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

Technological progress is undoubtedly the flywheel of the 21st century economy. It has prompted the emergence of new industries and services that would have been hard to imagine just a decade ago.

New technological advancements can also play a significant role in addressing climate change and natural disasters, which are becoming more severe and occurring with greater frequency. This is evidenced by recent events in Europe, which is simultaneously experiencing flooding and wildfires. Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Hungary have faced catastrophic floods, while Portugal is battling unprecedented forest fires. Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, rapid climate change is transforming poverty into misery, forcing people to migrate on a large scale. This phenomenon of mass migration destabilises the political situation in migrant destination countries.

We must maximise the benefits of technological progress and artificial intelligence while minimising potential harm. New technological solutions are already causing serious disruptions on the job market. They are caused by enterprises of the "new economy" which are spectacularly successful as market disruptors, generating substantial profits for a small group of shareholders. However, this success frequently comes at the expense of "old economy" businesses, leading to job losses and contributing to the emergence of certain social challenges. The benefits of new technologies are also rarely accessible to rural residents and socially disadvantaged groups.

Another concern is the use of technology as a tool for manipulating and controlling public opinion. This primarily refers to advanced artificial intelligence tools which are now capable of cloning human voices and generating hyper-

realistic images, videos, and sounds within seconds. The use of these manipulated messages, known as deepfakes, poses a threat across various fields, including the fact that it undermines the integrity of democratic elections, and by extension, democracy itself. Disinformation is a troubling example of how technological progress can sometimes hinder, rather than contribute to, the creation of a better and more peaceful future. It is driving growing social and political polarisation worldwide, dehumanising opponents and undermining the cooperation between parties that is essential for a stable democracy. Therefore, decisive action is needed to combat disinformation, including that amplified by artificial intelligence. We should combat deepfakes, including through legal measures, as is already being done in some countries.

All of the above highlights the need to place democratic values at the heart of the technological transformation that we are witnessing and to ensure the preservation of social justice. It is necessary to "harness" the development of new technologies and put them on the right track. Politicians have the tools to support the new technological solutions that will serve the global good. New technologies should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, gender, origins, or financial position.

In light of the concerns surrounding artificial intelligence and its rapid development, it is essential to establish universal ethical guidelines for AI to ensure the respect for human rights and civil liberties, drawing from regulations which already exist in some countries.

Parliaments have a vital role in leveraging science, technology, and innovation to create a more peaceful and sustainable future.

This is because some technologies, such as artificial intelligence, are entering a market where there is a legislative vacuum. The same applied to the development of drones, the Internet, and social media. New solutions often greatly outpace legislation, resulting in regulations that, when they do emerge, merely

legitimise an already established market situation. This benefits the companies driving the innovations, sometimes at the expense of citizens. Therefore, Parliaments must closely monitor the development of new technologies to effectively address the challenges. We must be proactive, not reactive!