Excellences, Ladies and Gentelmen,

Dear colleagues,

Under the slogan “Makuhari – Where Many Wests Meet Many Easts”, the IX ICCEES World Congress was held the first time in an Asian country.

This Congress demonstrated the academic prosperity and dynamism of Asia. Thanks to Japanese colleagues (I would address my personal thanks to Professors Matuzaki and Nomano from Tokyo University) this Congress was an impressive success. There were 1310 delegates from 50 different countries attending 378 panels and roundtables.

By contrast I would underline that in the founding Congress of the Western ICCEES in Banff, Canada in 1974; Japan was the only Asian representative. Today, one year only after the IX Th Congress, one can see how our international network has benefited from turning towards the East.

ICCEES was established during the historical period called the Cold War, to promote Soviet and East European studies. Logically as our association was academic and not political, ICCEES remained after the Cold War.

At that time ICCEES has tried to extend its dimension into a large intercontinental organization by opening the door to the former Soviet-bloc countries and Asia. In 2008, the Chinese Association for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (CAREECAS) became a full member of ICCEES. In that same year, the Korean Association of Slavic Studies (KASS) normalized its relationship with ICCEES. In 2012, Mongolian colleagues created their national association of Central and East European studies and in the next year, they became a full member of ICCEES. In 2014, Kazakhstani specialists followed this example. That same year, the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, became an associate member of ICCEES.

As Professor Matuzaki quoted in our ICCEES website the growth and extension of Asian Associations activities under the ICCEES umbrella was very fast. In 2008, Asian specialists on Slavic Eurasian studies declared they would hold a yearly East Asian conference (with the status of an ICCEES regional conference). You have already held six regional conferences — Sapporo in 2009, Seoul in 2010, Beijing in 2011, Kolkata in 2012, Osaka in 2013, and Seoul again in 2014.

This year your regional conference takes place in Shanghai under a very crucial and up to day target: New Opportunities and New Challenges in the Greater Asia.

Indeed, today everyone looks at this region worryingly but also with curiosity and hope.

Today’s world is full of uncertainties: geopolitical conflicts are intensifying, notably around the question of resources, populisms are increasingly part of the political governance, societies face rising social inequalities, unique migration pressure, new forms of terrorism exploiting religion and global warming threatening us worldwide. A world is ending and we don’t know yet what the new world will be made of.

We are confronted currently to The Russo-Ukrainian conflict, to the hybrid wars, to the historic revisionism, to the nuclear provocations by North Korea but also to the natural disasters that heavily hit your region but also other continents. Those are a few phenomenon in front of which we must adapt our analytical concepts and our inter-disciplinary approaches to make them understandable.

We as men/women of sciences we must analyze those events and understand them, give the means to politicians and the people to avoid the worse. You are today in the frontline and this is certainly the direction taken by this conference, which, doubtlessly will contribute to make knowledge progress.

We can see that Asian associations give an opportunity to Western associations, both members of ICCEES, for a very motivating challenge.

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

Horoszoi raboty

Drzou ni men Da huoj chen gong

Thank you for your attention,

GM