Speech
for the signing ceremony at the Rome Call Global University Summit.
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Catholic University of Croatia
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Your Excellency Mons. Paglia, dear Rectors and Presidents, dear colleagues and friends,

It is my honour and privilege to be a part of this important initiative, and I am glad to see so many of you that have joined it. Artificial intelligence has recently developed exponentially, and it will undoubtedly enter the pores of everyday life. Although it is characterised by various degrees of autonomy and more efficient than humans in some tasks, we should strive towards preserving meaningful human control over it because the role of technology is not to steer us and our lives but to facilitate our lives, leading us towards greater social good. Therefore, the Rome call for AI ethics is a proper answer to the fast development by keeping up with AI development and not lagging behind. First of all, as a Catholic priest, I am glad that the Church has continued to timely cherish ethical considerations and moral values in this new and emerging technology such as AI. I am grateful to Mons. VINCENZO PAGLIA, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life and Renaissance Foundation, for starting this noble and important initiative.

Let me introduce briefly the Catholic University of Croatia. It is one of the youngest universities in Croatia and it is trying to fill the gap in the Croatian society through the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dialogue between different scientific areas and disciplines. One of its priorities is building a bridge between the STEM field and humanities by cherishing the ethical aspects of innovation and development and trying to steer it towards responsible research & innovation, and social good. We are trying to keep up with the ethical analysis and reflection on technological progress, particularly with the development of AI. Although, to be honest, the interdisciplinarity in the IT sector in Croatia is at an infant stage and thinking outside the disciplinary box about ethical and societal issues is still perceived as unnecessary and, I would say, unwanted. However, we are not discouraged by this, and we perceive it as our mission in the Croatian society and we are trying to change this perspective and collective awareness.

The University currently has many researchers studying AI from different perspectives. The key role is played by the newly established research unit Digital healthcare ethics laboratory (Digit-HeaL) and its research group with their primary focus on applied AI in healthcare. We had the chance to organise two international conferences, one about Digital health: ethical, legal, and social perspective for a sustainable future & International Conference on Privacy-friendly and Trustworthy Technology for Society. The Digit-HeaL research group have also extensively published about AI ethics in journals such as the International Journal of Medical Informatics and Science and Engineering Ethics and presented the results of their research at various conferences across Europe. One of its current priorities is developing an IT branch and starting a new study programme focused on software engineering, which will try to integrate AI ethics principles and shape new engineers to incorporate the principles of AI ethics into designing the algorithmic solutions.

The Catholic University of Croatia's main reason for joining the Rome Call for AI Ethics is being a part of the global community and driving force to shape AI's development, placing the human person in the centre. The University will try to integrate its principles into the research & teaching activities by spreading the word about importance of AI Ethics for the future of humanity. As the higher education institution founded by the Church, besides the Academia, we aim to engage in the pores of social life and try to contribute to improvement of our everyday life. This initiative's global and international aspects will help the University

to disseminate the principles of Rome's Call for AI Ethics into Croatian society. This initiative will help us cherish and nourish one of its main pillars, the social embeddedness in the Croatian community.

The Catholic University of Croatia appreciates this opportunity to join an important initiative that perfectly corresponds to its mission and vision. We are in a position to shape our future by keeping a human person in the centre of our research and teaching, and Rome's Call for AI Ethics will help us preserve this path even more.