



ANNETTE SCHAVAN

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Opening
Session

Madame Minister, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to turn to my colleague, Valérie Pécresse, and to the French Presidency of the European Union to congratulate them and to thank them for the progress made in the field of research and innovation in the six months of the French Presidency of the European Union. We have clearly seen that research and innovation are very important for the future and for the development of Europe, and we must initiate new combined projects based on research policy. Through research, we have been able to make progress with our wish to create a Europe with the will to innovate. We have also made great progress in turning the Lisbon strategy into reality. I would like to thank you for the excellent cooperation between our two countries on this matter. We are deeply convinced that partnership and cooperation between France and Germany have a special and very important role to play within the framework of the Union. Once again, we are meeting here in Paris for talks at ministerial level.

It is good that scientific research in Europe is devoting itself to analysing the extent to which science is an integral part of the culture of our European countries. Science

is an integral part of *l'esprit de l'Europe*, the spirit of Europe, as it is generally called. Science is part of our European tradition and culture and it is this role of science in our cultures which creates the dialogue between science and scientific knowledge: we call this the multidisciplinary approach. This involves analyzing the natural sciences, technology, the human and social sciences in their entirety, and in particular at the level of the human sciences. We have often had the impression that the future belongs to other disciplines.

Today, we can clearly see that the human and cultural sciences do not merely play a secondary role in whatever scientific discipline we are interested in, quite the reverse. They are essential in the overall context of science. They are central to the basis and the criteria on which we develop human sciences and every other branch of science. In this dialogue between human, cultural and social sciences on the one hand, and natural sciences on the other hand, there lies a principle that Hans Jonas formulated as follows: "Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life". This is the central element of all interdisciplinary discussion and dialogue – permanence. This dialogue has to be led primarily by the cultural and human sciences. We were talking about energy supplies, Alzheimer's disease, research, and security. Whatever the topic, it is clear today that we have to be extremely persistent in everything that we do.

The longer I am active in politics, the more I am convinced that our European policy depends on this dialogue with science, depends on knowledge and scientific discoveries. We cannot act in a responsible manner if we do not have this serious dialogue with science, incorporating scientific knowledge. The main theme of the Heiligendamm G-8 summit was climate change. This was probably the first time that Heads of State and Government clearly stated that the basis for political strategy was the scientific knowledge contained in the report on climate change. The central element in the dialogue between science and the political sphere is responsibility — acting in such a way that human life remains permanent. This is also what we mean when we say that science is part of a country's intellectual culture.

Our two countries, France and Germany, are trying to explain and communicate the aims of science more successfully to their citizens. We want young people to discover the opportunities and prospects offered by science in society. The "*Fête de la science*" as well as the "*Years of Science*" in Germany are trying to contribute to this objective. What motivates us is the communication of clearly defined criteria and an understanding of science as an integral part of our intellectual culture — and this is why I am delighted that this conference is taking place in Paris today. I hope that it will yield new ideas for our future together in Europe. Once again, I would like to thank the French Presidency

of the European Union and I hope that your conference will be a great success.

JEAN JOUZEL

Thank you very much Madame la Ministre. Thank you for this broad overview, for reminding us that this is a multidisciplinary approach, for recalling the importance of the scientific world for culture and the important role played by human sciences and social sciences. Thank you very much for this European perspective which we will now pursue as Commissioner Potočnik is going to address us. Commissioner Potočnik cannot be present, but we will hear a short video introduction.