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## WELCOME FROM ALLEA

Professor Caie thanked all those, and in particular the President of the Montenegrin Academy, who were involved in the preparation of this conference for making it so successful.

He brought the best wishes of the Board of ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Science and Humanities, of which the Montenegrin Academy is a member. This conference expertly reflects a core value of ALLEA, namely the essential links between, and co-dependence of, natural science, social science, technology, humanities and society. Such a conference occurs at a critical time for science and society, for example the need to plan for a sustainable future earth, and to promote human welfare throughout the world.

A word about ALLEA. ALLEA comprises 57 Academies of Sciences and Humanities from 40 countries in the Council of Europe region; that means countries outside the EU are members and some countries have more than one academy represented. Our President is Professor Günter Stock and the federation is based at the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. We have an annual General Assembly — this year in Vienna — at which all ALLEA activities are discussed, the working committees report and the President and Board are elected from amongst the ALLEA Members Academies, the Board being responsible for all operative ALLEA activities.

ALLEA membership is based on key criteria, such as interdisciplinary excellence” scientific autonomy, the academy’s role in the national science system, and international collaborations. It aims to promote the exchange of information and experiences between Academies, to offer European science and society advice from its Member Academies, to strive for excellence in science and scholarship, and for high ethical standards in the conduct of research. ALLEA contributes to improving the framework conditions under which science and scholarship can excel, fosters independence from political, commercial and ideological interests, and works towards an understanding of Europe as a cultural and intellectual entity.

ALLEA provides independent, evidence-based advice to European policy and society, and does this partially by means of the newly created European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM). In this project ALLEA has joined forces with EASAC, FEM, Academia Europea, and Euro-CASE. In addition to the High Level Group assembled by the Commission and the Joint Research Centre in Brussels, this Consortium of five Associations has been identified as the most suitable source of independent, scientific advice for EU policy makers. We hope that this will improve the quality of EU policy making by providing timely scientific evidence to the EU, and creating more effective links between individual academies and networks of academies. In addition to requests from the EU for short term and long term advice, ALLEA and its partners in SAM will initiate science advice projects, based on our horizon scanning. Advice, therefore, will be provided top down for policy makers, and bottom up on topics we consider policy makers should be aware of.

ALLEA co-organised meetings in the European Parliament on topics such as demography, societal inequalities and has co-organised the pairing of MEPs with researchers from our member academies.

Since its beginning ALLEA has provided analytical reports and studies, memoranda and statements, articles and essays on relevant scientific matters and reaches a wide range of decision-makers and stakeholders in the science policy arena. These include „Open Access to Scientific Publications”, „On the Status of the Patent System of the European Union”, „Going Digital: Creating Change in the Humanities”, „On the Boundaries of Europe” and „A Survey and Analysis of Basic Social Science and Humanities Research in European Academies”.

At the General Assembly we award the ALLEA Madame de Staël Prize for Cultural Values. Last year it was awarded to Professor Dame Helen Wallace of the British Academy by European Commissioner Carlos Moedas. This year in Vienna the prize was presented by Commissioner Johannes Hahn to the French philosopher Rémi Brague. The topic for this year's symposium at the General Assembly was *The Freedom of Scientific Research in the Face of Political and Societal Demands*.

ALLEA actively engages in the advancement of the European Research Area and in particular Horizon 2020, and has working groups on topics such as Digitisation and Research Infrastructures, Intellectual Property Rights and Open Access, Science and Ethics, Science Education, Social Sciences & Humanities and E-Humanities. The Social Sciences & Humanities working group, for example, has made major progress, thanks to the British Academy, in embedding SSH in future H 2020 calls, evaluating the first years of H 2020, and in planning the future research programmes in a post-H 2020 Europe.

ALLEA is honoured to be part of this important International Conference and wishes all participants well in the coming days,