



Paris, 25 January 2018

Dear colleagues,

On proposal by our supervisory Ministry and upon the recommendation of the relevant commissions of the French National Assembly and Senate, I have been appointed Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the CNRS by the French President during the Council of Ministers of January 24, 2018. The decree of our organization specifies that its President oversees general management.

Science forms the basis of a progressive society in which advances, both technological and social, benefit the greatest number. It also generates many breakthrough innovations that lead to job and value creation. France, a country with a strong scientific tradition, has all the necessary assets to be a key player in building the global world of tomorrow. To achieve this, it must strongly support science to maintain and strengthen its influence on the international stage.

In this regard, **the role of the CNRS is crucial**. Its global vision and interdisciplinary nature make it unique. Our institution is the **flagship of French scientific research**. It must have the ambition to **strengthen this status by developing partnerships with academia**, universities, schools and other research organizations, as well as with industry, multinationals, small and medium-sized enterprises and startups, local authorities, especially regional councils, and the main social players. The CNRS must ensure that it enhances both its impact and **added value**, but can only do so by making relevant choices. Indeed, we cannot be involved in every project, everywhere.

In this general framework, I have put forward six priorities for the CNRS:

- to uphold world-class basic research in all scientific fields
- to promote interdisciplinarity, especially regarding major societal challenges
- to work hand in hand with industrial and economic partners on breakthrough innovations
- to be a driving force for promoting French research on the global stage, especially in large research infrastructures and programs
- to redefine partnerships with autonomous universities
- to contribute both scientific culture and expertise in advising decision-makers and society at large.

These priorities build on the remarkable work achieved by Alain Fuchs, then Anne Peyroche, and their teams during the last eight years, for which I congratulate and thank them. I am also committed to bringing about the necessary evolutions to take into account the new national, European and international contexts, as well as the expectations placed upon the CNRS.

The CNRS must act as a national organization through a global policy and not as a federation of more or less autonomous institutes that work in silos. However, the CNRS must **consider the specific nature of the main scientific fields**. The above-mentioned priorities may therefore not be applied in the same manner across all institutes.

I am convinced that our country needs a strong CNRS, failing which there can be no strong universities and vice-versa. This must imply the State's full support.

If the CNRS is today a **renowned and internationally respected organization**, it is above all due to the **quality of its workforce**. It is therefore with you, personnel of the CNRS and of our partner institutions working in joint structures, that I want to pursue this objective. The commitment and dedication of each and every one of you is vital. I am aware of your attachment to the CNRS. With all our partners, we will focus all our efforts **on the advancement of knowledge to bolster France's influence abroad, promote a progress-based society and encourage breakthrough innovations**.

To be at the helm of France's very best research institution is for me a great honor, a pleasure and a formidable challenge. With you, I trust that I can take it on.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line that curves into a loop and then extends downwards.

Antoine Petit