



Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

it is my pleasure to chair this session on global perspectives for causes of world-wide blindness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. Frank Holz for hosting this conference and especially to Dr. Hendrik Scholl for organizing a most interesting meeting in a phantastic place with outstanding speakers.

The topic is of outmost importance:

- The population of people older than 65 is doubling by 2050.
- The incidence of blindness per year is increasing by 60 % by 2030, given the therapeutic possibilities we have today.

Therefore scientists worldwide and ophthalmologists have to work hard to reduce avoidable blindness.

Concerning global and interdisciplinary activities this conference is embedded within the EurovisionNet, a coordination project, granted by the European Community, and acting under the umbrella of The European Vision Institute which I have the pleasure to chair.

The European Vision Institute is a supranational institution with the goals of reducing fragmentation of European Research area, promote interactions between national institutions, provide training for future leaders in Vision Research, foster standardized clinical trials (www.europeanvisioninstitute.org).



EVI was instrumental in acquiring a large EU project called EVI-Genoret, an integrated project on retinal degeneration supported by 10 Mio. EU, the largest EU-project ever funded in Vision and Ophthalmology, coordinated by Prof. Jose Sahel and myself.

The European Vision Institute has been a success story since its beginning in 2003 and I would like to thank its CEO, Dr. Thomas Wheeler-Schilling for his extremely valuable services to EVI.

EuroVisionNet is an important activity in supporting goals of European Vision Institute, and I would like to thank Dr. Emanuela De Luca and Dr. Philipp Hunger for running the interactive internet portal of EuroVisionNet, the fastest growing web portal in Vision Sciences, a wonderful information platform, updated daily and I recommend to visit the site (www.vision-research.eu).

Today and tomorrow you all are an important part of EuroVisionNet and we invite you to remain a partner in this fast-growing web community.

I wish you a very successful meeting.

(Inaugural address by Prof. E. Zrenner at the Ageing Eye Conference, March 20, 2009, Bonn, Germany)