

Distinguished Members of the European Parliament, Representatives of the European Union Authorities and Institutions, Leaders and Members of the National and European Engineers' Organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

Speaking as the third one I have a privileged position. My esteemed previous speakers have already said enough so that I could limit my speech just to welcome you. However, I have decided to take up some of your precious time and share with you some of my personal thoughts.

We, the organizers of the 2nd European Engineers' Day feel honored to host here in Brussels, the administrative heart of the European Union so many distinguished guests. Your kind presence here is a tangible evidence that the issues so vital to the European Engineers Community are not completely unfamiliar and insignificant to you.

We are about to listen to six presentations given by eminent European engineers. All these presentations are closely related to practicing engineering profession in the European Union. All the speeches bring up issues which are highly up to date and important I think not only for us, engineers.

I might sound a little bit unorthodox to you asking this question: can you imagine our present life without all these buildings, roads, bridges, means of transportation, communication and all the domestic appliances we use on daily basis? To say last but not least very difficult, am I right? This all we owe to engineers who in response to the needs and expectations provide with solutions.

On many occasions I have been asked: what does it take to be an engineer? To my mind it takes being a visionary as well as being able to give your vision a physical shape. But it is not enough, the solid educational foundation is necessary. This path is a painstaking process, but the outcome could be outstanding.

Engineers, in particular civil engineers make their very unique contribution to the surrounding world, shaping the environment in which we work, live and pass our free time, and making our world a better and safer place to live. The results of their activity remain with us throughout decades and centuries. Therefore civil engineering has gained its due status of the **Public Trust Profession**. To prove oneself worthy of this trust each and every civil engineer has to undergo probably one of the most demanding, challenging and one of its kind educational path.

On this special day it is my desire to bring it home to you, the value of engineering education.

I do believe, that engineers feature specific set of qualities just like for example in Special Forces. These people throughout years are trained in precision and logic of reasoning and solving seemingly unsolvable problems. In the wake of it, the future engineers develop both confidence in their intellectual abilities and intellectual curiosity, which allows them to challenge the world order as we know it today, again on the other hand, maintain the entire technical infrastructure in which we live, and which surrounds us on all sides.

The engineers, because of their thorough knowledge, based on comprehensive understanding of mathematics, physics and other exact science, which for the overwhelming part of society seem to be kind of “ black magic “ , ought to be treated as the “ national treasure “ and most valuable asset of every state in the world.

But that would be merely scratching the surface to say that, because according to the report entitled The Vision of Civil Engineering 2025, published a few years ago by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE): " In 2025, civil engineers, entrusted by society to create a sustainable world, and enhance the global quality of life, will serve competently, collaboratively and ethically as master builders, environmental stewards, innovators and integrators, managers of risk and uncertainty, and leaders in shaping public policy. As used in this document, to be "master" means to possess widely recognized and valued knowledge and skills and other attributes acquired as a result of education, experience, and achievement. But it sets new tasks engineers will have to take on such as mastering entirely new skills, apart from these, that are and always will be - the backbone of their professional training.

At this point I wish to emphasize one thing; it has never been my intention to depreciate the significance of other professions which make equally important contribution to functioning of sustainable society. Nonetheless, especially on this day it is my obligation to highlight the role and meaning of engineers.

To conclude with, I wish to remind you one, short and commonly known story. For ages, people watching birds envied their marvelous ability to fly. One day two daredevils ventured to challenge the nature and soared up into the sky. I am talking about two citizens of Ancient Greece named Icarus and Daedalus.

But what about today...Today, at any time we can go to the airport, buy a ticket, board a plane and - fly.... where to? Even here, to Brussels, just to take part in The 2nd European Engineers' Day. But it is not only that, we can arrange it all without leaving the comfort of our armchair at home or in the office, simply by means of a computer or a mobile phone.

This all we owe to engineers!

Therefore let's show them our appreciation. They truly deserve it.

Thank you for your attention.

Brussels, 20th November 2014