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Draft speech to the attention of Vice-President Nicolae ȘTEFĂNUȚĂ

## ***Harnessing Science, Technology, and Innovation for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future***

Dear Madam President, distinguished colleagues,

It is a privilege to speak today at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly on behalf of the President of the European Parliament, Ms Roberta Metsola.

I would like to focus on the critical role that science, technology, and innovation play in shaping a more peaceful and sustainable future. As Vice President of the European Parliament, I am keenly aware of how these forces can be both drivers of progress and, when misused, sources of division. It is our responsibility, as parliamentarians, to ensure that they are harnessed for the common and global good.

In today's world, we are facing challenges on an unprecedented scale—climate change, resource depletion, conflicts and rise of social inequalities. Science and technology hold enormous potential to address these issues if guided with a sense of purpose and responsibility.

The environmental crisis we face today is one of the most pressing challenge of our time. The European Union has been at the forefront of global efforts to combat climate change, with its ambitious Green Deal and several leading initiatives, notably the commitment to

achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. However, these goals will not be realised without leveraging the power of innovation.

The [Horizon Europe](#) programme, which fosters research and innovation, is an excellent example of how the EU is investing in the science and technology needed to secure a greener future.

Green technologies, such as renewable energy, energy storage, are key to reducing our ecological footprint. Yet, we must also encourage circular economy models and resource-efficient industries. It requires governments, businesses, and research institutions to collaborate closely. And given that we live in a globalised world, in order for the solutions identified to function, we need to work and establish multilateral partnerships at the global scale.

If we are to analyse sustainability, we can fairly say that environment is key, but it is not only about environment. It also means creating societies where innovation benefits everyone. The EU remains firmly committed to the digital and green transitions. The overarching digitisation of various sectors of our economy, rooted in our fundamental values, is key to unleash its full potential to the benefit of our society as a whole. We as policy-makers need to create the right conditions and frameworks in the digital sphere to attract investment and to foster innovation as well as growth of our start-ups and SMEs to stay in Europe.

Let's not forget that, the AI and advancing technologies are reshaping our day-to-day lives.

Studies show that AI will affect almost 40 % of jobs around the world, with 60 % expected in advanced economies. The EU has to stay at the forefront of these technologies to shape the digital future.

The EU has adopted the world's first comprehensive Artificial Intelligence Act, one that strikes the right balance between innovation and safety.

AI holds tremendous potential to improve people's quality of life. AI can revolutionize sectors like healthcare, transport, and energy, making them more efficient and contribute to creating solutions for reducing waste. It can enhance early warning systems for natural disasters, help us optimize the use of natural resources, and even predict environmental changes. For example, Copernicus, the Earth Observation component of the European Union's space program, has made significant strides in this area. It now incorporates AI and machine learning as integral elements of its operations, enhancing its ability to monitor our planet and the environment for the benefit of citizens.

AI also has an important role to play in promoting peace. By using machine learning and big data, we can develop a more accurate system of foresight, detecting signs of instability before violence erupts. AI can assist in peacebuilding and mediation efforts by analysing complex data patterns that humans might overlook, providing insights that help prevent violence and foster reconciliation.

However, AI can also contribute to massive spread of disinformation, foreign interference and manipulation, fakes, inflammable content leading to radicalisation and erosion of trust in democratic institutions.

As legislators, we must embrace all aspects associated with evolving technologies and innovation. This is a time for transformation, with opening new opportunities and we must be ready to embrace them.

But to achieve all this effectively, we need to ensure that these technologies are grounded in ethics and human rights. The European Parliament has taken a strong stance on regulating AI, ensuring it is transparent, accountable, and aligned with democratic values. This is essential if we want innovation to contribute to a more peaceful world.

A global agreement on common standards for the responsible use of AI - human-centric, trustworthy inclusive and sustainable AI - fully in line with fundamental rights is essential and EU is aiming for such an agreement.

These common standards should evolve around the principles of transparency and accountability, responsible use of AI and have as objectives to harness benefits for people and industries and prevent harms to individuals and inequalities. In this regard, the adoption of the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact is a very positive outcome

The importance of international collaboration cannot be overstated. Science knows no borders, and many of the challenges we face—whether they are pandemics, food insecurity, or environmental degradation—require global cooperation. The European Parliament remains committed to promoting EU's close cooperation with partners around the world, sharing knowledge, expertise, and innovation for the benefit of all. The [Africa EU Energy Partnership](#) is an example of how we can work together across continents to foster sustainable development. I would also like to commend the instrumental work done by IPU in Parliaments harnessing AI.

Emerging technologies come with both great potential and great hazards. As policymakers, we must remain vigilant, ensuring that international frameworks and governance systems are in place to manage the risks and prevent misuse.

Dear colleagues, let's take a moment to reflect on the incredible potential of science and technology. These are not just tools: they are powerful allies in our quest to create a more peaceful and sustainable world. We, at the European Parliament, are committed to fostering innovation that not only drives economic growth but also protects our planet. Together, let's harness this potential for a brighter future!

Thank you.