och en ökad harmoni mellan nationella konjunkturer, särskilt inom euroområdet, kommer också att möjliggöra en monetär politik som är bättre avpassad för medlemsstaternas behov.

Som helhet har strategin således bidragit till att öka reformtakten, och gett medlemsstaterna stöd för nödvändiga men ibland obekväma reformer som hjälper dem att stå bättre rustade för globaliseringens utmaningar. De nya styrelseformerna för Lissabonstrategin bygger på ett starkare partnerskap mellan aktörer på medlemsstatsnivå och EU-nivå, och har visat sig fungera väl. En oberoende utvärdering visar att de integrerade riktlinjerna fungerar som ett komplett och öppet ramverk för arbetet, med plats för alla viktiga inslag i politiken för en stärkt tillväxt och sysselsättning i Europa. Enligt utvärderingen önskar de berörda aktörerna nu främst fokusera på genomförandet av politiken, där riktlinjerna också har en väsentlig roll att spela. Vår bedömning är därför att de integrerade riktlinjerna fungerar som avsett och inte behöver revideras i nuläget.

Mycket arbete återstår dock fortfarande för att förbereda EU och dess medlemsstater för globaliseringens utmaningar och för att skapa en mer solid grund för ekonomisk framgång på medellång och lång sikt. Snabba sociala förändringar ställer också krav på anpassning (längre yrkesverksamt liv, större variationer i familjestrukturer, nya former för mobilitet och ökad mångfald). EU måste därför justera sin politik och sina verktyg efter dessa förändringar. I många fall kan man också behöva utveckla helt nya verktyg, t.ex. Europeiska fonden för justering för globaliseringseffekter, för att stå bättre redo att ta itu med de problem och den oro som kan drabba dem som påverkas negativt av ändringar i handelsmönstren och sociala förändringar. Ett centralt mål är att skapa ett dynamiskt, konkurrenskraftigt och kunskapsbaserat samhälle i EU. Inom denna ram bör ytterligare prioritet ges åt den sociala dimensionen, åtgärder som bygger på *flexicurity*, energi- och klimatfrågor samt utbildning och kompetensutveckling, på ett sätt som bidrar till att modernisera europeiska marknader, främja innovation och skapa nya möjligheter för medborgarna i kunskapssamhället. De verktyg som står till buds inom Lissabonprocessen förenar redan idag element från olika politikområden, och medverkar till en mer heltäckande bild av hur EU och medlemsstaterna tillsammans kan

tackla de komplexa frågor som Europa står inför idag. Det gemensamma målet för den följande treårscykeln bör vara att göra bästa möjliga bruk av verktygen inom ramen för Lissabonstrategin, inklusive de landspecifika rekommendationer som antogs av rådet 2007, för att påskynda genomförandet av återstående reformer.

De integrerade riktlinjerna för perioden 2008–2010 presenteras i ett heltäckande dokument, som indelas i två huvuddelar:

Del 1 – Allmänna riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken

I avsnitt A behandlas hur man kan bidra till de ovanstående målen genom makroekonomisk politik. Avsnitt B är inriktat på de åtgärder som unionen och medlemsstaterna måste vidta för att göra Europa mer attraktivt att investera och arbeta i, och för att stödja tillväxtfrämjande kunskap och innovation.

*Del 2 – Sysselsättningsriktlinjerna*Denna del av de integrerade riktlinjerna inbegriper ett förslag till rådets beslut om riktlinjer för sysselsättningen. Samråd kommer att hållas med Europaparlamentet, Europeiska ekonomiska och sociala kommittén och Regionkommittén i enlighet med artikel 128 i fördraget.

Både den ekonomiska politiken och sysselsättningspolitiken är frågor av gemensamt intresse för medlemsstaterna enligt fördraget (artiklarna 99 och 126). För att en inbördes övervakning av arbetet ska fungera, och för att stärka samarbetet inom den ekonomiska politiken och sysselsättningspolitiken, ska medlemsstaterna avlägga rapport om de åtgärder de vidtar via de nationella reformprogrammen (och genom de årliga lägesrapporterna). På grundval av dessa rapporter kan rådet, i de fall det har konstaterats att en medlemsstat inte agerat enligt de integrerade riktlinjerna, utfärda rekommendationer till den berörda medlemsstaten med stöd av artiklarna 99 och 128.

LÄGET I EU:S EKONOMI

De ekonomiska villkoren har varit tämligen gynnsamma sedan 2005 då den förnyade Lissabonagendan för tillväxt och sysselsättning lanserades, även om det under de senaste månaderna förelegat vissa risker för att prognoserna inte kommer att nås. Tillväxttakten ökade till närmare 3 % år 2007, framför allt på grund av en robust inhemsk efterfrågan, och EU:s ekonomier har därmed byggt upp en starkare motståndskraft mot externa chocker. Den senaste tidens oro på finansmarknaderna och försvagningen av den amerikanska ekonomin har dock ökat riskerna betydligt, och för 2008–2009 förutses en långsammare tillväxt. De stramare villkoren på finansmarknaden kommer att hämma investeringstillväxten, särskilt inom byggsektorn, medan det gynnsamma läget på arbetsmarknaden däremot kommer att inverka positivt på tillväxten i privatkonsumtionen. Även om den senaste tidens gynnsamma utveckling främst beror på konjunkturen, finns det tecken på att strukturella faktorer kopplade till tidigare reformer i medlemsstaterna också haft en inverkan. I strukturhänseende har de största framstegen skett på arbetsmarknaderna, där arbetslösheten sjunkit till 7 % medan sysselsättningsgraden ökat till 65 %, varvid man särskilt kan notera ett ökat deltagande från kvinnor och äldre arbetstagare. Sedan mitten av 2005 har produktivitetstillväxten inom EU ökat. Även om merparten av denna ökning också kan tillskrivas konjunkturbetingade faktorer förefaller det nu som om en tioårig nedgång i den trendmässiga produktivitetstillväxten har brutits. Det kan särskilt noteras att det är första gången på ett decennium som skapandet av nya jobb och produktivitetsutvecklingen förbättras samtidigt.

Trots den positiva utvecklingen under de föregående åren kräver den senaste tidens oro på det internationella planet att man vidtar effektiva åtgärder för att stärka ekonomins motståndskraft och utnyttjar det handlingsutrymme som nu uppstått genom att ta bättre vara på den arbetskraft som finns och öka arbetsproduktiviteten. Tyvärr kan det dock noteras att reformerna mattas av i vissa länder. Sysselsättningsgraden inom EU är fortfarande låg i förhållande till konkurrerande ekonomier. Dessutom är arbetslösheten fortfarande alldeles för hög, och detta gäller särskilt långtids- och ungdomsarbetslösheten. Produktivitetstillväxten har också avmattats i flera sektorer, även om många tillverkningsföretag har varit tillräckligt produktiva för klara sig väl i den internationella konkurrensen. Den åldrande befolkningens inverkan på medlemsstaternas ekonomier och offentliga finanser ligger också allt närmare i tiden, då de stora babyboom-generationerna närmar sig pensionsålder i många länder. Det är därför särskilt viktigt att påskynda arbetet för att minska den offentliga sektorns skuldsättning och modernisera pensions- och sjukvårdssystemen. En utmaning som blivit mer aktuell på senare tid är finanssystemets kapacitet att klara chocker av det slag som uppstått under 2007. För att stärka tilltron till finansmarknaden och dess utveckling i allmänhet är det viktigt att arbeta för ökad öppenhet och insyn, verkningsfulla konkurrensregler och adekvat lagstiftning och övervakning. Det är också betydelsefullt att verka för en löneutveckling som är väl förankrad hos arbetsmarknadens parter och förenlig med målen för ökad sysselsättning och makroekonomisk stabilitet.

EU har nu ett gynnsamt tillfälle att fortsätta och till och med påskynda arbetet med strukturreformerna. Utmaningen är nu att inte låta sig nöja med det positiva konjunkturläget, utan istället fortsätta bearbeta de strukturella svagheter som fortfarande hämmar sysselsättningstillväxten, innovationen och utnyttjandet av tekniska framsteg, och försvagar EU:s motståndskraft mot externa chocker. Samtidigt måste man bedriva en makroekonomisk politik som garanterar stabilitet, motstår inflationstryck och medverkar till att minska den offentliga skuldsättningen.

INTEGRERADE RIKTLINJER FÖR TILLVÄXT OCH SYSSELSÄTTNING (2008–2010)

Makroekonomiska riktlinjer

(1) Säkerställa ekonomisk stabilitet för hållbar tillväxt.

(2) Slå vakt om ekonomisk och finanspolitisk stabilitet som en grundval för ökad sysselsättning.

(3) Främja en effektiv tillväxt- och sysselsättningsorienterad resursfördelning.

(4) Säkerställa att löneutvecklingen bidrar till makroekonomisk stabilitet och tillväxt.

(5) Öka samordningen av den makroekonomiska politiken, strukturpolitiken och sysselsättningspolitiken.

(6) Bidra till en dynamisk och fungerande ekonomisk och monetär union.

Mikroekonomiska riktlinjer

(7) Öka och förbättra kvaliteten på investeringar i forskning och utveckling, särskilt inom det privata näringslivet.

(8) Underlätta innovation i alla former.

(9) Underlätta spridning och ändamålsenlig användning av IKT samt utveckla ett informationssamhälle som omfattar alla.

(10)	Stärka den industriella basens konkurrensfördelar
(11)	Främja en hållbar resursanvändning och stärka synergierna mellan miljöskydd och tillväxt.
(12)	Utvidga och fördjupa den inre marknaden.
(13)	Säkerställa öppna och konkurrenskraftiga marknader inom och utanför Europa samt utnyttja globaliseringens fördelar.
(14)	Skapa ett mer konkurrenskraftigt företagsklimat och stimulera privata initiativ genom bättre lagstiftning.
(15)	Främja en mer företagarvänlig kultur och ett gynnsamt klimat för små och medelstora företag.
(16)	Utvidga, förbättra och sammanlänka den europeiska infrastrukturen och slutföra överenskomna prioriterade gränsöverskridande projekt.
Sysselsättningsriktlinjer	
(17)	Föra en sysselsättningspolitik som siktar på att uppnå full sysselsättning, förbättra kvaliteten och produktiviteten i arbetet och stärka den sociala och territoriella sammanhållningen.
(18)	Främja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete.
(19)	Sörja för en arbetsmarknad som är öppen för alla, göra arbetet till ett attraktivt alternativ och få arbetet att löna sig för arbetssökande, inbegripet missgynnade personer och personer utanför arbetslivet.
(20)	Förbättra förmågan att bemöta arbetsmarknadens behov.
(21)	Främja flexibilitet i kombination med anställningstrygghet och minska segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden, med vederbörligt beaktande av den roll som tillkommer arbetsmarknadens parter.
(22)	Sörja för att arbetskraftskostnader och lönesättningsmekanismer främjar sysselsättningen.
(23)	Utöka och förbättra investeringarna i humankapital.
(24)	Anpassa utbildningssystemen till nya kompetenskrav.

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Mot bakgrund av det ovanstående

– rekommenderar kommissionen följande allmänna riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik, i överensstämmelse med artikel 99.2 i EG-fördraget,

– föreslår kommissionen följande rådsbeslut om riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik, i överensstämmelse med artikel 128.2 i EG-fördraget.

DEL 1

Kommissionens rekommendation om allmänna riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken (2008–2010)

KOMMISSIONENS REKOMMENDATION

om allmänna riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas och gemenskapens ekonomiska politik

Avsnitt A – En tillväxt- och sysselsättningsinriktad makroekonomisk politik

A.1. A.1 En makroekonomisk politik som skapar förutsättningar för ökad tillväxt och sysselsättning

Säkerställa ekonomisk stabilitet i syfte att öka sysselsättningen och höja tillväxtpotentialen

Makroekonomisk stabilitet kan endast uppnås genom en väl avvägd kombination av flera ekonomisk-politiska åtgärder, och de hinder för en sådan stabilisering som kan uppstå måste bemötas med såväl makroekonomiska medel som genom strukturreformer på varu-, tjänste- och kapitalmarknaderna. Den monetära politiken kan bidra till detta genom att inriktas på prisstabilitet och, med förbehåll för detta mål, genom att understödja andra delar av den allmänna ekonomiska politiken som rör tillväxt och sysselsättning. För nya medlemsstater är det viktigt att penning- och växelkurspolitiken bidrar till att uppnå konvergens. Växelkursordningar utgör en viktig del av den övergripande ekonomiska och monetära politiken, och bör inriktas på att uppnå real och hållbar nominell konvergens. Deltagande i ERM2 i ett lämpligt skede efter anslutningen bör vara en hjälp i dessa strävanden.

Genom att sörja för sunda offentliga finanser ger man de automatiska budgetstabilisatorerna möjlighet att under konjunkturcykeln verka fritt och symmetriskt i syfte att stabilisera produktionstillväxten kring den potentiella nivån. För de medlemsstater som redan uppnått sunda offentliga finanser består utmaningen i att bevara det läget. För de övriga medlemsstaterna är det av avgörande betydelse att vidta alla de korrigerande åtgärder som krävs för att uppnå de medelfristiga målen för de offentliga finanserna, i synnerhet om de ekonomiska villkoren förbättras, för att undvika en konjunkturförstärkande politik och i stället skapa ett läge där de automatiska stabilisatorerna under konjunkturcykeln får tillräckligt spelrum före nästa konjunkturavmattning. I synnerhet bör de länder som ingår i euroområdet eller i ERM2 uppnå en justeringstakt för det offentliga underskottet på 0,5 % av BNP per år som standard, och en ännu snabbare justering vid gynnsam konjunktur. I linje med 2005 års reform av stabilitets- och tillväxtpakten bör de enskilda medlemsstaternas medelfristiga mål för de offentliga finanserna differentieras med hänsyn till skillnaderna i situationer och utveckling i ekonomiskt och statsfinansiellt hänseende samt de finanspolitiska riskerna för de offentliga finansernas hållbarhet, bland annat inför kommande demografiska förändringar. Enligt den rapport om reformen av stabilitets- och tillväxtpakten, som godkändes av rådet den 22 mars 2005, kan medlemsstaterna också komplettera arbetet inom pakten och stödja dess mål genom att införa eller vidareutveckla nationella finanspolitiska bestämmelser och institutioner, inklusive övervakningsfunktioner.

En annan utmaning på det makroekonomiska planet, som särskilt vissa medlemsstater står inför, är att arbeta mot en bakgrund av kraftig återhämtning i ekonomin i kombination med bytesbalansunderskott, snabb kreditexpansion och en ökad mångfald och komplexitet på finansmarkanden. En stram finanspolitik, effektiv övervakning av finanssektorn och insatser för att stärka konkurrenskraften är av yttersta vikt för att hålla de externa och interna obalanserna under kontroll. En återhållsam finanspolitik är också ett viktigt verktyg för att hålla bytesbalansunderskotten på en nivå som fortfarande möjliggör en stabil extern finansiering, och kan också begränsa risken för ett ökat inhemskt efterfrågetryck som leder till en varaktigt högre inflation och makroekonomiska risker som kan orsaka svängningar i de reala växelkurserna och en bestående försvagning av konkurrenskraften.

Riktlinje 1. Säkerställa ekonomisk stabilitet för hållbar tillväxt

1. I överensstämmelse med stabilitets- och tillväxtpakten bör medlemsstaterna iaktta sina medelfristiga mål för de offentliga finanserna. Så länge detta mål inte uppnåtts, bör de vidta alla nödvändiga korrigerande åtgärder för att nå det. Medlemsstaterna bör undvika en konjunkturförstärkande finanspolitik. Det är dessutom nödvändigt att de medlemsstater som har alltför stort underskott vidtar verkningsfulla åtgärder för att snabbt korrigera detta.

2. Medlemsstater vars bytesbalansunderskott riskerar att bli ohållbara bör sträva efter att åtgärda dem genom strukturreformer, främja konkurrenskraften gentemot omvärlden och vid behov bidra till korrigeringen genom finanspolitiska åtgärder. Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Bidra till en dynamisk och fungerande ekonomisk och monetär union” (nr 6).

Slå vakt om ekonomisk och finanspolitisk stabilitet som en grundval för ökad sysselsättning

Det faktum att medelåldern i Europa ökar (ofta betecknat som fenomenet med en *åldrande befolkning*) innebär allvarliga risker för ekonomins långsiktiga hållbarhet i form av ökad skuldbörda, lägre potentiell produktion per capita på grund av att färre människor är i arbetsför ålder, samt svårigheter att finansiera pensioner, socialförsäkringar och sjukvård. Av kommissionens ”hållbarhetsrapport” (Sustainability report) framgår att det finns en betydande risk för en s.k. hållbarhetsklyfta i EU som helhet. Riskerna i detta avseende är särskilt stora i vissa medlemsstater, medan de är medelstora i andra.

Medlemsstaterna bör motverka de ekonomiska följderna av en åldrande befolkning genom att, som en del av den väletablerade tredelade strategin för att hantera budgetkonsekvenserna av en åldrande befolkning, sträva efter en tillfredsställande skuldminskningstakt och ge incitament för att höja sysselsättningsgraden och arbetskraftsutbudet i syfte att kompensera för den framtida minskningen av antalet personer i arbetsför ålder. För att nå dithän krävs det en ytterligare konsolidering av de offentliga finanserna (utöver den senaste tidens framsteg), som bör resultera i att samtliga medlemsstater uppnår de medelsiktiga målen. Man behöver också modernisera de sociala trygghetssystemen för att se till att de är finansiellt hållbara och ger incitament till den befolkning som är i arbetsför ålder att aktivt delta på arbetsmarknaden, samtidigt som systemen behöver vara tillgängliga och tillräckliga. Åtgärder för att skydda och förbättra folkhälsan skulle bidra till att öka antalet år medborgarna i genomsnitt lever med god hälsa, och skulle dessutom förbättra den långsiktiga hållbarheten i sjukvårdssystemen. I synnerhet kan ett bättre samspel mellan de sociala trygghetssystemen och arbetsmarknaderna undanröja snedvridningar och, med tanke på den ökade förväntade livslängden, uppmuntra till ett längre arbetsliv.

Riktlinje 2. Slå vakt om ekonomisk och finanspolitisk stabilitet som en grundval för ökad sysselsättning

Medlemsstaterna bör, med tanke på de beräknade kostnaderna för den åldrande befolkningen, göra följande:

1. I tillfredsställande takt minska den offentliga skulden för att stärka de offentliga finanserna.

2. Reformera och förstärka pensions-, socialförsäkrings- och hälso- och sjukvårdssystemen för att se till att de är finansiellt hållbara, socialt tillräckliga och tillgängliga.

3. Vidta åtgärder för att öka deltagandet på arbetsmarknaden och höja arbetskraftsutbudet särskilt bland kvinnor, unga samt äldre arbetstagare, och främja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete för att öka antalet arbetstimmar i ekonomin.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Främja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete” (nr 18 och 4, 19, 21).

Främja en tillväxt- och sysselsättningsorienterad samt effektiv resursfördelning

Väl utformade skatte- och utgiftssystem som främjar en effektiv resursfördelning är nödvändiga för att den offentliga sektorn till fullo ska kunna bidra till tillväxt och sysselsättning utan att äventyra målsättningen med ekonomisk stabilitet och hållbarhet. Detta kan uppnås genom en omfördelning av utgifter till tillväxtfrämjande områden som forskning och utveckling (FoU), fysisk infrastruktur, miljövänlig teknik, humankapital och kunskap. Medlemsstaterna kan också bidra till att kontrollera andra utgiftsområden genom utgiftsregler och resultatbudgetering och genom att införa bedömningsmekanismer som ska se till att enskilda reformåtgärder och övergripande reformpaket är väl utformade. En huvudprioritering för EU:s ekonomi är att få skattestrukturerna och deras samspel med bidragssystemen att främja en högre tillväxtpotential genom stärkt sysselsättning och ökade investeringar.

Riktlinje 3. Främja en effektiv tillväxt- och sysselsättningsorienterad resursfördelning

Medlemsstaterna bör, utan att det påverkar tillämpningen av riktlinjerna för ekonomisk stabilitet och hållbarhet, justera sammansättningen av de offentliga utgifterna så, att ökad vikt läggs vid tillväxtfrämjande områden i enlighet med Lissabonstrategin, anpassa skattestrukturerna för att höja tillväxtpotentialen, se till att det finns mekanismer för att bedöma förhållandet mellan offentliga utgifter och uppnåendet av politiska mål och sörja för övergripande samstämmighet mellan reformpaketen.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Främja en hållbar resursanvändning och stärka synergierna mellan miljöskydd och tillväxt” (nr 11).

Se till att löneutvecklingen bidrar till tillväxt och stabilitet och kompletterar strukturreformerna

Löneutvecklingen kan bidra till stabila makroekonomiska förhållanden och till en sysselsättningsfrämjande kombination av politiska åtgärder. Detta förutsätter att reallöneökningarna ligger i linje med produktivitetstillväxten på medellång sikt och ger utrymme för en lönsamhetsnivå som räcker till för produktivitets-, kapacitets- och sysselsättningsökande investeringar. Då får inte heller tillfälliga faktorer, t.ex. en produktivitetsvariation till följd av konjunkturmässiga faktorer eller en tillfällig höjning av den allmänna inflationstakten, tillåtas leda till en ohållbar löneuppgång. Samtidigt bör löneutvecklingen återspegla förhållandena på den lokala arbetsmarknaden. I länder som håller på att förlora marknadsandelar skulle reallönerna behöva öka långsammare än produktiviteten om konkurrenskraften ska kunna återhämta sig. Dessa frågor bör beaktas under den fortsatta dialogen och det fortsatta informationsutbytet mellan de finans- och penningpolitiska myndigheterna och arbetsmarknadens parter genom den makroekonomiska dialogen.

Riktlinje 4. Se till att löneutvecklingen bidrar till makroekonomisk stabilitet och tillväxt

För att stärka anpassningsförmågan bör medlemsstaterna främja lämpliga ramvillkor för löneförhandlingssystemen med full respekt för arbetsmarknadsparternas roll, i syfte att gynna

en utveckling av nominella löner och arbetskraftskostnader som är förenlig med prisstabilitet och ligger i linje med produktivitetsutvecklingen på medellång sikt, med beaktande av kompetensskillnader och lokala arbetsmarknadsförhållanden.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Sörja för att arbetskraftskostnader och lönesättningsmekanismer främjar sysselsättningen” (nr 22).

Främja en samstämmig makroekonomisk politik, strukturpolitik och sysselsättningspolitik

En sund makroekonomisk politik ska skapa förhållanden som gynnar sysselsättning och tillväxt. Strukturreformer som är förenliga med sunda offentliga finanser på kort och medellång sikt är nödvändiga för att öka produktiviteten och sysselsättningen på medellång sikt, varigenom tillväxtpotential skapas och förstärks fullt ut. Reformerna bidrar också till skattesystemens hållbarhet, makroekonomisk stabilitet och förmåga till återhämtning efter kriser. Samtidigt är en lämplig makroekonomisk politik avgörande för att kunna skörda frukterna av strukturreformerna. Ett centralt inslag i medlemsstaternas allmänna ekonomiska strategi är att se till att de har en samstämmig strukturpolitik på olika områden som stöder de makroekonomiska ramarna och vice versa. Det behövs i synnerhet marknadsreformer för att förbättra ekonomiernas allmänna förmåga att anpassa sig till konjunktursvängningar och även inför mer långsiktiga trender såsom globaliseringen och den tekniska utvecklingen. I detta sammanhang krävs det också insatser för att reformera skatte- och förmånssystemen i syfte att göra arbete lönsamt och undvika eventuella hinder för deltagande på arbetsmarknaden.

Riktlinje 5. Öka samordningen av den makroekonomiska politiken, strukturpolitiken och sysselsättningspolitiken

Medlemsstaterna bör genomföra reformer på arbets- och produktmarknaderna som samtidigt ökar tillväxtpotentialen och stöder de makroekonomiska ramarna genom ökad flexibilitet, produktionsfaktorernas rörlighet och anpassningsförmåga på arbets- och produktmarknaderna som ett svar på globaliseringen, tekniska framsteg, förändringar i efterfrågan och konjunktursvängningar. Medlemsstaterna bör i synnerhet driva på reformeringen av skatter och bidrag så att incitamenten ökas och arbete lönar sig, öka arbetsmarknadernas anpassningsbarhet genom att kombinera flexibilitet och trygghet i anställningen och förbättra anställbarhet genom att investera i humankapital.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Främja flexibilitet i kombination med anställningstrygghet och minska segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden, med vederbörligt beaktande av den roll som tillkommer arbetsmarknadens parter” (nr 21, och nr 19).

A.2 Ett dynamiskt och väl fungerande euroområde

Sedan euroområdet skapades för nästan tio år sedan har den gemensamma valutan medverkat till ekonomisk stabilitet i länderna i området och skyddat dem från växelkursstörningar. Blygsam tillväxt och bestående klyftor mellan euroländerna både i fråga om tillväxt och inflation har lett till tvivel på om regleringen inom euroområdet har fungerat som den ska. Man har ifrågasatt om den ekonomiska politiken och styrmekanismerna faktiskt varit tillräckligt anpassade för att få ut alla fördelar av en gemensam valuta. Eftersom euroländerna inte längre kan fatta självständiga beslut inom penning- och valutapolitiken krävs det ytterligare reformer för att utveckla alternativa mekanismer som kan tjäna till att bättre anpassa ekonomierna till externa chocker och problem med konkurrenskraften.

Den policymix som utformas för euroområdet måste fungera som stöd för den ekonomiska tillväxten, och samtidigt medverka till långsiktig hållbarhet och stabilitet. I dagens situation är det viktigt att de åtgärderna bidrar till att stärka förtroendet hos konsumenter och investerare, vilket även innebär engagemang för stabilitet på medellång sikt. När det gäller de offentliga finanserna måste politiken utformas på ett sätt som säkerställer budgetsaldon som gynnar prisstabiliteten och bidrar dels till beredskapen för den demografiska utvecklingen, dels till en struktur på de offentliga utgifterna och inkomsterna som gynnar den ekonomiska tillväxten. Euroländerna har åtagit sig att påskynda arbetet för att uppnå sina medelfristiga mål, så att flertalet av dem ska ha uppnått sina mål under 2008 eller 2009 och samtliga ska ha uppnått målen senast 2010. Eftersom den offentliga sektorn svarar för en betydande del av den ekonomiska aktiviteten i euroländerna har de offentliga finanserna en stark inverkan på ekonomins utveckling i allmänhet. Resurser måste därför användas på ett sätt som gynnar tillväxten, samtidigt som man minimerar de störningar som finansieringen av offentlig verksamhet orsakar. Genomgripande strukturreformer ska hjälpa euroländerna att stärka sin tillväxtpotential på sikt, och samtidigt förebygga att en ökad tillväxt lägger grunden till högre inflation. För att uppnå en god anpassningsförmåga vid chocker är det av särskild vikt att euroländerna genomför reformer som leder till en mer anpassningsbar arbetsmarknad, starkare konkurrens på produktmarknaderna och djupare integration på finansmarknaderna, samt kombinerar dessa reformer med en makroekonomisk politik som inriktas på tillväxt och stabilitet.

För att euroområdet ska kunna bidra till en stabil internationell ekonomi och bättre tillvarata sina ekonomiska intressen måste det till fullo åta sig sin roll i det internationella monetära och ekonomisk-politiska samarbetet. Den yttre representationen för euroområdet bör förbättras ytterligare, även om man 2005 tog ett viktigt steg mot bättre kontinuitet genom att utse en ordförande för Eurogruppen för två år. Euroområdet måste kunna ta den ledande strategiska roll i utvecklingen av den globala ekonomin som står i proportion till dess ekonomiska tyngd.

Spridningseffekterna och behovet av en gemensam dagordning är också starkast i euroområdet. Att dela en gemensam valuta och en gemensam monetär politik ger en extra dimension åt samordningsarbetet, och kan stärka euroområdets roll när det gäller att generera ytterligare tillväxt och sysselsättning inom hela EU. Kommissionen kommer att göra en genomgripande översyn av EMU:s funktionssätt i samband med dess tioårsjubileum, och samtidigt lägga fram förslag till hur åtgärder, samordning och styrning kan ge största möjliga fördel av eurosamarbetet.

Riktlinje 6. För att **bidra till en dynamisk och fungerande ekonomisk och monetär union** bör medlemsstaterna i euroområdet sörja för en bättre samordning av sin ekonomiska politik och budgetpolitik och särskilt göra följande:

1. Ägna särskild uppmärksamhet åt hållbara offentliga finanser i fullständig förenlighet med stabilitets- och tillväxtpakten.

2. Bidra till sådana politiska åtgärder som stöder den ekonomiska återhämtningen och är förenliga med prisstabiliteten, och därigenom ökar förtroendet inom affärsvärlden och hos konsumenter på kort sikt, samtidigt som de överensstämmer med en hållbar tillväxt på lång sikt.

3. Fortsätta sina strukturreformer i syfte att förbättra euroområdets potentiella tillväxt på lång sikt och dess produktivitet, konkurrenskraft och ekonomiska anpassning till asymmetriska chocker, och samtidigt ägna särskild uppmärksamhet åt sysselsättningspolitiken.

4. Se till att euroområdets inflytande på det globala ekonomiska planet står i proportion till dess ekonomiska tyngd.

Avsnitt B - Mikroekonomiska reformer i syfte att öka Europas tillväxtpotential

Strukturreformer är nödvändiga för att öka EU:s tillväxtpotential och stödja makroekonomisk stabilitet, eftersom de bidrar till den europeiska ekonomins effektivitet och anpassningsförmåga. Produktivitetsvinster uppnås genom konkurrens, investeringar och innovation. För att Europas tillväxtpotential ska kunna öka måste nya arbetstillfällen skapas och produktiviteten öka. Produktivitetstillväxten inom EU har sackat efter USA i mer än tio år, men har sedan mitten av 2005 fått ny kraft. Att slå vakt om denna positiva trend är den viktigaste utmaningen som unionen står inför, särskilt med tanke på den åldrande befolkningen. Enbart på grund av den åldrande befolkningen beräknas den nuvarande potentiella tillväxttakten minska med nästan hälften. Om levnadsstandarden ska kunna upprätthållas och höjas i framtiden och en hög nivå i fråga om socialt skydd ska kunna tryggas är det därför nödvändigt att fortsätta förbättra produktiviteten och att öka arbetstiden.

B.1 Kunskap och innovation – redskap för hållbar tillväxt

Ökad kunskap är en viktig drivkraft för långsiktig tillväxt, och kan genereras genom t.ex. investeringar i forskning och utveckling, innovation, utbildning och livslångt lärande. Strategier som syftar till att öka investeringarna i kunskap och till en förstärkning av EU-ekonomins innovationsförmåga är centrala delar av Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning. Därför har de nationella och regionala programmen för 2007–2013 i allt högre grad inriktats på investeringar inom dessa områden i enlighet med Lissabonmålen.

Öka och förbättra investeringarna i forskning och utveckling för att upprätta det europeiska kunskapsområdet

Forskning och utveckling (FoU) är av central betydelse för vår framtida konkurrenskraft. FoU har betydelse för den ekonomiska tillväxten på flera olika sätt. För det första kan FoU bidra till skapandet av nya marknader eller produktionsprocesser. För det andra kan det leda till gradvisa förbättringar av redan befintliga produkter och produktionsprocesser, och för det tredje ökar forsknings- och utvecklingsarbetet ett lands förmåga att tillgodogöra sig ny teknik.

EU-länderna använder i genomsnitt motsvarande ca 1,85 % av BNP till forskning och utveckling, dock med stora variationer medlemsstaterna emellan (ca 0,5 %–4 %.) Andelen FoU-utgifter har dock avtagit något sedan år 2000. Dessutom finansieras bara omkring 55 % av utgifterna för forskning i EU av företagssektorn. De blygsamma privata investeringarna i forskning och utveckling har identifierats som en av de främsta förklaringarna till EU:s eftersläpning i fråga om innovation jämfört med Förenta staterna. Målet att skapa ett europeiskt område för forskningsverksamhet måste nås snabbare, och detta gäller även delmålet att öka investeringarna i forskning till 3 % av BNP. Medlemsstaterna har ombetts att inom ramen för de nationella reformprogrammen och de årliga lägesrapporterna redogöra för sina utgiftsmål för FoU för 2010 och ange med vilka medel de planerar att uppnå dessa mål, och att därvid ägna särskild uppmärksamhet åt den europeiska dimensionen i sin FoU-politik. Den största utmaningen består i att inrätta rambetingelser, instrument och incitament för företagen att öka investeringarna i forskning.

De offentliga forskningsanslagen måste utnyttjas effektivare, och banden mellan den offentliga forskningen och den privata sektorn måste bli starkare. Expertcentrum och

expertnätverk bör förstärkas, offentliga stödmekanismer användas på ett bättre sätt för att stödja innovation inom den privata sektorn, och man bör också säkerställa en bättre hävstångseffekt för offentliga investeringar och modernisering av forskningsinstitutens och universitetens förvaltning. Det är också viktigt att sörja för att företagen verkar i en tillräckligt konkurrenspräglad miljö, eftersom konkurrens är ett viktigt incitament för privata investeringar i innovation. Dessutom krävs kraftfulla insatser för att öka antalet kvalificerade forskare som är verksamma i Europa, särskilt genom att locka flera studenter till vetenskapliga, tekniska och ingenjörsvetenskapliga utbildningsgrenar och genom att förbättra karriärmöjligheterna och rörligheten för forskare mellan nationer och sektorer. Man bör också minska hindren för studenters och forskares rörlighet. Forskningens och utvecklingens internationella dimension bör förstärkas genom gemensam finansiering, uppbyggnad av en kritisk massa på EU-nivå på viktiga områden som kräver avsevärda medel samt genom att minska hindren för studenters och forskares rörlighet.

Riktlinje 7. För att **öka och förbättra investeringarna i forskning och utveckling**, särskilt de privata företagens investeringar bekräftas det övergripande målet för 2010 på 3 % av BNP, med en lämplig fördelning mellan privata och offentliga investeringar. Medlemsstaterna kommer att fastställa specifika mellanliggande nivåer. Medlemsstaterna bör vidareutveckla de åtgärder på olika områden som syftar till att främja forskning och utveckling, särskilt de privata företagens forskning och utveckling, genom att göra följande:

1. Förbättra rambetingelserna och att se till att företagen verkar i en tillräckligt konkurrensutsatt och attraktiv miljö.

2. Använda de offentliga utgifterna för forskning och utveckling på ett effektivare sätt, och utveckla offentlig-privata partnerskap.

3. Utveckla och förstärka kompetenscentrum vid institutioner för högre utbildning och forskning i medlemsstaterna och inrätta nya sådana vid behov, förbättra samarbete och tekniköverföring mellan offentliga forskningsinstitut och privata företag.

4. Utveckla och bättre använda incitament för att öka den privata sektorns forskning och utveckling.

5. Modernisera forskningsinstitutens och universitetens förvaltning.

6. Sörja för att det finns tillräckligt många kvalificerade forskare genom att locka fler studenter till vetenskapliga, tekniska och ingenjörsvetenskapliga utbildningsgrenar och genom att förbättra karriärmöjligheterna och rörligheten för forskare och utvecklingspersonal inom Europa, internationellt och mellan sektorer.

Underlätta innovation

Dynamiken i den europeiska ekonomin är beroende av dess innovationsförmåga. Det måste därför finnas ekonomiska rambetingelser för innovation. Detta förutsätter väl fungerande finans- och produktmarknader liksom effektiva och prismässigt överkomliga medel för att skydda immateriella rättigheter. Innovationer introduceras ofta på marknaden av nya företag som kan ha svårt att få finansiering. Åtgärder för att uppmuntra nystart av innovativa företag och fortsatt tillväxt i dessa företag, även genom att förbättra tillgången till finansiering, bör därför kunna bidra till ökad innovation. Spridning av teknik och en politik som på ett bättre sätt integrerar nationell innovation och nationella utbildningssystem kan främjas genom

utveckling av innovationscentrum och innovationsnätverk liksom av stödtjänster för innovation som är inriktade på små och medelstora företag. Överföring av kunskap genom ökad rörlighet för forskare, utländska direktinvesteringar eller importerad teknik är särskilt fördelaktig för länder och regioner som släpar efter i utvecklingen. Man måste också arbeta för stärkt integration av de olika komponenterna i kunskapstriangeln FoU, utbildning och innovation.

EU:s övergripande innovationsstrategi omfattar därför frågor om immaterialrätt, standardisering, anpassning av politiken för offentlig upphandling för att stimulera innovation, gemensamma tekniska initiativ, främjande av innovation i regionerna, innovation av icke-teknisk art och inom servicesektorer, samt förbättring av företagens tillgång till riskkapital.

Det är därför hög tid att införa ett enhetligt och i kostnadshänseende överkomligt gemenskapspatent och en EU-täckande jurisdiktion för tvistlösning i patentfrågor, samt att underlätta skyddet av immateriell äganderätt på den inre marknaden.

Riktlinje 8. För att **underlätta innovation** i **alla former** bör medlemsstaterna inrikta sig på följande:

1. Förbättra stödtjänster för innovation, särskilt för spridning och tekniköverföring.

2. Inrätta och utveckla innovationscentrum, innovationsnätverk och inkubatorer där universitet, forskningsinstitutioner och företag kan mötas, även på regional och lokal nivå, för att överbrygga den tekniska klyftan mellan regionerna.

3. Stimulera kunskapsöverföring över gränserna, även genom utländska direktinvesteringar.

4. Främja offentlig upphandling av innovativa produkter och tjänster.

5. Förbättra tillgången till inhemsk och internationell finansiering.

6. Effektivt och överkomligt skydd av immateriella rättigheter.

Spridning av IKT i linje med målen och åtgärderna i det kommande i2010-initiativet, är också ett viktigt sätt att öka produktiviteten och därigenom den ekonomiska tillväxten. Inom EU har man ännu inte lyckats dra full fördel av möjligheterna med IKT, särskilt på grund av fortsatt otillräckliga investeringar såväl i själva tekniken som i organisatorisk innovation och i ökade datakunskaper. För att slå vakt om det europeiska näringslivets framtida konkurrenskraft måste man arbeta för en mer utbredd och ändamålsenlig användning av IKT och en smidigt fungerande inre marknad för elektronisk kommunikation. Det är också viktigt att söka minska och förebygga en fragmentering av den inre marknad som baseras på elektronisk handel (*e-Internal market*) genom att se till att medlemsstaterna elektroniska tjänster är kompatibla med varandra.

Riktlinje 9. För att **underlätta spridning och ändamålsenlig användning av IKT samt utveckla ett informationssamhälle som omfattar alla** bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Främja utbredd användning av IKT i offentliga förvaltningar, små och medelstora företag och hushåll.

2. Fastställa de nödvändiga ramarna för förändringarna av organisationen av arbetet i ekonomin i samband med detta.

3. Främja en stark närvaro av den europeiska industrin i centrala segment inom IKT.

4. Främja utvecklingen av starka IKT- och innehållsindustrier samt väl fungerande marknader.

5. Säkerställa nät- och informationssäkerhet samt konvergens och driftskompatibilitet för att upprätta ett informationsområde utan gränser.

6. Främja utvecklingen av bredbandsnät, även i regioner där täckningen är bristfällig, för att utveckla kunskapsekonomin.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Främja flexibilitet i kombination med anställningstrygghet och minska segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden med vederbörligt beaktande av den roll som tillkommer arbetsmarknadens parter” (nr 21).

Stärka den europeiska industriella basens konkurrensfördelar

En stark industriell bas är av yttersta vikt för den europeiska ekonomin. EU:s konkurrenskraft är beroende av att ekonomin kan orienteras i riktning mot sektorer som ger en högre produktivitet. För att uppgradera den industriella basen bör man sträva efter att integrera åtgärder för innovation och sysselsättning med regionala och andra aspekter.

För att kunna öka och behålla sin ledande ekonomiska och tekniska ställning måste Europa förbättra sin förmåga att utveckla och marknadsföra ny teknik, bland annat IKT och miljöteknik. Man bör analysera och utnyttja de synergieffekter som kan uppnås genom gemensamma åtgärder på EU-nivå när det gäller forskning, regelverk och finansiering i de fall där de enskilda medlemsstaterna på grund av problemens omfattning eller utbredning inte ensamma klarar av att lösa marknadsmisslyckanden. EU har fortfarande inte kunnat utnyttja sin tekniska potential till fullo. Genom sammanslagning av den europeiska sakkunskapen samt utveckling av offentlig-privata partnerskap och samarbete mellan medlemsstaterna, när fördelarna för samhället är större än för den privata sektorn, kommer denna potential att kunna utnyttjas bättre.

Riktlinje 10. För att **stärka den industriella basens konkurrensfördelar** behöver Europa en solid industriell struktur på hela sitt territorium. Behovet av en modern och aktiv industripolitik förutsätter att den industriella basens konkurrensfördelar stärks, bland annat genom attraktivare ramvillkor för både tillverkning och tjänster, samtidigt som man ser till att åtgärderna på nationell, transnationell och europeisk nivå kompletterar varandra. Medlemsstaterna bör göra följande:

1. Inleda arbetet genom att identifiera mervärdes- och konkurrensfaktorerna i centrala industrisektorer och ta itu med de utmaningar de ställs inför genom globaliseringen

2. Inrikta sig på utveckling av ny teknik och nya marknader.

a) Detta innebär särskilt ett åtagande att främja nya teknikinitiativ som bygger på offentlig-privata partnerskap och samarbete mellan medlemsstaterna, som bidrar till att lösa marknadsmisslyckanden.

b) Detta innebär även inrättande och utveckling av nätverk av regionala eller lokala företagsgrupper i hela EU med större medverkan av små och medelstora företag.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Förbättra förmågan att bemöta arbetsmarknadens behov” (nr 20).

Främja en hållbar resursanvändning

En bestående framgång beror också på hur man hanterar en rad frågor på resurs- och miljöområdet som, om de lämnas därhän, kommer att bromsa den framtida tillväxten. Utvecklingen på senare tid har bekräftat vikten av energieffektivitet och behovet av att minska den europeiska ekonomins känslighet för variationer i oljepriserna. Det behövs ett integrerat tillvägagångssätt i klimat- och energipolitiken för att förbättra försörjningtryggheten för energi, säkra EU-ekonomins konkurrenskraft och tillgången till energi till överkomlig kostnad, samt för att bekämpa klimatförändringen. Medlemsstaterna och gemenskapen måste samarbeta för att uppnå EU-målen att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser med minst 20 %, öka de förnybara energikällornas andel till 20 % samt att öka energieffektiviteten med 20 % till år 2020. Medlemsstaterna bör fortsätta kampen mot klimatförändring för att hindra den globala temperaturökningen från att överstiga den förindustriella nivån med mer än 2°C, samtidigt som Kyotomålen uppnås på ett kostnadseffektivt sätt. Medlemsstaterna bör fortsätta arbetet med att hejda förlusten av biologisk mångfald under åren fram till 2010, särskilt genom att införliva detta krav med annan politik, med tanke på den biologiska mångfaldens betydelse för vissa ekonomiska sektorer. Marknadsbaserade instrument, som bättre avspeglar skadorna på miljön och de sociala kostnaderna i priserna, har här en viktig roll att spela. Främjande av utveckling och användning av miljövänlig teknik, miljötänkande vid offentlig upphandling, med särskild hänsyn till små och medelstora företag, och avskaffande av subventioner och andra politiska instrument som har negativa effekter för miljön kan leda till ökad innovationsverksamhet och till ökade insatser för hållbar utveckling. EU:s företag är till exempel bland de främsta i världen när det gäller att utveckla ny teknik för förnybar energi. I ett sammanhang där energipriserna hela tiden stiger och hoten mot klimatet ökar är det viktigt att kraftfullt uppmuntra till förbättringar av energieffektiviteten, som ett bidrag till såväl tillväxt som hållbar utveckling.

Riktlinje 11. För att främja en hållbar resursanvändning och stärka synergierna mellan miljöskydd och tillväxt bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Prioritera energieffektivitet och kraftvärme, utveckling av hållbara, inklusive förnybara energiformer samt snabb spridning av miljövänlig och miljöeffektiv teknik, a) dels inom den inre marknaden, särskilt på transport- och energiområdet, för att bland annat minska den europeiska ekonomins känslighet för variationer i oljepriserna, b) dels gentemot resten av världen som en sektor med avsevärd exportpotential.

2. Främja att medel utvecklas till internalisering av externa miljökostnader och bryta sambandet mellan ekonomisk tillväxt och miljöförstöring. Dessa prioriteringar bör genomföras i enlighet med befintlig gemenskapslagstiftning och de åtgärder och instrument som föreslås i handlingsplanen för miljöteknik (ETAP), bl.a. genom att a) utnyttja marknadsbaserade instrument, b) använda riskfonder och medel för FoU, c) främja hållbara produktions- och konsumtionsmönster samt miljötänkande vid offentlig upphandling, d) ägna de små och medelstora företagen särskild uppmärksamhet och e) reformera subventioner som har betydande negativa effekter på miljön och som är oförenliga med hållbar utveckling, i syfte att successivt avveckla dem.

3. Fullfölja sitt åtagande att stoppa förlusten av biologisk mångfald senast 2010, särskilt genom att införliva detta krav med annan politik, med tanke på den biologiska mångfaldens betydelse för vissa ekonomiska sektorer.

4. Fortsätta kampen mot klimatförändring genom att uppnå Kyotomålen på ett kostnadseffektivt sätt, särskilt när det gäller små och medelstora företag.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Främja en tillväxt- och sysselsättningsorienterad effektiv resursfördelning” (nr 3).

B.2 Göra Europa mer attraktivt område att investera och arbeta i

Europeiska unionens förmåga att locka till sig investeringar beror bland annat på hur stora och öppna dess marknader är, hur dess lagstiftning är utformad och vilken kvalitet dess arbetskraft och infrastruktur har.

Utvidga och fördjupa den inre marknaden

Även om den inre marknaden för varor är relativt väl integrerad, är marknaderna för tjänster fortfarande, rättsligt sett eller i praktiken, ganska fragmenterade. Ett fullgott genomförande av tjänstedirektivet inom utsatt tid är ett viktigt steg mot en väl fungerande inre marknad för tjänster. Arbetet med att avlägsna hinder för gränsöverskridande verksamhet genom att minska den administrativa bördan kommer att bidra till att frigöra outnyttjad potential inom tjänstesektorn i Europa. En fullständig integrering av finansmarknaderna skulle slutligen även öka produktionen och sysselsättningen genom att möjliggöra en effektivare fördelning av kapitalet och bättre förutsättningar för finansiering av företag.

För att kunna utnyttja hela den inre marknadens potential bör man fästa fortsatt hög prioritet vid införlivandet av inremarknadsdirektiven. Ofta genomförs eller tillämpas direktiven inte korrekt, vilket framgår av de många överträdelseförfaranden som inletts av kommissionen. Medlemsstaterna måste samarbeta mera aktivt med varandra och med kommissionen, så att deras medborgare och näringsliv kan dra full nytta av lagstiftningen om den inre marknaden. Metoderna för offentlig upphandling skulle till exempel kunna förbättras betydligt. Sådana förbättringar skulle leda till att antalet offentligen tillkännagivna upphandlingar ökade. Ett mer öppet upphandlingsförfarande skulle dessutom leda till betydande budgetbesparingar för medlemsstaterna.

Riktlinje 12. För att utvidga och fördjupa den inre marknaden bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Påskynda införlivandet av direktiven om den inre marknaden.

2. Prioritera en striktare och bättre efterlevnad av lagstiftningen om den inre marknaden.

3. Undanröja kvarstående hinder för gränsöverskridande verksamhet.

4. Tillämpa EU:s bestämmelser om offentlig upphandling effektivt.

5. Främja en fullt fungerande inre marknad för tjänster, samtidigt som den europeiska sociala modellen bevaras.

6. Påskynda integrationen av finansmarknaden genom att handlingsplanen för finansiella tjänster genomförs och tillämpas på ett konsekvent och enhetligt sätt.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Förbättra förmågan att bemöta arbetsmarknadens behov” (nr 20).

Sörja för öppna och konkurrenskraftiga marknader i och utanför Europa

En öppen global handel är av centralt intresse för Europeiska unionen. EU är världens största handelspartner och investerare, och öppenheten i vår ekonomi har lett till lägre kostnader för insatsvaror till industrin, en stimulerande konkurrens för europeiskt näringsliv och ytterligare investeringar. Det är också viktigt för EU att använda sitt inflytande i internationella förhandlingar för att påverka andra parter i riktning mot öppnare ekonomier. EU kommer således att fortsätta sitt arbete för att undanröja hinder för handel och investeringar, och motverka illojala metoder inom handel och investeringar, liksom konkurrenshämmande praxis i olika former.

Konkurrenspolitiken har givetvis spelat en central roll för att garantera likvärdiga konkurrensvillkor för företag inom EU. Men det finns också anledning att överväga hur marknadslagstiftningen i bredare mening kan utvecklas för att förbättra konkurrensvillkoren för företagen. De europeiska marknaderna kan öppnas ytterligare för konkurrens om den allmänna nivån på det återstående statliga stödet minskas. Detta måste åtföljas av en omfördelning av det återstående statliga stödet till förmån för vissa övergripande mål. Översynen av reglerna för statligt stöd har underlättat denna process.

Strukturreformer som underlättar marknadsinträde är ett särskilt effektivt medel för att öka konkurrensen. Sådana reformer är särskilt viktiga på marknader som tidigare var skyddade mot konkurrens på grund av konkurrensbegränsande beteende, monopol, överreglering (tillstånd, licenser, minimikapitalkrav, juridiska hinder, affärstidsregleringar, reglerade priser osv. som kan hindra utvecklingen av ett effektivt konkurrensklimat) eller på grund av handelspolitiska skyddsåtgärder.

Genomförandet av redan överenskomna åtgärder i syfte att öppna nätindustrierna för konkurrens (på el- och gas-, transport-, telekommunikations- och posttjänstområdena) bör dessutom bidra till lägre priser generellt och till större valmöjlighet, samtidigt som tillhandahållandet av tjänster av allmänt ekonomiskt intresse för alla medborgare garanteras. Konkurrens- och tillsynsmyndigheter bör se till att det råder konkurrens på de avreglerade marknaderna. Man måste också garantera att högkvalitativa tjänster av allmänt ekonomiskt intresse tillhandahålls till rimliga priser.

Konsumenter som erbjuds en verklig valfrihet och fattar väl underbyggda beslut kommer snabbt att belöna effektiva och högpresterande företag. Det behövs således ytterligare insatser för att stärka konsumentlagstiftningen, på ett sätt som både ger konsumenterna ökat inflytande och öppnar den inre marknaden för ännu starkare konkurrens i detaljistledet.

Öppenhet utåt för handel och investeringar genom ökning av både export och import är en viktig stimulans för tillväxt och sysselsättning, och kan förstärka effekterna av strukturreformer. Ett öppet och starkt system för globala handelsregler är av avgörande betydelse för den europeiska ekonomin. Om man lyckas ingå ett ett ambitiöst och balanserat avtal inom ramen för Doharundan och fortsätter utveckla bilaterala och regionala

frihandelsavtal bör detta leda till att marknaderna i ännu högre grad öppnas för handel och investeringar, vilket i sin tur bidrar till att öka den potentiella tillväxten.

Riktlinje 13. För att säkerställa öppna och konkurrenskraftiga marknader inom och utanför Europa samt utnyttja globaliseringens fördelar bör medlemsstaterna prioritera följande:

1. Avlägsnande av rättsliga hinder, handelshinder och andra hinder som obefogat står i vägen för konkurrens.

2. Ett effektivare genomförande av konkurrenspolitiken.

3. En selektiv undersökning av marknader och regleringar från konkurrens- och tillsynsmyndigheternas sida i syfte att identifiera och undanröja hinder för konkurrens och marknadsinträde.

4. En minskning av statligt stöd som snedvrider konkurrensen.

5. En omfördelning av stödet i enlighet med gemenskapsramarna, till förmån för vissa övergripande mål som forskning, innovation och bättre utnyttjande av humankapitalet, samt vid väl identifierade fall av marknadsmisslyckande.

6. Främjande av öppenhet utåt, även i ett multilateralt sammanhang.

7. Fullständigt genomförande av de överenskomna åtgärderna för att öppna nätindustrierna för konkurrens, så att effektiv konkurrens säkerställs på de integrerade europeiska marknaderna. Samtidigt spelar tillhandahållandet av effektiva tjänster av allmänt ekonomiskt intresse till rimliga priser en viktig roll i en konkurrenskraftig och dynamisk ekonomi.

Förbättra europeiska och nationella bestämmelser

Marknadslagstiftning är nödvändig för att skapa ett klimat där affärstransaktioner kan äga rum till konkurrenskraftiga priser. Den tjänar också till att korrigera icke-fungerande marknader eller till att skydda marknadsaktörerna. De samlade verkningarna av lagstiftning och andra bestämmelser kan emellertid medföra stora ekonomiska kostnader. Det är därför viktigt att lagstiftningen är väl utformad och proportionell, och att den ses över regelbundet. Kvaliteten på de europeiska och nationella regelsystemen är ett gemensamt åtagande och ett delat ansvar på såväl EU-nivå som medlemsstatsnivå.

En bättre lagstiftningskultur börjar också få allt starkare fotfäste i EU. I kommissionens strategi för en bättre lagstiftning görs en noggrann bedömning av de ekonomiska, sociala och miljömässiga konsekvenserna av ny eller reviderad lagstiftning i syfte att identifiera eventuella avvägningar, som kan behöva göras, och synergier mellan olika policymål. Vidare undersöks om man kan förenkla den befintliga lagstiftningen, bland annat genom att lätta på den administrativa bördan. Man bedömer också lagstiftningens inverkan på konkurrenskraften. Slutligen har man enats om ett gemensamt tillvägagångssätt för bedömning av de administrativa kostnaderna för ny respektive befintlig lagstiftning, och satt det ambitiösa målet att minska den börda som tillämpningen av EU-rätten och dess nationella genomförandebestämmelser innebär med 25 % till år 2012.

Medlemsstaterna bör sätta lika ambitiösa mål när det gäller att minska den administrativa börda som följer av nationell lagstiftning på alla nivåer. De bör också utveckla en mer övergripande strategi för bättre lagstiftning, som även omfattar planer för institutionella strukturer, mekanismer för övervakning och resursfrågor. Det är också viktigt att de

systematiskt bedömer kostnaderna och fördelarna med initiativ till nya eller ändrade bestämmelser. De bör förenkla lagstiftningen och förbättra dess kvalitet, samtidigt som målen bevaras. De bör ha ett omfattande samråd om kostnaderna för och fördelarna med lagstiftningsinitiativ, i synnerhet när det innebär avvägningar mellan olika politiska mål. Medlemsstaterna bör också se till att lämpliga alternativ till lagstiftning beaktas till fullo. Detta är särskilt viktigt för små och medelstora företag, som vanligtvis bara har begränsade resurser till sitt förfogande för att hantera de krav som åläggs dem genom gemenskapslagstiftningen och den nationella lagstiftningen. Man bör således särskilt överväga om små och medelstora företag helt eller delvis kan undantas från vissa administrativa krav.

Riktlinje 14. För att skapa ett mer konkurrenskraftigt företagsklimat och stimulera privata initiativ genom bättre lagstiftning bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Minska den administrativa börda som åläggs företagen, särskilt för små och medelstora företag och nystartade företag.

2. Förbättra kvaliteten på befintlig och ny lagstiftning, samtidigt som målen bevaras, genom en systematisk och rigorös bedömning av de ekonomiska, sociala (inklusive hälsomässiga) och miljömässiga konsekvenserna, samtidigt som medlemsstaterna beaktar och bättre mäter den administrativa börda som är förbunden med lagstiftningen, samt effekterna på konkurrenskraften, även i samband med verkställigheten.

3. Uppmuntra företag att utveckla sitt kollektiva sociala ansvar.

Europa behöver bli bättre på att utveckla sin entreprenörsanda och behöver fler nya företag som är villiga att ge sig in på kreativa eller innovativa projekt. Man bör främja studier i entreprenörskap på alla utbildningsnivåer och tillhandahålla den kompetens som behövs. Entreprenörskapsdimensionen bör införlivas med processen för livslångt lärande från skolan och framåt. Partnerskap med företag bör också uppmuntras. Såväl nyföretagande som tillväxt i befintliga företag kan uppmuntras genom att man underlättar tillgången till finansiering och stärker ekonomiska incitament. Detta kan t.ex. innebära att anpassa skattesystem på ett sätt som är mer gynnsamt för vinstgenererande företag, reducera lönebikostnader och minska på den administrativa bördan för nystartade företag, inte minst genom att skapa särskilda stödtjänster för företag (särskilt för unga företagare) och kontaktpunkter där man kan få all relevant hjälp på ett ställe. Man bör särskilt arbeta för att underlätta ägarskifte och förbättra förfarandena för undsättning och omstrukturering av företag, särskilt genom en effektivare konkurslagstiftning. Om man effektivt kan genomföra de förslag som kommer att ingå i den kommande ”småföretagsakten” för EU (Small Business Act) kommer även detta att ge de små och medelstora företagen potential att skapa tillväxt och sysselsättning.

Riktlinje 15. För att främja en mer företagarvänlig kultur och ett gynnsamt klimat för små och medelstora företag bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Förbättra tillgången till finansiering, för att främja företagens bildande och tillväxt, särskilt mikrokrediter och andra former av riskkapital.

2. Stärka de ekonomiska incitamenten, bland annat genom att förenkla skattesystemen och minska lönebikostnaderna.

3. Stärka små och medelstora företags innovationspotential.

4. Tillhandahålla relevanta stödtjänster, till exempel inrättande av systemet med ”en dörr in” och stimulans av nationella stödnätverk för företag, i syfte att främja nyföretagande och tillväxt i enlighet med stadgan för småföretag. Vidare bör medlemsstaterna förstärka utbildningen i entreprenörskap för små och medelstora företag. De bör också underlätta ägarskifte, vid behov modernisera sin konkurslagstiftning och förbättra sina förfaranden för undsättning och omstrukturering av företag.

Se också de integrerade riktlinjerna ”Främja en effektiv tillväxt- och sysselsättningsorienterad resursfördelning” (nr 3) och ”Underlätta innovation i alla former” (nr 8, 22 och 23).

Utvidga och förbättra den europeiska infrastrukturen

En modern infrastruktur är en viktig faktor som påverkar hur attraktiv en lokalisering är, eftersom den underlättar personers, varors och tjänsters rörlighet i hela unionen. Moderna infrastrukturer för transport, energi och elektronisk kommunikation har därför en viktig roll i Lissabonstrategin. Sammankopplade och driftskompatibla transeuropeiska nät bidrar till att främja internationell handel och skapa dynamik inom den inre marknaden, genom att transportkostnaderna minskar och marknaderna blir större. Den pågående liberaliseringen av de europeiska nätindustrierna främjar dessutom konkurrens och bidrar till effektivitetsvinster inom dessa sektorer.

När det gäller framtida investeringar i europeisk infrastruktur bör man prioritera de 30 prioriterade transportprojekt som fastställts av Europaparlamentet och rådet i riktlinjerna för de transeuropeiska transportnäten (TEN), de gränsöverskridande snabbstartsprojekten för transport, förnybar energi och bredbandskommunikation och forskning som fastställts inom ramen för det europeiska tillväxtinitiativet, samt de transportprojekt som stöds av Sammanhållningsfonden. Flaskhalsar i ländernas infrastruktur måste också åtgärdas. Lämpliga prissättningssystem för infrastrukturen kan bidra till att den används på ett effektivt sätt och till att en hållbar jämvikt uppnås mellan transportsätten.

Riktlinje 16. För att utvidga, förbättra och sammanlänka den europeiska infrastrukturen och slutföra prioriterade gränsöverskridande projekt, med det särskilda syftet att uppnå en högre grad av integration av de nationella marknaderna inom det utvidgade EU, bör medlemsstaterna göra följande:

1. Utveckla tillfredsställande villkor för resurseffektiva infrastrukturer för transport, energi och IKT, med prioritering av de infrastrukturer som ingår i TEN-näten, genom att komplettera gemenskapsmekanismerna, särskilt i gränsöverskridande avsnitt och randområden, eftersom det är en väsentlig förutsättning för att nätindustrierna ska kunna öppnas för konkurrens.

2. Överväga utvecklingen av offentlig-privata partnerskap.

3. Undersöka frågan om lämpliga prissättningssystem för infrastrukturen för att säkerställa en effektiv användning av infrastrukturerna och utveckling av en hållbar jämvikt mellan transportsätten, med tonvikt på teknikövergång och innovation och med vederbörlig hänsyn till miljökostnaderna och konsekvenserna för tillväxten.

Se också den integrerade riktlinjen ”Underlätta spridningen och en effektiv användning av IKT samt utveckla ett informationssamhälle som omfattar alla” (nr 9).

Del 2

Sysselsättningsriktlinjer (2008-2010)

Förslag till

RÅDETS BESLUT

om riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik (enligt artikel 128 i EG-fördraget)

2007/0300 (CNS)

Förslag till

RÅDETS BESLUT

om riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik

EUROPEISKA UNIONENS RÅD HAR ANTAGIT DETTA BESLUT

med beaktande av fördraget om upprättandet av Europeiska gemenskapen, särskilt artikel 128.2,

med beaktande av kommissionens förslag[1],

med beaktande av Europaparlamentets yttrande[2],

med beaktande av Europeiska ekonomiska och sociala kommitténs yttrande[3],

med beaktande av Regionkommitténs yttrande[4],

med beaktande av Sysselsättningskommitténs yttrande, och

av följande skäl:

(1) Reformen av Lissabonstrategin 2005 var inriktad på tillväxt och sysselsättning. Sysselsättningsriktlinjerna i den europeiska sysselsättningsstrategin och de allmänna ekonomiska riktlinjerna antogs som ett integrerat åtgärdspaket[5], vilket gav den europeiska sysselsättningsstrategin en central ställning i uppnåendet av Lissabonstrategins sysselsättnings- och arbetsmarknadsmål.

(2) Den genomgång av medlemsstaternas nationella reformprogram som ingår i kommissionens årliga lägesrapport och utkastet till gemensam sysselsättningsrapport visar att medlemsstaterna bör fortsätta sina ansträngningar för följande prioriterade ändamål:

– Att få ut och behålla fler människor på arbetsmarknaden, öka arbetskraftsutbudet och modernisera de sociala trygghetssystemen.

– Att förbättra arbetstagares och företags anpassningsförmåga.

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1 EUT C …, …, s. .
2 EUT C …, …, s. .
3 EUT C …, …, s. .
4 EUT C …, …, s. .
5 EUT L 205, 6.8.2005, s. 21 (riktlinjer för sysselsättningen) och s. 28 (allmänna riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken).

– Att öka investeringarna i humankapital genom bättre utbildning och färdigheter.

(3) Mot bakgrund av kommissionens granskning av de nationella reformprogrammen och Europeiska rådets slutsatser bör fokus nu ligga på ett effektivt genomförande inom fastställda tidsramar, med särskilt beaktande av de beslutade kvantitativa målen och riktmärkena, och i linje med Europeiska rådets slutsatser

(4) Riktlinjerna för sysselsättningen gäller i tre år; uppdateringen av dem under de mellanliggande åren till och med 2010 bör vara strikt begränsad.

(5) Medlemsstaterna bör beakta sysselsättningsriktlinjerna när de planerar användningen av gemenskapsmedel, särskilt medel från Europeiska socialfonden.

(6) Eftersom riktlinjerna utgör ett integrerat paket bör medlemsstaterna genomföra de allmänna riktlinjerna för den ekonomiska politiken fullt ut.

HÄRIGENOM FÖRESKRIVS FÖLJANDE.

Artikel 1

De riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik som anges i bilagan godkänns härmed.

Artikel 2

Riktlinjerna ska beaktas i medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik, som det ska rapporteras om i de nationella reformprogrammen.

Artikel 3

Detta beslut riktar sig till medlemsstaterna.

Utfärdat i Bryssel den

På rådets vägnar
Ordförande

BILAGA

Riktlinjer för medlemsstaternas sysselsättningspolitik: att stödja den europeiska sociala modellen

Medlemsstaterna ska i samarbete med arbetsmarknadens parter bedriva sin politik så att nedan angivna mål och prioriteringar genomförs, och så att fler och bättre arbetstillfällen bidrar till att skapa en arbetsmarknad för alla. I linje med Lissabonstrategin och med hänsyn tagen till gemensamma sociala mål ska medlemsstaterna på ett balanserat sätt främja följande:

– *Full sysselsättning:* För att upprätthålla den ekonomiska tillväxten och förstärka den sociala sammanhållningen är det viktigt att uppnå full sysselsättning och minska arbetslösheten och antalet personer utanför arbetskraften, genom att öka efterfrågan och utbud på arbetskraft genom en integrerad strategi som bygger på *flexicurity*. Detta förutsätter åtgärder såväl för flexibilitet i fråga om arbetsmarknader, arbetsorganisation och arbetsmarknadsrelationer som för sysselsättningstrygghet och social trygghet.

– *Bättre kvalitet och produktivitet i arbetet:* Strävandena att öka sysselsättningsgraden går hand i hand med att arbete görs mer attraktivt och att arbetets kvalitet och arbetsproduktivitetens tillväxt förbättras, samtidigt som segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden och andelen arbetande fattiga minskar. Synergier mellan arbetets kvalitet, produktivitet och sysselsättning bör utnyttjas till fullo.

– *Förstärkt social och territoriell sammanhållning*: Resoluta åtgärder är nödvändiga för att stärka den sociala integrationen, bekämpa fattigdom – i synnerhet fattigdom som drabbar barn – förhindra uteslutning från arbetsmarknaden och stödja missgynnade människors integration i arbetslivet, samt för att minska de regionala skillnaderna när det gäller sysselsättning, arbetslöshet och arbetsproduktivitet, särskilt i eftersatta regioner. En ökad samverkan är nödvändig med tanke på den öppna samordningsmetod som används i fråga om social trygghet och integration.

För att öka utrymmet för framsteg är det viktigt att garantera lika möjligheter och bekämpa diskriminering. Integrering av jämställdhetsperspektiv och främjande av jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män bör garanteras i alla åtgärder. Man bör ägna särskild möda åt att minska klyftorna mellan kvinnor och män på arbetsmarknaden i linje med den europeiska jämställdhetspakten, vilket också kommer att gynna medlemsstaternas arbete för att bemöta de framtida demografiska utmaningarna. Som en del av en ny generationsöverskridande strategi bör särskild uppmärksamhet ägnas åt de ungas situation, varvid den europeiska pakten för ungdomsfrågor bör genomföras, samt åt främjande av tillgång till arbete under hela arbetslivet. Särskild uppmärksamhet måste ägnas åt att väsentligt minska sysselsättningsklyftorna för mindre gynnade personer, inbegripet personer med funktionshinder, samt klyftorna mellan medborgare i tredjeland och EU-medborgare, i linje med eventuella nationella mål.

Medlemsstaterna bör verka för aktiv social integration för alla, genom att främja deltagande på arbetsmarknaden och bekämpa fattigdom och utslagning inom de mest marginaliserade samhällsgrupperna.

Medlemsstaterna bör, när de vidtar åtgärder, sörja för en god förvaltning av sysselsättnings- och socialpolitiken och verka för att positiva trender i ekonomin, på arbetsmarknaden och på

det sociala området får en inbördes förstärkande effekt. De bör upprätta ett brett partnerskap för förändring genom att verka för ett starkt engagemang från parlamentsorgan och berörda aktörer – inklusive på regional och lokal nivå – samt från det civila samhällets organisationer. Europeiska och nationella arbetsmarknadsparter bör spela en central roll. Ett antal mål och riktmärken som har fastställts på EU-nivå inom ramen för den europeiska sysselsättningsstrategin i samband med riktlinjerna för 2003 bör även i fortsättningen följas upp med hjälp av indikatorer och resultattavlor. Medlemsstaterna uppmanas också att bevaka de sociala effekterna av reformer och fastställa sina egna åtaganden och mål, varvid de bör beakta ovanstående mål och riktmärken samt de landspecifika rekommendationer som man enats om på EU-nivå.

En god förvaltning kräver också större effektivitet vid fördelningen av administrativa och finansiella resurser. Medlemsstaterna bör i samförstånd med kommissionen utnyttja strukturfondsmedel, särskilt Europeiska socialfonden, för att genomföra den europeiska sysselsättningsstrategin och EU:s sociala målsättningar, och rapportera om de åtgärder som vidtas. Särskild vikt bör läggas vid att stärka den institutionella och administrativa kapaciteten i medlemsstaterna.

Riktlinje 17. Föra en sysselsättningspolitik som syftar till att uppnå full sysselsättning, förbättra kvaliteten och produktiviteten i arbetet och stärka den sociala och territoriella sammanhållningen.

Politiken bör bidra till en genomsnittlig sysselsättningsgrad för Europeiska unionen på 70 % totalt sett, på minst 60 % för kvinnor och på 50 % för äldre arbetstagare (55–64 år) senast 2010 och till att arbetslösheten och antalet personer utanför arbetsmarknaden minskar. Medlemsstaterna bör överväga att fastställa nationella sysselsättningsmål.

Arbetet för att uppnå dessa mål bör koncentreras på följande prioriteringar:

– Att få in och behålla fler människor på arbetsmarknaden, öka arbetskraftsutbudet och modernisera de sociala trygghetssystemen.

– Att förbättra arbetstagares och företags anpassningsförmåga.

– Att öka investeringarna i humankapital genom bättre utbildning och färdigheter.

1. Att få ut och behålla fler människor på arbetsmarknaden, öka arbetskraftsutbudet och modernisera de sociala trygghetssystemen

Att höja sysselsättningsnivåerna är det mest effektiva sättet att generera ekonomisk tillväxt och främja ekonomier utan social utslagning, samtidigt som det sörjs för ett skyddsnät för de människor som är oförmögna att arbeta. Med tanke på att antalet människor i arbetsför ålder väntas sjunka har det blivit ännu viktigare att främja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete och modernisera de sociala trygghetssystemen i syfte att sörja för att de är lämpliga, ekonomiskt hållbara och anpassade till de föränderliga behoven i samhället. Man bör särskilt sträva efter att komma till rätta med de bestående skillnaderna i fråga om sysselsättning mellan kvinnor och män, att verka för en fortsatt ökad sysselsättningsgrad för äldre arbetstagare och unga som ett led i en ny generationsövergripande strategi, samt att främja ett aktivt deltagande på arbetsmarknaden för de grupper som varit utestängda. Det krävs också stärkta insatser för att förbättra de ungas situation på arbetsmarknaden och för att kraftigt minska ungdomsarbetslösheten, som i genomsnitt är dubbelt så hög som den samlade arbetslösheten.

Man måste skapa rätt förutsättningar för att underlätta framsteg i yrkeslivet, oavsett om det för den enskilde är fråga om det första inträdet på arbetsmarknaden, en återgång till arbete efter ett uppehåll eller en önskan att förlänga sitt yrkesverksamma liv. Kvalitet i arbetet – inbegripet löner och förmåner, arbetsvillkor, möjligheter till livslångt lärande och karriärutsikter – är av avgörande betydelse för att flexicurity ska fungera, liksom stöd och stimulans genom de sociala trygghetssystemen. För att befrämja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete och göra det lättare att kombinera yrkesliv och privatliv behövs det också en ökad satsning på barnomsorg. Man har satt som mål att det senast 2010 ska finnas barnomsorg för ca 90 % av barnen mellan tre år och obligatorisk skolålder, och för ca 33 % av barnen under tre år. För att den genomsnittliga sysselsättningsgraden hos föräldrar, och i synnerhet ensamstående föräldrar, ska kunna öka krävs aktiva åtgärder för att hjälpa familjer. Medlemsstaterna bör ta särskild hänsyn till behoven hos ensamstående föräldrar och familjer med många barn. Som ett riktmärke för strävan att förlänga medborgarnas yrkesverksamma liv bör den faktiska ålder då man lämnar arbetslivet år 2010, i genomsnitt för EU, ha ökat med fem år (jämfört med 59,9 år 2001). Medlemsstaterna bör också vidta åtgärder för att förbättra folkhälsan, förebygga sjukdom och främja en hälsosam livsstil, för att minska bördan på samhället, öka arbetsproduktiviteten och förlänga människors yrkesverksamma liv.

Genom att omsätta den europeiska pakten för ungdomsfrågor i praktiken bör man också kunna gynna en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete, i synnerhet genom att underlätta övergången från studier till yrkesarbete.

Riktlinje 18. Främja en livscykelinriktad syn på arbete genom följande:

- Ett förnyat försök att skapa sysselsättningsmöjligheter för unga och minska ungdomsarbetslösheten i enlighet med europeiska ungdomspakten.

- Resoluta åtgärder för att öka kvinnors deltagande och minska klyftorna mellan män och kvinnor när det gäller sysselsättning, arbetslöshet och löner.

- Bättre balans mellan arbete och privatliv samt tillhandahållande av tillgänglig barnomsorg och anhörigvård till rimliga priser.

- Stöd till aktivt åldrande, inbegripet lämpliga arbetsvillkor, bättre (yrkes)hälsostatus och tillräckliga stimulansåtgärder för arbete och åtgärder för att motverka förtidspensionering.

- Moderna sociala trygghetssystem, inklusive pensioner och hälsovård, som är socialt tillräckliga, ekonomiskt hållbara och anpassade till föränderliga behov, så att man stöder deltagande i, och vidmakthåller, sysselsättning och längre arbetsliv.

Se även integrerad riktlinje ”Slå vakt om ekonomisk och finanspolitisk hållbarhet som en grundval för ökad sysselsättning” (nr 2).

Åtgärder för aktivt deltagande på arbetsmarknaden kan medverka till att öka utbudet på arbete och är ett verksamt medel för att stärka social integration och integration på arbetsmarknaden för de mest utsatta grupperna. Det är viktigt att alla som drabbas av arbetslöshet får en ny chans inom rimlig tid. För unga människor bör denna tid vara kort, och målet är att den inte bör överstiga fyra månader år 2010, medan den för övriga deltagare på arbetsmarknaden inte bör överstiga tolv månader.

Man bör också vidta aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder för att hjälpa långtidsarbetslösa, med målet att uppnå ett arbetsmarknadsdeltagande på 25 % år 2010. Metoderna för att öka de

arbetslösas aktivitet bör omfatta utbildning, omskolning, praktikplatser, anställning eller andra åtgärder som främjar anställbarheten, när det är lämpligt kombinerat med fortlöpande stöd i sökandet efter arbete. Att underlätta tillgången till arbete för arbetssökande, förebygga arbetslöshet och sörja för att de som blir arbetslösa har fortsatt nära anknytning till arbetsmarknaden och bibehåller sin anställbarhet är av stor betydelse för att öka deras deltagande och bekämpa social uteslaging. Dessa mål ligger också i linje med principerna om flexicurity. För detta krävs att hinder för att komma in på arbetsmarknaden avlägsnas, vilket kan ske genom att man erbjuder effektiv hjälp till arbetssökande, underlättar tillträdet till utbildning och andra aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder, ser till att bastjänster erbjuds till överkomliga priser och att en miniminivå av resurser är tillgängliga för alla. Genom att närma sig problemet på detta sätt bör man kunna försäkra sig om att arbete lönar sig för alla arbetstagare, och samtidigt reducera arbetslöshet, fattigdom och sysslolöshetsfällor. Särskild uppmärksamhet behöver ägnas åt arbetsmarknadsintegrationen av mindre gynnade personer, däribland lågutbildade arbetstagare, inbegripet genom en utbyggnad av sociala tjänster och samhällsekonomiska åtgärder samt genom utveckling av nya källor till sysselsättning som svar på gemensamma behov. Att bekämpa diskriminering, främja tillträdet till arbetsmarknaden för funktionshindrade och att integrera invandrare och minoritetsgrupper är särskilt viktigt.

Riktlinje 19. Sörja för en arbetsmarknad som är öppen för alla, göra arbetet till ett attraktivt alternativ och få arbetet att löna sig för arbetssökande, inbegripet missgynnade personer och personer utanför arbetsmarknaden genom

- aktiva, förebyggande arbetsmarknadsåtgärder, inbegripet tidigt fastställande av behov, hjälp med arbetssökandet, vägledning och utbildning som ett led i personliga handlingsplaner, tillhandahållande av nödvändiga sociala tjänster för att stödja integration av de personer som är mest isolerade från arbetsmarknaden och bidra till att utrota fattigdomen,

- fortlöpande översyn av incitament eller brist på incitament som följer av skatte- och bidragssystem, inbegripet förvaltningen av förmåner och villkoren för dessa samt en betydande minskning av höga marginaleffekter, särskilt för låginkomsttagare, samtidigt som man sörjer för tillfredsställande nivåer för socialt skydd,

- utveckling av nya källor till sysselsättning inom tjänster med inriktning på personer och företag, särskilt på lokal nivå.

För att göra det möjligt för fler att finna ett bättre arbete är det också nödvändigt att förstärka arbetsmarknadsinfrastrukturen på nationell nivå och på EU-nivå, inbegripet genom Eures-nätverket, så att det blir lättare att förutse och avhjälpa eventuell bristande överensstämmelse mellan efterfrågan och utbud. En central komponent i idén om flexicurity är att göra det smidigt att ta sig in på arbetsmarknaden samt att flytta mellan olika anställningar, och åtgärder som underlättar rörligheten och anpassningen mellan utbud och efterfrågan på arbetsmarknaden bör uppmuntras. Arbetssökande inom hela EU bör kunna få information om alla lediga platser som anmäls till medlemsstaternas arbetsförmedlingar. Rörligheten för arbetstagare bör garanteras fullt ut i enlighet med fördragen. Det kompletterande utbud av arbetskraft som följer av invandringen av medborgare från tredjeland måste också till fullo beaktas på de nationella arbetsmarknaderna.

Riktlinje 20. Förbättra förmågan att bemöta arbetsmarknadens behov genom följande:

- Modernisering och förstärkning av arbetsmarknadsinstitutionerna, särskilt arbetsförmedlingarna, bland annat i syfte att garantera större öppenhet när det gäller sysselsättnings- och utbildningsmöjligheter på nationell nivå och på EU-nivå.

- Undanröjande av hinder för arbetstagarnas rörlighet i hela Europa, inom ramen för fördragen.

- Bättre förutseende när det gäller färdighetsbehov samt utbudsbrister och flaskhalsar på arbetsmarknaden.

- Ändamålsenlig förvaltning av ekonomisk migration.

2. Förbättring av arbetskraftens och företagens anpassningsförmåga

Europa behöver förbättra sin förmåga att förutse, sätta igång och tillgodogöra sig ekonomiska och sociala förändringar. För detta krävs arbetskraftskostnader som är utformade så att de gynnar sysselsättning, moderna former av arbetsorganisation och väl fungerande arbetsmarknader som möjliggör större flexibilitet i kombination med trygghet i arbetet för att möta företagens och arbetstagarnas behov. Detta bör också bidra till att förhindra uppkomsten av segmenterade arbetsmarknader och till att minska det odeklarerade arbetet. För att möta dessa behov behövs en integrerad metod som bygger på flexicurity, och som täcker såväl avtalsfrågor som livslångt lärande, aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder och socialförsäkringssystem (se även riktlinje 18, 19, 23).

I dagens alltmer globaliserade ekonomi med öppna av marknader och snabb teknisk utveckling ställs både företag och arbetstagare inför behovet att anpassa sig, men också inför de möjligheter som en sådan anpassning kan leda till. Även om denna process med strukturella förändringar på det hela taget är gynnsam för både tillväxt och sysselsättning, medför den också förändringar som påverkar vissa arbetstagare och företag negativt. Företagen måste bli bättre på att anpassa sig till plötsliga förändringar i efterfrågan och till ny teknik, och konstant arbeta för att förnya sig och därmed bibehålla sin konkurrenskraft. De måste också kunna möta ökade krav på kvalitet i arbetet, såväl i form av arbetstagares personliga önskemål som i samband med förändringar i familjesituationen, och de kommer också att behöva hantera en situation med en åldrande arbetskraft och färre unga att nyanställa. För arbetstagarna blir arbetslivet alltmer komplicerat efterhand som arbetsmönstren blir mer varierade och oregelbundna, och alltfler omställningar framgångsrikt måste klaras av under livscykeln. I en snabbt föränderlig ekonomi måste arbetstagare vara öppna för idén om livslångt lärande och ta till sig nya kunskaper, så att de kan anpassa sig till nya arbetssätt, ökad användning av informations- och kommunikationsteknik och förändringar i yrkesstatus, som ibland kan medföra en risk att tillfälligt förlora i inkomst – förluster vars effekt dock bör dämpas genom moderniserade socialförsäkringslösningar.

Medlemsstaterna bör i dessa avseenden genomföra de åtgärder de själva anser lämpligast, i linje med de gemensamma principer som antagits av rådet. Flexicurity omfattar fyra huvudkomponenter som bör vägas in: flexibla och tillförlitliga avtalsbestämmelser som bygger på modern arbetsrätt; kollektivavtal och arbetsorganisation; övergripande strategier för livslångt lärande för att öka arbetstagarnas anpassningsförmåga och möjligheter att få arbete, särskilt när det gäller de mest utsatta arbetstagarna; effektiva aktiva arbetsmarknadsåtgärder som hjälper människor att hantera snabba förändringar, minskar perioder av arbetslöshet och

underlättar omställningar mellan jobb, moderna socialförsäkringssystem som ger ett tillräckligt inkomststöd, uppmuntrar sysselsättning och underlättar rörlighet på arbetsmarknaden (vilket bland annat förutsätter en god täckning för socialförsäkringsbestämmelser, arbetslöshetsstöd, pensioner och sjukvårdssystem, på så sätt att man underlättar för enskilda att kombinera yrkesliv med familjeplikter som barnomsorg). Geografisk rörlighet är också nödvändig för att ta vara på arbetsmöjligheterna i ett vidare perspektiv och i EU som helhet.

Riktlinje 21. Främja flexibilitet i kombination med anställningstrygghet och minska segmenteringen av arbetsmarknaden, med vederbörligt beaktande av den roll som tillkommer arbetsmarknadens parter, genom

- anpassning av arbetslagstiftningen, vid behov genom en översyn av olika typer av anställningsavtal och arbetstidsarrangemang,

- hantering av problemet med odeklarerat arbete,

- bättre föregripande och positiv hantering av förändringar, inbegripet ekonomisk omstrukturering, framför allt förändringar som är förbundna med öppnandet av handeln, så att de sociala kostnaderna för förändringarna blir så små som möjligt och en anpassning underlättas,

- främjande och spridning av innovativa och smidiga former för arbetets organisation, i syfte att förbättra kvaliteten och produktiviteten i arbetet, inbegripet hälsa och säkerhet,

- stöd till omställningar med anknytning till yrkesstatus, inbegripet utbildning, verksamhet som egenföretagare, bildande av företag samt geografisk rörlighet.

Se även integrerad riktlinje ”Öka samordningen av den makroekonomiska politiken, strukturpolitiken och sysselsättningspolitiken” (nr 5).

I syfte att skapa så många arbetstillfällen som möjligt, bevara konkurrenskraften och bidra till den allmänna ekonomiska ramen bör löneutvecklingen generellt ligga i linje med produktivitetstillväxten över konjunkturcykeln, och avspegla situationen på arbetsmarknaden. Löneklyftorna mellan kvinnor och män bör också reduceras. Särskild uppmärksamhet bör ägnas åt den låga lönenivån inom kvinnodominerade yrken och sektorer, liksom åt skälen till den sämre löneutvecklingen inom sådana yrken och sektorer. Det kan också bli nödvändigt att vidta åtgärder för att minska de indirekta arbetskostnaderna och att se över skattekilen, i syfte att underlätta skapandet av nya arbetstillfällen, särskilt för lågavlönade.

Riktlinje 22. Sörja för att arbetskraftskostnader och lönesättningsmekanismer främjar sysselsättningen genom att

- uppmuntra arbetsmarknadens parter att inom sina respektive ansvarsområden fastställa en lämplig ram för löneförhandlingar, så att produktivitets- och arbetsmarknadsutmaningarna återspeglas på alla relevanta nivåer och så att könsrelaterade löneklyftor undviks,

- se över lönebikostnadernas inverkan på sysselsättningen och vid behov anpassa deras struktur och nivå, särskilt för att minska de lågavlönades skattebörda.

Se även integrerad riktlinje ”Att se till att löneutvecklingen bidrar till makroekonomisk stabilitet och tillväxt” (nr 4).

3. Öka investeringarna i humankapital genom bättre utbildning och färdigheter

Europa måste göra fler och bättre riktade investeringar i humankapital. Alltför många människor lyckas inte komma in, göra framsteg eller hålla sig kvar på arbetsmarknaden på grund av att de saknar tillräckliga färdigheter eller inte har de rätta färdigheterna. Om tillträdet till arbetsmarknaden ska kunna förbättras för kvinnor och män i alla åldersgrupper och produktiviteten, innovationsförmågan och kvaliteten i arbetet ska kunna öka måste EU investera mer, och mer effektivt, i humankapital och livslångt lärande till förmån för enskilda, företag, ekonomin och samhället.

Kunskapsbaserade och tjänstebaserade ekonomier kräver andra färdigheter än traditionella industrier – färdigheter som kontinuerligt behöver uppdateras med tanke på tekniska förändringar och innovation. Om arbetstagarna ska kunna stanna kvar och göra framsteg i arbetet måste de förvärva flera färdigheter och regelbundet förnya dem. Företagens produktivitet är beroende av att de kan bygga upp och behålla en arbetsstyrka som kan anpassa sig till förändringar. Den offentliga sektorn måste sörja för att utbildningsnivåerna förbättras och att unga människor får den nyckelkompetens som behövs, i överensstämmelse med den europeiska pakten för ungdomsfrågor. För att förbättra unga människors utsikter på arbetsmarknaden bör EU sätta som mål att de elever som slutar skolan i förtid ska utgöra högst 10 %, och att minst 85 % av dem som är 22 år gamla år 2010 ska ha slutfört gymnasieutbildning. Politiken bör resultera i att genomsnittsnivån inom EU för deltagande i livslångt lärande når upp till minst 12,5 % av den vuxna befolkningen i arbetsför ålder (åldersgruppen 25–64). Alla berörda aktörer bör engageras i arbetet med att utveckla och förankra principen om livslångt lärande från tidigaste ålder. För att en betydande ökning av de offentliga och privata investeringarna i humankapital per capita ska kunna uppnås och investeringarnas kvalitet och effektivitet ska kunna garanteras, är det viktigt att se till att kostnaderna och ansvaret fördelas på ett rättvist och öppet sätt mellan alla aktörer. Man bör också sträva efter att bredda det empiriska underlaget när det gäller utbildningsåtgärder. Medlemsstaterna bör utnyttja strukturfonderna och Europeiska investeringsbanken på ett bättre sätt för investeringar i utbildning. För att uppnå dessa mål måste medlemsstaterna lägga sig vinn om att genomföra de samlade och övergripande strategier för livslångt lärande som ingår i deras tidigare åtaganden.

Riktlinje 23. Utöka och förbättra investeringarna i humankapital genom följande:

- en utbildningspolitik och utbildningsåtgärder som omfattar alla, i syfte att avsevärt underlätta tillträdet till grundläggande yrkesutbildning, gymnasieutbildning och högre utbildning, inklusive lärlingsutbildning och utbildning i entreprenörskap,

- en avsevärd minskning av det antal elever som slutar skolan i förtid,

- effektiva strategier för livslångt lärande öppna för alla i skolor, företag, offentliga myndigheter och hem i enlighet med europeiska avtal, inbegripet lämpliga stimulansåtgärder och kostnadsfördelningsmekanismer för att öka deltagandet i vidareutbildning och arbetsplatsutbildning under hela livscykeln, särskilt för lågutbildade och äldre arbetstagare.

Se även integrerad riktlinje ”Öka och förbättra kvaliteten på investeringar i forskning och utveckling, särskilt inom det privata näringslivet.” (nr 7).

Det räcker inte att fastställa ambitiösa mål och att öka nivån på de investeringar som görs av samtliga aktörer. För att få balans mellan utbud och efterfrågan på arbetskraft i praktiken

måste systemen för livslångt lärande vara ekonomiskt överkomliga, tillgängliga och kunna anpassas till föränderliga behov. Det är nödvändigt att anpassa utbildningssystemen och bygga upp deras kapacitet så att deras relevans för arbetsmarknaden, anpassningsmöjligheter i förhållande till behoven i kunskapsbaserade ekonomier och samhällen samt deras effektivitet förbättras, liksom rättviseaspekterna. Informations- och kommunikationsteknik kan användas för att förbättra tillgången till utbildning och anpassa den till arbetsgivarnas och arbetstagarnas behov. Man behöver också arbeta för en ökad rörlighet för både arbets- och utbildningssyften, för att underlätta tillgången till arbete var som helst i unionen. De återstående hindren för rörligheten på den europeiska arbetsmarknaden bör undanröjas, särskilt de hinder som beror på att kvalifikationer och utbildningar inte erkänns, framstår som oklara eller inte kan användas i andra medlemsstater. Detta bör särskilt ske genom införandet av den europeiska referensramen för kvalifikationer. Det kommer att vara viktigt att instrument och referenser som överenskommits på EU-nivå används för att stödja reformer av nationella utbildningssystem i enlighet med arbetsprogrammet *Utbildning 2010*.

Riktlinje 24. Anpassa utbildningssystemen till nya kompetenskrav genom att utöka och förbättra investeringarna i humankapital genom att

- förbättra och garantera attraktiva och öppna utbildningssystem med hög kvalitetsstandard, bredda utbudet av utbildningsmöjligheter och sörja för flexibla inlärningsvägar samt förbättra möjligheten till rörlighet för studenter och praktikanter,

- förbättra och diversifiera tillträdet för alla till utbildning och kunskap genom arbetstidens förläggning, tjänster som stöder familjen, yrkesvägledning och eventuellt nya former av kostnadsdelning,

- möta nya yrkesbehov, efterfrågan på nyckelkompetens och framtida färdighetskrav genom att förbättra definitionen och jämförbarheten när det gäller kvalifikationer och underlätta deras faktiska erkännande, samt godkännandet av icke-formellt och informellt lärande.

EUROOPAN YHTEISÖJEN KOMISSIO

Bryssel 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 804 lopullinen

KOMISSION TIEDONANTO EUROOPAN PARLAMENTILLE, NEUVOSTOLLE, EUROOPAN TALOUS- JA SOSIAALIKOMITEALLE JA ALUEIDEN KOMITEALLE

Ehdotus yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaksi 2008–2010

KOMISSION TIEDONANTO EUROOPAN PARLAMENTILLE, NEUVOSTOLLE, SISÄLLYSLUETTELO

1. Johdanto: uusi yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma 3

2. Yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman lujittaminen ja uudistaminen 3

3. Uudessa yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmassa on kymmenen keskeistä tavoitetta neljällä painopistealueella 4

3.1 Ihmisiin investoiminen ja työmarkkinoiden nykyaikaistaminen 6

3.2 Liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen erityisesti pk-yrityksissä 7

3.3 Panostaminen osaamiseen ja innovointiin 10

3.4 Energia ja ilmastonmuutos 12

4. Ulkoiset toimet 14

5. Yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman tuloksellisuuden varmistaminen 15

LIITE 17

1. JOHDANTO: UUSI YHTEISÖN LISSABON-OHJELMA

Jäsenvaltioiden ja yhteisön välinen tiivis yhteistyö on olennainen tekijä uudistetussa Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiassa. Jäsenvaltiot panevat toimintalinjansa täytäntöön **kansallisissa uudistusohjelmissa**, ja **yhteisötason poliittiset toimet ovat tärkeä täydennys ja tuki kansallisille toimille**. Yhteisötason toimien avulla on mahdollista saada aikaan esimerkiksi yhteiset oikeudelliset ja/tai poliittiset puitteet ja koordinoida toimintalinjoja jäsenvaltioiden kanssa. Lisäksi yhteisö antaa suoraan täydennystä epäedullisessa asemassa olevien alueiden ja jäsenvaltioiden resursseihin esimerkiksi koheesiopoliittisten ohjelmien avulla. Sopivien perusedellytysten luomisessa on edistyttävä sekä jäsenvaltioiden että yhteisötasolla, jotta kasvu vauhdittuisi ja työllisyys paranisi merkittävällä tavalla EU:ssa.

Tässä tiedonannossa ehdotetaan **yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaa** vuosiksi 2008–2010. Ehdotetussa ohjelmassa määritetään **keskeiset yhteisötason toimenpiteet** jäsenvaltioiden uudistusohjelmissa sovellettua esittämistapaa noudattaen. Uutta yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaa koskeva ehdotus perustuu yhdennettyihin suuntaviivoihin, ja sen lähtökohtana ovat neljä painopistealuetta, jotka määriteltiin vuoden 2006 kevään Eurooppa-neuvostossa. Ehdotus sisältää yhteisötasolla toteutettavat toimet seuraavaa toteuttamisvaihetta varten sellaisina kuin niitä ehdotetaan keväällä 2008 kokoontuvalle Eurooppa-neuvostolle esitettävässä komission strategiaraportissa. Ehdotus sisältää **useita kunnianhimoisia mutta realistisia toimia**, jotka olisi toteutettava yhteisötasolla vuoteen 2010 mennessä. On tärkeää, että kaikki EU:n toimielimet toimivat yhtenäisesti ja määrätietoisesti, jotta voidaan sopia näistä työllisyyttä ja kasvua vauhdittavista toimenpiteistä seuraaviksi kolmeksi vuodeksi.

2. YHTEISÖN LISSABON-OHJELMAN LUJITTAMINEN JA UUDISTAMINEN

Ensimmäisestä yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmasta (2005–2008) saatiin merkittäviä tuloksia. Esimerkiksi **yhtenäismarkkinalainsäädännön** parantaminen on edistynyt, kun on annettu palveludirektiivi ja pantu täytäntöön rahoituspalvelujen toimintasuunnitelma. Komissio on myös vienyt eteenpäin **paremman sääntelyn suunnitelmaansa**, jossa on tavoitteena karsia tarpeettomia kustannuksia ja poistaa innovoinnin esteitä. Kasvua ja työllisyyttä edistäviin toimiin on osoitettu huomattavasti enemmän yhteisön rahoitusta. **EU:n koheesiopolitiikan uuden sääntelykehyksen** mukaan vuosina 2007–2013 on määrä osoittaa noin 210 miljardia euroa kasvua ja työllisyyttä tukeviin investointeihin. Summa on yli 25 prosenttia suurempi kuin vuosina 2000–2006. Vuoden 2007 puoleenväliin mennessä oli toteutettu **yli 87 toimea** yhteensä 102:sta alkuperäiseen vuoden 2005 yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaan sisältyvästä toimesta. Lisäksi neuvosto ja Euroopan parlamentti ovat pyrkineet määrätietoisesti vauhdittamaan toimielintenvälistä päätöksentekoa. Neuvosto ja parlamentti ovat vahvistaneet kymmenkunta yhteensä kahdeksastatoista toimielintenvälistä päätöksentekoa edellyttävästä lainsäädäntöehdotuksesta, jotka on esitetty yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaa koskevassa täytäntöönpanoraportissa vuodelta 2006[1].

[1] ”Community Lisbon Programme: Technical Implementation Report 2006”, SEK(2006) 1379.

Useista onnistuneista toimista huolimatta on todettava, että vuosien 2005–2008 ohjelma ei aina mahdollistanut riittävästi ohjelmaan kuuluvien toimien täysimääräistä priorisointia eikä toimien vahvistamisen ja täytäntöönpanon vauhdittamista. Monissa tapauksissa yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaa pidettiin yksinomaan Euroopan komission uudistusohjelmana, vaikka ohjelman toteuttaminen vaatii kaikkien yhteisön toimielinten ja jäsenvaltioiden täyden sitoutumisen.

Tavoitteena on **korjata nämä puutteet** vuosien 2008–2010 uudessa yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmassa. Sen vuoksi komission ehdottama **ohjelma on entistä voimakkaammin priorisoitu**: siinä on **vain kymmenen keskeistä tavoitetta**, joihin voidaan päästä vuosina 2008–2010. Tavoitteiden ja niihin liittyvien toimien avulla on kaiken kaikkiaan määrä

- **tuoda esiin huomattavaa yhteisötason lisäarvoa** tai merkittäviä synergiavaikutuksia jäsenvaltioiden toimintalinjoihin ja/tai muihin EU:n tasolla toteutettuihin toimintalinjoihin nähden

- **saada näkyviin merkittäviä kasvu- ja työllisyysvaikutuksia** joko suoraan tai helpottamalla rakenneuudistusta ja sopeuttamista.

3. UUDESSA YHTEISÖN LISSABON-OHJELMASSA ON KYMMENEN KESKEISTÄ TAVOITETTA NELJÄLLÄ PAINOPISTEALUEELLA

Komissio ehdottaa, että vuosien 2008–2010 yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmassa olisi kymmenen keskeistä tavoitetta ja niitä vastaavat toimet. Ehdotettu ohjelma perustuu yhdennettyihin suuntaviivoihin ja sen lähtökohtana on neljä painopistealuetta.

Vuoteen 2010 mennessä saavutettavat kymmenen keskeistä tavoitetta

1. Komissio esittää ehdotuksen uudistetuksi sosiaaliseksi toimintaohjelmaksi vuoden 2008 puoleenväliin mennessä ja osallistuu osaamispuutteiden korjaamiseen.

2. Komissio esittää vuonna 2008 ehdotuksia yhteisestä maahanmuuttopolitiikasta.

3. Yhteisö antaa pienyrityksiä koskevan eurooppalaisen säädöksen, jonka tavoitteena on vapauttaa pk-yritysten kasvupotentiaali koko niiden elinkaaren aikana.

4. Yhteisö jatkaa toimiaan saavuttaakseen tavoitteen, jonka mukaan EU:n hallinnollisia rasitteita karsitaan 25 prosentilla vuoteen 2012 mennessä, ja toteuttaa kunnianhimoisen yksinkertaistamisohjelman.

5. Yhteisö lujittaa yhtenäismarkkinoita, lisää kilpailua palvelusektorilla ja jatkaa rahoituspalvelumarkkinoiden yhdentämistä.

6. Yhteisö toteuttaa ”viidennen vapauden” (osaamisen vapaa liikkuvuus) käytännössä luomalla todellisen eurooppalaisen tutkimusalueen.

7. Yhteisö parantaa innovoinnin perusedellytyksiä.

8. Yhteisö toteuttaa energian sisämarkkinat ja vahvistaa ilmastonmuutospaketin.

9. Yhteisö edistää teollisuuspolitiikkaa, jossa on tavoitteena entistä kestävämpi tuotanto ja kulutus.

10. Yhteisö käy tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden kanssa kahdenvälisiä neuvotteluja avatakseen uusia mahdollisuuksia kansainväliselle kaupalle ja sijoitustoiminnalle ja luodakseen säännösten ja standardien kannalta yhteisen alueen.

Yksityiskohtainen luettelo toimista on liitteessä. Toimenpiteet on siinä jaoteltu seuraaviin kolmeen ryhmään:

- toimenpiteet, jotka Euroopan komission on hyväksyttävä
- toimenpiteet, jotka muiden toimielinten on hyväksyttävä
- toimenpiteet, jotka vaativat yhä täytäntöönpanoa.

Kunkin toimielimen tehtävät käyvät selvästi ilmi tästä ryhmittelystä. Komissio ehdottaa, että **kaikki EU:n toimielimet asettavat nämä toimenpiteet etusijalle**.

Yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman täysimääräinen toteuttaminen edistäisi komission näkemyksen mukaan huomattavasti Lissabonin kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategian onnistumista. Ohjelmaan sisältyvien toimenpiteiden pitkän aikavälin vaikutuksista tehty analyysi osoittaa, että toimenpiteiden täytäntöönpano **vaikuttaisi merkittävästi EU:n kokonaistuotantoon**[2]. Ohjelman toimien vaikutukset tulisivat näkyviin parantuneena tuottavuutena, lisääntyneenä kilpailuna ja kohentuneena sopeutumiskykynä, mikä lisäisi kokonaistuotantoa ja työllisyyttä pysyvällä ja kestävällä tavalla.

Neljään painopistealueeseen kuuluvia jäljempänä selostettuja yhteisön eri toimintalinjoja tuetaan kanavoimalla **yhteisön omia taloudellisia resursseja** kasvu- ja työllisyyspainotteisiin kohteisiin, mikä vauhdittaa kasvua ja parantaa talouden sopeutumista varsinkin uusissa jäsenvaltioissa ja muilla taloudellisesti epäsuotuisassa asemassa olevilla alueilla. Näitä resursseja ovat muun muassa Euroopan koheesiopoliittiset ohjelmat, Euroopan maaseudun kehittämisen maatalousrahasto (maaseuturahasto), elinikäisen oppimisen ohjelma ja Euroopan globalisaatiorahasto. Koheesiopolitiikan alan varojen määrä on noin 347 miljardia euroa vuosina 2007–2013 ja maaseuturahaston varojen määrä on noin 91 miljardia euroa. Rakennerahastojen korvamerkinnän ansiosta on saatu käyttöön huomattavasti lisää rahoitusta kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiaa varten. Jotta yhteisön rahoituksen kerrannaisvaikutuksia voitaisiin lisätä, Lissabonin strategian painopisteiden korostamista on seurattava tiiviisti ja tarvittaessa lujitettava koheesiopoliittisten ohjelmien sekä maaseuturahaston väliarviointien yhteydessä vuonna 2010 tarkentamalla korvamerkintää sellaisilla aloilla, joilla on todettu parhaimmat tulokset. Ensisijaisia kohteita ovat taitojen (myös tietoteknisten taitojen) parantaminen, yleissivistävä ja ammatillinen koulutus, elintärkeisiin infrastruktuureihin tehtävät investoinnit, yksityisten investointien lisääminen ja tietoyhteiskuntaan osallistumisen

[2] Ks. komission yksiköiden valmisteluasiakirja ”Spillovers and complementarities in the context of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy including the economic effects of the Community Lisbon Programme”. Siinä arvioidaan, että yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman taloudellisten vaikutusten myötä EU:n kokonaistuotanto nousisi jopa 2¾ prosenttiyksikköä vuoteen 2020 mennessä. Selvityksessä on kuitenkin käytetty eri taloudellisia malleja, menetelmiä, tietolähteitä ja oletuksia, minkä vuoksi tuloksia on tulkittava varovaisesti.

edistäminen. Rakenne- ja koheesiorahastojen investointien myötä syntyy arvioiden mukaan noin 2 miljoonaa uutta työpaikkaa vuoteen 2015 mennessä[3].

3.1. Ihmisiin investoiminen ja työmarkkinoiden nykyaikaistaminen

<u>Tavoite 1</u>: Komissio esittää vuoden 2008 puoleenväliin mennessä ehdotuksen uudistetuksi sosiaaliseksi toimintaohjelmaksi, joka kattaa varsinkin koulutuksen, maahanmuuton ja väestörakenteen muutokset, ja osallistuu osaamispuutteiden korjaamiseen parantamalla tulevaisuuden osaamisvaatimusten seurantaa ja ennakointia.

Entistä suurempi panostaminen koulutukseen ja taitoihin on ihmisten itsenäisen elämän edellytys. Se on EU:n menestymisen kannalta ratkaisevaa globalisaation aikakaudella, mutta se on myös yksi tehokkaimpia tapoja taata yhtäläiset mahdollisuudet ja torjua päättäväisesti eriarvoisuutta ja köyhyyttä. Väestörakenteen kehityssuuntausten vuoksi työvoiman tarjontaan, osaamispuutteisiin ja sosiaalialan budjetteihin kohdistuu yhä enemmän paineita. Koulutuksen ja ammattitaidon parantaminen on tässä tilanteessa tärkeää sekä työllistyvyyden että sosiaalisen yhteenkuuluvuuden kannalta. Jotta näihin kysymyksiin paneuduttaisiin yhteisön näkökulmasta, tarvitaan **uudistettu sosiaalinen toimintaohjelma**, jossa koulutus, maahanmuutto ja väestörakenteen kehityssuuntaukset ovat etusijalla.

”Uusia taitoja uusia työpaikkoja varten” -aloitteen[4] mukaisesti yhteisö voi myös osaltaan parantaa työmarkkinoiden tarpeiden yhteensopivuutta ja korjata osaamispuutteita **ennakointivälineiden asianmukaisen koordinoinnin avulla, jotta EU:n laajuisia työmarkkinoiden muutoksia voitaisiin ennakoida paremmin**. Yhteisö on jo käynnistänyt useita hankkeita työmarkkinoiden kehityssuuntausten ja osaamistarpeiden ennakoimiseksi, mutta nyt on tärkeää parantaa näiden eri toimien koordinointia, jotta vaikutukset olisivat mahdollisimman suuret. Taitojen kehittämistä tuetaan myös EU:n laajuisen koulutuspoliittisen strategisen kehyksen avulla sekä toteuttamalla erityisiä toimenpiteitä ammatillisen koulutuksen laadun varmistamiseksi.

Jotta työmarkkinoiden tarpeiden yhteensopivuus voitaisiin varmistaa entistä tehokkaammin ja löytää ratkaisuja osaamispuutteisiin, yhteisön on poistettava nykyiset suuret sääntelyesteet yhtenäisten työmarkkinoiden tieltä. Suurimpia esteitä ovat tutkintojen riittämätön vertailtavuus ja tunnustaminen ja eläkkeiden ja sosiaalietuuksien siirrettävyyteen vaikuttavat rajoitukset. Näiden esteiden poistaminen täydentää jäsenvaltioiden toimia, joilla tuetaan taitojen parempaa hyödyntämistä ja korjataan työntekijöiden ammattitaidon ja työmarkkinoiden vaatimusten välistä epäsuhtaa.

Toimet:

- Esitetään ehdotus uudistetuksi sosiaaliseksi toimintaohjelmaksi vuoden 2008 puoleenväliin mennessä.
- Parannetaan tutkintojen avoimuutta, tunnustamista ja vertailtavuutta ja lisätään eläkkeiden ja muiden sosiaalisten oikeuksien siirrettävyyttä koko EU:n alueella.

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[3] *Neljäs kertomus taloudellisesta ja sosiaalisesta yhteenkuuluvuudesta*, Euroopan komissio, 2007.

[4] ”Uusia taitoja uusia työpaikkoja varten”, koulutusneuvoston 15. marraskuuta 2007 antamat päätelmät.

- Parannetaan kykyä ennakoida EU:n laajuisia työmarkkinoiden kehityssuuntauksia ja osaamistarpeita.

Tavoite 2: Komissio esittää vuonna 2008 ehdotuksia yhteisestä maahanmuuttopolitiikasta.

Yhteisön on myös kehitettävä **yhteinen maahanmuuttopolitiikka**, jotta on mahdollista vastata paremmin nykyisiin ja tuleviin työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin. EU:hun suuntautuva muuttoliike on nettomäärältään yli 1,5 miljoonaa vuodessa, mutta useimmilla maahanmuuttajilla on heikko ammattitaito. Jotta on mahdollista vastata kasvavaan ammattitaitoisten työntekijöiden kysyntään ja välttää tehottomien kansallisten järjestelmien välinen kilpailutilanne, on tärkeää kehittää yhteinen toimintalinja taloudellisista syistä tapahtuvaa maahanmuuttoa varten. Kun parannetaan EU:hun muuttavien työntekijöiden taitokokonaisuutta, maahanmuuttajat voivat entistä paremmin vastata EU:n työmarkkinoiden tarpeisiin, minkä lisäksi on mahdollista vähentää osaamispuutteita. Komissio on jo tehnyt alustavia ehdotuksia ja esittänyt muun muassa sinisen kortin järjestelmää EU:hun muuttavia erittäin päteviä työntekijöitä varten. Komissio esittää vuonna 2008 kattavia ehdotuksia yhteisestä maahanmuuttopolitiikasta.

Toimet:

- Edetään kohti yhteisen maahanmuuttopolitiikan käyttöönottoa ottaen huomioon EU:n työmarkkinoiden tarpeet. Toimiin kuuluu myös sinisen kortin järjestelmä, jonka avulla halutaan houkutella korkeasti ammattitaitoisia työntekijöitä.

3.2. Liiketoimintapotentiaalin vapauttaminen erityisesti pk-yrityksissä

Tavoite 3: Yhteisö antaa pienyrityksiä koskevan eurooppalaisen säädöksen, jonka tavoitteena on vapauttaa pk-yritysten kasvupotentiaali koko niiden elinkaaren aikana.

Yhteisön olisi vuoteen 2010 mennessä **vapautettava pk-yritysten kasvu- ja työllisyyspotentiaali**, sillä pk-yritysten osuus yritysten kokonaismäärästä on yli 99 prosenttia ja pk-yritykset työllistävät 67 prosenttia EU:n työvoimasta. Monissa yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman toimissa tuetaan myös pk-yrityksiä, mutta on tarpeen toteuttaa erillisiä toimia, jotta kohennettaisiin pk-yritysten suhteellisesti riittämätöntä pääsyä sisä- ja vientimarkkinoille ja vähennettäisiin hallinnollisia rasitteita. Yhteisö laatii ja ottaa käyttöön **”pienyrityksiä koskevan säädöksen”**, jossa määritetään periaatteet ja konkreettiset toimenpiteet pk-yritysten tukemiseksi koko niiden elinkaaren ajan. Tukimuotoihin kuuluvat muun muassa pk-yritysten tarpeisiin mukautettu yksityisen eurooppayhtiön perussääntö, vapautukset hankalista lainsäädännöllisistä vaatimuksista (esimerkiksi tilastotietojen ja aineistojen keräämisestä, arvonlisäverosta ja kirjanpitovaatimuksista), riskipääoman parempi saatavuus, pk-yritysten ideoiden suojaaminen, henkilöstön palkkaamiseen ja uudelleenkoulutukseen suunnattu tuki, julkisiin hankintoihin sekä tutkimus- ja kehitysohjelmiin osallistumisen helpottaminen, tiiviimmät yhteydet yliopistoihin ja tutkimuskeskuksiin, yrityksen luovuttamisen helpottaminen ja uusien mahdollisuuksien tarjoaminen yrittäjille liiketoiminnan epäonnistuessa.

Toimet:

- Annetaan pienyrityksiä koskeva eurooppalainen säädös, jossa määritetään periaatteet ja konkreettiset toimenpiteet pk-yritysten tukemiseksi koko niiden elinkaaren ajan.

- Toteutetaan erityinen yhteisön säännöstön kartoitus pk-yritysten näkökulmasta ja otetaan mahdollisuuksien mukaan käyttöön vapautuksia EU:n lainsäädännön mukaisista hallinnollisista vaatimuksista.

Tavoite 4: Yhteisö jatkaa toimiaan saavuttaakseen tavoitteen, jonka mukaan EU:n hallinnollisia rasitteita vähennetään 25 prosentilla vuoteen 2012 mennessä, ja toteuttaa kunnianhimoisen yksinkertaistamisohjelman.

Yhteisö saattaa päätökseen yhteisön säännöstöä koskevan kattavan tarkastelun, jossa on tarkoitus **yksinkertaistaa säännöstöä ja poistaa yrityksiin kohdistuvia tarpeettomia hankalia vaatimuksia** tinkimättä lainsäädännön alkuperäisistä tavoitteista. Tästä työstä on apua jäsenvaltioille, kun ne sitoumustensa mukaan pyrkivät karsimaan hallinnollisia rasitteita 25 prosentilla vuoteen 2012 mennessä. Hallinnollisten rasitteiden vähentyessä yritykset, varsinkin pk-yritykset, voivat ohjata enemmän sisäistä rahoitusta investointeihin. Kun rasitteet vähenevät, sopeutumiskykyä ja innovointia tukevat kannustimet paranevat. Yksinkertaistamishankkeissa yhteisö noudattaa täysimääräisesti toissijaisuusperiaatetta ja ”pienet ensin” -periaatetta.

Toimet:

- Varmistetaan, että voimassa olevaan yhteisön lainsäädäntöön kohdistuva säännöllisesti tarkistettava yksinkertaistamisohjelma toteutetaan kaikilta osin, jotta poistetaan yrityksille asetettuja tarpeettomia hankalia vaatimuksia.

- Varmistetaan, että EU:n lainsäädännöstä johtuvan hallinnollisen rasituksen keventämiseen tähtäävä toimintaohjelma toteutetaan kaikilta osin. Kaikki vuodeksi 2007 suunnitellut kiireelliset toimet olisi saatava valmiiksi vuoden 2008 keväällä pidettävään Eurooppa-neuvoston kokoukseen mennessä.

Tavoite 5: Yhteisö lujittaa yhtenäismarkkinoita, lisää kilpailua palvelusektorilla ja jatkaa rahoituspalvelumarkkinoiden yhdentämistä.

On kiistatonta, että palvelusektorilla on vähemmän kilpailua kuin EU:n tavaramarkkinoilla. Yhteisön on viritettävä kilpailua ja lisättävä tehokkuutta, jotta **palvelusektorille saadaan aikaan tosiasialliset yhtenäismarkkinat**. On tärkeää, että jäsenvaltiot panevat **palveludirektiivin** täytäntöön kattavasti ja oikea-aikaisesti komission tuella. Direktiivin myötä palveluntarjoajien sijoittautuminen ja palvelujen vapaa tarjoaminen helpottuvat huomattavasti, kun hallinnollisia rasitteita vähennetään ja nykyisiä esteitä poistetaan. Yritysten, varsinkin pk-yritysten, markkinoillepääsy paranee, kuluttajien valinnanvara kasvaa ja palvelujen saatavuus kohenee. Oikea-aikainen standardointi ja yhteentoimivuus ovat myös tärkeitä kysymyksiä yhtenäismarkkinoilla, varsinkin tieto- ja viestintätekniikan tavaroiden ja palvelujen tapauksessa. Kilpailupolitiikka voi tässä yhteydessä antaa hyvää täydennystä.

Komission suorittamissa selvityksissä, muun muassa yhtenäismarkkinakatsauksessa, on käynyt ilmi, että erityistä huomiota on kiinnitettävä useisiin keskeisiin verkkotoimialoihin ja -palveluihin, joita ovat esimerkiksi **postipalvelut, sähkö ja kaasu, rautatieliikenne, rahoituspalvelut, sähköinen viestintä sekä vähittäis- ja tukkukauppa**. Yhteisön olisi näin ollen **lujitettava yhtenäismarkkinapolitiikkaa ja kilpailupolitiikan täytäntöönpanoa** siten, että tavoitteena on lisätä tuottavuutta ja alentaa kuluttajahintoja ja samanaikaisesti varmistaa yleishyödyllisten palveluiden tarjonta. Siksi yhteisön on parannettava **keskeisten alojen markkinavalvontaa** ottaen huomioon kuluttajiin kohdistuvat vaikutukset ja hyödynnettävä kaikkia käytettävissä olevia välineitä, kuten kuluttajien tulostaulua, jotta kuluttajamarkkinoita voidaan valvoa pitkäjänteisesti. Nykyistä lainsäädäntöä on myös vahvistettava, jotta voidaan varmistaa avoimuus ja taata kuluttajille ja muille ostajille todelliset valinnanmahdollisuudet. Parantamalla kilpailua ja tehokkuutta palvelusektorilla on mahdollista parantaa koko talouden kilpailukykyä.

Euroopan rahoituspalvelumarkkinoiden yhdentäminen vaatii uusia yhteisön toimia, jotta euron käyttöönoton tuomat hyödyt saataisiin täysimääräisesti käyttöön ja jotta rahoituspalvelujen käyttäjille olisi tarjolla entistä enemmän entistä huokeampia tuotteita, jotka täyttävät tiukat kuluttajansuojavaatimukset. Rahoituspalvelujen toimintasuunnitelman onnistumisesta huolimatta EU:n rahoituspalvelujärjestelmä on yhä joiltakin osin hajanainen. Yhtenäinen euromaksualue on vielä perustamatta, vähittäisrahoituspalvelujen alalla on karsittava esteitä kilpailun ja rajatylittävän toiminnan vilkastumisen tieltä ja tukku- ja sijoitusmarkkinoita koskevat yhtenäiset puitteet on saatava valmiiksi ja otettava käyttöön.

Rahoituslaitosten valvontaa ja rahoitukseen liittyvää kriisinhallintaa varten tehtyjä valtioidenvälisiä järjestelyjä on tehostettava kiireesti ottaen huomioon rahoitusmarkkinoilla lisääntyvät häiriöt ja epävakaisuudet. Kun rahoituksen välitystä tehostetaan, rahoituspalvelujen yhtenäismarkkinoilla voidaan samanaikaisesti vähentää lainanottajien pääomakustannuksia ja lisätä säästäjien tuottoja. Erityisesti euroalueeseen kuuluvien jäsenvaltioiden kannalta on tärkeää, että rahoitusmarkkinat ovat tehokkaat, sillä sellaisilla markkinoilla on helpompi mukauttaa ja kohdentaa uudelleen resursseja ja lisätä kestävyyttä talouselämän häiriöiden varalta.

Sääntöjen noudattamisesta varsinkin pk-yrityksille aiheutuvia kuluja, jotka johtuvat sisämarkkinoiden verotuksellisesta hajanaisuudesta, pyritään edelleen vähentämään. Tavoitteena on myös mahdollistaa se, että yritykset voivat käyttää EU:n laajuista veropohjaa.

Toimet:

- Lujitetaan yhtenäismarkkinoita ja edistetään kilpailua, parannetaan alakohtaista markkinavalvontaa ja parannetaan tarvittaessa sääntelyä varsinkin keskeisten palvelujen alalla sekä verkkotoimialoilla.
- Varmistetaan palveludirektiivin kattava ja oikea-aikainen täytäntöönpano.
- Varmistetaan yhtenäisen euromaksualueen toteutuminen ja poistetaan esteitä, lisätään kilpailua vähittäisrahoituspalvelujen alalla ja vakiinnutetaan yhtenäiset puitteet rajatylittäviä tukkumarkkinoita ja sijoitustoimintaa varten.
- Tehostetaan nykyisiä valvontajärjestelyjä ja kehitetään asianmukaisia välineitä EU:n rahoituslaitosten rajatylittävää kriisinhallintaa varten.

3.3. Panostaminen osaamiseen ja innovointiin

Yhteisö toteuttaa käytännössä ”viidennen vapauden”, joka täydentää tavaroiden, palvelujen, ihmisten ja pääoman vapaata liikkuvuutta koskevia neljää vapautta. ”Viides vapaus” tarvitaan, jotta kansallisten tutkimus- ja innovaatiopolitiikkojen hajanaisuus saadaan poistetuksi, ja vapaus toteutetaan perustamalla eurooppalaisen tutkimusalue ja korkeakoulutusalue ja luomalla paremmat perusedellytykset innovoinnille. Vain näin EU pystyy saavuttamaan maailmanhuippua olevia tuloksia tutkimustoiminnassa ja houkuttelemaan entistä paremmin yksityisiä sijoituksia.

Tavoite 6: Yhteisö toteuttaa ”viidennen vapauden” (osaamisen vapaa liikkuvuus) käytännössä ja luo todellisen eurooppalaisen tutkimusalueen.

Jotta olisi mahdollista toteuttaa ”viides vapaus” (osaamisen vapaa liikkuvuus) käytännössä ja luoda todellinen eurooppalainen tutkimusalue yhteistyössä jäsenvaltioiden kanssa, on lujitettava jokaista osaamisen kolmea kulmakiveä: tutkimusta, innovointia ja koulutusta[5]. Jäsenvaltioiden kanssa ja niiden kesken tehtävää tutkimusresurssien yhdistämistä vaihtelevan geometrian välineen pohjalta edistetään käyttämällä yhteistä suunnittelua ja kehittämällä sääntelypuitteet yleiseurooppalaisen tutkimusinfrastruktuurin perustamista ja toimintaa varten. EU:n ja jäsenvaltioiden yhteistyötä ja kansainvälisiä kerrannaisvaikutuksia lisätään myös kehittämällä yhteisön strategia ja puitteet kansainvälistä tiede- ja teknologiayhteistyötä varten.

Olisi perustettava toimivat eurooppalaiset yhtenäiset työmarkkinat tutkijoille pitäen lähtökohtana eräänlaista eurooppapassia. Tämä parantaisi tutkijoiden uranäkymiä sekä heidän rekrytointiaan ja liikkuvuuttaan maiden välillä. Nämä toimet täydentävät jäsenvaltioiden toimia, joilla lujitetaan ja uudenaikaistetaan korkea-asteen koulutusta, ja helpottavat verkottumista ja lisäävät yhteistyötä yliopistojen, tutkimusorganisaatioiden ja yritysten välillä.

Euroopan innovaatio- ja teknologiainstituutilla on myös tärkeä osuus tässä strategiassa, sillä siinä yhdistyvät koulutus, tutkimus ja innovointi. Siitä tulee näin ollen malli, jonka mukaan voidaan edistää julkisten tutkimusorganisaatioiden ja elinkeinoelämän välistä avointa innovaatioiden ja osaamisen jakamista. Kun toteutetaan eurooppalainen tutkimusalue, syntyy mittakaava-etuja ja resurssien jakaminen tehostuu, minkä lisäksi saadaan aikaan maiden rajat ylittäviä myönteisiä heijastusvaikutuksia kaikkien jäsenvaltioiden hyödyksi.

Toimet:

- Yhdistetään tutkimus- ja kehitysresursseja, jotta voidaan varmistaa niiden käytön vaikuttavuus. Tätä varten sovitaan vuoden 2008 loppuun mennessä, millä alueilla yhteisiä ohjelmia toteutetaan, ja käynnistetään yhteisiä hanke-ehdotuspyyntöjä vuoden 2010 loppuun mennessä.
- Parannetaan tutkijoiden rajatylittävää liikkuvuutta ja uranäkymiä eräänlaisen eurooppapassin avulla.
- Käynnistetään Euroopan innovaatio- ja teknologiainstituutin toiminta täysimääräisesti.

[5] Tutkimus- ja kehitys-/innovointitoiminta oli keskeinen haaste 24:ssä yhteensä 25:stä kansallisesta uudistusohjelmasta vuonna 2005.

- Pannaan vireille maailmanluokan tutkimusinfrastruktuurin uusi sukupolvi laatimalla vuoden 2009 loppuun mennessä etenemissuunnitelmat, joiden mukaan yhteisesti sovitut hankkeet käynnistetään. Maailmanlaajuisia hankkeita käsittelevä vuoropuhelu aloitetaan asianomaisten kansainvälisten kumppaneiden kanssa vuoden 2008 aikana.

<u>Tavoite 7</u>: Yhteisö luo paremmat perusedellytykset innovoinnille kiinnittäen erityistä huomiota riskipääomaan ja teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksiin.

Yhteisön on luotava paremmat perusedellytykset innovoinnille panemalla täytäntöön laaja-pohjainen innovaatiostrategia[6]. On esimerkiksi luotava edelläkävijämarkkinat uuden teknologian alalle, vahvistettava teollis- ja tekijänoikeusjärjestelmää ja vauhditettava yhteentoimivien standardien antamista.

Yhteisön on ennen kaikkea **luotava suotuisammat edellytykset innovoinnin rahoittamiselle**, jotta erittäin innovatiivisia pk-yrityksiä syntyisi enemmän ja jotta helpotettaisiin edelläkävijämarkkinoiden syntyä uusien teknologioiden, esimerkiksi hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisen teknologian, alalla. EU:n laajuisen riskipääomajärjestelmän kehittäminen on olennainen vaatimus. Yhteisön on tehtävä tiivistä yhteistyötä jäsenvaltioiden kanssa, jotta riskipääomarahastojen rajatylittäviä sijoituksia hankaloittavat nykyiset sääntely- ja veroesteet saadaan poistettua. Sen on myös autettava korjaamaan pääoman puutetta alkuvaiheen riskirahoituksen alalla. Pk-yrityksille tarkoitettua Euroopan investointirahaston takausohjelmaa olisi laajennettava huomattavasti, jotta edistettäisiin mikroluottoja ja välirahoitusta[7]. On arvioitu, että riskipääomasijoituksia varten saataisiin käyttöön 20 miljardia euroa enemmän vuotta kohden, jos riskipääoman keskimääräinen käyttö EU:ssa nostettaisiin nykyisten suorituskykyisimpien maiden ja alueiden tasolle.

Yhteisön on myös **parannettava aineettomien hyödykkeiden käyttöä ja suojelemista** kiinnittäen huomiota etenkin teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksiin, jotka myös osaltaan edistävät rahoituksen saatavuutta. EU:ssa käytössä olevan patenttijärjestelmän toimivuus kärsii yhä kalliista ja hajanaisesta rakenteesta, joka hankaloittaa osaamisen ja innovoinnin siirtoa ja levittämistä kaikkialle EU:ssa[8]. Jos järjestelmää tehostettaisiin ja täytäntöönpanon valvontaa lisättäisiin, turvattaisiin tutkimus- ja kehitysinvestoinneista saatavat tuotot, mikä loisi kannustimia tutkimus- ja kehitystoiminnalle, taloudellisille sijoituksille ja innovaatioiden kaupallistamiselle. Jos yhteisön patenttijärjestelmää kehitettäisiin muun muassa luomalla yhteisöpatentti ja parantamalla patenttioikeudenkäyntijärjestelmää, patentointikustannukset pienenisivät huomattavasti ja oikeusvarmuus paranisi.

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6 "Neuvoston päätelmät laajapohjaisesta innovaatiostrategiasta: EU:n strategiset painopisteet innovaatiotoiminnalle", 4. joulukuuta 2006 kokoontuneen kilpailukykyneuvoston päätelmät.

7 EIR:n ohjelma vuodeksi 2006 oli määrältään vähän yli 2 miljardia euroa, ja ohjelmassa annettiin tukea noin 180 000 pk-yritykselle kaikkialla EU:ssa.

8 Patenttien käsittelystä ja kääntämisestä aiheutuu EU:ssa keskimäärin yli kymmenen kertaa suuremmat kustannukset kuin Yhdysvalloissa ja Japanissa.

Toimet:

- Edistetään EU:n laajuisia riskipääomamarkkinoita.
- Parannetaan pk-yritysten investointivalmiuksia ja rahoituksen saantia.
- Luodaan yhteisöpatentti ja parannetaan patenttioikeudenkäyntijärjestelmää, mikä pienentää merkittävästi patentin rekisteröintikustannuksia ja lisää oikeusvarmuutta.

3.4. Energia ja ilmastonmuutos

Tavoite 8: Yhteisö toteuttaa energian sisämarkkinat ja vahvistaa ilmastonmuutospaketin, jotta käyttöön saadaan sellaiset edellytykset, joiden avulla on mahdollista vähentää kasvihuonekaasupäästöjä ainakin 20 prosenttia ja saavuttaa 20 prosentin suuruinen uusiutuvien energialähteiden osuus vuoteen 2020 mennessä.

EU:n on kehitettävä todelliset **EU:n laajuiset energian sisämarkkinat** ja **laaja päästökauppajärjestelmä**, jotta se selviytyisi kiristyvästä maailmanlaajuisesta kilpailusta energiansaannin alalla ja jotta se saavuttaisi vuodeksi 2020 asetetut kunnianhimoiset tavoitteet vähentää kasvihuonekaasupäästöjä ja lisätä uusiutuvien energialähteiden osuutta. Kun energian sisämarkkinat toteutuvat, tehokkuus lisääntyy ja energian toimitusvarmuus paranee. Aiemmat hankkeet, joissa kansallisia energiamarkkinoita on vapautettu, eivät ole aina johtaneet kilpailun lisääntymiseen. On tarpeen panna nykyinen lainsäädäntö kaikilta osin täytäntöön ja **erottaa tuotanto ja toimitukset tosiasiallisesti verkkotoiminnoista**, jotta kilpailu ja tehokkuus lisääntyisivät uusien kilpailijoiden markkinoilletulon myötä. On myös lisättävä energia-alan sääntelyviranomaisten riippumattomuutta ja yhteistyötä ja poistettava teknisiä esteitä markkinoiden yhdentymisen tieltä. Tätä varten on muun muassa **lisättävä maiden välistä yhteenliittämiskapasiteettia**, jotta kansallisten markkinoiden yhdentämistä varten saadaan käyttöön riittävästi siirtokapasiteettia. Tällä tavoin on tarkoitus luoda todellisia kannustimia investoida 1 000 miljardia euroa uuden sukupolven laitoksiin ja parempiin maiden välisiin yhteenkytkentöihin, joita tarvitaan seuraavien 20 vuoden aikana. Energian sisämarkkinoiden toteuttamisen lisäksi on kehitettävä kustannustehokas päästökauppajärjestelmä, jotta vuodeksi 2020 asetetut kasvihuonekaasupäästöjen vähentämistavoitteet saavutettaisiin, ja laadittava **yhteisön puitteet uusiutuvien energialähteiden kustannustehokasta kehittämistä varten**, jotta uusiutuvien energialähteiden osuus nousisi 20 prosenttiin vuoteen 2020 mennessä.

Toimet:

- Vahvistetaan sähkön ja kaasun sisämarkkinoiden toteuttamiseen tähtäävä lainsäädäntöpaketti toukokuuhun 2009 mennessä. Paketin tavoitteena on luoda kilpailua ja investointeja suosivat energian sisämarkkinat, lisätä energia-alan sääntelyviranomaisten riippumattomuutta ja yhteistyötä ja poistaa teknisiä esteitä markkinoiden yhdentymisen tieltä.
- Vahvistetaan kasvihuonekaasupäästöjä ja uusiutuvia energialähteitä koskevien EU:n tavoitteiden saavuttamiseen tähtäävä lainsäädäntöpaketti toukokuuhun 2009 mennessä.

<u>Tavoite 9</u>: Yhteisö edistää teollisuuspolitiikkaa, jossa on tavoitteena entistä kestävämpi tuotanto ja kulutus ja jossa painotetaan uusiutuvia energialähteitä sekä hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisiä ja luonnonvaroja tehokkaammin käyttäviä tuotteita, palveluja ja teknologioita.

Eurooppa-neuvoston kunnianhimoiset ilmastonmuutostavoitteet vuodeksi 2020 vaativat ennennäkemättömän suuria investointeja uusiin hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisiin teknologioihin ja muuttavat perusteellisesti EU:n taloutta. Yhteisön on toimittava painokkaasti, jotta saadaan aikaan dynaamiset **ympäristöteknologia-alan sisämarkkinat varsinkin hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisille ja energiaa ja luonnonvaroja tehokkaammin käyttäville teknologioille**. Näitä aloja edistävissä jäsenvaltioiden toimissa ei selvästikään päästä hyödyntämään sellaisia markkinamahdollisuuksia ja mittakaavaetuja, joita olisi mahdollista saada aikaan, jos kehitettäisiin todelliset EU:n laajuiset markkinat ympäristötuotteille, -palveluille ja -teknologioille. Menestyminen edellyttää uutta yhteisön laajuista **kestävää teollisuusstrategiaa**, jotta siirryttäisiin hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäiseen ja luonnonvaroja tehokkaammin käyttävään talouteen[9].

Olisi saatava aikaan uusia markkinoita toteuttamalla edelläkävijämarkkinoihin perustuvia toimintalinjoja esimerkiksi kestävän kehityksen mukaisen rakentamisen, kierrätyksen, biotuotteiden ja uusiutuvien energialähteiden alalla. Sellaisten toimintalinjojen ansiosta ympäristöteknologioiden kysyntä vilkastuisi, mikä johtaisi merkittäviin taloudellisiin ja ympäristöhyötyihin. Toimintalinjoihin voisi myös sisältyä dynaamisten EU:n ympäristöstandardien varhainen kehittäminen yhtenäismarkkinoille, mikä johtaisi kilpailuhyötyihin siinä vaiheessa, kun ympäristöstandardit hyväksytään kansainvälisesti. Muita välineitä ovat merkintävaatimukset ja ympäristöä säästävien julkisten hankintojen edistäminen. **Yhteisön varoja olisi myös käytettävä yksityisen sektorin rahoituksen liikkeelle saamiseksi** tutkimus- ja kaupallistamishankkeissa, jotka koskevat hiilidioksidipäästöiltään vähäisiä tuotteita ja teknologioita. Esimerkkinä voidaan mainita puhtaiden teknologioiden riskipääomarahoitus. Päästökauppajärjestelmässä samoin kuin **energiaverotusta koskevan direktiivin tarkistuksessa** on määrä varmistaa, että energiaverotus edistää entistä vaikuttavammin ja kannustavammin EU:n energia- ja ilmastonmuutostavoitteita ja parantaa tällaisten toimintalinjojen kustannustehokkuutta. Olisi myös kartoitettava, onko energiaa säästävien tuotteiden tukemiseksi mahdollista käyttää muita verotuksellisia keinoja, arvonlisävero mukaan luettuna.

Toimet:

- Luodaan ympäristöteknologia-alan sisämarkkinat ja edistetään eurooppalaisten edelläkävijämarkkinoiden kehittämistä energiaa ja luonnonvaroja tehokkaammin käyttäville teknologioille.
- Tarkistetaan energiaverotusta koskevaa direktiiviä, jotta sillä olisi tiiviimpi yhteys EU:n energia- ja ympäristötavoitteisiin.
- Tarkastellaan uudelleen toimenpiteitä, jotka lisäävät suorituskykyisten ympäristöä säästävien tuotteiden, teknologioiden ja palvelujen julkista hankintaa ottaen huomioon myös rakennukset.

[9] Komission tiedonanto *Teollisuuspolitiikan väliarviointi – EU:n kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiaan liittyvä tiedonanto*, KOM(2007) 374, 4.7.2007.

4. ULKOISET TOIMET

Tavoite 10: Yhteisö pyrkii saamaan Dohan monenväliset kauppaneuvottelut päätökseen, minkä lisäksi se käy tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden kanssa kahdenvälisiä neuvotteluja avatakseen uusia mahdollisuuksia kansainväliselle kaupalle ja sijoitustoiminnalle, parantaakseen markkinoillepääsyä varsinkin sellaisissa maissa ja sellaisilla aloilla, joilla on edelleen merkittäviä esteitä, sekä luodakseen säännösten ja standardien kannalta yhteisen alueen.

Yhteisö on sitoutunut jatkamaan kaupan ja sijoitusten esteiden poistamista ja torjumaan epärehellisiä kauppa- ja sijoituskäytänteitä sekä kilpailun vääristymistä. Näihin tavoitteisiin päästään parhaiten saattamalla Dohan kierros onnistuneesti päätökseen. Kaikki saatavilla olevat välineet käytetään sen varmistamiseksi, että Euroopan avoimuutta pidetään yllä ja että avoimuuden vastapainoksi pääsy kolmansien maiden markkinoille lisääntyy. Komissio raportoi vuosittain markkinoillepääsyä koskevista toimista: se tuo esiin maita ja sektoreita, joilla on edelleen huomattavia esteitä, ja käy kyseisten maiden kanssa neuvotteluja. Jos ongelmia ei saada ratkaistuksi, voidaan harkita yhteisön kaupansuojelukeinojen käyttämistä ja/tai WTO:n toimia.

Yhteisö on sitoutunut vaikuttamaan globalisaatiokehitykseen siten, että globalisaatiohyödyt ovat mahdollisimman suuret ja että kehitykseen osallistutaan yhdessä muiden kumppaneiden kanssa. Yhteisön olisi jatkettava neuvotteluja tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden kanssa, naapurimaat ja kehittyvän talouden maat ja alueet mukaan luettuina, ja edistettävä jatkossakin alueellista taloudellista yhdentymistä naapurimaidensa kanssa. **Tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden**, myös naapurimaiden (parempaan sopimukseen tähtäävät neuvottelut Ukrainan kanssa) ja kehittyvän talouden maiden ja alueiden, **kanssa tehtävien kahdenvälisten kauppasopimusten** ansiosta EU voi antaa WTO:n sitoumuksia laajempia sitoumuksia ja vahvistaa kunnianhimoisia määräyksiä sääntely-yhteistyöstä ja rajatylittävästä yhteistyöstä. Kahdenvälisistä vapaakauppasopimuksista neuvotellaan parhaillaan Etelä-Korean, Intian ja ASEAN-maiden kanssa ja suunnitelmissa on käydä vastaavia neuvotteluja myös muiden maiden ja alueiden kanssa. Yhteisön ja Kiinan välinen kumppanuussopimus parantaa EU:n yritysten markkinoillepääsyä ja edistää sääntelyn lähentämistä. Nämä sopimukset vilkastuttavat kansainvälistä kauppaa ja sijoitustoimintaa, lisäävät kilpailua ja alentavat kuluttajahintoja. Kauppa ja muut taloussuhteet ovat tärkeässä asemassa assosiaatiosopimusneuvotteluissa Mercosurin, Andien yhteisön ja Keski-Amerikan kanssa. Näiden neuvottelujen sekä paremman poliittisen vuoropuhelun avulla voidaan myös osaltaan tukea kestävää kehitystä kumppanimaissa sekä edistää yhteisiä arvoja ja kansainvälisesti sovittuja sosiaalisia ja ekologisia standardeja, ihmisarvoinen työ mukaan luettuna.

Vakaan **yhteisen sääntelyalueen** muodostaminen tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden, kuten Yhdysvaltojen (transatlanttisen talousneuvoston puitteissa), kanssa käynnistää prosessin kohti säännösten ja standardien yhdenmukaistamista varsinkin uusien teknologioiden alalla. Tästä hyötyvät loppujen lopuksi kaikki kauppakumppanit. Yritysten kustannukset alenevat merkittävästi, kun muut kuin tariffiesteet vähenevät, ja kauppa vilkastuu. On myös parannettava **teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien täytäntöönpanojärjestelmän vaikuttavuutta väärentämisen estämisen kannalta**. Keskeisiin aloitteisiin kuuluvat entistä laajempi yhteistyö tärkeimpien kauppakumppaneiden kanssa tulliyhteistyön lisäämiseksi ja täytäntöönpanon tukeminen tärkeimmissä alkuperämaissa esimerkiksi EU:n ja Yhdysvaltojen välisen teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksia koskevan strategian puitteissa sekä uutta väärentämisenvastaista kauppasopimusta (ACTA) koskevien neuvottelujen päätökseen saaminen.

Toimet:

- Edistetään kunnianhimoisten kahdenvälisten sopimusten tekemistä tärkeiden kauppakumppaneiden kanssa ja tuetaan naapuri- ja ehdokasmaiden kanssa tapahtuvaa yhdentymistä kehittämällä yhteinen talousalue.

- Käytetään mahdollisesti yhteisön kaupansuojelukeinoja jatkotoimina markkinoillepääsyä koskevalle komission vuotuiselle raportoinnille.

- Kehitetään transatlanttisen talousneuvoston toimintapotentiaali täyteen mittaan ja työskennellään muiden tärkeimpien kauppakumppanien kanssa tavoitteena luoda yhteensopivien säännösten ja standardien kannalta yhteinen alue.

- Parannetaan teollis- ja tekijänoikeuksien täytäntöönpanojärjestelmän vaikuttavuutta väärentämisen estämisen kannalta muun muassa monenvälisen väärentämisenvastaisen kauppasopimuksen (ACTA) avulla.

5. YHTEISÖN LISSABON-OHJELMAN TULOKSELLISUUDEN VARMISTAMINEN

Yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelma sisältää taloudellisten uudistusten keskeiset tavoitteet vuosiksi 2008–2010. Tavoitteet on määritetty siten, että niiden avulla on mahdollista saada aikaan suurimmat kasvu- ja työllisyysvaikutukset yhteisön tasolla tukemalla ja täydentämällä kansallisia toimia. Tämän **strategisen ohjelman** olisi ohjattava EU:n kaikkien toimielinten työtä kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategiaan kuuluvissa yhteisön toimissa.Tavoitteisiin pääsemiseen voidaan vaikuttaa myös muiden toimenpiteiden avulla, mutta yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman toimien katsotaan olevan kiireellisimpiä ja tärkeimpiä taloudellisille uudistuksille, jotka voidaan saavuttaa vuosina 2008–2010. **Ohjelman tuloksellisuuden varmistamiseksi komissio ehdottaa kahta tärkeää aloitetta**.

Ensiksi on tärkeää, että **Euroopan parlamentti, neuvosto ja Euroopan komissio sopivat strategisista uudistustavoitteista ja -toimista**. Tältä pohjalta olisi kehotettava Euroopan parlamenttia ja tulevia neuvoston puheenjohtajia asettamaan yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman tavoitteet ja toimet ehdottomasti etusijalle.

Toiseksi on välttämätöntä seurata tarkoin yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman toteuttamista, jotta sen avulla päästäisiin oikea-aikaisesti tuloksiin. Seuranta voitaisiin järjestää raportoimalla taloudellisten uudistusten saralla saavutetuista yhteisön tuloksista **vuotuisessa täytäntöönpanoraportissa**, jossa arvioitaisiin, missä määrin yhteisö on onnistunut toteuttamaan oheisessa taulukossa esitettyjä konkreettisia toimenpiteitä. Raportti olisi tärkeä panos syksyllä tapahtuvaa monenvälistä seurantaa varten, sillä raportin avulla voitaisiin järjestelmällisesti kartoittaa yhteisötasolla saavutettua edistystä samalla kun arvioidaan jäsenvaltioissa toteutetut uudistukset aihealueittain. Myös Euroopan parlamenttia kehotettaisiin arvioimaan edistystä. Arviointi- ja kartoitustulokset otettaisiin huomioon komission **vuotuisissa seurantaraporteissa**, jotka antaisivat viitteitä siitä, onko yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelmaa päivitettävä. Tältä pohjalta **kevään Eurooppa-neuvoston** olisi arvioitava tilanne ja annettava tarvittaessa uusia suuntaviivoja siinä yhteydessä, kun se suorittaa kasvu- ja työllisyysstrategian vuotuisen kokonaisarvioinnin.

Euroopan komissio ehdottaa sen vuoksi, että

– Euroopan parlamentti, neuvosto, Euroopan talous- ja sosiaalikomitea sekä alueiden komitea vahvistavat ehdotetun yhteisön Lissabon-ohjelman vuosiksi 2008–2010 erityisesti

- hyväksymällä yhteisön toimille asetetut kymmenen keskeistä tavoitetta sekä tavoitekohtaiset toimenpiteet
- sitoutumalla seuraamaan saavutettua edistystä ja antamaan ohjausta vuosittain
- asettamalla kymmenen keskeisen tavoitteen toteuttamiseksi vaaditut toimet etusijalle.

LIITE

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour ,Market needs), 21 (Flexicurity), 23 (Investment in Human Capital), & 24 (Education and training systems)	The Commission will propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008, particularly covering education, migration, and demographic evolutions, and help to address the skills gap by improving the monitoring and forecasting of future skills requirements		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on Portability of pensions - possible political agreement at the Council (end of 2007)	
				Ensure progressive removal of transitional restrictions on the free movement of workers from the new Member States (by 2011)
		Revision of REGULATION on Portability of social security rights **(2nd half 2009)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010)*	
				Monitor the implementation of the RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Projected adoption: February 2008): Member States are asked to relate national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010
				DIRECTIVE- Monitoring the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive – Deadline for implementation by Member States:20 October 2007
				Ensure the implementation of the basic skills communication (by 2010)
		RECOMMENDATION on EU-wide credit system transfer and accumulation systems for vocational training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
		RECOMMENDATION on quality assurance in vocational education and training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
				EU-wide inventory and monitoring system for on-going anticipation of future skills requirements in the context of "new skills for new jobs" initiative -Implementation in the course of 2008 and 2009
				Ensure effective implementation of the Flexicurity common principles including the review "flexicurity: 3 years after".

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour ,Market needs)	The Commission will make proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Entry of highly skilled workers; "Blue Card"	
		DIRECTIVE setting conditions of entry of seasonal workers **(end 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (End* 2010)	
Guideline 15 (SMEs)	The Community will adopt a Small Business Act to unlock the growth potential of SMEs throughout their life-cycle	Measures following Communication on "Small Business Act" **(May /June 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Proposal for a Directive on the Small Company Statute **(2nd half 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010.)*	
Guideline 14 (Better regulation)	The Community will move towards the target to reduce EU administrative burdens by 25 % by 2012 and implement an ambitious simplification programme	Rolling SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME **(2006-2009)** including 109 actions (2009) ➔➔	Pending proposals from SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME	
		Proposals to reduce administrative burdens following administrative burden mapping and measurement of EC legislation and related transposition measures (2007-2008) in 13 priority areas. Proposals in 2008-2010. ➔➔		
			First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions	First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions in comitology
		Proposal for next batch of fast track actions alongside the strategic review on better regulation **(January 2008)** ➔➔		
Guideline 9 (Information Society), 12 (Internal Market) &13 (Open Markets)	The Community will strengthen the single market, increase competition in services, and take further steps to integrate the financial services market		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Revision of the regulatory framework for electronic communications and services **Projected adoption (2009)**	
				Market monitoring in key markets
				DIRECTIVE amending Directive 97/67/EC concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services **(Implementation 2011/ 2013)**
				DIRECTIVES - Third Package on Rail **(Implementation by 2009)**
				DIRECTIVE on services in the internal market - Implementation by the MSs 28 December 2009

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Actions to improve implementation of single market following Communication on the application of Community Law (SMR)
		Proposals to allow companies to choose an EU-wide tax base **(3rd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (3rd Q 2010)*	
				Follow up of Retail banking (including payment cards and payment systems) and Business Insurance Sector Inquiries
		Measures to promote the creation of an EU mortgage credit market following a communication **(White paper 19/12/07)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2009)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 85/611 on EU harmonised investment funds- UCITS **(February 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (February 2010)*	
				DIRECTIVE - Monitoring Implementation of MiFiD- Entered in force 1 November 2007
		Measures to ensure the realisation of Single Payments Area following a communication **(2nd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Strengthening EU arrangements for financial stability, through review of cooperation obligations, **(End 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Solvency II -on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance **Projected adoption (End 2008)**	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amendments to Directive 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC Capital Requirements **(October 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (October 2010)*	
Guideline 7 (R&D)	The Community will make the "fifth freedom" (the free movement of knowledge) a reality and create a genuine European Research area.	Framework REGULATION -Legal framework for construction and operation of pan-European research infrastructures **(July 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (July 2010)*	
		Legislative and other proposals following Communication on "Partnership for a European researchers' passport for mobility and career development" **(April 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Implementation of legal and financial decision on European Institute of Innovation and Technology **Projected adoption (2nd Q 2008)**	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
		Measures for preparation of joint programming of research following a communication **(September 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
Guideline 8 (Innovation)	The Community will improve the framework conditions for innovation, in particular for venture capital and intellectual property rights.	Measures for mutual recognition process following Communication on "Removing regulatory obstacles to cross-border investments by venture capital funds" **(December 2007)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the Community Patent and additional measures to set up an EU wide jurisdictional system for patent litigation *Projected adoption (2010)*	
				The Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises initiative (JEREMIE)
				EIF - The High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF): risk capital for innovative SMEs in their early stages (GIF1-€ 255m) and in their expansion phase (GIF2-€ 299 m)
				EIF- The SME Guarantee Facility, providing loan guarantees to encourage banks to make more debt finance available to SMEs, (€506 m)
				EIF-The Seed Capital Action and the Partnership Action: helping to reinforce the capacity of financial intermediaries to invest in and lend to SMEs. (€69 m)
Guideline 11 (Environment), 12 (Internal Market) 13 (Open Markets) & 16 (Infrastructure)	The Community will complete the internal market for energy and adopt the climate change package in order to put in place the framework to achieve at least a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and reach a 20% renewables energy share by 2020.		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/54/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/55/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION establishing an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1228/2003 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Follow up measures to the energy sector inquiry
Guideline 10 (Industrial Base) & 11 (Environment)	The Community will promote an industrial policy geared towards more sustainable production and consumption, focusing on renewable energies and low-carbon and resource-efficient products, services and technologies.	Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amending the Emission Trading Directive, 2003/87/EC **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Legislative proposal on Carbon Capture and Geological Storage (CCS) **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Review of the Energy Taxation Directive **(4th Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (4th Q 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on the promotion of renewable energy **(January 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
				Initially 14 Implementing DIRECTIVES for priority product groups for adoption of minimum energy performance standards (eco-design requirements) **(Comitology until 2011)**
		Revision of DIRECTIVES on Energy labelling and household appliances **(2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Measures to strengthen the Public Procurement of high-performance environmentally-friendly products, technologies and services-following communication (Green Public Procurement **(1st Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
				- 7th Framework Programme (2007-13): €2.3 billion for energy, €1.8 billion for environment (including climate change) - Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) (2007-13), Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) € 430 million for eco-innovation and Intelligent Energy for Europe (IEE) €730 million
		Legislative proposals following the "Sustainable industrial policy/Sustainable consumption policy", notably extension of EUP Directive **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 13 (Open Markets)	Whilst working to conclude the Doha multilateral trade negotiations, the Community will negotiate bilaterally with key trading partners to open up new opportunities for international trade and investment, improve market access focussing on countries and sectors where significant barriers remain, and create a common space of regulatory provisions and standards.	International Agreement - Conclusion of the most important bilateral FTAs (ASEAN, India, South Korea)		
		International Agreement - New Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with China		
		Bilateral Cooperation EU-USA- Transatlantic Economic Council		
		Bilateral regulatory cooperation with US, Japan, China and Russia		
				EU-US Action Strategy on IPR enforcement
		Multi-party Agreement - Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)		
	Monitoring and strengthening of spending on Growth and Jobs (earmarking)			European Cohesion Policy Funds (mid-term review 2010)
				European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (mid-term review 2010)
				Lifelong learning Programme
				European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

EUROPEISKA GEMENSKAPERNAS KOMMISSION

Bryssel den 11.12.2007
KOM(2007) 804 slutlig

MEDDELANDE FRÅN KOMMISSIONEN TILL EUROPAPARLAMENTET, RÅDET, EKONOMISKA OCH SOCIALA KOMMITTÉN OCH REGIONKOMMITTÉN

Förslag till gemenskapens Lissabonprogram 2008–2010

INNEHÅLLSFÖRTECKNING

1. Inledning: Gemenskapens nya Lissabonprogram 3

2. Att stärka och förnya gemenskapens lissabonprogram 3

3. Tio centrala mål för det nya Lissabonprogrammet på de fyra prioriterade områdena. 4

3.1. Investera i människor och modernisera arbetsmarknaderna 6

3.2. Tillvarata företagspotentialen, särskilt hos de små och medelstora företagen 7

3.3. Investeringar i kunskap och innovation. 9

3.4. Energi och klimatförändringar 12

4. Den externa agendan 13

5. Garanterade resultat för Lissabonprogrammet 15

BILAGA 16

1. INLEDNING: GEMENSKAPENS NYA LISSABONPROGRAM

Ett nära partnerskap mellan medlemsstaterna och gemenskapen utgör kärnan i den nya Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning. Samtidigt som medlemsstaterna genomför sin politik inom ramen för de **nationella reformprogrammen**, behövs det en **övergripande insats på gemenskapsnivå för att komplettera och stärka de nationella insatserna**. Gemenskapens insatser kan till exempel resultera i gemensamma rättsliga och politiska ramar och de gör det möjligt att samordna politiken med medlemsstaterna. Vidare har gemenskapen ett direkt inflytande när det gäller att komplettera resurserna i de mindre gynnade regionerna och medlemsstaterna, t.ex. genom sammanhållningspolitikens program. Framsteg när det gäller att skapa de rätta ramvillkoren både på nationell nivå och på gemenskapsnivå är en nödvändighet om man vill skapa ett rejält uppsving både för tillväxten och sysselsättningen inom EU.

I detta meddelande föreslås **gemenskapens Lissabonprogram** för perioden 2008–2010, och de **centrala åtgärderna på gemenskapsnivå** fastställs på ungefär samma sätt som i medlemsstaternas nationella reformprogram. Förslaget till ett nytt Lissabonprogram grundar sig på de integrerade riktlinjerna och bygger på de fyra prioriterade områden som definierades av Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2006. I förslaget ingår även de insatser som måste genomföras på gemenskapsnivå under nästa runda, såsom föreslås kommissionens strategiska rapport som kommer att läggas fram för godkännande vid Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2008. Förslaget innehåller **en räcka ambitiösa men realistiska insatser** som bör ha uppnåtts på gemenskapsnivå före 2010. Det krävs en samordnad politisk insats inom alla EU:s institutioner för att under de kommande tre åren nå fram till en överenskommelse om dessa åtgärder och främja tillväxt och sysselsättning.

2 ATT STÄRKA OCH FÖRNYA GEMENSKAPENS LISSABONPROGRAM

Det första Lissabonprogrammet för gemenskapen (2005–2008) gav betydande resultat. Det har till exempel gjorts framsteg för att förbättra **den rättsliga ramen för den inre marknaden**, genom antagandet av tjänstedirektivet och genomförandet av handlingsplanen för finansiella tjänster. Kommissionen har också drivit **programmet för bättre lagstiftning** för att skära ned onödiga kostnader och undanröja hinder för innovation. Betydligt större gemenskapsmedel har ställts till förfogande för att skapa tillväxt och sysselsättning. **Genom den nya rättsliga ramen för sammanhållningspolitikens program** kommer omkring 210 miljarder euro att frigöras för investeringar i tillväxt och sysselsättning under 2007–13, vilket är en ökning med över 25% jämfört med 2000–06. Totalt sett hade **över 87 åtgärder** av de 102 som anmäldes i det ursprungliga Lissabonprogrammet 2005 genomförts i mitten av 2007. Även rådet och Europaparlamentet har gjort betydande ansträngningar för att skynda på det interinstitutionella beslutsfattandet. Av de 18 lagstiftningsåtgärder i den interinstitutionella beslutsprocessen som togs upp i genomföranderapporten för Lissabonprogrammet 2006, har omkring tio antagits av rådet och parlamentet[1].

[1] Community Lisbon Programme: Technical Implementation Report 2006, SEK(2006) 1379.

Trots en rad framgångar, var den rättsliga ram som erbjöds av Lissabonprogrammet 2005–2008 inte alltid tillräckligt stark för att ge programåtgärderna full prioritet och skynda på antagandet och genomförandet. Lissabonprogrammet uppfattades ofta som Europeiska kommissionens eget reformprogram, men om det ska bli framgångsrikt krävs alla gemenskapsinstitutioners och medlemsstaters fulla engagemang.

Det nya Lissabonprogrammet för 2008–2010 siktar på att **åtgärda dessa tillkortakommanden**. Kommissionen föreslår därför **ett program med starkare prioriteringar och med bara tio centrala mål** som det är möjligt att uppnå under perioden 2008–2010. Dessa mål och föreslagna kompletterande åtgärder bör alla uppvisa följande:

- Ett **väsentligt mervärde på gemenskapsnivå** eller betydande synergier med medlemsstaternas strategier och annan policy på EU-nivå.

- **Betydande effekter på tillväxt och sysselsättning**, antingen direkt, eller genom att underlätta omstrukturering och anpassning.

3 TIO CENTRALA MÅL FÖR DET NYA LISSABONPROGRAMMET PÅ DE FYRA PRIORITERADE OMRÅDENA

Kommissionen anser att Lissabonprogrammet 2008–2010 bör innehålla tio centrala mål och motsvarande åtgärder som är baserade på integrerade riktlinjer och helt stöder sig på de fyra prioriterade områdena.

Tio centrala mål att uppnå till 2010

1. Kommissionen kommer att föreslå en förnyad social agenda i mitten av 2008 och kommer att arbeta för att åtgärda kompetensklyftan.

2. Kommissionen kommer att lägga fram förslag till en gemensam immigrationspolitik under 2008.

3. Gemenskapen kommer att anta en småföretagslag (Small Business Act) för att tillvarata de små och medelstora företagens tillväxtpotential under hela deras livscykel.

4. Gemenskapen kommer att arbeta mot att minska EU:s administrativa börda med 25% till 2012 och genomföra ett ambitiöst förenklingsprogram.

5. Gemenskapen kommer att stärka den inre marknaden, öka konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn samt ta ytterligare steg för att integrera marknaden för finansiella tjänster.

6. Gemenskapen kommer att förverkliga den femte friheten (fri rörlighet för kunskap) och skapa ett genuint europeiskt forskningsområde.

7. Gemenskapen kommer att förbättra ramvillkoren för innovation.

8. Gemenskapen kommer att fullborda den inre marknaden för energi och anta klimatförändringspaketet.

9. Gemenskapen kommer att främja sin industripolitik inriktad på mer hållbar produktion och konsumtion.

10. Gemenskapen kommer att förhandla bilateralt med viktiga handelspartner för att öppna nya möjligheter till internationell handel och internationella investeringar, samt skapa ett gemensamt område för reglering och standarder.

I bilagan finns en detaljerad insatsförteckning, där åtgärderna delats in i tre kategorier:

- Åtgärder som ska antas av Europeiska kommissionen.
- Åtgärder som ska antas som prioriterad insats av andra institutioner.
- Åtgärder som återstår att genomföra.

Denna kategoriindelning visar tydligt de olika institutionernas ansvar. Förslaget är att **dessa åtgärder prioriteras av alla EU-institutioner**.

Kommissionen anser att ett fullt genomförande av Lissabonprogrammet på ett väsentligt sätt skulle bidra till att göra Lissabonstrategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning framgångsrik. En analys av de långsiktiga effekterna av Lissabonprogrammets åtgärder visar att deras genomförande kan **få ett betydande inflytande på den reala BNP-tillväxten i EU**[2]. Lissabonprogrammets insatser kommer att verka genom ökad produktivitet och konkurrens samt förbättrad anpassningsförmåga, och detta kommer att innebära en permanent och hållbar ökning av den reala BNP:n och sysselsättningen.

Kommissionens egna finansiella resurser har tagits i anspråk för att stödja de olika gemenskapsstrategier som skisseras inom vart och ett av de fyra prioriterade områdena nedan. Detta sker i syfte att fokusera på tillväxt och sysselsättning, samt för att förbättra återhämtning och ekonomisk anpassning framför allt i de nya medlemsstaterna och andra ekonomiskt mindre gynnade regioner. Dessa resurser omfattar sammanhållningspolitikens program, Europeiska jordbruksfonden för landsbygdsutveckling (EJFLU), programmet för livslångt lärande och Europeiska fonden för justering för globaliseringseffekter. Sammanhållningsfonderna bidrar med omkring omkring 347 miljarder euro under 2007–2013 och EJFLU med omkring 91 miljarder euro. De öronmärkta medlen ur strukturfonderna har inneburit betydande kompletterande finansiering för tillväxt- och sysselsättningsstrategin. För att ytterligare öka gemenskapsmedlens hävstångseffekt, måste Lissabonprioriteringarna övervakas på nära håll och, om nödvändigt, stärkas ytterligare under halvtidsöversynen år 2010 av sammanhållningsprogrammen och EJFLU, genom en ännu tydligare öronmärkning för de områden där man uppnått bäst resultat. Bland prioriteringarna märks uppgradering av kompetenser (inklusive e-kompetens), utbildning och fortbildning, investeringar i kritisk infrastruktur, främjande av privata investeringar samt ökat deltagande i informationssamhället. Man förväntar sig att omkring 2 miljoner nya jobb kommer att ha skapats till 2015 med hjälp av investeringarna från struktur- och sammanhållningsfonderna[3].

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[2] Se arbetsdokument ”Spillovers and complementarities in the context of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy including the economic effects of the Community Lisbon Programme” där det uppskattas att de ekonomiska effekterna av Lissabonprogrammets åtgärder kommer att höja EU:s reala BNP med upp till 2¾ procentenheter till 2020. Eftersom studien skett med stöd av olika ekonomiska modeller, metoder, datakällor och antaganden, måste man emellertid tolka resultaten med ett visst mått av försiktighet.

[3] Europeiska kommissionen (2007): Fjärde rapporten om ekonomisk och social sammanhållning.

3.1. Investera i människor och modernisera arbetsmarknaderna

<u>Mål 1:</u> Kommissionen kommer att föreslå en förnyad social agenda i mitten av 2008, som framför allt täcker utbildning, migration och demografisk utveckling, och kommer att arbeta för att åtgärda kompetensklyftan genom att förbättra övervakningen av och prognoserna om framtida kompetensbehov.

Större investeringar i utbildning och kompetens är ett villkor för att människor själva ska kunna råda över sina liv. Det är av avgörande betydelse för EU:s framgångar i dessa globaliseringstider och det är också ett av de effektivaste sätten att garantera lika möjligheter och att kraftfullt bekämpa ojämlikhet och fattigdom. De demografiska trenderna kommer att sätta ytterligare press på tillgång till arbetskraft, kompetensklyftor och de offentliga välfärdsbudgetarna. I en sådan situation är det av grundläggande vikt att förbättra utbildnings- och kompetensnivån, både av anställbarhetsskäl och för den sociala sammanhållningen. Det behövs en **förnyad social agenda** som fokuserar på utbildning, migration och demografiska trender, så att man kan gripa sig an dessa frågor ur ett gemenskapsperspektiv.

Genom uppföljningen av initiativet Ny kompetens för nya arbetstillfällen[4] kan gemenskapen också bidra till bättre anpassning till arbetsmarknadens behov och åtgärda kompetensklyftorna. Detta sker genom lämplig **samordning av prognosverktygen för att bättre förutsäga utvecklingen på arbetsmarknaden inom hela EU**. Gemenskapen har redan startat flera projekt för att förutse arbetsmarknadstrender och kompetensbehov, och det är nu dags att förbättra samordningen av dessa olika insatser för att göra dem så effektiva som möjligt. Kompetensutvecklingen kommer vidare att stödjas genom en EU-täckande strategisk ram för utbildningspolitik och särskilda åtgärder i syfte att garantera en hög kvalitet på yrkesutbildningen.

För att mer effektivt kunna möta arbetsmarknadens behov och gripa sig an problemet med kompetensklyftor, måste gemenskapen undanröja de stora regleringshinder som för närvarande finns på den gemensamma arbetsmarknaden. De viktigaste bland dessa är otillräcklig jämförbarhet mellan och otillräckligt erkännande av kvalifikationer samt restriktioner när det gäller möjligheten att överföra pensioner och sociala förmåner. Ett undanröjande av dessa hinder blir ett led i medlemsstaternas ansträngningar att se till att befintlig kompetens kan utnyttjas bättre och att obalansen mellan befintlig kompetens och marknadens behov kan jämnas ut.

Åtgärder:

- Att föreslå en förnyad social agenda i mitten av 2008.
- Att öka tydligheten och jämförbarheten i fråga om kvalifikationer samt möjligheterna till ömsesidigt erkännande av dem, och att öka möjligheterna att överföra pensionsrättigheter och andra sociala rättigheter inom EU.
- At förbättra förmågan att förutse trender och kompetensbehov på arbetsmarknaden i hela EU.

[4] ”Ny kompetens för nya arbetstillfällen”, rådets (utbildningsfrågor) slutsatser från den 15 november 2007.

<u>Mål 2:</u> Kommissionen kommer att lägga fram förslag till en gemensam immigrationspolitik under 2008.

Gemenskapen måste också utveckla **en gemensam immigrationspolitik** för att bättre kunna tillgodose behoven på arbetsmarknaden, nu och i framtiden. Nettoinvandringen till EU uppgår till över 1,5 miljoner människor per år. Huvuddelen av immigranterna tillhör vanligtvis de lågutbildade skikten inom arbetskraften. Det är därför nödvändigt att driva en gemensam politik för ekonomisk migration, för att på så sätt bemöta den ökade efterfrågan på högkvalificerad arbetskraft och samtidigt undvika ett lappverk av ineffektiva och konkurrerande nationella system. Om kompetensmixen bland EU:s invandrare förbättras kan de på ett bättre sätt bidra till att tillgodose behoven på EU:s arbetsmarknad och minska kompetensbristen. Kommissionen har redan lagt fram inledande förslag, bland annat om att främja högkvalificerad invandring till EU via ”blåkortspolitiken”. Kommissionen kommer att lägga fram omfattande förslag till en gemensam immigrationspolitik under 2008.

Åtgärd:

- Arbeta i riktning mot en gemensam immigrationspolitik som kan tillgodose behoven på EU:s arbetsmarknad, bland annat genom ett ”blåkortssystem” för att locka högkvalificerad arbetskraft.

3.2. Tillvarata företagspotentialen, särskilt hos de små och medelstora företagen

<u>Mål 3:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att anta en småföretagslag (Small Business Act) för att tillvarata de små och medelstora företagens tillväxtpotential under hela livscykeln.

År 2010 bör gemenskapen ha **frigjort tillväxt- och sysselsättningspotentialen inom de små och medelstora företagen**, som utgör mer än 99% av alla företag och sysselsätter 67% av hela EU:s arbetskraft. Många av Lissabonprogrammets insatser kommer även att vara till stöd för de små och medelstora företagen, men det är ändå nödvändigt att särskilt åtgärda det faktum att dessa i viss mån saknar tillträde till de inhemska marknaderna och exportmarknaderna samt att minska den administrativa bördan. Gemenskapen kommer därför att utarbeta och genomföra **småföretagslagen (Small Business Act)** med principer och konkreta åtgärder för att stödja de små och medelstora företagen under hela livscykeln, framför allt genom en särskild Europabolagsordning som anpassats till de små och medelstora företagens behov, undantag från tyngande lagstadgade krav (t.ex. insamling av statistik och dokumentation, moms och räkenskapskrav), lättare tillträde till riskkapital, skydd av idéer, stöd för rekrytering och omskolning av personal, främjande av deras deltagande i offentlig upphandling och program för forskning och utveckling, närmare anknytning till universitet och forskningscentrum, underlättande av företagsöverlåtelser och möjligheter till nystart efter företagsmisslyckande.

Åtgärder:

- Anta småföretagslag och fastställa principer och konkreta åtgärder för att stödja de små och medelstora företagen genom hela livscykeln.

- Företa en särskild genomgång av gemenskapslagstiftningen ur de små och medelstora företagens perspektiv och införa undantag från administrativa krav i EU-lagstiftningen när så är möjligt.

<u>Mål 4:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att arbeta mot att minska EU:s administrativa börda med 25% till 2012 och genomföra ett ambitiöst förenklingsprogram.

Gemenskapen kommer att avsluta sin omfattande översyn av gemenskapslagstiftningen i syfte att **förenkla och undanröja onödigt betungande krav på företagen**, utan att därför ändra lagstiftningens ursprungliga mål. Detta arbete ska komplettera medlemsstaternas ansträngningar att uppnå sina mål att minska den administrativa bördan med 25% till 2012. En minskad administrativ börda kommer att göra det möjligt för framför allt de små och medelstora företagen att öka den egna investeringspotentialen och öka incitamenten till anpassning och innovation. Kommissionen kommer i sitt arbete för en förenklingspolitik att ta full hänsyn till subsidiaritetsprincipen och till principen att ”tänka småskaligt först”.

Åtgärder:

- Säkerställa fullt genomförande av det rullande förenklingsprogrammet för befintlig gemenskapslagstiftning, i syfte att undanröja onödigt betungande krav för företagen.
- Se till att åtgärdsprogrammet för minskning av administrativa bördor till följd av gemenskapslagstiftningen genomförs fullt ut. Alla omedelbara åtgärder som planerats för 2007 bör ha avslutats före Europeiska rådets vårmöte 2008.

<u>Mål 5:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att stärka den inre marknaden, öka konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn samt ta ytterligare steg för att integrera marknaden för finansiella tjänster.

Det finns klara bevis för att konkurrensen inom tjänstesektorn är lägre än på EU:s varumarknader. Gemenskapen behöver stimulera konkurrensen och öka effektiviteten för att se till att den **gemensamma marknaden för tjänster förverkligas**. Det är viktigt att medlemsstaterna, med kommissionens hjälp, genomför **tjänstedirektivet** inom rimlig tid och i omfattande utsträckning. Om man kan minska den administrativa bördan och undanröja de hinder som står i vägen blir det lättare för tjänsteleverantörer att etablera sig och man främjar ett fritt tillhandahållande av tjänster. Detta kommer att förbättra marknadstillträdet för företagen, särskilt för de små och medelstora företagen, och ge konsumenterna större valmöjligheter samt öka tillgången på tjänster. När det gäller den inre marknaden är det viktigt att standardisering och interoperabilitet sker i rätt tid, särskilt för IKT-varor och -tjänster. I detta sammanhang kan konkurrenspolitiken spela en viss roll.

Analyser som gjorts av kommissionen, t.ex. för översynen av den gemensamma marknaden, visar att det finns ett antal centrala nätverksamheter och tjänster som bör ägnas särskild uppmärksamhet, **bland annat posttjänsterna, el/gas, järnvägar, finansiella tjänster, elektronisk kommunikation samt detalj- och partihandeln**. Kommissionen bör därför **stärka sin politik för den inre marknaden och effektivisera genomförandet av konkurrenspolitiken i syfte att öka produktiviteten och minska priserna för konsumenterna. Samtidigt måste man garantera tillhandahållandet av allmännyttiga tjänster**. Gemenskapen måste därför öka sin **marknadsövervakning av viktiga sektorer**, bland annat med avseende på konsumentverkningar, och måste använda alla tillgängliga medel, inklusive en konsumentresultattavla, för att övervaka konsumentmarknaderna på längre sikt. Det krävs också större ansträngningar för att genomföra gällande lagstiftning, i syfte att skapa större öppenhet och garantera verkliga valmöjligheter för konsumenter och

andra köpare. Allmänt sett skulle förbättrad konkurrens och effektivitet inom tjänstesektorn leda till förbättrad konkurrenskraft inom ekonomin som helhet.

Det krävs också ytterligare ansträngningar från gemenskapens sida för att **integrera EU:s marknad för finansiella tjänster** och se till att fördelarna till följd av eurons införande kan utnyttjas fullt ut och att tjänsteanvändarna får tillgång till fler och billigare produkter med en hög nivå av konsumentskydd. Trots framgångarna med handlingsplanen för finansiella tjänster (FSAP), har vissa delar av de finansiella systemen i EU förblivit splittrade. Det gemensamma eurobetalningsområdet har ännu inte inrättats, hindren för ökad gränsöverskridande verksamhet och konkurrens inom de finansiella tjänsterna till privatpersoner och mindre företag måste undanröjas, och den gemensamma ramen för partihandeln och investeringsmarknaderna måste fullbordas och genomföras.

De gränsöverskridande arrangemangen för **finansiell övervakning och krishantering** måste också stärkas omgående som svar på ökad ostadighet på finansmarknaderna och en generellt växande instabilitet. Genom en mer effektiv finansförmedling kan den gemensamma marknaden för finansiella tjänster på samma gång minska kapitalkostnaderna för låntagarna och öka avkastningen för spararna. En effektiv finansmarknad är särskilt viktig för medlemsstaterna i euroområdet, eftersom det underlättar justeringar och omfördelning av resurser och ökar motståndskraften vid ekonomiska chocker.

Arbetet fortsätter för att minska de kostnader som följer av att företagen måste anpassa sig till fragmenterade skattesystem inom den inre marknaden (fullgörandekostnader), särskilt med inriktning på de små och medelstora företagen. Målet är också att ge företagen möjlighet att välja en EU-omfattande skattebas.

Åtgärder:

- Stärka den inre marknaden och konkurrensen, öka den sektorsinriktade marknadsövervakningen och förbättra regleringen om så krävs, framför allt med inriktning på viktiga tjänster och nätverksamheter.
- Säkra ett omfattande och tidsmässigt välplanerat genomförande av tjänstedirektivet.
- Fullborda genomförandet av det gemensamma eurobetalningsområdet och undanröja hinder, öka konkurrensen inom finansiella tjänster till privatpersoner och mindre företag och konsolidera en gemensam ram för gränsöverskridande partihandel och investeringsverksamhet.
- Stärka redan gällande övervakningsarrangemang och fortsätta att utveckla lämpliga verktyg för gränsöverskridande riskhantering för EU:s finansinstitut.

3.3. Investeringar i kunskap och innovation.

Gemenskapen kommer att förverkliga den ”femte friheten” – fri rörlighet för kunskap som kompletterar de fyra friheterna fri rörlighet för varor, tjänster, människor och kapital. Förverkligandet av den femte friheten, genom inrättandet av ett europeiskt område för forskning och högre utbildning och genom förbättrade centrala ramvillkoren för innovation, är en nödvändighet för att råda bot på uppsplittringen inom nationell forskning och innovationspolitik. Detta är det enda sättet för EU att bli världsledande inom forskningen och göra den mer attraktiv för privata investeringar.

<u>Mål 6:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att förverkliga den ”femte friheten” (fri rörlighet för kunskap) och skapa ett verkligt europeiskt forskningsområde.

Om gemenskapen, i partnerskap med medlemsstaterna, ska kunna förverkliga den ”femte friheten” – fri rörlighet för kunskap – är det viktigt att stärka de tre delar som ingår i kunskapstriangeln, dvs. forskning, innovation och utbildning[5]. En ökad sammanföring av forskningsresurser med och mellan medlemsstater på grundval av principen ”variabel geometri” kommer att underlättas genom att programplaneringen kommer att ske gemensamt och att det kommer att utarbetas en rättslig ram för inrättande och drift av Europatäckande forskningsinfrastrukturer. Samarbetet mellan EU och medlemsstaterna kommer också att öka genom den gemenskapsstrategi och ram för internationellt vetenskapligt och tekniskt samarbete som håller på att utarbetas. Samarbetet förväntas också ge en hävstångseffekt på det internationella planet.

Genom att följa upp tanken om ett gemensamt EU-pass kan man skapa en effektiv gemensam arbetsmarknad för forskare. Detta kommer att förbättra karriärutsikterna, den gränsöverskridande rekryteringen och den fria rörligheten för forskare. Det kommer också att komplettera medlemsstaternas ansträngningar att stärka och reformera den högre utbildningen och kommer att underlätta inrättandet av nätverk och öka samarbetet mellan universitet, forskningsorganisationer och företag.

Europeiska institutet för teknik och innovation utgör också ett centralt inslag i strategin för att integrera utbildning, forskning och innovation. Institutet kommer på detta sätt att bli en modell för främjandet av öppen innovation och utbyte av kunskap mellan offentliga forskningsorganisationer och industrin. Mer generellt kommer ett europeiskt forskningsområde att leda till stordriftsfördelar och resursfördelningen kommer att bli mer effektiv. Det kommer också att uppstå positiva spillover-effekter över gränserna som gagnar alla medlemsstater.

Åtgärder:

- Sammanföra FoU-resurser så att de används mer effektivt, genom att före utgången av 2008 ha kommit överens om gemensamma program och före utgången av 2010 har inlett gemensamma ansökningsomgångar för projekt.
- Förbättra rörligheten över gränserna och karriärutsikterna för forskare med hjälp av ett EU-pass.
- Göra Europeiska institutet för teknik och innovation helt driftsdugligt.
- Lansera en ny generation forskningsanläggningar i världsklass, genom att före utgången av 2009 utarbeta färdplaner för lanseringen av gemensamt överenskomna projekt. För projekt på global nivå, inleda dialog med berörda internationella partner under 2008.

[5] Forskning och utveckling/innovation ingick som en central utmaning i 24 av 25 medlemsstaters nationella reformprogram 2005.

<u>Mål 7:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att förbättra ramvillkoren för innovation, särskilt när det gäller riskkapital och immateriella rättigheter.

Gemenskapen måste förbättra de viktigaste ramvillkoren för innovation genom att genomföra sin breda innovationsstrategi[6]. Här ingår åtgärder som att utveckla ledande marknader inom ny teknologi, att stärka ramen för immateriella rättigheter och att påskynda fastställande av driftskompatibla standarder.

Gemenskapen måste framför allt skapa mer fördelaktiga villkor för finansiering av innovation, i syfte att underlätta för starkt innovativa små och medelstora företag att etablera sig i bredare utsträckning samt underlätta för ledande marknader inom ny teknologi (t.ex. industri med låga koldioxidutsläpp) att utvecklas. Utvecklingen av en EU-täckande ordning för riskkapital är ett centralt krav. Gemenskapen måste samarbeta nära med medlemsstaterna för att undanröja befintliga lagstiftnings- och skattehinder för gränsöverskridande investeringar av riskkapitalfonder. Den måste också arbeta för att avhjälpa bristen på eget kapital genom riskbaserad finansiering på ett tidigt stadium. Europeiska investeringsfondens garantiprogram för små och medelstora företag bör utvidgas i omfattande utsträckning och omfatta även mikrokrediter och mezzaninfinansiering[7]. Om det genomsnittliga utnyttjandet av riskkapital i EU höjdes till nivån för de för närvarande bästa resultaten skulle, enligt uppskattningarna, ytterligare 20 miljarder euro göras tillgängliga per år för riskkapitalinvesteringar.

Gemenskapen måste också arbeta för **att förbättra utnyttjandet och skyddet av immateriella tillgångar**, särskilt immateriell äganderätt, som också bidrar till att skapa finansiering. Patentsystemet i EU lider fortfarande av den kostsamma och tyngande fragmentering som hindrar överföring och spridning av kunskap och innovation i EU[8]. Ett effektivare och fullt genomfört system skulle säkra avkastningen på FoU-investeringar samt skapa incitament för FoU-verksamhet, finansiella investeringar och kommersialisering av innovationer. Ett förstärkt patentsystem i gemenskapen, vilket bland annat omfattar införande av ett gemenskapspatent och ett förbättrat system för lösning av patenttvister, skulle inte bara väsentligt minska patentkostnaderna men också skapa ett tydligare rättsläge.

Åtgärder:

- Främja en EU-täckande marknad för riskkapital.
- Förbättra investeringsberedskapen och tillgången till finansiering för små och medelstora företag.
- Skapa ett gemenskapspatent och förbättra systemet för lösning av patenttvister, vilket väsentligt skulle minska kostnaderna vid patentregistrering samt skapa ett tydligare rättsläge.

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6 ”En brett upplagd innovationsstrategi för EU: nio strategiska åtgärder för innovation inom EU”, rådets (konkurrens) slutsatser av den 4 december 2006.

7 EIF-programmet 2006 uppgick till något över 2 miljarder euro, och stödde omkring 180 000 små och medelstora företag över hela EU.

8 Genomsnittskostnaderna för behandling och översättning av patent i EU är mer än tio gånger högre än i USA och Japan.

3.4. Energi och klimatförändringar

<u>Mål 8:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att fullborda den inre marknaden för energi och godkänna klimatförändringspaketet, i syfte att uppnå en minst 20-procentig minskning av växthusgasutsläppen och se till att andelen förnybar energi uppgår till 20% 2020.

Inför en ökande global konkurrens om energitillgångarna och för att uppnå de ambitiösa målen inför 2020 när det gäller att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser och öka andelen förnybar energi, måste EU skapa en **verkligt EU-täckande inre marknad för energi och ett brett system för handel med utsläppsrätter**. En inre marknad för energi kommer att öka effektiviteten och möjligheterna till en tryggad energiförsörjning. Tidigare liberaliseringar av de nationella energimarknaderna har inte alltid lett till stark konkurrens. Det krävs ett fullt genomförande av existerande lagstiftning och **en effektiv åtskillnad mellan energiproduktionen och nätverksdriften** för att ytterligare öka konkurrensen och effektiviteten och låta nya konkurrenter komma in på marknaden. Vidare är det nödvändigt att stärka energitillsynsmyndigheternas oberoende och samarbetet dem emellan, samt undanröja tekniska hinder för marknadsintegrering, framför allt genom att väsentligt **stärka den gränsöverskridande sammanlänkningskapaciteten** och på så sätt skapa tillräcklig överföringskapacitet för att integrera de nationella marknaderna. Detta är avsett att skapa faktiska incitament till att investera de 1 000 miljarder euro i den nya generationen fabriker och den förbättrade gränsöverskridande sammanlänkning som behövs under de kommande 20 åren. Den inre marknaden för energi kommer att kompletteras med kostnadseffektiva system för handel med utsläppsrätter så att de mål som satts för att minska utsläppen av växthusgaser till 2020 kan uppnås, samt med en gemenskapsram för kostnadseffektiv utveckling av förnybar energi så att andelen förnybar energi kan nå upp till 20% till 2020.

Åtgärder:

- Anta det lagstiftningspaket som krävs för att fullborda den inre marknaden för el och gas i maj 2009, så att det kan skapas en inre marknad för energi som är öppen för konkurrens och investeringar, stärka energitillsynsmyndigheternas oberoende och inbördes samarbete samt undanröja tekniska hinder för marknadsintegrering.

- Anta det lagstiftningspaket som behövs för att förverkliga EU:s mål rörande växthusgaser och förnybar energi före maj 2009.

<u>Mål 9:</u> Gemenskapen kommer att främja en industripolitik som är inriktad på mer hållbar produktion och konsumtion och som är fokuserad på förnybar energi samt produkter, tjänster och teknik som är resurssnåla och ger låga koldioxidutsläpp

Europeiska rådets ambitiösa klimatförändringsmål för 2020 kommer att kräva tidigare oöverträffade investeringar i ny teknologi som ger låga koldioxidutsläpp och leder till grundläggande förändringar i EU:s ekonomi. Det krävs kraftfulla insatser från gemenskapens sida för att genomdriva utvecklingen av en dynamisk **inre marknad för miljöteknologi, särskilt resurssnål teknik som ger låga koldioxidutsläpp**. Medlemsstaternas ansträngningar att främja denna industri har naturligtvis inte den räckvidd när det gäller avsättningsmöjligheter och stordriftsfördelar som kan förverkligas på en verkligt EU-täckande marknad för miljöprodukter, -tjänster och -teknik. För att detta ska bli verklighet krävs därför

en ny **gemenskapstäckande hållbar industriell strategi** för att leda övergången mot en resurssnål ekonomi med låga koldioxidutsläpp[9].

Nya marknader bör få stimulans genom införandet av marknadsledande strategier på områden som hållbara byggnadssätt, återvinning, biobaserade produkter och förnybar energi. Denna typ av strategier skulle ge en skjuts åt efterfrågan på miljöteknologi som ger betydande miljömässiga och ekonomiska fördelar. I strategierna ingår en tidig utveckling av dynamiska EU-miljöstandarder för den inre marknaden, vilket i sin tur kommer att leda till konkurrensfördelar i takt med att standarderna får internationellt godkännande. Märkningskrav och främjande av miljövänlig upphandling är andra verktyg. **Gemenskapsmedlen bör också användas för att främja finansiering från privata sektorn** när det gäller forskning kring och kommersialisering av produkter och teknologi som är ekonomiska i fråga om koldioxidutsläpp, såsom riskkapital för finansiering av ren teknik. Jämsides med systemet för handel med utsläppsrätter bör det göras en översyn av energiskattedirektivet i syfte att göra energibeskattningen till ett mer effektivt instrument till stöd för energi- och klimatförändringsmålen samt bidrar till att denna politik blir kostnadseffektiv. Möjligheten att använda andra skatteinstrument, inklusive mervärdesskatt, för att främja energisnåla produkter bör undersökas.

Åtgärder:

- Inrätta en inre marknad för miljöteknik och främja utvecklingen inom EU av ledande marknader för energi-/resurssnål teknik.
- Se över energiskattedirektivet för att knyta det närmare till EU:s energi- och miljömål.
- Se över åtgärder för att stärka den offentliga upphandlingen av högpresterande miljövänliga produkter, tekniker och tjänster, även när det gäller byggnader.

4. DEN EXTERNA AGENDAN

<u>Mål 10:</u> Samtidigt som man arbetar med att avsluta de multilaterala handelsförhandlingarna i Doha, kommer gemenskapen att föra bilaterala förhandlingar med viktiga handelspartner för att öppna nya möjligheter för internationell handel och internationella investeringar, förbättra tillträdet till marknaderna framför allt med inriktning på länder och sektorer där betydande hinder kvarstår, samt skapa ett gemensamt område med lagstiftning och standarder.

Gemenskapen är besluten att fortsätta att undanröja hinder för handel och investeringar, och kommer att kraftfullt bekämpa illojala metoder inom handel och investeringar och mot otillåten konkurrens. Ett framgångsrikt avslutande av Doharundan är fortfarande det bästa sättet att uppnå detta. Alla tillgängliga medel kommer att användas för att se till att EU behåller sin öppenhet och att denna vägs upp av ökat tillträde till marknader i länder untanför EU. Kommissionen kommer att avlägga årliga rapporter om marknadstillträdesverksamhet, identifiera länder och sektorer där betydande hinder kvarstår och hålla samråd med de berörda

[9] ”Meddelande från kommissionen: Översyn av industripolitiken efter halva tiden: Ett bidrag till EU:s tillväxt- och sysselsättningsstrategi” , KOM(2007) 374, 4.7.2007.

länderna. På områden där problemen kvarstår kommer man att överväga att utnyttja gemenskapens handelspolitiska instrument och/eller vidta WTO-åtgärder.

Gemenskapen är besluten att forma globaliseringen på ett sätt som gör att man får ut största möjliga fördelar och kan dela dessa med sina partner. Gemenskapen måste förhandla vidare med viktiga handelspartner, bland annat grannländerna och tillväxtekonomierna, och bör fortsätta att främja regional ekonomisk integrering med de närmaste länderna. **Bilaterala handelsavtal med viktiga handelspartner**, inklusive grannländer (som t.ex. förhandlingarna med ett förbättrat avtal med Ukraina) och tillväxtekonomier, gör det möjligt för EU att gå längre än WTO-åtagandena och omfatta ambitiösa bestämmelser om lagstiftningssamarbete och samarbete ”innanför gränserna”. Bilaterala frihandelsavtal är för närvarande under förhandling med Sydkorea, Indien och Asean-länderna, och andra förväntas följa. Ett partnerskapsavtal med Kina kommer att förbättra marknadstillträdet för EU-företag och främja överensstämmelse på lagstiftningsområdet. Dessa avtal kommer att stimulera internationell handel och internationella investeringar, öka konkurrensen och sänka konsumentpriserna. Förhandlingarna för associeringsavtal med Mercosur, Andinska gemenskapen och Centralamerika innehåller viktiga delar om handel och andra ekonomiska förbindelser. Dessa förhandlingar i förening med ökad politisk dialog, kan också bidra till att ytterligare främja en hållbar utveckling i partnerskapsländer, att främja gemensamma värden och internationellt överenskomna sociala och miljömässiga normer, inklusive anständigt arbete.

Inrättandet av ett stabilt **gemensamt lagstiftningsområde** tillsammans med viktiga handelspartner som USA (inom ramen för transatlantiska ekonomiska rådet) kommer att bli inledningen av en process mot en harmonisering av regler och standarder, särskilt med hänsyn till ny teknologi. Detta kommer att vara till gagn för alla handelsnationer. Det kommer också att väsentligt minska företagens kostnader genom en reducering av de icke-tariffära hindren och en sporrad handel. Det krävs också insatser för att **systemet för att kontrollera efterlevnaden av bestämmelserna om immateriella rättigheter** mer effektivt ska kunna bekämpa varumärkesförfalskning. Centrala initiativ är ökat samarbete med viktiga handelspartner för att stärka tullsamarbetet och stödja efterlevnaden i viktiga ursprungsländer, som t.ex. via den gemensamma handlingsstrategin för EU och USA för skydd av immateriella rättigheter och avslutandet av förhandlingarna om ett nytt handelsavtal för bekämpning av varumärkesförfalskning.

Åtgärder:

- Främjande av ambitiösa bilaterala avtal med viktiga handelspartner och främjad integrering med grann- och kandidatländer genom att utveckla ett gemensamt ekonomiskt område.
- Potentiellt utnyttjande av gemenskapens handelsinstrument som uppföljning av kommissionens årliga rapportering om tillgång till marknader.
- Full utveckling av potentialen inom transatlantiska ekonomiska rådet och samarbete med andra viktiga handelspartner för att skapa ett gemensamt område med kompatibla regler och standarder.
- Förbättrad effektivitet i systemet för kontroll av efterlevnaden av bestämmelserna om immateriella rättigheter i avsikt att bekämpa varumärkesförfalskning, bland annat genom ett plurilateralt handelsavtal för bekämpning av varumärkesförfalsning.

5. GARANTERADE RESULTAT FÖR LISSABONPROGRAMMET

Lissabonprogrammet innehåller de centrala målen inom den ekonomiska reformen för perioden 2008–2010 som kommer att kunna bidra mest till tillväxt och sysselsättning på gemenskapsnivå, samtidigt som de stöder och kompletterar de nationella ansträngningarna. Denna **strategiska agenda** bör ledsaga arbetet i alla EU-institutioner när det gäller gemenskapsdimensionen inom tillväxt- och sysselsättningsstrategin. Även om andra åtgärder kan bidra, har åtgärderna i Lissabonprogrammet bedömts vara de mest angelägna och de viktigaste åtgärderna för ekonomisk reform som kommer att kunna uppnås under perioden 2008–2010. **Kommissionen föreslår två nyckelfaktorer för att programmet ska ge resultat**:

För det första är det av grundläggande vikt **att Europaparlamentet, rådet och Europeiska kommissionen är överens om den strategiska reformen av mål och insatser**. Mot bakgrund av detta bör Europaparlamentet och rådets framtida ordförandeskap uppmanas att ge högsta prioritet åt gemenskapens Lissabonmål och åtgärder.

För att uppnå resultat inom rimlig tid är det, för det andra, absolut nödvändigt med en nära övervakning av Lissabonprogrammets genomförande. Detta kan ske genom att gemenskapens framsteg inom ramen för de ekonomiska reformerna rapporteras i en **årlig genomföranderapporter**, innehållande en bedömning av i vilken utsträckning gemenskapen framgångsrikt genomför de konkreta åtgärder som anges i den bifogade tabellen. En sådan rapport vore ett viktigt tillskott i den multilaterala övervakning som avslutas varje höst, då den ger en systematisk genomgång av framstegen på gemenskapsnivå jämsides med den tematiska utvärderingen av reformerna på medlemsstatsnivå. Europaparlamentet kommer också att uppmanas att se över framstegen. Allt detta matas sedan in i kommissionens **årliga framstegsrapport**, som kommer att bli utslagsgivande för om det krävs en uppdatering av gemenskapens Lissabonprogram. Mot bakgrund av detta kan Europeiska rådets vårmöte sedan utvärdera resultaten och eventuellt ge vidare riktlinjer, som en del av sin övergripande bedömning av strategin för tillväxt och sysselsättning.

Europeiska kommissionen uppmanar därför

– **Europaparlamentet, rådet, Ekonomiska och sociala kommittén och Regionkommittén att godkänna det Lissabonprogram för gemenskapen 2008–2010 som föreslås, särskilt genom följande:**

- Att godkänna de tio centrala målen för gemenskapsinsatser samt de åtgärder som föreslås inom ramen för varje mål.
- Att samtycka till att granska framstegen och tillhandahålla vägledning på årlig basis.
- Att prioritera de åtgärder som krävs för att genomföra de tio centrala målen.

BILAGA

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour ,Market needs), 21 (Flexicurity), 23 (Investment in Human Capital), & 24 (Education and training systems)	The Commission will propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008, particularly covering education, migration, and demographic evolutions, and help to address the skills gap by improving the monitoring and forecasting of future skills requirements		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on Portability of pensions - possible political agreement at the Council (end of 2007)	
				Ensure progressive removal of transitional restrictions on the free movement of workers from the new Member States (by 2011)
		Revision of REGULATION on Portability of social security rights **(2nd half 2009)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010)*	
				Monitor the implementation of the RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Projected adoption: February 2008): Member States are asked to relate national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010
				DIRECTIVE- Monitoring the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive – Deadline for implementation by Member States:20 October 2007
				Ensure the implementation of the basic skills communication (by 2010)
		RECOMMENDATION on EU-wide credit system transfer and accumulation systems for vocational training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
		RECOMMENDATION on quality assurance in vocational education and training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
				EU-wide inventory and monitoring system for on-going anticipation of future skills requirements in the context of "new skills for new jobs" initiative -Implementation in the course of 2008 and 2009
				Ensure effective implementation of the Flexicurity common principles including the review "flexicurity: 3 years after".

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour ,Market needs)	The Commission will make proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Entry of highly skilled workers; "Blue Card"	
		DIRECTIVE setting conditions of entry of seasonal workers **(end 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (End* 2010)	
Guideline 15 (SMEs)	The Community will adopt a Small Business Act to unlock the growth potential of SMEs throughout their life-cycle	Measures following Communication on "Small Business Act" **(May /June 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Proposal for a Directive on the Small Company Statute **(2nd half 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010.)*	
Guideline 14 (Better regulation)	The Community will move towards the target to reduce EU administrative burdens by 25 % by 2012 and implement an ambitious simplification programme	Rolling SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME **(2006-2009)** including 109 actions (2009) ➔➔	Pending proposals from SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME	
		Proposals to reduce administrative burdens following administrative burden mapping and measurement of EC legislation and related transposition measures (2007-2008) in 13 priority areas. Proposals in 2008-2010. ➔➔		
			First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions	First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions in comitology
		Proposal for next batch of fast track actions alongside the strategic review on better regulation **(January 2008)** ➔➔		
Guideline 9 (Information Society), 12 (Internal Market) &13 (Open Markets)	The Community will strengthen the single market, increase competition in services, and take further steps to integrate the financial services market		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Revision of the regulatory framework for electronic communications and services **Projected adoption (2009)**	
				Market monitoring in key markets
				DIRECTIVE amending Directive 97/67/EC concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services **(Implementation 2011/ 2013)**
				DIRECTIVES - Third Package on Rail **(Implementation by 2009)**
				DIRECTIVE on services in the internal market - Implementation by the MSs 28 December 2009

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Actions to improve implementation of single market following Communication on the application of Community Law (SMR)
		Proposals to allow companies to choose an EU-wide tax base **(3rd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (3rd Q 2010)*	
				Follow up of Retail banking (including payment cards and payment systems) and Business Insurance Sector Inquiries
		Measures to promote the creation of an EU mortgage credit market following a communication **(White paper 19/12/07)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2009)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 85/611 on EU harmonised investment funds- UCITS **(February 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (February 2010)*	
				DIRECTIVE - Monitoring Implementation of MiFiD- Entered in force 1 November 2007
		Measures to ensure the realisation of Single Payments Area following a communication **(2nd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Strengthening EU arrangements for financial stability, through review of cooperation obligations, **(End 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Solvency II -on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance **Projected adoption (End 2008)**	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amendments to Directive 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC Capital Requirements **(October 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (October 2010)*	
Guideline 7 (R&D)	The Community will make the "fifth freedom" (the free movement of knowledge) a reality and create a genuine European Research area.	Framework REGULATION -Legal framework for construction and operation of pan-European research infrastructures **(July 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (July 2010)*	
		Legislative and other proposals following Communication on "Partnership for a European researchers' passport for mobility and career development" **(April 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Implementation of legal and financial decision on European Institute of Innovation and Technology **Projected adoption (2nd Q 2008)**	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
		Measures for preparation of joint programming of research following a communication **(September 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
Guideline 8 (Innovation)	The Community will improve the framework conditions for innovation, in particular for venture capital and intellectual property rights.	Measures for mutual recognition process following Communication on "Removing regulatory obstacles to cross-border investments by venture capital funds" **(December 2007)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the Community Patent and additional measures to set up an EU wide jurisdictional system for patent litigation *Projected adoption (2010)*	
				The Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises initiative (JEREMIE)
				EIF - The High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF): risk capital for innovative SMEs in their early stages (GIF1-€ 255m) and in their expansion phase (GIF2-€ 299 m)
				EIF- The SME Guarantee Facility, providing loan guarantees to encourage banks to make more debt finance available to SMEs, (€506 m)
				EIF-The Seed Capital Action and the Partnership Action: helping to reinforce the capacity of financial intermediaries to invest in and lend to SMEs. (€69 m)
Guideline 11 (Environment), 12 (Internal Market) 13 (Open Markets) & 16 (Infrastructure)	The Community will complete the internal market for energy and adopt the climate change package in order to put in place the framework to achieve at least a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and reach a 20% renewables energy share by 2020.		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/54/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/55/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION establishing an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1228/2003 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Follow up measures to the energy sector inquiry
Guideline 10 (Industrial Base) & 11 (Environment)	The Community will promote an industrial policy geared towards more sustainable production and consumption, focusing on renewable energies and low-carbon and resource-efficient products, services and technologies.	Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amending the Emission Trading Directive, 2003/87/EC **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Legislative proposal on Carbon Capture and Geological Storage (CCS) **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Review of the Energy Taxation Directive **(4th Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (4th Q 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on the promotion of renewable energy **(January 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
				Initially 14 Implementing DIRECTIVES for priority product groups for adoption of minimum energy performance standards (eco-design requirements) **(Comitology until 2011)**
		Revision of DIRECTIVES on Energy labelling and household appliances **(2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Measures to strengthen the Public Procurement of high-performance environmentally-friendly products, technologies and services-following communication (Green Public Procurement **(1st Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
				- 7th Framework Programme (2007-13): €2.3 billion for energy, €1.8 billion for environment (including climate change) - Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) (2007-13), Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) € 430 million for eco-innovation and Intelligent Energy for Europe (IEE) €730 million
		Legislative proposals following the "Sustainable industrial policy/Sustainable consumption policy", notably extension of EUP Directive **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 13 (Open Markets)	Whilst working to conclude the Doha multilateral trade negotiations, the Community will negotiate bilaterally with key trading partners to open up new opportunities for international trade and investment, improve market access focussing on countries and sectors where significant barriers remain, and create a common space of regulatory provisions and standards.	International Agreement - Conclusion of the most important bilateral FTAs (ASEAN, India, South Korea)		
		International Agreement - New Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with China		
		Bilateral Cooperation EU-USA- Transatlantic Economic Council		
		Bilateral regulatory cooperation with US, Japan, China and Russia		
				EU-US Action Strategy on IPR enforcement
		Multi-party Agreement - Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)		
	Monitoring and strengthening of spending on Growth and Jobs (earmarking)			European Cohesion Policy Funds (mid-term review 2010)
				European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (mid-term review 2010)
				Lifelong learning Programme
				European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Proposal for a Community Lisbon Programme 2008 - 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: towards a new Community Lisbon Programme (CLP) 3

2. Strengthening and renewing the CLP 3

3. 10 Key objectives for the new CLP in the Four Priority Areas 4

3.1. Investing in people and modernising labour markets 5

3.2. Unlocking business potential, especially of SMEs 7

3.3. Investing in knowledge and innovation 9

3.4. Energy and climate change 11

4. The external agenda 12

5. Ensuring the delivery of the CLP 14

ANNEX 15

1. INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS A NEW COMMUNITY LISBON PROGRAMME (CLP)

A close partnership between Member States and the Community is at the heart of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. Whilst Member States implement their policies under the **National Reform Programmes**, additional **Community level policy actions are essential to complement and strengthen national actions.** Community level actions for example can provide a common legal and/or policy framework; they help provide policy co-ordination with Member states; moreover the Community directly plays a role in supplementing the resources of disadvantaged regions and Member states, e.g. through the Cohesion policy programmes. Progress in creating the right framework conditions both at Member State and Community level is needed to significantly boost growth and jobs in the EU.

This Communication proposes the **Community Lisbon Programme** (CLP) for the period 2008-2010 setting out in a way similar to a Member State national reform programme, the **key Community-level measures.** The proposal for a new CLP is based on the integrated guidelines and rests on the four priority areas defined by the 2006 Spring European Council. It integrates the actions to be undertaken at Community level for the next cycle, as proposed in the Commission's Strategic Report for adoption at the 2008 Spring European Council. It sets out a **series of ambitious but realistic actions** that should be achieved at the Community level by 2010. There is a need for a concerted political drive by all the EU institutions to reach agreement on these measures in the next three years to boost growth and jobs

2. STRENGTHENING AND RENEWING THE CLP

The first Community Lisbon Programme for 2005-2008 generated significant results. For example, progress has been made towards improving the **legal framework of the single market**, through the adoption of the services directive and the implementation of the Financial Services Action Plan. The Commission has also driven forward its **better regulation agenda** to cut unnecessary costs and remove obstacles to innovation. Substantially greater amounts of Community funding have been made available for growth and jobs. The **new regulatory framework for the Cohesion policy programmes** will make some €210 billion available for investment in growth and jobs over 2007-13, an increase of over 25% compared to 2000-06. Overall **over 87 actions** of the 102 announced in the original 2005 CLP had been delivered by mid-2007. Substantial efforts have also been made by the Council and the European Parliament to speed up inter-institutional decision-making. Of 18 legislative actions in the inter-institutional decision-making process identified in the 2006 CLP Implementation Report, some 10 have been adopted by Council and Parliament[1].

While there have been a number of successes, the 2005-2008 CLP did not always provide a strong enough framework to fully prioritise CLP actions and speed up their adoption and implementation. The CLP was often perceived as the reform programme of the European Commission alone, whereas its achievement requires the full engagement of all the Community institutions and Member States.

The new CLP for the 2008-2010 cycle aims at **remedying these shortcomings**. The Commission therefore is proposing **a more strongly prioritised programme with only 10**

[1] "Community Lisbon Programme: Technical Implementation Report 2006", SEC (2006) 1379.

key objectives that can be delivered during the period 2008-2010. The objectives and the accompanying proposed actions all:

- **Demonstrate considerable Community-level value-added** or significant synergies with the policies of the Member States and/or other policies conducted at EU level.

- **Show significant impacts on growth and jobs**, either directly, or through facilitating restructuring and adjustment.

3. 10 KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW CLP IN THE FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

The Commission proposes that the 2008-2010 CLP should contain ten key objectives and corresponding actions based on the integrated guidelines and fully resting on the four priority areas.

10 Key Objectives to be accomplished by 2010

1. The Commission will propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008 and will help to address the skills gap.

2. The Commission will make proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008.

3. The Community will adopt a Small Business Act to unlock the growth potential of SMEs throughout their life-cycle.

4. The Community will move towards the target to reduce EU administrative burdens by 25 % by 2012 and implement an ambitious simplification programme.

5. The Community will strengthen the single market, increase competition in services, and take further steps to integrate the financial services market.

6. The Community will make a reality of the fifth freedom (the free movement of knowledge) and create a genuine European Research area.

7. The Community will improve the framework conditions for innovation.

8. The Community will complete the internal market for energy and adopt the climate change package.

9. The Community will promote an industrial policy geared towards more sustainable production and consumption.

10. The Community will negotiate bilaterally with key trading partners to open up new opportunities for international trade and investment, and create a common space of regulatory provisions and standards.

A detailed list of actions is provided in the Annex in which measures are divided in three categories:

- Measures to be adopted by the European Commission.

- Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions.

- Measures still requiring implementation.

This categorisation clearly highlights the responsibilities of each institution. It is proposed that **these measures are prioritised by all EU Institutions**.

The Commission considers that the full implementation of the CLP would make a major contribution to the success of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs strategy. An analysis of the longer term impact of the measures included in the CLP suggests that their implementation could **have a significant impact on the level of EU real GDP**[2]. Since the CLP actions would work through enhancing productivity and competition and improving adaptability, this would represent a permanent and sustainable increase in real GDP and jobs.

In order to support the different Community policies outlined under the four priority areas below, the **Community's own financial resources** have been mobilised to focus on growth and jobs, improving growth catch-up and economic adjustment particularly in the new Member States and other economically disadvantaged regions. These resources include the European Cohesion policy programmes, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Lifelong Learning Programme, and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. The Cohesion policy funds amount to some € 347 billion over 2007-2013 and EAFRD to some € 91 billion. The earmarking of Structural Funds has provided substantial additional financing for the Growth and Jobs Strategy. To increase further the leverage effects of Community spending, the focus on the Lisbon priorities needs to be closely monitored and further strengthened if necessary in the 2010 mid-term reviews of the Cohesion policy programmes and EAFRD through more refined earmarking in those areas showing the highest returns. Amongst the priorities are skills up-grading (including e-skills), education and training, critical infrastructure investments, leveraging private investment, and increasing participation in the information society. It is estimated that by 2015 some 2 million additional jobs will be generated due to the investment of the structural and cohesion funds[3].

3.1. Investing in people and modernising labour markets

<u>Objective 1:</u> The Commission will propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008, particularly covering education, migration, and demographic evolutions, and will help to address the skills gap by improving the monitoring and forecasting of future skills requirements.

Investing more in education and skills is a precondition for a self-determined life of people. It is critical to Europe's success in the age of globalisation and it is also one of the most effective ways to assure equal opportunities and to fight vigorously inequality and poverty. Demographic trends will further increase pressures on labour supply, skills gaps, and public welfare budgets. In this situation, improving education and skills are essential both for employability and social cohesion. A **renewed Social Agenda** is needed, focussing on

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[2] See the Staff Working Document "Spillovers and complementarities in the context of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy including the economic effects of the Community Lisbon Programme" where it is estimated that the economic impact of the CLP measures would raise the level of the EU's real GDP by up to 2¾ percentage points by 2020. However, since this study relies upon different economic models, methodologies, data sources, and assumptions, caution must of course be exercised in interpreting the results.

[3] European Commission (2007): Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion

education, migration, and demographic trends, to ensure a Community-wide perspective in tackling these issues.

Following up the "New skills for new jobs" initiative[4], the Community can also contribute to improving the matching of labour market needs and addressing the skills gap through the appropriate **coordination of forecasting instruments to better anticipate EU-wide labour market developments.** While the Community has already launched various projects to anticipate labour market trends and skills needs, it is now necessary to improve the coordination of these various attempts in order to maximise their impact. In addition, skills development will be supported by an EU-wide strategic framework for training policies and specific measures to ensure the quality of vocational training.

In order to ensure a more efficient matching of labour market needs and tackle the skills gap problem, the Community must remove the significant regulatory barriers that currently exist to the single labour market. The most important include the insufficient comparability and recognition of qualifications and restrictions on the portability of pensions and social benefits. Removing these obstacles will complement Member States efforts to facilitate the better use of skills and eliminate skills mismatches.

Actions:

- Propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008.
- Enhance the transparency, recognition and comparability of qualifications and increase the portability of pensions and other social rights across the EU.
- Improve the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market trends and skills needs

<u>Objective 2:</u> The Commission will make proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008.

The Community also needs to develop **a common policy on immigration** to better respond to current and future labour market needs. Although net migration to the EU runs at over 1.5 million a year, the majority of migrants tend to be in low skilled segments of the workforce. To meet the increasing demand for higher skilled workers whilst avoiding a patchwork of inefficient and competing Member state schemes, a common policy on economic migration is essential. Improving the skills-mix of EU migrants will improve their contribution to the needs of the EU labour market and help reduce skills shortages. The Commission has already made initial proposals, including covering highly-qualified migrants to the EU through the "blue card" scheme. The Commission will further comprehensive proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008.

Action:

- Move towards adopting a common policy on immigration that responds to the needs of the EU labour market, including a "blue card" scheme to attract highly-skilled workers.

[4] "New skills for new jobs", Conclusions of the Education Council of 15 November 2007.

3.2. Unlocking business potential, especially of SMEs

Objective 3: The Community will adopt a Small Business Act to unlock the growth potential of SMEs throughout their life-cycle.

The Community should by 2010 **unlock the growth and jobs potential of SMEs** that make up more than 99% of all firms and employ 67% of the EU's workforce. Whilst many CLP actions will also assist SMEs, it is necessary specifically to address their relative lack of access to the internal and export markets and to reduce administrative burdens. The Community will therefore design and implement a **"Small Business Act"** setting out the principles and concrete measures to support SME throughout their life-cycle and notably through a special private company statute adapted to SMEs needs; exemptions from burdensome legal requirements (e.g. the collection of statistics and documentation, VAT, and accounting requirements); easier access to risk capital; protecting their ideas; support for recruitment and retraining of staff, facilitating their participation in public tenders and in R&D programmes; closer links with universities and research centres; facilitating their transfer and providing entrepreneurs with a new chance in case of business failure.

Actions:

- Adopt a European Small Business Act setting out the principles and concrete measures to support SMEs throughout their life-cycle.
- Undertake a specific screening of the *acquis Communautaire* from an SME perspective and introducing exemptions from administrative requirements of EU legislation wherever possible.

Objective 4: The Community will move towards the target to reduce EU administrative burdens by 25 % by 2012 and implement an ambitious simplification programme.

The Community will complete its comprehensive review of the Community's legislative acquis in order to **simplify and to remove unnecessary burdensome requirements on businesses** whilst maintaining the legislation's original objectives. This work will complement the efforts of Member States to achieve their commitments to reduce administrative burdens by 25% by 2012. Reducing administrative burdens will allow firms, especially SMEs, to increase internal funds for investment and will improve incentives for adaptability and innovation. In pursuing simplification policies, the Community will fully respect the principle of subsidiarity and the "think small first principle".

Actions:

- Ensure the full implementation of the rolling simplification programme for existing Community legislation to remove unnecessary burdensome requirements on businesses.
- Ensure the full implementation of the Action Programme for reducing administrative burdens related to EU legislation. All Fast Track Actions scheduled for 2007 should be finalised by the 2008 Spring European Council.

<u>Objective 5:</u> The Community will strengthen the single market, increase competition in services, and take further steps to integrate the financial services market.

There is clear evidence that competition in services is lower than in EU goods markets. The Community needs to stimulate competition and increase efficiency to ensure that the **single market for the services sector becomes a reality**. The comprehensive and timely implementation of the **services directive** by Member States with Commission support will be important. It will considerably facilitate the establishment of service providers and the free provision of services by reducing administrative burdens and removing existing barriers. This will improve market access for businesses, in particular SMEs and increase both the choice for consumers and their access to services. Timely standardisation and interoperability are important issues in the single market, especially for ICT goods and services. In this context competition policy can play a complementary role.

Analysis undertaken by the Commission, including for the Single Market Review, shows that there are a number of key network industries and services that require particular attention, including **postal services, electricity/gas, rail, financial services, electronic communications, and the retail and wholesale industries**. Consequently, the Community should **strengthen single market policy and the enforcement of competition policy** with the aim of increasing productivity and reducing prices for consumers, whilst ensuring the provision of services of general interest. For that purpose, the Community needs to enhance its **market monitoring of key sectors** including effects on consumers and use all available tools, including a consumer scoreboard to allow the long term monitoring of consumer markets. More effort is also needed to enforce existing legislation to ensure transparency and guarantee genuine choice for consumers and other purchasers. Overall, improving competition and efficiency in services would improve competitiveness throughout the whole economy.

Further Community efforts are also needed to **integrate the European financial services market** in order to ensure that the full benefits accrue from the introduction of the euro and to provide financial services users with a wider range of less expensive products with a high level of consumer protection. Despite the success of the Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP), some segments of the EU financial system still remain fragmented. The Single Euro Payments Area still needs to be established, barriers need to be removed for greater cross-border activity and competition in retail financial services, and the single framework for wholesale and investment markets still needs completion and implementation.

Cross-border arrangements for **financial supervision and crisis management** also urgently need to be strengthened to reflect increased turmoil in financial markets and rising instability. Through more efficient financial intermediation, the single market for financial services could simultaneously reduce the cost of capital for borrowers and raise the rate of return for savers through more efficient financial intermediation. An efficient financial market is particularly important for the Member States belonging to the euro-area since it facilitates adjustments and reallocation of resources and increasing their robustness to economic shocks.

Work will continue to reduce compliance costs resulting from the tax fragmentation of the internal market in particular for SMEs, as well as to allow companies to choose an EU-wide tax base.

Actions:

- Strengthen the single market and competition, enhance sectoral market monitoring, and improve regulation where necessary, notably focussed on key services and network industries.
- Ensure the comprehensive and timely implementation of the Service Directive.
- Ensure the achievement of the Single Euro Payment Area and remove barriers, increase competition in retail financial services, and consolidate the single framework for cross-border wholesale markets and investment business.
- Strengthen the existing supervisory arrangements and make progress on developing appropriate tools for cross-border crisis management of EU financial institutions.

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3.3. Investing in knowledge and innovation

The Community will make a reality of a "fifth freedom" – the free movement of knowledge completing the four freedoms of movement of goods, services, people and capital. The realisation of this "fifth freedom", through establishing a European Research and Higher Education Area and improving the key framework conditions for innovation, is necessary to overcome the fragmentation of national research and innovation policies. Only this can enable the EU to attain world-leading research performance and improve attractiveness for private investment.

Objective 6: The Community will make the "fifth freedom", the free movement of knowledge, a reality and create a genuine European Research area.

In order to make the "fifth freedom", the free movement of knowledge, a reality and create a genuine European research area and in partnership with Member States, all three components of the knowledge triangle, research, innovation, and education, need to be strengthened[5]. Increased pooling of research resources with and between Member States on a variable geometry basis will be facilitated by joint programming and by the development of a legal framework for the creation and operation of pan-European research infrastructures. The development of a Community strategy and framework for international science and technology co-operation will also increase EU and Member state co-operation and international leverage.

An effective European single labour market for researchers based on the idea of a "European passport" should be established which will improve career prospects and the cross-border recruitment and mobility of researchers. This will complement Member state efforts to strengthen and reform the higher education sector and will facilitate networking and enhance competition between universities, research organisations and business.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology is also a key element of this strategy integrating education, research and innovation. In this way it will become a model for the promotion of open innovation and knowledge sharing between public research organisations and industry. Overall, achieving a European Research Area will achieve economies of scale

[5] R&D/innovation was a key challenge in 24 out of 25 Member state National Reform Programmes in 2005.

and scope, help allocate resources more efficiently, and result in substantial positive spillovers across borders for the benefit of all Member States.

Actions:

- Pool R&D resources to ensure their more effective use, by agreeing by end 2008 areas for joint programmes and launching common calls for projects by end 2010.
- Improve cross-border mobility and career prospects of researchers based on a European "passport".
- Make the European Institute of Innovation and Technology fully operational.
- Launch a new generation of world-class research facilities by drawing up by end 2009 roadmaps for the launch of the commonly agreed projects. For those projects of a global scale, launch a dialogue with interested international partners during 2008.

Objective 7: The Community will improve the framework conditions for innovation, in particular for venture capital and intellectual property rights.

The Community needs to improve the key framework conditions for innovation through the implementation of its broad-based innovation strategy[6]. This includes for example the development of lead markets in new technologies, strengthening the framework of intellectual property rights, and accelerating the setting of interoperable standards.

In particular, the Community needs to **create more favourable conditions for the financing of innovation** to facilitate the more widespread emergence of highly innovative SMEs and facilitate the development of lead markets in new technologies such as low carbon technologies. The development of an EU-wide regime for venture capital is a key requirement. The Community must work closely with Member States to remove existing regulatory and tax obstacles to cross-border investments by venture capital funds. It must also help to bridge the equity gap in terms of early stage risk-based financing. The SME guarantee programme of the European Investment Fund should be substantially expanded to leverage micro-credit and mezzanine finance[7]. It is estimated that raising the EU average use of venture capital to that of the current best performers would make available an additional €20 billion a year for venture capital investments.

The Community must also work to **improve the usage and protection of the intangible assets**, particularly intellectual property rights that also help leverage financing. The patenting system in the EU still suffers from costly and burdensome fragmentation that hampers the transfer and dissemination of knowledge and innovation across the EU[8]. Increasing its efficiency and enforcement secures returns on R&D investments, setting incentives for R&D activities, financial investments and the commercialisation of innovations. An enhanced Community system for patents, including the creation of a Community patent and the

6 "A broad-based innovation strategy: nine strategic measures for innovation action at the EU level", Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council of 4 December 2006.

7 The 2006 EIF programme amounted to just over €2 billion, assisting some 180,000 SMEs throughout the EU.

8 The average costs for processing and translation of patents in the EU is more than ten times higher than in the US and Japan.

improvement of the patent litigation system, would not only considerably decrease patenting costs but also provide more legal certainty.

Actions:

- Promoting an EU-wide market for venture capital.
- Improve investment readiness and access to finance for SMEs.
- The creation of a Community patent and the improvement of the patent litigation system, substantially bringing down the cost of patent registration and increasing legal certainty.

3.4. Energy and climate change

Objective 8: The Community will complete the internal market for energy and adopt the climate change package in order to put in place the framework to achieve at least a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and reach a 20% renewables energy share by 2020.

In the face of rising global competition for energy supplies and to achieve the ambitious 2020 targets for reducing greenhouse gases and increasing the share of renewable energy, the EU needs to create a true **EU-wide internal market for energy** and a **wide emissions trading scheme.** The creation of an internal energy market will increase efficiency and improve energy security. Past liberalisation of national energy markets has not always created strong competition. The full implementation of existing legislation and **the effective separation of generation and supply from networks** operations are needed to further increase competition and efficiency by allowing market entry of new competitors. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen the independence and co-operation of energy regulators and remove technical barriers to market integration, notably through substantially **strengthening the cross-border interconnection capacity** with a view to making sufficient transmission capacity available to integrate national markets. This is intended to create real incentives for the €1000 billion investment in new generation plants and better cross-border interconnections that are needed over the next 20 years. The internal market for energy will need to be complemented by a cost-effective emissions trading scheme to ensure the achievement of the 2020 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by a **Community framework for the cost-effective development of renewable energies** to reach a renewables energy share of 20% by 2020.

Actions:

- Adopt the legislative package to achieve the internal electricity and gas market by May 2009, in order to create an internal market for energy favourable to competition and investment, strengthen the independence and co-operation of energy regulators, and remove technical barriers to market integration.
- Adopt the legislative package to realise the EU's targets on greenhouse gases and renewable energy by May 2009.

Objective 9: The Community will promote an industrial policy geared towards more sustainable production and consumption, focusing on renewable energies and low-carbon and resource-efficient products, services and technologies.

The European Council's ambitious climate change targets for 2020 will require unprecedented investment in new low-carbon technologies and result in fundamental changes in the EU economy. Strong Community action is needed to ensure the development of a dynamic **internal market for environmental technologies, in particular low carbon and energy/resource efficient technologies.** Member State efforts to promote these industries inevitably lack the scope of market opportunities and economies of scale that could be realised through the development of a truly EU-wide market for environmental products, services, and technologies. Success therefore requires a new Community-wide **sustainable industrial strategy** in order to lead the transition towards a low carbon and resource efficient economy[9].

New markets should be stimulated through the implementation of lead market strategies in areas such as sustainable construction, recycling, bio-based products and renewable energy. Such strategies would boost demand for environmental technologies yielding significant environmental and economic benefits. They would also include the early development of dynamic EU environmental standards for the single market resulting in subsequent competitiveness gains as such standards become accepted internationally. Other instruments are labelling requirements and the promotion of green procurement. **Community funds should also be used to leverage private sector funding** for the research and commercialisation of low carbon product and technologies, such as clean technology venture capital financing. Alongside the Emissions Trading Scheme, **a review of the energy taxation directive** would aim at ensuring that energy taxation is a more effective and supportive instrument of the EU energy and climate change objectives and contributes to the cost-effectiveness of such policies. Furthermore, the possibility of using other fiscal instruments including VAT to promote low energy products should be examined.

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Actions:

- Establish an internal market for environmental technologies and promote the development of European lead markets for energy/resource efficient technology.
- Review the energy tax directive to link it more closely to the EU's energy and environmental objectives.
- Review of measures to strengthen the public procurement of high-performance environmentally-friendly products, technologies and services, including with regard to buildings.

4. THE EXTERNAL AGENDA

Objective 10: Whilst working to conclude the Doha multilateral trade negotiations, the Community will negotiate bilaterally with key trading partners to open up new opportunities for international trade and investment, improve market access focussing on countries and sectors where significant barriers remain, and create a common space of regulatory provisions and standards.

[9] Commission Communication "Mid-term review of industrial policy: a contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy" COM(2007) 374 of 4.7.2007

The Community is committed to further breaking down barriers to trade and investment and will stand firm against unfair practises in trade and investment and against distorted competition. A successful completion of the Doha round remains the best way of ensuring this. All available instruments will be used to ensure that Europe's openness is maintained and matched by increased access to third country markets. The Commission will report annually on market access activities, identifying countries and sectors where significant barriers remain and undertaking consultations with the countries concerned. Where problems remain, the use of Community trade instruments and/or WTO action will be considered.

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The Community needs to further engage with key trading partners, including neighbour countries and the emerging economies and should further promote regional economic integration with its neighbourhood. **Bilateral trade agreements with key trading partners**, including neighbour countries (such as the negotiations on an enhanced agreement with Ukraine) and the emerging economies, enable the EU to go beyond WTO commitments and include ambitious provisions for regulatory and behind-the-border cooperation. Bilateral Free Trade Agreements are currently under negotiation with South Korea, India, and the ASEAN countries, with others planned to follow. A Partnership Agreement with China will improve market access for EU companies and promote regulatory convergence. These agreements will stimulate international trade and investment, increase competition, and lower consumer prices. Furthermore, the negotiations for association agreements with Mercosur, the Andean Community and Central America contain important parts on trade and other economic relations.

Establishing a stable **common regulatory space** with major trading partners such as the US (in the framework of the Transatlantic Economic Council) will begin a process towards a harmonisation of regulations and standards particularly in respect of new technologies, ultimately benefiting all trading nations. This will significantly reduce costs for businesses by reducing non-tariff-barriers and spur trade. Action also needs to be taken to improve the **effectiveness of the IPR enforcement system against counterfeiting.** Key initiatives are increased co-operation with major trading partners to strengthen customs co-operation and support enforcement in major source countries, such as through the EU-US Action Strategy on IPR and the conclusion of the negotiations on a new Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA).

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Actions:

- Promote ambitious bilateral agreements with important trading partners and promoting integration with neighbouring and candidate countries through developing a common economic space.
- Potential use of Community trade instruments as follow up to the Commission's annual reporting on market access.
- Fully develop the potential of the Transatlantic Economic Council and work with other key trading partners to create common space of compatible regulatory provisions and standards.
- Improve the effectiveness of the IPR enforcement system against counterfeiting, including through a multiparty Anti-counterfeiting Agreement (ACTA).

5. ENSURING THE DELIVERY OF THE CLP

The CLP presents the key economic reform objectives for the period 2008-2010 that can make the greatest contribution to growth and jobs at Community level whilst supporting and complementing national efforts. This **strategic agenda** should guide the work of all of the EU institutions on the Community dimension of the Growth and Jobs strategy. While other measures can also contribute, the CLP actions have been identified as the most urgent and important for economic reform that can be achieved during the 2008-2010 period. To realise this, the **Commission proposes two key elements for ensuring delivery**:

First, it is essential that the **European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission agree on the strategic reform objectives and actions.** On this basis, the European Parliament and future Council Presidencies should be invited to give the utmost priority to the Community Lisbon objectives and actions.

Secondly, a close follow-up of the implementation of the CLP is indispensable to guarantee timely delivery. This could be done by reporting on the Community's achievements in its economic reforms through an **annual implementation report**, assessing the extent to which the Community is successfully implementing the concrete measures outlined in the attached table. It would constitute an important input into the multilateral surveillance exercise in the autumn, allowing a systematic screening of progress at the Community level alongside the thematic assessment of reforms at Member State level. The European Parliament would also be invited to review progress. This would feed into the Commission's **Annual Progress Reports** which would advise on whether any updating of the Community Lisbon Programme is required. On this basis, the **Spring European Council** should take stock and provide further direction, where necessary, as part of its annual overall assessment of the Growth and Jobs Strategy.

The European Commission, therefore, invites:

- The European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions to endorse the proposed Community Lisbon Programme 2008-2010 in particular by:

- endorsing the 10 key objectives for Community action and the measures proposed under each objective
- agreeing to review progress and providing guidance on an annual basis
- Prioritising the actions required to implement the 10 key objectives.

ANNEX

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour ,Market needs), 21 (Flexicurity), 23 (Investment in Human Capital), & 24 (Education and training systems)	The Commission will propose a renewed Social Agenda by mid-2008, particularly covering education, migration, and demographic evolutions, and help to address the skills gap by improving the monitoring and forecasting of future skills requirements		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on Portability of pensions - possible political agreement at the Council (end of 2007)	
				Ensure progressive removal of transitional restrictions on the free movement of workers from the new Member States (by 2011)
		Revision of REGULATION on Portability of social security rights **(2nd half 2009)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010)*	
				Monitor the implementation of the RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Projected adoption: February 2008): Member States are asked to relate national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010
				DIRECTIVE- Monitoring the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive – Deadline for implementation by Member States:20 October 2007
				Ensure the implementation of the basic skills communication (by 2010)
		RECOMMENDATION on EU-wide credit system transfer and accumulation systems for vocational training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
		RECOMMENDATION on quality assurance in vocational education and training **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	
				EU-wide inventory and monitoring system for on-going anticipation of future skills requirements in the context of "new skills for new jobs" initiative -Implementation in the course of 2008 and 2009
				Ensure effective implementation of the Flexicurity common principles including the review "flexicurity: 3 years after".

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 20 (Matching of Labour Market needs)	The Commission will make proposals for a common policy on immigration in 2008		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Entry of highly skilled workers; "Blue Card"	
		DIRECTIVE setting conditions of entry of seasonal workers **(end 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (End* 2010)	
Guideline 15 (SMEs)	The Community will adopt a Small Business Act to unlock the growth potential of SMEs throughout their life-cycle	Measures following Communication on "Small Business Act" **(May /June 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Proposal for a Directive on the Small Company Statute **(2nd half 2008)**➔➔	*Projected adoption (2nd half 2010.)*	
Guideline 14 (Better regulation)	The Community will move towards the target to reduce EU administrative burdens by 25 % by 2012 and implement an ambitious simplification programme	Rolling SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME **(2006-2009)** including 109 actions (2009) ➔➔	Pending proposals from SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAMME	
		Proposals to reduce administrative burdens following administrative burden mapping and measurement of EC legislation and related transposition measures (2007-2008) in 13 priority areas. Proposals in 2008-2010. ➔➔		
			First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions	First batch of fast track administrative burden reduction actions in comitology
		Proposal for next batch of fast track actions alongside the strategic review on better regulation **(January 2008)** ➔➔		
Guideline 9 (Information Society), 12 (Internal Market) &13 (Open Markets)	The Community will strengthen the single market, increase competition in services, and take further steps to integrate the financial services market		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Revision of the regulatory framework for electronic communications and services **Projected adoption (2009)**	
				Market monitoring in key markets
				DIRECTIVE amending Directive 97/67/EC concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services **(Implementation 2011/ 2013**)
				DIRECTIVES - Third Package on Rail **(Implementation by 2009)**
				DIRECTIVE on services in the internal market - Implementation by the MSs 28 December 2009

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Actions to improve implementation of single market following Communication on the application of Community Law (SMR)
		Proposals to allow companies to choose an EU-wide tax base **(3rd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (3rd Q 2010)*	
				Follow up of Retail banking (including payment cards and payment systems) and Business Insurance Sector Inquiries
		Measures to promote the creation of an EU mortgage credit market following a communication **(White paper 19/12/07)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2009)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 85/611 on EU harmonised investment funds- UCITS **(February 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (February 2010)*	
				DIRECTIVE - Monitoring Implementation of MiFiD- Entered in force 1 November 2007
		Measures to ensure the realisation of Single Payments Area following a communication **(2nd Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Strengthening EU arrangements for financial stability, through review of cooperation obligations, **(End 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE Solvency II -on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance **Projected adoption (End 2008)**	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amendments to Directive 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC Capital Requirements **(October 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (October 2010)*	
Guideline 7 (R&D)	The Community will make the "fifth freedom" (the free movement of knowledge) a reality and create a genuine European Research area.	Framework REGULATION -Legal framework for construction and operation of pan-European research infrastructures **(July 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (July 2010)*	
		Legislative and other proposals following Communication on "Partnership for a European researchers' passport for mobility and career development" **(April 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Implementation of legal and financial decision on European Institute of Innovation and Technology **Projected adoption (2nd Q 2008)**	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
		Measures for preparation of joint programming of research following a communication **(September 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
Guideline 8 (Innovation)	The Community will improve the framework conditions for innovation, in particular for venture capital and intellectual property rights.	Measures for mutual recognition process following Communication on "Removing regulatory obstacles to cross-border investments by venture capital funds" **(December 2007)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
			Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the Community Patent and additional measures to set up an EU wide jurisdictional system for patent litigation *Projected adoption (2010)*	
				The Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises initiative (JEREMIE)
				EIF - The High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF): risk capital for innovative SMEs in their early stages (GIF1-€ 255m) and in their expansion phase (GIF2-€ 299 m)
				EIF- The SME Guarantee Facility, providing loan guarantees to encourage banks to make more debt finance available to SMEs, (€506 m)
				EIF-The Seed Capital Action and the Partnership Action: helping to reinforce the capacity of financial intermediaries to invest in and lend to SMEs. (€69 m)
Guideline 11 (Environment), 12 (Internal Market) 13 (Open Markets) & 16 (Infrastructure)	The Community will complete the internal market for energy and adopt the climate change package in order to put in place the framework to achieve at least a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and reach a 20% renewables energy share by 2020.		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/54/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2003/55/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION establishing an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1228/2003 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	
			Proposal for a REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks *Projected adoption (end 2009)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
				Follow up measures to the energy sector inquiry
Guideline 10 (Industrial Base) & 11 (Environment)	The Community will promote an industrial policy geared towards more sustainable production and consumption, focusing on renewable energies and low-carbon and resource-efficient products, services and technologies.	Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Amending the Emission Trading Directive, 2003/87/EC **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Legislative proposal on Carbon Capture and Geological Storage (CCS) **(January, 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE - Review of the Energy Taxation Directive **(4th Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (4th Q 2010)*	
		Proposal for a DIRECTIVE on the promotion of renewable energy **(January 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (January 2010)*	
				Initially 14 Implementing DIRECTIVES for priority product groups for adoption of minimum energy performance standards (eco-design requirements) **(Comitology until 2011)**
		Revision of DIRECTIVES on Energy labelling and household appliances **(2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
		Measures to strengthen the Public Procurement of high-performance environmentally-friendly products, technologies and services-following communication (Green Public Procurement **(1st Q 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (2010)*	
				- 7th Framework Programme (2007-13): €2.3 billion for energy, €1.8 billion for environment (including climate change) - Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) (2007-13), Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) € 430 million for eco-innovation and Intelligent Energy for Europe (IEE) €730 million
		Legislative proposals following the "Sustainable industrial policy/Sustainable consumption policy", notably extension of EUP Directive **(March 2008)** ➔➔	*Projected adoption (March 2010)*	

Integrated Guidelines Number	Key Objectives	Measures to be adopted by the European Commission	Measures to be adopted as priority action by other institutions (EP, Council)	Measures to be implemented
Guideline 13 (Open Markets)	Whilst working to conclude the Doha multilateral trade negotiations, the Community will negotiate bilaterally with key trading partners to open up new opportunities for international trade and investment, improve market access focussing on countries and sectors where significant barriers remain, and create a common space of regulatory provisions and standards.	International Agreement - Conclusion of the most important bilateral FTAs (ASEAN, India, South Korea)		
		International Agreement - New Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with China		
		Bilateral Cooperation EU-USA- Transatlantic Economic Council		
		Bilateral regulatory cooperation with US, Japan, China and Russia		
				EU-US Action Strategy on IPR enforcement
		Multi-party Agreement - Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)		
	Monitoring and strengthening of spending on Growth and Jobs (earmarking)			European Cohesion Policy Funds (mid-term review 2010)
				European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (mid-term review 2010)
				Lifelong learning Programme
				European Globalisation Adjustment Fund