Your excellences, dear Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Since quite a few years now, the Executive Committee of ICCEES regularly meets in Asia for important scientific events organized by our Japanese, Chinese and now Korean colleagues. Last year in Shanghai, I was given the opportunity to tell how the executive committee of ICCEES and myself were impressed by your extensive development. Our organization can now be proud of progressing symmetrically in East and West.

Let’s remember that when ICCEES was created during the founding Congress of Banff in Canada in 1974, Japan was the only state representing the Asian continent. Today, two years only after the IX th Congress of ICCEES in Makuhari in 2015, I’m delighted to see how our international network is benefiting from this eastern focus.

ICCEES was established during the Cold War to promote Soviet and East European studies. Because our association was academic rather than political it was logically maintained after the end of the Cold War. Since then ICCEES constantly tried to become an inter-continental organization therefore extending itself to former Soviet-bloc states and Asia. In 2008, the Chinese Association for Russia, East European and Central Asian Studies (CAREECAS) became part of ICCEES. During the same year, the Korean Association of Slavic Studies (KASS) normalized its partnership with ICCEES. In 2012, Mongolian colleagues created their own national association of Central and East European studies before becoming full members of ICCEES a year later. In 2014, Kazakhstani specialists followed suit. That same year, the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences became an associate member of ICCEES.

Clearly this shows how fast was the growth of Asian Associations’ common activities under ICCEES umbrella. In 2008, Asian specialists on Slavic Eurasian studies declared that they would hold a yearly East Asian conference with the status of an ICCEES regional conference. You had already Sapporo in 2009, Seoul in 2010, Beijing in 2011, Kolkata in 2012, Osaka in 2013, Seoul again in 2014, and of course Shanghai. It’s already the third time that this conference takes place in Seoul. What a great demonstration of your dynamism!

This year, your regional conference goes on in Seoul under a crucial and up to date topic: *Conflict and Harmony in Eurasia in the 21st century: Dynamics and Aesthetics*.

Indeed, today, the entire world is anxiously observing the region. The North Korean military pressure has increased recently. But the list of social, economic, political and geopolitical phenomenon threatening world peace is long.

Almost nothing changed since our last meeting in Shanghai. The world is still full of uncertainties, geopolitical conflicts are still multiplying, particularly around resources issues, populism increases within political governance, societies are still facing rising social inequalities, migration pressure, new forms of destabilization by terrorist groups exploiting religion, not to forget climate change threatening the earth we are sharing. A world is ending and we don’t know yet what the new one will be made of against all those threats.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, hybrid warfare, historical revisionism, nuclear tests by North Korea but also natural disaster which have happened particularly in Asia but also in Europe. We have to adapt our analytical concepts and inter-disciplinary approach to this broad range of phenomenon to make them more understandable.

Let’s not forget that we are commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, which left a trace till today and has differed consequences everywhere.

As men and women of sciences, it is our duty to analyze those changes and to understand them so as to give policy-makers and citizens the tools to avoid the worse. If we had to give an aim to our academic exchanges I believe it would be to ensure that our knowledge is progressing.

It is the mission and endeavor of ICCEES to enhance the scholarly exchange on Eastern Europe on a global level. In this respect, we regard our presence here in Seoul as an important step to deepen the collaboration with our colleagues from different Asian associations. I am sure that we shall have many opportunities to think of new tools to enhance our partnership.

Excellences, dear Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of ICCEES Executive Committee and International Council I wish you a very productive work.