

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social Science and Humanities (SSH) research is of vital importance to the future of Europe<sup>1</sup>. SSH researchers study the human aspects of the world and they generate important new knowledge which has a deep and intrinsic value.

The disciplinary SSH agenda is increasingly complemented by an interdisciplinary agenda addressing societal challenges in Europe. These challenges include international conflicts, human rights, ethics, religious traditions of acute contemporary relevance, economic and educational inclusion, institutions and governance networks, social and environmental resilience, changing media, literacy, identities and cultural memories, linguistic diversity, creative industries, cultural heritage, life long education and learning, developmental disorders, psychopathologies, psychological disorders, addiction, and man-machine interactions. This understanding is as important as contributions from natural-scientific and technological disciplines to the creation, implementation and evaluation of effective public policies and innovative structures underpinning corporate performance.

Social Science and Humanities research is essential for all societal challenges identified by the European Commission in Horizon 2020. SSH researchers should be involved in the agenda setting process in relation to all societal challenges - not only the *Inclusive, Innovative and Secure Societies* challenge(s)<sup>2</sup> - meaning that SSH researchers will take part in the whole process, from problem formulation to project evaluation and project implementation. Given the importance of the *Inclusive, Innovative and Secure Societies* challenge(s), LERU wishes to see it (them) strengthened with an increased research budget.

Excellent research is one of the foundations on which the future of European societies should be based. LERU very much welcomes the first pillar of Horizon 2020, 'Excellence in the science base', which will strengthen the EU's excellence in research in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities. We expect frontier SSH research to be supported by the very successful European Research Council (ERC), by the Marie Curie actions and by priority research infrastructures.

It is extremely important that Marie Curie programmes remain available for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Therefore, involvement of "research institutions, businesses, SMEs and other socio-economic actors" in Marie Curie programmes should be used in the widest possible sense, including all fields of future workplaces and public engagement: from industry to business, government, NGOs, charities and cultural institutions (e.g. museums).

Horizon 2020 should support cutting-edge research in ethics as it is necessary to identify, analyse and develop appropriate responses to the ethical challenges of contemporary societies over the entire range of research topics funded by the European Union.

Further funding for pan-European Social Science and Humanities research infrastructures is required if previous investments by European funders are to be exploited to their full potential. To ensure the highest quality information about European society is available to key decision makers, funding for Social Science research infrastructures must be maintained, while future funding for digital Humanities research infrastructures must be ensured if the full potential of Humanities research is to be reached.

National funding organisations should play a distinct role in Europe by complementing SSH Horizon 2020 activities. In the field of the Social Sciences and Humanities the successful European Research Area - Joint Research Programme (HERA-JRP) and NORFACE should be continued and strengthened. Universities and national research councils should promote international cooperation in the fields of "small disciplines", especially in the Humanities.

The unwelcome regional disparities across Europe in research performance in the Social Sciences and Humanities should be addressed by distinct, complementary and synergistic actions of the Cohesion Policy funds.

Finally, a European Social Sciences and Humanities Platform should be established. Such a Platform, led by leading SSH researchers from research universities, can provide a useful framework for stakeholders, and should develop and update research priority agendas, taking care to consider and not duplicate the work of existing European Social Platforms. An SSH Platform should facilitate the dialogue between the European Commission, researchers of leading research universities, representatives of other institutions and national government representatives in order to create consensus and to improve alignment of investment efforts.

<sup>1</sup> We use the term SSH in this paper as a commonly used and accepted one in the context of FP7 and Horizon 2020. However, taking into consideration the difficulties in drawing exact boundaries between research areas and disciplines especially in dealing with societal challenges research, we wish to point out that, firstly, the Humanities do represent distinct challenges and that, secondly, in LERU (and elsewhere) the term Social and Behavioural Sciences (SBS) is used rather than Social Sciences. While both fields study processes of behaviour, they differ in the level of scientific analysis of various behavioural dimensions. Economics, political science and sociology, for example, are social science disciplines, while psychology and social neuroscience are behavioural sciences. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioural\\_sciences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioural_sciences)

<sup>2</sup> See paragraphs 45-46.