

## **Europe 2020 The implications for Health and Social Policy**

### Background Information

The EU Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth will reach its term in 2010. The EU must develop a new strategy for the next 10 years, to guide its work and inspire its citizens' confidence. The European Commission published the Europe2020 strategy on 3 March 2010. The European Council debated the Commission's proposed strategy during the Council meeting on 25-26 March 2010.

### Why is this important for Committee 2?

The Europe2020 Communication constitutes the European Commission's vision of the goals the EU should set for itself for the next 10 years. It proposes a strategic framework, with key priorities, that will guide all EU policy and financial instruments until 2020. Concretely, this means that:

- The future EU cohesion policy will have to serve the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 strategy.
- EU policy in public health and social affairs will have to align itself to the Europe 2020 objectives.
- Europe 2020 will guide EU policy in health and social affairs: it will determine to what extent these policy areas are seen as priority sectors at EU level and it will determine the amount of funding allocated to initiatives in health and social affairs.
- Europe 2020 will also define the role of the regions in contributing to achieving the Europe 2020 vision.

Committee 2 therefore needs to take a stance on this new vision for Europe, as it will have a direct impact on how regions work in these policy fields and what they do.

### Public Health in the Europe 2020 strategy

Health policy considerations are raised within the framework of the new targets and priority initiatives proposed in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Europe 2020 strategy refers to health in the following contexts:

- The potential for growth the health sector offers in terms of employment and the need to better match skills to jobs.

- The economic growth potential of e-health and other ICT-related services.
- The need to reduce health inequalities and find ways to improve access to health care services for all.
- Focusing Europe's research agenda on issues such as health and ageing, among other issues energy efficiency and climate change.
- The need for structural reforms at national level of pension and health care systems, in order to bring sustainability and growth to Europe's economy.

#### Social Affairs in the Europe 2020 strategy

Social Inclusion figures high in the Europe2020 strategy. One of the 5 targets the EU sets itself for 2020 is to have 20 million less people at the risk of poverty.

The European Council that discussed the Commission's proposals did not explicitly agree to this target of 20 million people less. The Council has decided to develop indicators for this target during its June 2010 summit meeting.

This target covers a variety of issues and social concerns, ranging from education and training for people at the margins of society, to ensuring social inclusion for persons with disabilities, developing a new policy for the integration of migrants and overcoming health inequalities.

To achieve this target, the Commission proposes establishing a *Flagship Initiative – European Platform against Poverty*. This entails transforming the Open Method of Coordination (a flexible meeting of national representatives) into a platform for the exchange of best practice

#### Future Cohesion Policy

The EU Cohesion Policy should support the strategy and contribute to achieving its aims – thus, cohesion policy will become a financial mechanism for Europe 2020 and its priorities will be linked to the priorities set out in this strategy.

The Council has emphasised the importance of promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion and of creating the necessary infrastructure in order to achieve the Europe 2020 targets.

#### **Timeline**

3 March 2010	European Commission	Publication of Europe 2020- A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
25-26 March 2010	European Council summit meeting-	Agreement on key elements of the strategy
15 June 2010	AER Bureau meeting	Update on AER actions
17-18 June 2010	European Council summit meeting	Adoption of the Europe2020 strategy

OG, Brussels, April 2010