

Can universities enhance the economic development of regions?

Summary

The potential contribution of universities to the successfully economic development of the countries, especially of regions, could be

- a demand oriented impact, and/or
- a supply oriented impact.

The demand oriented impact results from the spending of the students, the lecturers and the other employees of the university and the spending of the university buying goods and services.

The supply oriented impact results from the use of the university and its activities of education, training and research as a special infrastructure; this means,

- the employment of university's graduates,
- the cooperation between companies, enterprises or other private or public institutions and the university in order to use the research activities and realize innovations, and
- the continuing education.

The successful economic development of regions requires especially:

- structures, which make economic dynamics possible, as well as increasingly structural changes,
- ideas, which facilitate successful innovations, especially innovations which are real novelties,
- and especially humans, personalities with optimism, energy, persuasive power, enthusiasm, passion and a "no giving up" attitude.

Creative and trustful cooperation between businesses and universities can help to realize these needed necessities.

Cooperation between businesses and universities don't only require the collaboration between institutions but essentially the collaboration between humans, the collaboration of humans

- with different interest and different mentalities of working,

- but with the intention to reach a joint economic goal with benefits for both sides.

Consequently it is very important to realize a suitable process of communication and cooperation between scientists and managers. This requires different goal-oriented strategies and activities. For example, the scientist and the entrepreneur should accept their different interests and way of working, but the cooperation should be based on common or compatible objectives.

Cooperation could mean individual projects of technology transfers; it could also mean working within a strategic partnership between the university and businesses, for example within a concrete regional cluster.

Decisive condition of a successful cooperation must be mutual trust between scientists and enterprisers/managers.

It is one of the objectives of the South-Eastern European network "Entrepreneurship and Innovation", to enhance the cooperation between universities and businesses as well as to improve the entrepreneurial spirit in regions.