



Opening and welcome by Kristel Baele, President of the Executive Board

105th Dies Natalis, 8 November 2018

Thank you very much Sonia, for this kind introduction.

Your excellencies, distinguished guests, trustees, dear colleagues, dear students, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome you today, on behalf of the Executive Board and the Deans, to the Dies Natalis of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

A very special welcome to our honorary doctors and their honorary supervisors:

- Honorary doctor Professor George Davey Smith and his honorary supervisor professor Johan Mackenbach
- Honorary doctor Professor Nina Glick-Schiller and her honorary supervisor professor Inge Hutter
- Honorary doctor Professor Debra Satz and her honorary supervisor professor Jack Vromen

The professors Davey-Smith, Glick-Schiller and Satz will receive their honorary doctorate by recommendation of our three Erasmus Initiatives.

Dear professors, we are honoured to have you here today. Welcome and congratulations.

I would also like to congratulate the winner of the FAME Athena Award, Lizzy Boonen (HR policy worker at Erasmus MC), for her outstanding contribution to enhancing female talent in our university. Her Female Talent Class connects perfectly with our diversity and inclusion goals. The prize will be presented by our new Central Diversity Officer, Professor Semiha Denктаş.

This year's Dies is very special for two reasons.

First of all it is the celebration of 105 years Erasmus University. A year filled with interesting events to commemorate that in 1913 a few influential businessmen decided that Rotterdam needed a good institution for higher education, which is what De Nederlandsche Handelshoogeschool became.



We have come a long way since then, in our wide range of disciplines, in our student numbers, both national and international and in the role we play in society. I will briefly touch on that subject in a minute.

The other reason that this Dies is special is because it is the first one for our new Rector Magnificus, Professor Rutger Engels. He has taken over from professor Huibert Pols last June, so today will be the first time you will hear him deliver the Dies speech.

The theme for this Dies is *'Advancing Science, Impacting Society'*.

We have chosen this title because it is so close to the one we chose for our lustrum year: Science meets City.

Society needs us and our researchers to help solve the issues the world is faced with today.

Issues regarding globalization, digitalization, immigration and integration and environmental problems. We have made it our mission to make a positive impact on societal challenges and strive to understand and contribute to solving these challenges.

Today, Professor Rutger Engels will talk to you about the ways in which we can and already have impact on society with our research and excellent knowledge and experience. And you will also hear from our three honorary doctors what they have to say about impact in relation to their own fields of expertise.

It promises to be an inspiring afternoon and I am very pleased you are here to share in the celebrations. And now, please welcome to the stage, for his first Dies speech: Professor Rutger Engels.