



## The Lincei, science and politics *An Italo-European vocation*

by  
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Concluding the 415<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is indeed a demanding task, as it implies to balance between past, present and future. If past, present and future are in fact clearly distinguishable as a chronological thread of events, they also appear as an unbroken flow of historical connections. Here I will therefore summarize my official statement that can be found on the website [www.lincei.it](http://www.lincei.it).

### **The foundations of our present**

At the end of May, the Lincei, in a troublesome institutional moment of transition, expressed their «deepest appreciation to the President of the Republic» - whom I thank for his presence here today - «who, for the Republican Constitution, "represents the national unity", which he upholds with admirable steadfastness as he, with unambiguousness and determination, stands as a defender of our own democracy, within the democracies of the European Union». This deserved manifestation of solidarity has its roots also in the republican history of the Lincei, starting with their unforgettable members and founders, like Benedetto Croce and Luigi Einaudi; the latter in his position as President of our Class of Humanities and then President of the Italian Republic.

The history of the Lincei reveals its political-institutional actualness, even when we look back to the re-foundations of our Academy that took place first in the Risorgimento and later, when the Republic was instituted, always through an Italo-European perspective, without which Italy has no future.

In the rapidly flourishing period of the Risorgimento, personalities like Quintino Sella (an engineer and a versatile and well-known scientist) and Terenzio Mamiani della Rovere (a less known but equally talented scholar and philosopher), thanks to their political weight and their European culture, re-founded the Lincei in

1874, in this way providing great support to the process of unification of the Italian nation that, at the time, was lagging behind in the industrial revolution and the European political scenario.

This commitment culminated with Vito Volterra, the Academy's president from 1923 to 1926 and signatory (like other Lincei fellows, including Luigi Einaudi) of the "Manifesto of the anti-fascist intellectuals" of 1925, drawn up by the Lincei fellow Benedetto Croce. It was the beginning of the "Resistenza" of the Lincei - and not only - to the fascist dictatorship that in 1939 suppressed the Academy.

In September 1944, with two legislative decrees of the Bonomi government, Benedetto Croce obtained that the Lincei were reinstated. Later, thanks to Luigi Einaudi, they became the present-day Republican National Academy, an institution that owes much also to Guido Castelnuovo, our President in the years between 1946 and 1952, whom Einaudi had nominated senator for life in 1949. We have in this way shed some light on personalities that are part of the Italian and European Identity, even if many do not know.

### **The identity of the Lincei**

Constitution and equanimity, freedom and responsibility, culture and community have always been the guidelines of the Lincei and it is along these lines that I have reported on the three years of my Presidency.

The history of the Lincei has made our Academy famous for its values of science and culture, for its credibility made of wisdom and independence based on knowledge, thus stamping our mark on many periods of the Italian identity. The intellectual weight of the Lincei members is well-known, while the communitarian nature of their association is less famous.

In our age, sciences are getting more and more specialized, thus providing a great contribution to the progress of mankind; but so often the culture of science is neglected or trivialized, even for the assumption that you only have to launch a query «on your mobile phone». On the contrary, the contribution of the scientists' wisdom to the human development is crucial. Therefore, it is also crucial to maintain a holistic view of knowledge; this is indeed possible, even during periods of radical innovation, for a community like ours that has a rich tradition and history and a dense network of relationships, in terms of cultural confidence, among its members, who are appointed through a complex procedure.

### **Recent initiatives**

We know very well that our words may lead to the hasty conclusion that it is all about the usual self-referential attitude among university professors "emeriti". It is therefore appropriate to clear right away that, on the contrary, the Lincei live in the present and look far into the future, with great attention to young people, women and the contribution of professionalism and collaborations, as demonstrated by the following initiatives.

The "Antonio Feltrinelli Giovani" Prizes for Italian scientists under the age of 40 were awarded in 2017 in the field of the "Natural Sciences" and more specifically in Astronomy, Mathematics, Medicine and Physics, while in 2018 they were awarded in the field of the "Humanities" and more precisely in Archaeology, in Criticism of Art and Poetry, in Juridical Sciences, and in Social and Political Sciences. In these two years, out of the eight scientists awarded (five of whom work in Italian universities and three in foreign athenaeums), four are women. Meritocracy has therefore led to perfect gender equality. In the following years the alternation between "natural sciences" and "humanities" will continue. From this starting point, we will try to build a community of young Italian talents who will create among themselves (and also with the Lincei partners) a net of multidisciplinary relationships within the Prize's cultural field.

**The lectures held by women scientists:** Fabiola Gianotti (physicist), Elena Cattaneo (neurobiologist), Bina Agarwal (economist), Marcella Frangipane (archaeologist), all Lincei fellows, joined by Emanuelle Charpentier (biochemist), have illustrated their field of research but have also highlighted their leading role in directing important "laboratories" or political-scientific initiatives that contribute to the human development. This humanitarian purpose is also the message conveyed by the President of the Nobel Peace Committee, nominated by the Norwegian Parliament, Berit Reiss-Andersen who has completed our 2018 series of conferences by explaining the philosophy that underlies all the Nobel Prizes.

**The Conferences of top personalities** in Italy and for Italy, that is of institutional figures such as the Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, the Prime Minister, several Ministers, the Presidents of the three highest Magistracies (the 'Consulta', the 'Cassazione' and the State Council). These latter were joined by the Presidents of several Research Institutes, of which many are Lincei fellows: the National Research Council (CNR), the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV), the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the Committee of Historical Sciences, the Galileo Museum of Florence, the Italian Istitute of Historical Studies, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), the National Institute of Health (ISS). Last but not least, the representatives of private and public entrepreneurship, who benefit from the collaboration of the Association "Friends of the Accademia dei Lincei", have also had their space.

Among the **Collaboration Agreements**, we must mention the agreement with the High School of Magistracy aimed at combining the legal sciences with the "natural and humanistic" ones, as typical of the Lincei. Another agreement worth mentioning is the one with the CNR that, with their wide gamut of specializations, can provide support regarding the pressing requests for the opinion of the Lincei that come from so many International Academic Associations.

Those who visit **Huffington's** Lincei web site - which is the result of a fruitful collaboration - will realize that we have tackled and discussed many other topical questions, like the crucial question of vaccines.

## National Academies

All the above-mentioned initiatives may not be enough to fully illustrate what goes on in the life of our National Academy. But it is not so, if we consider our initiatives against the background of the broader mission carried out by all the most important National Academies representing the state of science and culture of their own Country. Or, furthermore, in comparison with other National Institutions in an ever more international scenario. This is true for the Academies of oldest foundation, those of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, which are acquiring more power, as well as for the academies that have just been founded in Countries where there were no such institutions or in newly-born States.

All of them pursue, above all, science policy and science for politics. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the acceleration of science and technology, combined with the globalization, the emergence of new powers such as China, the ever-growing gap between development and underdevelopment (like the extremely serious African situation, with its still overwhelming demographic growth), call the National Academic Academies for action on their national scientific policy and for international cooperation with other Academies. The 21<sup>st</sup> century opened with great expectations for peace and progress. Twenty years have not yet passed and the horizon has become dark again. Academies should make their contribution to national, European and international human and civil progress to contribute to sustainable development, hopefully according to the UN Millennium Development Goals and the UN Agenda 2030 strategy.

## The Italo-European approach

Since 2009, as President of the Class of Humanities and President of the *Corint* (*Commissione relazioni internazionali*) the International Relations Committee of the Lincei and even more as President of the Lincei from 2015 to 2018, I have focused on strengthening the role of the Lincei in important European and international academic associations, as well as the collaboration with National Academies of other Nations.

We are in *Allea* (All European Academies) and in 2012 we have strongly believed in and consequently contributed to the election of the German scientist Prof. Günter Stock to the presidency of this institution. He has kept this position until 2018 doing an excellent work, and always with a high regard of the Lincei. Under his guidance, *Allea* has managed to bring together in consortium 60 academies of 40 countries in Western and Eastern Europe, some of which even have two distinct academies, one for the natural sciences and one other for humanities. *Allea* elaborates scientific advice that is then provided to institutional, national and EU decision-makers.

We are in *Easac* (*European Academies' Science Advisory Council*), an organization established in 2001 by the Royal Society (which with Brexit is becoming more and

more pro-European!), which includes the National Academies of Science of the European Union Countries. We contributed to elaborate Policy reports regarding three macro-areas in particular: environment, biosciences, energy.

A proof of the topical relevance and potential of these European Academic Associations is given by the foundation of *Sapea* (Science Advice for Policy by the European Academies), a consortium between *Allea*, *Easac* and three other European academic associations, namely *Academia Europaea*, *Euro-CASE* (the network of the Academies of applied sciences, technologies and engineering), *FEAM* (the network of medical academies). The Lincei are active in *Sapea* having already participated in the drafting of 4 reports of science policy and science for politics.

*Sapea* aims high, so as to contribute to the preparation of **Horizon Europe**, the new European program for research and innovation, for which a budget of 100 billion has been envisioned in the 2021-2027 multi-annual Financial Framework.

The Lincei are aware of this issue and therefore are following both the procedure to launch the *European Innovation Council* and the debate triggered by the two documents supporting the strategy of the new Horizon Europe Program. These are the "Lamy report", named after the French coordinator (former director of the WTO) and of the "Mazzucato report", named after its author, a brilliant Italian-American economist with whom we hope to intensify our relations.

Finally, the Lincei joined an initiative promoted by the German National Academy (*Leopoldina*) for the *Western Balkans Process* for the scientific and cultural development of the Balkan countries that is expected to generate a foundation based in Trieste.

### The international approach

The firm repositioning of the Lincei in the framework of science policy and of science for politics, both at a European and at an international level, took place with the **G7 of Science Academies** held at the Lincei in 2017. There, we issued three Joint Statements: *Cultural heritage: building resilience to natural disasters*, drafted by a working group coordinated by the Lincei fellow Giovanni Seminara; *The challenge of neurodegenerative diseases in an aging population*, drawn up by a working group coordinated by the Lincei fellow Maurizio Brunori; *New economic growth: the role of science, technology, innovation and infrastructure*, developed by a working group coordinated by myself. Their final approval, following a debate within the G7 Academies, was very gratifying and - in my opinion - it was also a great success. In the recent *Allea Assembly* in Sofia, I proposed that these three themes are included into the proposals that *Sapea* will put forward for the European Programs, and hopefully in Horizon Europe.

This G7 has also strengthened the position of the Lincei in the **IAP** (InterAcademyPartnership), a global association for both macro-sectors (*IAP Research*, *IAP Science*, *IAP Health*) and continental networks (Africa, the Americas, Asia). This system is very important and significant for science policy and science for

politics, as it also emerges from the circumstance that many powerful Countries aim at including their scientific representatives in the system's governing bodies. Some Lincei fellows have been part of, or currently participate in the boards of some *IAPs* but we believe that a Lincei fellow might even become their President in the future.

Indeed, Italy has political and scientific weight in *IAP Science* and *IAP Health*, which have their headquarters (diminutively called «secretariat») in Trieste, at the *TWAS* (The world academy of sciences for developing sciences in developing world) who contributes to their funding. Within this complex system of academies, Italian Institutions can offer several reasonable suggestions, since we have contributed with far-sightedness to founding in 1983 and financially supporting the *TWAS*, based in Trieste. We will continue to do so on the grounds of an agreement with UNESCO that, as established by law, receives an annual contribution from Italy and that is then allocated to support both *TWAS* and *IAP*. These latter are very important organizations also in the field of policy and diplomacy of science along the line north-south/east-west, an area into which the Lincei shall take a closer look; this is a commitment in which I will do my best as I have been appointed by the Italian Government, immediately after the G7/2017, member of the «steering committee».

### **Conclusions**

It was an honour for me to serve the Lincei for 15 years, first as one of the Academic Secretary, then as Vice President and President of the Class of Humanities and finally as President of the Academy. I have had the opportunity to meet and know outstanding personalities of first-rate knowledge, culture and dedication. And it was also illuminating to revisit and, in a certain way, "revive" the history of the Lincei from the late Renaissance to the Risorgimento and especially the period of the Republic during which Italy, within the European context, has given and received much in terms of civilization, development, peace and human progress. I am confident that the Lincei will persevere in pursuing this ideal, made of both moral values and concreteness.