

As delivered

Opening address by CERN Director General, Professor Rolf Heuer:

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1949, Europe was in ruins. However, in that year a small group of visionary scientists and visionary diplomats combined science and education to create a resonance that would change the way cross-border science is done, and play an important role in transforming the continent. That resonance became CERN, and through the efforts of those people, this laboratory was established on the 29th of September 1954.

Today, we can only marvel at the vision that drove those people, at their tenacity and determination, and at their remarkable foresight in creating a formula that would not only stand the test of time, but that would act as a blueprint for long-term, international collaboration in science that has not been bettered to this day. Because today, CERN is a world leader, a magnet for some of the best minds in the world and a hotbed of science and innovation.

Don't panic, but try to imagine a world without fundamental science...

...it would be a very different place.

Now imagine a world without CERN. Would our knowledge of nature have taken the phenomenal leaps and bounds that led to the experimental unveiling of the Brout-Englert-Higgs mechanism in 2012? Probably not. Would we have the World Wide Web? Maybe, but definitely not in its current form as a free and open standard. Would Western Europe be as peaceful as it is today? It's hard to tell, but what is certain is that CERN pioneered collaboration between formerly warring neighbours, promoted East-West collaboration through the cold war, and today hosts scientists of over 100 nationalities. Fantastic examples. Facts like these undoubtedly contribute to peace and understanding among peoples and nations, and are something of which we can all feel justly proud. I think we can feel very proud.

Yet, while in Western Europe, we have enjoyed almost seven decades of peace and prosperity, much of the world is still torn by conflict and division. Open any newspaper, any day, any time, and you will find tales of human suffering. Much of it of our own making. Much of it avoidable. In today's world, places like CERN are islands, islands of stability where people from all nations and cultures can come together and show the greatness we are capable of if we celebrate our common humanity, rather than focus on what makes us different. I think places like CERN need to be nurtured, and new ones established. Let me briefly mention SESAME, the fledgling laboratory in Jordan that brings together the peoples of its region following the CERN model. Its pioneers dream of a region that follows a similar trajectory to that of Western Europe from the 40s to the present day. It will take quite some time, but we must never lose sight of such dreams.

If CERN owes its origins to a handful of visionaries, it owes its continuing success to the sustained support of its Member States, represented here by those beside me, and to the people from around the world who carry out their research here. I would like to thank all of you for your unbroken support, and for sustaining the vision and spirit of CERN's founding fathers that has allowed people to rise above their differences and create something special. And I think CERN is something special. *Je tiens également à remercier notre région hôte, ici à la frontière franco-suisse, pour son accueil chaleureux, propice à notre travail. Sans cet appui soutenu, les réussites du CERN n'auraient pas été possibles et le brillant avenir de découverte et d'innovation qui se trouve devant nous, ne serait pas plus que de la science-fiction.*

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honour to welcome you here today to celebrate CERN's 60th anniversary.

Closing Statement by President of the CERN Council, Professor Agnieszka Zalewska:

Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a memorable day for particle physics, especially after so many kind words from so many eminent people.

We are celebrating 60 years of CERN, this unique institution, founded to bring European nations together through science after the horrors of the Second World War. Thanks to a handful of visionaries, backed by Governments that chose to build peace on the foundations of science, CERN was created. As we celebrate 60 years of Science for Peace, this vision has proved its worth.

Over time, CERN has become the world's leading laboratory in particle physics, always oriented towards, and achieving, excellence. With its unrivalled facilities, excellent staff and experimental groups from more than 70 countries, CERN is a truly global laboratory, blazing a trail for ambitious international initiatives in scientific research to follow.

On the occasion of CERN's 50th anniversary, Professor Enzo Iarocci, then President of the CERN Council, expressed his wish that the LHC would deliver experimental evidence for the Brout-Englert-Higgs mechanism and associated Higgs boson. His wish became reality in 2012, and led to the award of the 2013 Nobel Prize in physics to François Englert and Peter Higgs for their pioneering work in the 1960s. The discovery of the Higgs boson has inspired the interest of millions around the world, showing that science is reclaiming its rightful place in general culture.

Another important development since our 50th anniversary is the European strategy for particle physics, initiated by the CERN Council in 2006 and updated in 2013. This reflects the central role of CERN for European particle physics, and among its key elements is this statement: *"The success of the LHC is proof of the effectiveness of the European organisational model for particle physics, founded on the sustained long-term commitment of the CERN Member States and of the national institutes, laboratories and universities closely collaborating with CERN. Europe should preserve this model in order to keep its leading role, sustaining the success of particle physics and the benefits it brings to the wider society."*

But as someone said to me recently, it is not only CERN as an organization, but CERN as an idea that has such strong appeal. It brings together people from different nationalities and cultures, people who have different ways of doing things – and this brings added value. Over the past 60 years, the idea of CERN has succeeded in bringing countries together through science. I sincerely believe that this idea will continue to inspire people around the world.

Indeed, with the accession of Israel to CERN Membership on the 6th of January 2014, and several other nations on their way to membership or associate membership, the CERN family is still growing strongly.

It now remains only for me to wish that growing family a future rich in new discoveries and innovations to follow the World Wide Web: a magnificent gift from CERN to humanity.

Ministers, Your Excellencies, on behalf of the CERN Council, I thank you for honouring us with your presence here today and for your encouraging words, and through you I thank the Governments of CERN's Member States, without whose sustained support our successes would have not been possible.

Thank you very much.