

Speaking points
Joan PEARCE
Head of Section, Economic Issues, Institution-Building and Pre-Accession Reporting
Delegation of the European Commission

Fulbright Academy of Science & Technology (FAST) annual conference
"Small Places Can Change the World: Science and Technology as a catalyst for economic
development"
Skopje, 25 March 2009, 09:00h
FON University, Str. Vojvodina b.b., Skopje

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Fulbright Academy for inviting me to make some remarks at the opening of this event, which promises to be very interesting and useful.

Science and technology are key elements of the EU's strategies for economic growth. The European Commission has assisted the universities and enterprises in this country through various programmes. Community programmes such as Tempus, and the Framework Research Programme, which is now in its seventh round, are just two of many community programmes that provide support to scientific and technological development. Macedonia participates actively in all of them. These programmes are expected to help create an environment in which students and academics, and enterprises are able to pursue innovation.

The European Commission has earmarked the year 2009 as the year of creativity and innovation. The aim is to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development; to disseminate good practices; to stimulate education and research, and to promote policy debate on related issues.

Creativity and innovation contribute to economic prosperity as well as to social and individual well-being. All relevant institutions are encouraged to mobilise and become involved in programmes such as 7th Framework Research Programme, Tempus, Erasmus programme.

Investment in education and science fosters a culture of innovation, to the benefit of society as a whole. The European Commission will continue to work together with universities and enterprises in the country in supporting their efforts to further scientific and technological development.

This annual conference offers an opportunity to find ways to increase collaboration between various stakeholders on the path towards further development, prosperity and integration into world technological development.

I hope that for all of you this will be a fruitful occasion.

Thank you!