

**Prof. Jüri Engelbrecht (Estonian Academy of Sciences),  
Immediate Past President of ALLEA (2006-2011)**

**Report on main directions of activities during the tenure 2006-2011  
(with a focus on the period 2009-2011)**

**Speech given at the ALLEA General Assembly, Rome, April 2012**

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues!

In Madrid in 2008, I reported on ALLEA's activities from 2006 to 2008. At that time the President's address was the only overview of the previous period. Now the situation is completely different. The member academies have met more often for discussions, and the Executive Director will provide a detailed overview over activities in the past year as at previous General Assembly meetings. The President and the Vice-President have now more liberty to generalise and draw conclusions.

But so much has happened since 2008 that if speakers are not to lose the thread, they have the difficult task of choosing which topics to focus on, and which to set aside. I shall try to deal with rather general issues: namely on how ALLEA is organised, how ALLEA unites the voice of academies for the benefit of science and the community, and how ALLEA links up with our possible partners; last but not least, I shall touch briefly on general principles for the future.

The past Vice-President and I have set out many of our views in the book "The Sum of the Parts: ALLEA and Academies" published by ALLEA in 2011, of which you should have received a copy. But perhaps you will allow me to summarise some of the more important ideas and achievements of ALLEA over the period 2009-2011.

Let me start with 2009 when we reorganised the Office, which was then ably supported by the staff of the KNAW. You all know that the previous Office was not very active: indeed the previous Executive Director is on record as saying "... it was not a position I felt committed to with heart and soul". As a result of internal pressures (member academies wanting more voice) and external ones (the need for more timely reaction to what was happening in Europe), the Presidency opted for strengthening the personnel and expanding activities. The appointment of a new Executive Director and Secretary injected fresh energy into the organisation, and their work was well supported by the Board. Surely the KNAW funding over this period was essential. On the organisational side a few headlines show the improvement: more effective preparation of meetings, more links to the EC bodies and to academies, an active website with background documents, memos on meetings which have been used for Newsletters, etc. In many cases academies were asked for their opinions in order to formulate joint ALLEA statements. There is no doubt that thanks to the effective work of the ALLEA Office, the flow of information has been immeasurably improved. In this context, some member academies have even said that too much input was being asked for from them. Given the constraints of time, I would like simply to pick up a few important issues from the past few years which also serve as a basis for future work.

For the EC and the wider community, the most important recent documents prepared by ALLEA include:

- the promotion of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2010) drafted by the ALLEA Standing Committee on Science and Ethics together with an ESF Working Group;
- the ALLEA Position Paper on the EC Green Paper (2011) which was the result of intensive discussions with member academies;
- the Statements on IPR by the relevant ALLEA Standing Committee (2011).

The discussions on the Green Paper led to an increased emphasis on the value of the Social Sciences and Humanities; the British Academy subsequently took the lead in collecting opinions and preparing conclusions for the EC. The Vice-President will dwell further on this action in his presentation. Other substantial activities include the evaluation of the research institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, carried out jointly with the ESF, and the Science Education conferences in Stockholm (April, 2010), York (October, 2010) and Helsinki (this year). One should also not forget the activities of our Standing Committees and Working Groups, bodies which have been working well because of the dedicated people involved. Their efforts resulted in several statements and science policy documents as well as interventions in science diplomacy, as for example the activities aimed to engage Palestinian colleagues with the international community. The Report from the Standing Committees will elaborate on some of these achievements.

Let me now turn to more general aspects of ALLEA's life in Europe: links to the European Commission and partners in the community, links to academies, and joint activities of wider relevance. It seems to me that during the last three years contacts with the EC and other European official organisations have been more productive than in my first period as President. Indeed, the invitations to the EU Presidency conferences and other EC discussions have opened many opportunities for the presentation of the views of Academies. Furthermore on occasions the interests of Academies were represented not only by the President or the Vice-President but also by the Executive Director. Together with its other activities, ALLEA's presence at such meetings has contributed materially to the growing visibility of ALLEA and in general of academies in Europe.

The proposition advanced in Madrid that academies should henceforth meet more often than at the biannual General Assemblies has proved successful not only because it was supported by the academies, but also because of the desirability of more frequent discussions of issues important for research policy in Europe, and of timely responses to the community's need for the opinions of academies. Consequently we now meet in plenaries such as this on an annual basis for debates and discussions on European science policy and indeed on ALLEA policy. The Presidency and the Office have made every effort to meet the ambitions of the member academies and this has led to an almost exponential growth in activity. It is now for the academies to determine how to balance their wishes with the funding and staffing available.

The conferences organised by academies locally or regionally, whether on science policy issues or to mark anniversaries, all contributed to strengthening the academic community and the positions adopted by ALLEA. The concept of "lead academies" in particular has proved to be successful. In practice, it means that one member academy takes the lead in an action which needs concerted efforts. While the present staffing and funding do not enable the ALLEA Office to support many activities, the lead academy can take advantage of all the ALLEA networks and links. Thus the range of activities has been extended: for example, the Working Group on Science Education is supported by Academie des Sciences, an Interest

Group on SSH came into existence due to an initiative of British Academy, discussions are going on with Leopoldina on an Interest Group Science and Human Rights.

Among the values that ALLEA actively promotes is the independence of academies. When this is under threat, particularly from political forces (as has happened in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Turkey, and Montenegro), ALLEA reacts in support of its member academies also by directly approaching the political authorities. We are not a political organisation, but at times of difficulty we can at least lend support to academies in difficulty in the name of all European Academies and remind politicians on values of academies and independent opinions. It may well be that we should formulate a short statement on the values of independence, excellence, and autonomy of academies, for we never know when our colleagues may not need it.

The academic community is multifaceted and its diversity needs to be understood. That is why partnerships are important to us; ALLEA has always stressed its wish to understand its partners, for that is in the backbone of academic dignity. As a consequence we tried to establish better links with those organisations with which we share approaches or have an overlapping or similar membership. There is a danger that there are too many academic organisations in Europe competing for members and spheres of influence when in fact what they should be doing is collaborating and complementing each other. Just a few words on this issue. First, about the European Science Foundation (ESF). As you all know, a number of ESF member organisations which either fund or perform research have launched a new organisation, ScienceEurope, membership of which is denied to academies which do not perform directly research. Academies participated actively in discussions within the ESF and defended certain values of the ESF despite the likelihood that they would be abandoned, in particular in relation to the networking activities of the ESF for bringing researchers together. We managed to ensure the continuity on joint activities – for example, on research integrity – in discussions with the new organisation, but many academies simply left the ESF.

Second, a word about EASAC. My understanding is that academies should work hand in hand and with full understanding of the activities of their organisations. ALLEA and EASAC have distinctive features which show that they are carrying out largely complementary activities: ALLEA operates primarily in the fields of “policies for science” and “science in society”; EASAC in specific domains of “science for policy” (biomedical research/health, energy, and environment). Without any doubt, all these fields are important. In 2011 we organised a special meeting of ALLEA, EASAC and Academia Europaea, at which we agreed to issue a succinct joint Statement clarifying the activities and aims of each of these three institutions. Such a Statement should give the whole community – EC, academies, and the academic community – a clear understanding of the nature, activities and scope of the leading inter-academy institutions in Europe. Although many academies have very clearly stated that cooperation and mutual understanding between these institutions is needed, there is to date neither a joint Statement nor a regular flow of information between these potential partners. The efforts of the past Presidency in this direction did not meet with success. My feeling is that this might be more a personal problem rather than one of principles. At the same time it is true that there are also other potential partnerships, be it with ICSU or IAP, with LERU or WAAS, where there are prospects of collaboration in need of further development.

Let me finish with some general points. In the last few years ALLEA has spent a great deal of time looking ahead and we have had many debates about future strategy. There is no need to remind you the history of meetings and the crucial issues set out in strategy documents because tomorrow’s Session will be devoted to the discussion of the future. A key issue has

always been, and will remain, understanding the identity of academies. If Ludwig Wittgenstein is right, identity is related to family resemblance. This is in fact what we discuss in Europe as a whole – trying to understand and to use a diffuse network of more or less interconnected activities or ideas. But nowadays we know much more on networks and hidden links rather than take only resemblance as a primary notion. Complexity of society is now much better understood than the times of Ludwig Wittgenstein. While in Europe there are many areas of activity that need consideration – economy, trade, currency, migration etc. , in the academic world the activities most under scrutiny are related to the values of knowledge, shared knowledge and productive knowledge. These are the central ideas of our Strategic documents which were composed on the basis of proposals from academies. The first outline, discussed in Stockholm in 2010, turned to be too exhaustive in the prevailing, and rapidly changing, circumstances and that is why the subsequent scaled-down document was presented in Amsterdam (2011). This document aimed to foresee in a nutshell the future activities of ALLEA with a view to connecting up scientific excellence for the benefit of European society. Such activities have, however, been overshadowed by budgetary constraints and lack of manpower. These are the issues which will need to be taken into account in the future, drawing on the experience we have derived from our debates, combined with the flexibility and the wisdom to find new solutions and opportunities.

ALLEA, which through its members unites the top scientists and scholars of Europe, is a superb blend of large and small academies, of older and younger academies from all across the continent. Our voice is needed in Europe, and has the added value that comes from working and acting together. We must not forget that in addition to scientific values, academies also bear cultural values in society. National academies all have an important role to fulfil in their countries; what ALLEA can contribute is to build the resulting national communities into a global whole. National experiences may feed into the work of the international community; international activities can enhance the reach of the national communities. Every academy is unique and together we can blend our values even into the much larger networks of Europe and of the global world.

Finally, from this rostrum I would like to thank all the ALLEA member academies for their support over the last six years – for me these have been the most interesting years in my life. It has been a special challenge to be involved in a much larger community than that composed of researchers in one's particular field of interest or in one's own academy. Thank you, Nicholas and Rüdiger for the teamwork and friendship, and thank you, all my friends and colleagues. I would also like to thank the Acting Presidency, Stefan Luby and Marie-Therese Flanagan for the work they were willing to do in the period leading up to the General Assembly.

My own research will be moving forward, and as you will hear from Prof Luciano Pietronero, complexity issues are extremely interesting as in science as well as in society.

**Prof. Nicholas Mann (British Academy),  
Immediate Past Vice-President of ALLEA (2006-2011)**

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**Speech given at the ALLEA General Assembly, Rome, April 2012**

Dear colleagues,

ALLEA President Jüri Engelbrecht has already reported on some essential aspects of the immediate past Presidency. He commented on the difficulty of making choices when reflecting on such a range of issues. Without his experience and his breadth of vision - working with him was a constant education - even I must make choices. I have therefore chosen briefly to reflect upon two questions with which I have been particularly involved over the past few years, and each of which is sufficiently representative of the strengths and weaknesses of ALLEA to provide food for thought as the General Assembly contemplates the future.

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The first of these is the project that we named the European Young Academy, born in discussions and in collaboration with the ESF in 2008. It was basically an excellent idea: to develop for the first time at European level an institution for which we were fortunate to have a number of national models: the German Junge Akademie, the Dutch Jonge Akademie, and the Austrian Junge Kurie. Anyone who is remotely aware of the rapid pace of scientific developments around the globe must know that much of the advance is due to the work of a new generation of scholars and scientists who will no doubt be sitting in our seats in ten or twenty years' time, but who are for the moment denied a voice in the affairs of Academies, and, arguably more importantly, in the conception and steering of crucial scientific and development issues on a world-wide scale. By young we meant too young to be admitted to most national academies: established researchers of great promise who had not yet been engulfed by administrative responsibilities; the plan hatched by ALLEA and ESF was to create a European forum for these brilliant young people and to ensure that their voice would be heard in academies, in Brussels, by government and in the press.

The consultative process, as befits an organisation whose members are institutions rather than individuals was exemplary in its breadth, if consequently both a little slow and somewhat inconclusive. Over the following two years there was a series of meetings –the ALLEA Board and the Extraordinary Strategy meeting - of brainstorming workshops involving representatives of the new generation likely to be concerned by our initiative (one by open call in Vienna, and the other by delegation of member Academies in Antalya). There was also [slide3] a process of learning from the experience of others and consultation with our member academies, with other actual or potential partners, together with regular interchange with the existing Young Academies, and exchanges with other projects aimed in a variety of ways at bringing young researchers together. Finally, the project was repeatedly presented by our President to EU Presidency conferences, to the advisory boards of the EU People programme, to ERC meetings and in discussions with the Commissioner and the Directorate General. These presentations invariably met with great interest, and the expectation that National Academies would support such a promising project. Indeed so promising was it that as the result of a presentation at a meeting in Berlin in February 2010, many of its particulars were absorbed into the blueprint for a Global Young Scientists scheme elaborated under the aegis of IAP.

And yet the project foundered. There was a financial element: ALLEA wanted the European Young Academy to be genuinely owned by its members, rather than be exclusively the result of external fund-raising, for which the elements were also in place. At the same time, part of the reason was the genuine conviction of many of our member academies that there was a more urgent initiative: to establish a Young Academy or an equivalent instrument for the support and promotion of young scholars and scientists in their own countries. This is the case for instance of the Flemish Academy of Belgium, the Danish and Swedish Academies and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Meanwhile, the German Young Academy is taking up the European challenge abandoned by ALLEA by moving towards the establishment of a European network of young scientists. We note with interest that the secretariat is at the home academy of the candidate for ALLEA's Presidency, which seems to offer opportunities for contact in the future between Young and what I will for once call Old Academies.

So one might say that this project, even if it did not succeed, acted as a powerful catalyst in provoking a reaction – it would be unwise of a non-scientist to say a chain reaction – which is to the benefit of precisely those brilliant young people many of whom deserve to be sitting in our seats now, and certainly will do in the future

whether we like it or not. We are frequently told that ALLEA should develop a distinctive profile. Here was the chance: to develop a unique and necessary concept, a Young Academy with a truly European dimension. But when asked to support it, the member academies preferred to act along national lines, if they acted at all. This was essentially an opportunity for Academies to show leadership by providing Europe with access to an exceptional group of the leading scholars and scientists, ready and well-equipped to engage with the process of shaping the research and development landscape of the future. The opportunity was missed, but the example may be valuable for the future.

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The second issue upon which I would like to reflect is one which is both intrinsic to ALLEA and at the same time a valuable demonstration of the way in which the organisation can adapt, despite the constraints placed upon it by underfunding and understaffing, to make real progress on behalf of its members in the conduct of European affairs.

I am referring to the concept and associated mechanisms of the 'lead academy', of which JE has already made mention. When I say that it is intrinsic to ALLEA, that is because the example I have in mind – that of the British Academy – reminds us of one of the defining characteristics of ALLEA: that it unites all European Academies and therefore the whole range of scientific and scholarly disciplines. This is of course one of the ways in which ALLEA can readily be distinguished from EASAC, though I believe it would be a grave error to infer from that distinction that ALLEA is only the champion of the Humanities and Social sciences.

Be that as it may, the first occasion on which the concept of lead academy has very successfully been put to the test has indeed involved championing the H&SS in the precise context of the discussions and consultations leading up to the drafting of the future Framework Programme. The SS&H are, after all, the disciplines that address questions such as how innovation can come about, what can be done with it, how knowledge is created, structured, articulated, used and above all communicated. They are also the disciplines that enable us to understand ourselves and our society and to reflect on our place in the world – both in the sense of humans in the natural world and Europeans in the globalising world. And yet it seemed far from evident to a number of colleagues that the voice of the humanities and social sciences was to be heard in the design process for the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation of the European Commission. The Commission's priorities appeared, in

late 2010, to focus on the Grand Challenges that society faces, yet there also seemed a real danger that there would be no HSS-led component in the future programme at all.

For that reason, ALLEA was happy to support the initiative of the British Academy in proposing a meeting, held in Rome in December 2010 and attended by representatives of 16 European academies (though a much larger number expressed interest in absentia), covering a wide range of expertise across the SSH, to discuss the position of these disciplines in the current and future Framework Programmes.

The conclusions of the Rome meeting, which effectively began the work of the ALLEA Interest Group SSH, were enshrined in a statement that served as a first input from the research community represented by Europe's national academies to the process of the development of the Framework Programme. The statement was submitted to the European Commission and triggered a series of strategy meetings which brought together a variety of representatives from funding agencies, ministries and the diverse HSS scholarly communities.

Having submitted in a coordinated fashion substantial comments on the Green Paper, ALLEA convened - with very generous support from the British Academy - a day-long meeting for the Interest Group SSH at the Royal Academies in Brussels on 31 March 2011, at which some 25 Academies and representatives of these various parties exchanged views with several senior representatives of the Directorate Research and Innovation, who attended together with a sizeable number of their staff members. The clear message - that the largest community of researchers in Europe would not accept being marginalised in the process of building the European Research Area - was well-received. At the same time, Commission staff tested out a number of new ideas on international collaboration, research infrastructures, and the role of SSH in relation to Grand Challenges.

The positions of the academies on the future of Humanities and Social Sciences in the future Framework Programme - as articulated and communicated through the ALLEA Interest Group and further developed in exchanges with the other relevant organisations - were subsequently chosen as the launch presentation for the stakeholder workshop on the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation convened under the title "Towards more inclusive, innovative and secure societies" by the DGs Research and Innovation, Information Society and Media and Enterprise and Industry in June 2011, and were also presented to the workshop that these DGs held with member states and associated states.

Numerous exchanges with cabinet and officers led the Commission hierarchies to understand that ALLEA was the channel whereby they could exchange views with the HSS communities from every discipline and every part of Europe. As a result, the Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science requested ALLEA to help organise a public meeting at the British Academy, where she could announce the Commission's new position regarding HSS. This took place in November 2011, and she took the opportunity to underline the importance of the social sciences and humanities, announcing that they would have a central role in Horizon 2020, the new European research funding programme. "In the current context of the deep economic crisis and of constant transformation in our economy and society" she said, "the social sciences and humanities help us to address the most fundamental economic, social, political and cultural issues. ... Let me ... assure you that future funding at the European level will provide significant space for social science and humanities research." The importance of this outcome is of course not simply the money (though that will naturally be welcome); it is rather that the initiatives I have described aimed to redress a grave structural defect in the planning for the distribution of some 80 billion Euros in support of research. It seems that without the interventions of ALLEA and the Academies, Europe was proposing to address what had been identified as Grand societal Challenges without harnessing, or even acknowledging, those whose expertise is precisely the study of culture and society.

Rather more obviously than the European Young Academy, this is an ALLEA success story, owing its impact to the concerted efforts of an Interest Group of Academies, led by a Lead Academy, and underpinned by the expertise and political skills of ALLEA's Director. It shows how the leverage of a single Academy can be significantly increased by ALLEA and its members; it provides an organisational model for other activities and interventions which might be beyond the reach or means of a single Academy, and could certainly not be undertaken by the ALLEA Office alone. But above all it shows for the future how ALLEA and its members together can change the course of European history.