

WATER JPI CONFERENCE, HELSINKI, 6-7 June 2018

Concluding words by Maurice HERAL, Water JPI Chair

I would like to make my concluding words along seven items:

As first one, we need to **recognise that emerging pollutants are a major issue** for Human Health and Ecosystems. Key figures have been provided by NORMAN (700 emerging contaminants, 40 new chemicals per hour) or JPI AMR (more than 10 million deaths per year in 2050 due to antimicrobial resistance, more than cancers). I could illustrate also with some real cases, such as the Chlordecon, a banana pesticide impacting population in Guadeloupe or the Tributyltin impact. Banning such substances from the market requires many years, sometime decades... and even longer to get rid of their impacts in the environment.

Secondly, we should **promote solutions for reducing the impacts**, which means acting from monitoring to more integrated approaches based on the precautionary principle:

- a. Identifying sources and effects / impacts on health and ecosystems
- b. Qualifying and quantifying risk
- c. Promoting innovative treatments, securing water reuse as the water resources will be insufficient for all required needs.
- d. Developing alternative products for pesticides or antibiotics, including Nature-Based Solutions molecules

My **third take-home message** is that there is a need to **change the landscape**, in particular in terms of consumption (in diet, in drugs, pesticides use) to better use our scarce resources. We are all involved in this effort. This will require us to work with different stakeholders (i.e. policy-makers, NGOs) and therefore different types of actions / skills: for formulating recommendations as those in the NEREUS Cost Action presented this afternoon, supporting the integration of innovative solutions in policies, or advising industries for alternative options.

Fourthly, we have to emphasise that we need more **pluri-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity** to tackle global challenges

- e. From soils to land, rivers and groundwater resources to coastal areas,
- f. From ecosystems to human health
- g. To different users (i.e. Agriculture, industrial sectors...)
- h. In cooperation with the other initiatives, in particular the JPIs (OCEANS, FACCE, AMR, CLIMATE...).

As a Fifth recommendation, in addition to research and innovation development, we need to do more on **knowledge transfer**, to bridge with citizen, economic sectors and policy-makers. This is crucial for building the necessary trust in innovative solutions.

During the conference, it was many times mentioned that some extra efforts should be made to summarise key research findings and transform these into policy briefs for impacting policy development and implementation. Becoming a knowledge broker will require some communication professionals.

Sixthly, what should be the **role of the JPIs** in this context? Why are they unique?

JPIs are not instruments, they are acting over the **long-term, to align** national programmes of the members countries to European ones, with the aim of maximising efforts. National research and innovation programmes represent 88% of public RDI expenditures in Europe. These multinational initiatives also have benefit at national level, through a broader knowledge sharing.

Regarding the topic of this conference, the Water JPI launched a Joint Transnational Call in 2013 (leading to the funding of 7 projects) and a knowledge hub is being established on this issue with a seed group of 24 scientists and a focus on knowledge transfer . We will have, in the upcoming months, a second call in cooperation with the JPIs OCEANS and AMR (Anti-Microbial Resistance). It is a nice example of long-term action over a period of 10 years.

What will be the JPI position in the future EU Framework Programme? The answer is quite uncertain as the European Commission wants to define scientific priorities. Will these EC priorities meet the JPI priorities expressed by their memberships? Will they converge? This is the work to be done in the upcoming year with the support of all the member states.

Finally, I would like to thank the Academy of Finland for the excellent work in organising the second Water JPI conference and for the large role they are playing in the Water JPI actions. With 210 attendees from 25 countries, this conference is a major success. Thanks also to the Finnish Ministries and Research Institutes that contributed to this event. Thanks to all speakers and participants.

See you soon!