

**Date and location:** The conference will be held on 22 April 2009 from 9.00 to 15.30 at the Nordic Hotel Forum located in Tallinn

**Target group:** Politicians and officials, representatives of local governments, lecturers and scientists from various universities and institutions of professional higher educations, entrepreneurs, opinion leaders, students of institutions of higher education, delegates of the SPACE Network conference.

### **Preliminary agenda**

***8.30–9.00 Registration and coffee***

### **09.00 – 10.30 SESSION I – THE STATE**

**One of the aims of the Estonian Higher Education Strategy 2006–2015 is to make higher education serve the interests of progress and innovation of the Republic of Estonia. We need to ensure a direction followed by the educational and scientific spheres, which would start paying more and more attention to the needs of the economy and developmental trends in the society of Estonia. Our aim is to involve all significant partners in the society in the planning process and the activities of higher education, and also create a considerably more recognizable role for the higher education sector as the leader of Estonian economic and social innovation/modernisation and as the integrator of Estonia into the political, economic and social networks of the European Union.**

1. How have the actions taken so far shaped the higher education from the perspective of the expectations of the society and those of the students as well as from the perspective of the needs of the labour market?
2. What does the state expect from higher education and the institutions of higher education in the context of bringing about a new wave of economic growth? What does the state expect from the enterprises? What kind of conditions has the state created for involving companies in the process of developing/supporting higher education and financing lifelong learning?
3. What kind of changes do we need to make to the developmental and operational programmes in order to achieve the goals set?

***10.30–11.00 Coffee break***

### **11.00–12.30 SESSION II – THE ENTERPRISES**

**The European Commission has defined entrepreneurship in the following manner:**

**“Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in**

**order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in being better aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity.”**

1. How have enterprises been involved in the process of developing higher education? How do enterprises support higher education?
2. How and when do the needs of enterprises reach the ones responsible for planning higher education? How long is the interval between the time a need manifests itself and the time it is met? What is the rate between the number of specialists ordered to be educated and the number of specialists who actually start working in their area of specialisation? How big are the “losses”? How to motivate people to start working in the area of specialisation they have studied?
3. The needs of enterprises arise during relatively short periods of time. The open labour market of the EU and the national higher education – what kind of “national specialists” do we have an inevitable need for? What types of need of the labour force are met by the international labour market?

*12.30–13.15 Lunch*

### 13.15–14.45 SESSION III – THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**Institutions of higher education – universities and institutions of professional higher education as the centres and the developers of intellectual capital have an important role to play in bringing about a new wave of economic growth. The promoting and applying of the entrepreneurial and innovative mindset in the society has a central role to play in the economic growth, competitiveness and sustainability of a country.**

1. How to find the balance between the needs of the state and those of the enterprises?
2. How to motivate students to study in those areas of specialisation that the country and the enterprises need? Does the socially unjust financing system of the higher education, that is the current situation in which the studies of less than 50% of students are paid for by the state and more than 50% of the students are paying for their studies themselves create the conditions needed for acquiring/offering high-quality education?
3. What have we done in order to ensure the international competitiveness and quality of our higher education? Will the currently offered study programmes and areas of specialisation ensure the economic growth and sustainability of Estonia?

*14.45–15.00 Coffee break*

### **15.00–15.30 CONCLUSION**

Presenters: Anneli Kannus, the Chairman of the Rectors Council of Applied Universities and Alar Karis, the Chairman of the Estonian Rector’s Conference

### **Conference publication**

Since the number of presentations to be delivered at the conference is limited, they will be complemented by a conference publication in paper format and a set of electronic materials. The essays written on the main subject of the previously announced essay competition will be mentioned in the conference publication as well.

The working languages of the conference will be Estonian and English (simultaneous interpretation). The conference publication will be printed in Estonian.