

**Science Europe Launch Event
21. Oktober 2011, Berlin**

Welcome by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Matthias Kleiner

I would like to welcome:

The German Minister for Education and Research, Professor Schavan,

The Commissioner of Research, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,

The Director-General of Research, Robert-Jan Smits,

The President of the Social Science Research Center [Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin], Professor Allmendinger,

The Director of the National Science Foundation, Dr. Suresh,

The President of the Swiss National Science Foundation, Professor Imboden,

Distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Science Europe Launch Event today! Welcome to Berlin! The German poet Wilhelm Raabe reflected on the times he spent as a student in Berlin:

“[...] I studied in Berlin – and Heaven, what did I study! It is a miracle to me until today that I do not walk around with a crack or a flaw in my brain: Its expansion was too powerful.”¹

In this spirit, I welcome you to Berlin, which is the perfect place for the launch of Science Europe: Not only because of its inspiring, “brain-affecting” and “brain-widening” atmosphere but also because of its many opportunities to conduct and experience science and research – at Berlin’s universities, in laboratories, libraries, museums or simply in the streets.

We are proud to host the Launch-Event of Science Europe and to celebrate its hour of birth here in Berlin and to reach out for and in the favor of science in Europe and, at the same time, to be open to the world of science without regard to national borders.

¹ „Ich war ein Student, und ich studierte in Berlin - o großer Gott, was studierte ich alles! Es ist mir heute noch ein Mirakel, dass ich nicht mit einem Riss, einem Sprung im Hirnkasten herumlaufe: die Gehirnerweiterung war zu mächtig.“ [Wilhelm Raabe 1831 - 1910] – Quelle: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/eine-lust-da-zu-lesen/1614414.html>

Berlin in the heart of Europe is a place of great symbolic value to give clarity and volume to the voice of Science Europe to make it audible and effective from its very beginning on.

And I am certain that this clear voice will further develop its tone compass and range of audibility from its home in Brussels. Beyond this, Berlin has already proven once before to be an ideal place for a promising European beginning: Do you remember the ERC launch conference in 2007? I am sure we all agree on this comparison as a good sign for success!

Science Europe is designed to give shelter to all matters of European science and research and thus, its mode will be self-governance. The firm conviction in scientific self-governance derives from the insight that those who are active in science and research know their needs and conditions and can monitor the developments – which occur very quickly sometimes – at close range and react directly.

Scientific self-governance functions well in Germany. I might even say that it can serve as a model at the European level. The interaction between politics and science in Germany is well-balanced and I am convinced that the reason for this is the mutual understanding and acceptance of the genuine roles and interests. May this be the same for Science Europe.

“European unity was a dream of a few. It became the hope for many. Today, it is a necessity for us all.”²

This was declared by Konrad Adenauer, Germany’s first chancellor, in 1954 and until today, his statement has not lost any of its relevance. And of course, it applies for science and research just as much as in general and for other fields of life and society.

² „Die Einheit Europas war ein Traum weniger. Sie wurde eine Hoffnung für viele. Sie ist heute eine Notwendigkeit für alle.“ [Konrad Adenauer] – Quelle: <http://www.kas.de/polen/>

Cooperation and, moreover, integration across borders is necessary in science and we see this in many activities and grown collaboration already. Yet, today, we need a strong and visible representation of researchers in Europe, which will support progress and foster the scientific development through the immediate cooperation of the organizations representing them.

Take issues like Open Access, research infrastructures, peer review – all of which concern the quality of science. Science Europe will offer an ideal platform to work on these issues through a close interaction of its members.

Science Europe sets a frame to merge interests, ideas and policies by having European scientists and researchers as its core. Science Europe will be actively reaching out beyond Europe and connect to the world to keep up a continuous dialogue.

Having said this, I am glad that the director of the NSF, the National Science Foundation, Mr. Subra Suresh from the USA accepted our invitation.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being with us today and making this Launch Event a promising day!