

REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

Note from the Editor – The following opening remarks were given by Dr. Blazenka Divjak, founder of the Central European Conference of Information and Intelligent Systems (CECIIS), University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Informatics Professor, and current Minister of Science and Education of Croatia. They constitute an interesting reflection on the value of attending academic conferences.



Dr. Blazenka Divjak addressing the 30th CECIIS Meeting in Varazdin, Croatia

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, dear friends,

I greet you all at the beginning of 30th conference, and wish you successful work and socializing here. Since it is 30 years in a row that this conference has existed and it is many years for a scientific conference, I will try to answer why it is important to have a conference in such a digitalized world.

As always, it is a good idea to look at what people wiser than me have said about it.

The great American author F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, “No grand idea was ever born in a conference, but a lot of foolish ideas have died there.” This is half cynical, but also half true; you can choose which one is which.

There is so much new knowledge, research and theories around and the quantity is rising exponentially. Therefore, I believe it is important to have the opportunity to discuss ideas, consider new knowledge and hopefully extract some wisdom from it.

As the great Isaac Asimov noted, “The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.”

Finally, the economist Mark Skousen has a very simple idea, “Since the 1970s, I've been a big fan of attending conferences as a great way to learn, network, socialize and enjoy a new environment. It's always refreshing to get out and see a whole new world.”

I would say that many of you that have come to this conference year after year can probably confirm the strength of our networking and friendship. In that context, I recognize the friends of FOI (Prof. Wolf Rauch and Prof. Guenter Mueller) that are keynote speakers today, but also a newly established friend and the third keynote speaker Sirje Virkus. I would also like to welcome Prof. Enrique Mu, a longstanding friend of FOI and current program committee member, who has come from the United States to participate in this event.

So to conclude, the role of conferences today may be to gather wisdom and put aside foolish ideas, but most of all it is to socialize and enjoy each other.

And this is a recipe for a successful conference as well.

With that, I would like to thank the organizing and program committee for having successfully prepared this year's conference, and I wish all of you a fruitful conference.

Thank you,

Blazenka Divjak