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ABSTRACT

Today in the world of global economic crisis, human resource development and entrepreneurship agenda has never been more important.

Role of education and training especially in entrepreneurship agenda is still fresh and evolving, but we are all aware that the key issue for economic growth and competitiveness is knowledge. One thing is clear: the entrepreneurship policy agenda involves many partners of which education, training and employment are core pillars.

The new Croatian government has committed itself to developing a competitive, inclusive entrepreneurial society. It established a **dedicated entrepreneurship ministry** – Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts which I am proud to lead. A second issue is, if a country is serious about the making the most of its entrepreneurship potential, there can be **'no standing on the policy side-lines'**. My ministry brings all policy partners together to **maximize the entrepreneurial potential of the country**. In your own countries you may already have found your own institutional solutions for strategic entrepreneurship developments. Ministries for education, employment and training need to work in partnership with entrepreneurship, economy ministries, science, business world and civic interest groups. **Partnership is imperative.**

And partnership cannot be confined with our borders. There is enormous value to be gained by **co-working developments with neighboring countries and even beyond** as this conference has proved.

So, four years ago – in 2009 – we have established the **South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning - SEECEL** located in Zagreb as an independent institution with an international Governing Board supporting the introducing of entrepreneurial learning in our educational systems, but also the realization of all other significant components essential for high quality lifelong entrepreneurial learning – comprising enhanced interaction between the business sector and education, developing of partnership relations between all institutions representing the interests of small and medium entrepreneurship and their cooperation and linking with educational and scientific-research institutions and business entities, as well as raising the overall level of entrepreneurial competence. SEECEL represents a central point of cooperation around which South East European region is brought together by strengthening and development of entrepreneurial learning.

It is of major importance that the countries of our region have taken sides to put the entrepreneurial learning on the top of the priorities of their Governments as a significant contribution to strengthening of their economic competitiveness. SEECEL has undertaken a long-term role within the region to introduce entrepreneurship as a key competence at all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education. We are confident that the results are much more than just positive and that this approach will be multiplied in other EU countries, countries of Eastern partnership and Meda countries.

We will see in this conference a very systematic attempt, at international level, to provide for quality and good practice in the area of human resource development. This provides an important baseline for building cooperation, transparency and trust between education and the business world.



