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).

Questions/remarks? Contact person on behalf of the writers group: Ms. Wendy Sonneveld, Sr Policy Advisor European Affairs at Ghent University, T + 32 9264 9562, wendy.sonneveld@ugent.be.

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VLIZ

Isabel Rodriguez-Moldes Rey, Vice-chancellor for Research and Innovation, Universidade De Santiago De Compostela

Geoffrey Williams, President of Evalhum Initiative

Gabi Lombardo, Director of the European Alliance for SSH

Stefanie Ubrig, Director of OPERA (Brussels Office of Alliance 4 Universities)

Elena Castro-Matínez, Scientist at Ingenio (CSIC-UPV)

Kristof Vlaeminck, Head of the Brussels Office, University of Bergen

Margareth Hagen, Pro-Rector of University of Bergen

Pierre Jadoul, Recteur d'Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles

Jean-Michel Ganteau, Vice-Président Recherche - Vice Provost for research at Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3

Christophe Prochasson, Président d' Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)

Els Stuyven, Director of Research Affairs at University College Ghent

Jonas Stier, Pro Vice Chancellor of Dalarna University

Eric Zimmerman, Director of Research & Global Engagement at IDC Herzliya (Israel)

Christian Jowers, International Relations Coordinator at IDC Herzliya (Israel)

Rūta Petrauskaitė, chair of the Committee of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Research Council of Lithuania and professor at Vytautas Magnus University

Saša Babič, Postdoctoral researcher at Estonian Literary Museum

Reet Hiiemäe, Researcher at Estonian Literary Museum / Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies

Egge Kulbok-Lattik, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Estonian Government Office, KUPUKE Estonian Center for Cultural Policy Research

Jane Ohlmeyer, Professor of Modern History & Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin

Christiane Abele, Project manager Fundit, Réseau français des instituts d'études avancée / NCP SC6 France

Georg Mein, Dean of the Faculty for Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education, University of Luxembourg

William Mulligan, Vice-Principal for Research, College of Arts & Humanities, University College Dublin

John Pearson, Research Support Officer at Catholic University of Leuven

Daniëlle De Vooght, SSH research advisor at Catholic University of Leuven

Marc Vanholsbeeck, Lecturer at Université Libre de Bruxelles

Fabrice Thuriot, Director of development of SSH at University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne

Wim De Winter, Researcher at VLIZ (Flanders Marine Institute)

Katarzyna Tarnawska, Expert at Polish Science Contact Agency

Gemma Derrick, co-Director Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation at Lancaster University.

Janja Komljenovic, Lecturer at Lancaster University

Paola Perucchini, Professor at Roma Tre University

Paola Ranzini, Professor at Université d'Avignon

Aurelia Barrière, Ingenieure chargée de médiation scientifique at Université d'Avignon

Luule Mizera, Science officer at COST Association

Fatiha Idmhand, Professor at University of Poitiers

Ester Oras, Senior researcher at University of Tartu

Olena Nedozhogina, Project Manager at University of Tartu

Mislava Bertoša, Associate professor at University of Zagreb

Rita Faria, Assistant professor at University of Porto

Miha Kozorog, Assistant professor at University of Ljubljana

Liviu Matei, Provost at the Central European University

Wioletta Miskiewicz, Researcher at CNRS/ Archive Poincaré/Université Lorraine

Christophe Parisse, Researcher at INSERM/Modyco, Université Paris Nanterre

Jorge Fins, Ingénieur d'étude at Université de Tours/Université d'Orléans/CNRS

Catherine Mariette, Directrice du centre de recherches "Charnières" (UMR Litt&Arts), Université Grenoble-Alpes

Monica Zanardo, MSCA fellow at CNRS

Matilde Accattoli, PhD Researcher at Paris 8 University

Timothée Premat, PhD Researcher at Paris 8 University / CNRS

Marcos García de Teresa, PhD Researcher at EHESS / IRIS

Norah Dei Cas Giraldi, Professor Emeritus, Université de Lille

Julia Uhlik, Scientific advisor at Danube University Krems, University for Further Education

Vanda Baloh, Deputy Director of ZRC SAZU

Jerneja Fridl, Assistant Director of ZRC SAZU

Nataša Gliha Komac, Assistant professor at ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language

Kosma Ahačič, Assistant professor at ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language

Tadej Slabe, Head of ZRC SAZU Karst Research Institute

Drago Perko, Director of Anton Melik Geographical Institute at ZRC SAZU

David Bole, Senior research associate at ZRC SAZU Anton Melik Geographical Institute

Mateja Šmid Hribar, research fellow at ZRC SAZU Anton Melik Geographical Institute

Špela Ledinek Lozej, Research Fellow at ZRC SAZU

Ivan Šprajc, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Mateja Jemec Tomazin, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Jani Kozina, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Mojca Kovačič, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Andrej Pleterski, Professor at ZRC SAZU

Žiga Kokalj, Head of Remote Sensing Department at ZRC SAZU

Peter Kumer, Research Assistant at ZRC SAZU

Helena Dobrovoljc, Assistant professor at ZRC SAZU

Marko Juvan, Head of Institute at ZRC SAZU

Marina Lukšič Hacin, Head of Institute at ZRC SAZU

Jozica Skofic, Scientific Advisor at ZRC SAZU

Jernej Tiran, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Gregor Pobezin, Research Associate at ZRC SAZU

Boštjan Nedoh, Research Assistant at ZRC SAZU

Lucija Grahek, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Alenka Koron, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Renata Komić Marn, Research Assistant at ZRC SAZU

Marjetka Golež Kaučič, Research Advisor at ZRC SAZU

Sneža Tecco Hvala, Senior Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Mojca Kumin Horvat, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Ursa Kanjir, Senior Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Dan Podjed, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Miha Seručnik, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Majda Černič Istenič, Associate professor at ZRC SAZU

Duška Knežević Hočevar, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Matjaž Geršič, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Janez Nared, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Borut Telban, Professor at ZRC SAZU

Katarina Polajnar Horvat, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Jure Tičar, Research assistant at ZRC SAZU

Barbara Vodopivec, PhD researchers at ZRC SAZU

Primož Gašperič, Research fellow at ZRC SAZU

Miha Pavsek, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Primoz Pipan, Researcher at ZRC SAZU

Natasa Gregoric Bon, Assistant professor at Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA)

Alexis Dewaele, professor at Ghent University

Bruno Seutin, visiting professor at Ghent University

Liselotte Hudders, assistant professor at Ghent University

Klaas Mulier, assistant professor at Ghent University

Sophie Manigart, full professor at Ghent University

Michel De Dobbeleer, postdoctoral researcher at Ghent University

Maggie Geuens, full professor at Ghent University

Claire Dupont, Assistant professor at Ghent University

Lode Goukens, student at Ghent University

Iris Vermeir, associate professor at Ghent University

Iris Vermeir, associate professor at Ghent University