

## Meeting with Geneviève Fioraso

***Former French Minister of Higher Education and Research, Current Deputy***

### I. Following the science in motion

To reflect on the Law as a politician, you need to learn to reason in term of advantages and disadvantages and avoid ideological debate. There is a need to adopt a more holistic and innovative approach.

Extricating out from the fantasy of the purity of the expert who never worked in the industry and application of science. This fantasy is partially due to the precautionary principle. We are today in a society of defiance towards science.

The precautionary principle is misunderstood. This principle implemented in 2005 under the presidency of Jacques Chirac had the vocation of being used for environmental issue. Today, the jurisprudence shows that the utilization of the principle is mainly made in public health sector. This is the example of the relay antenna of Bobigny. The relay antenna was inactivated but the neighbors complained of headaches. The Court recognized the prejudice of anxiety provoked by the idea of this relay antenna, as a consequence the antenna has been removed!

Science needs to be followed by autonomous comity, there is a need to bring back some rationality.

### II. Promoting an interdisciplinary approach

As a Minister, I encouraged the implementation of MOOC (“Massive Open Online Course”) to promote the interdisciplinarity and stimulate the entrepreneurship. Admitting risks and mistakes is important, they are progress factors. We need to tell a story, to be able to tell the evolution of Science. Our system is blocked; our culture needs to evolve.

The idea of a European iGEM is seductive because the problem is that we have today “an information leak” to the US.

We should encourage an innovation principle and not a precautionary principle which appears to put a real brake on innovation. Bans do not help to encourage research.

### III. The value of the research

I promoted the research thanks to a 2013 statue. When a research can be commercially exploited we need to promote this. Valorizing the research also comes with a simple principle: a patent should have the same value as a publication.

Digital technology deeply modified things within the research by changing the link between fundamental research and industrial applications, they can influence each other.

The role of politician the international benchmarking, he has to create a favorable environment for the scientist and evaluate the needs of the society.

Empowering instead of imposing a law must also be the role of the politician as ensuring a transversality. In France, institute often cares about one specialization, for instance the vision institute. We need to avoid science islands.

#### IV. Talking with the general public

In France, there is no peaceful debate. France is good un research but not in innovation. There are exceptions because a lot of patents are registered thanks to the French Atomic Energy and Alternative Energy Commission (CEA) and the city of Grenoble, an innovation center. To teach Science, there is the example of George Charpak and his method of "Science by hand" which is used as early as at pre-school. There is also a need of teaching the History of Science at school to avoid ideological postures.