



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 8663
Fax: 020 7219 6715
roperj@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk/lords

Mr Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE
Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of
the Cortes Generales
C/ Floridablanca, s/n
E-28071 Madrid
SPAIN

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Dear Colleagues,

The EU 2020 Strategy: The role of national parliaments

At our COSAC meeting next week we will debate the political priorities of the new European Commission. One of these priorities is Europe 2020: the EU's strategy for economic growth.

On 26 March the European Council agreed a series of measures designed to ensure that Europe 2020 is a success. Many of these, for example nationally set targets and National Reform Programmes, are for national governments to produce and pursue. The Lisbon Strategy, the predecessor to Europe 2020, laid similar responsibility on national governments by requiring them to produce annual National Action Plans.

When my Committee reported on the Lisbon Strategy on 2006 we noted that parliamentary involvement in drawing up National Action Plans varied from Member State to Member State. We saw a similar variation in the extent to which national parliaments held their governments to account for their progress against the goals set out in their Action Plans. We concluded, with reference to the UK, "that parliamentary debates on the Agenda would help to raise its profile and engage citizens in the relative economic performance of the Member States and the urgency and desire for economic reform in Europe".

On Tuesday I would like to put two questions as part of the debate. The first, to the Vice President of the Commission, is how the Commission sees the role of national parliaments in the Europe 2020 strategy; the second, to my fellow parliamentarians, is how they intend to hold their governments to account for their actions in pursuit of the objectives of this strategy.

I would be very grateful if you would be so kind as to circulate this letter to delegations and to the Vice President so that they might be able to consider these questions in preparing their own contributions.

I look forward to seeing you in Madrid.

Yours — by
John Roper

The Rt Hon the Lord Roper
Chairman of the Select Committee on the European Union