April 25th, 2013

Dear colleagues,

The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU is currently preparing a conference to discuss the new role of SSH in the new EU research funding programme, Horizon2020, which will be launched at the end of this year. The conference will take place in Vilnius on 23-24 September 2013 (http://horizons.mruni.eu/). We would like to ask for your views on a set of five questions, in order to take the pulse of the SSH research community and prepare a declaration that will be handed over to research policy makers at the event.

As you know, the European Commission proposals for the multi-annual framework for research and innovation ("Horizon 2020" - http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020), discussed and modified by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, have structured research funding into interdisciplinary blocks defined as "societal challenges". In this new structure, a new role for SSH is being envisaged. SSH are seen as core building block for realizing the Vision "Europe 2020" (http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/): an "integrated approach" will replace previously existing dedicated funding streams. With a view to this unprecedented role that has been assigned to SSH research in Europe, the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU has decided to dedicate a specific conference to this discussion.

The conference's steering committee has decided to launch an online consultation on how to shape the roles of SSH in "Horizon 2020". The objective is to learn more about the current situation and the ambitions of the research community, but also to identify the needs and structural problems of specific fields, with an emphasis on their potential to contribute to the success of the Vision Europe 2020.

We are circulating this consultation to the wider SSH research community, irrespective of whether individuals or institutions are already active in EU-funded research. Indeed we believe it would be of great importance to reach out also to those SSH communities that have not yet been involved in EU-funding. Therefore we would be grateful if you could forward this letter and the list of questions to others whom you consider relevant contributors to this debate. This may include researchers who are based outside Europe but are in cooperation with colleagues in Europe.

Results of the consultation will be made publicly accessible online (in an anonymised format, unless you explicitly state otherwise). They will also provide valuable input for the planned Vilnius declaration on "Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities".

Please find attached the five questions we would like you to **answer until June 15th 2013**, including specific examples whenever possible. Even if you do not plan to apply within the new scheme, your views will be very valuable to us.

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation.
Sincerely,

Katja Mayer
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Office of the President of the European Research Council
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For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact consultation@mruni.eu

Consultation on the state of the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in Europe April 15th to June 15th, 2013

Please send your answers/statements via email to **consultation@mruni.eu** until June 15th, 2013

Your statements will be archived in anonymised format (unless explicitly stated otherwise) in a database at the Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius. A report will be published on the conference website (http://horizons.mruni.eu) and made widely available to the conference participants.

Please indicate your position/standpoint: e.g. individual researcher, representative of research institution, representative of association, etc. and your fields of research!

1. SSH research is often conducted in disciplinarily defined contexts. This may be an obstacle in a problem-driven research environment ("societal challenges"). Can you give examples of *how your own research area has been involved* in (a) opening up to other research fields, (b) translating findings and/or methods to or from other academic fields, (c) contributing to the emergence of new, cross-disciplinary fields, and/or (d) transcending, with its results and insights, the fields of academic research?

2. The research agendas of the different subfields of SSH are very heterogeneous. What are the broad research questions, new methodological or theoretical developments, or generally new approaches that are *high on your own research agenda*? Which ones are high on the research agenda of your field? Where do you see potential contributions to societal relevance?

3. "Horizon 2020"will provide new opportunities for SSH to contribute to new research on "societal challenges". What are the *potential contributions from your field*? Please specify the "societal challenge/s" to which contributions from your research community are most likely, and suggest successful steps in this direction, if possible.

4. Do you foresee (or have you experienced) obstacles that may prevent you and your research community from making contributions to the "societal grand challenges" approach? Please provide specific indications.

5. In order to foster a more integrative approach that would also benefit the SSH research communities, what would you consider the *most important incentives* that "Horizon 2020" could provide?

Should you have any additional comments, please feel free to share them with us.

Many thanks for your support!

The steering committee,
Helga Nowotny (chair), Rūta Petrauskaitė (Vice Chair), Giedrius Viliūnas (Vice Chair),
Jutta Allmendinger, Paul Boyle, Craig Calhoun, Gustavo Cardoso, Rivka Feldhay, Poul Holm, Pavel Kabat, Alain Peyraube, Aura Reggiani, Peter Strohschneider, Peter Tindemans, Wim van den Doel, Michel Wieviorka, Björn Wittrock

If you want to receive updates on the consultation and conference, please indicate if we may include your email address in the conference mailing list.