

Athens

**Hearing
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Nobody thought that...

...the financial-economic crisis so quickly becoming a *social-political-solidarity* crisis;

...it is so *difficult to preserve* economic stability and to create conditions for *smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* simultaneously.

Over the last few years, due to

- the crisis and Europe's response to it

- *the EU has become more complex, with*

- a greater tendency to *multi-speed integration,*

and more divergent national interests.

Long-term growth is not possible *without a process of catching up.*

**to achieve these objectives well
balanced *macroeconomic policy mix* and
structural reforms *are needed.***

***Strengthening* the fiscal policy;**

***Easing* the monetary policy;**

Income policy:

- ***generous* for families with low income**
- ***restrictive* for families with high income**

We need a *new balance* between responsibility and solidarity.

The EU *needs to show* that it has the necessary political will of a substantially *closer integration*.

It is vital *to enrich* the *multilevel cooperation* between Member States and the regions, *and to achieve* "more and better" Europe.

Governance *must be further strengthened.*

It is possible *to endorse* the general approach for implementation of the EU 2020 strategy;

the triple objective of the Europe 2020 strategy, i.e., smart, sustainable and inclusive-cohesive growth, *is generally appropriate;*

For better growth:

strengthening foundations,
implementation of measures such as a
European banking union; European
regulation, monitoring, bailouts and
guarantees of bank deposits,

the issuance of project bonds,

the role of the European Central Bank
should be more *developed.*

Provided funding is used efficiently and effectively could be justified by the following arguments:

- **Firstly;**
- **it can be shown that at *macroeconomic* level investments from the EU budget *deliver above average growth in the financial results,***

- **Secondly;**
- **enlargement of the Single Market, free movement of services,**
- **more widespread growth in the knowledge base activities are factors which in themselves already *contribute substantially***
- ***to innovation activities and to catching up;***

Thirdly;

at microeconomic level, for the SME sectors, Structural Fund financing *often means markets, access to development resources, and*

Finally;

the potential beneficial impact of integration and *catching up for the most disadvantaged social groups* in various ways is considerable.

New development policies *must support the reforms:*

by *implementing* pan-European,

- cross-sectoral,**
- multi-dimensional programmes**
- at European level.**

- The planned development of macro-regional strategies, *should be backed with the requisite instruments,*

- the involvement of private-sector funding the Connecting Europe Facility *could be a good example of closer integration,*

The macro-regional strategy

has to be priority in the European programming 2014-2020,

A "new" model of territorial cooperation *within the Partnership agreement* and Operational programmes,

with a specific focus on the concept of "*Community Led Macro-regional Development*".

- **We have to emphasises the great importance of**
- ***the partnership agreements*** ,
- ***appropriate coordination with the social partners,***
- ***the active involvement of social, economic and civil society* stakeholders in them**

so as to match broader policies with available funding and thus *give initiatives added value,*

The macro-regional strategy increase *the positive impact of public spending* without funding provision actually increasing.

The EESC believes that all the conditions are now in place *for multilevel dialogue*

- **to begin between the Commission, the Member States, the countries, local and regional authorities and civil society**
- **involved in Euro-Mediterranean and in the Adriatic-Ionian cooperations,**

- **The pillars of such a Macro-regional approaches:**
- **1st pillar: *economic cooperation and development* coupled with the objectives of sustainability,**
- **2nd pillar: *improving transport links* strengthening and improving merchant shipping with the aim of free movement of goods and people.**
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3rd pillar: cooperation in the sphere of *energy and safe transport of energy,*

4rd pillar: *strengthening the environmental responsibility,*

5th pillar: promote *the development of the cities,*

6th pillar: setting-up of *a Mediterranean civil society forum to encourage a spirit of cooperation .*

For Cohesion Policy

during the period of 2014-20, there are a number of major changes,

The primary goal of this policy the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is to use investment as a means of achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The rules contained in the regulation laying down common provisions relating to the Funds some of which relate directly to the use of ERDF. General features like

- ***concentrating* priorities;**
- ***linking* more closely to the Europe 2020 strategy;**
- ***focusing* on results;**

- ***monitoring*** progress towards agreed objectives;
- ***increasing*** the use of conditionalities;
- and ***simplifying*** delivery;
- the use of a more ***integrated*** approach;
- ***regulate*** more explicitly the use of the financial instruments.

Finally, the EU2020 Strategy

- *has to be remained the growth strategy of the EU, but fine-tuned and adjusted,*
- *major mismatch is between the complexity of the EU2020 and the modest instruments made available,*
- *discrepancies are between the long timeframe and the uncertain resources,*
- *institutional system of the implementation is weak.*