

WUS – A Success for South-Eastern Europe

One of the weaknesses of initiatives that were and still are active in South-Eastern Europe (Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, etc.) consists in virtually not having considered education and science as a priority. This results from the fact that on the EU level, there is no joint responsibility for these fields and the national regions still have the authority. However, it is very clear that without activities in this area, there can be no satisfactory economic and social development, nor a coming to terms with the martial past. Although foundations and NGOs have done some significant work in this respect, a joint strategy is lacking also due to the fact that the governments themselves didn't particularly concentrate their attention on these areas. Especially in this regard, WUS plays a decisive role. It is fascinating and striking that in my daily activities I'm consistently reminded of that, as I meet with WUS alumni in responsible positions.

In my opinion, Austria is not aware how much WUS contributed here in the interest of our country. The dominant role that Austrian enterprises play in the economy of South-Eastern Europe (from which our country highly benefits) would not be possible without WUS alumni. In this way, an unparalleled connection with Austria has been established and a European obligation fulfilled. I know what it means under the given circumstances to keep an initiative alive and to continue striving to create enough enthusiasm. All the more gratitude is due to WUS in that it did not only do our country an important service, but especially because what is (a bit carelessly) called "human capital" in the common language of conferences has been supported. So the development and dissemination of European values in their best sense, a perspective for a young generation, and eventually for the future of the respective countries would not be possible without WUS. I am constantly asking myself if organisations of this kind should not deserve an award. If this award existed, then WUS would be an outstanding candidate for it. That such organisations exist helps us to be sometimes proud of Austria!

Dr. Erhard Busek

Former Vice Chancellor