

## **CLOSING REMARKS – ALEXANDER HEICHLINGER:**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear distinguished guests, dear EPSA friends,

Everything has been said I believe and I am inspired by the many innovative and encouraging ideas exposed over the last 48 hours. For this reason, my closing remarks will focus on the more distant future and will be rather a personal reflection instead of some mere repetition.

Please allow me to reflect on **EPSA 2027**.

Yes, 2027 (16 years from now!). Why did I choose this date?

- First, it has nothing to do with my strong believe and hope that the current best European soccer team – FC Barcelona- will continue to win in the next years and naturally also for this reference year the *European Champions League*.
- Second, it also has not directly much to do with a well-known Hollywood movie named “*Children of Men*”, by Alfonso Cuaron and with the main actor’s part by Clive Owen and Julian Moore. It’s a political thriller about a nervously plausible future of the planet earth. Its set –exactly- in 2027 the human race faces its terminus of its long good-bye. Cities across the globe are in flames, the earth is marked by national violence and more of this kind... right here, right now, the end of the world as we knew and loved it! Until Theo, an emotionally and physically enervated bureaucrat from the Ministry of Energy is mandated to take care of the last planet’s hope –given the fact that for years no birth took place- of a pregnant woman. In addition, and since this happened as a mystery, he together with his

affiliates is to search and find this apparently only fertile men....

I will not continue here, but as said this movie has not been used as a reference....

But, it has to do with children why this EPSA date has been set for 2027!!! Namely my own ones! As some of you probably know, I have two kids in rather young ages. One, 16 years from today will graduate from high-school and the elder one 16 years from now will –hopefully- finish his university education! Both, in two stages of their lives will very likely ask themselves and approach me –knowing that I work in and with this sector- with a simple question -a salient one for me and I guess for all of you:

**“Is the Public Sector an interesting –professionally looking- employer for me which you can recommend?”**

**What answer would you provide to my children’s inquiry (2027)???**

As we know, Europe is currently at a turning point in its history, but how will the future look like? Believing in or questioning many of the published or announced scenarios or projections of Europe and the World in 2027 (or 2030) and looking to these horizons, the world/Europe in 2027 will:

- Continuously be tackling the demographical shift, facing declining birthrates in Europe, and a shrinking working-age population, coupled with increase in pensioners. Increase in the life expectancy to rise from 75 currently to over 80. As a consequence, the size of labour force in Europe will decline and increased stress will be put on public pension programs accompanied by declining resources for public services.
- See a population increase worldwide, another approx. 1/3 by the reference date with the consequence that the EU 27 (if not

enlarged by then) will account for only 13% of global population--> Significant demand increase for water, food and energy resulting in a competition for resources and rising costs because of rising demand.

- Be faced with growing power and clout of the East, new international economic competitors (China, India, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey & Indonesia) --> International balance of power shifts and redistribution. This newly grouped E7 will overtake the current G7 economies already by 2020 if measured by PPP.
- Observe increased diversity in EU population and immigration--> In UK for instance, by 2030, 27% of population and 36% of children under 14 will be minorities!
- See an increase capacity of technology to perform tasks currently performed by humans, resulting in a loss of available jobs as they are increasingly performed by technology, particularly low-tech jobs. Also, the rise of technology raises privacy concerns for citizens as more information becomes available to governments, businesses and each other.
- Face transportation changes--> automated cars, increase in bikes and scooters. Infrastructure (transport and water/waste) in Central Europe will be replaced (some still left over from Communism) within the next 15-30 years.
- Cities will become more important as hubs of technology, research and employment. Thus city infrastructure, housing and education services will come under increasing pressure, as well as the need to continue supporting rural and dispersed areas. Rural and dispersed areas will have to be looked after to ensure that the population is not left behind.

- Energy demand will rise by 50% in 2030). Energy infrastructure and overhaul, green innovations, dwindling energy reserves. Increase competition for energy and lacking reserves requires a shift to green technologies led and financed by the public sector.

I could continue, but I would like to conclude rather with another question:

**How can these rising and important issues and challenges be resolved?**

The only solution seems to be, in our “beloved” public sector and in this scenario, *to increase even more efficiency, to innovate and to strive for better and best practices.*

For this reason, the EPSA will remain or probably be even more important in the future, i.e. in 2027. This is my conviction.... and my answer to my children in this context I would like to reply with a clear.... **“Yes”!**

Thank you very much for your attention and I would like to congratulate already now the 15 nominees/winners for their public excellence which will certainly shape Europe for 2020.