

Dear ERNOP members,

Stepping aside as ERNOP president, I take the opportunity for a short look back. What has ERNOP established since we launched it in September 2007 in Amsterdam. Leslie Hustinx, Pamala Wiepking, Rene Bekkers and I were together in my office at the VU. It was Pamala who came with the idea to create a network of scholars in Europe. Why? The number of scholars who were involved in philanthropy was growing. However, they had to conduct their research in isolated positions in a variety of university departments. The research domain was scattered. There was a need to associate, a need to communicate, a need to get know each other, to meet and to support each other's work. Most of us felt underestimated by university colleagues and professors, struggling for recognition but eager and convinced to go forward. To emancipate philanthropy as a meaningful promising and relevant domain of research. In this respect ERNOP offered and still offers a feeling of coming home; a small but inspired group of congenial peers, a family. This feature still characterizes the current ERNOP network; we want see each other in person, to share our experiences, to drink a beer or wine, and to encourage each other in our journey to get full academic status.

In making this mission real Pamala published the first ERNOP publication: *"The state of Giving Research"* in Europe in 2009.

It was also Pamala who wrote an elaborated strategic plan for ERNOP. In the "Vision document of the ERNOP board" dated May 17th 2010 among others we can read:

"Five year goals for ERNOP"

1. *To establish ERNOP as a leading innovative, knowledgeable and complete network of European interdisciplinary philanthropy researchers.*
2. *To secure structural funding for ERNOP.*
3. *To establish a Giving in Europe research methodology and database.*
4. *To make ERNOP a successful coordinating body of joined European research projects and publications.*
5. *To establish the annual ERNOP conference as the leading philanthropy conference in Europe.*

6. *To establish a new official ERNOP journal, or to seek cooperation with an existing journal.”*

This all happened in a time-span of growing interest in philanthropy of the EC, and the Dept. R&I in particular in research funding and fundraising. EC Reports like *“Giving more for Research in Europe”* published in 2006 and *“Engaging philanthropy for university research”* published in 2008, paved the way for researchers on philanthropy to get to know each other.

In 2010 Beth Breeze, Iain Wilkinson of Kent University and Barbara Gouwenberg and I were invited and commissioned to conduct the research *“Fundraising from philanthropy in European universities”*, which results were reported in the *“Giving in Evidence”* publication in 2011. A highly rewarded report. Success breeds success. ERNOP was commissioned to conduct the research *“European Foundations supporting Research and Innovation”*, known as the EUFORISTUDY in 2012. In this research ERNOP could optimally profit of its European network of philanthropy-experts.

In the meantime ERNOP’s Exec. Director Barry Hoolwerf launched the ERNOP research-project *“Giving Europe”*. All ERNOP members and a number of affiliates contributed voluntarily to gather the available data on philanthropy in their EU home-countries. A marvelous publication was released in 2017. The gathered data and the factsheet still get full attention from the Brussels Administration, from members of the European Parliament and from EC Commissioners, like Margaritis Schinas who recently supported the promotion of the ERNOP Giving Europe research to become part of the Social Economy Action Plan of EU-president von Leyen. **Giving Europe is our ERNOP-Business-CARD.** December 8th 2021¹ we know if we are “in”, and if “yes” we can roll out research among our ERNOP-members. The elaborated ERNOP research-plan is already written by Barry. (What should ERNOP be without him?)

The EUFORI study and publication in 2015 was followed by an EU conference *“Philanthropy and Social Investments”* (www.phisiconference.eu) in April 2016 in Amsterdam. In 2017 Barbara Gouwenberg and I were appointed to chair the

¹ The European Commission launched in Social Economy Action Plan on December 9th stating that a specific study on philanthropic donations will be launched as part of the action plan. We eagerly wait for the details!

EC-DG R&I Expert group “*Venture Philanthropy and Social Investments*”. In 2018 the report “*Driving Progress for Research and Innovation*” was published. The recommendations of this report are now used for the coming ERNOP – AGAPE conference in Turino, March, 2022 to bridge the gap between EU-foundations and ERNOP.

Europe harbours a long tradition of philanthropy. However, too often, , the perception of philanthropy in public, political and academic debates is dominated by examples from the United States. In this context it has come to be associated with the Wealthy and super-rich, forgetting that in reality it is a matter for everyone. In Europe, for example, the majority of philanthropic contributions come from “ordinary” households, like Giving Europe proofs.

As said, Europe has a long tradition of philanthropy. Philanthropy belongs – and is part of the European value system. Research on European Philanthropy and ERNOP are young. The future is ours. We are able to show by empirical research the prevalence of social commitment and the function of philanthropy for all societies in the world to survive. On this I have developed a general theoretical framework to analyse philanthropy – in all its different forms – as a societal system function. I my conviction we need such a general theory like the cultural anthropologist Marcel Mauss offered in his book “*Sur le Don*” (The Gift). My new book, that will be released in 2022 is titled: “*A world of Giving and Volunteering. Philanthropy as a universal Social Arrangement*”.

I come to an end. It was a pleasure and honour to be president of ERNOP for 13 years. I step aside, but stay as an affiliate board-member responsible for the progress of the Giving Europe project in Brussels till a formal contract is concluded. Thanks for all inspiration, friendship and trust given to me.

Theo Schuyt