



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Good morning, everyone!

Thank you for being here. I wish to thank the University of Ljubljana for the hospitality and for organising this EUTOPIA Week.

It's always a pleasure to get together.

I feel very honored and moved to have the privilege to chair Eutopia.

I feel the great responsibility and I hope we can work together in harmony in the coming years. First of all thank you so much to Eva and all the presidents and rectors of Eutopia, I hope to deserve your trust. I am very excited at the idea of working with you at Eutopia More, and confident about the success of our project. We share the same goals, we aim at implementing our European values, including the university of Warwick which, we all know, strongly believed in this alliance and paved the way for its constitution.

EUTOPIA More is an ambitious project, and all of us here strongly believe in it. If this project is to be successful in reaching its goals, it needs to reach the hearts of all of our communities. I witnessed this personally last September, when many of you came to Ca' Foscari, in Venice, and after your stay with us: EUTOPIA is an invaluable opportunity for European researchers to meet, get to know each other, and network. I witnessed how much this opportunity for exchange was appreciated. In some cases, the seed for future collaboration has already been planted.

EUTOPIA is our great European home. It's a place where we want to give people space to get together to further research, to enrich teaching, to cultivate the talent of the younger generations, and to apply best practice to processes and to the organisation of our universities. For these reasons I believe it is important that we continue to work together to accelerate our communities' *involvement* and sense of belonging. We need to start with students, the children of a united Europe, who have always been willing to get to know other cultures and experience living in other countries. EUTOPIA is a project that we will place in their care, one day. This is why it is crucial that they be directly involved as much as possible. I am sure that many of our students are ready to appreciate this

project and commit to developing it further. We need to make this possible for them.

Since Ca' Foscari University of Venice had the privilege of joining this alliance, there is one thing in particular that I have learned to appreciate. It is the value of cooperation and sharing, with the common aim of spreading knowledge and skills, promoting development, and creating opportunities for the greatest possible number of people. In addition to the European flag, we share the desire to contribute to the development of our territories, to connect them, to champion the value of cooperation over competition, and to grow together as Europeans.

With our project the fundamental values of Europe can flourish: freedom, inclusion, openness, cooperation, and the awareness of the challenges we face together every single day — the environment, equality, digitalisation. These values and crucial issues of our time inspire EUTOPIA and our actions. We should be proud to share this experience, and at the same time we should feel a sense of responsibility to make good use of this wonderful opportunity.

In the academic world, and especially in the humanities, we are still tempted to regard research as an individual practice. But this approach is anachronistic — it has been outdated by the facts and course of history. In a way, my generation has had to *learn* the value of collaboration. On the contrary, I see that with younger generations this approach comes more naturally. We need to foster collaboration: together we can do great things.

Not only in the near future, but even *now* we are called to achieve the goals we established in EUTOPIA More. These goals are wide-ranging and perfectly aligned with the unity of purpose of the Europe we are part of. We must be courageous and willing to engage in a project that has such a high degree of potential. Let us consider, for example, one great challenge we face as European universities: we need to attract people from outside of the alliance, in order to strengthen mobility to and from EUTOPIA, promote our values and foster peace.

Interdisciplinarity is another crucial challenge we need to work on, because it is a catalyst for the innovation of our study programmes. We need to create innovative courses that can equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to tackle global challenges, in line with the European agenda. Last but not least, we need to enhance the

knowledge and skills of our administrative staff, without whom our many activities would not be possible.

As always, it is people who make a real difference, with their sensitivity and their convictions. From this perspective, I believe we are an incredibly rich community. Our people are talented, competent, passionate, and motivated. This is evident in our universities' participation in this week together. ***Involvement*** is key.

I wish to thank Nikki, for her precious work and commitment, for always being available to find solutions and answers, for her great sensibility and vision. I hope you can still be with us someday.

I express my heartfelt thanks to Eva, François, Stuart, and all the presidents who have helped me understand and appreciate EUTOPIA. To all the Eutopians, the vice presidents, the project managers — thank you. To all the administrative staff, professors, and students who have worked with enthusiasm and courage on this ambitious project — thank you.

My wish is that all of us will continue to cultivate this enthusiasm and trust in our project. Let us believe in it. Let us join forces to make it grow and have a positive impact on our universities, on Europe, on the world and on all the people who belong to it.

United we stand.

Thank you.