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**EUSR: Kosovo needs entrepreneurs that build businesses and strive for excellence**

EU Special Representative Pieter Feith made the following remarks at the opening ceremony of the Jade Summer Conference hosted by the Pristina UNI group:

I am happy to be here today in this gathering of young and budding entrepreneurs. Welcome to Kosovo and to Pristina. As the European Union Special Representative, I am particularly happy that the Jade conference is being held here in Pristina, enabling a further positive step in the direction of Kosovo's European aspirations. With the keen dialogue that will follow over the next few days and the possibilities that all of you have for international networking, I have no doubt that you will make an invaluable contribution to the further development of Kosovo.

In the past year, Kosovo has made impressive strides. I have known this region for over a decade now and still remember the situation only a couple of years ago. And great progress since the declaration of independence.

Nevertheless a long path of reform still lies ahead. A long path to join the European family. And a long path towards a stable and strong economy. The first steps have indeed been taken. As of today, Kosovo is a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and it is evident how far it has already reached in its steady progress.

To take on this challenge, Kosovo needs you. Kosovo needs young people and their ideas to move the country forward. It needs entrepreneurs that build businesses and strive for excellence. Kosovo needs people with modern thinking, integrity and commitment. It is through initiatives like yours that this can indeed be achieved.

Jade unites student organizations from all over Europe. Its spirit of internationalism and excellence through international cooperation is exemplary. It is my hope that this spirit will also prevail at this summer conference and beyond, in the months and years to come.

Regional cooperation is also crucial for Kosovo's ongoing path to European integration. Political and economic integration are not possible without regional cooperation. In fact, the European Union could be seen as a successful project of regional cooperation.

Regional integration and a strong economy are the two cornerstones for Kosovo's future. Kosovo citizens, no matter whether Albanian, Serb or of other communities, should measure their government against these goals.

A democracy is only as strong as the voice of its people. You have to raise your voice to remind the government of its responsibilities. In order to shape a successful economy the government needs your ideas. And it needs your constant pressure.

Don't be afraid to seek answers from your government. – I am sure that Ahmet Shala will be delighted to respond to all your tough questions, I am available as well for that purpose. Challenge your leaders, tell them of your needs and concerns. Only if you speak out, will you be heard.

The EU is keenly committed to Kosovo's European perspective and stands ready with significant support to help it along the way to eventual integration. Together we will strive to limit corruption, increase accountability and ensure fair and transparent rules for all of Kosovo's citizens, and in all areas of their economic and political lives.

Let me welcome you once again and wish you all the very best for a productive and successful conference.

(Ends)

**Note to editors:**

Background Jade summer conference:

The program of the four day Jade conference in Pristina is attended by around 200 participants from all over Europe. The conference includes an international career fair, panel discussions and workshops around the topic of Sustainable Development in the 21st Century.

Jade ([www.sjm09.com](http://www.sjm09.com)) - The European Confederation of Junior Enterprises is a student-run network representing around 20,000 entrepreneurs in 15 European countries.

Jade is an umbrella association for national student groupings in the entrepreneurial field. It was founded in 1992 as a non-profit organization to promote entrepreneurship among European students.

The Kosovar UNI Group joined Jade as Consultative Member in July 2008. Kosovo is thus among the first countries in the region to have joined this association (after Greece and Romania).

UNI Group is the first Kosovar junior enterprise. Through contacts with businesses as well as academic and government institutions it is engaging in consulting activities.