

Mark Eyskens is optimistic

Tremendous technological progress by 2048

When I travel to the year 2048 in a time machine, I will land on our planet, called Globalistan by that time. The world will have ten billion inhabitants, of which only five percent are Europeans. All big cities in Europe have a distinctly multicultural character.

This will require major adjustments from the 'fearful white man'. Multicultural will change into intercultural. The concept of 'people' will have been replaced by 'population'. There will be a high degree of prosperity in 2048. Technological progress will be astounding. There will be revolutionary inventions, especially in the field of energy and then above all for nuclear energy, which will play a major role due to the exhaustion of oil and natural gas reserves. Therefore, it would not be right to close down nuclear energy plants right now. Quite the contrary; they should be promoted with a view to nuclear fusion.

Computers will have an unparalleled capacity and, amongst other things, they will form a breakthrough in terms of language diversity. The digital devices of the future will have the size of a piercing and they will be implanted in the teeth of our grandchildren, or fitted to the frame of their glasses. And when they are walking on Tiananmen Square in Beijing,

Mark Eyskens, a member of thirteen successive Belgian governments from 1976 until 1992, who also served as prime minister.



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everybody understands one another, because the computer arranges for simultaneous translation of all languages. I am also quite optimistic about the medical science in 2048; many diseases will be extinct by then. However, to get this far we will first have to overcome our awkward predicament in the next ten to fifteen years. We will have to find ways to finance the ageing of the population, find an answer to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and solve the climate problems. In addition, we need to embark on a dialogue with the Muslim world and work out political solutions. The frequently heard statements 'Holland is filled-up' or 'our own (Flemish) people first' are at cross-purposes with the future. Then again, the multicultural aspect will require the necessary efforts. It is not all that simple to live in harmony with all fellowmen. We will have to deal with this carefully with a view to avoiding eruptions.