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Becoming More Human Again

A Passionate Call for Humanity, Connection, and Solidarity in Europe and Beyond

Europe stands at a historic crossroads. Between renewal and the rupture, between technological triumph and geopolitical fracture. Never before have our possibilities been greater: artificial intelligence, green transformation, a new generation of intelligent and courageous young professionals ready to take responsibility. And yet, at the same time, we feel the chill of a world in upheaval.

War is once again raging in the heart of Europe. A nuclear power like Russia is waging a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, covering parts of our continent with destruction, fear, and hybrid warfare. Our freedom, our peace, our shared European idea are under pressure. Beyond this, the Middle East conflict, which has been smouldering for 50 years, has recently reached a new and dramatic military peak. None of this is good for humanity as a whole.

At the same time human societies are changing in the digital world. We are constantly connected, at least digitally - yet people feel more distant from one another than ever before. Anonymity encourages polarization, algorithms amplify extreme voices, and trust becomes harder to build.

What We Have Lost

The years of the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the way we live and work. Between 2020 and 2022, encounters became a risk, closeness a threat. Video conferences replaced handshakes, chats displaced hallway conversations.

Yes, digital tools kept us operational. But they could not replace what connects us at our core: the spontaneous smile, the shared struggle for an idea, the trust that grows in face-to-face interaction. Even the often-smirked-at pat on the back or a simple touch to signal closeness.

Behind every technical discussion stands a human being with a story, a culture, a hope. Without real encounters, empathy withers. Without empathy, collaboration withers. And without collaboration, progress withers.

Especially now, in a time of growing tensions, we must not allow the quiet erosion of our social cohesion to become the new normal. We must renew the bond that sustains us: our shared values, our mutual respect, our willingness to listen.

More Than Technology – Engineering as a Service to Humanity

Since 1972, EUREL has connected engineers across Europe. But EUREL is more than a network. It is a conviction: engineering is not cold calculation with numbers; it is a profoundly human endeavour. A calling to serve humanity.

Behind every system, every line, every code stand people who want to solve the most pressing challenges of our time: climate change, energy security, digital resilience, security for humanity.

Just weeks after the Russian full-scale invasion, EUREL published the appeal “Advancing Technology for Humanity.” In it, we honoured those engineers in Ukraine and in other war affected regions who, at risk to their lives, safety, and freedom, are using their skills – for peace, for stability, for the reduction of human suffering.

EUREL fundamentally opposed those who endanger the peaceful coexistence of humanity. In doing so, we emphasize that the roles of perpetrators and victims must not be reversed. Anyone facing attack or threats from aggressors - for example Ukraine or in the context of the Middle East conflict - has the right to defend itself. We are convinced that the desire for a peaceful world is not naive. A peaceful world is simply necessary. Engineering carries responsibility. Just as physicians are committed to healing, engineers have a duty to make the world safer, more sustainable, and more human.

The Next Generation Deserves More Than Screens and Mouse Clicks

In the EUREL Young Engineers Panel (YEP), the spirit of the future comes alive. Students and young professionals bring courage, creativity, idealism, and a powerful desire to contribute. They want to shape Europe, not merely administer it. Yet many of them began their academic and professional journeys in isolation. Remote learning. Virtual conferences. Digital networks without face-to-face encounters.

What is missing are the moments that endure:

The first in-person meeting with international colleagues.

The discussion that lasts late into the night.

The wild celebration until the early morning hours.

The experience of being part of a shared European story.

If we are serious about the future, we must not leave this generation behind in digital twilight. We must create spaces where they can grow, lead, and shape – together, physically, and as Europeans. They need real encounters, shared experiences, and the opportunity to build lasting relationships.

Reclaiming Our Shared Humanity

The challenges of our time demand more than technical excellence. They demand character. Empathy. A sense of justice. Cultural understanding and the ability to understand different perspectives. As engineers, we build systems but, we also build society. European unity and friendship with regions across “Spaceship Earth” do not arise solely through treaties or institutions.

They grow through encounter. Through honest conversation. Through experiencing the other as an enrichment. Now is the time to place the human being back at the centre. Not as a footnote of technological development but as its origin and its purpose.

Five EUREL Steps on the Path Back to Humanity

To bring this vision to life, EUREL advocates five concrete measures:

- 1. Prioritize Personal Encounters**

More in-person meetings, exchange programs, site visits, and cross-border workshops. Trust does not arise in a pixel but in a gaze.

- 2. Strengthen Cross-Border Collaboration**

Multinational projects between students, professionals, academia, industry, politics, and civil society. Diversity is not a challenge; it is Europe's greatest strength.

- 3. Empower Young Engineers**

Structured mentoring programs, genuine leadership responsibility, financial support for independent initiatives. Youth should not merely participate, they should shape.

- 4. Connect Generations**

Experience meets vision. History meets future. When generations listen to one another, respect emerges and from respect comes cohesion.

- 5. Live a Culture of Inclusion and Solidarity**

A Europe in which every engineer, regardless of gender, origin, or nationality feels welcome and valued. Solidarity is not a slogan. It is an obligation.

Now is the time to meet again.

Not only as professionals. But as human beings.

Let us speak again. Listen. Argue and understand.

Let us build bridges where walls are rising.

Let us rediscover one another across borders, generations, and disciplines.

Let us become more human again.

Together.

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