

Brussels, 10. 07. 2009
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22 JUL. 2009

Dear Rev. Dr Heidtmann,

Thank you for your letter and your views on the current crisis and the Lisbon Strategy.

The employment and social impact of the crisis, which is likely to bring higher long-term unemployment and greater social inequality, is of great concern to the European Union and to the Commission. Social recovery measures that build on and supplement the European Economic Recovery Plan are therefore needed. While most measures that can mitigate the negative effects on labour markets are in the hands of the Member States, the social partners and other players, including local authorities and civil society, it is vital to ensure convergence between national policies at EU level and to avoid negative spill-over effects, to step up coordination and exchange best practice, and to mobilise and modernise the existing EU Funds. A coordinated EU response is therefore needed.

The Commission Communication entitled 'A Shared Commitment for Employment' adopted on 3 June draws on the Employment Summit and the workshops and the debate in the European Parliament that preceded it. The Shared Commitment puts forward key priorities and actions to preserve jobs and help those in difficulty while paving the way for recovery under the priorities of maintaining employment, creating jobs and promoting mobility, upgrading skills and matching labour-market needs, and increasing access to employment.

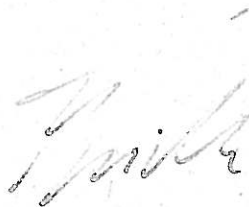
The objective is for all relevant players, including civil society, trade unions and employer organisations, as well as the Member States and the EU, to work together to deliver on the Shared Commitment by implementing concrete measures. The EU will make €19 billion of planned EU funding available through the European Social Fund to support people affected by the economic crisis in 2009-10. The Commission has also recently proposed to establish a new EU micro-credit facility for employment and social inclusion. Together with the Member States and the social partners, the Commission will monitor implementation of the Shared Commitment and the recovery measures closely.

Our response to the crisis should not, however, be seen as divorced from the structural reforms needed and the challenges that lie ahead. Globalisation, demographic ageing, technological development and climate change need to be addressed by a strong and coordinated response. The Commission will present its proposal for a post-2010 Lisbon Strategy early next year.

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It will need to consider those challenges, along with persisting structural challenges that may arise from the current crisis. It will also need to reflect on the governance of the Strategy and make sure that key stakeholders are involved to a greater extent to ensure the measures needed are implemented effectively.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "N. Smith", is located in the center-right of the page.