

Dear Rector,
Dear Honorary Doctors *in spe*,
Dear academic family,
Ladies and gentlemen.

The world's biggest, so far the most expensive, and probably also most ambitious scientific structure – a 27 kilometres long Large Hadron Collider – was launched last week at CERN.

Centuries after Galileo Galilei and Newton, and a little more than a century after the creation of Einstein's relativity theory, scientists are trying to find experimental proof of the conception process of mass and matter.

All over the world, from the United States to New Zealand, and from Finland to Singapore, scientists are looking out with relish for new knowledge and discoveries. Physics, biology and chemistry are pointing at an established and secure path for new applications of the knowledge we already possess.

For many scientists and research institutes, but also whole countries, the commitment to scientific research is spurred partly by the recognition that today's knowledge and solutions will not suffice tomorrow.

Yet this too is an effect. The cause is nothing but mankind's inherent and unrelenting curiosity for touching and crossing new boundaries. It is educated and well-motivated people, the brain potential of the world that are the cause of it all.

The CERN collider is wonderful news for Estonia too. And not just because also Estonian researchers are engaged in the information technology of the realisation of the project.

This particle accelerator is a masterpiece of engineering, a masterpiece of the designers and builders of applications. Owing to that, new vistas of fundamental research are opening up very soon.

I hope that news from CERN and other research centres will attract the attention of Estonian youth more and more in the future. I hope that the physics and mathematics teachers of our schools will be able to direct that attention, answer questions and urge their students to come up with new ones.

Because this is the best advertisement for sciences and engineering. Much more effective than dozens of newspaper articles or speeches about the importance of sciences in main school and secondary school. This advertisement shall have a more widespread effect than the hints of political and economic leaders that a final exam in mathematics should be obligatory for all students finishing secondary school. By the way, I am deeply convinced that it indeed should be obligatory.

Ladies and gentlemen.

In the 17 years following the restoration of our statehood, the Estonian state and society have reached a stage where the task of restoration of the fundamental basis of our nation has, to a considerable extent, been accomplished.

Now, we can concentrate on the future. And on the acquisition of knowledge that we so far may have considered superfluous. And even on the knowledge that we have begun to forget or considered obsolete.

We know that today it is the countries investing in science, technology, application of technology, and training of engineers that are successful. It is the countries investing in the fields organically related to the needs of their economies that are successful. This way, such investments yield a direct output in improved quality of life.

Tallinn University of Technology, celebrating a jubilee today, is Estonia's leading centre of competence in many professions, whose vital importance I need not emphasise at great length in this hall today.

All issues related to energy, as well as subsurface chemistry, including oil shale chemistry, entail major challenges. This is where the scientists of the world are seeking new solutions today, with the financial backup of both the state and private sector.

I am glad to see that Tallinn University of Technology is among the seekers. Glad that the TTU is trying to ensure that the fields of research that are so vital for Estonia would stand on a strong basis also in the coming decades.

Furthermore – TTU is the hub where we can fasten our hopeful eyes, because we know – the men and women whose skills and wisdom shall ensure the growth of social wealth also in the future are studying here.

Here you have the people, the knowledge, and the experience. You are one of the lighthouses of Estonia, and your brilliant light invites ambitious students and researchers to participate in projects that may change the world.

Keep this light burning bright – grow, develop, prosper.

Many happy returns to Tallinn University of Technology, a contemporary of the Republic of Estonia.