

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

Brussels,
BARROSO (2012) 1286054
BARROSO (2012)

Dear Presidents,

Thank you very much for your letter of 19 October enclosing the Austrian Social Partners' declaration "Future of Europe". This is a constructive and timely contribution to the Commission's ongoing, intensive efforts with Member States, other institutions and social partners, to ensure that Europe comes out of the crisis stronger.

Your report highlights the need to stabilise the Eurozone and overcome the financial crisis, which is at the heart of our action. The Commission has made proposals to enhance EU-level supervision of the financial sector and has taken steps towards a banking union. The Commission has just recently presented a blueprint for a European Economic and Monetary Union, with concrete proposals for the short, medium and long term, on an integrated financial framework, budgetary framework and economic policy framework. An Economic and Monetary Union will not function without strong mechanisms for democratic legitimacy and accountability that will form an integral part of the reflection.

Moreover, since the beginning of the crisis, the Commission has consistently called for growth enhancing measures and in 2010 presented a comprehensive Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In the Annual Growth Survey for 2013, the Commission highlighted as priorities (which are also reflected in your report) the need to pursue differentiated growth-friendly fiscal consolidation, to restore normal lending, to promote competitiveness, to tackle unemployment and to modernise public administration. Building on these five priorities, the Annual Growth Survey gives detailed and concrete input to policy makers.

../.

Mr Erich FOGLAR
Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)
Mr Christoph LEITL
Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)
Mr Herbert TUMPEL
Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (BAK)
Mr Gerhard WLODKOWSKI
Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (LKÖ)

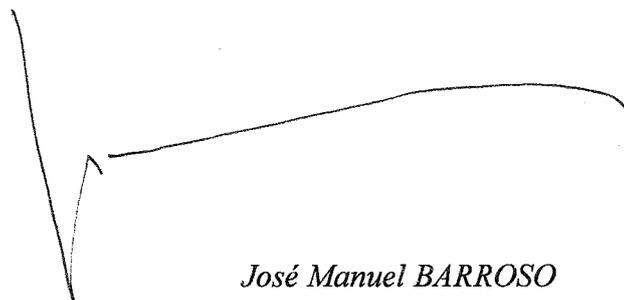
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However, we are not calling for growth at any cost, but for smart, sustainable and inclusive action. This principle guides our thinking and our proposals on a daily basis. All three pillars are essential and intrinsically linked. For instance, the level of youth unemployment is unacceptable in a number of Member States. This is why last year the Commission launched the youth opportunities initiative and in spring brought together "action teams" to explore solutions with the Member States suffering from the highest youth unemployment rates. Further impetus will be provided by the employment package, which the Commission tabled this week, proposing inter alia a youth guarantee. Employment levels also need to be increased among older workers. The EU target is a global target for the working age population, so that everybody can benefit from inclusion in the labour market.

The tasks ahead of us are significant. The commitment and cooperation of all institutions, Member States and societal actors is required to deliver results to our citizens. Responsible social partners like yourselves are particularly relevant partners in this regard. I have noted your support in particular to two Commission initiatives subject to discussion in the Council, namely the proposals on the financial transaction tax and on the common consolidated corporate tax base.

Thanking you again for your cooperation, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left that curves into a horizontal line extending to the right, ending in a small hook.

José Manuel BARROSO