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Vice-Secretary for Economics R. Oehler “The Region Berlin-Brandenburg at a Glance”

The optical industry in the metropolitan region Berlin-Brandenburg belongs to the future technology areas with high potential and good access to scientific institutes. Therefore the optical industry is one of sixteen centers of competence in the state of Brandenburg. The center of competence of optical industries includes the innovative ophthalmic optics. The enterprises of these branches deal with production, manufacturing and distribution of eyeglass lenses and spectacles. Furthermore there are enterprises, which produce optical appliances, special lenses and microscopes. All these enterprises are situated in Rathenow with a manpower of about 1200 employees. The city of Rathenow is known as city of optics and looks back to a tradition in the field of optical industry of more than 200 years. Rathenow is the cradle of the industrial mass production of excellent ophthalmic optics and optical appliances in Germany. The leader and decision makers of the optical industry in Rathenow have carried on the tradition and have continued to develop the potential of the ophthalmic optics. Next to Rathenow there are also many small and medium-sized optical enterprises situated in the region of Kleinmachnow/Stahnsdorf/ Teltow and the city of Henningsdorf, both regions situated at the gates of Berlin, which enriches the optical industry in Brandenburg

Within this center of optical competence the metropolitan region Berlin-Brandenburg is as well home of high innovative optical enterprises in the field of modern light and laser technology for photovoltaic production. Berlin has been the city of light and is today a national and international center of light technology. A very important issue to model the future effect the improvement of energy efficiency. Scientists in Berlin develop solutions for innovative and energy efficiency lighting in the public area. It is the aim to develop a comprehensive concept for the public illumination in Berlin. At the end of this process the scientists will present measures to reduce the energy and service costs. Berlin is on the way to become a new supplier of light technology products. In this field Berlin is highly sophisticated compared to its competitors. The replacement of the light plants in the public area of Berlin offers the opportunity to demonstrate the scientific-technology and industrial potential of the metropolitan region in the field of lighting. The institute of lighting technology at the Technology University of Berlin is the most successful scientific institute in the sphere of illumination. Therefore in the region concentrates the experience of application of optical coating and there is the high competence in optical measures. This will be accompanied by many enterprises in the field of optoelectronics. It is the aim to develop the metropolitan region as a center of light-technology. This will be supported by marketing and networking activities.

Another focus lies on the application of laser technology in the photovoltaic production. The metropolitan region has developed a great competence in this field. Because of its central location and its advantages in infrastructure, scientific institutes and the condition of public grants a number of companies have specialised in the production of solar cells settled in the region. The development and production of solar cells is a very high sophisticated process. To optimise this process special laser

technologies are necessary. This enables to reduce the production costs of solar cells. A very important key project is to coordinate the activities in the field of photovoltaic and to support the unification of the competences to create high synergy effects. It is the aim to install a platform between the industries and the scientific world in order to support the exchange of scientific knowledge to the enterprises and to improve the cooperation between enterprises and users.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today you have the opportunity to learn more about the actual projects in the innovative optical field. Let me now tell you more about our optical industry. It is very important that our optical industry is integrated in national and international networks. Because of the membership in OptecBB the metropolitan region is represented in all important optical regions in Germany. Besides the international engagement of OptecBB our enterprises are supported to make access to external markets in USA, Canada, France, UK, Russian and South Korea. This is important to increase the export activities of our enterprises. In this context it is very important that several other networks exist within the optical industry. For example Photonics 21 as an European technology platform and a consulting adviser of the European Commission. This network optimises the participation on European projects. Further more we have the European Technology Platform on Smart Systems Integration. This is a very important application and information network. Beyond it there exist tight links to other important growth regions in Germany like Dresden and Jena. All in the optical industry of the metropolitan region enjoys a strong competition position to other regions like Asia and United States of America. The state of Brandenburg supports the optical industry with grants and other measures in order to save the competitiveness of the enterprises.

The metropolitan region also plays a very important role in the field of education in optical technology. The Universities of the region offer a great curriculum for optical technologies. For example the international study European Master of Optics for the Information Society has been developed by the TU Berlin in cooperation with Spanish and French universities. The University of applied Science in Brandenburg has an agreement with the Scottish University of Paisley about the implementation of studies in Microsystems and Optical Technologies. Berlin-Adlershof has a high reputation on optical technology and Microsystems technology, too.

Next to the academic training in the region exist many activities in the professional training in optical technology but the situation on the training market is ambivalent. Especially in the border areas the companies have difficulties to find qualified employees. Therefore there exist a lot of networks in the field of professional training which support the enterprises. In the metropolitan region exist 300 enterprises with round about 8500 employees. There are excellent conditions for start up enterprises. It's a booming branch with high growth rates. This demonstrates the power and high concentration of the optical technology in the metropolitan region. An important characteristic of the optical industry is the very high productivity and the innovation power. Weakpoints of the branch are the inadequate start up activities and the lack of great and important enterprises. But in this point the optical industry is a very typical branch in the metropolitan region which is characterized by small and medium sized enterprises. Because of the structure of the branch the enterprises have difficulties to finance their development and innovation projects. In order to optimise their competi-