

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

science & technology have made us who we are and where we are right now as a global community.

The progress and impact of science & technology on human life is unprecedented. As are the challenges ahead because we have more and more powerful tools in our possession. Tools that can be used both for good as for harm. Sometimes with no undo.

As we live in such a World of Pandora's Box, we must be aware of opportunities as well as threats. And our role as parliamentarians is to develop and approve legislation in this very fast changing environment. Legislation not too restrictive but also dealing with the threats efficiently.

This is challenging now and it is going to be even more challenging in the near future influenced by new technologies such as AI, genetic engineering, augmentation or quantum computing.

What should we do? How should we adapt as law makers to such situation? How should we protect humankind and democracy?

Answering such questions requires us, politicians, to be open-minded and prepared for possible futures. Those futures that we want and also those that we do not want.

In this respect I would like to remind you of great authors of science-fiction. Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, William Gibson or Liou Cch'-Sin amongst others. Their thought provoking books may help in such preparation.

Also, there are some prominent figures of science dealing with future. My personal favourite is Jay W. Forrester, founder of the scientific discipline of system dynamics. This approach was used by Donella and Dennis Meadows to develop the first computer model of interaction between the Earth and human systems as described in their seminal book Limits to Growth.

I have been developing and using such models myself. And I can testify from my experience that their use can be very enriching because you can, in a short time, see probable consequences of your own actions. And very often you realize that long-term unintended consequences outweigh short term gains.

I am convinced that we need such scenario evaluation tools more than ever. And we also need to use them as a sandbox or serious games in our political debates about the future. Only then we can overcome our own limitations and really harness science, technology and innovation for more sustainable and peaceful future.

Thank you for your attention!