



CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DE LA PHILOSOPHIE ET DES SCIENCES HUMAINES
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN SCIENCES

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Seven decades later

CIPSH, the International Council for the Philosophy and Human Sciences, was established seventy years ago, in the framework of the launching of the United Nations and of Unesco within them, as part of a strategy that should help preventing a new global terror.

CIPSH started as one more structure that was fostered by the core of partner nations, but with a past of its own and expecting its further growing autonomy, trying to prevent the agenda of research and knowledge from being governed by short term driven needs and results, which is still a major dimension today.

In the first general assembly of CIPSH, the 18th January 1949, Jacques Rueff, president its preparatory commission, define the priorities for CIPSH at that time: campaign against non-reflexive specialization (“We wish to get the technicians away from their techniques”), encouragement of the setting up of international organizations in fields in which no such organizations exist, coordination of bibliographical work and re-establishment of a world “community of minds.

The contextual constraints of the humanities today differ significantly from the 1950’s, but the crucial choices related to the pressure of short-term anxieties share similar traits, since societal constraints, culturally generated through time, are precisely the conditions of viability of humanities academic research. Disciplinary isolation, insufficient coordination of research in some fields, bibliographic dispersal, intellectual individualism, ... these are contemporary problems that were also present seven decades ago.

However. the context pushes humans to, for the first time ever, face global unified challenges, living not only within one environmental system with integrated ecosystems as in the past, but also within a planetary socio-economic integration. The question is if humans will be able to build a coherent convergence of strategies to face a context that leaves no room for merely regional adaptations, while requiring reinforced diversity, designing a new modernisation which starts as one conceptual choice and proceeds as a sociocultural facing of dilemmas, involving values and meanings. Humanities have a major role in helping societies in this process.

The World Humanities Conference, organized by CIPSH and UNESCO in 2017, led to five main results: institutional (new members and fields of study), strategic (a first state of the art of the humanities), networking (with UNESCO, with other international councils, but moreover across CIPSH members), organic (through new structures, such as the new



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UNESCO and CIPSH Humanities chairs) and operational (through new programmes, namely the Global History of Humanity and the World Humanities Report). The new structure of CIPSH, assuming its confederative dimension, clearly reinforces the Council and its members, while debates need to be pursued, namely on how to move forward, within a dispersed context that reversed the trends issuing from the late 1940's.

Today, the federations and unions are called upon to help CIPSH, as the Council is asked to contribute for Unesco and various international, regional and national institutions which experience severe difficulties themselves. The path undertaken since 2014 is leading to positive results, and CIPSH will certainly build from those, anchored in its member organisations and in close partnership with the other domains of research and with Unesco and society in general.

There is a need for a flexible framework of reference capable of federating research and outlining a convergent path. CIPSH has a major role to play in such process, which implies new administrative procedures, a new vision building collaborations with other sciences, the remobilization of its member organizations and a common joint program of action rooted in a clear methodology. The World Humanities Conference and the establishment of projects such as the Global History of Humanity or the World Humanities Report contribute to this but need to be complemented with further actions.

CIPSH, bringing together academies, world scholarly federations and unions, universities and the whole scope of humanities, may undertake this path, leading to resume the process of integrative knowledge through diversity, making full but critical use of digital possibilities, countering the current trend of disruptive ignorance of disciplinary corporative approaches and focusing on meaning and integrative epistemologies.

This is our common responsibility.


Luiz Oosterbeek
Secretary-General