

Call on the European Union to create high-quality dedicated and embedded SSH research opportunities in FP9

The undersigned universities, from countries [leading](#) in Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH) in Horizon 2020 research and innovation, call on the three EU institutions to assure that researchers from the entire range of SSH disciplines can fully participate in the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation (FP9).

European citizens have indicated in the [Special Eurobarometer about The Future of Europe](#) that they would like the EU to remedy “unemployment, social inequalities, migration, terrorism and security issues, the public debt of Member States, insufficient economic growth and the ageing population”. Many of these societal issues are at the heart of SSH research. SSH also plays an important role in disruptive innovation and social acceptance of science and technology. In order to face the grand challenges and to contribute responsibly to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Europe needs these disciplines to fully unfold their capacity. The recommendation in the [Lamy report](#) to give SSH researchers an initiating and leading role for some of the FP9 missions therefore seems crucial.

The undersigned universities call on the three EU institutions, i.e. Commission, Parliament and Council, to act upon their statements. First, the Commission states that 59% of the H2020 budget devoted to SSH (i.e. SC6) is spent on topics and activities [other than SSH research](#), such as ICT research, innovation policy and other actions. It also acknowledges that the quality of SSH integration is “[highly uneven across H2020](#)”, while SSH deserves an improved integration within SSH-flagged projects, both quantitatively (involvement of more SSH disciplines) as well as qualitatively (strengthening their role). Moreover, key findings of the Interim Evaluation of H2020 show that SC6 is amongst the parts of the programme with the [lowest success rate](#), an indication of fierce competition. Second, the Parliament warns in its report that “[SSH integration means SSH research in interdisciplinary projects](#) and not an ex post add-on to otherwise technological projects”. Third, the Council stresses the importance of taking “into account the diversity of contributions of R&I to knowledge and society” and to [fully take “advantage of social sciences and humanities”](#). Finally, the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) in its Interim Evaluation of H2020 found that the [Societal Challenges 1 to 5 and 7 are mono-disciplinary](#), i.e. *de facto* dedicated to one of the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) subjects only.

Therefore, it is necessary **to combine a dedicated approach with an embedded approach to SSH**. This means strengthening SSH-led interdisciplinary research, both within SSH and with STEMM (cf. SC6), as well as encouraging high-quality contributions from SSH to STEMM-led Societal Challenges and/or missions.

The diverse SSH community, including Arts and Law, represents on average one third of the human resources within universities. Europe's knowledge capital in SSH is world leading, as proven by the rapid growth of its academic impact. At the European level, many SSH-fields are working towards improved collaboration, internally as well as with STEMM disciplines and societal partners. Given the consensus on the need to strengthen SSH research and improve its integration in FP9, **the undersigned universities and organisations urge for 5 concrete commitments.**

- 1) **The creation of an SSH Platform**, analogous to ETPs, can consolidate this collaboration and structure the way this community provides input to scoping papers, work programmes, societal challenges and missions. The platform would also facilitate the search for SSH evaluators.

The support for multidisciplinary collaborations can be increased, by

- 2) **encouraging researchers to think about how to generate academic and societal impact when drafting proposals,**
- 3) **recognising that all disciplines crucially contribute to the goal of an inclusive and prosperous Europe and**
- 4) **investing in high-quality SSH research and innovation opportunities.**
- 5) **A target budget for SSH spending of 10% of the overall civil research budget for FP9** will help in better facilitating the highest-quality SSH activities and consequently activating its full potential to academic and societal impact for the future of Europe.

This declaration was adopted by the following universities:



Should you, or your organisation, in any way wish to refer to/quote (parts of) the message brought forward in this paper, please do so by using the following name of the paper: "Joint call to EU regarding SSH in FP9" (<http://www.ugent.be/ssh-call>).

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