

Welcome Address | ALLEA Symposium “Management of Large Data Corpora”

29 April 2013 | BBAW Leibniz-Saal | 17:00

Dear Minister Wanka,

Dear Dr Stancic,

Dear Dr Husung,

Dear Delegates of the ALLEA member academies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted that so many have followed our invitation to the ALLEA symposium “management of large data corpora” in the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities today.

For those of you who have found their way to this event due to their interest in the topic of the symposium, and who are not familiar with the nature and role of academies of sciences and humanities or with the landscape of academies in Europe, I would like to devote a few words on the European federation of Academies, *ALLEA – All European Academies*, not least because this symposium is part of our annual meeting, the General Assembly.

ALLEA is for me a fascinating and unique institution, especially for the following two reasons:

- 1) It comprises 52 academies from 40 countries. These figures demonstrate the regional inclusiveness of ALLEA, embracing not only the academies in the EU member states but also in neighbouring and partner countries. Hence, we do not follow a political logic but the geographic and cultural rationale of the Council of Europe, understanding Europe in its most inclusive sense.
- 2) It comprises academies that cover all scientific disciplines: The natural and life sciences as well as social sciences, humanities and arts. This demonstrates the disciplinary inclusiveness of ALLEA, following the spirit of the original Latin

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word *scientia* which encompasses all sorts of knowledge and today still finds its expression in the German term *Wissenschaft*.

I feel there is hardly a more appropriate venue to allude to the inclusiveness of scientific disciplines than this very Academy which was founded as an academy which later became famous as *Prussian Academy of Sciences* in 1700 by its first President Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a genius and polymath who pioneered the overcoming of disciplinary frontiers and gave birth to one of the first truly interdisciplinary academies in Europe.

Today, the academies – with their multidisciplinary scope and on the basis of their autonomous and independent nature – have a strong responsibility for accompanying political and societal developments. They need to provide their scientifically based advice towards society and politics concerning the great technological and societal changes ahead but they also have to give their advice towards building the European Research Area and a needed European education area.

In this regard, since its foundation in 1994, ALLEA has been serving as a platform for the European academies to jointly address these challenges and to bundle the voice of excellent scholars in the member academies' countries.

ALLEA's "policy for science" work addresses the broader framework conditions for science and research in Europe and beyond. ALLEA advice takes the form of analytical reports and studies, memoranda and statements and our positions are elaborated through permanent and issue-focused expert Working Groups. You can take a look at examples of recent ALLEA publications in the break or after the closing of this symposium.

Currently we have 5 such working groups each focusing on highly relevant topics for the development of science and research in Europe: "Intellectual Property Rights", "Science and Ethics", "Science Education", "Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe" and "E Humanities".

It is the latter, our working group on E Humanities, that addresses a rapidly evolving set of challenges and opportunities for science and research resulting

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from the progress that has been and still is made in digitisation of research data and results, including questions of storage, accessibility and long-term preservation of research data, pan-European interoperability and large-scale European data infrastructures, as well as reliable digital archives and repositories. New technologies offer the unique opportunity for Europe's cultural heritage to be safeguarded and made accessible to large sections of society. ALLEA sees it as its duty to actively contribute to this development.

In Germany, there is a high level of awareness that the progress in digitisation creates invaluable opportunities for science and research, not least for the humanities and social sciences. For example, in the Union of German Academies we have developed a comprehensive digitisation concept already many years ago, in order to make the research results of the unique "Academies Programme" - which comprises long-term research projects in the humanities devoted to analysing, preserving and making available our cultural and intellectual heritage – accessible as digital resources via open e-infrastructures.

When I started my term in office as ALLEA President one year ago, the General Assembly included a scientific session on the issue "Open science in the 21st Century". We had the honour of hearing a keynote from the European Commission's Vice President, Neelie Kroes, responsible for the Digital Agenda in Europe. In the aftermath, a fruitful dialogue has evolved between ALLEA and the Directorate for Communications Networks, Content and Technology in the European Commission. (DG CONNECT)

And I am more than pleased that Deputy Director General of DG CONNECT, Dr Zoran Stancic, has followed our invitation to share with us the European Commission's point of view on the issues that we will be discussing later today.

The issue of digitisation, digital preservation and long-term accessibility of data bases is among the top priorities of ALLEA. Today's symposium on "management of large data corpora" will highlight some particularly relevant aspects and I am very grateful to the working group E Humanities for their great contributions to

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making this possible. Later on, its Chair, Dr Sandra Collins, will provide us with an introduction to today's complex and multifaceted topic and subsequently lead us through the evening alongside the promising presentations of experts from various European countries and different institutional backgrounds. A cordial "Thank you" to all of you for your contributions to this symposium!

In order for you to get an example of the great added value that the new technologies and digitisation initiatives can create for research conducted at the academies, selected projects, in which the Berlin Brandenburg Academies takes an active part, have offered to demonstrate what they do by means of digitisation and how they make use of technological progress: The Person Data Repository, the German Text Archive, DARIAH-DE and CLARIN-D.

We would like to invite you to seize this opportunity and have a look at these projects during the coffee break or after the closing of the symposium.

After returning from the European picture to examples of domestic and regional practise, I would like to close my opening remarks with a warm welcome to the German Federal Minister for Education and Research, Professor Johanna Wanka.

I am extremely thankful that she has taken her valuable and very limited time to direct her words to us. Minister Wanka is very acquainted with the academies in Germany, especially with today's venue, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. For many years, as Minister for Science, Research and Culture of the *Bundesland* Brandenburg, she was responsible for the matters of this academy. Hence, I can not only say "welcome" but rather "welcome home".

Thank you for your attention.

Now I would like to give the floor to Minister Wanka.