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# Growth, competitiveness, employment

## The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century

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### White Paper

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# PREAMBLE

This White Paper sets out to foster debate and to assist decision-making — at decentralized, national or Community level — so as to lay the foundations for sustainable development of the European economies, thereby enabling them to withstand international competition while creating the millions of jobs that are needed.

We are convinced that the European economies have a future. Looking at the traditional bases of prosperity and competitiveness, Europe has preserved its chances. It possesses assets which it has only to exploit — assets such as its abundant non-physical capital (education, skills, capacity for innovation, traditions), the availability of financial capital and highly efficient banking institutions, the soundness of its social model, and the virtues of cooperation between the two sides of industry.

Given the scale of the needs that have to be met, both in the European Union and elsewhere in the world, recovery must be achieved by developing work and employment and not by endorsing basically Malthusian solutions. Yes, we can create jobs, and we must do so if we want to safeguard the future — the future of our children, who must be able to find hope and motivation in the prospect of participating in economic and social activity and of being involved in the society in which they live, and the future of our social protection systems, which are threatened in the short term by inadequate growth and in the long term by the deterioration in the ratio of the people in jobs to those not in employment.

In other words, we are faced with the immense responsibility, while remaining faithful to the ideals which have come to characterize and represent Europe, of finding a new synthesis of the aims pursued by society (work as a factor of social integration, equality of opportunity) and the requirements of the economy (competitiveness and job creation).

This major challenge confronts us all. That is why we are arguing, first and foremost, the need to press on with building a unified Europe which will increase our strength through cooperation and through the benefits of a large area without frontiers of any kind. That is why we are calling on everyone — and not only political decision-makers and business leaders — to contribute to the combined effort by seeking to understand the new world and by participating in the joint endeavour.

Nothing would be more dangerous than for Europe to maintain structures and customs which foster resignation, refusal of commitment and passivity. Revival requires a society driven by citizens who are aware of their own responsibilities and imbued with a spirit of solidarity towards those with whom they form local and national communities — communities that are so rich in history and in their common feeling of belonging.

The contribution which the European Union can make is therefore to assist this movement, which reconciles our historical loyalties with our wish to take our place in this new world that is now emerging.

