

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **From the Scientific Gathering “Regional Development of the Republic of Macedonia”**

The estimate of the participants in the scientific gathering is that the absence of consistent strategy, i.e. regional development programme unfavourably influences the development of the national economy and the separate regions, especially the economically underdeveloped regions, and slows down the process of integration of the country in the European and world flows.

Having the present conditions and needs as a starting point, as well as the experience of the countries in transition, activities should be initiated for preparation of a strategy, i.e. regional development programme for the Republic of Macedonia. The realization of this program will contribute to development of the regions, especially of the economically underdeveloped regions. At the same time, it is emphasized that the regional development strategy will contribute to approximation of the Republic of Macedonia to the structural funds of the European Union, as well as to the entrance of the country in this economic integration.

The participants in the scientific gathering believe that the preparation of a strategy, i.e. regional development programme should not be conditioned by the coming changes in the political-territorial boundaries of the municipalities in the country, nor by the ongoing observations regarding the policy for support to the economically underdeveloped regions.

The participants in the scientific gathering are at the stand that the regional development policy should be an integral part of the global social and economic devel-

opment. This will be achieved by integrating and coordinating both the sector and regional development, i.e. the sector and regional programs and projects.

In relation to his, complex measures for regional policy need to be defined, as well as measures for other policies such as industrial and agrarian policy, employment and technological development policy, entrepreneurship promotion, etc.

What is of significant importance for the Republic of Macedonia is to identify the sectors and the activities, which, on local level, have possibilities to be successfully developed and to be competitive on the world market, and to be underpinned by an appropriate development policy by the Government. Having this as a starting point, and given the experience of the developed countries and of the advanced countries in transition, the regional development should be realized by coordinating both the “bottom-up development” and “top-down development”.

Within the concept of regional development, from the point of view of the new approach that emphasizes both the competitiveness and the coordination, it is indispensable to undertake concrete measures towards adjustment to the standards of the European Union. The participants in the scientific gathering believe that the basic elements to which attention should be paid in the future regional development policy are the following: the need to apply the basic principles of the structural policy of the EU; the need to categorize the unit system used in the EU in the Republic of Macedonia; the need to adapt the legal segment; the need to adapt the financial system; the knowledge and adaptation of the nomenclature of the regional statistical units; the necessity to develop institutions to support the regional development, and alike.

The participants in the scientific gathering consider that, regarding the future regional policy, an emphasis should be put on the development of the rural centers. By strengthening the demographic and the social and economic structure, the functional contents and the other infrastructure features, especially by expanding the economic activities, these centers should be performers of development and become poles of development. Therefore, the need arises for emphasized social care and support to the development of the rural centers to the end of regional development in the Republic of Macedonia.

The participants in the scientific gathering believe that the legal aspects of both the regional and the local development should be underlined. Accordingly, these issues need to be arranged in a complex manner so as to create conditions for more successful regional development of the country.

It is considered that a special body needs to be established to the end of successful realization of regional development. To that effect, the experience from the advanced countries in transition could be applied.

It is participants' opinion that what is of importance for preparation of regional development program is to provide statistical and other data that will contribute to

observing the level of development in certain regions, monitoring of the achieved development, as well as proposing measures and activities.

Given the shown interest by the municipal representatives for many issues in the area of local development, it is proposed to organize scientific and expert gathering on the topic “Local development in the Republic of Macedonia”. In addition, it is estimated that this scientific gathering is a kind of continuity of the today’s exchange of opinions related to the regional development of the Republic of Macedonia.

These conclusions and recommendations will be submitted to the Ministry of Local Government, the Agency for Underdeveloped Regions, “Fridrih Ebert” Foundation - office in the Republic of Macedonia and to other interested bodies and organizations, and will also be published in the collection of reports and discussions from the scientific gathering.