

Dear members of ERGOMAS,

During the recent ERGOMAS conference in Athens, I was elected as the new president. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve ERGOMAS in this position. I would like to express my gratitude to the former president George Kaffes and all the colleagues in the board for their support and encouragement.

Being the president of ERGOMAS is a challenge that I am pleased to accept for a number of reasons.

First of all, for what ERGOMAS is and the values it stands for.

ERGOMAS is, above all, a bridging organization. Anchored in a strong European pillar, it developed into a truly international forum, connecting people from all over the world. It is inclusive and diverse, and so it should stay.

ERGOMAS is also bridging diverse disciplines, promoting interdisciplinary study and bringing together researchers from very different intellectual backgrounds and traditions. It is scientifically pluralistic and this is something I would like to see us cherish and strengthen.

ERGOMAS connects academic and professional contexts, researchers and practitioners. As such, it contributes to reducing the gap between knowledge production and applied action. If it is true that no science chooses for us – political action has its own ethical and normative rationality - it is also clear that no policy choice will be effective if disconnected from knowledge production, accurate analysis and sound research results.

Beyond all this, ERGOMAS is also a community; a place where so many of us experience the 'strength of weak ties', where we find the space and time to discuss research problems, projects and ideas, in a way that is often rarely possible in our own professional contexts, and, most significantly, do it in a comparative manner.

Secondly, being a woman president, is (unfortunately) still not irrelevant. I am happy to uphold the promotion of gender equality as a fundamental ERGOMAS value, and carry on the legacy of the former women presidents, as well as of all those- men and women - who have been supporting gender equality in their various roles.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, this challenge is particularly significant at a moment when so many of the core political values at the heart of the European construction – and which are also the basis for free and independent science - are under threat: democracy, freedom, justice, the rule of law and human rights. I believe that organizations, as much as other type of groups and individuals, have a responsibility to protect and promote these values. In particular, ERGOMAS should stand for its members in countries that have been imposing growing constraints on freedom of thought and movement, or even effective censorship and political violence.

I count on you all to help me strengthen ERGOMAS around these values and hold the flame for the coming two years.

Since there is an ERGOMAS tradition that the president has a specific responsibility in organizing the biannual conference, I am happy to announce that our next conference will take place in Lisbon in 2019. I invite you all to bookmark your agenda and come to Portugal to be part of what we hope will be another great ERGOMAS event.

Please let us know if you have ideas or suggestions that will help to improve this organization, its structure, procedures and outreach. Your input will be crucial to further consolidate ERGOMAS as a scientific and professional group, but also as a community.

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