

Brussels, 9 October 2007

Cohesion policy: OPEN DAYS go global for first time

OPEN DAYS, the European week of regions and cities, go global for the first time, welcoming delegates from Russia, Brazil and China to seminars in Brussels. OPEN DAYS, which runs 8-11 October, features a seminar entitled: 'Regional policy in a global perspective' for Russia, Brazil and other countries. It follows a seminar on 8 October that focused on China. The events, at ministerial and expert level, offer participants the opportunity to share their experience on how to implement an efficient regional policy with European experts, politicians and non-governmental organisations.

Commenting ahead of the Tuesday seminar, Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional policy, said: *'This is the first time we have opened our OPEN DAYS to other countries in this way. By sharing experiences, we can help to shape the opportunities that globalisation offers to create jobs and growth. By bringing our regions and cities together, and involving citizens in global cooperation networks, we can help people to create positive politics to face up to new challenges in the 21st century.'*

Notes for editors

EU-China regional cooperation: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed last year in Beijing between the European Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the main agency in charge of macroeconomic management and of formulating policies for economic and social development. It prepares development plans and reports on the national economy and social development to the National People's Congress.

EU-Russia regional cooperation: A Memorandum of understanding on regional cooperation was signed in May 2007 between the European Commission and the government of the Russian Federation. The purpose of this agreement is to exchange information and best practices on experiences in setting up and implementing cohesion policy.

Challenges in common: The European Union, China, Russia and Brazil face similar problems and share a common goal of reduce regional disparities within their territories. Mr. Geddel Vieira Lima, Minister of National Integration of Brazil, Chinese First Vice-Minister Du Ying from the National Development and Reform Committee, and representatives of the Russian Ministry of Regional Development will describe their respective policies at Tuesday's seminar.

- Within the European Union, despite impressive growth rates in new member states, one region in four has a GDP per inhabitant under 75% of the EU average.
- China is facing regional disparities between the booming coastal regions (10 regions represent 58% of GDP) and the lagging western parts of the country (11 regions which account for 13% of GDP).

- In Russia, the GDP per habitant in the richest region of Tyumen is 33 times higher than the GDP in the poorest region of Ingushetia.
- In Brazil, there are sharp differences between the North and the more developed South.

OPEN DAYS

The European week of regions and cities, first introduced in 2003, offers a platform for discussion, and networking among regions and players in the field of regional policy. From 8 to 11 October 2007, 150 workshops are organised gathering around 5000 participants. To consult the full programme of the event: www.opendays.europa.eu

See

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on the Open Days

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on the EU-China regional seminar