



## Coal Regions High-Level Conference

9 October 2019, 14.30-17.00, Room JDE 62

*Taking place during the 2019 European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC)*

### Political context

Following the Paris Agreement, the EU has committed to reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by 40% comparing to 1990 levels by the year 2030, and at least 80% by 2050. Cutting coal-fired power generation is an important element in this context, which will have tangible economic and social effects on Europe's coal-producing regions. Lignite and coal are currently mined in 41 NUTS-2 regions, and there are coal-fired power stations in 103 NUTS-2 regions. The structural change initiated by energy policy decisions poses enormous challenges for the regions affected as for example recent debate in Germany highlighted. The phasing-out of coal one requires substantial resources (in the case of Germany 40 billion EUR until 2038).

The necessary resources exceed the resources the regions dispose of. Thus the regions concerned need support if the phasing-out of coal should become a success. Apart from national support, also the Cohesion Policy with its unique delivery mechanism could play a key role. The success of energy transformation depends on the ability of local and regional authorities to manage this change at the local and regional level, starting with the best practices, but also understanding local limitations and obstacles, but they also need the necessary resources.



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## Objectives

The High-Level Conference would have the following objectives:

- to highlight the close link between the European Union committing to ambitious climate targets and its territorial consequences for the 41 coal regions in Europe,
- to underline the need for a structural support of these regions through the European Union as a whole via additional means via Cohesion Policy provided through the future MFF,
- to promote a system of shared management with a strong involvement of the cities and regions as well as the social partners and the civic society to find a long term solution and
- to stress the need for a strong co-operation at European level between all levels of government to exchange experiences and promote new solutions.

## Participants

The High-Level Conference will include national Ministers, Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission and high-level representatives from regions (Prime ministers or ministers).

The two CoR Rapporteurs Mr Mark Speich (DE/EPP) on “The socioeconomic transformation of coal regions in Europe” and Mr Witold Stepień (PL/EPP) on “Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level” will be present.

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## Draft Agenda

*Interpretation from and into English, Polish, Spanish, German, Romanian and Czech will be provided.*

The **first panel** should focus on the need for a structural response to the transition of coal regions and the potential role of cohesion policy for this. The **second panel** should focus on the main content of regional exit strategies focussing on the specific needs at regional level.

14.30            **Opening remarks**

- ❖ Mr Mark Speich, CoR Rapporteur

14.35            **First high-level panel**

*What shall be the structural response to the transition of coal regions?  
Which role can the cohesion policy play in this context?*

- ❖ Mr Günther Oettinger, member of the European Commission, responsible for Budget & Human Resources
- ❖ Mr Younus Omarjee, Chair of EP REGI committee
- ❖ Mr Jan Olbrycht, EP Rapporteur on the MFF
- ❖ Ms Klára Dostálová, Minister for Regional Development, Czech Republic
- ❖ Mr Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister of Finance, Poland
- ❖ Ms Teresa Ribera, Minister for Ecological Transition, Spain
- ❖ Ms Mihaela Toader, State Secretary, Ministry of European Funds, Romania
- ❖ Mr Reiner Haseloff, Minister President Saxony-Anhalt, Germany
- ❖ Ms Dr Kirsten Scholl, Director General European Policy, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany

*Moderator: Mr Mark Speich, Questions by the audience*

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15.45

### **Second high-level panel**

*What are the main exit strategies for coal regions?*

*Which needs do the regions have to implement their exit strategies?*

- ❖ Mr Marc Lemaitre, Director General DG REGIO
- ❖ Mr Jerzy Buzek, former Chair of EP ITRE committee
- ❖ Ms Corina Crețu, member of the EP REGI committee and former member of the European Commission in charge of regional policy
- ❖ Mr Adrián Barbón, President of the Principado de Asturias, Spain
- ❖ Mr Francisco Igea, Vice-President of the Junta de Castilla y León, Spain
- ❖ Mr Jakub Chelstowski, Marshal of the Voivodeship of Silesia, Poland
- ❖ Mr Jörg Steinbach, Minister for Economy, Brandenburg, Germany
- ❖ Mr Ivo Vondrák, Governor of Moravskoslezský Region, Czech Republic
- ❖ Mr Witold Stepień, CoR Rapporteur

*Moderator: Ms. Denisa Žiláková, Director General, Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Slovak Republic, Questions by the audience*

16.45

### **Closing session**

Markku Markkula, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions