

Launch event of public consultations European Funds for Lubelskie 2021-2027

Speaking points

Introduction

- Szanowny Panie Wicepremierze, Szanowni Panowie Ministrowie, Szanowny Panie Wojewodo, Szanowny Panie Marszałku, Szanowni Panie i Panowie

Cieszę się, że mogę wziąć udział w dzisiejszym wydarzeniu inauguracyjnym konsultacje społeczne programu Fundusze Europejskie dla Lubelszczyzny. Szkoda, że nie mogę być z Państwem osobiście, ale mam nadzieję, że niedługo, jeśli sytuacja epidemiologiczna na to pozwoli, wrócimy do normalnego trybu organizowania spotkań i spotkamy się w Lublinie, by negocjować nowy program dla Lubelszczyzny.

Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Dear Ministers, Dear Voivod, Dear Marshall, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very glad to be with you today, at this event launching the public consultations of the European Funds for Lubelskie programme. It's a pity I can't join you in person but I hope that soon, if the health situation allows, we will come back to the normal mode of organizing meetings and we will meet face to face to negotiate the new programme for Lubelskie.

- Christopher has touched many important issues regarding the situation in the region and its challenges, so I will start with more horizontal issues which are substantial for programming.

Transfer

- First of all, I would like to inform you that we are still discussing with the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy the Partnership Agreement and the transfer of 3bln EUR from the ESF+ to the Cohesion Fund, which is 20% of the ESF+ allocation for Poland. This is a big sum, and we are concerned that the objectives of the European Social Fund cannot be met under these circumstances, and that the country specific recommendations cannot be adequately addressed. The latest state of play is this: we agreed with the Ministry that we will get additional materials, to see how the ESF+ will be distributed among specific objectives, including on the regional level, and then the decision will be made, probably on the political level.

Horizontal EC on the Charter of Fundamental Rights & LGBTIQ & gender equality

- The second issue I would like to bring up is the Horizontal Enabling Condition on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. We have requested an explicit commitment in the PA to respect horizontal principles related to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the principle of gender equality.

- I cannot hide this from you: we are deeply concerned about the fulfilment of this enabling condition in Poland, especially in context of Article 21 of the Charter. The point of concern focuses on the resolutions adopted by some self-governments, including in Lubelskie, at various administrative levels, targeting the LGBTI community. Equality and non-discrimination are core principles in the EU, enshrined in its Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In recent decades legislative developments, case law and policy initiatives have improved many people's lives and helped us build more equal and welcoming societies, including for LGBTIQ people. Still, discrimination against LGBTIQ people persists throughout the EU, which is why the EU has to be at the forefront of efforts to better protect LGBTIQ people's rights. Therefore, to better protect LGBTIQ people's rights, the European Commission adopted, on 11 November 2020, the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The Strategy sets out a series of targeted actions around four main pillars, focused on tackling discrimination; ensuring safety; building inclusive societies; and leading the call for LGBTIQ equality around the world.
- The Commission expects that in 2021-2027 Poland will ensure concrete measures directly related to combating all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation. This should not only concern the composition and procedures of Monitoring Committees, a solid complaints mechanism, but also programme selection criteria and co-financing agreements with beneficiaries. From the letter sent by the Marshal Stawiarski to the Ombudsman, Adam Bodnar, we know that some measures have been implemented by the Lubelskie MA, but this is still not enough.
- We would like to see a commitment, both in the PA text and in the programmes, that anti-discrimination measures, including on the ground of sexual orientation, will be actively pursued in each phase of the programme implementation.
- It should be also ensured that a gender perspective is taken into programming and implementation. The managing authority should actively work to prevent discrimination and to educate beneficiaries on the hidden discrimination and gender-bias in projects. In the current programming period Lubelskie, as one of the few regions, realized projects targeted to women at the labour market - ACADEMY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP WOMEN 30+ - Program for supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment of women aged 30 and more living in the Lubelskie Voivodeship. We appreciate this idea of targeted actions for women and encourage you to realize more projects in this spirit and to go even further by addressing gender stereotypes in educational and professional decision-making on career suitable for men and women.

Social Pillar Action Plan & Porto Objectives

- As you know, the guiding principles for the investments from the European Social Fund+, our Bible, so to say, in our domain, are set by the European Pillar of Social Rights. In May this year all the Heads of state and government met in Porto and

expressed their support for the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights. Partners have signed up to the three 2030 ambitious headline targets to be reached by 2030, the so called Porto Social Commitment.

- These targets are:
 - at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030 in this your region is still lagging behind (the latest official figures, for 2019, show a global employment rate in Lubelskie at 69.8%, while in PL it is 73% and in EU 73.8%; while for men it is higher (76.6%), for women it is only 62,8%: so we all know this is an area for ESF+ intervention.
 - at least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year by 2030; today I heard a lot of words spent on roads and transport, and unfortunately not a lot about human capital, which is a fundamental element for development; it is fundamental because the digital and green transition, the automation, the demographic challenge are all factors which mean that our workforce needs to adapt, upskill and reskill at a much higher frequency than in the past. The participation rate in education and training of adults in Lubelskie is low: my figures, although partial, speak about only 5.5%. ESF+ will surely support Lubelskie in this challenge.
 - a reduction of at least 15 million in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This is for your region, unfortunately, still the biggest challenge, with a rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Lubelskie at 28,8%, the highest in Poland, comparing to the national average of 18.2%. Here, also, the ESF+ will dedicate the necessary attention.
 - Indeed, we think that these three challenges – increasing participation in adult learning, raising employment level and reducing poverty, should be well reflected in the allocations for the specific objectives.
- The Porto Social Commitment is a responsibility shared among the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society to achieve. We encourage you to translate these EU objectives into the regional ones.

Final remarks

- Of course there are more challenges in Lubelskie but we will discuss them bilaterally later on. I wish you fruitful discussion today and many accurate comments and remarks, which will make the programme for Lubelskie aligned to the people's needs.