Welcome Address

Becoming more Human again

EUREL General Assembly 2026, Bucharest

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Dear friends, dear colleagues,
dear members of the EUREL family,

Welcome to Bucharest. And this year, I really mean it: Welcome. Here. Together. In one room.

Last year, things were different. Our planned General Assembly in Israel could not take place because of the war. At very short notice, our friends from AIEE stepped in and welcomed EUREL here in Bucharest. Some of us were here. Others joined just digitally. So did I, unfortunately. It was complicated. It was improvised. But we made it work. Thank you, Team AIEE!

And today: We are back. So, first of all, thank you to AIEE – again. And after last year, I think we have earned the right to meet, to argue, to laugh, to celebrate and perhaps to be a little louder than usual. This year, let's make some noise!

Because behind this simple idea of meeting, arguing, laughing and celebrating lies something much bigger. Something that has become increasingly important to me and to EUREL: **Becoming More Human Again.**

Dear friends, we are living through extraordinary times. Artificial intelligence is changing our economies. Digitalization is changing our societies. The energy transition is changing the foundations of our infrastructure. The possibilities are breathtaking. But so are the dangers. There is war in Europe.

Russia has brought war, destruction and fear back to our continent with its war of aggression against Ukraine. And the confrontation does not stop at Ukraine's borders. We see hybrid warfare coming out of the sphere of Russia every day. Cyberattacks. Sabotage. Disinformation. Attacks against our societies and our critical infrastructure.

Russia wants a weaker Europe. A divided Europe. A frightened Europe. And that confronts us with a fundamental question: What kind of Europe do we want to be? A Europe that hopes the storm will somehow pass? Or a Europe that stands together when the storm arrives?

For me, the answer is clear: We must become more resilient. So, we can stand the stoms. That was also the central message of our European Future Technology Summit this year in Brussels: **“THE RESILIENCE CODE: From Vulnerability to Resilience.”** Because we cannot assume that every attack will be prevented. We cannot guarantee that every cyberattack will fail. That every act of sabotage will be stopped. That every attempt to manipulate our societies will be exposed in time. We must protect ourselves.

But protection alone is not enough. We need the ability to withstand. To adapt. To recover. And, when necessary: To rise again. That is resilience. For a power grid. For a communication system. For an organisation. And for a society. But there is something even more fundamental. Technology alone will not save Europe. The strongest firewall is useless without people willing to take responsibility. The most resilient power grid cannot create solidarity. And no artificial intelligence can replace courage. True resilience begins with people. With trust. With responsibility. With solidarity. And this is where our two ideas come together: **The Resilience Code.** And: **Becoming More Human Again.**

Because there is another paradox of our time. Never before have we been so connected: We have Teams Video Calls. We have smartphones. We have social media. We have artificial intelligence. We can communicate around the world in milliseconds. And yet sometimes, we seem further apart than before. Because communication is not the same as connection.

A screen cannot replace a handshake. A chat cannot replace the conversation after a difficult meeting. And a video conference cannot replace sitting together late at night, developing an idea, fighting about it, laughing about it and suddenly realising: We have created something together.

That is what EUREL has been about since 1972. Not simply technology. Not simply organisations. Not simply conferences. People!! People from different countries. Different languages. Different generations. Different experiences. Different opinions. And yet: One community. That is Europe. Not Europe as a map. Not Europe as an institution. Europe as an encounter between people.

Because cooperation does not begin with a treaty. It begins when people meet. Friendship does not emerge from a regulation. Trust is not generated by an algorithm. Trust grows between human beings. And that is especially important for our young engineers. They are entering a world of technological possibilities that previous generations could hardly have imagined. But also, a world of uncertainty, geopolitical confrontation and new responsibilities.
We must prepare them for both. They need knowledge. They need technology. They need international experience. But above all: They need each other. They need the journey abroad. The passionate discussion with someone from another country. The conversation that continues until midnight. The idea that suddenly emerges over dinner. And yes: The celebration that somehow continues until early morning. Because twenty years later, they probably will not remember every PowerPoint slide. But they will remember the people. They will remember where friendships began. Where ideas began. Where trust began. And where they first understood that they were part of something larger than themselves.

That is what EUREL can give them. Not simply participation. Belonging. Not simply a seat at the table. Responsibility. Not someday. Now.

Dear friends, Europe is facing a storm. There are forces that want to frighten us. Forces that want to divide us. And Russia has demonstrated that it is willing to use aggression, destruction and intimidation to pursue its interests. But there is one thing Russia must never be allowed to achieve: To make Europe lose faith in itself. Because fear is not our future. Division is not our future. Isolation is not our future.

Our answer is cooperation. Our answer is courage. Our answer is resilience. Our answer is Europe. And above all: Our answer is humanity. The strongest Europe will not simply be the Europe with the most advanced technology. It will be the Europe that combines technological excellence with human strength. Innovative enough to shape the future. Resilient enough to withstand those who attack it. Courageous enough to defend its values. And human enough to remember why those values are worth defending. And this is why I am optimistic. Because when I look around this room, I do not see vulnerability. I see strength. I see engineers. I see experience. I see young people ready to take responsibility. I see friendships crossing borders. I see countries that may disagree but still sit at the same table. I see Europe.

That is for what we used Bucharest in these days. Let us talk. Let us listen. Let us disagree. Let us laugh. Let us create. And yes: Let us make some noise. Because others may try to divide Europe. We will connect it. Others may try to frighten Europe. We will strengthen it. Others may try to attack the foundations of our societies. We will make them resilient. And where others build walls, we will build bridges. From vulnerability to resilience. From isolation to connection. From technology to humanity. And from many countries: One European community.

So – Welcome to Bucharest. Welcome to the EUREL General Assembly 2026. So let's make it count. Let's become more resilient. Let's become more European. And above all: Let's become more human again. Together!