

Let me begin by thanking you for your kind invitation. I am particularly grateful to have been invited to the Atomium Culture platform as I believe the work that this platform does is of real importance.

This is because it is essential that we are able to communicate the real benefits that science and technology is able to confer on society. We also need to pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility.

From my point of view, as one of the rapporteurs on Horizon 2020, platforms of this sort should enable a wide cross section of the population to involve themselves in decisions that are often of crucial importance for the public at large. It is also necessary that we stimulate interest in science amongst the young at a European level as they will represent the next generation of European scientists in a rapidly changing and often challenging world.

This is something that is clearly recognised at EU level and, indeed, Horizon 2020 has created a new line "Science with and for Society". This was the result of a proposal made by the European Parliament and it devotes 420 million euros to developing dialogue and active cooperation between science and society in order to ensure that we maintain the highest standards of responsible science.