



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 25 October 2012

**Awarding ceremony
Best Essay Competition “Why is it Cool to be Old?”
on the occasion of 2012 European Year
(EU InfoCentre)**

Speaking points

**H. E. Ambassador
Aivo ORAV
Head of the European Union Delegation**

Dear Minister Mr Kralev,

Dear students, teachers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that the EU Delegation hosts today's awarding ceremony for the Best Essay competition with really inspiring title "Why is it Cool to be Old?", organised on the occasion of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

The 2012 European Year is intended to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to society. It seeks to encourage policymakers and relevant stakeholders at all levels to take action with the aim of creating better opportunities for active ageing and strengthening solidarity between generations.

The idea behind is to take action for the purpose of creating better opportunities for active ageing and strengthening the solidarity between generations.

Active ageing means ageing in good health, with good life quality, a feeling of greater independence in daily life and greater inclusion as active citizens in the community.

No matter how old we are, we can still play our part in society and enjoy a better quality of life. The challenge is to make the most of the

enormous potential that we harbour even at a more advanced age. The Year seeks to promote active ageing in three areas:

1. Employment - stay in the workforce and share their experience;
2. Participation in society - keep playing an active role in society;
3. Promoting independent living - live as healthy and fulfilling lives as possible.

The challenge for politicians and stakeholders will be to improve opportunities for active ageing in general and for living independently, acting in areas as diverse as employment, health care, social services, adult learning, volunteering, housing, IT services or transport.

In the process of preparation for this year, among other activities, we launched the best essay competition for the secondary school students, hoping that we will inspire and engage younger generation to consider what the meaning of being older is. And in addition, what are the welfares of being in that experienced age.

And we didn't make a mistake. We received many works by the students with content of thoughts that shows that bonds between the generations are exist and endure.

The jury, as I was informed, had a very difficult job to select the

winners. All of the works are excellent and inspiring.

At the end, I would like to congratulate to all the participants in the essay competition, as well as to express my appreciation to Minister Kralev for the excellent cooperation we have with the Ministry of Education and Science.

Thank you for your attention!