

Viceministro Dr. Mindaugo Petrausko sveikinimo kalba konferencijoje „East Link“

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me welcome all of you at the international conference „East Link – The Way to Knowledge Economy“.

It is not a coincidence that this international conference is held in Lithuania. Lithuanians have been well acquainted with the mentality and culture of the Eastern countries and have peculiar political experience in this area. Representatives of the eastern countries are also on good communication terms with Lithuania.

Euro-integration has set two independent geographic prospects for research and innovation development which include the new EU Member States with a possibility to act in the common EU research area and the Eastern republics with Central Asian and Russia offering a market of more than 200 million consumers.

The aim of the "East Link" conference is re-establishment of relations in business, research and innovations as well as attempts to link these areas seeking to develop knowledge economy in the region. Benefits of such cooperation can be demonstrated by new opportunities which can open for R&D projects, their implementation and commercialization of their results as well as the development of knowledge-based economy.

Lithuania aims to build its future economy based on innovation, creativity, science and new technologies. Higher value-added manufacturing and services as well as R&D sectors are classified as priority fields in Lithuania. Future growth of Lithuanian and Baltic exports today depends not only on the demand side but also – on qualified work forces, adoption of new technologies, ability to innovate and to present new market brands, etc. Countries and companies need to cooperate more if they want to achieve better results and get more competence to create new ideas and the projects for business.

Since we believe that innovation, science and technologies can help us gain a competitive advantage worldwide, the largest financial and intellectual forces will be centered on the sectors of information technology, biotechnology and biopharmaceutical and clean technology. About 600 million dollars of EU structural assistance will be allocated to the development of five Integrated Science, Studies and Business Centres (Valleys). Valley is a potential of scientific research, studies and knowledge based businesses accumulated in one area. It has common or related infrastructure and contributes purposefully to the creation of knowledge society and knowledge economy. According to the directions of valleys, seven universities will be consolidated with over 50,000 students and more than 5,000 researchers and scientists. The Ministry of Economy finances science and technology parks, technological business incubators, cluster laboratories, and similar infrastructure development projects run in valleys. Therefore, that makes favourable conditions for enterprises which generate high added - value to collaborate with academic institutions.

Valleys are being established in order to develop science and business cooperation. Infrastructure in valleys is being created to carry out applied research and technological development necessary for business, thus, allowing the establishment of brand new and innovative enterprises. Laboratory equipment of the established open access centres' is focused on applied research, the results of which shall be commercialized. The newly started spin-offs will have excellent conditions to create assay of innovative products or test new technologies that are being created, patent research results as well as produce product prototypes.

Innovations always associate with partnership and cooperation. I therefore very much hope that this conference will be another step towards strengthening of this aspect in the further.

I also hope that this conference will receive much attention and will become traditional in the future.

Let me once again welcome all the participants and wish success and rewarding work.