

VILNIUS DECLARATION

Vilnius Declaration - Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities

Europe will benefit from wise investment in research and innovation and Social Sciences and Humanities, SSH, are ready to contribute. European societies expect research and innovation to be the foundation for growth. Horizon 2020 aims to implement inter-disciplinarity and an integrated scientific approach. If research is to serve society, a resilient partnership with all relevant actors is required. A wide variety of perspectives will provide critical insights to help achieve the benefits of innovation. The effective integration of SSH requires that they are valued, researched and taught in their own right as well as in partnership with other disciplinary approaches.

The value and benefits of integrating Social Sciences and Humanities

European Social Sciences and Humanities are world class, especially considering their diversity. They are indispensable in generating knowledge about the dynamic changes in human values, identities and citizenship that transform our societies. They are engaged in research, design and transfer of practical solutions for a better and sustainable functioning of democracy. Their integration into Horizon 2020 offers a unique opportunity to broaden our understanding of innovation, realigning science with ongoing changes in the ways in which society operates.

1. Innovation is a matter of change in organisations and institutions as well as technologies. It is driven not only by technological advances, but also by societal expectations, values and demands. Making use of the wide range of knowledge, capabilities, skills and experiences readily available in SSH will enable innovation to become embedded in society and is necessary to realise the policy aims predefined in the "Societal Challenges".
2. Fostering the reflective capacity of society is crucial for sustaining a vital democracy. This can be achieved through innovative participatory approaches, empowering European citizens in diverse arenas, be it through participation as consumers in the marketplace, as producers of culture, as agents in endangered environments, and/or as voters in European democracies.
3. Policy-making and research policy have much to gain from SSH knowledge and methodologies. The latter lead to new perspectives on identifying and tackling societal problems. SSH can be instrumental in bringing societal values and scientific evaluation into closer convergence.
4. Drawing on Europe's most precious cultural assets, SSH play a vital role in redefining Europe in a globalising world and enhancing its attractiveness.
5. Pluralistic SSH thinking is a precious resource for all of Europe's future research and innovation trajectories, if it can be genuinely integrated. H2020 offers this opportunity for the first time.

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Conditions for the successful integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020

6. Recognising knowledge diversity: Solving the most pressing societal challenges requires the appropriate inclusion of SSH. This can only succeed on a basis of mutual intellectual and professional respect and in genuine partnership. Efficient integration will require novel ways of defining research problems, aligned with an appropriate array of interdisciplinary methods and theoretical approaches. SSH approaches continue to foster practical applications that enhance the effectiveness of technical solutions.
7. Collaborating effectively: The working conditions of all research partners must be carefully considered from the beginning and appropriately aligned to set up efficient collaboration across different disciplines and research fields. This includes adequate organisational and infrastructural arrangements, as well as ties to other stakeholders in civil society and business. Budgetary provisions must be appropriate to achieve this goal.
8. Fostering interdisciplinary training and research: Integrating SSH with the natural and technical sciences must begin with fitting approaches in post-graduate education and training. Innovative curricula foster a deepened understanding of the value of different disciplinary approaches, and how they relate to real world problems.
9. Connecting social values and research evaluation: Policy-makers rightly insist that the impact of publicly funded research and its benefits for society and the economy should be assessed. Accurate research evaluation that values the breadth of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches is required to tackle the most pressing societal challenges.

Agreement with the principles of the Vilnius Declaration should be made the basis for the integration of the SSH into H2020.

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