



Embedding the Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020

Recent Communications by the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council on Horizon 2020 have clearly articulated the European Union's continued commitment to deepening the central and pervasive position of the social sciences and humanities to Europe's future. This vision is to be applauded and one that ALLEA fully supports, such as it did, most recently, in October 2012, with its Comments on the EC Communication "A reinforced European Research Area partnership for excellence and growth" of July 2012.¹ The opportunity it presents for European policy and research now needs to be grasped. A strategy to embed the social sciences and humanities across the design, shape, establishment and implementation of all three pillars and the seven societal challenges is required. We therefore recommend the following roadmap by which to embed the social sciences and humanities ensuring their value and contribution to Horizon 2020 are fully realised.

1. ALLEA is of the view that the following actions are key to the successful integration and realisation of the potential contribution of the social sciences and humanities to Horizon 2020:

- a. Introduction of specific quotas for the representation of the social sciences and humanities within Expert Advisory Groups and Programme Committees across all three pillars and societal challenges.
- b. Allocation of individual quotas within the aforementioned structures for the social sciences, and for the humanities. Both areas cover a vast disciplinary range and an extraordinary breadth of perspectives. One cannot be substituted for the other.
- c. Adequate social science and humanities representation amongst the evaluators of bids to Horizon 2020 Calls to support the realisation of the interdisciplinary goals that Horizon 2020 has set itself.
- d. Development of a new enhanced and dedicated unit for the social sciences and humanities and their embedding within DG Research & Innovation.

2. We welcome and support existing steps taken by the Commission - including the opening of the application process for Horizon 2020's Expert Advisory Groups - to enhance the transparency and accountability of Horizon 2020. ALLEA has already provided, on DG Research & Innovation's request, a comprehensive list of researchers to assist in the further direction of these strands. Additionally, with experts from across Europe, Academies have particular strengths to provide for Horizon 2020's design and for the membership of its Advisory Groups. We look forward to engaging on all the Advisory Groups in this respect. ALLEA's Academies will nominate experts across the range of the social sciences and humanities, as well as in the natural sciences, and due to

¹ ALLEA Comments on the EC's Communication: 'A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth', September 2012, http://allea.org/Content/ALLEA/News/2012/ALLEA_on_ERA_Communication_final.pdf

the Academies' interdisciplinary nature we are uniquely capable of bringing to the table inter-connected expertise in the pursuit of Horizon 2020's goals.

3. The creation of the sixth and seventh societal challenges on the suggested lines of 'Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies' and 'Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens' is welcome. Social science and humanities research is crucial to such inclusive societal challenges as multilingualism, demographic change, migration, solidarity, work, poverty and cultural diversity. The understanding of these challenges has to be additionally enriched from Europe's historical experiences in these diverse fields.

4. The social sciences and humanities have a key contribution to make in defining and understanding the conditions for fostering innovative change and increasing the likelihood that innovation will lead to economic and societal progress.² We know that innovation is neither a quick nor a linear process.³ Technology is just one of the ways to achieve innovation: to be sustainable and successful in the long-term, innovation requires behavioural, institutional and structural change. Embracing this wider and systemic understanding of, and engagement with, innovation will represent a significant strength across the European research base.

5. The value of the social sciences and humanities to the appreciation of Europe's identity as a reflective society is clear. A deep understanding of Europe's cultural heritage, and of its socio-economic and institutional structures is necessary for the identification of grounded and effective policy guidelines. The lessons of the past are most valuably elucidated and understood through our engagement with the social sciences and humanities. History, literature, art, philosophy, religion – these define who we are, how we live and have lived, and suggest directions towards a better future.

6. Security is a core matter for social science and humanities research in which the social sciences and humanities community has huge potential to offer to policymakers. Investing in technology is not *sine qua non* for bolstering our or the world's security. In order to develop and enhance our knowledge of security we must explore and understand security in human, cultural and social terms as well as divining the historical drivers of insecurity.⁴ Through such an approach we can begin to understand the root causes of insecurity as well as the local social and security context in which we are aiming to nurture secure societies.

7. Considering the novel nature of the social sciences and humanities being embedded through Horizon 2020, we would welcome a stronger overarching institutional mechanism or platform for delivering the input of the social sciences and humanities to

² ALLEA Position Paper on the EC Green Paper *Common Strategic Framework for EU Research & Innovation Funding*, 20 May 2011, http://www.allea.org/Content/ALLEA/Task Force/CSF_consultation_ALLEA_final.pdf;
ESF-STOA Policy Brief, *The Science of Innovation*, June 2012, [http://www.esf.org/index.php?eID=tx_ccdamdl_file&p\[file\]=40478&p\[dl\]=1&p\[pid\]=3728&p\[site\]=European Science Foundation&p\[t\]=1362752978&hash=cdd90c63049c21e70df72e6331e00251&l=en](http://www.esf.org/index.php?eID=tx_ccdamdl_file&p[file]=40478&p[dl]=1&p[pid]=3728&p[site]=European Science Foundation&p[t]=1362752978&hash=cdd90c63049c21e70df72e6331e00251&l=en)

³ It is a complex process with diverse interactions and synergies that can provide greater understanding and knowledge of the economy, society, culture we live in and the wider world. It is also a process that requires explicit interdisciplinary engagement and collaboration fundamentally involving the social sciences and humanities.

⁴ ALLEA Position Paper; LERU Advice Paper, *Social Sciences and Humanities: Essential Fields for European Research and in Horizon 2020*, No.11, June 2012, http://www.leru.org/files/general/LERU AP 11_SSH Essential fields.pdf

the design and implementation of research. For the Expert Advisory Groups themselves we recommend a strategic mechanism is established, such as an overarching Advisory Group, whereby the expertise of the social sciences and humanities across the Advisory Groups could be drawn together, distilled, and utilised to ensure that the social sciences and humanities are, in fact, properly embedded across Horizon 2020.

8. This strategic mechanism and the presence of social scientists and humanists on all the Advisory Groups in significant numbers will help to ensure that inter-disciplinarity remains an essential objective and outcome for Horizon 2020. Both these processes together would provide a focused platform for driving interdisciplinary research within the first five societal challenges and the first two pillars, which is fundamental to delivering scientific excellence. This would enable the developing of interdisciplinary research themes within Horizon 2020's Work Programmes that could include issues such as the economy, inequalities, health, ageing population, well-being, agriculture, food security, education, migration, globalisation, governance, democracy, transport, climate change, energy, innovation, water, the environment, and sustainability.⁵ All of which are paramount challenges that require broad research within, across and between the entire spectrum of the sciences, humanities and arts.

9. Furthermore, the goal of embedding the social sciences and humanities requires institutional support from within DG Research & Innovation in order to deliver its objective. We recommend that a new strongly staffed and resourced unit is established within DG Research & Innovation to provide the essential institutional support and leadership to ensure the social sciences and humanities are fully embedded and their critical perspectives are brought to bear in understanding the challenges we face today. We believe that institutional support for embedding the social sciences and humanities across Horizon 2020 is key to its success.

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⁵ For example, see ALLEA Position Paper; and the European Science Foundation reports, *Vital Questions: The contribution of European Social Science*, November 2009, http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/links/Social/Publications/SCSSpositionPaper_2009-11.pdf, and *Responses to Environmental and Societal Challenges for our Unstable Earth (RESCUE)*, February 2012, <http://www.esf.org/publications/forward-looks.html>