

Remarks at the Conference on “European Cohesion Policy:
Hungarian experiences, Russian opportunities”

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by

István Íjgyártó,

Ambassador of Hungary to the Russian Federation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege to represent one of the co-sponsors and take the opportunity to deliver some remarks on this extremely important and timely topic the Conference intends to discuss today.

Some optimists are having the opinion that leading economies of the world are more or less passed through the worst of the global financial crisis. But it is also widely understood that still enormous efforts to be done to manage the legacy of the crisis and ensure that we get better equipped to prevent such turbulences in the future.

Globalisation has given us new opportunities for significant global economic growth and prior to the crisis we have witnessed the first results. But without properly addressing the challenges of the ever-changing world economy, Europe soon has to face her diminishing weight and competitiveness.

Economic, social and territorial cohesion is one of the main pillars of the EU. An internally unified Europe is more competitive globally and more efficient in external actions.

Although the last waves of enlargement by all means resulted a historic success for European unity, we should not neglect the fact it has also increased the amount of lesser developed regions. These developments led to the growing need to re-adjust the EU's cohesion policy and sharp debates are already taking place on its successes and failures.

It is one of the goals of the programme of the Hungarian Presidency to review the future of our most important common policies. Our aim is not only widening the target area of cohesion policy but strengthening and modernising its instruments during the new multiannual financial framework starting in 2014. Hungary has been a beneficiary of cohesion policy since the accession, and it is almost impossible to describe the importance of the role the EU resources play in developing the Hungarian economy and infrastructure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Improving the competitiveness of the European regions requires proper scientific background. Results of the European regional science can be detected both in the Union's and the member states' policies on regional development.

Hungary has a relatively good position in regional science. The achievements of the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Science in researching regional economies, multi-level governance, regulation of regional development, trans-frontier co-operation and the effect of new space-forming factors have generated significant international appreciation and contributed to the strengthening of the European competitiveness of the Hungarian regional policy. A sample of these achievements is recently published in Moscow under the title of „*Региональное развитие и региональная политика Венгрии и Центрально-Восточной Европы в переходный период*”. This publication is representing the fruitful co-operation of the respective research institutions of the two countries. In 2008, a similar work was published generating significant professional attention: „*Regional development and policy in the transforming Russia*.” We hope that the planned common research project for 2011-13 – *New driving forces of regional development in Hungary and Russia* – will enhance further improving regional science in the two countries and will contribute to a more effective regional development policy, too.

This conference gives not only an excellent opportunity to touch upon many subjects related to cohesion and regional development, but to discuss the forms and methods to transfer Hungary's EU-membership experience, to identify new directions of co-operation in regional policy – aiming at serving a successful and strong Europe based on sustainable development and multi-level partnership.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude to the host of this event, the leadership of the Republic of Komi, providing us this excellent facility and traditional hospitality based on the long tradition of good and friendly relations and brotherhood of two Finno-Ugrian nations.

Thank you for your attention!