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**Prof. Danuta Hübner,
Chair of the Committee on Regional Development**

**Summit of regional presidents: Lobbying action for the maintenance of
objective 2 Regional Funding after 2013**

Handing-over ceremony of the signature-books

**7 October 2010
15.45-16.45
Charlemagne Building, Brussels**

European Parliament has adopted today a resolution in which we say that European post 2013 cohesion policy must be carried out across the Union's territory. It must be a policy for all regions. If we abandoned objective 2 regions, we would risk going back to the old fashioned approach, based on the principle of "compensating for the past" subsidy based policy instrument with a strong sectorial focus, weak from the point of view of effectiveness. This type of approach to the policy would make its focus on the pursuit of common European objectives very unlikely. We would generate a quasi European policy working as supplement to national objectives oriented sectorial policies. Europe cannot afford it.

Cohesion is Treaty, based principle of European integration. This principle makes cohesion policy a policy for all citizens of the Union. We all agree that cohesion policy should do more in regions where catching up is a challenge.

But investing more in linking them better with Objective 2 regions will allow to more efficiently exploit development potential of our economy.

Objective 2 regions are home to the majority of our world class industrial and financial centres. It is in these regions that many of the most advanced research institutes and technologically advanced SMEs are found. These regions have suffered the most from restrictions on credit, accelerated and unusual levels of industrial closures and unemployment over the last few years. Indeed, some of them are wondering what tomorrow will hold.

The role of Objective 2 regions in strengthening Europe's competitiveness in the global context is a precious asset. We are also aware that only few of them outperform their global competitors. Many still score below EU average on productivity, share of graduates, on employment rate. Cohesion policy framework gives them a chance for improvements.

A large part of their post crisis budgets is absorbed by current expenditure, leaving very little margins to finance new investment, to invest in resource efficiency and innovation. Small resources provided by cohesion policy very often represent a significant share of the regional capacity to finance new investment, crucial from the point of view of European strategic objective-resource efficiency, innovation, social inclusion.

The future policy architecture should take into account the post crisis reality at the regional level. Crisis is still working on a new regional map of Europe. We cannot leave to the crisis the future of our regions. It is Europe's future.