Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen’s dinner speech at European Intersectoral Summit on Research and Innovation (EISRI), 25-26 February 2013 at Trinity College, Dublin

Distinguished guests, President Valery Giscard d’Estaing, Minister Dainius Pavalkis, Lithuania, Provost Patrick Prendergast, Trinity College, colleagues and friends

It is a pleasure to be back in Dublin, the host city of Euroscience Open Forum 2012. I think Danes always like to come back here since you threw us out 1,000 years ago!

Science and scientists create value for society.

1. **Science is at the core of the European political ambition**, to be a leading competitive and sustainable economy for our continent. An economy in which the key input is knowledge, and in which prosperity comes from innovation and an efficient use of resources. For this reason sufficient and stable investments in research, development and innovation is – *sine qua non* – and without the best educated workforce of all times we can’t make it.

2. **The Bologna process and the Lisbon strategy have highlighted that strong universities and research institutions are crucial** for building a knowledge economy and to answer responsibly to public and private demands.

3. **The Globalization processes** bring urgency to this – *el mundo es un panuelo* – the world is a handkerchief – and we share it with 7 billion other people! Our only hope to meet the consequences of climate changes, address resource scarcity and to resolve demographic and health related issues are through scientific breakthroughs that can be transformed into smart technologies
and solutions. Euroscience therefore applauds Horizon 2020 and joins the appeal for sufficient financial backing of it.

4. How do we ensure that universities, research institutes and scientists fulfill their responsibility to work for a better and stronger Europe? In my opinion first of all through formation of human capital. We must have educational programs that are open to everybody, promote values such as tolerance and interpersonal trust, but also educational programs that are targeting educating highly skilled, scientific literate and motivated individuals for all sectors of society, - and we have to stimulate an entrepreneurial mindset, to teach young people to understand their own capacity and to become oriented towards using their knowledge and skills.

And we must turn the most talented students and our researchers into world-leading scientists eager to discover applicable potentials of their scientific results.

In fact, we need to nurture Europe’s talent – and maybe promote the daring, the wild and the innovative.

5. Europe is the home of many of the world’s leading universities, research establishments and industries. Maybe we should be less humble about it. It is right to invest in good conditions and infrastructures for excellent scientists to be able to produce state-of-the-art scientific results such as it is envisioned in the Horizon 2020 program, in national strategies and through the many national research councils.

Excellent science creates extraordinary ideas and products for societies and citizens, enhances our understanding, and prepares us for the unexpected.
Research for the short-term benefit of societies might lead to important incremental improvements but it is frontier science that leads to breakthroughs that are crucial for solving the highly complex societal challenges in the long run.

Also from an innovation and economical perspective, cutting-edge research that relies on long-term investments is needed. Industries are increasingly knowledge-dependent and will seek their scientific collaborators anywhere.

A report recently published by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences underlines this. The report urges research systems and universities to balance sectorial strategic research and cross-sectorial collaboration with a strong focus on frontier science to avoid a decline in global competitiveness and the risk of brain drain.

Autonomous universities with clear career patterns for researchers, and creative environments that support outstanding research are key elements. Therefore we must celebrate the Bologna Declaration, the Magna Carta of Europe’s Universities.

Funding instruments should promote this agenda. The Swedish report shows that scientific excellence is advanced by stability, a long-term approach, and trust.

Euroscience has recognized in its statement to European Heads of State that investments in research and innovation must be ensured at both national and European levels.

Horizon 2020 has become even more important in times of recession and economic downturn.
6. (But) a plea for excellent science should go hand in hand with a commitment to society. Universities and research entities, public and private, should commit to the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation – Just to mention a few key aspects.

- Ethics must become fore found not only by compliance but by raising awareness of ethical quality through training of researchers and the development of guidelines and best practices.

- We should therefore commit to open access; publicly financed research, and scientific results should be disseminated and exchanged with stakeholders – peers, industry, citizens, NGO’s – directly and transparently. We also have to engage other regions in developing a common code of conduct for open access.

- Engaging scientists and communicators in the developing art of scientific knowledge exchange is at the agenda.

- In realizing the challenges ahead we must also realize the complexity of most of the issues in front of us. Therefore, new paradigms are being established, interdisciplinarity is a must and multidisciplinarity is the future.

Conclusion:

We must all engage in ERA, make Horizon 2020 a success and implement RRI.

Euroscience commits itself to this project and has established working groups on issues such as ethics, open access, science communication, science and society, science and grand challenges. But first of all.
Euroscience has together with a number of private foundations taken the initiative to organize ESOF, the largest “science and society” meeting place in Europe. Bringing scientists, students, industrialists, policy makers, NGO’s and citizens together. ESOF has so far taken place in Stockholm, Munich, Barcelona, Torino, and in 2012 in Dublin. Next, June 21-26, it is in Copenhagen.

Finally:

I wish to congratulate Atomium Culture with this second EISRI Summit in Dublin. This is an important contribution to the Irish EU-council Presidency agenda. – And not least to have chosen Trinity College – one of Europe’s leading research universities as its venue. Congratulation. Dear colleagues. I wish you all a great meeting and an enjoyable evening.