

Opening Remarks by Günter Stock

**All European Academies Madame de Staël Prize for Cultural Values**

in the context of the ALLEA General Assembly 2015

23 April 2014 | Academy of Lisbon

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Dear Commissioner Moedas,

Dear President Aires-Barros,

Dear Dame Helen,

Dear delegates of the ALLEA Academies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all here tonight after today's symposium which I hope was thought-provoking and stimulating for all who were in attendance. Today's symposium and tonight's award ceremony could not have been possible without the generosity and efforts of our wonderful host, the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, to whom we give our heartfelt thanks. I am very pleased that tonight we shall celebrate the accomplishments of Professor Dame Helen Wallace, whose lifelong dedication to her subject has resulted in a formidable résumé that remains unparalleled by many of her peers.

Her research, teaching, advising and living in different parts of Europe for many years makes her a truly European scholar.

First, please allow me to make a few remarks concerning the context of tonight's event, the 16<sup>th</sup> ALLEA General Assembly. ALLEA brings together many of Europe's oldest bastions of knowledge, the Academies, whose role in

sustaining Europe's intellectual productivity remains vital, perhaps now more than ever in an age of rapid development in numerous sectors - both positive and negative developments, I would add -, global societal challenges, and increasingly advanced technological possibilities. For centuries, Academies have provided an ideal space to research and reflect, to collect data from many fields and combine them in interdisciplinary ways to fit today's challenges; a space to observe developments and help identify possible paths the future will take; and a space to carefully formulate conclusions and recommendations firmly grounded in scientific evidence and free of ideological, political or commercial interests.

The complexity and diversity of science and within our scientific institutions requires cooperation and integration in order to bring the Academies' work to true fruition, to really drive the work forward and give it impact. Through ALLEA, we have created an entity that reflects this belief in working together while upholding those essential values of Academies which trace back to Plato's own ancient Academy – the independent and pure search for the truth. Thus, through ALLEA we strive for unity in our diversity, which is a maxim that is quite emblematic for Europe as well.

All Academies in Europe - regardless of their size, role in the national research system, structure or funding sources - are subject to the larger European framework conditions that directly and indirectly influence how Academies perform their work. Therefore ALLEA's goal is to help improve these conditions so that our members can continue to pursue their longstanding mission of conducting unbiased, independent research and scholarship that enriches and seeks to advance our society in many ways.

Yet it is important to remember that this research must be transmitted concretely so that we scientists can effectively contribute to this advancement of our society. And one of the ways we can maximise the impact of our research is by focusing on providing evidence-based advice both to the society at large and to those institutions that not only determine the framework conditions under which Academies function, but also decide on policies that impact our civil society, our environment, and our economies. Creating the resources and infrastructure for providing scientific advice to policymakers – and therewith eventually helping the society at large - is therefore a highly relevant, important and necessary task for ALLEA and the Academies in Europe.

To that end, we have to modify, adopt, and follow through on existing guidelines for providing scientific advice, such as the guidelines compiled by my academy several years ago. Building a rapport with policy-makers, setting up working groups of experts from different disciplines, and implementing mechanisms to assure transparency and independence from outside influences are all tasks that require guidelines in order to protect the Academies' independence and stature. We must make sure that our advice is both responsibly produced and effectively transmitted.

However, we – the academies in Europe – have, in our work, a responsibility to remember to consider Europe itself. Europe is not just a geographic region, a political entity or an economic area. It has ancient, core values that must be preserved in order to remain intact. The understanding of Europe as an intellectual and cultural entity must not be weakened through economic crises or political scepticism. Europe has been built on a network of ideas, concepts, and common convictions – values like individualism, pragmatism, pluralism and

diversity. So when trying to advance society via new research, technology, new laws, or new markets, we should not neglect to consider the society's soul – Europe's soul – and its omnipresent yet intangible power to guide our questions, our considerations, and our conclusions.

This is why we have created the All European Academies Madame de Staël Prize for Cultural Values which is awarded to scholars in order to reflect this belief and to honour the contribution of scholarly work towards maintaining, preserving, and developing these European values that remain constantly at risk. Because we are sometimes so busy researching how to practically fix the problems in Europe that we do not always appreciate the deep significance of research on Europe itself for helping our society. To put it simply, we cannot know where to go if we forget who we are. Through the Madame de Staël Prize, ALLEA honours those scholars who have dedicated their extensive work to the European values, the European identity and the idea of European integration - scholarly work that helps to foster this deeper discourse of where Europe can and should go.

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*[Laudatio prepared by Professor Nicholas Mann, CBE, FBA former Vice President of the British Academy and ALLEA; Professor emeritus in Renaissance Studies and former dean of the School of Advanced Study in the University of London]*

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And on this note, I would like to welcome Commissioner Carlos Moedas, to whom I will turn over the floor in just a few moments. Commissioner Moedas is an alumnus of the Instituto Superior Técnico here in Lisbon, where he studied

civil engineering. His success in politics reflects his extensive experience in the fields of investment banking and economics combined with his scientific background. Between 2010 and 2014, Commissioner Moedas served as Senior Economic Advisor of the Portuguese Social Democratic Party, Member of the Portuguese Parliament, and Secretary of State to the Prime Minister of Portugal. Since autumn 2014, he has served as the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation in the new Commission under President Jean-Claude Juncker. We are very honoured that he will be presenting our award to Dame Helen tonight.

So thank you very much for your attendance and a warm welcome to Commissioner Moedas.