Dear colleagues

We are at the beginning of 2016 and I sincerely hope it will be a good year for EuroScience and for everyone of you.

No doubt ESOF 2016 in Manchester, will be the highpoint of the year for EuroScience, but I would also hope that we will see an increase in membership and in the impact of the EuroScientist.

The real world for European scientists did not improve during 2015, the aftermath of the austerity policies triggered by the global financial crisis is still a reality in most of our countries. Diminishing core resources and increased competition for grants, insecure career pathways and a dysfunctional ERA is what we face. The research institutions and research universities are being challenged in their traditional governance structures, and indeed the institutional landscape is under constant transformation. It was to be expected that these multiple pressures would lead to further division of labour more concerted action, and at the end a more effective research system for our continent. In my opinion we still have to see this happens.

The political focus on Europe as a strong knowledge based community of competitive countries has changed towards a much more short sighted and defensive agenda not only at the European level but also in most of our countries. Therefore I believe we should remind ourselves that it is in times of constraints systems must show their strength.

I have worked in all regions of the World on strengthening research, higher education and innovation systems, it is still my strong belief that no other region can match the diversity, productivity, and the strength of Europe. All others look to us for ideas, for advanced human capital and for the way we have built social cohesion, and indeed for longer term policies. One recent example is what was achieved during COP 21, despite its shortcomings, thanks to excellent French leadership. To face global climate change is what we in Europe have been planning for a long time.

EuroScience must insist on freedom and fairness for researchers, autonomy for institutions, and for independece in policy advice. We should assist our members as much as we can in insisting on this in each of their national systems.

But we could achieve much more if we became less defensive and less selfserving. We at EuroScience could offer ES as an umbrella for more of Europe's scientific organisations provided we have a strong income base and a much larger membership. We must all work hard and cooperatively on this during 2016.

All the best wishes for the New Year,
Lauritz