

Dear Prime Minister Costa, dear Minister Heitor, dear Commissioner Moedas, cher Carlos, Dear Director General Smits, cher Robert-Jan,

I am very honoured to be able to address you this morning and happy to be back in Lisbon, one of my favourite cities in Europe.

Ciencia 2016 is an important event: indeed, a lot of the future of Europe, and more broadly the world, will depend on the quality of relations between science (and therefore scientists) and society (and its many representatives: politicians, media and more generally the woman and the man in the street).

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Portuguese government for having taken the initiative of such an event, stressing the importance of science in society.

Science, as we know it, is not just a domain of knowledge. It is one of the results of **using the scientific method**. This method is based on **establishing facts**, on **analysing their consequences**, and on **designing the conceptual framework to organise them**, a step which is, too often, forgotten. (Actually, this lacuna is one of the reasons why mathematics, my field, is often reduced to a language when it is an incredible factory for concepts.)

Recent events show how much this culture based on evidence is lacking, or even worse, **challenged**. We must be passionate **advocates of rational decisions**, and what should nurture them, namely **facts**.

This method has to be presented and taught all through the education system and through the media at large. This requires a **patient and humble approach**, just the opposite of what we see too often flourish these days where insults, bold statements seem to have become the way of life of some people.

I have been confronted with achievements of Ciencia Viva in the past. I still have a vivid memory of an exhibit presenting an expedition in Amazonia where scientists of all kinds worked hand in hand with artists. This was a formidable opportunity to conjugate the creative power of the two worlds, that of artists and that of scientists. This **conjugation of creators** is a very important dimension to make thrive.

Last but not least, **we need to convince young people that science is a professional option** with several possible paths: research, academic, industrial and policy. We need them and **they must see a career path** ahead of them so that the most talented ones have no doubt that this will be a good choice for them. They represent **the science of the future**.

I thank you for your attention.