

## **Welcome Address**

on the occasion of the Scientific Symposium

### **Science and Research in Europe: past, present and future – 15 Years of Lisbon Agenda**

in the context of the ALLEA General Assembly 2015

23 April 2015 | Academy of Sciences of Lisbon - **10:10h**

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Dear Secretary of State Parreira,

Dear President Aires-Barros,

Dear ALLEA delegates,

esteemed faculty of today's workshop,

In the name of the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities – ALLEA – I warmly welcome you to this year's General Assembly. We are most grateful to our host, the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, and especially to the previous speaker and President of this Academy, Professor Aires-Barros, as well as to Professor Salomé Pais, its General Secretary. And before mentioning anything else, I would like to thank all the staff at this Academy who helped in preparing and organising today's event at this spectacular venue.

At the outset, I would like to say a few words about what ALLEA stands for:

ALLEA in 2015 brings together almost sixty Academies from over forty countries. These figures clearly underscore two important aspects of ALLEA's membership structure:

- 1) it goes beyond the political understanding of Europe as the European Union and instead follows the geographic rationale of the

Council of Europe. Member academies are thus based in EU and in non-EU countries and hence make us especially suited for science diplomacy in a growing EU.

- 2) it reflects that academy systems are historically grown and differ remarkably from one country to the other. ALLEA's membership is therefore not limited to one National Academy per country but includes national umbrella organisations of academies or, in some cases, up to four academies from one country.

I am especially pleased to note that only within the last two years ALLEA has grown by 5 new full members and one new associate member.

And allow me to reiterate one further aspect which is crucial for ALLEA membership: our academies cover all scientific disciplines - the natural and life sciences as well as social sciences, humanities and arts. We thus follow an inclusive – interdisciplinary – approach in the spirit of Leibniz and with an understanding of “science” in the meaning of the Latin word *scientia* which encompasses all sorts of knowledge and also finds its expression in the German term *Wissenschaft*.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today's topic is a very broad topic indeed: “Science and Research in Europe: past, present and future”. However, together with our colleagues here in Lisbon, we found that it is the right time and the right place to reflect on the “state of affairs” for doing science and research in Europe – 15 years after the Lisbon agenda was formulated, thus the subtitle of our symposium. We know that many aspects of the Lisbon Agenda have not yet been realized and thus remain present in the current Europe 2020 strategy. So today, let's take stock of what has been achieved, what remains unfinished, and what is

needed now in order to truly achieve a knowledge-based economy and society in Europe.

For ALLEA, today's topic is of highest relevance in at least two ways. Our academies and its fellows – as part of the scientific community/-ies of Europe – are dependent on the conditions for science and research in Europe. Hence, we are, to put it in economic terms, part of the demand side of the “scientific market”. On the other hand, we are providers of advice and recommendations regarding these very conditions that can benefit or hinder our work and activities. Thus we are also part of the supply side.

What we as ALLEA in this regard try to help with and provide is set out in our mission:

- to secure conditions that respect autonomy for scientists and researchers, and for scientific institutions,
- to foster excellence and high ethical standards in the conduct of research, as well as multidisciplinary approaches in all scientific endeavours,
- to provide impartial scientific advice to decision-makers and stakeholders in the science policy arena,
- to help securing the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the European cultural heritage,

and finally:

- to contribute to the improvement of the framework conditions under which science and scholarship can flourish in Europe and beyond.

This latter objective will be in the focus of today's discussions: under which conditions is research being done in Europe?

And a second question could be: How can ALLEA and the European Academies contribute to the discourse on these framework conditions? To this end and as a stimulus for today's and further discussions, with the help of today's speakers we have prepared a joint declaration of the European Academies which we will present later today when closing the symposium. You can see the document here on the projection behind me. The context of our declaration can of course be found in its title: - "15 Years of Lisbon Agenda".

It is obvious that the Lisbon Agenda and its successor the Europe 2020 strategy's efforts towards creating a European Research Area have, to an extent, been successful. And yet, we have not yet fully managed to bring all science and research systems within Europe up to a level which enables them to actively take part in the European funding schemes and increase their competitiveness. A lot of inequalities prevail. And there is no doubt we must prevent this inequality in structures and in resources from having an impact on our young people, students, post-docs - our young researchers. And the critical part is to reach this goal without violating the highest possible standards in doing research.

And hence, underlying the several aspects addressed in the declaration – which have all been part of the Lisbon Agenda – is the core question: How far did we get with the objective to transform the EU into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world", with a comprehensive set of measures and programmes including the European Research Area (ERA)?

Today we will hear contributions and statements from manifold viewpoints that bring together academia, research and policy, including

perspectives from the European Research Council, Science Europe, Academia Europaea, LERU, and early career scientists. The contributions will generally comprise the European scope and in some cases focus on the national experiences in Portugal as host country of this year's General Assembly and as a country that, as the statistics show, on the one hand has achieved quite some progress in terms of innovation so far while on the other hand big challenges for the science and research sector remain.

A few days ago, another Roadmap on the European Research Area has been published (*by the European Research Area and Innovation Committee – ERAC*) which lists a set of priorities that still need to be further addressed and implemented, such as an open labour market for European researchers, more effective national research systems among others.

In this context I would like to point to three aspects that in my view are central to our discussion today.

- 1) One aspect is: would it be advisable and helpful if the substantial structural funds which we have in Europe were more open to science and research infrastructures as well, in order to help those countries that strive hard to create highly competitive science systems prosper?
- 2) A second question is: What can we do better in order to secure a prosperous future for our young people, our young researchers? Is

the open European labour market the solution or one solution among others?

- 3) Number three: how do we approach President Juncker's plan to create the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), which would mean a substantial cut to the funds agreed for the Horizon 2020 Programme?

ALLEA and many others have written letters to President Juncker and the Commission with the request to re-consider the proposal and to leave the funds for Horizon 2020 untouched.

The issue here is not that we are not aware of the need for a programme with the overall function and aims that the EFSI strives for. Rather, the problem is how we can better integrate science-based ideas into the EFSI program itself, ensure that the funds used in the EFSI are channeled back to the science sector and avoid cutting the badly needed research money.

So one of the proposals we made towards President Juncker was that as soon as the major programme topics for EFSI are known, we scientists should take a look at the plans and give advice as to what extent research can and should help. This would at least help prevent the money from being spent without taking into consideration the needs of and for the science and research sector in Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very thankful to our speakers for their willingness to take part in today's event and I look forward to hearing their contributions to our symposium.

I would now like to introduce Professor Leonor Parreira, Secretary of State for Science in Portugal, to whom we are very grateful for accepting our invitation to speak to us today.

To name but a few of her positions and responsibilities, before becoming part of the Portuguese government Professor Parreira was investigator and full Professor of Histology and Developmental Biology at different institutes and universities. She is a specialist in Clinical Hematology and author of many scientific publications in national and international journals.

Professor Parreira was Pro-Rector of the University of Lisbon and a member of numerous Pedagogical and Scientific Councils. She was President of the Medical Sciences Society of Lisbon and she is corresponding member of the Portuguese Academy for Medical Sciences.

I welcome all of you again to our General Assembly and to our Scientific Symposium, and now we are certainly all anxious to hear Professor Parreira, to whom I now turn over the floor.

Thank you very much.