

THE LISBON STRATEGY AND VIVANT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC MODEL 2005

“The aim of the Lisbon Strategy is to extend social protection and other advantages to the great majority of people and so include those who are still denied them,” stated Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER, President of the European Council, in a speech he made in Luxemburg.¹

“Certain European heads of state or government are concerned,” he indicated, *“that putting this strategy into effect might give **an immediate advantage** to the forces of opposition, who, if they came to power, could then claim responsibility for the positive effects of the reforms, which would appear later.”*

We think, with Mr JUNCKER, that this line of argument **is unacceptable**. It is the product of an ultra-political turn of mind which would prefer to maintain the *status quo* rather than allow the opposition to claim benefit for the fruits of reform.

This is a long way from the search for the COMMON GOOD based on a balance between the three aspects of the Lisbon Strategy - **the economic, the social and the environmental**.

“It is undeniable,” continued Mr JUNCKER, *“that Europe has a very real problem of competitiveness, while enjoying the top slot in social and environmental affairs. But that doesn't mean that competitiveness should be chosen as the sole objective of the Lisbon Strategy.”*

For her part, Odile QUINTIN² suggested “growth and employment” as the top priority for a European social model adapted to modern conditions.

From listening to these two speakers, Europe:

1. has **too little** competitiveness and is thereby tempted to emphasise this to the detriment of social and environmental considerations;
2. needs **to concentrate** on growth and employment in order **to guarantee** the European social model.

By definition, VIVANT believes **in balance** between the economic, social and environmental considerations of the Lisbon Strategy, but **finds it vain to think that it can be achieved without adapting and modernising our socio-economic system**.

To lose competitiveness because labour is **too dear**, and to reduce social protection and public services **for lack of an alternative** means of financing them, is to jeopardise the environment, which requires social and economic policies that care for the long-term future of both human beings and the environment.

Thus, in order to be more competitive, to boost employment and investment in growth and to protect social security funding,

¹ The participation of civil society in the Lisbon Strategy was the subject of the conference organised by the European Economic and Social Council (EESC) on 26 and 27 January 2005.

² Director-General of Employment and Social Affairs in the European Commission.

“The penalisation of the work of European citizens by taxes that encourage job migrations must be stopped. Tax on work kills employment, empties Europe of its skills and jeopardises the funding of our social security.

European social security must be funded by the sale of products in Europe, through tax on consumption, or “social VAT” (without increasing prices), instead of making employment unaffordable.

Saving employment and social security will guarantee sustainable human development in an environmentally friendly and social Europe.”
(Programme of VIVANT-EUROPE)

The Lisbon Strategy may thus become a process, to which the **unconditional Basic Income for all Europeans** must be added -- for it is that which will maintain citizens' purchasing power and subsidise employment. And it is in this way that the synergy will be found between economic, social and environmental actions, which will extend social protection and other advantages to the great majority of citizens and thus attain the objective of the Lisbon Strategy.

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