

Although the European Union is one of the richest parts of the world, there are striking internal disparities of income and opportunity between its regions. The entry of 10 new member countries in May 2004, whose incomes are well below the EU average, has widened these gaps. Regional policy transfers resources from affluent to poorer regions. It is both an instrument of financial solidarity and a powerful force for economic integration.

The European Union allocates more than a third of the budget to the reduction of the gaps in development among the regions and disparities among the citizens in terms of well-being. One of the current priorities is to bring living standards in the new member states closer to the EU average as quickly as possible.

The increasing budget of financial instruments for regional help is connected with appreciation of European regions and its role in the politics field. The last years have showed the tendency of strengthening the position of particular regions. Today regions are stronger partners than national states for lot of institutions. It is likely that this tendency is still intensifying after the enlargement in the year 2004.

The role of the representation of particular regions in the capital of the EU has gained the importance for the previous reasons. In the current period of time over 300 regions of the EU member states and over 2500 companies are presented in Brussels. Mostly all of the important regions of member states have their permanent representations in Brussels. The Spanish regions have done it all of them. From the Czech Regions Prague, South Bohemia Region, Liberec Region, Central Bohemia Region, Zlinsky Region and newly Pilsner Region, Moravia Silesia Region and Carlsbad Region have already one.

Despite of financial exigency we can expect the increasing number of Czech representations in Brussels, its continuous raising of activities in the field of the EU and enforcement of cooperation among other member states regions.