

**Address by Commissioner Danuta Hübner at the official opening of the
Exhibition of pictures of the region of Małopolska
(Małopolska week in Brussels)
Brussels, 5 June 2007
(pre-recorded speech)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very sorry that I cannot be with you in Brussels today. I am happy, though, that at least through this televised recording I can indirectly participate in this opening of the exhibition.

It is already for quite a time that I have known about Małopolska's plans to organize a special week in Brussels during which Kraków would be present here in many dimensions, in many places and with a number of events. And since that distant moment I have kept my fingers crossed for the success of the project. Today I wish to congratulate you once again on the idea and on the efficiency of all the efforts. We all know that Małopolska and Kraków are exceptional places. In the course of the past years Kraków has become an unquestionable cultural metropolis which stays awake 24 hours a day and which is well on top of holiday plans of probably all Europeans.

Before Poland's accession to the Union voices were heard that once Poland is in, the national identity will be lost, that national and regional features will be diluted in the multi-state organism. For three years now, however, we have been observing the flourishing and the promotion of all that constitutes the pride of the regions, of all that the region boasts of: traditions, customs, culture, cuisine. Małopolska's June week in Brussels is indeed a reflection of how specific regional features are and how great is the determination of regional communities to widely present their heritage and to share it with others.

And it is at the regional and local levels that the great, positive changes brought about by the membership in the Union, are seen best. Regions have very quickly adapted themselves to the new reality and we can see how well they are capable of making use of new chances, in particular of those generated by the European

Regional Policy, the most concrete and the most appealing example of the realisation of the European idea. By working together, we in the European Commission and you, our partners in the regions and cities, can bring tangible changes to people's lives and to the environment in which they live.

We need to remember that actions that we take should be aimed at generating a lasting ability of regions to compete on the European and world markets. I am convinced that this goal can be attained if the leadership and management in regions is effective and efficient and if local communities develop visions, initiatives and if they engage in their realisation. And I know that in Małopolska there is no shortage of experienced leadership and I know that the people of the region are determined to succeed and I wish you all every success.

I hope you will enjoy today's celebrations and I count on meeting you in Brussels or in Kraków.