

## Pre-Document to Workshop 1

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Dialogue driven by political instruments and responding academic autonomy

The hope of the organizers of this (first) World Knowledge Dialogue is that it will be possible to bridge the divide between scientific research between natural science and humanities. Is it just an unrealistic dream to return to the “honnête homme” able to participate in all adventures of the spirit? It there, on the contrary, a need for further development of our understanding of nature and societies? To quote Albert Jacquard: “Superman exists; it is not me, it is not you, it is us!” How many individuals – and with which experience, methodology, knowledge – must work together to realize “Superman”?

The organizers of the WKD think that building the bridge is necessary and urgent...

1. Because neither scientific cultures is sufficient to answer the questions society wants to see answered. Progress in knowledge of complex phenomenon can (only) be realized through a process of cross-fertilization and exchange of concepts and methods.
2. Because the “dialogue de sourds” between science and humanities is detrimental for the dialogue between the scientific community and the society, between the scientific community and politics.
3. Because there is an individual aspiration to overcome the boundaries of an overly reductionist way of communication with the world and our human fellows

Geoffrey West expressed the hope to “start a process”, to “think in action terms”, and insisted that the length of an effective process will take years of discussions and common work.

Julia Higgins underlined the need to develop together “methodologies” in order to make the dialogue possible and promote common projects.

Our workshop has to explore the role of politics and political instruments. We can approach our tasks on several levels:

- Are the political bodies able to integrate, in their questionings and in their decisions, the multiple dimensions of their fields of influence (climate, migration, violence, urbanization, etc.)? How can one organize multidimensional information flows and where can the synthesis be achieved on a practical level? An interesting example can be the relation between politics and the scientific community working in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

- As responsible for the promotion of basic research, how can political bodies and specialized institutions like the CNRS, the FNRS, the European Foundation, etc. stimulate multidimensional research projects?
- Which obstacles emerge from the selection systems in professional careers? How is it possible to avoid the advantage given to deep and narrow specialization over the capacity to dialogue with other professionals?
- How can the dialogue between sciences and humanities be embedded in the broader dialogue between research and society?