

Good afternoon!

For my part, I am very delighted to be able to stand here today and to deliver a positive message on behalf of the student body.

When I was told that I will speak at the closing ceremony, I wanted to try to step away from the Brussels & Bruges bubble for a bit. I wanted to deliver a **decentralized** message, which would be optimistic and hopeful. However, this hope was not really easy to create. A lot of bad things are happening in our world, negative numbers and incidents are crazy. We live in a world that is facing a rising populism, increasing terrorism and nuclear arms, increasing violations of human rights, democracy deficits, and increasing poverty.

In 2017, at a global level, 5 million and a half children died before their fifth birthday. That means 15,000 children died every day. When I say this, it seems that the world is actually getting worse, but is it? Actually, I believe it is not, because everything I have just mentioned, I mentioned it in a way that it would look dramatic. I **manipulated** with the way I show the data and the information in order to make it look like it's going so bad, I've taken **one** single perspective, and I looked at **one** number **without** seeing the bigger picture, and this is a major problem of our world, what I have said seemed dramatic enough to be believed, and I would say that many people here were shocked because of what I've just said. While in fact, it is totally the opposite, most of these numbers are improving year by year based on official UN statistics and other organisations and think tanks research.

I am going to show you an example, according to official numbers, when we think of almost 6 million children dying every year before their fifth birthday, it **just** seems to be a very large number to accept. However, this number was around 13 million children dying in the year 1990. Child mortality under 5 years then continued to decline decade and decade, but **only** because we've looked at one single number, we thought that it was so bad, while actually it's much better, we did not notice the improvements that the world has made, that the 3rd world countries have also made. In 1950, 75% of the world were still living in extreme poverty. But **today**, those living in extreme poverty are now less than 10%.

The **gender gap** in primary and secondary schools is nearly closed, and currently, more women hold government seats than **ever** before, and the number is improving year by year. People might be surprised by the fact the non-western countries, or developing countries, or poor countries have female ministers, ambassadors, and hold government seats. I, personally was approached regarding this. Yet, this is part of the problem, the fact that we do not seek to really get to know the bigger picture **in places that are out of reach**, we do not know the reality of those countries, and even worse, we get all these negative headlines, every day, to **prevent** us even **further** from seeing the positive things that are happening in our world and in these countries.

The media is a **major** player in this, we see a headline, or **one** number, and we completely drift to analyze the situation based on this **ONE** number. **MANY** of us, including **me**, fail to compare with other numbers, or other periods, to see the difference, whether positive or negative, and in most cases, it will be positive, because we have developed and improved. It is important for us, no matter what nationality we're holding, or where we come from, to step away from our concentrated zone and to really seek to understand, grace and criticize the **reality** of others. Of course, there are many aspects that the world **together** has to work on, but this shall not prevent us from looking at the

bigger picture and gracing the improvements which have been made, improvements that have been made by **both** developed and developing countries, by **both** rich and poor countries.

The College has helped us in this, with over 50 nationalities, we've come together, and we've learnt a lot about each other in such a short period of time, we've got to know details that would have not been possible without our **presence** here. And despite all the negative sides to our world and our countries, there are things that are bad, but in most cases, these things are **better** than they used to be. We shall not **extensively** count on the current systems that we have. Instead, we shall count on us, on our generation and our vision to the future which we want to shape, a future that does not only evolve around seeing the bad picture, but more about gracing the improvements that we have made. Lastly, we shall count and **believe** in the great Manuel Marin promotion! A Promotion that arrived here as individuals, but **today**, we truly leave as a big family! thank you!