

**Y Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac
Allanol
European and External Affairs
Committee**

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
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9 December 2009

Dear President Barroso

**National Assembly for Wales' European and External Affairs Committee:
Regional Dimension of the future "EU2020" Strategy**

As Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee at the National Assembly for Wales I am writing to express a number of concerns regarding the draft consultation document on the future EU 2020 Strategy, which the Committee discussed at its meeting on 1 December.

The Committee was both surprised and disappointed at the absence of any reference in the draft to regional parliaments and legislative assemblies, particularly as the draft was published just days ahead of the Treaty of Lisbon (and the new protocol on subsidiarity) coming into force.

A persistent criticism of the current Lisbon Strategy has been the failure to give sufficient recognition of the key role played by actors at the local and regional level in delivering and communicating the strategy on the ground. Regional parliaments and legislative assemblies across Europe are actively involved in this process, through scrutinising the implementation of the strategy at the sub-Member State level.

This is something that we take seriously at the National Assembly for Wales, a recent example being the Committee's meeting on 29 September where we scrutinised the Welsh Government's implementation of the current Lisbon Strategy and its involvement in shaping the UK position on the future of the Strategy. We also discussed the draft report on the future of the Strategy prepared by Christine Chapman AM, the Assembly's representative on the Committee of the Regions.

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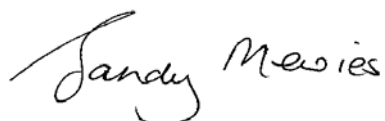
The Committee's second concern is the lack of reference to EU Cohesion Policy and the Structural Funds in relation to delivering the objectives of the strategy.

During 2009 the European and External Affairs Committee has carried out a detailed inquiry into the future of Cohesion Policy, and on 9 December we published our interim report (see copy enclosed). The key conclusions include rejection of 'renationalisation' of Cohesion Policy and recognition of the need for an EU-wide policy for all EU regions. On a positive note there was a clear consensus regarding the future priorities of the policy, which are broadly in line with those set out in the draft consultation paper.

Our concerns regarding the draft EU 2020 Strategy paper are shared by the Welsh Government, as raised by the Deputy First Minister at a recent meeting of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), and we understand that the Welsh Government intends to respond to the Commission consultation. The final version of Christine Chapman AM's report on the future of the Lisbon Strategy, which was adopted unanimously by the Committee of the Regions at its plenary meeting in Brussels on 3 December, also picked up on these two issues.

We urge you, therefore, to address these concerns in the final EU Strategy by giving explicit recognition of the key role of regional parliaments, and the importance and clear added value that an EU-wide Cohesion Policy, through regionally delivered Structural Funds programmes, will play in making the EU 2020 Strategy a success.

Yours sincerely



Sandy Mewies AM
Committee Chair

Enc: EEAC interim report of inquiry on the future of cohesion policy post 2013

CC:

Ieuan Wyn Jones AM, Deputy First Minister for Wales
President of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Luc Van den Brande