

Speech by Paul Boyle, Science Europe President

Science Europe Launch Event, Berlin, 21 October 2011

Esteemed colleagues,

I am honoured to be nominated as the first President of Science Europe and I have great pleasure in accepting this nomination, recognising that this will be a challenging position for challenging times. International collaboration is critical to finding solutions to the major problems facing the world today. As these problems span international boundaries, we must work together with our colleagues from around the world if we are to fully address them. 85% of public research funding in Europe is managed at the national level. Science Europe will therefore work with the EC to influence how the shared European funds are allocated and, at the same time, will provide an effective platform for us to mobilise national resources to collectively address these challenges with our European partners.

Under the Lisbon Treaty there is a commitment to realise the vision of a European Research Area which will allow free flow of people and ideas across the Union, and the European Commission has already approached Science Europe, while in its infancy, to provide input to important discussions relating to this ambition. With so many organisations putting their faith behind Science Europe we will now be able to address these issues with strength and with the conviction that we represent the major research funding and performing organisations across Europe.

The EC over the past years has encouraged member states to experiment in partnership, using a creative and flexible array of mechanisms. One of our first tasks will be to look at the landscape across Europe and understand where these mechanisms have been effective, where they could be strengthened and broadened and where barriers still exist. It is clear that we can get substantial additional benefit by working together. This is true across the spectrum from individual research projects to larger scale collaborations, and is demonstrated by a recent report sponsored by the UK government which has shown that international co-authorship of scientific papers consistently raises the impact. It is for this reason that we have embraced these initiatives at all scales, from theme focussed ERA-Nets to large scale Joint Programming initiatives. Now we need to look in more depth at these experiments and understand which have worked, developing consistent and coherent national and European policy positions which will help remove barriers to collaboration. We also need to ensure that we are agile in our response to new initiatives, but more importantly that we can help to shape the future international collaborative research agenda.

While recognising the importance of working together with our European partners we must also be outward facing and I particularly welcome the participation in this meeting of colleagues outside of the EU. Multilateral collaboration, across borders but also across discipline boundaries, will be increasingly important for the future of research and Science Europe will bring a European multilateral perspective to this agenda.

Of course, this launch is to celebrate the birth of Science Europe but it also marks the demise of EUROHORCs, so I would like to take this opportunity to

thank Dieter Imboden and all those who have worked to make EUROHORCS so successful with such limited resource. It has also been agreed that the European Science Foundation will be responsibly wound down but I am determined that it is properly supported over the transitional period and I look forward to working closely with Pär Omling and Martin Hynes to map the existing portfolio of activities onto our common vision for the future.

EUROHORCS and ESF are the bedrock from which Science Europe will be built – they provided the impetus for its creation – so we will harness their strengths to create a strong single voice for science (which includes the breadth of scientific endeavour from the arts, humanities and social sciences to the physical sciences). We very much look forward to working with all our members, current and future, as well as our international colleagues, to make Science Europe a resounding success.