



## INTRODUCTION 12TH CESE CONGRESS

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Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Professor Mitter,

This congress of the Comparative Education Society in Europe, intends the evaluation of the impact of technology on science and particularly on education. This is an impressing important set of goals. It seems to me though that you, participants to this congress, are well prepared to make this meeting a full success. The organizers elaborated an excellent introductory document for your discussions with summaries of the communications of the participants. The participants being present here come from nearly all countries of the European community, even from our new member states Spain and Portugal; they also come from a variety of other countries in Europe, from overseas Canada and the U.S. but also from countries such as the P.R. of China, Ghana, Egypt, Bahrein, India, Iran, Malaysia and many others. This wide participation from all over the world sufficiently shows the global importance of the topics to be discussed, topics of utmost importance in this decade.

The evolution in the 18-19th century was characterized by the change from a predominantly agrarian society to an industrial society. The evolution was slow and there was ample time to adapt mentally to the development. The much more rapid evolution now - one may rightfully call it a revolution - is one from an industrial society to a society based on information. Developments for the remaining years of this century will be overwhelming characterized by the problems created in this transformation process towards the electronic information era.

Telecommunications together with the applications of ever more refined solid state electronics will dominate the economic, social and political climate to a large extent. Simultaneously, this development will give rise to hitherto unexpected possibilities for the exchange of information. Information exchange between countries which will decrease the size of the world to what Marshall Mc Luhan already in 1964 called the global village. Exchange of

information between people with a drastic change of transfer media with electronic mail, networks of computers and data bases which will be retrievable from varied places, even from the living room of the home of each of us. Exchange of information also between teachers and students, with a variety of new technological possibilities for better education. The technological impact of this will be extremely important, as with the speed with which new science is generated, students will have to adapt much more quickly than ever before to the changing society. In an era when university graduates will need updates within their scientific discipline even 5 years after graduation, it becomes increasingly important for the university to rethink its mission and its organization. The university should move away from its mission to educate the 18-25 years old, to a more complex pattern in which emphasis will also have to be placed on adult education and permanent updating of scientists and professionals. The university will also have to adapt its educational process and place emphasis more on developments of skills and on the formation of generalists instead of on knowledge and specialisms which will be outdated rapidly.

We are glad that you selected Antwerp as the meeting place for your congress. I am sure that you will be happy with the choice of the meeting place, that the local organisers did not spare efforts to make your stay here both agreeable and productive. When I wish you a scientifically productive stay in this historic city of Antwerp, I also want to express my wish that you take at least some time to visit the touristic attractions of our city, which after all was the center of trade and commerce of XVIth century Europe and which afterwards, in the XVIIth century, when ruined by the results of the religious wars, became again of such an importance with baroque art and painters as Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens.

Good luck with the congress.