



3 October 2011

OPEN DAYS 2011 - EUROPEAN WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES

BREAKING THE TABOO: TIME FOR SMART SPENDING OF EU FUNDS

Date: 12 October 2011, 11.15 – 13.00, followed by a cocktail reception

Venue: Brussels, Committee of the Regions, Room JDE62

Introductory Statement:

- **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**, Polish Minister of Regional Development

Panel discussion moderated by Joshua Chaffin, Financial Times (with Q&As)

- **Dirk Ahner**, Director-General, Regional Policy, European Commission
- **Iain Begg**, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science
- **Sinne Conan**, Director of European Affairs, Confederation of Danish Industry
- **Bernward Kulle**, Member of the Executive Board of HOCHTIEF Concessions
- **Lambert van Nistelrooij**, Member of the European Parliament, REGI Committee

Concluding remarks

- **Philippe de Buck**, Director General of BUSINESSEUROPE

OUTLINE

The European Commission analysis demonstrates some clear benefits brought by cohesion policy in terms of GDP, employment, innovation and business development, among others. Yet, cohesion policy clearly could do more to leverage regional competitiveness. A lack of strategic approach, heavy administrative procedures, and little focus on project delivery and evaluation undermine the credibility and performance of this policy. Given present constraints on public finances and the ongoing debate around the next multiannual financial framework it is time to analyse the role of this policy into greater detail.

Bringing together views from a wide variety of stakeholders, we envisage a frank and open discussion considering issues such as: does cohesion policy bring a real European added-value? What are the key factors preventing better results? Are funds well targeted and properly channelled to competitiveness-related policies? How do these views fit into the multi-annual financial framework post-2014 proposal?