

Open Letter to the European Commission on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities research in the new Framework Programme, 2014-2020

Dear Colleagues

As you may be aware, preparations towards finalising the approach to the next European Framework Programme (referred to as **Horizon 2020**), have reached an advanced stage. According to current plans, research on topics relevant to Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) will be integrated across various thematic areas, rather than consolidated into a discrete programme of work. This approach is seen as potentially marginalising SSH research in Europe and beyond, and to place the European community and the world at risk of not benefiting sufficiently from critical insights from the SSHs on issues and topics that are of importance for planning and development, and has led to various responses from the research community.

With this message, you are invited to learn more about the debate on the future of SSH in the next European Framework Programme, from the perspective of SSH research. If you find the information of relevance and importance, you will also have an opportunity to sign an Open Letter addressed to the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation (www.eash.eu/openletter2011), alerting her to the vital insights that Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) contribute to address Europe's and the world's Grand Societal Challenges. Signatures added to the dedicated website are intended to give weight to arguments submitted to the Commission.

First results of this initiative will be presented by the Inter-agency Task Group on SSH to Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn on 11 November 2011. The members of the Inter-agency Task Group on SSH hope to be able to point to a high number of signatures as an expression of a groundswell of support and concern among SSH communities. Speedy responses to this invitation, including submission of signatures of people in support of the letter, will therefore be appreciated. The collection of signatures will, however, continue after this specific date, as the legislative decision process will last for longer.

In view of legislative decisions to be taken on the next 100-Billion-worth EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), the Open Letter stresses the necessity for a varied and strong research programme in the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH): it argues that neglecting such potential contributions as SSH research has to make risks undermining the EU strategy to develop innovative, inclusive and sustainable societies. Yet, there still is a distinct danger of insufficient funding in Horizon 2020 for research areas such as cultural change, demography, education, the economy and globalisation, identity politics and social cohesion, and many others. For background information on these matters see: www.eash.eu/openletter2011

The Open Letter initiative has grown out of deliberations among a number of European umbrella organisations in the area of SSH, and seeks to bring to the attention of the European Commission and national governments the concerns of the largest research community in Europe.

The South African research community is also invited to respond, If you agree that a substantial and independent SSH-centered research programme should be included in all future European Framework Programmes and would like to add your signature to support this, you will find the Open Letter on-line at www.eash.eu/openletter2011. **You will be able to sign the letter** by adding your personal details on the dedicated signature page. Where "Country" has to be selected from the drop-down menu, please select "Other".

Please also kindly **spread this invitation to sign** in your institutions and among your networks.

Thank you in advance for considering and hopefully supporting this initiative. Do not hesitate to contact members of the Inter-agency Task Group on SSH if you have any questions: SSH-letter@net4society.eu.