

Dear participants,

First, I would like to thank the Rector of the University of Vlora for his invitation and the opportunity he gave to me to address to such a respected audience. I really appreciate this incentive for organizing meetings among academic and supportive staff of different universities in a regional and European level.

These events are an excellent opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the current cooperation, to create new networks, and to specify and strengthen this cooperation through joint programmes, mutual experiences, projects and doctorate programmes. This inter-university exchange is really significant to attend and deal with the increasing demand towards the higher education institutions for the formation of senior specialists and new researchers.

University of Vlora is really a new university. Although it is widely known that the universities as well as the wine are valued for their old age which is considered an added value, both do not always prove that older means better every time. What is important to consider here, is the skill to acquire and benefit from the experiences of the others.

The modern technology and communication opportunities make it possible to implement joint programmes, to transmit them to the younger generations and to benefit from the most distinguished professors of the respective field no matter which university a student is enrolled and graduated.

This has a special value especially within the European context and the process of Europe without borders, where the individual is prepared to work and practice his profession not necessarily where he is educated and trained, but wherever he is presented with the opportunity to practice his skills or where he prefers to do so. The meetings we are having here today in Vlora and this cooperation experience conveys an important message for countries like Albania.

It implies that there are all the conditions to get a European degree without having to study abroad, that there are all opportunities to show qualities and your skills in every field, even if you are educated in a modest, but open university which closely cooperate with experienced European counterparts and the standards of the time. If I continue with the *wine metaphor*, its brand always increases its price, but not necessarily its quality.

As the Academy of Sciences of Albania we support and welcome such initiatives. It is well known the necessity and inseparability between education and science, the connection between a professor and a researcher. The experience which is shared between you and with you is a tool to strengthen and concretize this cooperation especially in breaking some which exist in some countries including Albania mentalities in regard with research and science:

This means that science and research are not just attributes of big countries or elite universities. Science develops in a pyramidal way and everyone can put a brick in this pyramid; that the purpose of engaging the professorship in this pyramid is not necessarily to place them in leading positions, but to make them follow the rhythms and innovations of science so that they can transmit them as quickly and competently as possible to the younger generations, to the new generations of specialists, through the revised university programs.

For this purpose, the Academy of Sciences of Albania cooperates closely with every Albanian university and especially with University of Vlora in the framework of their inclusion in the permanent committees of the Academy of Sciences of Albania in which around 140 members are included, 60% of which are from the academic staff of universities . Each research unit which is set up from time to time at Academy of Sciences has the same rate of representation. Dozens of our colleagues who work at various European universities, are also part of these research units and committees in the capacity of external members and they closely cooperate with the permanent members and give their contribution here.

Thank you very much!!