

**Prof. Graham Caie**

**Welcome address**

**On the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Academy  
of Sciences, Sofia, 12 October 2019,**

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Dear President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,

Dear Members of the Academy,

Distinguished Guests,

I bring you hearty Congratulations on the occasion of your 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation and sincerest gratitude for having the honour to be here on this great occasion and to address this eminent audience.

The rich history of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the successor of the Bulgarian Learned Society is indeed highly remarkable and worthy of our respect and admiration. On this very day, 12 October in 1869, the Bulgarian Learned Society was established in Braila, Romania, with Professor Marin Drinov – a historian and philologist like myself -- as your first President who played a decisive role in the creation of your Academy.

With the later move to Sofia and then in 1911 becoming the Bulgarian Academy you quickly established yourselves as an authoritative scientific centre, demonstrating a true and long-standing commitment to science and scholarship despite difficult challenges, and showing the importance of the academy's cultural influence and significance. The history of this academy is testament to how evidence-based science as a common good, transgresses natural borders,

to deliver knowledge not only at national and regional levels, but also to the global community.

The academy has proven its excellence in providing policy for the development of science and research, for instance, by accounting for about half of the scientific output in Bulgaria, by establishing c. 50 research units, as well as through its active participation in the European Research Area. These are but a few of the numerous achievements of your Academy, alongside the pursuit of enlightenment values and democratic principles. The academy's importance for advancements in scientific research and policy for Bulgaria, the Balkans, for Europe and globally, is therefore evident and highly admirable.

I am particularly encouraged by your Academy's actions to encourage early career researchers, to train doctoral candidates in 240 PhD programmes, and establish a Career Development Centre as well as encouraging talent in secondary schools.

It is in times like today's, where scientists and researchers find themselves in more and more competitive environments, ensuring trust in science and expertise that academies need to be audible voices of reason. It is fitting in this your 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary to honour the memory of the great scientists in this Academy and expand on their wisdom. If we take for instance Leibniz's founding ideas for an academy; namely to establish a place where scientists from all scientific disciplines can come together to work in an interdisciplinary fashion, we must realise that it is precisely this interconnectedness that is today sorely needed. The key to solving many of our problems, no matter their size, lies in cooperation. In cooperation between disciplines, between countries, but most importantly between people.

The Bulgarian academy has shown tremendous commitment to these values. So much so that you were fantastic hosts of the ALLEA 2018 General Assembly! You warmly welcomed us here in Sofia, where we shared insights during the scientific symposium *“Science in Times of Challenged Trust and Expertise”*, as well as during the science-policy symposium co-organised by the European academies’ project SAPEA, entitled *“Shaping European Science Advice: Insights and Experiences”*. It is precisely these platforms for exchange on the European level that build trust and confidence in one another and I would like to repeat ALLEA’s sincere gratitude for hosting us here.

We are genuinely appreciative of the Bulgarian Academy’s commitment to ALLEA over the years. The academy was a founding member of ALLEA 25 years ago and has since taken active part in many ALLEA activities. First, Prof Eugene Nickolov was a much admired Board member and I would like to mention my dear former colleague in the ALLEA Board, Professor Nikolay Miloshev, who admirably served for 6 years up until 2018 and invited the Board in 2014 to hold its meeting here – my first visit to your country.

Ultimately, we at ALLEA, look forward to maintaining our partnership with you, and to continue to help you connect with all the other European academies and their research. So, dear Members of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in the name of the ALLEA team and as its Vice-President, congratulations once more on 150 years of successful academic research, and for 150 years of commitment to the world of sciences.

Thank you very much for your attention.