

Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Finnish Parliament and its Education and Culture Committee I wish you Luck, Inspiration, Energy and Passion that are all needed for the co-creation of a new European-wide network for human-centric research and innovation.

You engage yourselves into a hard work for years to come. It is challenging to build up a European Innovation System where the modern technology is developed in co-creation of people, firms and public agencies.

However, this is a highly inspiring challenge. Historically, only since 1990s, we have had as widely socially embedded technologies in place as we have today. The ICT and energy technologies and parts of life sciences and environmental technologies penetrate deeply into everyday lives. This tendency is even strengthening with the digital convergence that integrates Internet, mobile, TV, communication, media and other technologies. Based on this, we can foresee more European-wide and even global media, education, communication and other cultural services and activities to emerge. They may emerge also from individual and local initiatives and interaction, in parallel to those of big corporations.

You have discussed here – in the innovative working and learning environment of Dipoli – how the development of technology steps out from closed laboratories, the “temples” of natural sciences, into everyday life, the “temples” of human and social sciences. The challenge is to make these sciences and their research methodologies to interact. We need to develop new approaches to research methodologies and processes of innovation. The processes and contexts of real life challenge the way how the research for innovation should be conducted.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We have a good reason to argue that the modern technology has all the potential for empowering people.

However, we should also understand to be sensitive to human and socio-economic considerations we encounter. We deal with wider social and societal issues and with values: what should the modern world be like that we create for and with people?

I encountered the article of Jules Verne (1860). As You know he was pretty visionary concerning the 20th century. He was sitting in the street café of Champs Élysée and he was worried: “I feel that the era of humanism is over. It is being conquered by the era on technology. I feel that the literature, poetry, music and arts will lose their important status as means to give meaning to life. Human beings may subordinate their lives to technology. This will change the premises of life fundamentally.” These were the thoughts of Jules Verne already close to 150 years ago.

We know that his worries were not fully justified.

However, today in the beginning of the 21st century, we have a good reason to argue for the return of humanism, even as enabled by technology. I foresee that this would be part of our shared European vision; we could create together a human-centric Europe that is not only globally

competitive as a knowledge society but rather globally cooperative in the creation of human-centric world-wide future.

That is why I appreciate to see foreign guests and delegates from other parts of the world, including the welcomed Chinese delegation.

The Austrian economist Professor Hayek articulated already in 1940s as follows; the basic element of a society and economy are the people and their knowledge. This is the shared view of contemporary Japanese Professor Ikujiro Nonaka, a fan of Finland, who by the way has visited several times the Parliament of Finland and encouraged us in developing our knowledge management processes. Professor Nonaka argues for people and their knowledge as a major source for new knowledge and innovation. However, he views that these two are not value-free. That is why he always reminds us of the meaning of Love, Beauty, Goodness and Truth.

Innovation has been an important issue in the work of Parliament of Finland for close to 10 years. May I conclude the closing words of this important conference by quoting, in short, one of our Committee's decisions, made by the Parliament already 5 years ago: "Innovations are invariably centred around people and human communities as the generators, developers and users of the emerging ideas and products. New programmes are required to build a strong intellectual bridge between artists and technology developers."

These policy guidelines by our Parliament meet extremely well with what you are having as your mission for the next few years. Networking, commitment and passion seem to be the drivers of your work. Go on with those.

With these words I wish you all the Best.

Thank You!