

POZDRAVNI NAGOVOR PREDSEDNIKA DRŽAVNEGA ZBORA DR. MILANA BRGLEZA NA 2. SVETOVNEM KONGRESU O PROSTO DOSTOPNIH IZOBRAŽEVALNIH VIRIH

Ljubljana, 18. september 2017

*Spoštovani udeleženci Svetovnega kongresa, dear participants of the World Congress,
cenjeni visoki gostje, distinguished guests,
gospe in gospodje, ladies and gentlemen,*

v veliko čast in veselje mi je, da vas lahko z nekaj kratkimi mislimi nagovorim ob otvoritvi 2. Svetovnega kongresa o prosto dostopnih izobraževalnih virih; ne le zato, ker ta dogodek predstavlja največji mednarodni forum, ki ga Slovenija gosti v letošnjem letu, temveč predvsem zato, ker se tako kot politik kot tudi univerzitetni učitelj še kako dobro zavedam potrebe po naslavljanju ključnih izzivov izobraževanja v 21. stoletju.

It is my great honour and privilege to deliver a few brief introductory thoughts at the opening of the 2nd World Congress on Open Educational Resources; not only because this event represents the largest international forum hosted by the Slovenia this year, but first and foremost because – as a politician as well as a university professor – I am well aware of the dire need to address key challenges facing educational policy in the 21st century.

The Paris Declaration, adopted at the first World Congress more than five years ago, laid out in its preamble the aspirational and normative foundations of a holistic and inclusive approach to education. Nowhere in this world should education be perceived as a privilege or luxury. No, education is a *basic* human right that must be guaranteed to all individuals, regardless of their age, gender, material and social status, or any other personal circumstance. While considerable gains have been made in recent years in terms of improving access to education worldwide, we must persevere in our struggle for inclusive and equitable quality education for all generations. In this respect, I find it extremely important that this World Congress will also link the question of open educational resources to the realisation and effective implementation of sustainable development goals originating from the *Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development*. Quality and accessible education adapted to rapid technological advances and new learning environments remains in my opinion the most important tool for addressing profoundly unjust global developmental imbalances. Knowledge platforms created by innovative educational processes thus create new opportunities not only for personal growth but also for the promotion of democracy, equality and just development around the globe.

The incredible spread of what we used to call “information superhighways” has called for an appropriate adaptation of the widest possible spectrum of public policies. The amount of information that individuals of virtually all ages are able to instantly acquire through various means of communication has changed our patterns of thought and the way we perceive the world around us. These changes have established the need to equip individuals with knowledge, skills and resources that allow them to grasp the opportunities offered by the contemporary world of Information and Communications Technology. It is thus more important than ever for individuals of all ages to develop the art of critical thinking in order to discern, analyse, evaluate and effectively employ the bits and pieces of information they come across at any given moment. The so-called digital transformation of education is not a question of “if” or “when”, it is merely a question of “how”.

Ladies and gentlemen,

it is a great pleasure to be standing in front of experts, practitioners and high-level policy makers who are very much aware of how informational thunderstorms and technological innovation do not necessarily imply *better* education, but rather call for conceptually *different approaches* to it. The rise of so-called open educational resources, which represent the focus of this international forum, has certainly contributed to this debate. Virtually unlimited access to treasuries of knowledge, the blurring of lines between content users and content creators, and the ongoing transformation of knowledge into a specific form of global public good have all created numerous opportunities for the empowerment of individuals through innovative educational processes. These, however, must be managed responsibly. They must take into account that new learning environments call for new approaches to teaching and learning alike. They require the development of appropriate infrastructure, provision of adequate training and motivation for educators, and the acquisition of numerous sets of skills by those seeking knowledge. Moreover, understanding that education is a life-long process that does not only fit into early socialisation phases but also accompanies individuals throughout their lifetime is imperative. Inclusive education must cut across all generations while facilitating dialogue among them – only with such an approach will we create empowered knowledge communities that can really take advantage of freely available learning resources for the broader benefit of societies they live in. Education is a powerful tool, nonetheless, we must know how to use it to make the most of it.

I am extremely proud that Slovenia, in partnership with UNESCO, stands at the forefront of these transformations and has gained important international recognition as a reference country in the development and deployment of open education, and I believe this World Congress is solid proof that our commitment to inclusive and quality education is only growing stronger by the day. In this respect I wish to congratulate UNESCO, the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and the UNESCO Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning at the Jožef Stefan Institute for organizing this remarkable event that will hopefully pave the way to a genuine global normative commitment to open education.

Ladies and gentlemen, *spoštovani in spoštovane,*

I sincerely hope this congress enables you to make yet one more invaluable step in overcoming the existing challenges to the employment of open educational resources, and I wish your discussions bring forward practices and solutions that can provide for an effective and empowerment-oriented modernization of educational systems. The future is – now.

Želim vam oblico konstruktivnih razprav, ki bodo osvetlile tiste nove prakse in rešitve, ki lahko omogočijo učinkovito modernizacijo naših izobraževalnih sistemov, temelječo na opolnomočenju slehernega posameznika. Prihodnost se je namreč pričela že danes.

Thank you for your attention. *Hvala za vašo pozornost.*