

4th European Engineers Day

Tuesday, 21 June 2022

The role of engineers in the successful realisation of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus

(10-15 minutes)

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

Let me start by thanking the European Council of Civil Engineers, the European Federation of National Engineering Associations and the European Council of Engineering Chambers for inviting me to join you here today in this significant event.

I am delighted to be able to open this event by addressing all of you on such a topical and crucial issue.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time. It is an existential issue for Europe and the world. It has changed the way we live and the way we act. In our daily lives, in our work, in our societies, in all aspects of our lives.

To tackle the challenges posed by the climate crisis, the EU has presented the European Green Deal. A set of policy initiatives with the overarching aim of making Europe climate neutral by 2050 at the latest.

To amplify this effort, the Commission launched the New European Bauhaus initiative. A cross-cutting initiative that integrates the European Green Deal with education, industry, art, regional policy as well as many other aspects of European policies.

It is an initiative that represents the ambition of creating beautiful, sustainable and inclusive places and ways of living. An initiative that aims to connect the European Green Deal with the spaces we live in and the way we would like to live together, respecting our planet and preserving nature.

The green transition brings many challenges. So does the pressing issue of rising energy prices that results to increased energy poverty among EU households. The New European Bauhaus initiative can offer solutions and transformation - from the global level to the level of neighbourhoods, cities and villages.

Under these pressing challenges, holistic and inclusive approaches are the only way forward. These approaches demand collaboration among all relevant parties and stakeholders - local and regional authorities, SMEs, neighbourhood organisations, social enterprises, cooperatives, local residents and of course all relevant professionals that will co-design and materialise the envisaged projects.

In this context, the role of engineers already is and will continue to be vital. But it will not be enough on its own.

Inclusion is a key factor. It is only by sharing and combining visions, ideas and expertise that we can proceed with the successful realisation of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus initiative.

This will require engagement with non-engineers and better communication, management, leadership, and other professional practice skills on the part of engineers, in order to showcase the critical contribution of engineering to the future of our societies and our planet.

Raising this awareness in order to boost the uptake of new smart engineering approaches will be a key issue for the functioning of the green transition. But it can't be done by engineers on their own. It will need interdisciplinary and creative approaches.

The New European Bauhaus initiative can offer the ground on which such processes can grow. Overcoming rivalries and prior assumptions between different professions and disciplines by positive experience will be a gain for all and will inspire even better sustainable holistic solutions in projects.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

As some of you may already know, I myself had been working as an engineer before taking up my duties as a MEP. For more than 25 years, I have lived through the changes that technological progress and climate change brought in our lives and in the profession.

Over the years, engineers have faced rapidly changing, complex and increasingly demanding solutions in an environmentally sensitive world. Our world faces the challenge of climate change and an unstoppable process of urbanisation and population growth. At the same time, the vast majority of the existing European building stock has been built without modern provisions for energy efficiency.

As an engineer myself, I understand and I share the worries and concerns but also the enthusiasm that new challenges create.

I am confident that engineers will be able to meet the challenges of the present and of the future. I truly believe that engineers can and will contribute to the efforts and the goals for a more sustainable, greener, fairer and more inclusive future for our societies.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I wish you every success in today's event.