

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION

Dear participants,

It is a real pleasure to address you all today, despite the fact that I cannot be with you in person.

Your event tackles the subject of the moment - green economy, and in particular, its implementation and practical meaning. This topic is currently attracting the interest of governments, businesses and civil society. After the Rio + 20 Conference, we are convinced that the green economy and sustainable development is the only pathway to provide economic growth and secure natural resources for future generations. It is not a matter of whether we are going to choose this road; it is a matter of how we should do it. Precisely the topic of your conference.

Green economy means that we should use less resources to produce more of the products our society needs and produce more products that have a lower impact on the environment. To meet this challenge, last year the European Commission adopted a "Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe". "By 2050 we want to have an economy that is competitive and that provides a high standard of living, but, with much lower environmental impacts. An economy where raw materials, water, air, land, biodiversity and other valuable resources will be sustainably managed and protected".

The market for eco-products and eco-services is on track to double in size by 2020. So, by supporting the development of these new products we will help create new growth and jobs that will last. Innovation is the

key – this is why we have launched innovation partnerships on water and materials. We also have an Eco-Innovation Plan to support projects in areas such as material recycling, buildings, food and drink as well as greener business.

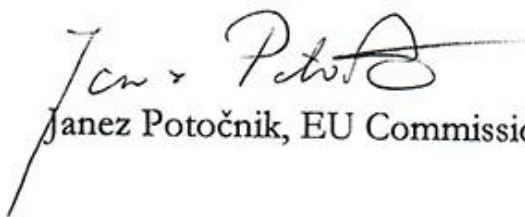
The EU advocated a global approach to a green economy at the Conference in Rio. We now face the task of transforming the Rio outcome into concrete actions. It will require the participation of all countries, the support of the whole of society with engagement from business circles to researchers. We can introduce comprehensive solutions only through a collective effort. Gatherings such as yours today, encourage me to believe that this objective is realistic.

The European Union considers green economy as one of the key topics of our cooperation and collaboration with Ukraine at both national and regional level. At regional level, this is covered by the work of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Environment and Climate Change. In this respect, I am pleased to inform you that a specific regional project dedicated to “greening the economy” in the Eastern Partnership has recently been launched, and I hope that it will deliver tangible results in Ukraine and across the region.

The EU is ready to share its experience with Ukraine in promoting relevant legislation that facilitates green technologies and in working with businesses to foster an environmental approach. I hope that one day the results of our endeavours could be taken as a pragmatic model of best practice by the other countries that look for new ways to develop their economy, while respecting the environment.

I hope that your efforts will help people to realise that "business" and "environment" inevitably go together and that you can change people's lives for the better by setting your economy on a path to a greener and more resource-efficient one.

I wish you a fruitful and successful meeting

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janez Potočnik', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Janez Potočnik, EU Commissioner for Environment

