

Science Europe Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

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*“Building a Scientific Narrative on Impact
and Societal Value of Science”*

Setting the Scene

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#SEimpact

Science & Society

- Different conceptions of '**societal impact**' and the broader value of research:
 - ▶ The importance of excellent fundamental research
 - ▶ The impact of research upon society

- Measuring issues:
 - ▶ Quantitative indicators,
 - ▶ Growing qualitative approaches during the last decade (Miettinen et al., 2015)

- Differences across scientific disciplines

The Narrative: A Dynamic Understanding of Societal Impact

- ▶ **Challenge:** a narrow linear understanding of impact, from research upon society (economic indicators/output).
- ▶ Impact is much more **dynamic and relational** (**‘productive interactions’**).
 - ▶ A political discourse broadening the concept of impact reflecting the complex relationship between scientific and societal needs.
- ▶ Example: PISA-study (OECD, longitudinal)
 - ▶ Based on fundamental research
 - ▶ Policy implications
 - ▶ Refined research instruments based on new research

6 Main Themes

1. Societal impact of science can be found **everywhere**
2. Need for a **very broad understanding** of societal implications of science fields (mobilisation and co-creation of knowledge)
3. **Trust** as a pre-condition of societal impact
4. **Timescale** of societal impact
5. Importance of **translational dimension** of research
6. Advancement of knowledge and its **intrinsic value**

Key Messages to Foster further Discussion

1. The value of **unexpected impact** should not be underestimated!
2. **Co-creation/knowledge exchange** result from **translational processes** from fundamental research to social/political knowledge and back
3. Different stakeholders as part of the **trust-in-science** building process
4. To **assess** impact, one should do it **forward, backwards and continuously**
5. Scientific research may not produce immediate, 'useful' results' (risk of short-termism). **Pushing scientific frontiers for the 'unknown unknowns' to emerge** and help society answering future questions and new unforeseen problems.