



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008  
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008  
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

## **Slovenian Presidency of the EU Conference on 'Quality of tertiary education and the economic policy agenda'**

**Ljubljana, 2 April 2008**

Main current challenges facing the EU include globalization, sustainability of public finances and labour market performance. There is widely accepted analysis suggesting that knowledge is a crucial factor for growth, structural adjustment and social inclusion.

Policy formulation has been centered primarily on labour supply aspects, but less so on the quality aspects of human capital. The challenge of rising productivity and its positive effect on innovation and sustainability of public finances puts the quality of education at the center stage. The regular EU assessment of progress on structural reform (the annual review of national reform programs) suggests that the area where countries need to make more progress is in human capital formation. This is demonstrated by the fact that this is the area where the number of country specific recommendations put forward by the EU Commission is the highest. Furthermore, the OECD (PISA 2006) indicates that improving student performance is an important issue for Europe; and other studies (Bruegel 2007) suggest that European universities lag in excellence by world standards. From the policy making and public finance point of view, this mitigates for careful prioritization of overall expenditures and pursuance of greater effectiveness and efficiency of spending on education. In the context of the Lisbon strategy, tertiary level education holds specific relevance. It is a tool not only for producing university graduates but also for driving the knowledge frontier and supporting innovation.

To strengthen efforts of Member States in the area of tertiary education the EU dimension can play an important role, in particular by enhancing mobility of professors and students and cooperation of universities. Some initiatives could be underpinned and strengthened by the Community level in parallel with the implementation of the Bologna process.

The objective of the Conference is to provide an opportunity for academics and policy makers to take stock of the relevance of human capital in the economic policy agenda, discuss and exchange initiatives to enhance the efficiency of public spending in the domains of tertiary education at national and EU level.

The Conference is organized in three thematic sessions and a panel discussion focusing on: (i) assessment of factors enhancing the quality of tertiary education including the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending; (ii) explore the EU dimension of enhancing national efforts and; (iii) the macro-economic dimension of tertiary education. The panel discussion will wrap up the discussion and draw conclusions.

All interested participants can register online at:

[http://www.cef-see.org/education\\_conference\\_application.html](http://www.cef-see.org/education_conference_application.html)

The number of available spaces is **limited** and all applications will be treated on a **first-come-first-served basis**.

## Wednesday, April 2, 2008

08:30-09:00 Welcome to participants-Registration

09:00-09:10 Opening address by Minister of Finance Mr. Andrej Bajuk

---

### **09:10-11:00 Session 1: How to enhance the quality of tertiary education**

09:10-09:40 Mr. André Sapir, Professor of Economics at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

9:40-10:10 Mr. Stephan Vincent-Lancrin (OECD)

10:10-10:30 Discussant Ms. Reinhilde Veugelers (European Commission BEPA)

10:30-10:45 General discussion

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

### **11:00-12:30 Session 2: Is there a EU policy Dimension on Tertiary Education**

11:00-11:30 Ms. Odile Quintin. Director General Education and Culture (EU Commission)-TBC

11:30-12:00 Mr. Olivier Debande (European Investment Bank).

12:00-12:20 Discussant Mr. Jean Pisani-Ferry, Director Bruegel

12:20-12:30 General discussion

### **14:00-15:30 Session 3: The Macroeconomic Dimension of Tertiary Education**

14:00-14:30 Mr. Philippe Aghion (Robert C. Waggoner Professor of Economics, Harvard University).

14:30-15:00 Mr. Karl Pichelmann (EU Commission)

15:00-15:20 Discussant Mr. Jukka Peckkarinen. Vice-President of the Economic Policy Committee.

15:20-15:35 General discussion

15:35-15:50 Coffee brake

**15:50-16:50**      **Session 4: Panel discussion**

Gonzalo Capriolo. Chief economist. Ministry of Finance of Slovenia.

Ms. Fabienne Ilzkovitz . Head of Division in DG ECFIN

Ms. Andreja Kocijančič. Rector, University of Ljubljana.  
(TBC)

Mr. André Sapir Professor of Economics at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

Mr. Alasdair Smith (former Head of Sussex University)

16:50-17:10      General discussion

**17:10-17:20**      Closing remarks