

**Virtualna otvoritev Mednarodnega raziskovalnega centra za umetno inteligenco
pod okriljem UNESCO (IRCAI) 29. – 30.3.2021**

**Govor ministrice za izobraževanje, znanost in šport – prof. dr. Simone Kustec
ponedeljek, 29.3.2021, 14:30 – 15:00**

Dear distinguished guest - President of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr Borut Pahor,
Director General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay,
high level representative of the European Commission,
Distinguished Ambassadors.

Dear Colleague, Minister Koritnik,

Distinguished representatives from UNESCO Member States,

Respectful Director of Jožef Stefan Institut, Dear Researchers and Experts from all over the world,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Lepo pozdravljeni, good, sunny afternoon to all of you from Ljubljana.

It is a great pleasure for me to have the task to **formally introduce the new IRCAI center today.**

Artificial Intelligence is a **very recent technological force of the contemporary history**, if we ignore the science-fiction movies of the last half of the Century, of course. **What was science-fiction just a few years ago, is in common use by many of us around the world of every-day life today.**

Societies, companies, research communities, as well as governments across the world believe that AI will **have a high, for sure significant impact on their business, industries, infrastructures, as well as better well-being, also environmental protection potentials in the next five years.**

The use of **AI has as well a very ambitious potential** to help activating measures of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals strategy by 2030.

Speaking about my country - **Slovenia is proud to have assumed a leadership position in connecting AI with the wider and complex world around us.**

In this regard we are as well especially proud to have established IRCAI as a Network of experts and knowledge hotspots **not just in Europe but wider across the world.** Thus, we believe that IRCAI could serve as an **important policy tool in future work of UNESCO, OECD, the Council of Europe, EU.**

In doing so The IRCAI Centers programme boasts with 4 pillars; 1) Science, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Validation and 4) Funding, with

4 Scientific Programme Comities covering AI and: 1) Healthcare, 2) Education, 3) Assistive Technologies, 4) Climate and Circular Economy,

and expanding through at least 10 large scale projects, more than 20 national focal points, and an impressive globally recognized scientific editorial board.

Last, but not least, for me personally even the most important among all is also not to forget about our human kind responsibility task of **addressing ethical challenges** that AI is bringing to the world, continents, countries, societies.

This two-day launch is delivering on the promises and the potential given to us by research and science in the field of AI and Sustainable Development in an international multi-stakeholder setting across the world.

We are grateful that we may welcome more than 50 countries in the world, 1000 online participants from many international organizations as well as experts and researchers from the global scientific community. Of course, I am **extremely happy** to see so many researchers also from Slovenia.

It is **our mission right now to collaborate, to unite all our forces to address the challenges of the existing times,** and to take everything of the best that AI and its sciences can offer us for a future better humankind and growth.

I wish us all a very good work done, all the best and as much health as possible

IRCAI talking points

- It's a great pleasure for me to have the task to formally introduce the new IRCAI center, with its exceptional online launch due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Artificial Intelligence is a technological force rarely seen in history.
- AI has advanced so rapidly in the last five years.
- The world is lagging behind on UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- However, it seems like that the use of AI could increasingly help measure these massive goals as more and more data on each Challenge is becoming available to the scientific community.
- Slovenia is proud to have assumed a leadership position in the response to this discrepancy by connecting AI and SDGs via IRCAI.
- Slovenia wishes to contribute to the SDGs by making the world's largest sustainable solutions platform even more effective and impactful.
- Slovenia is proud to drive its collective ability to transform its economy and society to put it on a more sustainable path.
- Ethical questions across the globe are being taken into consideration as AI rapidly transforms various spheres of human agency.
- Slovenia is equally proud to have established IRCAI as a focal point among different stakeholders and as a Network of experts and knowledge hotspots not just in Europe but across the world.
- We must be at the forefront of coordinating international efforts towards building a coherent AI research system that supports sustainable solutions.
- Via IRCAI and its network of experts Slovenia is proudly involved in policy creation and decision-making bodies such as UNESCO, OECD and the Council of Europe.
- IRCAI programme boasts with 4 pillars; Science, Capacity Building, Validation and Funding, with 4 Scientific Programme Comities covering AI and Healthcare, Education, Assistive Technologies, Climate and Circular Economy and expanding, 10 large scale projects, more than 20 national focal points, and an impressive scientific editorial board globally recognized and growing to a movement.
- This two-day launch is delivering on the promises and the potential given to us by research and science in the field of AI and Sustainable Development in an international multi-stakeholder setting across the world.

- IRCAI can provides an excellent opportunity for dialogue among AI experts, sustainability experts, policymakers, researchers, journalists, executives, and the general public to develop a deeper understanding of the complex field of AI to address the UN Grand Challenges
- Let us work together to create opportunities in these challenging times by making the most of what Artificial Intelligence and its science can offer – join us in Action!
- IRCAI will open its doors to its new Network of Excellence across AI Centres across the Globe where we will welcome you in 2021!