

Folketinget – Europaudvalget
Christiansborg, den 1. februar 2005

Til

udvalgets medlemmer og stedfortrædere.

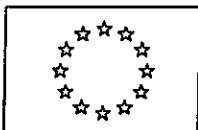
Kommissionens strategiske målsætninger 2005 – 2009

Til udvalgets orientering vedlægges Kommissionens forslag til EU's strategiske målsætninger for 2005 – 2009 (KOM (2005) 12).

Målsætningerne vil danne baggrund for Kommissionens konkrete arbejdsprogrammer de kommende fem år. Kommissionens arbejdsprogram for 2005 er omdelt som KOM (2005) 0015 – bilag 1.

For yderligere information om dokumentet henvises til notat af 27/1-05 fra Folketingets repræsentant ved EU, Mongin Forrest (info-note I (04) 28).

Med venlig hilsen
Lone Boelt Møller,
Udvalgssekretær.



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2005 – 2009

Europe 2010: A Partnership for European Renewal

Prosperity, Solidarity and Security

**Communication from the President
in agreement with Vice-President Wallström**

EUROPE 2010: A PARTNERSHIP FOR EUROPEAN RENEWAL

Over the last few years, the European Union has made huge strides forward:

- the biggest enlargement ever, largely uniting our continent into a Europe of freedom
- the introduction of the Euro, consolidating a zone of financial stability
- the signing of the Constitution, modernising the rules of an enlarged Union resting uniquely on the dual legitimacy of its Member States and citizens
- progressing towards a common area of Justice and Security across Europe
- building up the first stages of a European Defence Policy

Politically, Europe has confounded its critics and shown its capacity to move forward. Enlargement of our membership has enlarged the Union's potential and added to the richness of our diversity: this is a source of strength, not weakness for the future. More generally, the development of the Union in varying spheres of action means that for citizens in all our Member States decisions taken at European level will assume greater reach, although too few are aware of the scale of what Europe has achieved or the extent of its impact on their lives.

On the other hand, significant sections of the European public are not convinced that Europe is on the right track. At European level we can only be effective if we are prepared to recognise these concerns. Although the picture varies considerably between Member States, feelings of indifference to the European idea are widespread. Less than one out of two citizens voted in the last European elections. The reasons for this reduced confidence are complex and include sluggish economic growth, heightened feelings of economic and personal insecurity, fears of loss of identity and a more general feeling of "disconnect" between what happens in "Brussels" and in people's everyday lives. There is an urgent need to demonstrate more clearly the value of what the Union brings and the legitimacy of its decisions.

Europe is therefore at a crossroad. The Union has to convey to Europeans a new sense that we understand the challenges of the future and that we have credible strategies in place to address them. Europe can regain trust if its leadership sets out a clear and compelling vision of the direction in which the Union should be heading in the second half of the decade, and demonstrates it has the policies and commitments to match this vision.

The priority should be to bring to fruition the grand projects that have been launched. The mission of all institutions should be to take the Europe we have and make it work.

What should be the aims for the next five years?

- To put Europe back on the path to long-term prosperity. The re-invigorated and refocused Lisbon Agenda will put Europe back on that track, with the target for new and better jobs being met through higher growth. The twin foundations for a more competitive and dynamic Europe are economic and social reforms and a thriving knowledge economy. We will contribute to the knowledge economy through the establishment of a European education area and the European research area. A sound macroeconomic environment and

a stable currency will reinforce growth conditions and will make it financially sustainable in the medium and long term.

- To sustain and reinforce Europe's commitment to solidarity and social justice in order to strengthen the cohesion of the enlarged Union as a new economic dynamism gathers pace. To achieve a real narrowing in economic disparities. To enable the poorest regions to catch up. To open up fresh economic opportunities in all parts of the Union where, under pressure from the inevitable forces of globalisation and more intense competition, jobs are being perceived as under threat. To have made further advances in the promotion of equal rights. The Union will contribute to the solidarity among generations by meeting its international commitments to combat climate change, reducing pollution and safeguarding future energy supply.
- To bring tangible practical benefits to the quality of life for European citizens through new measures to strengthen their security which can only be achieved by acting together at European level to better manage and reduce risks in their daily life. For the Union to bring a new successful dimension to tough action against the evils of terrorism, drugs, people trafficking and organised crime. To enable also citizens to enjoy proper access to justice and fundamental rights throughout the Union.
- To give the Union a stronger voice in the world, with the proposed new Foreign Minister, assisted by a European External Action Service, representing the Union's foreign policy externally and bringing greater coherence to all our actions. To actively prepare future enlargements and bring the other Western Balkans closer to membership. To establish effective partnerships with the circle of neighbouring countries that surrounds the Union. To guarantee an extended zone of stability and democratic progress beyond the Union itself. To play a key role in first securing and then implementing a Middle East Peace settlement, key to progress in the wider Middle East. To implement a progressive trade policy beyond a hopefully successful Doha Development Round. More widely, to live up to our commitment to meet the Millennium Development Goals, notably in Africa, and make the Union a leading global partner for global justice, sustainable development, growth and prosperity.

How will Europe meet these expectations by 2010?

To be effective, the European Union needs to be clear about its political priorities.

The most urgent issue facing Europe today is clear: growth and jobs. Strong economic performance and dynamic growth were the cornerstone on which the European model of social solidarity and sustainability was originally built. The top priority today is to restore sustainable dynamic growth in Europe in accordance with the Lisbon strategy. Renewed growth is vital to prosperity, can bring back full employment and is the foundation of social justice and opportunity for all. It is also vital to Europe's position in the world and Europe's ability to mobilise the resources to tackle many different global challenges.

Making growth and jobs the immediate top priority obviously does not mean devaluing other objectives. Growth is essential to sustain these objectives: one only needs to think of how otherwise our ageing society threatens the long term sustainability of our social model. Improving competitiveness and re-invigorating growth are means to an end, not an end in

themselves: growth in itself will not guarantee social solidarity or sustainability. That is why solidarity and security must and will remain central European objectives alongside prosperity.

Equally we should make policy choices that ensure that our various objectives are mutually reinforcing. Actions that promote competitiveness, growth and jobs, as well as economic and social cohesion and a healthy environment reinforce each other. These are all essential components of the overarching objective of sustainable development, on which we must deliver.

Without solidarity and security, prosperity will not be fully realised: the economy is there to serve people, not the other way round.

For Europeans to have confidence that this vision will be realised, the Union needs to work with them. We need to work through a dynamic Partnership for European Renewal. European society – its institutions, its networks, its citizens and its Member States– must pull together to make our common goals a reality.

In this context, it is essential that the European institutions work together and share a common programme of action for the coming years. Not only is this plain common sense: the Constitution recognises the value of a common programme to be shared by Parliament, Council and Commission. This is why in this case, the Commission is proposing to the other institutions to be inspired by the provisions of the Constitution at this juncture. The strategic objectives that follow are therefore proposed as a basis for a common platform of action by the European institutions in the next 5 years.

The challenges facing European institutions have become so wide and so complex that they can only be tackled in partnership:

- All levers must be brought to bear and all actors must work together – not just the institutions, but national Parliaments, governments, social partners and civil society at all levels.
- Most importantly, individual citizens must be brought into this partnership: through clarity about what Europe is trying to achieve, and participation in the common effort.
- With partnership comes responsibility. Every European has a stake in the work of the Union, and every European has a share of the responsibility to realise our common goals.

To bring about this partnership, the Union should deliver in terms of implementation and reach out to every European.

First, the Union must work well, and be seen to work well:

- Failure to apply European legislation on the ground damages the effectiveness of Union policy and undermines the trust on which the Union depends. The perception that “we stick by the rules but others don’t”, wherever it occurs, is deeply damaging to a sense of European solidarity. There should be continuity from policy development to policy delivery, assisted by a modern, effective and service-minded administration at all levels. Prompt and adequate transposition and vigorous pursuit of infringements are critical to the credibility of European legislation and the effectiveness of policies.

- Legislation should aim at the highest levels of quality, coherence and effectiveness. Better Regulation means that legislation should be well-prepared and as simple as possible. Impact assessment, including on competitiveness, before initiatives are launched and throughout the legislative process, must become second nature. Reviews of legislation in force should be systematically done. Subsidiarity and proportionality must be applied in full. Better regulation should be a priority also at the Member States' level.
- The adoption of the Constitution is a further critical step. The European institutions should work together with Member States towards the successful entry into force of the Constitution. It will reinforce the Union in terms of democracy, transparency and participation, as well as effectiveness through the enhanced use of the Community method.
- The multi-annual budgetary framework to be laid down in the Financial Perspectives must provide the Union with the adequate means to deliver on its commitments, such as competitiveness and cohesion, as well as sustainable management of resources, in an enlarged Union. It must also ensure budget discipline and efficiency of public spending.

Secondly, European citizens must also be made aware and understand what the Union is doing for them, and be offered a stake in the European edifice. All European institutions must adopt the mindset of being at the service of the citizens:

- Inherent in the idea of partnership is consultation and participation. Initiatives need to have the benefit of the full involvement of national Parliaments, public authorities at all levels, social partners, civil society and voices of stakeholders throughout the community. Dialogue must reach beyond the Brussels-based political debate into a full-blown European Public Space, creating understanding for each others cultures, identity and political thinking. This will help to generate a sense of European identity, particularly amongst young people.
- The Union must be open to public scrutiny and accountable for its work. This requires a high level of openness and transparency. It should be clear how the Union has reached a decision, through analysis such as impact assessment and through maximum public access to the workings of the institutions. The provisions of the Constitution for the Council to legislate in public are of importance here. Accountability should be enhanced by striving for a positive declaration of assurance from the European Court of Auditors. In order to protect the financial interests of the Union, fraud deterrence should be enhanced through more transparency and cooperation.
- None of this can work if the intentions and actions of the Union are not underpinned by accurate and effective communication. The cornerstones of the new Communications strategy should be that the Union not only advocates its policies clearly, but is also receptive; integrates communication into its policy formulation from the very beginning and focuses strongly on adapting communication to national needs. This is a responsibility which must involve all European institutions as well as national authorities.

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EUROPE 2010: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. PROSPERITY

The most urgent issue facing Europe today is the lack of growth and job creation that safeguards the standard of living and social protection Europeans have grown used to.

The Single Market and the euro have opened the door to achieving greater efficiency through economies of scale and scope, faster innovation, more growth opportunities for expanding firms – in other words for businesses in every Member State, by making the European market their home market, to become able to achieve competitiveness on a European scale and better equipped to meet the challenges of global competition. However, until now Europe has not realised these opportunities to the full.

In the last decade, Europe's growth and productivity has failed to match its major economic partners. In principle, as new competition forces European businesses up the value chain and strength in the so-called knowledge economy becomes more and more important, Europe should have important economic advantages in the world economy – political and economic stability, a skilled workforce, a tradition of social partnership, a long standing and well developed science base, and the stimulus of the economic catch-up from the new members of the Union.

These are the challenges addressed by the Lisbon strategy agreed in 2000. However, progress towards its goals has fallen well short so far, calling for a decisive impulse which may put it back on the right track. Our objective is to turn the European economy into one of the most attractive to invest, to produce and to work. This requires a new impulse for reforms that lead to a significant improvement in the business environment; boosting research and innovation in key sectors; and modernizing European labour markets and social protection systems.

1.1. A friendly business environment

- Sound macroeconomic foundations are essential to promoting sustainable growth and embracing change. The proper functioning of the Growth and Stability Pact is critical to a healthy euro in the run-up to the enlargement of the euro-zone, in particular to new Member States. To that end, it should be improved by making it more effective in economic upswings, and more realistic in the correction of deficits, while avoiding negative incentives for major economic reforms.
- It is time to deliver a new phase in economic integration. Appropriate regulation must be in place to allow the productive economy to thrive. Companies should be able to operate inside a genuinely Europe-wide regime, with equal rights to start businesses, a common approach on corporate governance and intellectual property, fair corporate taxation rules and trade-promoting customs systems. Better regulation and sound competition rules should ensure the breaking down of barriers, open up markets for goods and services and assist innovation for the benefit of the most efficient producers and consumers. In particular, the service sector offers huge growth potential. Efficient services also mean lower costs for businesses. By the end of the decade, it should be as natural to offer services

across borders within the Union as to transport goods, preserving the special role recognised for services of general interest.

- Boosting innovation and the use of new communication and information technologies are crucial for a more dynamic and competitive economy. Take-up of new technology by users and new developments from suppliers will both flow from a mix of actions and policies on research, training and innovation.
- Europe needs to reduce the burden of regulation at all levels in order to foster entrepreneurship and investment, notably for small and medium size enterprises, which are the engine of job creation.

1.2. Investing for prosperity

- Prosperity and growth cannot come without investment. The drivers of growth – research and development, modern technology, the highest skills, efficient networks – come at a price. The Union budget already invests substantial sums in these areas through its various funds. The focus on growth and jobs should be further strengthened in the next Financial Perspectives.
- The Union is committed to investing 3% of GDP in research, with one third coming from the public sector, and to raising significantly investment in higher education. But it is just not enough to spend. Europe must become more attractive for researchers and scientists, with the fruits of research used effectively by European companies. Pooling resources at European level can offer real added value: promoting and spreading excellence, offering economies of scale, creating new connections and new networks. Mobility in education and learning opens up a new dimension to developing Europe's skill set: after the 1 million level reached in 2002, 3 million university students should have participated in mobility programmes by 2011.
- The European economy will never reach full potential if it is hamstrung by bottlenecks in transport, telecom and energy networks. Targeting such weaknesses on a cross-border scale is the only way to connect the enlarged Europe.

1.3. Embracing change

- Adapt labour markets in order to encourage job creation. Europe needs a workforce that is better skilled and better adapted to change. Life-long learning will help to set in train a virtuous circle of better jobs and higher growth. The Partnerships for reform and change announced by the European Council in 2004 are the best way to ensure ownership in making labour markets conducive to more and better jobs.
- Attract more people into the labour market. In addition to more effective use of an ageing workforce and promoting labour mobility, consider the potential of immigration. The Green Paper on economic migration points to how a managed process of immigration targeting key skills can be part of the solution. European societies are concerned that the benefits may be outweighed by the costs of

integration: but a balance can be found which benefits migrants and the host societies alike.

2. SOLIDARITY

The essence of the European Union is to work for sustainable development as an overarching objective that aims at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our common project brings with it a responsibility to offer mutual support and to protect and manage our surroundings together. A healthy European society depends on the effective delivery of this common project. Solidarity needs a concrete expression, both at present and with future generations, through:

- Economic and social cohesion, which will help disadvantaged areas and groups of population in the Union to narrow disparities through enhanced growth and competitiveness;
- Sustainable management and protection of our environment, our natural resources and safeguard of long term energy supply;
- Adequate reform and management of social protection systems, in order to ensure sustainability in the medium/long term;
- Preservation and strengthening of our common values.

2.1. Economic and social cohesion

- Cohesion policies are at the heart of how the enlarged Union works. The gap between the richest and the poorest region in Europe has trebled since enlargement. Cohesion policy targets the goal of economic convergence and seeks to unlock the latent potential for high growth. It is an essential instrument to promote growth and competitiveness. Rural communities, coastal areas and ultra-peripheral regions also face particular challenges in terms of economic development, social exclusion and depopulation. Rural development, for instance, is a way of reinforcing cohesion and promoting renewed prosperity and growth for the rural areas, as well as better managing natural resources.
- A tailored response to the demographic challenges for Europe's population. By the middle of this century, the ratio between the population in retirement and the working age population will double from 24% today to almost 50% in 2050. Central to solidarity is a response adapted to the needs of different sections of society, both ageing citizens and young people, for instance through an initiative for Youth, maximising the contribution to our society of all generations.
- Protect the weakest in society. Europe cannot compete globally by chasing after low wages or poor working conditions. The social agenda offers a level playing field of adequate social standards; and the European social model can act as a stimulus to growth when it acts as a safety net and a springboard for change. In order to safeguard the sustainability of this model the necessary reform in labour markets and social protection systems should materialise in a timely way, while

economic reform and sound economic policies should manage to significantly increase the potential growth rate.

2.2. Solidarity with future generations

- Environmental protection remains a key duty we have towards future generations. Climate change presents a threat which is growing more tangible every year. A threat to our physical environment, but also to our growth and prosperity. Europe must continue to take a lead in addressing the causes by improving energy efficiency and showing that alternatives, such as rebalancing transport modes, can be found through market-based solutions. Eco-innovation must be promoted and eco-efficiency fostered: with a long-term knock-on benefit for productivity and innovation, the key sector of environmental technology can contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy.
- Europe is a continent rich in resources. Resource management is essential to safeguard the long-term interest. The implementation of reform in the agricultural and fisheries sectors will allow for a sustainable management of key assets, and increased competitiveness.
- In view of the environmental and economic value of the oceans and the seas, there is a particular need for an all-embracing maritime policy aimed at developing a thriving maritime economy and the full potential of sea-based activity in an environmentally sustainable manner. Such a policy should be supported by excellence in marine scientific research, technology and innovation.

2.3. Common responsibilities for common values

- The protection of fundamental rights and fight against discrimination must be put at the forefront of European action with new initiatives on anti-discrimination and establishing a European Agency of Fundamental Rights. Ensuring equal rights to all citizens and fighting against discrimination, including gender equality, should be mainstreamed into all European action. Europe should be the point of reference worldwide for the practical application of fundamental rights. A particular priority must be effective protection of the rights of children, both against economic exploitation and all forms of abuse, with the Union acting as a beacon to the rest of the world.
- Protecting and promoting cultural diversity in Europe is at the heart of the Union's values. In a world where globalisation pushes towards homogeneity, this cultural richness needs to be nurtured through action to preserve mutual respect across borders. In this respect, the promotion and circulation of European audiovisual products is essential. Mobility, language learning, intercultural and social dialogue and the promotion of an active citizenship are among the best ways to build this respect.
- Solidarity must not end with Union citizens. A common approach concerning the rights and obligations of immigrants should be developed, and migrants from inside and outside the Union require support with integration into their new societies in full respect of human dignity. Such a migration policy needs to be

long-term: ensuring that the knock-on effects of migration on society are cushioned by smoother integration.

3. SECURITY AND FREEDOM

The European institutions must tackle the risks faced by citizens in their daily life. The protection of the life and the property of citizens is a core task giving legitimacy to public power and public policies. Freedom can only be enjoyed within a framework of security provided by law. Citizens legitimately expect that threats to their health and safety will also be countered at European level. The Constitution will strengthen the ability of the Union to act. But much can already be done now.

In the first place, there is the personal security of European citizens in the face of crime and terrorism. Freedom in a borderless Europe gives the Union a special responsibility. This is the case notably for border control, asylum and immigration, and trafficking of human beings.

Security is also about the ability of citizens to run their daily life on a secure basis. This can be put at risk by natural disasters, environmental or health crises and transport and energy threats. The Union has a role to play at all stages: risk prevention, early warning, crisis management, and acting in solidarity with the victims of disasters.

3.1. Security and Justice in Europe

- Implementation of the Hague Programme agreed in 2004 is a coordinated response to the risks faced by citizens in Europe. The Programme addresses the full range of measures required. Prevention and preparedness measures can offer a real add-on to the efforts of Member States in the fight against terrorism, with improved intelligence exchange, effective operational cooperation, and a better link with other forms of criminality. Terrorist financing must be targeted more effectively. A strategic approach to organised crime can minimize the opportunity for criminals to exploit a borderless Europe.
- The capacity to act at European level of judicial, intelligence, police and customs authorities should be reinforced. The integration of Europol into the Union would mean a step change in combating human trafficking, drug trafficking and cyber crime.
- The integrated management of external borders and a common visa policy is essential. The Union faces the shared responsibility of managing external land borders of some 11.000km and maritime borders of 68.000km, with obvious risks in terms of illegal migration and human trafficking. A coherent European framework is essential for the entry and stay of third country nationals across the EU: and must work in tandem with tackling the root causes of human trafficking. A common asylum policy should allow the Union to admit asylum seekers in justified cases in an equitable way.
- Mutual recognition and free circulation of judicial decisions in civil and criminal matters helps to ensure that justice is done, and strengthens the protection for families facing legal difficulties across borders. The increase in personal movement and cross-border economic activity since the Single Market has

increased the urgency to ensure easy, real and non-discriminatory access to justice through a European Justice Space.

3.2. Managing risk in the modern world

A key element of quality of life for citizens is a policy that manages and reduces the risks with which they are confronted such as natural disasters, environmental or health crises and transport and energy threats.

- Environmental and health risks such as the increased threats of floods or droughts following climate change, the fallout from potential biological, chemical or radiological attacks or serious outbreaks of disease have immediate EU-wide implications. They must be tackled in two ways: by the ability to offer early warning and immediate response to a particular crisis, and by long-term prevention. Information and surveillance networks need to be effective if they are to cope adequately with cross-border threats.
- Major sea accidents, the risk of terrorist attacks and the energy supply crises have raised public concern for transport security, particularly in air transport, as well as maritime and road safety.
- Unless action is taken, Europe's dependence on external oil will rise to 90% by 2030 (compared to 70% now). A greater security of energy supply would be provided by a concentrated effort to reduce energy demand, a reinforced cooperation with the main producer and transit countries; as well as by the vigorous promotion of renewable energies.

4. EUROPE AS A WORLD PARTNER

In the world today, we can only deliver fully on our key internal priorities if we succeed on the world scene. Globalisation and increasing interdependence have abolished many of the old distinctions between internal and external policy challenges.

The political clout of the Union should better match its economic weight. To address this goal, the Union must achieve greater political coherence in external action: coherence between different branches of external policy; coherence between internal and external policies; and coherence in action between that of the Union or Member States bilaterally.

If it wants to have a stronger presence and influence on the international scene, it needs to speak with a single voice and promote a coherent stand. Equally, its capacity to influence also depends on its ability to establish coherent and effective relations with key partners, in particular the transatlantic relationship.

Europe must continue its commitment to effective multilateralism as the best way to engage with global partners. The architecture of international organisations needs to be strengthened with a continued process of reform and renewal: the United Nations is the only option for tackling global problems needing global solutions.

4.1. A stronger actor in the world economy

- Europe's role in the world cannot be separated from its internal strength. Its capacity to influence relies strongly upon the health of its economy. The more dynamic Europe's own economic progress and the more effectively Europe can act together, the stronger will be its grasp over world events as well as its ability to achieve globalization with social justice and sustainability. The external dimension of internal policies should be used to the full.
- Future enlargements of the European Union will increase its global strength, with the enlargement process set to move on from accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 to prepare further enlargements, focusing on the negotiations with Croatia and Turkey and addressing the application of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. At the same time, the other Western Balkans will also be brought closer to the membership perspective.
- Europe cannot build prosperity alone. A successful neighbourhood policy will increase the reach of the largest economy in the world. Our futures are closely intertwined and the creation of a more integrated space with our neighbours is a necessity: trade; immigration; networks; services are just a few examples of areas the need for such integrated space. These will be our priorities for relations with Russia, Ukraine and other neighbouring countries. The economic and social progress of the whole Mediterranean area and countries that border it will be a prime European concern.
- International trade is key in promoting competitiveness and growth. We benefit from openness in helping to realise our own competitive potential at home. Europeans should feel confident that the challenges of globalisation can be turned into Europe's advantage and help realise its competitive potential. Trade liberalisation will guarantee new outlets for exports and quality jobs on competitive, open and regulated markets. Negotiations must be pursued with vigour at all levels: principally in the World Trade Organisation, such as in the case of the Doha round, but also with key bilateral and regional partners. Targeted regulatory convergence with key partners has also been shown to be mutually beneficial, and should be pursued in particular in transatlantic relations. We need to develop much closer partnerships, based on the economic interests we share, with our new trading partners in Asia such as China and India, as well as with Brazil and Latin America more generally.

4.2. Global solidarity

- Our external relations are also a way to promote and protect our values outside our borders. Europe must promote stable international growth founded on sustainable development and remain true to its commitment to human rights. It must also target effective implementation of key goals in the area of environmental protection. It must share the responsibility with key partners to this end.
- The Millennium Development Goals set for 2015 must be the guiding objective of Union development policy. Their review in 2005 offers the opportunity to make a

quantum leap with a new development policy statement to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction through effective multilateralism and trade liberalisation facilitating the integration of developing countries into the world economy.

- The Union needs a specific response for Africa. Africa, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, is falling behind. Within the framework of its external cooperation, Europe should draw together action to offer a step change in support to Africa in terms of both quantity and quality. It must target the goal of a real partnership based on a mature trading and political relationship.

4.3. Making security work worldwide

- Europe cannot survive as an island of peace in a world of instability. Europe's external policy needs to be adjusted to international developments including crisis and global security challenges. The Union has the potential to wield much more influence over the long-term political and economic choices determining prosperity and stability in Europe and the wider world. In turn, these influence the well-being and security of Europeans.
- External action is also required to tackle stability and security issues at their root by strongly promoting sustainable development through both multilateral and bilateral channels. They must be at the heart of all the Union's external relationships. A successful neighbourhood policy will be a step towards world stability and security. So will Europe's commitment to play an active role in searching for, and implementing on the ground a Middle East peace settlement. So too would be closer security cooperation with the United States in the framework of a re-invigorated transatlantic partnership.
- European security and defence capabilities need to match these challenges by providing a fully credible capability for action, through a full implementation of the European Security Strategy and a more effective European Security and Defence Policy.

These are the strategic objectives the Commission intends to pursue for the duration of its mandate. In preparing them, the Commission has taken account of the debates in the European Parliament in the run-up to its own nomination and in December 2004. It has also taken the existing multi-annual programme of the upcoming presidencies into account. Due to their comprehensive nature, the Commission puts them forward as a basis for a common platform of the European institutions for action in the next 5 years.

Hopefully, an agreement can be reached on them by the three institutions before the end of the Luxembourg Presidency. Once agreed, the strategic objectives will offer a stable framework for the institutions to work together in pursuit of common targets and in playing their role in the proposed partnership.