

Dear Mr Prime Minister,
Your Excellences, honourable speakers,
Distinguished guests of this inspiring conference,

It is a great honour for me to share and discuss with you our ambitious ideas here in Israel, in a country that is renowned for its amazing courage.

I would like to use this opportunity **to introduce to you my country** - Slovakia. It is a young country in which traditions go hand in hand with modernity and where its people are not afraid of new challenges.

While Israel became known as a start-up nation in recent decades, **Slovakia** has transformed itself into an **automotive nation**. Several global automotive leaders have chosen to locate their large production facilities in Slovakia. Our factories produce cars of the highest quality, including Audi and Porsche models. We make the greatest number of cars per capita - almost 180 cars per one thousand inhabitants. Slovakia belongs to the world leaders in car production.

Slovakia is also a country in which ideas are born and transformed into reality. Slovakia - based ESET is the world leader in anti-virus software. Pixel Federation develops online games played in over 200 countries around the world and technological company Sygic is a Slovak company of global automotive navigation systems for mobile phones and tablets.

In order to stay competitive as a country, it is necessary to predict changes and prepare for the future. **Small countries must be open to innovations.** We keep our feet on the ground but our heads in the clouds. Our car Aeromobil already flies in the sky and towards the future.

The **future cars will be smart and connected**, that's for sure.

Technological innovations such as vehicle connectivity; autonomous driving and maybe even flying; interactive safety systems, biometric technologies; and advanced use of data **are the game changers**.

The future car will not only optimize **its own operation and maintenance** but also enhance **the in-car experience and comfort**.

2021 may be the year of the fully autonomous cars driven by the artificial intelligence.

Yesterday I had the chance to test the autonomous car. It was an impressive experience. But any **modern technology creates new challenges and risks** in addition to benefits. Self-driving car is no exception.

One of the challenges that society will face as transportation transforms in the coming years is the **ETHICS OF ACCIDENTS**.

Self-driving vehicles should reduce traffic accidents, but they will sometimes have to choose between two evils, such as running over pedestrians or sacrificing themselves and their passenger to save the pedestrians.

How should the car be programmed to act in the event of an unavoidable accident? Should it minimize the loss of life, even if it means sacrificing the occupants, or should it protect the occupants at all costs? Should it choose between these extremes at random? Who would buy a car programmed to sacrifice the owner?

The answers to these ethical questions are important because they will have a significant impact on the way self-driving cars are accepted in society.

In addition, **the liability for an accident caused by connected cars** seems to be a big challenge. Who would be liable for accidents caused by the wrong communication between two connected cars? Will it still be the manufacturer or the network provider who did not ensure sufficient quality of the communication? Or will it be the information provider who may have sent wrong information about the road conditions?

Policy makers need to address these kinds of open questions before the connected cars really take off.

The biggest threats are also an insufficient **VEHICLE CYBERSECURITY AND PRIVACY PROTECTION**.

More than 50 percent of new-car buyers are concerned about data privacy and the possibility of hacking when it comes to the car connectivity. When we think about the **tragic events in Nice and Berlin**, let us imagine that there would be no driver in those trucks and that they could only be hacked. Therefore, **we cannot underestimate the importance of the automotive computer security and we need to invest heavily in it and share the best practices.**

Once the cars of the future are connected to the Internet and communicate with each other intensively, the advancements in **the cyber security** will be tested to their limits. **Therefore, we must always keep in mind the importance of the security of our networks and software solutions.**

Connected cars can collect and transmit massive volumes of information about the habits, preferences and behaviours of drivers. Therefore, **debate on data storage, ownership, data privacy and appropriate use** is evolving in parallel with the new technologies.

The responsibility of the policy maker is

- to protect the privacy of citizens,
- to protect the safety and security of countries
- and to protect the trade secrets of businesses in the virtual world.

Yet companies of all sizes and in all sectors and citizens are increasingly **dependent on safe and free data flows** across borders. **European rules should not be barriers in the global market.**

Therefore I fully support a free flow of data regulation that is based on the general principle, that no matter where data are stored, but rather how data are stored.

Unless we are able to create a system based on trust and security in the digital environment, then it will be very hard for us to convince the citizens to change their habits and move their activities to the virtual world.

The big challenge for the automotive industry in the future is also **NEW SKILLS REQUIREMENTS.**

Computerization and modern production **have created new types of factory jobs with higher salaries but also higher requirements for labour skills.** Production of vehicles and parts will be affected by using new materials, SW solutions and increased use of robots. The workforce will need to be able to work with these technologies.

We need to make sure that we're building the knowledge and skills today for the jobs of tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even given the challenges, **I want to see automated vehicles produced in Europe and driving on our roads.** Therefore, I find important to address three important areas:

- Infrastructure,
- Legal Framework and
- Connected Industry Clusters.

The first important precondition of connected and autonomous vehicles is the **WORLD-CLASS 5G NETWORK WITH CONTINENT-WIDE COVERAGE.**

For the safety of the connected cars, the latency of the mobile network is the crucial point. Therefore, **we need to speed up the process of the 5G implementation. Without higher, steady Internet speeds the connected cars simply won't be able to function in Europe.**

Putting autonomous vehicles on the road is not just a matter of fine-tuning the technology and network coverage.

We need **to start preparing a COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL FRAMEWORK** that will enable the connected and automated cars to flourish.

The law now assumes that a human being is in the driver's seat. **We do need to update those laws. Countries are** hesitant to modify their laws to allow autonomous vehicles onto the roads. **This hesitation slows the whole industry down. The legal approach needs to be flexible to deal with any new legal challenges that may arise.**

At the same time, we need to create space for innovation and growth in the area of artificial intelligence and new business models based on data.

The last area is **CONNECTED INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**. In Slovakia we realize, that close cooperation among all relevant stakeholders - from automotive and transport industry, government, telco sector, cyber security, research and education - **plays the crucial role for the private sector to embrace the opportunities of the smart industry era.**

Countries and selected cities must transform into **living labs for new smart transport models**. The companies need to have an access to special zones with specific rules where they can test their solutions in safe and real-life scenarios. **Slovakia is ready to join and is already designing its pilot projects with international cooperation** – a virtual testing highway that will be probably set up within Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Germany.

The automotive industry is a very important economic sector. Therefore, we need **to make the automotive industry an integral part of the digital ecosystem and to let the innovations flourish**. But we cannot act alone. We have to start cooperating and sharing best practices for common digital future.

Israel stands right at the forefront of the technological development. We believe that we can learn from your journey how to get to the top. **Tomorrow, I am about to sign a Joint Declaration of Intent on the Co-operation for Promoting Digitization in the presence of the Minister for Social Equality, Gila Gamliel** with the aim to start a cooperation in the ICT innovation and digital economy. It is a great honour to be a partner of this country and Israel's government - leaders of the change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We live in an exciting time when ordinary objects are slowly getting superhuman features. We may soon possess a self-flying car and super smart personal assistants from sci-fi films. But at the same time, **we are becoming more vulnerable.**

Being disconnected will be a luxury because we will live our lives in the interconnected ecosystems. Our privacy and safety will face all sorts of threats online. Thus, it must be our priority **to protect us with the most sophisticated technology that we can think of.**

We have an obligation to protect our citizens, our countries and our nations.

The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

Thank you.