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MIO-ECSDE's response to the Commission's Working Document Consultation on the Future "EU 2020" Strategy

MIO-ECSDE welcomes the participatory approach followed by the European Commission in the development of the EU 2020 Strategy and request to give input to the Commission's Working Document.

In summary, the main views, concerns, and considerations that should be taken into account while drafting the "EU 2020" Strategy are the following:

1. MIO-ECSDE welcomes the EU's basic objective for an international leadership combined with Sustainable Development. This vision needs to permeate all EU policies and to be transmitted strongly, effectively and in a convincing way to all Member States and Partner Countries and institutions all around the world.
2. The European Union's objective of sustainable development will not be met, unless there is an agreement to an agenda that puts people and responsibility, as well as the planet truly high. Therefore, all future EU economic and market policies should refocus on the overarching goal to bringing prosperity to all people living in the EU (and not only) and ensuring a high level of environmental protection and improvement in the quality of the natural and cultural environment of Europe and beyond. Clear and ambitious targets must be set for the preservation and restoration of ecosystems, the conservation of natural resources and the prevention of climate change through the reversion of production and consumption patterns and trends.
3. Extreme caution must be given in order to avoid focusing too much on the objectives of economic growth and competitiveness, as in the case of the 'Lisbon Strategy', which led to serious adverse effects mostly in the domain of the environment and public goods.
4. On the first key driver of the proposed EU 2020 Strategy, which is 'Creating value by basing growth on knowledge', emphasis must be given to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which should be promoted actively (not passively as it has been the case until now) in all levels of formal and non formal Education, as a tool for setting solid foundations for peace, dialogue, cooperation, better understanding of cultural diversity and environmental protection. In parallel, the role of universities should be strengthened and key elements of the Bologna Process be revisited. As far as research is concerned, it should be



- ensured that it is driven by real societal needs and priorities and based on ecological, social and sustainable development considerations on equal footing with the potential of “innovation”, the “marketability” of products and the “maximization” of practical benefits.
5. On the second key driver of the EU 2020 Strategy which is ‘Empowering people in inclusive societies’, it is necessary to be stressed that the creation of new, greener jobs could be the best safeguard against poverty and exclusion but this is not enough to be announced and promoted in theory without proper incentives. Social considerations should be taken in to account and targets should be set for green and quality jobs, which will ensure good social protection systems and access to quality services, respect of human rights and of the environment. In addition, the Commission’s proposal for the promotion of labour mobility must be handled with due caution in order to enhance the feeling and psychology of security, protect the workers’ collective rights avoiding ‘social dumping’.
 6. On the third key driver of the EU 2020 Strategy concerning the creation of a greener, connected and greener economy, extreme emphasis must be given not only to the more efficient use of resources but also to **preventive measures** in terms of conservation and sustainable management of natural resources (freshwater, soil, biodiversity, energy, forest) and **restoration measures**.
 7. At all stages of decision making transparency, public accessibility and civil society participation must be ensured. This should be obtained by promoting the vision for a durable better governance and practical incentives.

In general, as MIO-ECSDE was involved in the drafting and elaboration process of the Spring Alliance Manifesto (an initiative undertaken by four leading European Civil Society Organizations the European Environmental Bureau, the European Trade Union Confederation, the Social Platform and Concord), considers its 17 concrete proposals as an important input that should be considered by the European Commission in the finalizing process of the working document as it reflects the views and positions of more than 40 European, Sub-regional and National Civil Society Organizations. (For more info: <http://www.springalliance.eu>)