

**Jaromír Jech**  
**Executive Vice-President**

Prague, 11 January 2010  
Ref.: 38/2010

Dear Angelika,

I am coming to you in response to Cornelia Schröder's e-mail as of 21 December 2009 requesting CEMR member associations to react to CEMR's position to the "EU 2020" Strategy (COM(2009) 647/2).

The Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (hereinafter as SMOCR) would like to thank the CEMR for preparing a complex position that answers the key points suggested by the European Commission to be the future direction of the EU towards the year 2020. We acknowledge that such work requires a lot of efforts and a great deal of diplomacy.

Let me inform you that the Czech municipalities in general support the CEMR's position, which is what SMOCR states in its own position attached to this letter. However, we would still like to draw your attention to a few facts that are from our point of view insufficiently reflected in your Position, but they are still very important.

Based on the point of view of majority of the "new" member states (the EU-12) we stress that the EU Strategy 2020 rather too much concentrates on the so-called "soft" projects. It insufficiently reflects the need for building up new, or recovery and modernising the current infrastructure, which is a condition sine qua non for any further development. We therefore ask for CEMR to mention this in its Position. **This comment is fundamental.**

In the course of work on our own position we have raised a concern among CEMR's members to the role of Cohesion Policy in the EU Strategy 2020 as it has been suggested in the Position. In that sense we agree with Bas van den Barg from the Association of Netherlands Provinces, who expressed his opinion like this: „*Cohesion Policy is a tool to deliver some of the EU2020 objectives, but certainly not the tool to deliver all the goals. Cohesion Policy is much more.*“ With a view to that SMOCR would welcome if the reference to the Cohesion policy being an instrument to achieve the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy was not mentioned in the CEMR's position (point 21). **This comment is fundamental.**

From the point of view of the Czech local authorities, mentioning Cohesion policy in the EU Strategy 2020 is rather twofold. Of course we understand that the EU should in its ten-year strategy integrate various policies and that they should direct in the same way. However,

this could also inspire the European Commission to further limit regional and local authorities in their competence to set their own priorities and objectives. In that sense we are mainly afraid of raising the earmarking levels. We therefore ask for CEMR to stress in its position that earmarking should not become a tool to prevent local and regional authorities from setting their own priorities and objectives and that its levels should not be raised in the future. **This comment is fundamental.**

The EU Strategy 2020 concentrates mainly on industry and services. However, great amount of the EU budget is used for preserving the EU countryside with great amount of the EU budget being invested into the agriculture. However, today's agricultural policy includes also the aspect of the rural development. And this is what we miss in the EU Strategy 2020: the context of the rural development. Besides its emphasis on the cohesion and territorial policies we therefore ask CEMR to stress that, too. **This comment is fundamental.**

Last, but not least, CEMR in its position states: "*Also the European Parliament should get a more prominent role in the new Strategy.*" (point 15 of the CEMR's position). Although the position of the European Parliament should be unquestionably strong with a view to the fact that its members are elected in general elections, it should be first of all the CEMR that should make prompt efforts to strengthen its prominent role as the voice of local authorities. The European Parliament is a strong actor on its own and in our opinion its role need not be promoted in a CEMR's position.

Dear Angelika, I believe that our comments will contribute to strengthening the role of regional and local authorities in the EU Strategy 2020.

Best regards,



**Attached:** Position of the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic to the European Commission's consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy (COM(2009) 647/2).

**Council of European Municipalities  
and Regions (CEMR)  
Dr Angelika Poth-Mögele  
Director of Policy  
Square de Meeûs 1  
B-1000 Bruxelles**