

Speech by

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on the occasion of the EPSA 2011 ceremony in Maastricht on 17 November 2011

Dear Mr Governor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- As Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič has already pointed out in his video message, effective implementation of public policy requires competent and efficient administration that is impartial and customer-oriented. The Commission has launched several initiatives aiming at strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services at EU, national, regional and local level.
- In my view, the most important initiative is the European Social Fund's priority to support institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations with the allocation of 2 billion Euros for the 2007-2013 programming period. Currently, 18 Member States have made use of this ESF funding possibility.
- The ESF involvement in that field has been supported by the Polish Presidency, which organised an important conference in October 2011 on ESF support for better governance ("Catalysing reforms - ESF support for better governance"). All participants of the conference have supported the ESF involvement in this domain.
- This conclusion does not surprise. Without any doubt, ESF support has contributed to reform, better regulation and good governance at national, regional and local levels.
- For example, with the ESF support services to the public and to enterprises have been improved, and the time needed to register a new company has been reduced to even one day at zero cost and via a single access point.
- Therefore, the ESF is in particular involved in measures focusing on administrative structures, human resources, systems and tools.

- Our conference - the EPSA 2011 clearly demonstrates that funding possibilities offered by the European Union in this field do matter.
- There are 45 projects submitted to the EPSA 2011 that have benefited from EU structural funds actions.
- Many of them were directly co-financed by the ESF. Two projects received on Tuesday the Best Practice Certificate. One project "**Civil Society Involvement in the Welcoming and Integration of Immigrants**", from Portugal, is still running for an award under the second category. It promotes dialogue between different cultures, ethnic groups and religions – the core values of the European Union.
- ESF support in this field has been important and will remain important in the future financial perspectives.
- The draft legislative package on Cohesion policy for 2014-2020 was presented by the Commission on the 6th of October 2011. It establishes enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration as one of four ‘thematic objectives’ to be targeted by the ESF throughout the European Union. The other three objectives are:
 - (i) Promoting employment and labour mobility;
 - (ii) Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; and
 - (iii) Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.
- Regarding the future cohesion policy please let me say just few words on the overall proposal for the European Social Fund, which will play a substantial role in meeting the ambitious objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- Three out of the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy are directly linked to the core activities of the Fund (boosting employment; improving education and fighting poverty and social exclusion). The fourth headline target of the Europe 2020 Strategy (on research and innovation), also depends on investing in human capital.

- Currently, ESF supports more than 10 million Europeans a year and helps 2 million to get into employment. With the improvement of its performance more will be achieved. Therefore the Commission proposed for the new programming period that:
 - the overall role of the ESF will be reinforced with a minimum share of the total cohesion budget – at a 25% minimum share resulting in at least 84 billion Euro;
 - 20% of the ESF allocation should go specifically to social inclusion actions to underpin the inclusive growth dimension of our strategy;
 - The ESF will focus more money on fewer priorities, reflecting our key challenges: raising employment rates, improving education and reducing poverty.
 - Member States will have the possibility to combine ESF resources with other funds; and
 - There will be a stronger performance orientation, a common set of indicators, with clear milestones and targets.
- As concerns the institutional capacity priority for the 2013-2020 financial framework, the Commission proposes that the support will be available to Member States with less developed regions or with regions eligible to the Cohesion Fund.
- Also, the ESF will also continue its support for projects from less developed regions that focus on capacity building for social partners and will expand its support for NGOs.
- In addition, the ESF funding will be provided for sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at national, regional and local levels, involving social partners and NGO's in the democratic debate.
- Like the ESF, the EPSA acts as a driver for change in the way public services function in the 21st century, encouraging them to implement innovations and deliver quality.

- The Commission has supported initiatives, which encourage good practice in public administration and help countries to share innovative solutions. We are looking into ways to continue such support where it adds value.
- I believe that we all here share the same goal - creating a competent and efficient administration. An administration that reduces regulatory and administrative burdens on businesses and creates a stable business environment and thus increases productivity and strengthens competitiveness of the European Union. I am glad to be here and to get acquainted with so many good practice models in this important field.