

## Future Generations and EU 2020 – Safeguarding Opportunities for Youth *Youth, Future Generations and Cultural Heritage*

Speaking Points - Maria da Graça Carvalho

- A. Present a vision to counter to major problems Europe faces today. Not abstract problems like “GDP growth is low” or “Too few people hold university degrees”. These figures play a role in my vision, but they are means, not ends. They are not the problem itself. Two problems as decisive, both concern a long-term perspective:
1. Sunset of the oil era, climate change. Moment of oil-peak is unclear, but probably nearer than expected<sup>1</sup>. Environmental costs, economic costs.
  2. Lacking opportunities for youth. Risk of a lost generation amplified by economic crisis. Youth unemployment currently at 20,7%.
- B. My vision is to build a resource efficient, low carbon society, a vision that will have to materialise during the next three decades if we want to solve the first problem. If we start to realise it soon enough, it can solve the second problem.
1. Decentralised energy production, giving power to citizens. Make every home an interconnected power plant in a smart-grid network. Make renewable energy production a daily routine for European citizens.
  2. Education – university and vocational education – tuned to lay the foundation for this transformation of infrastructure.
- C. The EU has already made achievements towards this vision: it will probably reach most of its 20-20-20 targets.  
But everybody in this room knows that reaching these goals is insufficient to ensure that global warming will remain below 2°C. Reaching a 30% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction by 2020 will be necessary.  
Vision of low-carbon society not only about abstract benchmarks, it is a way to attain these benchmarks.
- D. Using the Youth on the Move initiative to begin this process could advance the EU to solving the energy crisis and fight youth unemployment.
1. Create incentives to invest in low-carbon R&D.
  2. Increase attractiveness of university education geared towards the solution of the most pressing societal challenges. Create incentives for youth employment in IT, electricity and renewables sector.
  3. Gear vocational training towards the low-carbon vision.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/09/peak-oil-international-energy-agency>