



Inspireurope Virtual 2020 Stakeholder Forum 8 June 2020 (09.30 to 17.30 CET)

Opening speech by Ms. Anne-Sophie Barthez; Director General for Higher Education and Employability at the French Ministry of Higher Education (English)

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to open the inaugural forum organized within the framework of the *Inspireurope* project. I regret of course that I cannot play host to you in Paris, at the Collège de France, as planned, but if the health crisis deprives us of the pleasure of meeting in this beautiful building, **I am convinced that its spirit and values will accompany you throughout this day of exchanges.**

Founded in the 16th century in order to house knowledge that had no place else, open to all, unconditionally, **the Collège de France is a living symbol of the hospitality of science.** It is therefore only natural that it has been supporting the PAUSE program since its inception in 2017.

For part of the scientific community, this hospitality has become vital. In several regions of the world, researchers are in fact taking the road of exile to flee war or authoritarian regimes that threaten them, in their freedom of thought, in their freedom to seek, sometimes even in their lives. The situation of the Franco-Iranian anthropologist Fariba Adelkha, as well as that of the Swedish-Iranian researcher Ahmadreza Djalali, is enough to remind us of the cost of exercising academic freedom in countries where the authorities claim a monopoly on truth.

For if researchers are more particularly exposed to persecution and forced into exile, it is because they belong to the world of science, the world of reason, the world of fact. **That they can find refuge in science and a welcoming land in all the countries that defend its values is only a just return of this filiation.**

For the host countries, hosting them is as much a humanitarian duty as a scientific gesture, and on closer inspection, the two are in fact inextricably linked. If by saving these men and women, we save their ideas, the reciprocal is true, for each knowledge and each skill thus preserved can contribute to the reconstruction of their country once peace has returned.

This promise of resilience, backed by science, is now needed by all nations to recover from the pandemic that has dragged the entire planet into a multifaceted crisis. Some countries are tempted to deal with this by turning in on themselves, as a defensive reaction. Yet I am convinced that there is no more deadly response to what we are going through, no more blind denial of the community of destiny that binds humanity together. If the SARS-CoV-2 virus has brutally reminded us of this de facto solidarity, the climate crisis and the migration crisis are bearers of the same morality.

We will not escape this interdependence, nor will we escape the need, also revealed by this unprecedented ordeal, to strengthen the autonomy of our respective countries. **Cooperation and sovereignty, globalization and autonomy are now the forces that we will have to balance in**



order to meet the challenges before us, and we will only succeed in doing so by inventing new forms of solidarity that would make a definitive break with the paradigm of domination and subjugation and become the breeding ground for emancipation for all.

I firmly believe that the programs for hosting researchers in exile are the laboratories of tomorrow's solidarity. There are three reasons for this. The first is that the **scientific community is based on a longstanding, borderless network of relationships**, founded on the conviction that science has no homeland and that knowledge is a common good that grows through collaboration and emulation.

The second is that **the values carried by these programs are values for the future, both for a country at war and for humanity in crisis:** I am talking about mutual aid, the cross-fertilization of knowledge, the safeguarding of knowledge, the continuity of research, and the conviction that the other, the foreigner who comes, is an opportunity, because he or she is a scientist who brings in his or her baggage knowledge and methods useful to our laboratories, and beyond, because it is an exiled consciousness and it is good to *"look at the world through the eyes of these tightrope walkers", "always on the edge of the map"* in the words of the French historian Annie Cohen-Solal.

The third reason that makes these programs laboratories of new forms of solidarity is **their ability to involve people well beyond their initial scope.** The development of the French PAUSE program is emblematic in this respect: born of a call from the research community and the political will of the ministers for higher education and research, and nourished by the commitment of universities and schools, it persuaded French civil society to get involved and Europe to support it through the Fonds Asile Migration Intégration (Asylum Migration Integration Fund), which has enabled it to host 200 researchers to date, including 80 for two years. By connecting with its European counterparts through *Inspireurope*, PAUSE is now giving itself a new horizon for reflection and action.

For if they originate in local or national initiatives, these forms of solidarity can only truly flourish by looking towards Europe. As with all the major issues of our time, it is only on this scale and on this scale alone that we will be able to meet the challenge of welcoming researchers in danger, with solutions that are faithful to our values and likely to be a reference in the world. **Europe owes a debt to exile:** it was shaped in part by the movement of intellectuals, artists and scientists who fled their native countries to join a European neighbor. It was René Descartes who took refuge in the United Provinces, and Thomas Hobbes who stayed in Paris.

Today, it is no longer a matter of Europe sharing its scientists, but of offering researchers threatened outside its borders **one and the same haven of peace, one and the same field of possibilities, multiplying the places where they can be welcomed and the prospects for the future. For if there is one challenge within the challenge, it is that of the professional integration of our guests beyond their integration into our programs,** it is that of serenity and stability beyond the emergency.

To take up this challenge, we need to coordinate our efforts, to share our experiences, to pool our tools and that is the whole purpose of the *Inspireurope* project that brings us together today.

INSPIREEUROPE VIRTUAL
STAKEHOLDER FORUM

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 Inspireurope
Supporting Researchers at Risk

#Inspireurope2020Forum



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I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the organization *Scholar at risks*, without whom this initiative would not have been possible and would not have been recognized as one of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions in the H2020 program. It now brings together 10 partners, each of whom has found a unique response to the question of how to welcome researchers in exile: to confront them at this first forum is not only to enrich and articulate them, but also to launch a drive that is destined to grow, to spread throughout Europe and to involve other institutions in this humanitarian and scientific struggle.

I therefore hope to see even more of you next year in Germany for the second *Inspireurope* Forum, because **the cause of exiled researchers is a European cause**: perhaps more than any other, it reminds us of the values that bind us together and revives the hope that lies at the heart of the European project.

I hope you all enjoy the forum!