

body knows that science on its own cannot be either a social project or a destiny.

In order to avoid all these pessimistic scenarios forums for discussions are necessary, forums which will allow the different stakeholders in civil society to use their contributions and activities to place mankind at the heart of society's thoughts and actions. However, time is not on our side since everything is speeding up, as is demonstrated by the financial upheaval which we are currently experiencing. By welcoming you to this auditorium, we would like to bear witness to a simple idea: science has undoubtedly improved mankind's living conditions in every sphere. But we should also like to express the need for ethical scrutiny of science and its applications. Your role therefore is to reassure us and to protect us from all these fears generated by modern day sorcerer's apprentices. Economic and social advisers are here today to listen to your ideas and will be enriched like us by your presence, Madame la Ministre, and by the speech you are going to deliver. I wish you a fruitful day and am always delighted to welcome you all, as we are very devoted to this community. Thank you for your attention.



**JEAN JOUZEL**

Thank you, President Dermagne for welcoming us here to this splendid venue and for hosting this conference. As you know, I am speaking in my capacity as head of M.U.R.S. rather than as a researcher in the field of climate change. I would now like to ask Mr. Jean-Pierre Alix, General Secretary of M.U.R.S. and also the person in charge of Science and Society at the CNRS, to say a few words about the aims of these two days.



**JEAN-PIERRE ALIX**

Thank you, President Dermagne, for welcoming us to this magnificent auditorium. Science has never been more relevant than today. Every country wants researchers, every profession and company swears by

R&D. Every educational system teaches sciences. Every form of media has a section devoted to science and technology. Every army needs technology. Every researcher has dreams for the world of the future. Every government decision refers to science.

If we look at the history of civilizations, science and technology have a varied history. But they have one thing in common, which is to create power, i.e. the ability to achieve a lot in a limited space of time. Science emerged during the Renaissance from fertile, philosophic and scientific minds. Science and later technoscience evolved considerably during the 20th century in the most developed countries of that time. Their realms expanded on a daily basis as emerging countries developed.

What has been new for some decades is the rapid growth of this power. This brings with it certain responsibilities vis-à-vis nature and vis-à-vis society. Science used to promise us goodness, beauty and fairness – the Platonic vision of science. But if this endeavour is poorly controlled, then it can lead to the worst as well as to the best of worlds. We have the power to consume more, but also to exhaust energy resources and to change the planet on a large scale. We have the power to heal people more effectively, but also the power to modify genetic lines permanently. We have the power to know the world, and our society, but whom will all this benefit? As early as 1532, Rabelais had this message for us in *Pantagruel*:

“science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul”. How very topical these words are! Research only ends when the civilizations supporting it die. Research unconsciously supports plans for a different world, a different society, and even a different self. This is really worthy of discussion.

This is why a team, four fifths of whom are volunteers, has been enthusiastically preparing this conference for eighteen months with the support of our minister and ministry. In some respects it is certainly the offshoot of conferences held in Germany approximately a year ago and in Portugal during its presidency of the EU, and many others. We are certain that this conference will have repercussions in the Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain and so on. How can we find definitive answers to all the issues raised in two days? Today we have more than 300 participants from 33 countries in Europe and beyond. Our Ministers from France and Germany, the European Commissioner, who will address us by video link, the President of the CESE - thanks to the support we have received from the European Union, the French Ministry of research, and the CNRS, we are delighted to be reflecting over the course of these two days on the fundamental nature of the role of science in society and on the campaigns which we have to undertake so that research remains desirable and active.

I would like to suggest that we dedicate this conference to three of our French predecessors who enjoyed exercising responsi-

bility and strengthened its role as presidents of M.U.R.S. To Robert Mallet, Chief Education Officer, professor of arts at the Sorbonne and also a poet, who established M.U.R.S. in 1974 in Paris with a major colloquium similar to ours. To Professor Jean Dausset, winner of the Noble prize for medicine, who discovered HLA, and was president from 1982 to 1995, to whom we send our greeting in Majorca in Spain, where he now lives. To Professor Gérard Mégie, the inventor of the atmospheric Lidar, who was involved from the outset in the discussions on the Montreal Protocol, the precursor of the IPCC<sup>1</sup>, and who oriented M.U.R.S. towards the environment, who also passed away prematurely. My hope is that in 20 or 30 years, we can highlight some women scientists in the same way from among those who have had similar responsibilities here in France and in Europe.

Some of us met yesterday evening to think about what we need to do in the future and we agreed to suggest topics for reflection each year throughout the countries of Europe and beyond if possible concerning the relationship between science and society and between society and science. We agreed that it was a good initiative and that each year we would hold a conference on the chosen topic, organized by a group formed during these two days. Like the presidency system, this will be organized on a rotating basis within Europe. The next topic has not yet been chosen and I would therefore like

to invite suggestions. We will discuss this further tomorrow during our roundtable session.

### JEAN JOUZEL

Thank you Jean-Pierre. Madame la Ministre, it really is an honour for us to have you as the opening speaker at our conference "Science in Society: Dialogues and Scientific Responsibility", on themes which I know you consider to be very important.

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change