Prof. Wolfgang A. Herrmann
President of the TU München

General Meeting of the ENEN Association, March 4, 2005

It is a pleasure to welcome you all here at the founder campus of the Technische Universität München to host the General meeting of the European Nuclear Education Network (ENEN Association).

Our University has a range of science subjects unrivalled in Europe: natural and engineering science, medicine, life-sciences – our 'four-leafed clover'. The traditions of each separate discipline deserve our respect, but we expect interdisciplinary cooperation in teaching and research, simply because the influence of modern sciences goes far beyond technologies. It shapes our thoughts and influences our cultural conditions.

Many of the discoveries made in our days are shaped by methods used in physics. In particular nuclear science and technology play a important role within German and European research. The Heinz Maier-Leibnitz research reactor (FRM-II), a most powerful neutron source, is the modern successor to the legendary atomic egg from the year 1957, which was the nucleus of the internationally renowned Garching research cluster. The ultra-modern research neutron source is a Central Scientific Institution of the TUM and is used by different disciplines, such as radiochemistry, nuclear medicine, nuclear physics and reactor technologies.

Groups of research scientists – including many from other research facilities – are already constructing the new instruments which, immediately after routine operation commences, will be serviced by our high-performance source. Importantly the Research Neutron Source is open not only to experimenters of the TUM but also to the international community of neutron researchers – so the new generation of international scientists is already in their starting blocks. Our achievement in engineering, science and medicine do not strive to be at the top for their own sake, but to improve the quality of human existence whilst at the same time protecting the environment that nurtures us.

But while doing this, we also want to be attractive for the new generation, which we are equipping with the best scientific and technological competences. This is the only way to develop the future technology, such as nuclear technology.

The scientific ecological and economic evaluation converge to a political topic. Politicians do not develop new technologies but they do create the conditions required by talented researchers. The first German research reactor, the atomic egg, functioned as a kind of start-up for Bavaria as a location for science and industry. Nowadays, on the basis of globalisation, extended nuclear research is one of the key technologies for the European future.

Even if many citizens and organisations most concerned about the clean-energy problem, nuclear technology is an environmental engineering – with a technological advance and an ever-improving nuclear safety it is possible to ensure humans and environment against technical dangers and risks. Hence we have a non-profit corporation, called GRS, at the Technische Universität München, which makes its expert knowledge, methods and techniques available to trade and industry. They can use it in fulfilling their tasks of safeguarding and protecting the environment.

These days, many of the European countries content with difficulties due to globalisation. So nuclear science can be a start-up for Europe too. “Only those who have the key to science, have the key to the economy – and economic success is the key prerequisite to solve social problems”.

The Technische Universität München does accomplish the basic conditions of modern nuclear research. We have just dedicated a new chair position to nuclear technology and safety - a international Master study course in nuclear technology (Ecolè Centrale Paris). And in this spirit I would like to express my hope for further cooperation on high research and teaching level.

Thanks for coming here to join the association at the Technische Universität München! I want a good time and speed for you. Make yourself at home!