Address of Mr Edmunds Teirumnieks, Acting Head of the Latvian National Group to IPU at the General Debate on

Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Geneva, October 2024

Ladies and Gentlemen!
Dear Colleagues!

We as Parliamentarians, are sensors that can transform and deliver society's concerns into relevant legislative acts, we cannot afford to slow down the pace of development; we have to think strategically and in the long-term perspective; we have to adapt to the increasing demands of our societies.

The question is - how can parliaments ensure that the benefits of STI [es_t_ˈai] reach all parts of society,- particularly women, youth and people in need?

The other question is - why in a relatively short time, technologies have proven both - their contribution to the development of humanity and their destructive effects at the same time.

To tackle international challenges, we must build and strengthen international Research and development networks. Therefore the key goals of Latvian Research and development policy remain increasing human capital and fostering international collaboration.

As a result, we in Latvia are focusing our investments in doctoral and postdoctoral grants, increasing our activity in Horizon Europe and related programmes, enhancing our public-private research and development collaboration.

During **the past five years Latvian research sector has undergone major changes**. We have completed reforms in our research and development system – introducing new doctoral studies model, new result driven funding model, new typology of higher education institutions. Our research grant programmes remain aligned with the best European standards.

In **recent years, Latvia has strengthened its position in key international organisations.** Last year Latvia become a full member state of the **European Molecular Biology Conference and European Molecular Biology Laboratory**. We are strategically moving towards full membership of the **European Space Agency and CERN**, which we additionally support with a dedicated long-term national research programme in high-energy physics and acceleration technologies.

This year, the Children's Clinical University Hospital was awarded by more than fourteen million *euro* to develop a Centre for Excellence for Precision Medicine in Pediatric Care in Horizon Europe "Teaming for Excellence". This was done in collaboration with the Princess Maxima clinic in the Netherlands.

Latvia **is proud of our excellent performance in quantum algorithms and language technologies**. Since 2023, Latvia has been implementing a programme in high-level digital skills in quantum, language technologies and high-powered computing, developing new study modules, including for work with artificial inteligence tools.

This excellence encompasses also the private sector - Latvian language technology firm Tilde has recently won the European Commission's Large artificial inteligence Grand Challenge, attracting notable monetary prize and 2 million GPU hours on the supercomputer LUMI, to develop a large language model for European languages.

In Europe, more than a half of its citizens have a positive view of artificial intelligence and robotics, but 88 percent believe that these technologies need to be carefully managed, because Artificial intelligence can significantly change our lives - for better or for worse.

Therefore, European Union actively worked on its regulation, and the Artificial Intelligence Act came into force on August 1, this year, as the world's first regulation for the management of this phenomena.

Technology innovation expands the boundaries of knowledge and pushes the human potential beyond the limits of the possible.

Artificial intelligence can help improve citizens' health care, provide safer cars, cheaper and more sustainable goods, promote access to information and education, make working places safer by using robots, and many other good things.

BUT! Unfortunately, today we also see the destructive side of artificial intelligence. Using it in the military field - for attack strategies, for creating autonomous weapons, using them in the armed conflicts. It destabilizes the situation in the world, saws [so:s] death and destruction.

Both – good and destructive innovations are created by the human brain. MY QUESTION IS – how to switch the brain - that it can create only those programs, which are **meant for the benefit** of the people and **aimed for the development** of humanity.

If artificial intelligence accomplishes this task, then its existence in our world will be justified and its duty will be fulfilled!

Right solutions for the development depend on the political will of our parliaments and our governments!

Thank you for your attention!