



JANEZ POTOČNIK

Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to contribute to your conference — I am sorry that I will not be able to be there in person to participate.

What makes the most efficient European economies? They are the ones where the links between science and society are the most highly developed. Finland is often presented as the example of a high-tech nation which has used science to generate wealth. This reputation is earned and is due in no small way to the contribution organisations like the Academy of Finland make to research policy development. The latest available statistics show that Finland was one of only two EU countries that had met and exceeded our goals with regard to Research and Development intensity. Science in society can transform and translate into success, and economic prosperity.

Science and Society - the two are sometimes seen as entirely separate but of course the grand challenges we face today - the same challenges that we want to use research, innovation and education to counter are already society's global problems. They are the result of our growing demands, growing size and even growing years!

We need to ensure that research policy is seen to be at the service of society. Therefore in building our European Research Area - the research arm of the Lisbon Strategy - we need to make sure that it is both open to society and integrated with it. ERA needs a science and society dimension.

We have already made advances, through improved governance, cooperative approaches, ethical issues, two-way communication and in the way we prioritise and coordinate our research policy in Europe. We know what to do, but we still have to work even harder on how to do it.

This means we have to invest "downstream" - and this means building on the concept of knowledge in society by stimulating even more public engagement in science through the people that matter. These are the:

- Universities and research centres, businesses, government and professional associations.
- Schools, the media, science museums and science centres.
- Representatives from civil society, NGOs, national institutions, local government and cities.

Our goal is an engaged public with a self-conscious awareness of their role in the science/society relationship, and the knowledge of how they can be involved further. We want a knowledge society, but we have to make sure there is society in it!

Already twenty years ago, Isaac Asimov complained that “science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom”. Isn’t it up to us to make sure they catch up with each other?

I wish you the best of luck with the conference.

JEAN JOUZEL

Thank you to both our Ministers and to President Dermagne, for opening this conference. I would now like to ask Jean-Michel Besnier to chair our next session.