

Beijing, 3 May 2017

Dear ESEH Nomination Committee,

First, please let me express my humble gratitude for your invitation to share my perspective on the future of the ESEH with you as a nominee for the vice-presidency of our society.

Within the years I have spent as a member of the ESEH, I have experienced it as a welcoming and supportive group that is committed to secure high-level research in environmental history as well as teaming up with the neighboring sciences to proceed onto new paths. It expresses a strong European spirit through the regional diversity of its members and which institutionalizes in the coordinating regional representatives. Furthermore, the ESEH highlights event locations that bring the politically less strong EU member states into academic focus and declaring them as the center of our society. But it also provides funds to increase scholarly mobility and connects with academic partners around the globe.

To my view, this holds important messages for our individual scholarly communities and our political institutions. And the transgressing of national academic boundaries as practiced by the ESEH is indeed a living metaphor of our shared passion: The Environment. I believe that within the current troubled times of political disintegration of the EU together with continuing alarming news about environmental degradation, it is important for transnational societies to act as role models. They can set examples for meaningful European cooperation in research, thereby supporting their members in regional growth and funding acquisition.

In the case of my election as vice-president of the ESEH, I want to focus my term on increasing communication and visibility. Related measures could to start within our inner circles and extend beyond them to the public. Doubtlessly, our regional representatives are engaged and active individuals, and the new website of the Society has become a figurehead for the community. I think we (as a vibrant and lively society) can do more to support the president's coordinating work. For example, by bringing the regional nodes closer together in discussion and sharing local contributions, etc.. Even if this was only for a limited period to remind us as a society of the work that our colleagues and we do, of our role as an umbrella organization, and to even more strengthen European academic ties.

Furthermore, I am convinced that we have not reached our full potential in communicating our so very meaningful research beyond the proverbial bespoke, interested audience. Within our midst, a variety of creative and "multi-media" projects have grown over the years. As flagship projects of European research cooperation in environmental humanities and sciences, they contribute to raising awareness for both ecological topics and the benefit of multi-disciplinary perspectives on them. Such is not meant in a defensive way to justify the work that ESEH members commit to, but proudly and humbly sharing it beyond our general audience linking it well to the framework of our society.

This way, I hope we can contribute our part in protecting the European research environment, but more importantly spread the word about the outdatedness of environmental declensionist narratives by emphasizing the hopefulness that the ESEH's research projects are unearthing.

Agnes Kneitz
