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COMISIÓN EUROPEA

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DOCUMENTO DE TRABAJO DE LOS SERVICIOS DE LA COMISIÓN

Documento de evaluación de la Estrategia de Lisboa

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INTRODUCCIÓN

La Estrategia de Lisboa original se puso en marcha en 2000 como respuesta a los desafíos de la globalización y del envejecimiento. El Consejo Europeo fijó como objetivo de la Estrategia que en 2010 la UE se convirtiese «en la economía basada en el conocimiento más competitiva y dinámica del mundo, capaz de crecer económicamente de manera sostenible con más y mejores empleos y con mayor cohesión social», pero respetando el medio ambiente. En esta declaración subyace la constatación de que, para mejorar su nivel de vida y mantener su modelo social único, la UE debía aumentar su productividad y competitividad frente a una competencia global cada vez más fuerte, el cambio tecnológico y el envejecimiento de la población. Y se reconocía que la agenda de reformas no podía llevarse a cabo solo a nivel de la UE (como sucedió, por ejemplo, con el programa del mercado único de 1992), porque como muchas áreas implicaban competencias de los Estados miembros, sería necesaria una estrecha colaboración entre éstos y la UE para obtener resultados. También se reconoció por primera vez que las economías de los Estados miembros están intrínsecamente ligadas y que la acción (o falta de acción) de un Estado miembro podría tener consecuencias significativas para la UE en conjunto.

No obstante, la Estrategia original evolucionó gradualmente hacia una estructura excesivamente compleja con objetivos y acciones múltiples y una división confusa de las responsabilidades y tareas, particularmente entre la UE y el nivel nacional. Por ello, la Estrategia de Lisboa se relanzó en 2005 tras una revisión intermedia. A fin de tener un mayor sentido de las prioridades, la Estrategia relanzada se centró en el crecimiento y el empleo, estableciéndose una nueva estructura de gobernanza basada en un enfoque de asociación entre los Estados miembros y las instituciones de la UE.

Al evaluar los diez años de la Estrategia de Lisboa, lo que en definitiva cuenta es el impacto en el crecimiento y el empleo. Sin embargo, la evaluación de este impacto no es fácil, pues el ciclo económico y los acontecimientos exteriores, así como las políticas públicas, desempeñan un papel determinante. En definitiva, el objetivo de la Estrategia de Lisboa era mejorar el ritmo y la calidad de las reformas a nivel nacional y europeo: por tanto, la evaluación debe también considerar si la Estrategia configuró las agendas de la reforma forjando un mayor consenso entre los interesados respecto de los retos y respuestas políticas.

La Estrategia de Lisboa no se ha aplicado de forma aislada. La Unión ha crecido de 15 Estados miembros en 2000 a 27 en la actualidad y el euro se ha convertido en una divisa importante: la pertenencia a la eurozona ha crecido de 12 países en 1999 a 16 actualmente y el euro ha constituido un ancla para la estabilidad macroeconómica durante la crisis actual. Por otra parte, la Estrategia de Lisboa para el Crecimiento y el Empleo está llegando a su fin en un momento en que el impacto de la crisis económica se deja sentir profundamente en Europa, como en otras partes del mundo. La crisis ha tenido efectos profundos y duraderos en las economías de Europa: el PIB disminuyó un 4 % en 2009; el desempleo se acerca al 10 %; las finanzas públicas están destrozadas, con déficit que alcanzan el 7 % del PIB; y los niveles de deuda han aumentado un 20 % en dos años, dando al traste con 20 años de saneamiento. El objetivo del presente documento es evaluar el impacto de la Estrategia de Lisboa, resaltar sus

logros y determinar las áreas donde el progreso ha sido decepcionante. Mirando con perspectiva el recorrido de la Estrategia de Lisboa, se constata que el mundo ha cambiado inevitablemente en mayor medida y en formas distintas a las previstas en aquel momento por los analistas y los responsables políticos. La publicación de esta breve evaluación de la Estrategia de Lisboa es una oportunidad para identificar sus puntos fuertes, a fin de mantenerlos en la estrategia posterior, y para resaltar sus deficiencias a fin de no repetirlos. La primera parte del presente documento contiene las principales conclusiones y la segunda describe más detalladamente los acontecimientos, avances y deficiencias de los distintos ámbitos.

PRINCIPALES CONCLUSIONES

En conjunto, la Estrategia de Lisboa ha tenido un impacto positivo en la UE, aunque no se hayan alcanzado sus objetivos principales (es decir, un nivel de empleo del 70 % y un gasto en I+D del 3 % del PIB). El nivel de empleo de la UE alcanzó el 66 % en 2008 (frente al 62 % de 2000), antes de volver a caer a consecuencia de la crisis. Sin embargo, la UE no ha logrado superar el desfase de incremento de la productividad con respecto a los principales países industrializados: el gasto total en I+D en la UE, expresado como porcentaje del PIB, apenas mejoró marginalmente (del 1,82 % en 2000 al 1,9 % en 2008). Sin embargo, sería demasiado simplista concluir que la Estrategia fracasó por no haber alcanzado estos objetivos. Por las razones que figuran en el anexo, la Estrategia ha abierto nuevas vías al promover acciones comunes para abordar los principales retos a largo plazo de la UE. Las principales conclusiones que pueden sacarse son las siguientes:

La Estrategia de Lisboa ha contribuido a crear un amplio consenso sobre las reformas que necesita la UE...

La renovación de la Estrategia en 2005 contribuyó a aclarar su ámbito y objetivos. En particular, la definición de cuatro áreas prioritarias (investigación e innovación; inversión en las personas y modernización de los mercados de trabajo; apertura del potencial empresarial, particularmente de las PYME; y energía y cambio climático) supuso un importante paso adelante en la definición de los objetivos en los que debe centrarse el programa. En todos los Estados miembros, estas cuestiones ocupan ahora los primeros lugares en las prioridades políticas, demostrando la capacidad de la Estrategia de Lisboa para determinar la agenda de reformas. Por ejemplo, el éxito del concepto de «flexiguridad» representa la capacidad de la Estrategia de Lisboa para fomentar y centrar los debates políticos y generar soluciones mutuamente aceptables, aunque en muchos casos aún es preciso aplicar las medidas pertinentes. Por otra parte, la Estrategia ha resultado suficientemente flexible y dinámica para adaptarse a los nuevos retos y prioridades políticas surgidas con el paso del tiempo (por ejemplo, energía y cambio climático) y flexible para absorber gradualmente a los nuevos Estados miembros a medida que la Unión se ha ido ampliando.

... y ha logrado beneficios concretos para los ciudadanos y empresas de la UE...

Las reformas acordadas en el contexto de la Estrategia de Lisboa han producido beneficios tangibles, incluido un mayor empleo (antes de la crisis se crearon 18 millones de nuevos puestos de trabajo), un entorno empresarial más dinámico con menos burocracia (por ejemplo, la Comisión Europea ha propuesto reducir las cargas administrativas relativas a las normas de la UE por valor de más de 40 000 millones EUR, medida que está a la espera de su adopción por el Consejo y el Parlamento) y más posibilidades de elección para los consumidores, y un futuro más sostenible (por ejemplo, el crecimiento económico ha ido acompañado en muchos

Estados miembros de una tendencia a la baja en la intensidad energética). Si bien no siempre es posible demostrar un nexo causal entre las reformas de la Estrategia de Lisboa y los resultados en términos de crecimiento y empleo, existen pruebas de que las reformas han desempeñado un papel importante.

... pero un mayor empleo no siempre ha logrado sacar a los ciudadanos de la pobreza...

No obstante, el aumento del empleo no ha llegado suficientemente a las personas que se encuentran más alejadas del mercado de trabajo, y el empleo no siempre ha logrado sacar a los ciudadanos de la pobreza. Algunos grupos siguen enfrentándose a dificultades específicas como un difícil acceso a la formación para quienes carecen de cualificaciones, o la falta de servicios de capacitación. En algunos Estados miembros, el mercado de trabajo sigue estando segmentado y en otros la pobreza infantil todavía está muy presente. Es preciso extraer lecciones de estos hechos.

Las reformas estructurales han hecho a la economía de la UE más resistente y nos han ayudado a superar la borrasca...

Durante la mayor parte de la pasada década, las finanzas públicas siguieron la dirección correcta, con menores déficit y niveles de deuda, y la viabilidad a largo plazo mejoró con la reforma de los sistemas de pensiones. El saneamiento presupuestario creó las condiciones para un estímulo fiscal coordinado cuando la crisis comenzó a sentirse y la demanda disminuyó, y contribuyó a estabilizar la economía evitando un ciclo vicioso de demanda decreciente, menor inversión y mayor desempleo. Del mismo modo, las reformas del mercado de trabajo y unas políticas laborales activas han contribuido a proteger el empleo durante la crisis y a detener el incremento del paro, mientras que la eurozona ha resultado ser un amarre para la estabilidad macroeconómica durante la crisis. El hecho de que la Estrategia de Lisboa centrara su atención en las reformas estructurales a medio y largo plazo facilitó sin duda el diseño y la rápida introducción del plan europeo de recuperación económica a finales de 2008, garantizando que las respuestas políticas a corto plazo fueran coherentes con los desafíos a medio y largo plazo a los que se enfrenta la UE.

Sin embargo, la Estrategia de Lisboa no estaba suficientemente preparada para abordar parte de las causas de la crisis desde el principio...

La Estrategia de Lisboa se centró en las reformas estructurales adecuadas: I+D e innovación, mercados laborales («flexibilidad», cualificaciones y formación continua), entorno empresarial y saneamiento de las finanzas públicas, todos ellos ámbitos cruciales para preparar a la UE ante la globalización y el envejecimiento y para reforzar su prosperidad. Sin embargo, mirando con perspectiva, está claro que la Estrategia debería haberse organizado mejor para centrarse más en los elementos críticos que desempeñaron un papel clave en el origen de la crisis, como un control firme y el riesgo sistémico en los mercados financieros, las burbujas especulativas (por ejemplo, en los mercados inmobiliarios) y el consumismo inducido por el crédito que, en algunos Estados miembros y junto con unos incrementos salariales superiores al incremento de la productividad, propiciaron los elevados déficit por cuenta corriente de la actualidad. Los desequilibrios macroeconómicos y los problemas de competitividad generaron la crisis económica y no fueron abordados adecuadamente al vigilar las economías de los Estados miembros mediante el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento y la Estrategia de Lisboa, que tendieron a funcionar paralelamente en vez de complementarse entre sí.

Si bien se avanzó mucho, el ritmo de ejecución de las reformas fue lento y desigual...

Aunque la Estrategia produjo beneficios tangibles y ha contribuido a lograr un consenso sobre la agenda de reformas de la UE, no se ha superado el desfase entre compromisos y acciones. Los Estados miembros con mejores resultados presionaron con reformas más ambiciosas, mientras que otros acumularon gradualmente un importante desfase en los resultados. Esto significó que se perdieron importantes beneficios y sinergias. Lo mismo puede decirse de las políticas individuales que configuran la Estrategia de Lisboa, con progresos en algunas áreas más pronunciados que en otras: los avances en el ámbito microeconómico quedaron rezagados con respecto a los ámbitos del empleo y la macroeconomía. El objetivo de la Estrategia de Lisboa de promover una mayor integración política a través de las dimensiones macroeconómica, del empleo y microeconómica (incluido el medio ambiente) solo ha tenido un éxito parcial.

No se ha reconocido suficientemente la importancia de la interdependencia en una economía estrechamente integrada, particularmente en la eurozona...

En nuestras economías interconectadas, solo se aprovechará el potencial de crecimiento y empleo si todos los Estados miembros aplican las reformas más o menos al mismo ritmo, habida cuenta de sus condiciones nacionales y del impacto de sus acciones (o de la falta de ellas) en otros Estados miembros y en la Unión en su conjunto. La crisis económica ha atraído la atención a esta interdependencia: no solo se han perdido importantes efectos positivos y sinergias a causa del desigual progreso, sino que en algunos casos se han desencadenado efectos negativos.

Un vínculo más fuerte entre la Estrategia de Lisboa y otros instrumentos o medidas e iniciativas sectoriales de la UE habría mejorado su eficacia...

Los vínculos entre la Estrategia de Lisboa y otros instrumentos o estrategias de la UE, como el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, la Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible o la Agenda Social, no han sido suficientemente fuertes, de manera que en vez de reforzarse mutuamente, parte de las estrategias han actuado de forma aislada. Otras prioridades políticas importantes, como la integración del mercado financiero, brillaron por su ausencia en la Estrategia de Lisboa. Asimismo, en cuanto a las medidas individuales, las ambiciones aprobadas al más alto nivel político no siempre han dado lugar a una toma de decisiones más rápida o a evitar su dilución. Por ejemplo, mientras que el Consejo Europeo ha subrayado en varias ocasiones la importancia de la innovación y la necesidad de una Patente Comunitaria fuerte y asequible, el Consejo (aún) no ha dado una solución. En otras áreas, como la supresión de obstáculos al mercado interior, la mejora del libre flujo de contenidos (digitales), el fomento de la movilidad laboral o la aceleración de la fijación de normas interoperables, el progreso ha sido demasiado lento para producir resultados significativos a pesar de los llamamientos de los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno para intensificar esfuerzos. El Programa Comunitario de Lisboa, introducido como parte de la reforma de 2005 para establecer acciones en toda la UE, no generó el impulso de cambio necesario.

La asignación de fondos estructurales ha ayudado a movilizar considerables inversiones para el crecimiento y el empleo, aunque queda mucho camino por recorrer...

La «Lisboización» de los fondos estructurales ha ayudado a dirigir considerables fondos europeos (unos 228 000 millones EUR durante el período de financiación 2007-2013) a inversiones que fomentan el crecimiento, como la innovación, la I+D y el apoyo a las

empresas. La mayor parte de estas inversiones se harán efectivas en los próximos cinco años. Los vínculos entre los marcos estratégicos nacionales de referencia, que definen las prioridades de política regional, y los programas nacionales de reforma, que definen las prioridades socioeconómicas, han ayudado a garantizar una mayor coherencia, pero podrían haberse desarrollado más. El uso de fondos estructurales también ha contribuido a que la Estrategia de Lisboa sea tangible para las autoridades regionales y locales, que deben desempeñar un papel importante en su aplicación. Sin embargo, la experiencia muestra que el impacto de los fondos estructurales puede reforzarse mejorando las estructuras subyacentes (por ejemplo, en investigación e innovación o en los mercados laborales), simplificando los marcos reguladores (por ejemplo, entorno empresarial o desarrollo de infraestructuras) y reforzando la capacidad y la eficiencia administrativa en algunos Estados miembros. También hay margen para reflexionar sobre cómo movilizar en mayor medida el presupuesto de la UE en apoyo del crecimiento y el empleo.

La asociación entre la UE y los Estados miembros ha sido generalmente una experiencia positiva...

El concepto de asociación introducido en 2005 ha tenido un impacto positivo en la cooperación y división de responsabilidades entre las instituciones de la Unión Europea y los Estados miembros. El diálogo resultante entre la Comisión y los Estados miembros dio lugar a un intercambio constructivo de impresiones en el que la Comisión aconseja a los Estados miembros sobre las opciones políticas, basándose a menudo en su experiencia con otras partes de la Unión, mientras que los Estados miembros ofrecen una perspectiva nacional, destacando las oportunidades de reforma e identificando obstáculos. En algunos casos, los Estados miembros han sumado a las autoridades regionales y locales, así como a los interlocutores sociales y a otros interesados, a la asociación de la Estrategia de Lisboa, reconociendo que ejercen responsabilidades importantes en el marco de la Estrategia (por ejemplo, política de mercado laboral activa, educación, desarrollo de infraestructuras y entorno empresarial). Sin embargo, en muchos casos la implicación de los interlocutores regionales, locales y sociales ha estado menos desarrollada y los interesados participaron sobre una base ad hoc en su caso, a pesar de que las instancias regionales y locales tienen a menudo competencias políticas importantes y recursos significativos en los ámbitos de la Estrategia de Lisboa.

Pero la aplicación ha sufrido de una apropiación variable y de unas estructuras de gobernanza débiles ...

El papel del Consejo Europeo en el liderazgo de la reforma no se definió claramente. Podría afirmarse que a menudo el Consejo Europeo fue excesivamente preparado mediante un trabajo intensivo en sus diversas formaciones, dejando poco espacio para debates de fondo y decisiones por parte de los propios Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno. El papel del Parlamento Europeo también podría haberse definido más claramente de modo que pudiera haber desempeñado un papel más importante en el impulso a la Estrategia.

En cuanto a los instrumentos, las Directrices Integradas, basadas en el Tratado, han ayudado a fijar la dirección de las políticas económicas y de empleo nacionales. Aunque las Directrices eran amplias y podrían haber ayudado a sentar la base conceptual de las reformas, su carácter genérico y la falta de una jerarquía interna limitaron su impacto en las políticas nacionales. Los programas nacionales de reforma, que se basan en estas Directrices, fueron herramientas útiles para promover unas estrategias amplias de crecimiento con mayores vínculos entre las políticas macroeconómica, microeconómica y de empleo. No obstante, el enfoque de los programas nacionales de reforma difirió considerablemente entre los distintos Estados

miembros, con agendas ambiciosas y coherentes para algunos países, que contrastaban con agendas vagas y más descriptivas en otros que carecían del apoyo de los Gobiernos y los parlamentos nacionales (y regionales). Los objetivos a nivel de la UE eran demasiado numerosos y no reflejaban suficientemente las diferencias en las posiciones de partida entre Estados miembros, particularmente tras la ampliación. La ausencia de compromisos claramente acordados también exacerbó los problemas de asunción. Por ejemplo, los resultados de algunos Estados miembros ya habían sobrepasado el objetivo, mientras que para otros los objetivos se fijaron a tal nivel que su consecución en los calendarios establecidos resultaba poco realista.

Las recomendaciones específicas para cada país han tenido un impacto variable...

Las recomendaciones políticas específicas para cada país, un instrumento basado en el Tratado que el Consejo dirige a los Estados miembros sobre la base de una recomendación de la Comisión cuando el progreso debe intensificarse, constituyeron un componente importante de la Estrategia. En algunos Estados miembros, estas recomendaciones produjeron un impacto real: al establecer sus políticas en una dimensión europea y mostrar que otros países abordaban las mismas cuestiones, estos Estados miembros utilizaron las recomendaciones para crear una presión nacional en pro de las reformas. Sin embargo, en otros, las recomendaciones no dieron lugar a debates políticos ni a un seguimiento efectivo. Su formulación tendió a ir desde consejos bastante específicos hasta orientaciones generales. En el último caso, resultaba más difícil que los Estados miembros evaluaran qué medidas se necesitaban para cumplir los objetivos de la recomendación, mientras que en todos los casos un marco de evaluación sólido y transparente habría podido contribuir a una mayor aceptación de las recomendaciones por parte de los Estados miembros.

Se ha intensificado el aprendizaje político y el intercambio de buenas prácticas...

Todos los Estados miembros han tenido éxito con la aplicación de reformas, por lo que existe un gran margen para el aprendizaje mutuo y la difusión de buenas prácticas, teniendo en cuenta los contextos y tradiciones nacionales. Desde 2005, ha habido una intensificación del aprendizaje de políticas y del intercambio de buenas prácticas. Los Estados miembros han mostrado un gran interés en las experiencias de los otros en áreas que van desde la reforma de las pensiones y la atención sanitaria, la «flexiguridad» y la adquisición de cualificaciones, la gestión presupuestaria plurianual, la mejora del entorno empresarial (cómo acortar el plazo para crear una empresa), o la innovación (más de la mitad de los Estados miembros han adoptado el sistema de «vales de innovación»), hasta la lucha contra la pobreza y la exclusión social. La mayoría de los intercambios tuvieron lugar en el contexto del método abierto de coordinación. Al parecer, la eficacia del aprendizaje de políticas es mayor cuando hay objetivos claros y mensurables (por ejemplo, reducir las cargas administrativas en un 25 % o crear empresas en una semana) e implicación tanto de expertos técnicos (adaptación de políticas) como del nivel político (facilitar la aplicación).

La comunicación ha sido el talón de Aquiles de la Estrategia....

Globalmente, no se prestó suficiente atención a la comunicación ni de los beneficios de la Estrategia de Lisboa ni de las consecuencias que la falta de reformas tendría para la UE (o para la eurozona). Por consiguiente, la sensibilización y la implicación de los ciudadanos y el apoyo público a los objetivos de la Estrategia siguieron siendo débiles al nivel de la UE y en los niveles nacionales no siempre se coordinaron suficientemente. En los casos en que los

Estados miembros han realizado acciones de comunicación sobre las reformas vinculadas a la Estrategia de Lisboa, éstas raramente se presentaron como parte de una estrategia europea.

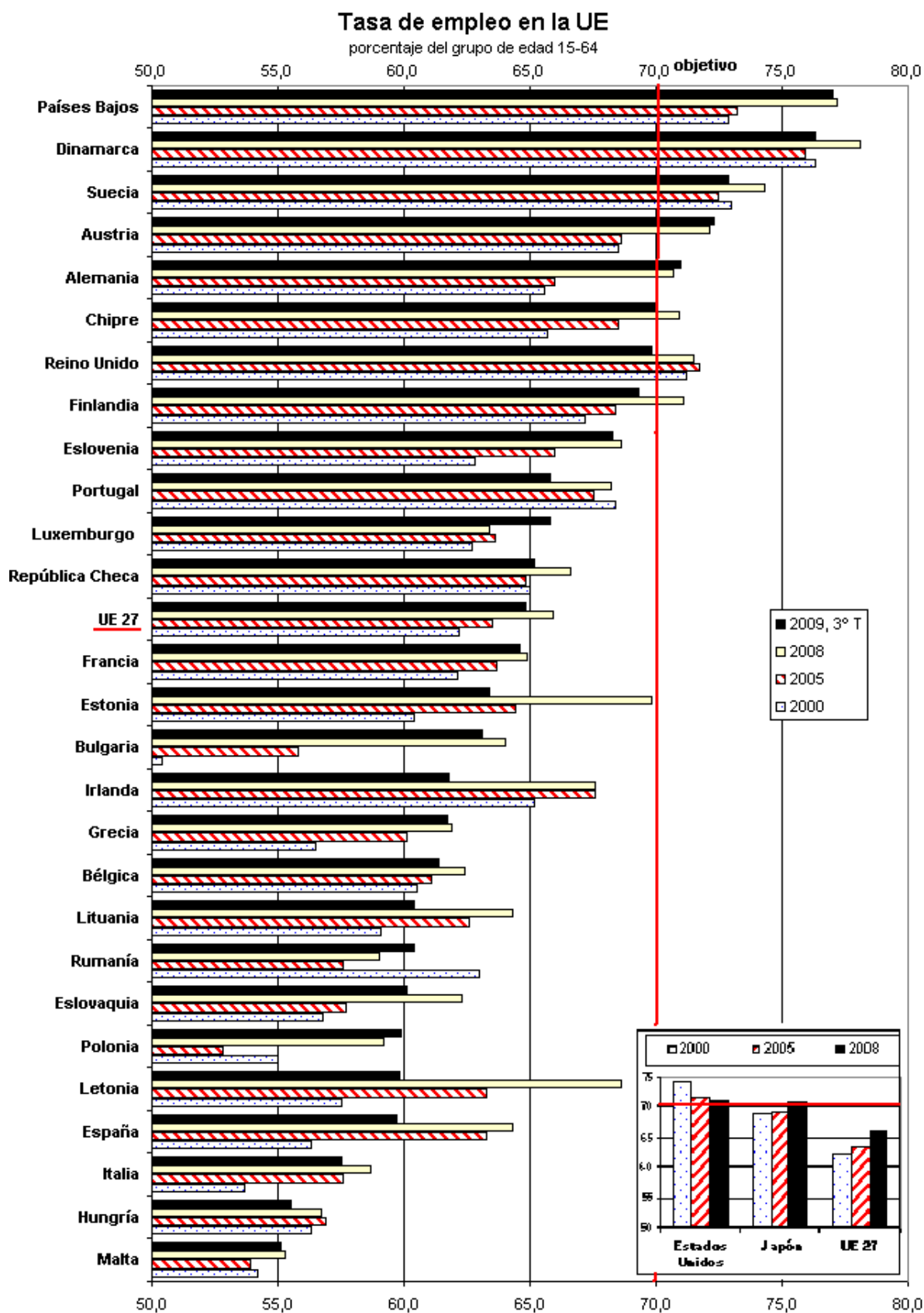
Podrían haberse realizado más esfuerzos para reforzar la dimensión de la eurozona...

La Estrategia de Lisboa coincidió con los primeros diez años de existencia del euro. Las Directrices Integradas reconocían la mayor necesidad de coordinar las políticas económicas en la eurozona, y desde 2007 se dirigieron recomendaciones específicas a los países de la eurozona centradas en las medidas que presentan un interés particular para el buen funcionamiento de la UEM. En la práctica, sin embargo, el seguimiento por los países de la eurozona y en el «Eurogrupo» ha sido relativamente limitado. El impacto muy diverso de la crisis en la eurozona ha puesto de manifiesto que algunos países han progresado mucho más que otros en cuanto a la aplicación de sus programas de reformas estructurales y al mantenimiento de su competitividad, lo que explica los grandes desequilibrios en el interior de la eurozona que crean dificultades para el buen funcionamiento de la UEM.

La dimensión exterior habría podido reforzarse

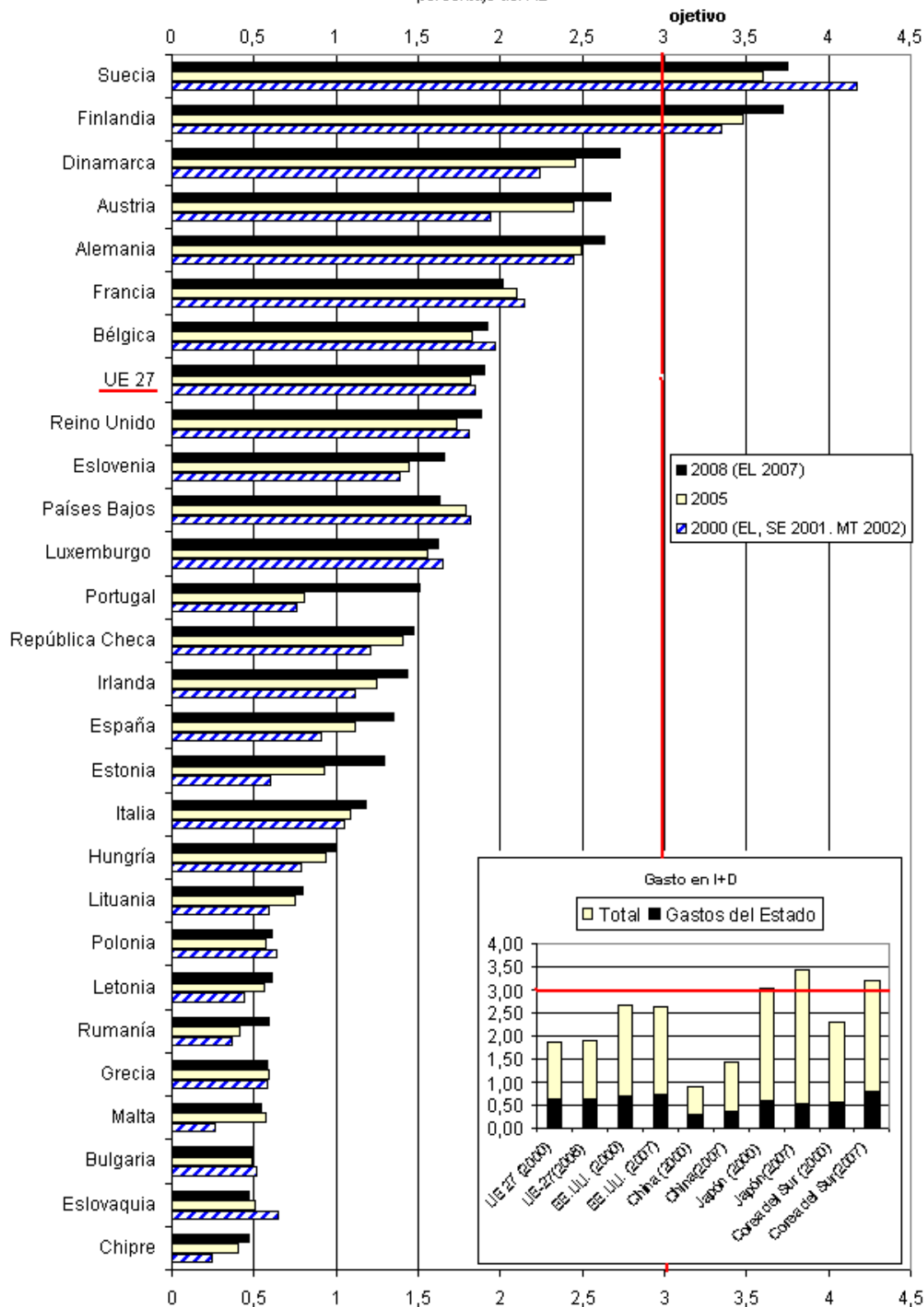
La estrategia quizás ha sido demasiado introspectiva, centrándose más en la preparación de la UE para la globalización que en tratar de influir en ella. La crisis ha dejado muy patente que la economía mundial es interdependiente, ya que sus efectos se han propagado rápidamente por todo el mundo. Desde entonces, la UE trabaja activamente en el G-20 para establecer un marco sólido que permita suprimir las lagunas observadas y evitar que se repitan los mismos errores. También podría haberse prestado más atención a los vínculos intrínsecos que existen entre la economía de la UE y las grandes potencias mundiales como Estados Unidos, Japón y los países BRIC. Por último, se hicieron pocos esfuerzos para comparar los resultados de la UE con los de sus principales socios comerciales y para evaluar, en términos relativos, el progreso de la UE.

GRÁFICOS:



Gasto en I+D

porcentaje del PIB

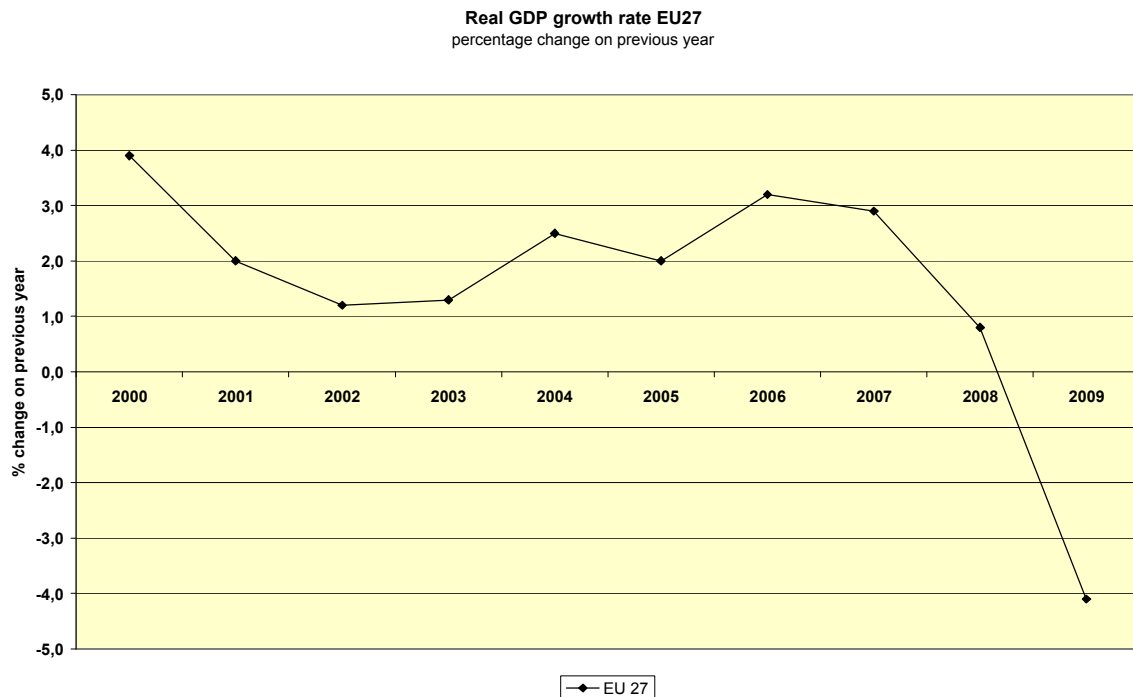


ANNEX: STOCKTAKE OF PROGRESS IN SPECIFIC AREAS

POLICY RESULTS

Introduction

Until the crisis hit, Europe was moving in the right direction. Labour markets were performing well with participation levels rising to 66% and unemployment levels dropping to 7%, while the graph below shows that EU GDP growth was just short of the Lisbon Strategy's envisaged 3% average growth. Although some of this progress was undoubtedly due to cyclical factors, developments in labour markets in particular owed much to the structural reform efforts of EU Member States.



Source Eurostat – 2009 forecasts DG ECFIN

This technical annex analyses in more detail developments in a number of critical Lisbon areas. Starting with an overview of progress in the macro-economic area, the annex is organised around the four priority areas: more research, development and innovation; unlocking business potential, especially for SMEs; investing in people; and a greener economy.

i) Macroeconomic resilience and financing

Sound macroeconomic policies are essential to support growth and jobs by creating the right framework conditions for job creation and investment.

Since the launch of the Lisbon strategy in 2000, the EU economy has experienced periods of cyclical upturns and downturns. The downturn 2002-2003 was followed by five years of increasingly strong economic developments characterised by price stability, steady economic

growth and job creation plus declining levels of unemployment. The backdrop to the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy in 2005 was therefore a stable macroeconomic environment, which prevailed broadly until 2008. The economic crisis radically altered this. While average GDP growth in the EU had risen to around 3% per year in 2006-2007, it plunged to -4% in 2009. Similarly, unemployment increased from a low of 7% in 2007 to its current rate approaching 10%.

Maintaining sound and sustainable public finances is a Treaty obligation, with fiscal policy co-ordinated through the Stability and Growth Pact and reflected in the Integrated Guidelines. Following a generally balanced position in Member States' public finances in 2000, deficits widened over 2001-03. This was followed by a continuous improvement in nominal terms until 2007, when again a balanced position for the EU as a whole appeared achievable. This led to reduced government debt ratios, with fewer and fewer Member States subject to the Excessive Deficit Procedure. However, the crisis has had a dramatic impact on public finances, with average deficits reaching 7% of GDP in 2009 and debt approaching 80% of GDP, an increase of around 20 percentage points in just two years. This indicates that budgetary consolidation during the "good times" was insufficient.

Given the projected budgetary impact of ageing populations, ensuring the long-term sustainability of public finances has been a key policy objective. A three-pronged strategy has been pursued to ensure fiscal sustainability, consisting of faster debt reduction, pension and health-care reform, plus labour market reforms (especially to extend working lives). Over the past decade, many Member States have enacted reforms of their pensions systems supported by the Open Method of Coordination, which looks at the access and adequacy of pension systems as well as their fiscal sustainability. Projections¹ confirm that these reforms have had a major impact in terms of containing future growth in age-related spending, and thus contributing to the sustainability of public finances. However, progress was uneven across Member States, and pension reform has been lagging in some countries. Moreover, with life expectancy continuously increasing and health care costs rising steadily, the challenge of ensuring sustainable modern social protection systems is far from over. The recent budgetary deterioration across the EU has substantially worsened the overall sustainability position.

Maintaining wage developments in line with productivity and improving incentives to work, contribute to macro-economic stability and growth, and were central objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Wage moderation has largely prevailed in most countries, supporting a low inflation environment and employment growth. However, in several Member States wages have systematically outpaced productivity growth, leading to a steady loss in competitiveness. The situation is most acute for some euro area Member States. Also, within a flexicurity strategy, reforms to tax and benefit systems to make work pay have gradually helped to reduce unemployment and inactivity rates. In terms of benefits policy, continuous progress has been made to strengthen conditionality of benefits, while on the tax side widespread efforts have been made to reduce the tax wedge, in particular for low wage earners.

Competitiveness positions, especially within the euro area, have developed differently across countries, with some Member States accumulating large external imbalances. This is due to a variety of factors, including wage developments exceeding productivity developments, rapid credit growth and the emergence of bubbles in housing and asset markets. While in some cases current account imbalances have fallen in nominal terms as a result of the crisis as

¹ Commission and Economic Policy Committee

exports and imports plummeted, underlying structural problems remain. In some countries, external imbalances have become so urgent as to require balance of payments support from the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While EU-level surveillance did point to the risks of imbalances, the urgency of the situation given the degree of inter-linkages across countries was not fully understood. This underlines the need to improve surveillance and coordination, while the crisis has also highlighted the importance of focusing on financial supervision and on monitoring developments, notably on housing markets in order to avoid "bubbles" occurring.

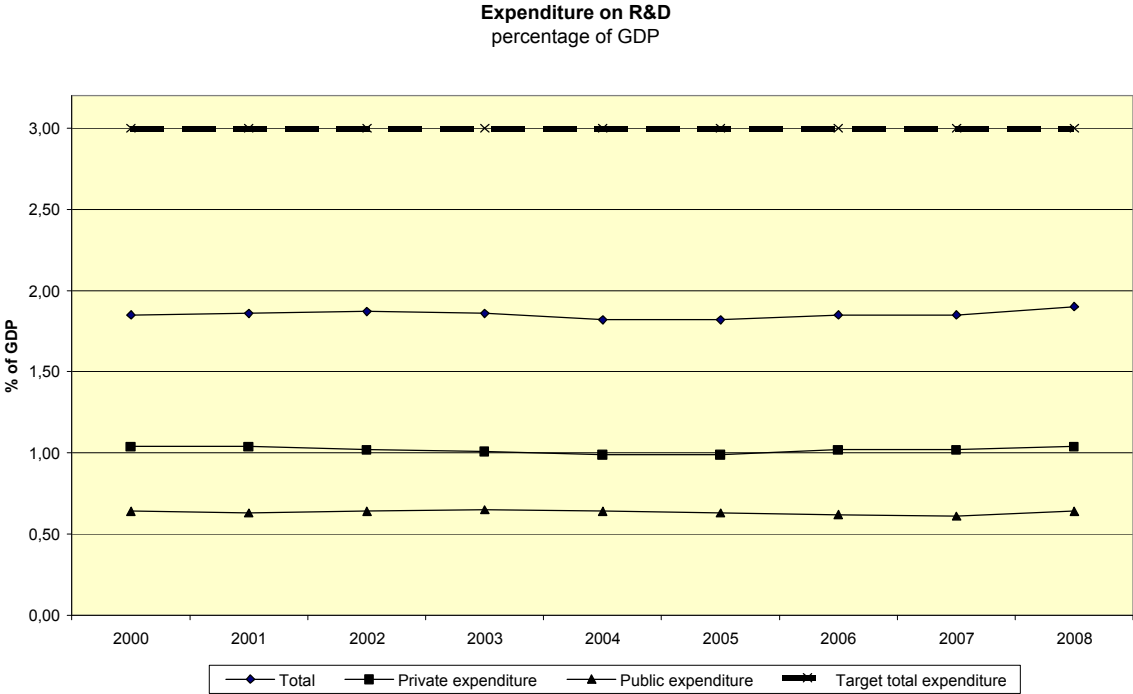
The Lisbon Strategy explicitly recognised the euro area dimension in both the Integrated Guidelines and the Commission Annual Progress Reports. A growing policy concern has been the gradual widening of the gap between competitiveness positions within the euro area, and the implications this has for a currency area. Indeed, specific policy recommendations to the euro area members as a group were issued on this basis over the last few years. However, the impact of this additional focus on the euro area in the Lisbon Strategy is hard to quantify in terms of a greater reform efforts compared to other Member States.

The 2005 re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy coincided with preparations for the 2007-2013 cycle of cohesion policy programming, providing an opportunity to place cohesion policy at the heart of the new Lisbon system. More than € 250 billion from the Structural and Cohesion Funds were earmarked over the 2007-2013 financial perspective for priority structural reforms in areas such as research, innovation, information technologies, business and human resource development. Such funding arrangements guarantee investment for priority projects, while the introduction of financial engineering and Public Private Partnerships has opened up further sustainable financing opportunities. The impact of Cohesion policy on some Member States' GDP growth can be as much as 0.7%. Despite this good progress, and despite the creation of a specific Heading in the annual EU budget for growth-related expenditure (Heading 1A), spending in other areas of the EU budget is considerably less well aligned with structural reform priorities, and a good deal of progress could still be made in terms of allocating funds in support of jobs and growth. EU budget financing for innovation, for instance, remains broadly inadequate, in spite of instruments such as the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. However, off-budget resources have nevertheless been mobilised as a response to the economic and financial crisis. The European Economic Recovery Plan announced three Public Private Partnerships to develop technologies for the manufacturing, automotive and construction sectors, while the European Investment Bank (EIB) increased its lending commitments by €25 billion in 2009 as a response to the crisis.

ii) More research, development and innovation

The Lisbon Strategy's objective for the EU to become a knowledge economy centred on an ambitious research and innovation agenda. The introduction of a 3% EU GDP spending target for research and development (R&D) represented a step change in the importance and visibility of research and innovation policy at the EU level. There is evidence that many Member States have prioritised public R&D investments: in 20 Member States, the share of R&D in the total government budget increased between 2000 and 2007. However, disappointing performance of some Member States means that the EU overall performance has only marginally improved since 2000 (from 1.85% of GDP to 1.9% of GDP). The graph below shows that the EU's key challenge remains making it more attractive for the private sector to invest in R&D in Europe rather than in other parts of the world. This means improving framework conditions (e.g. the single market, education and research systems, reinforcing the knowledge triangle, but also working on IPR and speeding up interoperable

standardisation which has become critical for getting products to markets as innovation cycles have become shorter). Although the sum total of Member States' spending on R&D has not risen above 1.9% of GDP, still far away from the 3% target, it is reassuring that spending levels have held up recently in spite of the crisis. , While the EU continued to trail the US, Japan and Korea in terms of overall R&D intensity for some time, recent data also suggests that emerging economies such as China or India are catching up.



Source Eurostat

Since 2005, the EU policy approach has shifted towards more demand-side measures, valuing the role of non-technological innovation and a particular emphasis on joining up the three sides of the knowledge triangle.² Initiatives such as the European Institute for Technology and Innovation (EIT) were launched, seeking to address the EU's persistent inability to "get innovation to market" and turn new ideas into productivity gains. Moreover, the EU has sought to use regulation and standardisation as tools to provide incentives and stimulate market demand for innovative products and services. Success in improving framework conditions has however been limited. The process to put in place a robust and affordable European patent has advanced somewhat, particularly with regard to litigation, but is far from completion. The system of standards remains fragmented and too slow given fast technological developments. The use of demand driven instruments such as public procurement has brought some improvements although the system has not developed to its full potential.

In turn, work on the European Research Area represents a shift towards a more holistic policy approach, promoting greater co-operation between Member States and industry (e.g. through Joint Technology Initiatives which are public-private partnerships in key areas, European

² Knowledge / education / innovation

Research Infrastructures and Joint Programming), a stronger emphasis on excellence and smart specialisation and removal of obstacles to researchers' mobility.

EU-level financing has played an increasingly prominent role in innovation policy under Lisbon. The European Investment Fund remains an important source of potential funding for innovation projects, while the European Commission and the EIB created the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility to help fund research and innovation projects. Although welcome, this recent increase in lending activity suggests that failing to make greater use of the off-budget financing instruments available at EU level was a major shortcoming of the Lisbon Strategy.

iii) Unlocking business potential, especially for SMEs

In order to unlock business potential the Lisbon Strategy has prioritised reducing the regulatory burden and supporting entrepreneurship. As a result of improvements to these framework conditions, the EU is now arguably a better place to do business than in 2000. External evaluations also reflect the attractiveness of the EU, with the World Bank ranking one third of Member States in the top 30 of its Doing Business Report, and two thirds in the top 50.³ 18 MS have now introduced one-stop shops to start a business, while thanks to a specific action in the context of the Lisbon strategy the European Council has adopted a target which has translated into significantly easier requirements to start up a new private limited company: the average time taken in the EU is now 8 calendar days, while the average cost has dropped to € 417. Although it is accurate to say that the Lisbon Strategy has succeeded in bringing about a major shift in the EU's regulatory culture much work remains to be done in terms of truly simplifying the business environment. Against a background of an administrative reduction target of 25% by 2012 for the EU, all Member States have set an ambitious national target for reducing administrative burdens but implementation will require further action. The European Commission has proposed potential savings in administrative burdens from EU rules worth € 40 billion, subject to their adoption by the Council and the European Parliament.

The Small Business Act (SBA), adopted in June 2008, was a first step towards a comprehensive SME policy framework for the EU and its Member States. The European Commission has delivered on several major actions announced in the SBA, for instance a proposal on reduced VAT rates entered into force on 1 June 2009, offering Member States ample possibilities to boost economic activity (notably in labour intensive services). Four other major proposals are still pending in the Council and European Parliament. The proposed recast of the Late Payment Directive and the proposal on a European Private Company Statute are both vitally important for the competitiveness of SMEs. The proposal on VAT invoicing aims at ensuring equal treatment of paper and electronic invoices and it is estimated to have a mid-term cost reduction potential of €18.4 billion (assuming that all 22 million taxable enterprises affected by the measure were to send all of their invoices electronically). Finally, up to 5.4 million companies could benefit from a proposal enabling Member States to exempt micro-enterprises from accounting rules, with potential savings of € 6.3 billion for the EU economy.

³ <http://www.doingbusiness.org/> The Doing Business project provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 183 economies and selected cities at the sub-national and regional level.

European SMEs typically experience difficulties accessing finance. While most Member States have already taken or are currently introducing measures facilitating SME financing, the results are still disappointing. The EU has used cohesion policy to mobilise significant financial support for SMEs, especially via the EIB. In addition, the introduction of financial engineering possibilities, through Public-Private Partnerships and supporting financial instruments suitable for SMEs, has increased the overall reach of policies promoting access to finance.

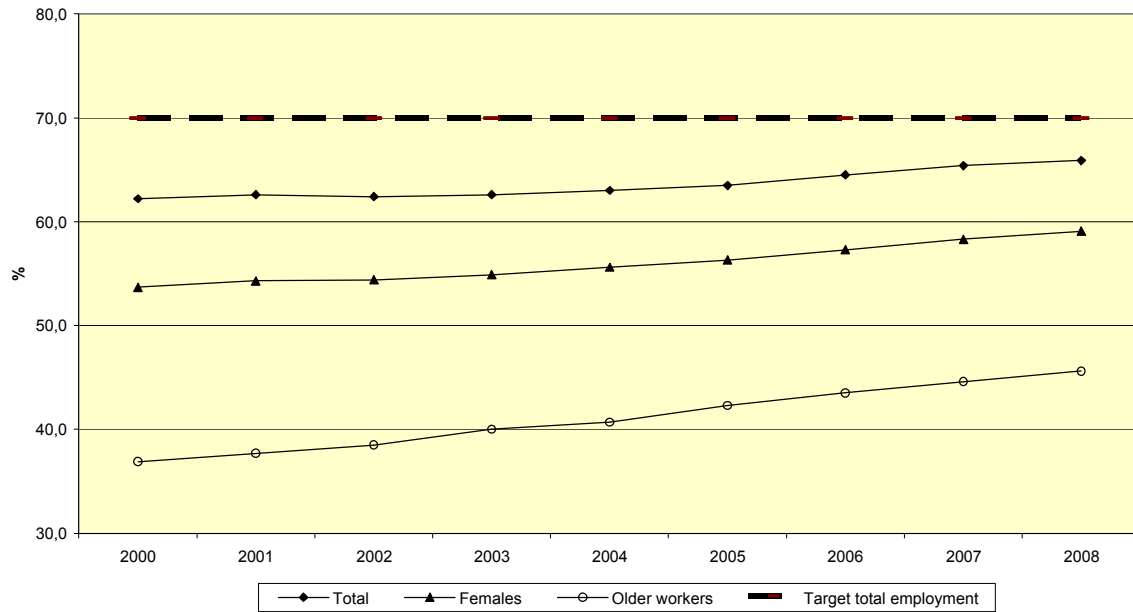
However, in spite of progress with many aspects of the single market, much of the EU's potential marketplace remains untapped – for instance, only 7% of EU consumers currently shop across borders. Many Member States have addressed competition in network industries, notably in gas and electricity and electronic communications, while unbundling (notably in the gas, electricity and rail sectors) has the potential to deliver concrete benefits in terms of growth and safeguarding jobs. Clearly mandated and independent regulatory authorities with adequate levels of resources would also deliver better outcomes for EU consumers. Several Member States also still impose unnecessary regulatory restrictions on professional services, fixed tariffs or *numerus clausus* restrictions, which should be abolished by the services directive.

iv) Investing in people

One of the two key targets was that the European Union should have 70% of the working age population in employment by 2010. This was supported by secondary targets of a 50% employment rate for older workers (aged 55 and above) and 60% for women. These ambitious targets could only be achieved through structural reforms to tackle a number of challenges within Europe's labour markets; tackling labour market segmentation, addressing skill needs through more and better education and training, promoting a lifecycle approach to active ageing, and inclusive labour markets.

The success of Lisbon in terms raising the profile of structural reform in labour markets also helped to deliver results. Progress towards Lisbon targets is shown in the graph below. The 2005-2008 period in particular was characterised by strong employment growth, with about 9.5 million jobs created and a fall in the unemployment rate to almost 7%. Overall employment in the EU rose by close to four percentage points, reaching 65.9% in 2008. The employment rates for women and older workers increased more substantially, attaining 59.1% and 45.6% respectively by 2008.

Employment rate EU27
percentage of population



Source Eurostat

The economic and financial crisis has since had a devastating effect on the labour market, with more than seven million job losses expected in the EU in 2009-10 and unemployment set to reach over 10% by the end of 2010.

While some of the progress made before the crisis was undoubtedly due to a cyclical upturn, there are a number of reasons to believe that structural reforms as well as sustained wage moderation initiated under the Lisbon Strategy had a significant impact:

- unemployment declined by 28% between 2005 and 2008, and dropped to nearly 7% following decades in double digits;
- in the economic upturn that preceded the crisis there was no significant pressure on wages (as would have been typical in a cyclical-driven expansion);
- in the period before the economic crisis the employment rate increased significantly and over a very long period. Such a rise cannot only be explained by cyclical factors.

One of the most important policy developments under the Lisbon Strategy since its 2005 re-launch has been the development, adoption and progress with implementation of common flexicurity principles, endorsed by the European Council in December 2007. Flexicurity represents a new way of looking at flexibility and security in the labour market. The concept recognises that globalisation and technological progress are rapidly changing the needs of workers and enterprises. Companies are under increasing pressure to adapt and develop their products and services more quickly; while workers are aware that company restructurings no longer occur incidentally but are becoming a fact of everyday life.

Rather than protecting a job, which will ultimately disappear, flexicurity starts from the assumption that it is the worker who needs protection and assistance to either transition

successfully in his/her existing job or move to a new job. Flexicurity therefore provides the right reform agenda to help create more adaptable labour markets and in particular to tackle often substantial labour market segmentation. It is encouraging that a majority of Member States have now developed or are developing comprehensive flexicurity approaches, although the focus of Member States' efforts should now be firmly on pushing forward reforms set out under individual Member States' flexicurity pathways. Major restructuring of Europe's labour markets since the crisis has made the scale of the challenge all the more apparent. Most reforms within this area have tended to focus on easing labour market regulation for new entrants to facilitate more contractual diversity. However, greater flexibility will only be achieved through the reform of legislation on existing contracts and by ensuring transitions between types of contracts and opportunities to progress.

The overall trend in terms of labour market policies has therefore been positive, albeit rather uneven both among Member States and across policy domains. There remains considerable room for improvement, in particular amongst the young and older age groups. Despite progress made in developing the concept of active ageing and avoiding early retirement schemes wherever possible, older workers are still under-represented in the labour market: the employment rate for people aged 55–64 is more than 30 percentage points lower than that for those aged 25–54, while less than 46% of people aged 55–64 are working compared with almost 80% for 25–54 year olds.

Youth unemployment continues to be a severe and increasing problem. Young people are particularly badly affected by the crisis, and in many Member States they suffer unemployment rates of more than twice the rate for the rest of the work force. Youth unemployment is intrinsically linked to skills policy, and despite some focus on this issue under the Lisbon Strategy, progress has been insufficient. Despite some progress in terms of reducing early school leaving, nearly 15% young people in the EU (or approximately 7 million young people) still leave the education system prematurely with no qualifications. Alongside this, there has been virtually no increase in the average levels of educational attainment of the young, and those who become unemployed often do not receive the support they need. In spite of EU-level activation targets which were set in 2005 and stepped up in 2007, many Member States still fail to ensure that every unemployed young person receives a new start in terms of active job search support or re-training within the first four months of becoming unemployed.

Education and skills policy is at the heart of creating a knowledge-based economy, but it is apparent that the EU has some way to travel in this regard. Progress in increasing youth educational attainment levels has been too slow, with outcomes only improving moderately since 2000. Since 2004, the level of adult participation in lifelong learning has remained stable or even decreased in 12 out of 27 Member States.

v) A greener economy

The importance of addressing climate change and promoting a competitive, and efficient energy sector with particular attention for energy security has become apparent since 2005, but it is fair to say that decisions on these important matters, particularly the so-called 20-20-20 targets, were taken outside of the context of the Lisbon Strategy. Furthermore, as climate change, environmental and energy issues moved up the political agenda, and were formally integrated into the strategy and mainstreamed into EU policy making, the distinction between the Lisbon and Sustainable Development Strategies started to blur. The main argument for keeping the strategies separate consisted of the different time focus with the Lisbon Strategy

taking a medium-term perspective (5-10 years) whereas the SDS looked several decades ahead. SDS also included a wider array of challenges, such as global poverty and pandemic diseases.

As part of the country surveillance under the Lisbon Strategy, Member States progress towards the Kyoto target was monitored. Current projections, taking account of the impact of the crisis on economic activity, indicate that the overall EU-15 target may even be overachieved. By sector, emission trends indicate decreases in the energy sector, industrial processes, agriculture and waste, while significant a increase can be noted in the transport sector. In the energy sector, there has been a significant shift in recent years from purely national approaches towards a European approach, with the objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply. The liberalisation of the gas and electricity markets has facilitated new investment in networks, allowed new market players to enter previously closed markets and has encouraged the emergence of liquid and competitive wholesale markets.

GOVERNANCE

Principal instruments of the renewed Lisbon strategy

The Integrated Guidelines: adopted by the Council in 2005 and updated in 2008, after discussion within the European Council, provided multi-annual general guidance and policy orientations. The twenty-four guidelines were designed as an instrument of coordination and laid the foundations for the National Reform Programmes, outlining the key macro-economic, micro-economic and labour market reform priorities for the EU as a whole.

The National Reform Programmes: Documents prepared by Member States, for a three year cycle, to indicate what instruments they would use to realise their economic policy objectives. NRPs were followed by annual updates called Implementation Reports.

Country Specific Recommendations: The Council adopted annual Country Specific Recommendations on the basis of a Commission recommendation for the first time in 2007⁴. These policy recommendations based on articles 99(2) and 128(4) of the Treaty were the issued on the basis of the Commission's assessment of Member States' progress towards achieving the objectives set out in their National Reform Programmes.

The Community Lisbon Programme: A European Commission programme created in 2005 to report on the European dimension part of the Lisbon Strategy.

The Commission's Annual Progress Report: this is the annual assessment of the Commission on progress made with the implementation of the Strategy accompanied by policy proposals for the European Council.

The Open Method of Coordination: an intergovernmental method of "soft coordination" by which Member States are evaluated by one another, with the Commission's role being one of surveillance

⁴ Council Recommendation of 27 March 2007

Targets

Delivery of Lisbon reforms would be measured against progress towards a series of headline, EU-level targets with a 2010 deadline: 70% total employment and a 3% GDP spend on R&D. A further assumption of Lisbon was that, if Member States' reforms had the desired effect, average GDP growth across the EU should be around 3%. Although the 2005 re-launch effectively reduced the number of headline targets, by their nature such EU-level targets represented a one-size-fits-all approach which was neither broken down into individual national targets, nor did it take account of the starting positions of Member States or their comparative advantages. It also seems that this approach to setting targets at the EU level contributed to a general lack of ownership of the Lisbon strategy at operational level.

A renewed partnership

The notion of partnership underpinned Lisbon from the outset, and was reinforced following the re-launch. In practice however, the partnership did not operate evenly across Member States. The role given of stakeholders and national parliaments in the implementation of the national reform programmes varied widely across Member States. Lisbon partnerships worked well in many Member States with national authorities creating incentives to reform, for instance via internal monitoring. Instances of good practice include involving national parliaments in policy debates and inviting stakeholders to contribute to National Reform Programmes. In some cases this represented an innovation, which would both encourage policy coordination and focus policy-makers on specific priorities, while many Member States came to appreciate and even depend upon the rigorous and impartial analysis of their structural reform programmes carried out by the European Commission.

National-level ownership

Although national authorities were successful at generating a sense of ownership of the Lisbon Strategy, the engagement of social partners and/or regional and local authorities could have been stronger in most processes, while institutional differences between Member States (for instance the absence of an Economic and Social Council or similar body in a minority of Member States) complicated the consultative process. Some Member States used the Lisbon "brand" to lend a sense of legitimacy to difficult reforms. Communication efforts surrounding Lisbon did not result in significant citizens' awareness of the Strategy; nor did this allow for dispelling the perception that the Lisbon Strategy was mainly a "business" agenda. Weak ownership resulted in less peer pressure could be applied to speed up reforms.

EU-level ownership

An EU-level partnership between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council in conjunction with other institutions was intended to complement and reinforce partnerships at Member State level, as well as helping to generate political ownership of the Lisbon Strategy. However, the precise roles of the institutions as driving forces in this partnership could have been better defined.

Community Lisbon Programme

Progress on the European dimension of the Lisbon partnership was illustrated via the Community Lisbon Programme (CLP).⁵ The CLP aimed at contributing to the overall economic and employment policy agenda by implementing Community policies in support of national approaches. By reporting on EU-level policy actions and their interaction with measures taken at Member State level, the CLP should have reflected the EU-level Lisbon partnership and helped to foster a collective sense of ownership. However, it is widely accepted that this attempt failed since the CLP failed to generate momentum and ownership in Council and Parliament, as well as in Member States.

Lisbon Strategy instruments

The re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 provided a set of new and more powerful instruments, which were designed to steer and monitor economic policy reform in the pursuit of growth and jobs.

i) The Integrated Guidelines

The integrated guidelines (IGs) adopted by the Council in 2005 provided general guidance and policy orientation. The twenty-four guidelines were designed as an instrument of coordination (constituting the basis for country-specific recommendations) and laid the foundations for the National Reform Programmes, outlining the key macro-economic, micro-economic and labour market reform priorities for the EU as a whole. While the guidelines served as the cornerstone of the EU reform effort and helped to make the case for reforms, they are very broad and insufficiently action-oriented to impact significantly on national policy-making. For instance, the conclusions of the European Council in 2006 to focus on four priority areas⁶ did not materially alter the IGs, while their level of integration has also been called into question. The European Parliament has also criticised the guidelines for not reflecting changing economic realities, while their exhaustive nature means that no sense of prioritisation is possible.

ii) National Reform Programmes

The introduction of publicly-available National Reform Programmes has undoubtedly encouraged Member States to focus on progress towards Lisbon goals, particularly given the NRPs' emphasis on implementation and results. However, as policy-making instruments (rather than merely reports), they present a somewhat mixed picture. While several Member States used their NRPs as powerful instruments of policy coordination which brought together ministries and local legislators (often for the first time), others tended to use them as low-profile reporting mechanisms. This reflects not only inherent differences in Member States' institutional structures and approaches, but also the fact that the precise purpose of NRPs was never clearly articulated. Given that the NRPs mirror the integrated guidelines, they have often been rather broad and unfocused documents, although in some cases mutual learning has led to their evolution into sharper instruments.

⁵ COM(2005) 330 final

⁶ Improving the business environment, investing in knowledge and innovation, increasing employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged, and an energy policy for Europe.

iii) Country-specific recommendations

Country specific recommendations were a major innovation of the 2005 re-launch. For the first time, policy advice covering the entire field of economic and employment policy was submitted to the European Council and the Council on a country-specific basis, resulting in politically (if not legally) binding guidelines addressed each year to the Member States. As the primary mechanism for exerting peer pressure on Member States, country-specific recommendations can be considered as a success story of the Lisbon strategy. They have helped to address poor performance and focus on main reform priorities, while also playing a key role in policy making in several Member States by increasing political pressure at home. However, in a number of Member States they remained low profile policy advice, and their impact on the reform pace has been less evident. It has also proven difficult to get high-level political attention and debate on the basis of country analyses.

The quality of the recommendations evolved with experience and succeeded in bringing several structural problems in Member States to prominence. However, in some cases, and given the multi-dimensional nature of some problems, the language was vague and not entirely effective in pinning down the real issues at stake. There was also a perception that policy recommendations issued to Member States too often have been seen as single-strand approaches, and have failed to reinforce the objectives of other instruments such as the Stability and Growth Pact. It is also likely that the recommendations would have gained more acceptance from Member States had they been underpinned by a transparent and robust evaluation framework.

iv) The open method of coordination

The governance structure of the re-launched Lisbon strategy was complemented by the Open method of coordination (OMC) – an intergovernmental method of "soft coordination" by which Member States are evaluated by one another, with the Commission's role being one of surveillance. The origins of the OMC can be found in the European Employment Strategy (now an integral element of the Lisbon strategy), where it provided a new framework for cooperation between Member States by directing national policies towards common objectives in areas which fall within the competence of the Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, youth and training. While the OMC can be used as a source of peer pressure and a forum for sharing good practice, evidence suggests that in fact most Member States have used OMCs as a reporting device rather than one of policy development.

New OMCs launched under the Lisbon Strategy include research policy (CREST⁷), which began in 2001 to support the implementation of the policy frameworks on researcher mobility and careers, and which gave rise to the headline Lisbon target of spending 3% of EU GDP on research and development in 2002 at the Barcelona European Council. A 2008 evaluation concluded that the research policy OMC had proven to be a useful tool to support policy learning, but that it had only given rise to a limited amount of policy coordination, and recommended an strengthening the OMC through more focus on policy coordination. Since then the European Research Area (ERA) was re-launched, with stronger policy co-ordination. A further example of an, OMC is in the field of entrepreneurship, which is based on benchmarking techniques and including specific projects (mainly on issues related to entrepreneurship, SME and innovation policy), and the use of scoreboards.

⁷ Comité de la recherche scientifique et technique (Scientific and technical research committee).