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Address by
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Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology
At the Plenary Session

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Distinguished President Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga,
Distinguished Mrs. Reding,
Distinguished Minister Mrs. Gudele,
Dear colleagues

Allow me to present you briefly my point of view regarding the overcoming of cultural diversity with help of computer science and communication technology in the light of their incorporation into the computer science society.

Traditional European values like freedom, tolerance, equality, solidarity and democracy have being built for many years and so they have achieved the present level. Europe has been growing and developing, in some countries faster, in some countries less faster. Each European country has contributed its own piece to the development of Europe, each country has developed its own culture, language and with each country their cultural heritage has grown as well. Europe has become the common area of diverse countries, cultures and their aspects of the world. Each country by itself has reached the level when to go on, when



to proceed expanding their knowledge, culture and experience abroad. The result is united Europe, which has the familiar cultural identity, common aims and tendencies. Mutual help is the only way for Europe to be successful, socially and economically impartial and progressive in development.

The improvement of computer science and communication technology has substantially relieved the common way to projecting the modern Europe and it has enabled the participation of all its residents. Everyone can contribute his part and everyone can observe the activities, which take place in his country. There are no borders anymore, only rough lines of these countries, that our contemporary world can overcome and connect mutually. Computer science and communication technology makes the swing of digital issues possible, it enables the interconnection and access to these topics and it offers many great opportunities in development and science.

The rich cultural heritage has been created through the years of Europe`s development and growing out. The heritage distinguish the identity in culture of each nation by itself, but as a whole it represents the cultural identity of Europe. During the period of migration of peoples everyone took a part of his culture and a part of his nation with him, but the link with his origin has been lost in his new country.

Historical archives are being filled up, the museum collections are getting richer, the number of records is increasing; this is a work and creation of our ancestors, this is our product and our result. The archives get



older, the documents decay, audio and video records are destroyed; it is urgent to begin with extensive archives digitalization; documents, audio, video, television and radio archives, museum collections, libraries, cultural heritage - the whole history needs to be converted from analogous to digital readout. There is no easy way, there are a lot of obstacles but the objective is well-defined; it means the access to our history, to our culture.

Access should be given to all people who would like to have an insight into their places of origin and into that what lead and denote them; everyone should be acquainted with the cultural identity of other nations, everyone should get to know the language of others. Particularly, it is very important that access to these information should be given to those displaced people all over the world and to those whose abilities don't allow them an easy access, e.g. disabled people, blind and weak-sighted, deaf and deaf-and-dumb and older people. Permanent keeping of digital information is a guarantee to preserve our work and the creation of our ancestors, so the culture can be continued and protected. The same should happen to scientific topics, whose assignment is to carry on and extend the knowledge. Actually, the latter is the proper guidance for the development and progress.

Our work doesn't end with digitisation. We need to assure that all new content is produced in digital form and that they are of a high quality. We need to assure an easy access to it, which assures its use and reuse at the level of individual citizen as much as society at large. In this respect, European initiatives such as Digital library initiative are of a great



importance. In this initiative Slovenia will also try to participate with its systems such as COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System & Services) for access to library catalogs and SICRIS (Slovenian Current Research Information System) for access to information about research activities at the national level. In the future, the activity of creating new digital materials and contents brings us big moves in the system of education. From classical education, which takes place mainly in educational institutions, we extend the method of teaching based on distance learning. Advantages of this kind of system are reflected in more qualitative, unified and multi-media materials, which are accessible to the majority, with no time and no place limit. These educational programmes request some changes for both: students and teachers. Constant society growth and progress are represented by a process of education. The permanency of a contemporary society is to study continuously and its qualitative implementation means opening new working places and new progress and therefore creating conditions for the society based on knowledge. The access to knowledge for everybody allocates the basis to include all people into the educational system.

To stimulate the digitalization brings out also some dilemmas and problems, which can be surpassed and solved. Problems are reflected by skilled workers, technical problems and financial resources. Digitalization opens the opportunities for new working places and new educational programmes, which will result within skilled cadre, who can be equal to this task. Technically, there are more approaches to digitalization, but only the joined, standard and adjusted approach is the



most suitable and reasonable one. At this point, Europe must overcome the economical interest and it must follow the common goal. To finance these activities is a project of great pretention, therefore the contribution of all segments of society must be drawn in, like public administration as the economy. The resources can be obtained from European structure and cohesive funds, within the 7th frame programme and within the work of the institute of research. Finally, it is necessary to bring out the problem of intelectual property as the digitalization exceeds the closed sphere of users and beneficiaries. Copyrights and the rights of intelectual property to the digitalization must be determined in order to give appropriate juridicial base and foundation. It is not an easy task. The solution must find the right balance between authors, users and interest od the society, specialy from the on-line accessibility point of view on the internet. In this search, also results and experiences of projects such as CreativeCommons licensing and its corresponding models of development and usage of digital content can give a valuable help with accessign the right sollution.

Digitalization, new digital contents and the use of computer science and communication technology contribute the essential share in overcoming the cultural diversity and preserving the cultural identity. This is a link between history and modern times, a bridge between technology and issues and finally, it is a connection among generations. To cross over the limit of digitalization means to overcome the cultural diversity and we can be successful only with united approach to include all social segments into computer science society.