



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

Laudatio for Professor François Héran

Winner of the Descartes Huygens Prize 2010

**Proclaimed by Professor Robbert Dijkgraaf,
President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences**

**On the occasion of the Descartes-Huygens Prize Ceremony
Amsterdam, 11 april 2011**

François Héran, Research Professor at the National Institute of Demographic Studies, is one of the recipients of the 2010 Descartes Huygens Prize. The Prize is awarded in recognition of his outstanding research work in the area of social demography and his contribution to French-Dutch relations.

Professor Héran, born in 1953 in Laon, is one of the world's leading authorities on social demography. He is a graduate of the *École normale supérieure* and holds an *agrégation* in philosophy, the highest teaching degree in France. Following four years of field work in Spain and Bolivia, he returned to France and joined the *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* [INSEE] and the *Institut national d'études démographiques* (INED), where he has been director from 1999 until 2010. He is chair of the Steering Committee of PRES "Sorbonne Paris Cité" and vice-chair of the French National Assessment Board of the Population Census. As president of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) he has played and continues to play a major role in the current success of the Association.

François Héran's main fields of research are the organisation of sample surveys, immigration and integration, family-formation, and kinship structures. He has been in charge of several national demographic surveys like "Sociability in France", "Couple Formation", "Educational Investments of Families", or "Longitudinal Study of Electoral Turn-Out", and the family survey associated to the census.

He has authored several highly influential works in which he offers distinct analyses and clear recommendations. His book *Le Temps des immigrés. Essai sur le destin de la population française*, in which Héran sets out a transparent strategic agenda for France based on empirical study and scientific insights, had a major impact on the French society and helped to shape the public debate about how the country should position itself in the 21st century as part of a globalising society.

The cooperation between the *Institut national d'études démographiques* (INED) and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), one of the research institutes of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, started in the 1970s when professor Dirk van de Kaa was director of NIDI and professor Gerard Callot director of INED. The cooperation resulted in the establishment of the European Association of Population Studies (EAPS), which has been and is instrumental in developing a community of demographers in Europe. During his stay at NIDI, François Héran will work on two related subjects that are of prime importance, not

only for the Netherlands and France, but also for Europe. The first subject is international migration. The aim is to develop a roadmap for migration research in Europe. The study of migration and the integration of migrants in new communities and a global society is currently highly fragmented. As a result, progress is slow. The second subject is the European identity. Who are we and who do we want to be as a group? How does social identities affect social cohesion?

In awarding the Descartes-Huygens Prize, we are honouring an eminent French scientist who has made a huge contribution to Dutch research and education. We are delighted to award the Prize to François Héran for the high quality of his scientific work, proven by his major experience in trailblazing migration research and his skill in introducing facts and insights into the debate about migration, his impressive track record and his international stature. We are convinced that this prize will give a further boost to the already close cooperation between French and Dutch scientists, so that we can continue to expect important scientific achievements from him and his Dutch partners and friends.