

Invitation

Catching-up Regions: Developing New Growth Dynamics in Europe

Final conference of the Lagging Regions Initiative, Rzeszów, 31 May 2017

Dear Madame, Dear Sir,

On 31 May 2017 in Rzeszów the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy and the World Bank are organising a major conference "Catching-up Regions: Developing New Growth Dynamics in Europe". This event will present and assess the results of the "Lagging Regions Initiative" that we intensely implemented over the last year together with the Ministry of Economic Development in the two regions of South-Eastern Poland, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie.

Since 2004 both regions have been major recipients of the EU funding. Our support largely contributed to reviving their economies and improving the quality of life of their more than three million citizens. A spectacular GDP growth, the quickest increase of R&D spending amongst Polish regions and lots of well-educated and ambitious employees in both regions clearly demonstrate this success.

Today Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie need more than simple investments to sustain their growth. Boosting further productivity and going beyond 50% of the average EU-28 GDP level will require substantial efforts to increase the ability of regional companies to innovate, allocate more efficiently labour skills to jobs and create a stable business environment to attract investments.

The programming period 2014-20 plays a pivotal role in making this shift happen with more focus on innovation and human capital. In this context, the "Lagging Regions Initiative" focused specifically on removing bottlenecks and facilitating investments in both regions.

I would therefore like to cordially invite you to join our event in order to learn more about the experience of Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie in delivering this project. A series of interactive workshops with leading experts and actors directly involved in the practical implementation will look at the method and concrete outcomes of our work: the design and the set-up of the Technology Transfer Centre Office in Rzeszów, ways to reduce the time and cost of business registration procedures at the regional level, an innovative pilot project on vocational education and training in Świętokrzyskie, a demand-driven voucher for provision of business services and the in-house financial instruments management model in Rzeszów.

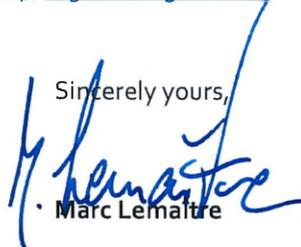
The conference will provide a perfect opportunity for peer-to-peer learning, especially for these regions, which would be interested in replicating similar actions in the future. We will also use this occasion to discuss in detail the role of Cohesion Policy post 2020 in delivering structural reforms in the catching-up regions across the European Union.

If you wish to attend our conference, please sign up by 12 May 2017 at the latest at:

https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/catching_up_regions_registration

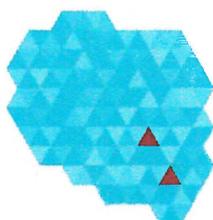
We are looking forward to seeing you all there!

Sincerely yours,



Marc Lemaître

Director-General,
Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission



CATCHING-UP REGIONS

DEVELOPING NEW GROWTH DYNAMICS IN EUROPE