

Discours de l'EHESS (Président F. Weil et S. Tcherkezoff)

16 mars 2011

Under the same address with our respectful greetings, I will first read the message sent by EHESS President Professor Francois WEIL, and then I will add few words.

Votre Excellence Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Michel Filhol  
Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Young,  
Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific Professor Andrew McIntyre,  
Monsieur le Conseiller de coopération Pierre Labbe  
Monsieur le Délégué général pour le Pacifique de l'Institut de Recherche en  
Développement Gilles Fédière  
Monsieur le Directeur à la Culture du Vanuatu Directeur du Vanuatu  
Kaljoral Senta Marcellin Abong,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

Please accept my apologies for being unable to attend today's ceremony in Canberra. The French government has launched a selection and funding program aimed at choosing a core group of academic institutions. Today is precisely the day when I have to make the case for the EHESS in front of an international jury in the context of this program, called Initiative of Excellence, and I have to be in Paris for the occasion.

Allow me, however, through the voice of my colleague, Serge Tcherkezoff, to emphasize how happy I am of the signature of the convention between the Australian National University, the French Embassy in Australia, and the EHESS. While the EHESS has a strong tradition of international cooperation and partnerships, I must acknowledge that until today our relationship with academic institutions on your side of the world was informal and based on individual scientific contacts. This is now changing, and I want to warmly thank all those who made today's signature possible. I am grateful to the French Ambassador, Monsieur Michel Filhol, who has shown great interest in human and social sciences; to the Counselor for Cooperation, Mr. Pierre Labbe, whom I have met several times in Paris and whose tireless energy and belief in this convention have been essential; and to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for its funding of our project. At the Australian National

University, I would like to thank Vice-Chancellor Ian Young and Dean Andrew McIntyre for their enthusiastic support. Finally, I thank Serge Tcherkezoff for having made this possible from the perspective of the EHESS.

In our globalized world we need global knowledge. For an institution like the EHESS, probably one of the less provincial ones in the French system of higher education and one which has always looked to the rest of the world, establishing formal relations with a prestigious partner like the Australian National University is an honor and a pleasure. I hope that in the next few months and years we will be able to develop mutually enriching scientific exchanges. We would be happy to invite ANU colleagues to come to the EHESS as visiting professors, and I ask Serge Tcherkezoff to see how this could be done very quickly. In the meantime, I want to assure you that we at the EHESS are thrilled to visit ANU and work with ANU colleagues, and I hope to be able to tell you this in person again in the very near future.

Thank you.

Francois Weil  
President, EHESS

Allow me to add:

The agreement that is being signed today is the result of two significant strands of scholarship, from France, and from the Pacific, now converging.

The first strand is that of the EHESS, one of the French *Grands Etablissements*, and the main in France for the social sciences. It is organised as a kind of national College or Institute of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences—please see the handout we have prepared for more information. I shall refer to it, for brevity, as the French Institute for Social Sciences. For some time now it has been building up and expanding a strong international network. The Institute has a presence today in 27 countries, with agreements signed with 68 tertiary institutions. But until now it has had no representation anywhere in Oceania.

The second strand involves the relations between French and Australian

researchers, which, now that the dark era of French nuclear policy in the Pacific has ceased since long time, have grown ever stronger, and here today I can see a number of ANU colleagues who have been part of joint programmes with the French centre for Pacific studies (or CREDO, the Centre for Research and Documentation in Oceania) which Maurice Godelier, Pierre Lemonnier and myself have established in the early 1990s and which is a component of the French Institute EHESS.

But for the convergence of these two strands to occur, we needed the focused and determined contribution of a number of different people, to whom I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks.

The idea that this collaboration could be enlarged to include the social sciences more generally and established on the basis of a long-term agreement first came from Pierre Labbe. We are very fortunate that the Councillor of the French Embassy has long been an avid reader of the publications of both the French Institute EHESS and of the ANU. It was here in 2009 that he first shared this idea with me, when we were launching several books resulting from a joint programme between the ANU (colleagues from the then RSPAS) and the French Centre for Pacific Studies, the CREDO.

It was important that these joint programmes were already operating and that is thanks to Professor Darrell Tryon from ANU. Darrell has put much effort into initiating and expanding joint programmes with French and New Caledonian groups and institutions. The dialogue between Pierre Labbe and Darrell Tryon has been crucial in bringing about this agreement that is signed today. Darrell, but also Professors and Doctors Margaret Jolly, Christopher Ballard, Bronwen Douglas have been guests, for different periods, at our Centre CREDO. And I can confirm that the Institute EHESS will give priority to considering 2 applications per year from our ANU colleagues.

It was also important that the President of the French Institute Professor François Weil, and the Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific at ANU, Professor Andrew MacIntyre, gave their support to this idea and could see its rich potential. They have both expressed many times how much they value international cooperation, because they know its value in their own work. François Weil is first and foremost a researcher and teacher, a historian of the United States of America and the founder of the Centre of

North American Studies (CENA); his researches have focused on the social history of American industrialisation and on the history of migration in that part of the world. He is currently completing a book on the history of the American interest in genealogy since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. And here at ANU, we all know the priority that Professor Andrew MacIntyre gives to international cooperation—building a globally significant professional school of policy research and development and his own research, which focuses on the political economy of Southeast Asia and Australian foreign policy interests in the Asia-Pacific region, and his role for instance as Convenor of the Australia-Indonesia Governance Research Partnership.

We have also been fortunate that Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, Professor Ian Young, is a proponent of these ideas. In his first media conference, that was in October last year, he emphasised that one of his priorities would be to strengthen the international role of the ANU; furthermore, when he was asked which disciplinary fields he would be looking at as a priority, among the first he mentioned the social sciences. A testimony to this is his attendance, a few days ago, at the launch of the new campus-wide Gender Institute, a significant expansion of the Gender Relations Centre that Professor Margaret Jolly created and has directed for many years, and where I am honoured to have been an adjunct member since some time.

And we have been very fortunate in the support given to the establishment of this branch of the French Institute by His Excellency the Ambassador of France, Michel Filhol, who is keen to promote the social sciences, and who has a great interest in the history of the Pacific and the history of the European voyages to the Pacific, as I learned from the thoughts he was kind enough to share with me in the informal conversations I have had the pleasure of having with him. Thank you your Excellency!

We are here today at the opening of this Branch because of the generous support of these different individuals and institutions. My sincere thanks to all for making it possible!

Serge Tcherkezoff

Directeur d'études EHESS, Visiting Professor ANU