Dear guests, colleagues, and ladies and gentlemen,

“Today it is an undisputed truth that knowledge is the principal catalyst of socio-economic growth.”

It is a great privilege for me to welcome **Professor Eric Hanushek**, Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University – a person who has been instrumental in proving this assertion using scientific methods.
Through his many analyses conducted with great statistical accuracy, he has demonstrated how high-quality education can contribute to enhancing the prosperity of countries and the welfare of their citizens. In his book co-authored with Ludger Woessmann, entitled *The Knowledge Capital of Nations: Education and the Economics of Growth*, which has earned worldwide renown, he describes in detail the mechanisms of creating knowledge and its impact on economic development.

The production and dissemination of knowledge, in other words, scientific research and education, is the essence of the mission of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Beyond the traditional role of researchers in producing new scientific knowledge, the Academy is committed to an increasingly important task: the enrichment of the personal knowledge of citizens, that is, to the matter of education.

Launched by my predecessor, Professor László Lovász, the “Content Pedagogy Research Programme” has been running under an extended remit for two years now under the name “Research

Programme for Public Education Development". So far, twenty-seven research teams have secured a grant under this scheme. As the new President of the Academy during this period, I was able to double the programme's budget to ensure that all relevant research was provided with adequate funding. The objective of the programme is to expand our national capacities in the field of educational research and strengthen the scientific foundations for the development of public education and evidence-based policymaking.

At the same time, we need to ensure that our views on the importance of scientific evidence are well received by society, despite our citizens' exposure to a constant barrage of unreliable and often pseudoscientific information that is all too easy for them to accept without much thought.

The seeds of critical thinking and scientific curiosity are best sown at an early age. For this reason, we have wished to kindle a keen and durable interest in science among students finishing their secondary-school studies. It was with this aim in mind that I launched the Alumni Programme last year.

The programme is based on the voluntary activity of as many as 1,800 members of our public association and the professional support and funding of the Academy to organise lectures delivered in over 150 schools across the country. Taking advantage of the involvement of these schools in the programme, we also organised a competition for teams of secondary-school students on the issue of climate change. To our pleasant surprise, a total of 700 teams signed up to take part,

and with two rounds of selection over, we are now looking forward to the exciting finals this Saturday at the Academy.

Besides raising an awareness and appreciation of science among our youth, I consider it equally important to collect and systematise the scientific information already available in the field of the science of education in a way that is ready-to-use for policymakers. For this reason, I appreciate the work undertaken by our Presidential Committee on Public Education. The committee regularly offers its expertise to evaluate decisions affecting public education, provides unbiased and independent advice, and facilitates the wide-scale dissemination of scientific results related to education. In connection with today's lecture, it should also be mentioned that drawing on the work of this committee, the Academy has recently issued a statement calling for an urgent and substantial increase in teachers' salaries.

Our public lecture series entitled "The Future of Education in a Knowledge-Rich Society", which has come to its third chapter today, is another example of our commitment to exploring the challenges of, and exciting developments in education. As part of this series, we intend to invite some of the most prominent figures from international academia to join us, experts whose research work has contributed to a better understanding of the fundamental processes of learning and teaching, and of the socio-economic role of education.

Today's lecture will be presented by a scientist who, besides being a prominent and highly-cited researcher and a renowned authority on the economics of education, has also played a key role

in communicating the results he has obtained in his field to decision-makers and stakeholders.

Once again, let me welcome Professor Eric Hanushek and thank him for having accepted our invitation. I'm confident that his talk will help us present our arguments regarding the essential role of scientific research and education in shaping our society and the future of our nation more persuasively.

I would also like to thank Professor Benő Csapó for having initiated this series of lectures, and I look forward with anticipation to the future events in the series.

On that note, may I ask Professor Eric Hanushek from the Hoover Institution of Stanford University to deliver his talk on education in a changing world.

Thank you for your attention. Professor, the floor is yours.