**Address at Saint-Sauveur by Pr Philippe Vervaecke, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lille, Social Sciences and Humanities**

Yesterday, I talked about the importance we give to the theme of this conference. I also told you the great pride we take in welcoming you to our university and to the European metropolis Lille.

Tonight, we are delighted to welcome you to the city which stands at the heart of this great European crossroads. Half-an-hour from Brussels, an hour from Paris, a bit more from London and a couple of hours from Rotterdam, Lille is indeed a metropolis, but one with a focus on people and where life is good. It is also keen on promoting culture, especially since its election as a European Capital of Culture in 2004. Its enthusiasm in this particular area—theatre, dance, exhibitions, cinema—is today renowned across the whole region, which has more museums than any other French region, excluding Paris.

Tomorrow, some of you will visit a brand new museum: the *Louvre Lens*. A few years ago, the world-known *Louvre* museum chose this region for its future expansion, with a desire to shine a new light on its collections and, in the near future, centralize the two hundred and fifty thousand items of its reserve collection.

We meet here in the *Gare St-Sauveur*: a former goods station transformed into a café with various projection, concert and exhibition rooms. It is part of these new places which are both the memory of this region’s history and the symbol of its successive rebirths. A region with a rock-solid enthusiasm and an ability to bounce back and transform the economic hardship it once knew into successful challenges.

For instance, consider the *Plaine Image* in Roubaix: this former industrial wasteland was entirely rehabilitated and now hosts an international technology platform called the *Equipement d’excellence Irdive*, which was imagined and developed by researchers from our University. By using this platform’s cutting edge equipment—sometimes seen nowhere else in Europe—, cognitive psychologists, art historians, philosophers and computer scientists, among others, can work together on research projects in the realm of visual and cultural sciences. Those researchers can meet and work together within the scope of company contracts, but they also have the opportunity to be part of innovative collaborations with the art world.

Tonight, I will not take much more of your time. I thank again all the people who helped organize this conference and wish you all a great evening. Please enjoy the music, played by a professional musician who is also a student at one of our institutes, which focuses on the development of musical education at school.