

JANEZ POTOČNIK

Member of the European Commission

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Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear participants,

I would like to thank you for inviting me to contribute to this second edition of the summer school organised by the Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing.

Europe must invest in its youth. The young are the future, and timely and effective investment in youth is the key to making that future prosperous, both economically and socially.

For many years, we have recognised the importance of making young people aware of the necessity of learning about science and technology and we have therefore supported various activities in the field of science education.

Science will play an ever increasing role in the development of our societies. Therefore activities such as the organisation of this summer school on "Theory and Application of Laser Scanning" are essential for stimulating the personal development of potential future scientists and young researchers.

Indeed, providing an intensive and educational week of training activities conducted by eminent scientists is for many young scientists and future researchers an excellent basis for deploying their ideas and thus contributing to innovation in science and technology. Giving students and young researchers the opportunity to take part in training activities, such as this summer school, is key to the development of a European knowledge society, and for young people it is often an important step towards an international career in science.

Moreover, the importance of practical work alongside the theory and lectures is indisputable. "Learning by doing" is a key element in the learning process and activities such as this one should therefore be encouraged and promoted.

There is another important aspect we must not forget: the social fabric that binds us. Initiatives such as this also have an important social impact on those who take part - meeting and exchanging ideas with like-minded people from other parts of the world provides the basis for future international cooperation. Bringing together people from across Europe and beyond, allows them to experience first hand the richness of cultural diversity, which is an essential ingredient in the formulation of our common policies.

At the European Commission we cover the whole spectrum of science education: from supporting "hands-on" experience of science in primary schools; activities and initiatives aimed at secondary school level and above; and a system of grant support to university level students and postdoctoral students.

Since its creation in 2005, this summer school has proven to be a great success and I am convinced this year's will be no exception. It gives many students and young researchers the opportunity to get involved in real science and creates a basis for cooperation which will undoubtedly contribute to shaping Europe's future.

I wish you a successful and fruitful summer school and all the best for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janez Potočnik', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Janez Potočnik
European Commissioner for Science and Research