

# European and External Affairs Committee

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**Date: 10 May 2006**

**Venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

**Title: European Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2007**

## **Background**

The Commission adopted its Annual Policy Strategy for 2007, entitled "Boosting Trust through Action" on 14 March. The Strategy was presented to the European Parliament at its mini-plenary on 22 March by Commission President José Manuel Barroso, who set out the Commission's strategic goals for 2007, the half-way point in his mandate as Commission President.

The Annual Policy Strategy is used to consult the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for their input on the following year's priorities and forms the basis of the Commission's Annual Work Programme, which is normally adopted in the autumn. The Assembly's Committees use this to identify their policy priorities for the coming year.

2007 sees the entry into force of a whole raft of multi-annual funding programmes, which are dependent on the final settlement of the Financial Perspectives. Otherwise, it is not an ambitious programme; "growth and jobs" remains the key target.

2007 will also be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the founding Treaty of the European Community. The EU will also have two new members, if Bulgaria and Romania are ready to join.

The Strategy was presented to the European Parliament's mini-plenary on 22 March. During a fairly short debate, MEPs criticised it for having an overstated, almost meaningless title, particularly in light of the fact that many of the proposals outlined in this document are similar to those identified in the 2006 Strategy. Malcolm Harbour (EPP-ED, UK) noted that the Commission would, in 2007, achieve "cruising speed" in its delivery of objectives, noting that at present the Commission was "barely at walking pace". Commission Vice-President Margot Wallstrom was criticised by some MEPs for an overly positive presentation of the Strategy.

## **Action**

The Committee is invited to note the summary of the Annual Policy Strategy at Annex A, before considering the Commission's Annual Work Programme for 2007 which is due to be published this

autumn.

## **Annual Policy Strategy 2007**

Key highlights in the Strategy include:

### **Lisbon Strategy**

Actions to boost investment in research and innovation by Member States and the private sector, in particular through supporting markets for innovative goods and services, to strive for an attractive single market for researchers, and to enhance university-based research.

New programmes starting during 2007 include the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme; Galileo; Trans-European Networks; Marco Polo; Lifelong Learning; Customs and Fiscalis. The European Space Programme will also be launched.

### **Employment**

Communication on "flexicurity": aiming at a balance between flexibility and employment security.

### **Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) governance**

Increase dialogue with the Member States likely to qualify for participation in the euro area; also enhanced monitoring of stability and convergence programmes and further development of the functioning of the euro area under the reformed Stability and Growth Pact.

### **Social Solidarity**

Follow up of Green Paper on the evolution of labour law; European Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies to promote social inclusion and independent living in an ageing society.

### **Energy and Transport**

Setting up a new European observatory of energy markets; measures to support the completion of the internal market for electricity and gas; action plan on intermodal transport logistics aiming at alleviating traffic congestion and diminishing transport costs; and promotion of inland waterways transport including exploiting its commercial potential.

### **Single Market**

Follow-up to the Green Paper on Public-Private Partnerships and EC public procurement and

concessions; continued action to create a European Single Payment Area by 2010; new rules for defence procurement to increase competition; promoting growth in wireless markets.

## **Legal Migration**

Facilitating the admission of highly skilled workers.

## **Justice and Home Affairs**

Green Paper and Policy Plan on second phase of Common European Asylum System; Communication on drugs policy and on mechanisms to detect, monitor and respond to emerging trends in drug use and drug markets.

## **Sustainable Management and Use of Resources and Environment Protection**

New initiative on Green Public Procurement as part of the Action Plan on sustainable production and consumption; Establishment of the new EU Chemicals Agency in Helsinki and implementing legislation on the new chemicals regulation (REACH); Conclusion of the Green Paper consultation on a future maritime policy and presentation of an Action Plan.

## **Health and Safety**

Develop a Community framework for safe, high quality and efficient health services, by reinforcing cooperation between Member States and providing clarity and certainty over the application of Community law to health services and healthcare; strengthen and simplify European structures to respond to health threats, notably through the creation of a high level European network of flu officials;

## **Wider World**

Finalising the Doha negotiations and start implementing agreements; Enhancing the contribution of EU internal policies to the implementation at EU level of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda on Policy coherence for Development; Negotiating a new EU-China Framework Agreement.

**Sandy Mewies**  
**Committee Chair**