8.6.2016 Silver Economy Development Meeting in Ljubljana

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**Over-the-Border Cooperation**

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My name is Metka Türk and I am pretty »young« student at the Third Age University, as I joined it slightly more then a year ago. But I was fortunate to be in the Italian class of Katarina Koren, who after only three months of my attendance in the class invited me to join to a small group of other Italian students who hosted our colleagues from Italy, more precise from the Third Age University in Krmin (Cormons). That was for me a splendid experience in many ways:

First: it gave me the opportunity to test to what extent I am already able to express myself in Italian language. And, am I brave enough to speak up in the Italian language in front of the native speakers.

Second: I have learned a lot about the approach of our Italian colleagues in managing their university. It surprised me to hear they accept students from the eighteen years of age and up to »no limit«. Which is a wonderful practice as I often hear from my still active friends, how much they would love to join in one or even more classes at our university, but sadly they don't fulfil the main criteria – that is, they are not retired (yet).

Third: I got acquainted with many Italian friends, above all with Renzo, who immediately gave me his e-mail address and invited me to start an e-mail conversation through which he is assisting and helping me to improve my current knowledge of Italian language, while he is at the same time encouraging me to speed up my Italian studies.

As we are traditionally short with finance we have not been able to host them more generously as we could afford with our individual contributions. So, our Italian colleagues had to pay for the entire programme and lunch by themselves.

That was not the case half a year later when we have paid them our return visit. They surprised us with a rich and interesting programme, which was completely covered from their budged.

But, if we at this point neglect the finance, described exchange visits between unofficial representatives from our university and Italian delegation headed by the president of the Cormons University was a very pleasant and fruitful event. So, we can only wish and do our best to continue such practice and to even spread it wider to reach other universities in Italy, in other neighbouring countries and further.

Therefore, I was very glad to hear that this aim is already on the agenda of the management of our university and that the first steps have already been taken. And even more I was surprised and honoured to be offered the task of managing the university international cooperation.

I will do my very best to fulfil the task within the limits of a scarce finance and in the situation of still unknown general interest of our students to expand their links and studies over the Slovenian borders.

On the other hand, I am very optimistic as I know that our university has based its tremendous past progress on strong will and determination of the current management and evenly important on the strong interest and commitment of its large population of students.