

CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF EURASHE

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I am indeed very happy and satisfied with the proceedings of our Conference, and I am glad to say that we have certainly had a productive and successful Annual Conference, with the participation of such a big number of key persons involved with higher education throughout the EHEA. EURASHE is an umbrella organisation covering a broad range of higher education institutions and programmes in a growing number of countries, which is in line with educational and societal evolutions.

We grew out of a need to represent what we have always called professional higher education at European level, originally in the countries of the European Union, now in more than 40 countries. Professional higher education has been and will always remain our mission, and the fact that we are here now in Croatia, right before its accession into the European Union, is a proof of it. However, with our mandate to represent this sector and the professionally oriented programmes and institutions in the Bologna Reform process, we have developed an additional mission, which has also broadened our field and scope, taking in levels and trainings which have been increasingly involved in professional higher education.

The expansion of the Bologna Process into a European space for HE, a process which is now stabilised with the creation of the EHEA, currently covering 47 countries, including European countries beyond the borders of the European Union, should not have an impact on our original mission to defend and represent a sector that was originally excluded from, but has now become the core of HE.

The Conference these two days, focused exactly on this profile, with themes linking education and innovation at all levels of higher education, and presenting employability as a primary concern, and at the same time as example of good practice of professional HE, from which all of us can learn.

For an Annual Conference of EURASHE that was once again so rich in content, in the first place we are indebted to a large number of keynote speakers and workshop contributors; too many to enumerate, from the European Commission representative to the researchers in different domains that made this conference particularly relevant, to EURASHE members and to other participants. They provided us with insights that will further stimulate our discussions on what makes our sector so relevant in the present times.

What made this Conference particularly relevant for EURASHE, was that this time we opened up the event to a partner network, the Universities of Applied Sciences Network. It seemed to be a natural thing to do, because of the Conference themes, but also because we share with them a common membership and similar objectives in the field of innovation and applied research. We are grateful to our colleagues from UASnet for this, and in particular to President Tim Creedon, who earlier in this Conference formulated the wish to go further on this road, and work for the benefit of the programmes we consider as the core of our membership, which is the professionally oriented postgraduate programmes; a wish that we certainly share.

The success of a conference always depends on a variety of factors, to which many persons and instances contribute, and I see it as a role of the President of our Association to pay tribute to these individuals.

I would like to thank in the first place Croatia, the country that hosted this 23rd Annual Conference of EURASHE, with the patronage by its President of the Republic, the support of the Ministry of Education, and the cooperation by the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education. Still an Association like ours cannot function without its members, and therefore I should first mention our member in Croatia, the Council of Universities and University Colleges of Applied Sciences. Prof. Žarko Nožica from the University College of Zagreb has been the inspiring force here and also the person in charge of the involved organisational aspects in the country.

EURASHE is a members-based organisation, and we are grateful to our members who are always willing to chair sessions and facilitate discussions in workshops.

An organisation still cannot function without the important support from an organising team, and this exactly was the task of the Secretariat of EURASHE, a task they have performed faultlessly. In particular, I should commend the effective and efficient contribution of our Secretary General, Stefan Delplace, and especially the excellent job of the person in charge of this event at the Secretariat, Marko Grdošić, and the fact that being Croatian greatly facilitated his and our work. And of course, since always it is the entire team that makes something successful, I would mention and thank Kristina, Iva and Alexandre.

It was my pleasure being with you these days, and I am looking forward so see you all again at the 24th Annual Conference of EURASHE around the middle of May of next year, for the hosting of which at Yerevan we have already received a very generous and challenging proposal from our members in Armenia.



Prof. Andreas G. Orphanides

President of EURASHE