



**Welcome speech given by Pascal Goergen,  
Representative of the Brussels-Capital Region to the European Union  
on the occasion of the NEREUS networking evening  
(Brussels, Perm. Rep. of Belgium to the EU, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010)**

Monsieur le Ministre,  
Monsieur le Vice-président,  
Monsieur le Représentant permanent,  
Ladies and gentlemen from Permanent Representations  
Representatives from European institutions,  
Ladies and Gentlemen representing Regional authorities,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to welcome you to the premises of the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU and more precisely in the beautiful salon which is, as you may see, a symbolic place in the history of Belgium. As Representative of the Brussels Capital Region to the EU, I am also very pleased to welcome you all for this NEREUS Evening.

I must say that it is of crucial importance to organize a second networking evening regarding the involvement of Regions in space matters and space applications. As you may know, we had organized a first meeting in November between the NEREUS network and some MEP's. This meeting was a real success. As a result, it was clear to us that organizing a new meeting with the major European decision makers would be a necessity. Space, innovation and research are part of the EU2020 Strategy. Regarding our common involvement in

NEREUS projects I would like to stress here the importance of the fact that Regional Authorities can give a significant contribution to space policy, for instance in the creation of new services for the benefit of citizens. As you know, social, economic and now territorial cohesion is the key objective of the EU. The 2020 Strategy will be the next step and we hope that concrete results will follow.

The territorial potentials were one of the Swedish priorities and will be now followed by concrete development during the Trio Spain, Belgium and Hungary. Today, during the ITRE committee, the Spanish Minister of science and innovation, Ms Garmendia, has explained to the MEP's the three axes on which the Spanish Presidency will focus in the field of R&D : integration, inclusion and commitment. Those three words are essential and connected to assure the best governance in all the regions across Europe. The Spanish Presidency also stressed the importance of innovation, telecommunications and space technologies to bring competitiveness and job creation.

Synergies of policies should lead to synergies of actions. This is also the objective of the WIRE event (the event of innovative regions organized in March in Grenada).where research, innovation and regional policy will be highlighted. You can thus easily understand that for regions like the Brussels Capital Region and the 25 regions involved in Nereus, it is of a major importance to make the link between innovation, space technologies, regional potentials and practical actions.

The first action can begin this evening and we hope that this Nereus networking session between the national, regional and EU actors will bring dynamic meetings, discussions and new projects.

Before giving the floor to Minister Benoît Cerexhe in charge of Research and Innovation in the Brussels Capital Region I would like to thank the General Secretariat of Nereus, the staff of Midi-Pyrenees and Brussels Capital for preparing the event and of course Ambassador Jean De Ruyt who joined us for the event. And finally, thank you for your attendance and I wish you all a successful networking evening.