Reindustrialisation of the European Union as an opportunity for the chemical industry in Poland

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The situation of economic entities operating on the territory of the EU has changed during recent years. At the end of June 2012, the industrial production dropped by 10% compared to the situation before crisis. During this period of time, employment in the industrial sector fell by 3 million, that is 10% of the whole employment figure in this sector. During 2008-2011, investments dropped by GDP 2.5%, and economic forecasts predict only slow improvement.

In order to reduce the crisis’ impact and to face challenges resulting among others from the climate package, at the end of the previous year, the European Commission published the communication titled: “A stronger European industry for growth and economic recovery” 1). This document provides details and updates to the communication: “An integrated industrial policy for the globalisation era” 2).

The goal of the communication titled: “A stronger European industry for growth and economic recovery” is to put more pressure on achieving faster economic growth, strengthening industrial policy and creating new workplaces. Those goals are to be achieved through actions in four domains called by the EC pillars of the strengthened industrial policy:

- Assuring by the EU the proper framework conditions for stimulating new investments, accelerating the use of new technologies and increasing the efficiency of resources
- Creating better market conditions through improving the functioning of the Internal Market and opening international markets
- Facilitating access to funds for investments and innovation
- Increasing investments in human capital and broadening skills.

The industry should remain the key factor of constructing prosperity and strong position of the UE on the international scene. Competitive, in other words: modern, innovative and environment friendly industrial base should offer opportunity to reduce prices and costs, create new, better goods and develop services, contributing in this way to the increase of competitiveness of the whole economy.

When competitiveness and development of chemical industry is mentioned, it should be remembered that the rule of sustainable development covers social, environmental and economic aspects. Therefore, cohesion among climate policy, energy policy and industrial policy is very important. Actions by the EC aim at counteracting replacement of industrial production away from the EU.

Reindustrialisation and investments in new, innovative technologies should constitute the basis for economic recovery and development of all the sectors of the industry, including those consuming energy. At present, industrialised European economies lean their competitiveness on industries such as chemical or electromechanical.

The communication titled: “A stronger European industry” dedicates much space to green energy, ecologically clean transport and ecologically clean production. European Union policy supporting the development of industry should not be excessively and unjustifiably restricted by climate and energy policy; the development of industry should be supported by climate and energy policy.

The most important challenge the Polish chemical industry is facing now is the development of innovativeness and knowledge economy. The more the economy is saturated with knowledge absorbent economic processes, the higher are its profitability and productivity.

Meeting those challenges, the Ministry of Economy is developing the Enterprise Development Programme 2020 (PRP), which will constitute the basis for a new operational programme in the area of innovativeness. The PRP will be an executive programme for the Strategy for Innovative and Efficient Economy adopted by the Council of Ministers on 15 January 2013.

Instruments indicated in the Enterprise Development Programme focus on the creation of more friendly environment for entrepreneurs, strengthening the entrepreneurship, improving the quality of human capital in the scope of innovativeness and employees’ adaptability, supporting R+D+I (pl. B+R+I), strengthening cooperation between entrepreneurs and the world of science, increasing internationalisation of the enterprises’ operation and sustainable growth.

Transformation towards low-emission economy with the preservation of competitiveness of Polish and European enterprises and assuring economic efficiency constitute an opportunity for the chemistry sector and for the whole industry. Consequently, the Low-Emission Economy Development Programme (pl. NPRGN) is being prepared.

The development of the National Low-Emission Economy Development Programme stems from the need to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and other substances emitted into air from all the areas of economy. Compliant to sustainable development rule, the Programme focuses on assuring economic, social and environmental benefits coming from actions aimed at reducing emissions achieved among others by the increase of innovativeness and implementation of new technologies, reducing energy consumption, creating new workplaces and consequently, fostering the growth of competitiveness of economy.

The final outcome of the NPRGN will be a set of actions targeting directly and indirectly the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and also instruments supporting all the participants of the Programme in moving to low-emission economy. The NPRGN will be addressed to entrepreneurs in all sectors of economy, local governments and territorial governments, organizations surrounding business and non-governmental organizations.

1) COM(2012) 582
2) COM(2012) 614