

ICSU ADDRESS

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Mr President, Madam President of the CNRS, Mr Brézin, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I address you this evening because it gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to the excellence of ICSU and its unquestioned international influence. I am pleased that the 75th anniversary of the International Council for Science (ICSU) is being celebrated at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.

ICSU has contributed for decades past to the reinforcement of links between science and society and has successfully mobilised the international scientific community on a number of major topics. ICSU acts as an umbrella organisation for a number of prestigious scientific societies, including the Académie des Sciences.

In my capacity as an elected representative with responsibility for research and the new technologies, and on behalf of the Mayor of Paris, I would like to reaffirm our support for the Council, which carries out vital work.

Since 2001 the City of Paris has been implementing an active policy in support of research, directly primarily at research workers from other countries, providing accommodation, grants, a range of appropriate reception services, and so on.

In addition, in order to reinforce the links between science and society and to make elected representatives, administrations and everyone living in Paris aware of current scientific issues, we have set up a programme of research and citizens' debates.

In this way, under a programme of research specifically relating to Paris set up in 2004, a large number of researchers in the Ile-de-France have been investigating pollution, housing and the environment in Paris. I have also initiated citizens' debates on current issues, such as nanotechnologies and climate, held in the auditorium at the Hôtel de Ville. I hope to introduce more initiatives of this kind in 2007 – this is advance notice for anyone interested!

Lastly, at its own level, Paris takes part in operations for spreading scientific and technological culture. Through the **Sciences Sur Seine** festival, the playful side of science is highlighted, with a number of theatre troupes focusing their shows on some scientific theme. It also supports the **Parisciences** international scientific film festival, which will be held in October 2006. Another of our concerns is making young people more aware of the possibilities of scientific careers. With a view to guiding young people towards scientific careers and diversifying work experience possibilities at lower secondary school level, the City and the local education authority launched a new type of action in 2005, enabling pupils to follow the activity of a research laboratory in Paris on a day-to-day basis. The City asked a number of interested research bodies and scientific institutions to accept one or two pupils to spend a week in their laboratories. Priority has been given to those sectors where demand for recruitment will be greatest in the years to come – these include physics, chemistry, biology and life sciences. Almost 130 places in research laboratories have been made available.

That sums up our activities very briefly.

Thank you very much. I wish you a very pleasant evening.”