



## HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON THE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR MIDDLE-INCOME REGIONS WITHIN THE EU COHESION POLICY BEYOND 2020

18 April 2018

European Committee of the Regions  
Rue Belliard, 101 (Room JDE 51), Brussels

### AGENDA

The last global financial crisis and its aftermath exposed many European regions and cities to many unsustainable growth models. **Globalisation** has a highly differentiated impact on EU regions. Some are well positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities it offers, others are hit by job losses, stagnating wages and shrinking market shares due to low-cost competitors moving into more technologically advanced sectors. **Industrial transition**, often in richer Member States and **mid-income regions**, brings economic and social challenges, including promoting innovation and creating SMEs in new, growing sectors and providing workers with new skills.

The European Union places considerable emphasis on cohesion policy, with it providing almost one third of the EU budget with the objective of reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions (Art.174 TFEU). However, over the last years several of the regions with a GDP per capita close to the EU average seem to have remained in a "**mid-income trap**".

This event aims to provide a new impetus to the ongoing discussion on the future of cohesion policy beyond 2020 based on the goals achieved so far and the challenges to be faced by a **transitional category** of mid-income regions with a GDP per capita between 75% and 100% of EU-27 average.

This is an event co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions in close cooperation with the regional government of **Wallonia** and within the framework of the political campaign "**Cohesion Alliance**" to defend a strong regional policy within the new multiannual financial framework beyond 2020.

**Interpreting arrangements:** 5/5: ES/DE/EN/FR/IT

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**14.00 Registration**

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**14.30 – 15.00: Opening statements**

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**Chair:** **Petr Oswald**, Chair of the COTER commission of the European Committee of the Regions, Councillor of the City of Plzeň (Czech Republic)

- **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, President of the European Committee of the Regions
- **Willy Borsus**, Minister-President of Wallonia (Belgium)

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**15.00 – 16.30: Challenges faced by mid-income regions and solutions provided to Cohesion policy beyond 2020**

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**Moderator:** **Sami Andoura**, Team leader, European Political Strategic Centre (EPSC), European Commission.

This session will explore the particular issues and challenges faced by these territories with regard to their economic, social and territorial development, such as the impact of globalisation, trade and the economic models. Several regions with a GDP per capita close to the EU average seem to have remained in a "mid-income trap". Speakers of this session will also explain why Cohesion Policy should continue supporting growth and jobs projects for transition regions promoting innovative solutions for issues such as climate change and energy transition, social inclusion, etc.

**Keynote speech:** *Lena Andersson Pench, Director, DG REGIO, European Commission*

**Speakers:**

- **Michael Schneider**, State Secretary, Representative of the Land of Saxony-Anhalt to the Federal Government (Germany)
- **Nicolas Lebas**, Vice-president in charge of European Affairs, Higher-Education, Research and Spatial planning, Hauts-de-France Region (France)
- **Maria de Diego**, Deputy Regional Minister on Spatial planning and Institutional Relations, Castilla y Leon (Spain)
- **Christian Illedits**, President of the Regional Parliament of Burgenland (Austria)

**Discussion with the audience**

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**16.30 – 16.45 Conclusions**

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**Petr Oswald**, Chair of the COTER commission of the European Committee of the Regions, Councillor of the City of Plzeň (Czech Republic)

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**16.45 – 18.30 Networking Reception**

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