



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

Président : Chao Gejin
Secrétaire général : Luiz Oosterbeek

1 rue Miollis 75732 Paris Cedex 15 cipsh@unesco.org + 33. 1. 45 68 48 85

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 its agency UNESCO, as part of a strategy that aimed to prevent a new global terror.

CIPSH started as a structure endorsed by the core of partner nations, but with a past of its own and anticipating a growing autonomy, to protect the agenda of research and knowledge from being governed by short term needs and results, which remains a major goal today.

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

The constraints facing the humanities today differ significantly from those of the 1950’s, but crucial choices related to the pressure of short-term anxieties share similar traits, since societal constraints, culturally generated through time, are precisely the conditions for viable academic research in the humanities. 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. for the first time the context pushes humans to face global unified challenges, living not only within one environmental system with integrated ecosystems as in the past, but also within an integrated planetary socio-economic system. The question is whether 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 a conceptual choice and proceeds as a confrontation with sociocultural dilemmas, involving values and meanings. Humanities have a major role to play 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 academic councils, and among CIPSH members), organic (through new structures, such as the new UNESCO and CIPSH Humanities chairs), and operational (through new programmes, namely the Global History of Humanity and the World Humanities Report). The new confederative structure of CIPSH clearly reinforces the Council and its members, while debates also need to be pursued, namely on how to move forward, within a dispersed context that reverses the trends of the late 1940’s.



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

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

There is a need for a flexible framework of reference capable of correlating research and delineating a convergent path. CIPSH has a major role to play in this process, which implies new administrative procedures, a new vision building collaborations with other sciences, the remobilization of its member organizations and a 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 extended with further actions.

CIPSH, by bringing together academies, world scholarly federations and unions, universities and the whole range of humanities, can pursue this path, leading to the renewed process of integrative knowledge through diversity, making full but critical use of digital possibilities, countering the current trend toward disruptive ignorance in disciplinary corporate approaches, and focusing on meaning and on integrative epistemologies.

This is our common responsibility.

Luiz Oosterbeek
Secretary-General