

Science Europe Press Release: *for immediate release*

The Essential Role of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020

(Brussels, 21 January 2013) With the future EU budget for research still under negotiation, Science Europe has released a Position Statement with recommendations on the importance of the appropriate inclusion of social sciences and humanities within Horizon 2020, the dedicated research and innovation programme.

Horizon 2020, the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, will start on 1 January 2014. The Council has proposed that the programme includes seven ‘Societal Challenges’, including one on ‘*Europe in a Changing World*’, which is predominantly focused on social and cultural issues.

Science Europe welcomes the inclusion of such a challenge in Horizon 2020, but would also stress that it is essential that social sciences and humanities are coherently embedded in all areas identified as the key challenges of our future society.

There are a number of cross-cutting social and cultural themes that have relevance across many areas. One example that is highlighted in the Position Statement is ‘Understanding and Influencing Behavioural Change’. This is fundamental in explaining decision-making processes that span the seven challenges including in areas such as energy consumption, food waste, health and transport use.

“While it is essential that in the on-going negotiations the Challenge ‘Europe in a Changing World’ is provided with an appropriate budget, we should not forget that many of the most significant global problems facing us today require inter-disciplinary approaches” said Paul Boyle, President of Science Europe. *“Therefore, social sciences and humanities should also be embedded in all Societal Challenges identified by Horizon 2020, avoiding certain mistakes of the past”*.

In previous Framework Programmes social disciplines were often included only at a late stage in planning scientific programmes. Science Europe recommends that social sciences and humanities researchers are involved throughout the entire decision-making process, and makes concrete suggestions on how to achieve this objective.

Science Europe agrees with the European Commission that social sciences and humanities should be fully integrated into Horizon 2020, but believes that considerable effort is required in order to implement this in practice.

Science Europe comprises 51 Research Funding and Research Performing Organisations from 26 countries, representing around €30 billion per annum. It was founded in October 2011 with the aim of promoting the collective interests of members and providing them with a platform to collaborate at both policy and activity level.

Science Europe’s Position Statement is available on Science Europe website at this link:

<http://www.scienceeurope.org/downloads>

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