

INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper discusses the new European economic and social inclusion strategy for 2010-2020, 'Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', as well as its implications for race equality and migrant rights in the UK. Designed as a combined European effort to revive the EU economy, Europe 2020 delegates implementation of the strategy to the national level, calling for stronger economic governance to deliver 'high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion'.¹ Repercussions of the strategy with regards to securing race equality and migrant rights in the UK and in Europe will be examined below.

BACKGROUND – THE LISBON STRATEGY

Prior to Europe 2020, the Lisbon Strategy, which entered into force in March 2000 and was to achieve its goals by 2010, set out to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, achieving full employment by the end of the decade. It divided its goals into three pillars, summarised in the Europa Glossary's entry on the Lisbon Strategy:²

- **Economic:** preparing the ground for the transition to a competitive, dynamic, knowledge-based economy. Emphasis is placed on the need to adapt constantly to changes in the information society and to boost research and development.
- **Social:** designed to modernise the European social model by investing in human resources and combating social exclusion. The Member States are expected to invest in education and training, and to conduct an active policy for employment, making it easier to move to a knowledge economy.
- **Environmental:** added at the Göteborg European Council meeting in June 2001, draws attention to the fact that economic growth must be decoupled from the use of natural resources.

¹ European Commission: Europe 2020
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

² Europa Glossary: Lisbon Strategy
http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon_strategy_en.htm

These goals were to be attained through the competence of the Member States under national action plans that were to rely on an open method of coordination (OMC). Unlike Europe 2020, the Lisbon Strategy benefited from a more stable and prosperous economy, counting on the success of the Euro and the internal market, as well as the supposed economic stimulus resulting from the 2004 enlargement.³ However, a mid-term look at the Lisbon Strategy's progress reported in 2005 showed disappointing performances in terms of economic growth and productivity and increased job creation and investment, attributed to a lack of coordination and accountability between the Member States and in national action plans.⁴ These results spurred the drafting of Europe 2020 in 2010, as the economic crisis and with it economic stagnation and high unemployment, further highlighted the need to create appropriate responses and initiatives for promoting the economy of the EU.

THE LISBON STRATEGY AND RACE EQUALITY

The Lisbon Strategy, within its social pillar, aimed to secure the European social model of welfare for its citizens, creating equal opportunities, reducing unemployment and improving employability. Within the realm of race equality, the Lisbon Strategy fails to directly address this issue. Among the criteria for equal opportunities, it cites eliminating occupational segregation, increasing jobs for different age groups, increasing the number of employed women and reducing the number of people below the poverty line.⁵ However, these criteria make no direct mention to securing race equality and migrant rights within the social inclusion aspect of the Lisbon Strategy.

EUROPE 2020 AGENDA⁶

On 17 June 2010 the Europe 2020 Agenda replaced the Lisbon Strategy for EU economic renewal and revival. Though it maintained much of the framework and initiatives from its predecessor, Europe 2020 expanded and clarified its goals and strengthened and reinforced the methodology behind their implementation.

The goals of Europe 2020 are centered on three main priorities:

- **Smart growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- **Sustainable growth:** promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy
- **Inclusive growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion

³ Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council 23-24 March 2000

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

⁴ A new start for the Lisbon Strategy (2005)

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/community_employment_policies/c11325_en.htm

⁵ Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council 23-24 March 2000

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

⁶ Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

Within these three main priorities, the Commission has defined five headline targets it will work to achieve by 2020. These targets are to be translated into national targets and projections, to ensure that each Member State tailors these goals according to their particular situation.⁷

In order to achieve these targets, the Commission has created **seven thematic flagship initiatives** that will utilise the single market, financial levers and external policy tools to ensure that Member States are fully mobilised. Through the use of the open method of

EU Headline Targets:

1. 75% of people aged 20-64 should be employed
2. 3% of EU's GDP should be invested in R&D
3. "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met
4. Share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
5. 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

coordination (OMC), Member States will work together towards common European goals, jointly defining objectives to be achieved and establishing measuring instruments and benchmarks.⁸ Below are the seven thematic flagship initiatives:⁹

1. **"Innovation Union"** to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs.
2. **"Youth on the move"** to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market.
3. **"A digital agenda for Europe"** to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms.
4. **"Resource efficient Europe"** to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency.
5. **"An industrial policy for the globalisation era"** to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.
6. **"An agenda for new skills and jobs"** to modernize labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle, with a view to increasing labour participation and better matching labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility
7. **"European platform against poverty"** to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.

⁷ Ibid, p3

⁸ ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p15 http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf

⁹ Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

In order to account for disparities between Member States, “the 5-EU level targets are being translated into national targets, to reflect the level of ambition each is able to make to the wider EU effort.”¹⁰ These national targets are set by the countries themselves; however, this will happen in conjunction with the Commission to ensure consistency with EU headline targets.

RACE EQUALITY AND MIGRANT RIGHTS IN EUROPE 2020

Among the headline targets pushed forward by Europe 2020 are three that have implications with regards to race equality and migrant rights.¹¹

- The employment rate of the population aged 20-64 should increase from the current 69% to at least 75%, including through the greater involvement of women, older workers and the **better integration of migrants in the workforce**
- A target on educational attainment which tackles the problem of early school leavers by **reducing the drop out** rate to 10% from the current 15%, whilst increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40% in 2020
- The number of Europeans living below the national poverty lines should be reduced by 25%, **lifting over 20 million people out of poverty**

It is particularly important to highlight that these targets are no longer purely economic targets, as was the case with the Lisbon Strategy, but are instead social and socio-economic ones, which reflect the goals of achieving the ‘European model, a social market economy framework’¹² rather than global economic competitiveness. The emphasis on social inclusion, as well as economic concerns, is noteworthy, ‘[h]owever, no explicit target rate is set for migrants.’¹³ As the ENAR report suggests, the varied national, economic and social situations of the EU’s 27 Member States make it difficult to create a standardised European target for migrant rates of any kind, be they employment, literacy or standard of living.¹⁴

¹⁰ European Commission- Europe 2020:National Targets

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/national-targets/index_en.htm

¹¹ ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p15

http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf

¹² Spanish Presidency 2010, “EU agrees on five basic areas for its 2020 economic strategy, including battle against poverty” 26 March 2010

www.eu2010.es/en/documentosynoticias/noticias/mar25_consejoprimavera.html

¹³ ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p16

http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid, p16

However, on 15 and 16 November 2010, the 4th Equality Summit was held in Brussels with the purpose of strengthening the fight against discrimination in the workplace in the context of the Europe 2020 Agenda. Joëlle Milquet, the Deputy Prime Minister for Equal Opportunities, exhorted a more pro-active approach among the Member States towards reaching the goal of equality in employment.¹⁵ Proposals for achieving this include adopting targets for diversity employment, diversity charters/plans, implementing reasonable accommodation for all, creating policies and procedures to remedy harassment, and making the struggle against discrimination a focal point of Europe 2020's flagship initiatives "New skills for new jobs" and "A European platform against poverty," among others.¹⁶ Perhaps these initiatives will help shed light on the need to identify and include anti-discriminatory measures in the Europe 2020 Agenda.

EUROPE 2020'S IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UK

With the arrival of the Europe 2020 Agenda, how will race equality and migrant rights be affected in the UK? With the increased reliance on Member State participation to enact headline targets, there follows an increased possibility of disparities between nations and their treatment of migrants and minorities. It is interesting to hypothesize about how this focus, combined with the goals of increasing migrant integration in the workforce, increasing education opportunities and reducing poverty, will affect the UK.

The recent Coalition Government's drastic budget cuts are likely to have a detrimental impact on race equality and migrant rights. In addition, with its decision to "reduce net migration from 196,000 to the 'tens of thousands' by 2015,"¹⁷ the government has made it clear that migration and migrants are not a priority and are instead a part of the problem. How, then, will Europe 2020 fit into the UK's plan?

PM David Cameron, in a speech delivered after his first European Council meeting:

This strategy [Europe 2020] will focus on jobs, and smart and sustainable inclusive growth by boosting competitiveness, productivity and growth potential. Crucially, I wanted to ensure that this strategy did not interfere with national competencies and it makes very clear in the final text that will be released that it 'shall not alter Member States' competencies'. That is important. This document is strongly in Britain's interest. A stronger European economy will strengthen economic recovery at home, creating jobs and helping to drive British exports.¹

¹⁵ Council of the European Union- Equality Summit: The need for a strong European equality and diversity strategy for employment

<http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/equality-summit-need-strong-european-equality-and-diversity-strategy-employment>

¹⁶ Council of the European Union- The EU 2020 Strategy and the European Union's employment and growth policies, p1

http://www.eutrio.be/files/bveu/101116-CP-Sommet_Egalite-site_FR_PART2_ENOK.pdf

¹⁷ BBC News- "UK government agrees on skilled migration cap" 23 November 2010

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11816979>

It is clear that Europe 2020 and its application in the UK represents an economic goal rather than a social one, however, will this focus on economics mean a shift away from race equality and migrant rights?

As previously mentioned, Europe 2020 is applicable to race equality and migrant rights in three headline target areas: employment, poverty and education. There is no explicit plan of action for implementation on the UK's part, nor has it agreed on national targets required to meet Europe 2020's goals. However, as a report by ENAR points out, the UK has previously succeeded in setting national targets and working towards achieving them, as was the case in 2002 when the Government Equalities Office set a target of 7-8% for minority ethnic representation in public appointments and saw increases to 6.5% by 2004.¹⁸ Another example is the UK government's 2011 target of having 11% of Asian, Black, minority ethnic public appointees.¹⁹ However, with the budget cuts it will be interesting to see whether this target will actually be met.²⁰

EMPLOYMENT

If we take the UK's performance in achieving the goals set by the Lisbon Strategy as precedent, then the future looks bright for Europe 2020. The UK National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010 demonstrates that the UK achieved targets set by the Lisbon Strategy, such as a female employment rate over 70%, exceeding the Lisbon goal of 60%, and the extension of anti-discrimination legislation to fulfil EU Framework Employment Directive requirements.²¹ Additionally, the UK has developed institutions to help achieve equality with the establishment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Government Equalities Office and the National Equality Panel, which examined all aspects of inequality such as gender, race, disability, income and social class.²² While these achievements are considerable, the economic crisis threatens to undo the progress towards race equality and migrant rights.

As the Coalition Government takes on a tougher attitude toward immigrants and their job prospects, we may see a trickle-down effect into minority and migrant communities. With emphasis placed on employing British workers, immigrants may find themselves unfairly marginalised or overlooked in job opportunities. Europe 2020 does little to ensure employment rights for ethnic minority communities, as its employment headline target mentions the need for a greater involvement of women, older workers and the

¹⁸ This number then dropped to 5.7% in 2007 and 2008; however, this does not diminish its previous increase.

¹⁹ ENAR- Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities in Europe: monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic-minorities- Part 2, November 2010, p32 http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/pubTargetSetting_final%20lowres.pdf

²⁰ BBC News- "Spending review 2010: George Osborne wields the axe" 20 October 2010 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11579979>

²¹ UK National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010, p2 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/uknationalstrategyreport12-9-08.pdf>

²² Ibid, p4-5

better integration of migrants in the workforce,²³ but fails to address similar initiatives for ethnic and religious minorities. In addition, in addressing the better integration of migrants into the workforce, Europe 2020 fails to define which migrants it is referring to- European migrants may find it much easier to integrate into UK society than their non-European counterparts. Thus, to clarify this point would help Member States better address racial, ethnic and migrant equality.

A report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in October 2010 titled *How fair is Britain?* shows that wealth is distributed more unevenly than income, with considerable gaps between ethnicity (White British versus Bangladeshi with around £200,000 difference in wealth) and age.²⁴ Though it is noteworthy that differences in income are less than those in household wealth, the wide gap is still a concern in an era when jobs and income are no longer secure or as readily available. On the other hand, there is also evidence that “Black Caribbean women are more likely to be in full-time work than any other group of women”, but that only 1 out of 4 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women works, Muslims have the lowest employment rate of any religious group and that Black graduates may face up to a 24% pay penalty.²⁵ Though there are improvements and advances in racial equality within the workforce, the need for a direct mention of employment equality for racial, ethnic and religious minorities is evident. Within this context, it is important to look at how Europe 2020 can initiate some progress on addressing these inequalities within the UK

EDUCATION

The proposed objective to reduce the share of early school leavers to less than 10% and that at least 40% of the population aged 30-34 have a tertiary degree by 2020 could be greatly curbed in the UK following the increase in tuition fees passed by the Coalition Government.²⁶ With tuition fees reaching up to a maximum of £9,000 a year, it is debatable whether the UK will be able to realise the goal of 40% tertiary education for ages 30-34 by 2020. The UK has also announced plans to limit international student entry into the country by cutting all students in “below-degree-level” courses, except from highly-trusted colleges, resulting in a loss of up to 120,000 international students, from a previous yearly total of around 300,000.²⁷ This cut in immigration will not only result in the possible closing of English language colleges and schools, but in a huge economic loss, as international students have an estimated yearly £8 billion economic

²³ Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, p8
<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

²⁴ Equality and Human Rights Commission- *How fair is Britain?* Part VI
<http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-05711.pdf>

²⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission- *How fair is Britain?*- Employment
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/triennial-review/online-summary/employment/>

²⁶ The Guardian- “Tuition fees: government wins narrow victory as protests continue” 9 December 2010
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/dec/09/tuition-fees-vote-government-wins-narrow-victory>

²⁷ The Guardian- “Government confirms plans to curb international student numbers” 7 December 2010
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/dec/07/government-curb-international-student-numbers>

benefit to the UK.²⁸ That these cuts will have grievous impacts on British students is clear- universities will lose a large part of their funding and students will be denied a diverse and international university experience. Additionally, many international students who once contributed to the British economy by staying on through post-study work visas may find themselves denied visas as further curbs are expected.

The detrimental impacts both the tuition fees increase and the Coalition Government's budget cuts will have on education will make it difficult for the UK to align itself and achieve the educational goals set out in Europe 2020. There may be an increase in drop out rates in both secondary and tertiary education, counteracting the efforts to lower the rate of early school leavers, and there may be a decrease in population percentage that completes tertiary education. So far the impact of the increase in tuition fees on ethnic minorities is unknown, since no equality impact assessment has been carried out by Government but such increases are likely to impact on the aspirations of ethnic minority students.

Another important challenge is the fact that Europe 2020 does not address the need to foster equal opportunities in education for black and minority ethnic students. Already there is a lack of black and minority ethnic representation at tertiary level educational institutions,²⁹ and with the tuition increases and the lack of any anti-discrimination initiatives in Europe 2020 there is only less diversity and more inequality to be expected within the next 10 years. Additionally, as education is a Member State competence,³⁰ i.e. the right of a Member State to legislate on its own, there is no guarantee that the UK will follow Europe 2020 headline targets, nor that it will want to or be able to.

POVERTY

Europe 2020's goal of reducing the number of Europeans living below the poverty line by 25%, which equals lifting 20 million people out of poverty, includes agendas for migrant integration, an emphasis on fundamental rights and fighting discrimination, and the provision of education, training and employment to deprived communities. However, when mentioning discrimination, it only refers to the disabled, and in order to fully pursue the goals of racial equality and migrant rights it should emphasise ethnic and religious minorities as well. Additionally, it fails to address concerns over social inclusion, an active inclusion strategy and general inequalities.

Although Europe 2020 aims to greatly reduce European poverty, it is clear that with the worldwide economic recession this task will be hard won. In the case of the UK, which is

²⁸ BBC News- "Are foreign students good or bad for Britain?" 6 September 2010

http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markeaston/2010/09/are_foreign_students_good_or_b.html

²⁹ Specifically within universities pertaining to the Russell Group. The Guardian- "Twenty-one Oxbridge colleges took no black students last year" 6 December 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/dec/06/oxford-colleges-no-black-students>

³⁰ Europe Unit- Europe 2020 Strategy

http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/europe_2020_strategy/index.cfm

facing massive budget cuts across all sectors, it is likely that there will be a disproportionate impact on minorities, many of whom are employed in the public sector. A study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that those who will be hit the hardest by the Coalition Government's budget cuts will be the poor.³¹

An example of a budget cut that affects migrants is the Migration Impacts Fund. Set up in 2009 "to assist public service providers to deal with transitional pressures of immigration"³², it has been scrapped by the Coalition Government, stating that they "believe the impacts of migration are better addressed through controlling immigration, which is why the government will reduce the level of net migration back down to the levels of the 1990s – tens of thousands each year, not hundreds of thousands."³³

CONCLUSION

In looking forward, it is imperative that Europe 2020 clearly define its goals in terms of racial equality and migrant rights, and that it not only define the terms, but also identify the methods by which these goals will be achieved. Though it aims to achieve its headline targets through both country reporting to help Member States identify situational methodology and an EU-wide thematic approach at tackling the issues, in these times of economic uncertainty it is essential that the path be clearly mapped out. Much like the Lisbon Agenda before it, Europe 2020 risks falling prey to Member State inconstancy and fickleness.

With regards to the UK, how will compliance with Europe 2020 be ensured? What incentives will the UK have to ensure that the headline targets are met, and that, moreover, race equality and migrant rights take on a more important role?

Underscoring the importance of anti-discrimination measures and fundamental rights is what Europe 2020 needs to include so that these issues be treated with the importance that they deserve. Adding more concrete measures for achieving these goals and holding Member States accountable for their performance and cooperation in meeting headline targets will help Europe 2020 achieve greater equality and progress both domestically and across Europe.

³¹ BBC News- "Budget hits the poorest hardest, says IFS" 25 August 2010-12-15

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11079496>

³² Migration Impacts Fund

<http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snha-05725.pdf>

³³ The Guardian- "Fund to ease impact of immigration scrapped by stealth" 6 August 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/aug/06/fund-impact-immigration-scrapped>