

Europe 2020: The EU Commission and Political Entrepreneurship

Daniel Silander

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7518-0067>

Linnaeus University
Department of Political Science
Vaxjo, Sweden
e-mail: daniel.silander@lnu.se

School of Government Studies
North-West University
Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa

Abstract

This study deals with the European Commission and Communication Europe 2020, which was a result of the global economic crisis of 2007–2008 and forward. Europe 2020 was an initiative to deal with the crisis by promoting smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. The Commission addressed the crisis as an existential threat to Europe, but also as a window of opportunity to build a new prosperous region. This study explores the political entrepreneurial efforts taken by the Commission as well as assesses the outcome of reforms implemented. The Commission has achieved many targets, although some challenges remain unsolved.

Keywords: European Commission, political entrepreneur, Europe 2020, economic crisis, window of opportunity

Strategia „Europa 2020” – Komisja Europejska a przedsiębiorczość polityczna

Abstrakt

W niniejszym opracowaniu omówiono założenia Komisji Europejskiej i strategii „Europa 2020”, powstałej w odpowiedzi na globalny kryzys gospodarczy w latach 2007–2008 i kolejnych. Strategia „Europa 2020” była inicjatywą mającą na celu walkę z kryzysem poprzez propagowanie inteligentnego i zrównoważonego rozwoju sprzyjającego integracji społecznej. Komisja oceniła kryzys jako egzystencjalne zagrożenie dla Europy, lecz również jako szansę na stworzenie nowego, dobrze prosperującego regionu. W niniejszym opracowaniu omówiono wysiłki podejmowane przez Komisję w zakresie przedsiębiorczości politycznej i oceniono wyniki wdrożonych reform. Komisji udało się osiągnąć wiele z wytyczonych celów, choć należy podjąć nadal nierozwiązane wyzwania.

Słowa kluczowe: Komisja Europejska, przedsiębiorca polityczny, Europa 2020, kryzys gospodarczy, szansa

Introduction

In 2007–2008, the European Union (EU) faced a global economic crisis. The crisis was the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It began in the United States (USA) with increased indebtedness among homeowners and overvalued house prices, leading to structural crisis in the US banking sector. It hit hard on the European Union (EU), with member-states with stock markets dropped, house markets destabilised, unemployment rates increased, and economic growth declined. Another serious challenge was the exposed deficiencies in the institutional structures of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Some EU member states had capability to mitigate the economic recession, while others saw serious challenges to real estate, construction, and service sectors, social stress in homelessness and limitations of welfare benefits, expanding poverty, and social exclusion. The economic crisis had also severe political consequences in polarisation, disintegration, nationalism, protectionism, and popular scepticism towards the EU.

In 2010, the European Commission declared how the crisis was unique in post-war economic history and presented the Communication *Europe 2020*

– *A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. The Commission urged EU institutions, member states, regional and local authorities, and the private sector to deal with the economic crisis through smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. The Commission referred to *smart growth* as promoting an economy based on knowledge and innovation, *sustainable growth* as economic growth based on resource efficiency and a greener economy, and *inclusive growth* as growth that provides for social integration (European Commission). The European crisis could serve as a window of opportunity (Cross) if the EU engaged new, bold, and innovative politics by showing political entrepreneurship (Karlsson, Silander). Although it is very hard to identify ‘cause-and-effect’ when studying the Europe 2020 strategy and the impact on the socioeconomic crisis, this study highlights the role taken by the European Commission to address the European crisis of 2008 and forward.

This study explores the possible role of the European Commission as political entrepreneur in the Europe 2020 strategy. In 2010, the Commission portrayed the economic crisis as a serious challenge as well as a window of opportunity to transform Europe’s social and economic model. Crises have historically played an important role for understanding the European integration. One of the founding fathers of European integration, Jean Monnet, once stated that he believed that “Europe would be built through crises, and that it would be the sum of their solutions” (Monnet 417). This study explores the Commission’s role on the economic crisis by asking three questions:

1. What were the main objectives of the European Agenda 2020 strategy?
2. In what ways (if any) did the Commission act as a political entrepreneur to mitigate the crisis?; and
3. To what extent did the Commission succeed in dealing with the crisis through the Europe 2020?

By exploring Europe 2020 and using statistics from Eurostat on five thematic areas, in climate change and energy, employment, education, poverty and social exclusion, and research and development, this study explores the role of the Commission to guide European politics in times of crisis. This introduction is followed by a short presentation of previous research on entrepreneurship and conceptualises in such context political entrepreneurship. The third section explores the nature of Europe 2020 and the next section analyses the impact of Europe 2020. The final section concludes the main contributions of the study.

Entrepreneurship and political entrepreneurship

There is a long tradition of scholarly work on entrepreneurship for economic and social growth (see Table 1.1). Studies on economics have explored entrepreneurs as important risk-takers and innovators, and entrepreneurship as essential for

growth and prosperity (Schumpeter; Carroll). Over the last decades, research on entrepreneurship has, however, become multidisciplinary, with new approaches from behaviour science, sociology, and anthropology, stressing new forms of entrepreneurship beyond the economic sector. Today, studies on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs refer to both business as well as public sector. Studies have explored public entrepreneurs (Osborne, Plastrik; Baumol) as innovative and creative actors within municipalities and public corporations who seek innovations in the public sector practice. Studies have also explored *social entrepreneurs* as innovative and goal-oriented people with the objective to promote the common social good within cooperative associations, interest organisations, and popular movements (Brickerhoff). In addition, studies on *policy entrepreneurs* have, on the one hand, focused on actors outside formal political institutions with the ambition to initiate new ideas into the public institutions and, on the other hand, on politicians seeking to launch alternative policy solutions (Kingdon). Finally, studies have also discussed the role of *bureaucratic entrepreneurs* in public servants, with authority to form policy processes by initiation and implementation (Carroll).

The multidisciplinary approach to entrepreneurship has also more lately included *political entrepreneurs* (Sheingate; Dahl). Originally, a political entrepreneur was about political-motivated citizens aiming to influence policymaking by seeking capacity and ability to promote collective benefits to the many and/or seeking individual profit politically. The main objective for a political entrepreneur could be to provide goods and services to citizens, to receive campaign contributions and political support (for elected politicians), and for public servants to increase political and administrative influence. The notion of political entrepreneur came from Robert Dahl, who saw resourceful politicians promoting the common good and/or individual political gains (Dahl 25, 223–227).

In this study, the political entrepreneur (and political entrepreneurship) is about the public sector of public actors and structures (politicians, public servants, bureaucrats, institutions) with the objective to create and shape favourable conditions for entrepreneurs in the economic sector (Karlsson, Silander). Political entrepreneurship initiates, shapes, and implements favourable formal and informal institutions for economic entrepreneurial activities. Although previous research clearly stresses that there is no overall favourable single political entrepreneurial policy to economic and social growth – since individual states, micro- and macro-regions, and policy sectors have different conditions – the role of the political entrepreneur is to understand such existing conditions and initiate appropriate innovative measures to promote prosperity. Political entrepreneurship is, therefore, about understanding, challenging, and changing traditional formal and informal institutions (North; Putnam), and identify a window of opportunities for successful change. In this study, focus is on the European Commission, with individual

politicians, public servants, and bureaucrats (actors), as well as institution (structures), that seeks to promote new, innovative, and favourable formal and informal institutional conditions (North; Kingdon) for growth in times of global economic crisis.

Table 1.1. Types of entrepreneurs

Term	Common definitions
Economic/Business Entrepreneurs	Actors within the business sector acting as risk-takers, innovators, and responders to market disequilibria to seek economic gains for their companies/organisations
Social Entrepreneurs	Actors within the civil society who seek societal changes within cooperative associations, interest organisations, aid branches, and rights and liberties movements
Policy Entrepreneurs	Actors inside or outside the formal positions of government/politics who seek to introduce and implement new ideas into the public sector for development of the public good rather than for individual profits
Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship	Actors who gain power from policymakers to influence the policy process and/or the public sector by initiating a political process, setting priorities, and interpreting the implementation phase
Political Entrepreneurs – traditionally used	Actors (politicians) within the political arena, driven by the common good or individual profit from the political system, acting to receive political support, votes, campaign contributions, or improved political status
Political Entrepreneurs – applied in this study	Actors and institutions (politicians, bureaucrats, officers, and institutions) within the publicly-funded sector that with innovative approaches encourage entrepreneurship/business and where the goal is growth and employment for the common good

Source: (Silander 8).

Europe 2020 and political entrepreneurship

The European Commission is often portrayed as the driving engine of the EU, navigating in the European political system of multiple actors of EU institutions and 27 member states (Hix, Goetz). Based on the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU has a division of competences (Lisbon Treaty). First, *exclusive competences* are institutionalised in Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), setting out areas where the EU has supreme authority to legislate and adopt binding acts, and where the Commission initiates and implements laws and regulations. Second, *shared competences* are set out in Article 4, with shared authority between the EU and member states to legislate and adopt legally-binding acts. Overall, member-states are sovereign to decide and legislate in areas where the EU previously has not exercised authority or addressed intention to exercise authority. Third and finally, *supporting competences* are enshrined in Article 6 with supreme authority to the individual member state. The EU may then only act upon the role of assisting member states through coordination, but such role has included the use of 'soft' influence by the Commission in terms of benchmarking, recommendations on best practices and guidelines through the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) process. The OMC was decided on at the Lisbon meeting in 2000 and has become a compromise between the idea of safeguarding member-states' main responsibility in a policy area, but ensure the EU to influence such areas through the coordination of policies. The OMC process has left the Commission with increased influence (EUR-Lex: Distribution of Competences).

Article 17 of the Treaty declares that the Commission should promote the general interest of the Union by identifying, preparing, proposing, coordinating, managing, and implementing EU policies. It leaves the Commission in a position of a driving engine within the EU system and as a possible provider of political entrepreneurship. The Commission has authority over the implementation process and thereby is in charge of managing policies and programmes as well as conduct executive decisions on the implementation of EU legislation. It is also the role of the Commission to manage the EU budget and oversee EU spending to ensure efficiency and transparency within EU institutions and member states in relation to rights and obligations to the EU. Finally, the Commission also holds authority to guard the treaties, oversee if member states adhere to EU laws and policies, and declare warnings and/or decide on bringing member states to the European Court of Justice when member states go against Treaties. In sum, the role and authority of the European Commission within the EU system provides a position for possible political entrepreneurship.

The role of the European Commission is perhaps extra-important in times of crisis (Middelcar; Copeland, James). A crisis challenges not only individual member states and EU institutions, but also European integration. Previous research

(Cross; Rosenthal *et al.*; Middelcar; Crespy, Menz) has addressed how historical European crises, from the 1950s to the early 2000s, has been perceived as a window of opportunities for change. Such European crises have been EU member states' reluctance to include new member states and to deepen integration in certain policy areas such as the Euro, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Schengen, or asylum and migration. Studies have shown how shared European crises often resulted in common debates, negotiations, policies, and laws providing for further European integration. However, this is not to argue that European crises cannot result in distrust, disengagement, and disintegration, but European integration over the last 75 years suggests that Europe's development has embedded political entrepreneurship by treating crises as possible windows of opportunity (Cross). One of the founding fathers of European integration, Jean Monnet, once stated that he believed that "Europe would be built through crises, and that it would be the sum of their solutions" (Monnet 417).

In 2010, the Commission accordingly argued that Europe had historically faced many crossroads, but always succeeded to evolve. The global economic crisis was another immediate challenge and in 2010, after a few years of economic crisis, the European Commission presented *Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. *Smart growth* referred to promoting new knowledge, innovation, quality education, research, and communication technologies to ensure a skilled workforce, innovative products, and services. *Sustainable growth* embedded a transformation into a greener economy based on improved resource efficiency, greener technologies, new businesses and networks, and a consumer culture that demanded resource efficiency and a greener low-carbon economy. Finally, *inclusive growth* set out the importance of higher employment rates and improved socioeconomic welfare providing for economic, social, and territorial cohesion and societal integration (European Commission 10–16).

Smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth embedded flagships.¹ These were an innovative take by the Commission. The Commission took the role as driving engine, through a broad package of flagships, in a broad range of policy areas. The Commission also took the role of monitoring other EU actors on Europe 2020 by addressing the European Council to guide and steer the EU member states and the Council of Ministers to ensure implementation at national, regional, and local levels, and the European Parliament to co-legislate with the Council of Ministers and mobilise European citizens. In addition, the Commission took the overall lead to monitor reforms taken by individual member states on how they could be successful in their specific national contexts (European Commission 26–27). Based on such flagships, the overall objectives were:

¹ 1. 'Innovation Union'; 2. 'Youth on the move'; 3. 'A digital agenda for Europe'; 4. 'Resource efficient Europe'; 5. 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era'; 6. 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'; and 7. 'European platform against poverty' (European Commission 3–4).

- i) to reach 75% employment among people aged 20–64;
- ii) to secure 3% of the overall EU GDP invested in research and development;
- iii) to lower gas house emission levels by 20% compared to the overall European greenhouse gas emissions in the 1990s;
- iv) to increase the share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption to 20%;
- v) to increase energy efficiency by 20%;
- vi) to reduce the drop-out rate to 10% (from 15% in 2010);
- vii) to increase the share of the population between 30–34 years old completing tertiary education to 40% (from 31% in 2010);
- viii) to reduce by 25% the number of Europeans living in scarcity by lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty (European Commission 3, 10–11).

Europe 2020 – a window of opportunity?

Since 2010, scholars have analysed the prospects for the Commission to succeed to meet the Europe 2020 objectives (Crespy, Menz; Copeland, James; Tusińska; Gros, Roth). One identified hindrance has been the fragility of the financial system and the banking sector imposing restraints on business sectors, companies and family households to access money for investments and spending. The economic crisis demanded rapid political and financial assistance to EU member-states from other EU member states, the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (European Commission 5). Another hindrance has been the low average European growth rate due to low levels of investments in research and development, limited implementation of information and communications technologies, and a weakened business environment. The third mentioned hindrance has been the complex system of EU governance, demanding collaboration and stronger cohesiveness between member states, but also within member states at local, regional, and national levels (European Commission 6).

Based on statistics provided by Eurostat, we may assess the progress made by the EU to achieve the objectives set out in Europe 2020. Table 1.2. demonstrates important objectives, including different policy areas in employment, research and development, climate change and energy, education and poverty reduction, and social inclusion.

Table 1.2. Assessment of Europe 2020 Objectives (Eurostat, a)

No.	Policy Area	Objective	Result						Target
			2008	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
1	Employment	75% of 20–64 year old to be employed	70.2	70.1	71.1	72.2	73.2	73.9	75.0
2	R&D	3% of EU GDP to be invested in R&D	1.83	2.03	2.04	2.06	2.11	3.0
3.1 3.2	Climate Change & Energy Sustainability	Greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990	90.7	77.5	78.1	77.8	78.3	80.0
		20% of energy from renewables	11.3	16.2	16.7	17.0	17.5	20.0
4.1	Education	Reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%	14.7	11.0	10.7	10.5	10.6	10.3	<10
4.2		At least 40% of 30–34-year-olds completing tertiary education	31.1	38.0	38.7	39.2	40.7	40.7	≥
5	Fighting Poverty & Social Exclusion	At least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion	116.1	117.9	116.9	111.9	111.9	96.2

Employment

Employment is an essential part for participation and citizenship within the EU. Paid employment is a cornerstone for individual empowerment, adequate living standards, social inclusion, and political participation. In 2014–2015, Eurostat conducted a mid-term review of Europe 2020. It was stated that Europe 2020 was viable and important, and had to continue to be the framework for European growth, employability, and prosperity. Focusing on increasing the employment rate in the 20–64 age group, improvements were made, but progress did not reach the 2020 target of 75% employment rate. In 2015, the employment rate increased to 70% (Eurostat b). Eurostat indicated that there was higher unemployment rate for people aged 20–29 and people aged 55–64, for citizens with limited education, and for migrants to the EU, as well as an existing gender employment gap. In addition, Eurostat also addressed major imbalances in employment rates between EU member states, with a north-south division where Greece had an employment rate of 59.2% compared to 82.6% in Sweden (Eurostat a, 24; Eurostat b, 8–9, 27, 30; Gros, Roth 32–43). In 2019, there was an increase in employment to 73.9% of the population aged 20 to 64. The figure of 2019 was the highest since 2002, but with a 1.1% remaining gap to the target of 75%. The gender gap remained, leaving women with lower unemployment rate compared to men, although the gender gap had decreased (Eurostat a). Other obstacles included a growing unemployment rate among people aged 55–64, higher unemployment rate among people born outside the EU, and, finally, a demographic change in Europe with a smaller share of working age population, supporting a greater share of older people (Eurostat a, 8).

Research and development

Research and development is also an essential area to provide for a knowledge-based, competitive, and sustainable economy. It is crucial for the promotion of new types of products and services, and for efficient use of resources. When exploring progress made on research and development (R&D), and the objective to increase gross domestic expenditure on R&D, Eurostat identified a minor increase as percentage of GDP from 2008 and forward. In 2008, R&D expenditure was 1.85% of GDP and increased to 2.03% in 2014. With the Europe 2020 stated objective of 3% of GDP, the level reached in 2014 was 0.97% below the identified objective (Eurostat b, 57). In a global comparison, the EU was significantly behind the USA, Japan, China, and South Korea regarding R&D. There were also regional variations within the EU with regions in Germany, the UK, Austria, France, Belgium, and the Nordic countries with the highest levels of spending on R&D, while much lower

in eastern and southern states such as Croatia and Romania (Gros, Roth 2012, 9–10, 14–16; Eurostat b, 59–61). In 2019, the R&D expenditure had increased slightly from 2017 going from 2.08% to 2.11%. Such limited growth remained a concern within the EU with a percentage of expenditure stagnating around 2% of GDP over the last years. The target of 3% of GDP remained in distance, requiring increased levels of combined public and private R&D investments. It has been the business enterprise sector that remained the largest performing sector on R&D with about 66% of overall expenditure, to be compared to the higher education sector on 22.1% and the government sector at 11.2% (Eurostat a, 10, 36).

Climate change and energy

The Commission has also focused on a green economy with energy efficiency to halt climate change. Estimations of 2014 on greenhouse gas emissions showed a decline in the EU by 22.1% compared to emission levels in 1990. In 2008–2009, the emission level dropped sharply by 7.2%, indicating a decline in the overall economic growth due to economic recession, but also due to a transformation into a greener European economy (Eurostat b 85). This has mostly been due to structural changes from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-oriented one, reduction in the use of coal in favour of gas, and overall reductions of emissions in all sectors except transportation and aviation (Eurostat b, 83–85). In a comparison between EU member states, Luxembourg, Denmark, Greece, Belgium, Finland, and Cyprus scored best on reduction of emission per capita between 2005 and 2015, with poor practice seen in eastern EU member states. In 2015, 16 out of 28 member states reached their national objectives (Eurostat b, 89–90). In addition, the share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption increased between 2008 and 2014 from 11% to 16% due to biofuels and renewable waste, hydropower, and wind and solar energy. All EU member states increased their levels of renewable energy, and 10 member states met their national objectives (Eurostat b, 96).

By 2018, emissions of greenhouse gases within the EU had dropped by 23.2% compared to 1990, symbolising a mission completed in reducing greenhouse emissions by 20%. Concerning the share of renewable energy, in gross final energy consumption, the EU reached 18% in 2018, leaving Europe 2% below the renewable energy target of 20%. In addition, the EU also faced the demand to reduce energy consumption of 4.4% to meet target of increasing energy efficiency by 20% (Eurostat a). At the end of the period of Europe 2020, the EU could acknowledge a decline in emissions of greenhouse gases. Another positive development was the increase of renewable energy in energy consumption reaching 17.5% in 2017, which was twice as much compared to the year 2004. However, the positive change has not been enough to meet the renewable energy target of 20% with a gap of

2.5%. Progress was also seen on renewable electricity consumption and energy consumption for heating and cooling, but falling short on meeting the overall targets of 2020; about 3.3% gap on energy consumption and 5% energy efficiency (Eurostat a, 10).

Education

Education has been an essential area of Europe 2020 in providing for a smart economy and a long-lasting social model of inclusion and participation. On education and early leavers from education and training in the 18–24 age range, Eurostat indicated in 2008 a level of 14.7% and in 2015 – 11%, consistently closing on the Europe 2020 objective of 10%. On tertiary education attainment in the 30–34 age group, Eurostat also identified a consistent increase from 2008 to 2015 from 31.1% to 38.7%, almost reaching the Europe 2020 objective of 40% (Eurostat 2017, 109). In 2016, 15 EU member states reached their national objectives and 17 states reached the EU objective of 10% (Eurostat b, 112). In 2019, progress continued with falling figures on the share of early leavers from education and training with 10.3%, coming very close to the final target of below 10%. Progress was seen on the share of 30 to 34 year-olds completing tertiary education reaching, with 41.6% in 2019, the Europe 2020 objective of 40%. In 2018, 17 member states reached the EU target of 10% on early leavers (Eurostat a, 60). At the end of Europe 2020, the EU could acknowledge a positive development in education. This is very important, since limited education has major impact on chances to enter the labour market (Eurostat b, 10).

Poverty and social exclusion

The reduction of poverty and social exclusion is important to promote individuals health, livelihood, and well-being, but also for societal equality and integration. Focusing on people at the risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, the economic crisis had a severe impact, leaving an increased number of people at risk (Gros, Roth 56–62); from 118 million people in 2010 to 124 million in 2012. After a few years of crisis, a decline left 122 million Europeans at risk in 2014. That is, however, almost one in four people in the EU and 25 million people too many to reach the Europe 2020 objective. In the Eurostat analysis of 2017, about 118.8 million people were affected, showing a decline in the number of people at risk (Eurostat b, 133). The Europe 2020 target, however, set out an ambition to decrease the number by 20 million people compared to the year 2008 (Eurostat b, 11). The risk of poverty and social exclusion embedded several related challenges in monetary poverty, material deprivation, and low work intensity. There was great variation within Europe, with

most challenges in southern and eastern member states. The most negative trend was identified in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain (Eurostat b, 136–137). People's risk of poverty and social exclusion in EU member states was higher for women, the young, less-educated people, and the unemployed. Migrants constituted another group at risk (Eurostat b, 143). At the end of Europe 2020, it is possible to see how monetary poverty is the most important type of poverty, with about 16.9% of EU citizens, 85.3 million people, living at the risk of poverty after social changes. Another type of poverty has been low work intensity, influencing 9.5%, about 35.3 million people, followed by poverty in terms of social exclusion and severe material deprivation, with 6.6% of the EU population, about 33.1 million people. The types of poverty have foremost challenged young people, people with disabilities, single households, people with low educational levels, people born outside the EU, and people living in rural areas (Eurostat a, 11, 73–75). There is still a way to go to reach the 2020 target of lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Conclusion

This study has dealt with the European Commission Communication Europe 2020, which was a direct result of the global economic crisis in 2007–2008. The aim has been to explore the role of the Commission as potential political entrepreneur to turn such crisis into a window of opportunity. There are previous studies exploring when and how the European Commission could act to promote the European good. Some studies have also identified major European crises as possible windows of opportunity for the European Commission to act beyond traditional routines and procedures to become political entrepreneurial.

The agenda-setting power of the Commission provides the potential for political entrepreneurship. The Commission addressed the economic crisis as an existential threat to European prosperity and called for major reforms on smart, sustainable, and socially-inclusive growth. It also called for European leadership of new, bold, innovative, and ambitious ideas (political entrepreneurship). First, this study theoretically develops the concept of political entrepreneurship based on decades of studies on entrepreneurship in the economics, but here focusing on how political actors may become entrepreneurial in the political sector to address serious social, economic, and potential political crisis. Second, by adding new theoretical insights to the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship, this study also shows how the European Commission initiative in the Europe 2020 strategy to large extent promoted member states to not only accept the strategy's targets, but also to be able to achieve them, but with a major challenge in not meeting the objective of increasing combined public/private investment in R&D and fighting back poverty and social exclusion. The immediate response and broad range of promoted policies

by the European Commission within the complex system of EU governance shows signs of political entrepreneurship by addressing the importance of a fundamental transformation into a smarter, more sustainable, and inclusive Europe. The role of political actors, such as the European Commission, should therefore not be underestimated and especially not so in times when EU member states are facing a serious crisis and becoming more inward-looking to solve domestic challenges.

Bibliography

- Baumol, W.J. "Entrepreneurship: productive, unproductive, and destructive". *Journal of Political Economy*, 98.5 (1990): 893–921. <https://doi.org/10.1086/261712>
- Brickerhoff, P.C. *Social Entrepreneurship – The Art of Mission-Based Venture Development*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2000.
- Carroll, J.J. "Failure is an option: the entrepreneurial governance framework". *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 6.1 (2017): 108–126. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEPP-04-2016-0013>
- Copeland, P., James, S. "Policy Windows, ambiguity and Commission entrepreneurship: explaining the relaunch of the European Union's economic reform agenda". *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21.1 (2014): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2013.800789>
- Crespy, A., Menz, G. "Commission Entrepreneurship and the Debasing of Social Europe Before and After the Eurocrisis". *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53.4 (2015): 753–768. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12241>
- Cross, D.M.K. *The Politics of Crisis in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Dahl, R.A. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
- EUR-Lex: Distribution of Competences. 2018. Web. 8.05.2018. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/competences.html?locale=en>
- European Commission. *Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. Brussels, 3.03.2010. Brussels: European Commission, 2010.
- Eurostat a. *Smarter, Greener, More Inclusive? Indicators to Support the Europe 2020 Strategy: 2019 edn*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019.
- Eurostat b. *Smarter, Greener, More Inclusive? Indicators to Support the Europe 2020 Strategy: 2017 edn*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017.

- Gros, D., Roth, F. *The Europe 2020 Strategy – Can it Maintain the EU’s Competitiveness in the World?*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), 2012.
- Hix, S., Goetz, K.H. “Introduction: European integration and national political systems”. *West European Politics*, 23.4 (2000): 52–72.
- Karlsson, C., Silander, C., Silander, D., eds. *Governance and Political Entrepreneurship in Europe: Promoting Growth and Welfare in Times of Crisis*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788112765>
- Kingdon, J. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.
- Lisbon Treaty. 2009. Web. 8.05.2018. <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty.html>
- Middelcar, L. van. *Pandemonium – Saving Europe*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2021.
- Monnett, J. *Memoirs*. London: William Collins, 1978.
- North, D.C. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808678>
- Osborne, D., Plastrik, P. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Putnam, R. *Making Democracy Work – Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400820740>
- Rosenthal, U., Charles, M.T., Hart, P.T. *Coping with Crises: The Management of Disasters, Riots, and Terrorism*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1989.
- Salerno, J.T. “The entrepreneur: real and imagined”. *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*, 11.3 (2008): 188–207. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12113-008-9043-5>
- Schneider, M., Teske, P. “Toward a theory of the political entrepreneur: evidence from local government”. *American Political Science Review*, 86.3 (1992): 737–747. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1964135>
- Schumpeter, J.A. *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934.
- Sheingate, A.D. “Political entrepreneurship, institutional change, and American political development”. *Studies in American Political Development*, 17.2 (2003): 185–203. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X03000129>
- Silander, D. “European governance and political entrepreneurship in times of economic crisis”. In: *Governance and Political Entrepreneurship in Europe: Promoting Growth and Welfare in Times of Crisis*. Eds. C. Karlsson, C. Silander, D. Silander. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018: 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788112765.00006>

- Simmons, R.T., Yonk, R.M., Thomas, D.W. “Bootleggers, baptists, and political entrepreneurs – key players in the rational game and morality play of regulatory politics”. *The Independent Review*, 15.3 (2011): 367–381.
- Stec, M., Grzebyk, M. “The implementation of the Strategy Europe 2020 objectives in European Union countries: the concept analysis and statistical evaluation”. *Quality & Quantity*, 52.1 (2018): 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-016-0454-7>
- Tusińska, M. “Competitiveness of the European Union – expectations, reality and challenges towards 2020”. *Horizons of Politics*, 7.21 (2016): 185–204.
- Wandel, J. “The role of government and markets in the strategy “Europe 2020” of the European Union: a robust political economy analysis”. *International Journal of Management and Economics*, 49.1 (2016): 7–33. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijme-2016-0002>

Daniel Silander is Associate Professor of Political Science and Research Leader of European Studies at Linnaeus University, Sweden. He is also Professor at North-West University, South Africa. His main areas of interests are international security, autocratization and democratization with specific focus on the contemporary democracy-security nexus in international affairs.