

**High Level Conference**

**The future of science and technology in Europe**

**Lisbon, Portugal**

**8-10 October 2007**

**A vision for the future of Science and Technology in Europe**

F. Mayor

Ending his introductory remarks to this Conference, Minister Mariano Gago said: “It’s time for action”.

I wish to start as well: “It’s time for action”.

Most of the diagnoses have been made. Many treatments are known: it’s high time, 7 years after the Lisbon Summit to ask, here in Lisbon again, not to postpone action anymore, not to ask for more reports, more meetings, more diagnosis. A reporting society is a postponing society, and now, if we really want to address the social, economic, political, environmental, cultural and ethical challenges threatening the world at present, we must transit rapidly from words to facts.

Tomorrow can be late. As a biochemist in Neuropathology I know that the best diagnosis is the one that allows you to apply the treatment timely. The

perfect diagnosis is autopsy, but it's too late. We are behind schedule, and points of no return can be reached, both in social, health and environmental terms.

Not only to identify the problems, but to solve them – and this is feasible in a truly knowledge-based society – is the supreme commitment we have with the succeeding generations.

To warn, to mobilize, to make people and all the stakeholders of the new world we dream, aware, committed, involved.

It's not only a matter of more knowledge, but of more wisdom. To know more. To apply better. Guided by the universal values enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights, beyond the short-sighted market laws. Guided by the UN Millennium Objectives for the benefit for human kind.

Guided by aims of otherness,  
the scientific community urges the adoption of rapid measures in the EU without further delays, placing science at the top of the political agenda.

New problems often need new solutions, new approaches. Transdisciplinarity is at the core of many solutions, creative solutions. It's not only a question of discovery, but inventing.

Creativity! This is the key word, the key for a future uplifted to the height of human dignity. Creativity, the distinctive capacity of all human beings, is our hope.

Is change possible? Can at present Humanity overcome so many inertias of all kind? For those who still think that it is not feasible, I recommend them to read the speech of President Kennedy at Washington University in June 1963: “Any challenge, any problem is not beyond human creative capacity”.

All together, with knowledge, experience and courage, we can. This was one of the initiatives of Minister Gago, the first to inspire ISE.

We are all together, the European scientists, to support the ERC for the promotion of basic research in all disciplines, with European funding.

All together, as the panel of this plenary session: Fotis Kafatos, President of the European Research Council; Robert Aymar, Director-General of CERN; George Winckler, President of the European Universities Association; and Philippe Busquin, Former European Commissioner for Research, Member of the European Parliament. And Peter Tindemans, of EuroScience and José Silva Rodríguez, Director General for Research of the European Commission. All together.

All together, the ERC is today a reality and before long we will see, with the support of national willingness too, the decrease of the brain-drain in Europe.

We were all together. Together to achieve; we must remain all together. Now, as Julio Celis pointed out, we will try to help to make infrastructures available and to make closer science and industry. Julio Celis, as Secretary General of FEBS, played a crucial role in the whole process of ERC creation, initiated by the Danish Minister of Research and Innovation.

ISE vision: science for society. To improve welfare and quality of life.

The contributions of LERU (League of European Research Universities), ELSF (European Life Science Forum), ESF (European Science Foundation), EMBL (European Molecular Biology Laboratory), EuroScience, FEBS (Federation of European Biochemical Societies)... are particularly relevant for the future of the European Research Area, for a European-level strategy.

We believe that the European Research Area can become a dynamic and creative enterprise for a more just and sustainable global community.

ISE provides a common forum to advocate independent scientific advice in European policy-making and to stimulate the involvement of European scientists in the design and implementation of European science and technology policy.

ISE for assessment and prospective, to facilitate the parliament's debate when dealing with scientific related issues.

ISE to promote patent initiatives, as the Commissioner Potočnik underlined.

ISE to favour universities role and in depth reform and improvement of higher education.

“A vision for the future”. In order to avoid that the future is always in the future, decisions must be adopted right now. Yes, the future we are talking about depends on the decisions adopted at present. Adopted at present at the European level and at the national level.

At this respect, I wish to emphasize one of the corner stones to build the EU we wish: is the diversity of Europe as our Secretary General, Luc Van Dyck, likes to reiterate:

polimorphic Europe,

diverse in economic development

diverse in scientific and university systems

diverse in research intensive industry

diverse in the expectations of the different societies

Diversity is our richness. To be united by common goals is our force.

Knowledge must flow across frontiers, starting with the European ones, where the populations must perceive the benefits of a knowledge-based society.

As Minister Gago said: “Science must be in the election campaigns; in the Parliaments and Councils; in the Governments at local level”... in order to achieve the needed changes at the European level.

“ISE vision: science for society”, will be coordinated by: Peter Tindemans, “The need for scientific research and its relations to society”; Frank Gannon, “The stakeholders in scientific research and their changing roles”; Giovanna Procacci and Carlos Ruzzo, “The specific responsibilities of the research community”; Dave Garner, “Improving the performance of European research”. In this way, with the overall frame of social sciences, humanities will represent a constant accent of the Initiative.

A concrete contribution of one of the ISE members, the European Materials Forum, has already been done here in Lisbon where the First World Materials Summit has been held the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. The Lisbon 2007 Declaration on International Cooperation in Materials Research represents a key contribution to meeting energy needs and addressing climate change.

Today – I quote from the ISE vision document – research is the only potential source of answers to the present needs of modern society and to understanding its changing complexities.

To alleviate world-wide disease and hunger are among the most pressing world priorities.

ERA must be attractive for scientists. Attractive for industrial centres of research as well, because is not only to the new science policy to redress the delocalization of human resources but also the delocalization of industry research to the Asian and North America poles. Allow me to quote Minister Gago in his speech in Lisbon July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007: “The leadership of the European scientific community in the movement which lead to the creation and definition of the ERC... constitutes a precious asset for the future science in Europe, which needs to be stimulated... Governments and the European institutions, regions, research funding agencies at a national level, large scientific European laboratories, the scientific community, industry, banking, universities and research institutions, are all partners whose alliance and collaborative action is becoming essential to the European scientific development”.

Lisbon was a political shift 7 years ago. Now must be a decision- making shift. And governance means action.

ISE vision: science for the benefit of the European people, of people at large. ISE vision to better share and care. To dare and not to be silent, when the voice of the scientific community is missing.

“Inventing our future together”, is the title of the “Green Paper”. The voice of the scientific community to contribute to invent the future, to advise good governance, to be a watch tower in the dawn of the century and millennium.

Scientific community as a partner, as a social actor.

Scientific community to trigger political will.

The main conclusions of this Conference will be important ingredients for the EU Council of Research Ministers and to the preparation of the EU Summit of Heads of State and Government next December. Enhance science and technology in the national and European agendas!

It's time for action.