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Function: Directress

Organisation: Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region

Welcome speech

Esteemed Mr. **Reinhard Büscher**, Head of Unit of Innovation Policy Development at the European Commission, Madam **Michela Michilli**, director of the INNO-DEAL project, Esteemed Madam **Jadranka Dakić**, Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana, Esteemed Madam **Darja Radič**, State Secretary of the Slovenian Ministry of Economy, and Madam **Tea Petrin**, Full Professor of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, former Minister of Economy and former Slovene Ambassador to the Netherlands.

Distinguished participants of the conference, ladies and gentlemen.

A most warm welcome at today's conference entitled »How to Provide Solutions for Innovative and Creative Start-ups in Uncertain Times«.

More than ever before Europe today is facing a new competitive environment on a global scale. This places the Ljubljana urban region in the demanding role of becoming an integral part of the international competitive environment. Our region is thus taking part in European efforts for a more efficient, yet qualitative and sustainable economic, social and spatial development. In other words, it is taking part in European integrative and evolutionary processes.

In doing so, the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region is well aware of its crucial role in the 26 municipalities making up the Ljubljana urban region. Ljubljana is the motor of development in the region and indeed the state as a whole. It is the generator of development for a dynamic and competitive Ljubljana urban region so as to ensure comparability and competitiveness with nearby urban regions in the EU. This is why we strongly advocate cross-sectoral agreements in formulating our development priorities by espousing the right critical distance and long-term vision. We are striving for Ljubljana to become one of those EU capitals that connects people and preserves nature in the region, thus ensuring a truly outstanding quality of life and work throughout the region.

We are very well aware of how difficult this can be in the current economic crisis. But this is also the reason why it is so very important to establish a competitive macro-economic environment for companies and to increase our technological competitiveness. Our aim is to establish a closer link between research and business, to support projects where industry can sell our universities' knowledge on the open market. Today's conference is in fact a step in that very direction.

I am convinced that the results of the INNO-DEAL project, through its range of measures encouraging innovation and technological development, are going to help those spearheading development at a regional and national level to identify highly ambitious and innovative projects in their environment, projects promising high growth on the international market for high value-added products and services despite the potential risks. That is precisely what will help us overcome the present crisis.



In conclusion allow me to wish one and all successful deliberations and a pleasant time spent together. We at the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region, as coorganisers of this event, will certainly do our best for the Ljubljana Urban Region to leave you with many fond memories.