



European  
Humanities  
Conference



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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN HUMANITIES CONFERENCE

Lisbon, 7 May 2021

We, the participants in the European Humanities Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 5 to 7 May 2021, following several months of debates, exchange of proposals and preparatory meeting, gathering together to engage in interdisciplinary dialogues to establish a new agenda for the European Humanities;

Commending the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) and the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) for their joint organization of the Conference;

*Building* on the long tradition of the Humanities in Europe, their diversity and inspiring reflexions, proposals and interaction with peoples' performances, leading to fostering better conditions of life;

*Reaffirming* the conclusion of the 2017 World Humanities Conference, convened jointly by UNESCO and CIPSH, that the humanities have an essential role to play in equipping societies to make sense of the contemporary challenges they face and enabling governments and other policy-makers and social actors to respond to them;

*Considering* the contributions of the regional Humanities Conferences organised in other continents;

*Stressing* that the unique value of the humanities relates to various dimensions, from their relevance in the identity and inner self of individuals to their relevance in overcoming any form of cultural discrimination, and that the diversity of their concepts, methods, traditions and experiences and on their productive relationship with the social and natural sciences, including through innovative forms of transdisciplinarity;

*Recognising* that the Humanities have a productive capacity for transformation of their own institutions and academic mindset that is unparalleled, including the ability to redefine their conceptions of humanity and the human actor; the ability for interdisciplinary cooperation, thus filling a human vacuum within technocratically dominated (world) social processes; and the ability for intercultural cooperation, thus overcoming centrisms of all kinds;

*Emphasizing*, among the challenges on which the humanities can shed light, the priority importance of the Covid-19 pandemic and its multiple effects on inequalities, inclusion and well-being; radicalism and extremism; digital transformations and their ethical implications; and imagining and creating new ways of inhabiting the Earth and relating to one another;

*Suggesting* that such challenges cluster around the overarching importance of interpreting and reinterpreting what it means to be human in the face of a world in transformation;

*Noting* recent initiatives taken on these lines by UNESCO, including in particular the BRIDGES sustainability humanities action coalition within the Management of Social Transformations programme and the preparation of the Recommendation of Ethics of Artificial Intelligence; by the European Union, in particular the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training; by national governments and agencies, including the preparation of the European Humanities Conference by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology; and by CIPSH and Humanities research units, in particular the Global History of Humankind and the World Humanities Report;

*Expressing* concern that the humanities often lack, in higher education and research systems, the resources and recognition necessary for their full potential to be captured;

*Underscoring* that their contribution to policy making can be enhanced substantially, as they shed light on different human interactions and contexts and help improving decision making.

*Welcoming* the outcomes of the European Humanities Conference, which brought together in Lisbon, from 5 to 7 May, humanities stakeholders from Europe, and beyond, to explore shared intellectual and institutional challenges and propose practical responses to them,

The European Humanities Conference,

1. Call on EU member states, the European Commission, all education, research and innovation related institutions and the community of researchers and scholars, to:

- Endorse the Lisbon Declaration on Humanities, Open Research and Innovation.
- Promote a stronger interaction of the humanities and sciences at all levels of education, overcoming divides that endanger science and the understanding of phenomena and processes.

2. Call specifically on higher education institutions, research centres and similar scholarly bodies to:

- Recognise that the Humanities are a core component of higher education historical and current impacts on the promotion of well-being and shared humanistic values, thus requiring adequate continuous research and education practices.
- Recognise that without basic data and disciplinary fundamental research it will not be possible to pursue high quality interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies, which implies to take decisive action to preserve knowledge in currently threatened domains, such as the study of ancient languages or the open rendering of data on ancient material and textual documents, as well as the specific disciplinary developments of the various disciplines and sub-disciplines of the Humanities, such as history, anthropology, literature, archaeology, linguistics, philosophy and the various approaches of the new humanities.
- Engage in current major societal debates, such as on heritage, inclusion, identity, history and memories, migrations, or global sustainability, through the diverse, robust and open approach of the Humanities and Sciences, anchored in research methodologies, countering any form of simplification.

- Contribute for language diversity and multilingualism , namely by promoting the publication of academic results in more than one language, countering the conceptual simplification imposed by the use of a restricted range of languages.
- Foster close collaboration between history, philosophy and sociology of science and technology and sciences, for better understanding of the conditions of science advances, for meaningful addressing of problems and dilemmas, as well as for a stronger societal appreciation of the relevance of academic knowledge.
- Embrace the contributions of the Humanities to face major contemporary challenges, namely in the domains of the implications of technological advancements, of the relations between health and well being or of facing different forms of identities segregation.

3. Call on foundations, councils, sponsors and other funding bodies, both at a national and European level to:

- Acknowledge the autonomy of the Humanities domains of research and their irreplaceable contribution for expanding the scales of approach to societal processes, in time and space, thus allowing for the assessment of dilemma, for the understanding of meanings and for foresight.
- Pay special attention to the threats imposed on fundamental Humanities research related to its sources of data – artefacts, texts and oral records – as well as to the new domains of Humanities research and their specific contribution for current societal concerns.
- Help securing the generational renewal of Humanities experts, thus contributing for the preservation and transmission of knowledge and for the continuity and expansion of careers for younger scholars.

4. Call on EU member states and the European Commission to:

- Implement the Declaration of Lisbon on Humanities, Open Research and Innovation.
- Take responsibility on the preservation of material, textual and performative inherited knowledge expressions, including museums, libraries, archives, sites and monuments, integrating them with research and education and articulating all with the global societal challenges in terms of co-designing transformative strategies for well-being and a humanistic understanding of sustainability.
- Acknowledge the importance of a greater interaction between Humanities and Sciences at all levels of education, preparing future generations of citizens to better understand their complementarity.
- Acknowledge the irreplaceable role of the Humanities to help building a critical understanding of complex societal phenomena and the importance of diversity and plurality for the design of sustainable collective strategies.
- Recognise the relevance of the Humanities in all domains of human life, namely in the organisation of its economic and social drivers, from tourism and food production, to logistics, health or territorial management.

- Foster the liberty and the material conditions for mobility of researchers and students across countries and institutions, building a stronger community of knowledge and its sharing and interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary interactions.
- Promote policies on the open access to data and academic studies results, in a context of preservation of the contributions of researchers and of development of professional careers, particularly for young researchers, that may secure the continuity and social impact of their contributions.