

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING RESEARCH IN THE MAIN AREAS OF THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

It is often pointed out that much can be done to enhance interdisciplinary research in the areas of the arts and the humanities, starting by drawing on the human and material resources already available in Greek Universities and in other academic institutions, and developing further collaboration with foreign artists and scholars. Apart from encouraging work in all fields which would reflect the current interests of researchers, professors and students aiming at excellence, one could focus especially on the interpretation of the Greek cultural heritage and of its modern reception and appropriation. Such a strategic goal would provide the basis for a variety of research and educational activities, addressing the interests of specialists in classics, linguistics, philosophy, history, archeology, history of art, museum studies, comparative literature, creative writing- and related fields of the social sciences (such as cultural anthropology and cultural studies) and attracting young scholars, scientists and artists from all over the world. These activities may concentrate on the study of texts and of monuments of different periods (ancient, Byzantine and modern) also with a view to casting light on the construction of Greek cultural identity and to assessing conceptions of continuity and discontinuity of a long past. One could examine diverging sources, perceptions and construals of this identity, in Greece itself, in the Balkan peninsula, in the West and in non Western traditions, especially in the near East. Historical and archeological research, documentation and textual exegesis shall proceed along with the elaboration of appropriate theoretical tools.

More particularly, one could envisage the following research, educational and cultural activities of a more or less general scope:

- the promotion of interdisciplinary and comparative studies, involving the study of Greek history, philosophy, literature and art within a wider international context.

- the analysis and critical assessment of forms of reception of the past (including monuments, texts, drama and translations) its uses, performances and canonizations.
- the development of exchange programs and the organisation of summer schools for senior and young scholars and students
- the organisation of conferences, seminars and special workshops
- the sponsoring of exhibitions, festivals and artistic contests
- the use of existing data bases, electronic libraries and the creation of new ones
- the promotion of projects of distance and e-learning
- an emphasis on cultural management and on museum studies
- the development of programs of cultural tourism

For the planning and the implementation of the above one could rely on many Greek and international institutions, public and private, such as scientific Academies, Greek and foreign universities, cultural institutes, societies and Foundations, archeological schools already active in Greece or others interested in new excavation projects, Greek and foreign museums, a.o. There are many examples of institutions which have been implementing more or less successful programs, some of which could serve as models for further initiatives, including the Academy of Athens, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, the Foundation for the Hellenic World, the European Cultural Center of Delphi, the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies in Nafplion, the American and the French Archeological Schools, the Institut français d'Athènes, the Goethe Institut the Norwegian Institute at Athens, the Onassis Foundation, the Department of Philosophy and History of Science of the University of Athens, to name only a few. One should also appeal to a variety of sponsors for funding, especially at a time of financial crisis, in Greece, in the EU and elsewhere. Of course,

the Ministries of Education and Culture would still be expected to provide funds for organizing programs and events helping to promote contemporary Greek culture at a national and international level and for awarding scholarships and fellowships to talented researchers. Moreover, apart from private sponsors, one could seek the collaboration of other authorities and institutions, including churches, municipalities and cultural societies and folklore clubs interested in drawing attention to specific historical and archeological sites and local traditions. There are already examples of successful series of national and international conferences and of drama, film and music festivals and competitions in Syros, Crete, Ithaca, Epidaurus, Patras, Thessaloniki, Drama, etc. Cultural tourism might add a new dimension to such activities and boost the local economies.

- Focusing on academic activities in a more narrow sense, one should emphasize the need for incentives for inter-departmental and inter-University cooperation (e.g. History departments in the same city or language and literature departments of the same University, Joint philosophy and classics conferences, or colloquia bringing together artists and scholars in the humanities, or classicists, historians and social scientists). There should be more efforts to create and promote networks of excellence involving cooperation among Universities and individual scholars.

- Every year proposals for research projects should be invited on specific interdisciplinary areas (e.g. translating cultures, reception of the past) encouraging cooperation between departments and Universities. Researchers or departments, which have not been assessed, should not be allowed to bid.

- More postdoctoral scholarships should be awarded each year to young researchers who do not hold a University post with an emphasis on the arts and humanities. There should be an independent mechanism for the award of these postdocs which shouldn't be limited to the existing State Scholarship Foundation (I.K.Y)

- There should be more exchange programs and projects for bi- and multi-lateral collaboration with foreign Universities and other research and educational institutions (apart from *Erasmus* and *Erasmus mundus*). The Greek state could provide more scholarships and research fellowships to foreign scholars who want to visit Greece.

Humanities departments in Greek universities should be encouraged to invite foreign professors and students interested in studying Greek language and culture and to offer more courses and seminars or entire programs in English and in other languages. One could also envisage the development of joint graduate programs involving the collaboration with foreign centers for the study of Greek culture and offering joint degrees. Greek scholars should also be required to publish more in international scientific journals and spend more time abroad. Greek cultural centers and foundations could provide funding for a foreign artist, scholar or researcher “in residence” for a certain period. Prizes could be established for pioneering research or excellent artworks.

- There is a growing interest in Greek language and culture not only in Europe and the USA, but also in the Far East. This tendency should be explored and enhanced further. There is a great potential for promoting academic cooperation with universities in countries such as India, China, Korea and Japan and for initiating new programs of comparative studies.

- Greece can play a leading role in the promotion of the study of the humanities in the Balkans. The project of the comparative study of history and of the teaching of history already implemented, with the participation of leading historians of most Balkan countries coordinated by Greek colleagues, is an example of a fruitful academic program with far reaching political implications for the region.

- One could take advantage of the peculiar position, the rich cultural heritage of Greece at the crossroads of East and West and the beautiful and history fraught landscape in order to develop one or more international centers of advanced humanistic learning, which would attract outstanding scholars from many countries on a regular basis and help produce first-rate, original interdisciplinary work. There are already centers and foundations, some of which are mentioned above, but their activities could be enriched and coordinated and there is potential for the creation of new ones.

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1/9/2012

