

# Welcome Speech

## (Korea-Italy Bilateral Symposium on Brain Sciences)

(2017. 5. 23, 화요일)

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of KAIST, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you attending the bilateral symposium between Korea and Italy on Brain Science.

Let me first express my gratitude to your Excellency, the Ambassador of Italy to Korea, H.E. Marco della Seta for his presence. Also Professor Francesco Canganella from the Embassy of Italy, and Professor Jeong Jaeseung for organizing this wonderful symposium.

As we all recognize that Brain research is the last challenge that modern science has to conquer. In particular, along with an enormous public interest in AI, which has been lately triggered by the AlphaGo, recent advances across several fields of human brain have emerged accordingly.

Especially in these days, interdisciplinary attempts regarding the application of brain function have been widely made in many fields.

Researches – not only to identify information processing mechanisms and principles of the human brain, but also to apply the identified mechanisms in development of AI or in deep-learning algorithms – should be a good example.

Convergence of many disciplines, such as Medicine, Cognitive Science, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Psychology, and Computer Science, is necessary to unveil the unexplored brain area.

Unfortunately, I am condensed matter Physicist. But, if I were back to school, I wish to study Brain science.

Recently, many countries including US, EU, and Japan have identified brain science as a national research priority. Those countries have been proactively engaging in the research with enormous size of federal investment. For instance, the U.S. government is providing financial support totaling over \$4.5 billion over a decade to the BRAIN Initiative.

Also, the European Union is funding the Human Brain Project, with the objective of reproducing brain activity inside a computer, committing over \$2 billion over 10 years to further the research.

Needless to say, Brain Science is one of the important research areas in Korea. I have served the President Advisory Council on Sci. & Tech. as the Vice Chairperson who advised the Chairperson, the President of Korea. The Council strongly recommended brain science as one of the national strategic research areas.

Last year the Korean government announced “Neuroscience Development Strategy” to raise national brain science capability to the level of the advanced countries by investing 340 billion KRW (300 million USD) until the year 2023. The strategy aims to create brain maps for specific functional categories.

Our university, KAIST has recognized the importance of brain science and technology and has established Dept. of Bio and Brain Engineering since 2002. Currently, there are 22 full-time faculty members and 11 adjunct and research professors, and 120 undergraduate and 220 graduate students in this department.

We are very pleased to host this bilateral symposium for the first time, because the time is now right to learn together, exchange ideas, and get ready for upcoming challenges. I sincerely hope that this bilateral symposium will result in success and will continue to be held in the future through close cooperation between the two countries.

Well, let me stop my speech here. Once again, I would like to welcome all of you participating in this exciting symposium. In particular, I wish our visitors from Italy a comfortable stay at KAIST in Daejeon.

Thank you very much!

Sung-Chul Shin  
President, KAIST