

**COMMISSIONER DANUTA HÜBNER**

**CONCLUSIVE REMARKS**

**PLENARY SESSION  
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

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BRUSSELS**

Thank you very much for comments and useful debate.

**On Mr Andria Report.**

Let me start by reminding that in the years to come we will be working within the legal framework of already adopted regulations, trying to be as innovative as possible in reaching out to additional instruments and as flexible as regulations allow us to be. We will be working within the agreed budget which for some is too small, for others too big but which in reality pushes us towards innovative financial instruments. In the coming years we will also have to do both improve the quality of life of our citizens and create a sound foundation for long term sustainable development of Europe.

With regard to housing, it is true that more possibilities for financing within the framework of the regional policy are foreseen in new Member States, but there are many areas also in old Member States where support is possible to housing related activities. I could mention some examples: rehabilitation of public spaces in deprived city areas, security

measures, connection of multi-family houses to water supply, sewage, energy and telecommunication networks. European Investment Bank and Council of Europe Bank are also an important source of financial investments in housing sector. We examine currently to which extent we can use JESSICA initiative to boost investments in housing.

Inter-service group in the Commission has just prepared an inventory on urban dimension of Community policies. It identifies all actions which have an impact on housing in the context of public health, social policy, energy, urban transport etc. This group can integrate housing related question in its work programme. The group can also commission a study on housing that you have requested. We need to be more innovative on financial engineering and combine different sources of financing.

On 24-25 May the German Presidency is organising the Council meeting which will adopt the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities; which includes provision on housing in the context of energy efficiency.

The Commission will submit to the Council an analysis which among other issues will also look at how housing is reflected in NSRFs and operational programmes for 2007-2013.

Concerning innovation, and as regards Mr Janowski's report, many of you stress something which I find absolutely essential, namely the broader interpretation of innovation as not merely being limited to multinationals and state-of-the-art 21st- or 22nd-century technology, but also taking small- and medium-sized companies on board. I fully share your view on this twin challenge. We need local motors and poles to take us forward quickly. However, the real challenge is to spread innovation capacities across Europe. I share your views on this very strongly. We

need both poles and networks. That is why the Regions for Economic Change, the first network of its kind, which will be launched this year, concerns the linking-up of clusters all over Europe. We will have the regions working together on the question of how to bring innovation to the market as quickly as possible. As we know, Europe's basic disease is its slowness in this area.

Once again, Mr President, thank you very much for this debate on the reports, which is a continuation of our inter-institutional discussions in this area. Both reports are extremely useful, not least with regard to future policy reflections.