

FOREWORD

MATTHIAS REITER-PÁZMÁNDY

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DEAR COLLEAGUES, DEAR FRIENDS,

This is the moment to look back on a very successful conference on the impact of social sciences and humanities and their integration in research framework programmes.

The conference had 30 sessions, 130 speakers, 20 papers and on the two days 340 people (55 % women) from over 30 countries attended the event. The conference did not only induce real life debates, but also lively interactions online. During the conference the dedicated Twitter hashtag #SSHimpact was a huge trend generating more than 1.900 tweets. The conference video and the livestreamed sessions were accessed more than 200 times each. The photos and videos about the conference were downloaded several hundred times.

For me the conference was a very impressive experience. I like to think back to the very intriguing start with pointed statements by Klaus Schuch and Ulrike Felt. In his opening words Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research Heinz Fassmann put great emphasis on the importance of SSH for research in general and the European Research Area in particular. Deputy Director General Wolfgang Burtscher lined out how the European Commission attaches great importance to SSH for their transformational power and the power to help solving the social challenges of our time. The keynote speech by John Brewer put forth the necessity that the social science and humanities engage in the impact discussion because they are already very good at impact. The very spirited afternoon keynote from Ineke Sluiter discussed the role of the humanities in innovation, the humanities' impact in teaching and she provided the audience with insights about the roots of particular innovations in ancient Greece. An afternoon full of hands-on interaction with policy officers from a number of Directorate Generals of the European Commission, DG Research & Innovation, DG Migration & Home Affairs, DG Health and DG Connect, showed that SSH experts already engage now with all scientific and policy fields where society is faced with challenges. But they also showed that there is still much potential to broaden and deepen this exchange across disciplines and across sectors. I particularly like to remember the late afternoon session about artificial intelligence and SSH together with industry representatives

that resulted in demands for more interdisciplinary curricula and more practical guideline in ethics and AI. The second day started with James Wilsdon giving a broad overview about impact debates and SSH. The main focus of that day was on the paper sessions. You find their output largely reflected in the papers published in this issue. I listed some of my personal highlights, but of course there were many more. The conference ended with an emphatic contribution from Head of Unit Harald Hartung from the European Commission, DG Research & Innovation and the clear invitation towards the SSH-community to work more closely together.

The event joined the choir of positions that led to the role of SSH in the current version of the Horizon Europe regulation. SSH will be much stronger rooted in the regulation for Horizon Europe¹ than it was in the regulation for Horizon 2020. Article 4 on the programme structure regulates that social sciences and humanities (SSH) shall play an important role across all clusters of Horizon Europe. Article 6a on the principles of the programme regulates that Horizon Europe shall ensure a multidisciplinary approach as well as the integration of SSH across all clusters and activities developed under the programme. Article 7 on the Missions defines that Missions shall stimulate activity across disciplines including SSH. The specific programme mentions SSH also several times explicitly and regulates the research areas in a more detailed way.² All these concrete references are a substantial improvement and upgrading of the role of SSH in the legal basis of the future framework programme in comparison to Horizon 2020.

The conference was not only designed as a forum for exchange between researchers and policy makers, but also as an undertaking that produces tangible outcomes supporting researchers and policy makers in their work. The first publication was a four-pager with the title "Social Sciences and Humanities Research Matters. Guidelines on how to successfully design, and implement, mission-oriented research programmes", in short "SSH-guidelines". The content was intensively discussed, in a dedicated workshop during the conference, with experts from research and policy making, including the European Commission. The aim of the hands-on document is to provide policy makers who design research programmes, but also research managers, reviewers and evaluators with recommendations for their work. Ever since it was published in February 2019 it has sparked debate and action on European, but also on national level.

1 In the current result of negotiations as a Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, 22.03.2019, 2018/0224(COD), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/38902/st07942-en19.pdf>

2 In the current result of negotiations as a Proposal for a Decision of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Partial General Approach, 15.04.2019, 2018/0225(COD), <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8550-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

The SSH-guidelines were followed by the Working Paper “SSH-Impact Pathways and SSH-Integration in EU Research Framework Programmes” by Thomas König that will broaden the perspective of the practical recommendations in scientific and policy debates. It builds on the scientific discourse on valuation of SSH research as well as SSH-integration in EU framework programmes. It discusses recent trends in research funding, provides a brief historical overview of the efforts of integrating SSH into the EU research framework programmes and concludes with suggestions for SSH-researchers. The Working Paper is included in this issue.

One of the specific recommendations is to organize workshops for SSH researchers and policy makers on the national level. In Austria we started with a pilot workshop in March 2019. SSH researchers from different disciplines and research fields, from universities and non-university research institutions met up with national Programme Committee delegates from different sectoral Ministries as well as the National Contact Points (NCPs) in Austria. The workshop was a great start of an initiative that needs to grow further as Horizon Europe will come closer.

I would like to thank once again all who contributed to the conference. First of all, a thank you goes to the Local Advisory Board of the conference who discussed the earliest drafts of the concept: Tara Andrews, Christian Fleck, Michaela Glanz, Barbara Horejs, Monika Mokre, Stephanie Rammel, and Frank Welz. A particular thank you goes to Thomas König and Katja Mayer who worked closely with us throughout the preparatory phase. I would like to thank the international Scientific Committee that did all the hard work of reviewing the papers of the Call to this conference: Paul Benneworth, Olivier Bouin, Ulrike Felt, Yves Gingras, Poul Holm, Jürgen Howaldt, Carina Keskitalo, Kirsten Langkilde, Stefania Milan, Andrea Petó, Claudio Radaelli, Emanuela Reale, Sarah de Rijcke, Evelyn Ruppert, Marta Soler, Jack Spaapen, Tereza Stöckelova, Johannes Vogel, and Milena Zic-Fuchs. I also want to thank the committee’s chair Helga Nowotny, who was giving us the most valuable input early on and drafted the “Impact Re-loaded” input paper. I would also like to thank the European Commission for their financial support and endorsement. A special thank you goes to the staff at the Unit B6 in DG Research & Innovation, who were extremely helpful throughout the preparation: Head of Unit Harald Hartung and Project Officer Monica Menapace. A very special thank you goes to Project Officer Basudeb Chaudhari, who was putting that extra effort in our common preparatory work. I also would like to thank for the support within my own Ministry, especially from our Director General Barbara Weitgruber, the Head of EU-Department Christian Naczinsky and my Head of Department Ursula Brustmann. I also have to thank all those invaluable helping hands that created such a good environment at the conference: Philipp Brugner, Patrik Cunat, Alexander Degelsegger-Márquez, Isabell Duscher, Tanja Feiler, Robert Frühstückl, Maximilian Jäger, Doris Kaiserreiner, Elisabeth Koller, Alexandra Krammer, Silvia Kraml, Martina Lindorfer, Gottfried Prinz, Peter Seitz, and Gorazd Weiss. A very special thank you goes to Elke Dall, and an extra special thanks to Bettina Glaser and Berenicke Ecker who went the metaphoric extra mile – and at the conference they did so in the real sense of the saying. Last but not least, a special thank you goes to Klaus Schuch, the director of the ZSI, Centre for Social Innovation, who did a beautiful job both on the organisational as well as on the intellectual level of the conference preparations.

The conference is over, the publications are published, but the work will continue. We need to cooperate to unfold the full potential of SSH in Horizon Europe, its Clusters and Missions. More exchange between policy makers and researchers is still needed. SSH researchers need not to shy away from approaching their policy makers. Policy makers should seek to exchange more with SSH researchers, their projects and their findings. This conference aimed at providing a forum for this exchange. I do wish that the conference publications – the SSH-Guidelines, the Working Paper and these proceedings – will help to carry on this exchange. Have an interesting read!

Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy

Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research