

UNION DER DEUTSCHEN AKADEMIEN DER WISSENSCHAFTEN

Position paper of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities on the *Common Strategic Framework Programme for EU Research and Innovation funding*

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The Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities is the umbrella organisation of eight academies of sciences and humanities. It assembles more than 1900 scholars from the humanities and the social sciences, the natural, technical and life sciences all of which are outstanding representatives of their disciplines, both nationally and internationally. Together, they are committed to promoting scientific exchange, excellent research, and the emergence of new talent in the liberal arts and sciences. The Union coordinates the “Academies’ Programme”, one of Germany’s most important and most comprehensive research programmes in the humanities and the cultural studies, represents the German academies of sciences and humanities abroad and sends delegates to national and international science organisations.

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities welcomes the debate on the *Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding* set out in the green paper issued by the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn. The present paper is a contribution to this debate. It aims to highlight a number of core aspects concerning the future of research and innovation in the EU that the Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities considers of outstanding significance for the realisation of the EU 2020 Strategy.

From the 7th Framework Programme to a Common Strategic Framework

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities supports the structure and the envisioned objectives of a Common Strategic Framework as a contribution to the priorities of the EU 2020 Strategy. The intended improvements resulting from the recommendations of the interim evaluation of the European Union's *Seventh Framework Programme for Research*

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and Technological Development are necessary steps to achieve the overall objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy – a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth - and to maximize the benefits that research and innovation funding can provide for the *Innovation Union*. Innovation processes can only be initiated and fostered by a joined up set of funding instruments that minimize the risk of overlap and duplication between funding programmes.

A growing coherency of the programmes and the simplification of funding instruments that cover the full innovation chain, including basic research, are of utmost importance to make life easier for researchers and innovators and to attract more applicants. Administrative complexities therefore should be minimized and the funding system and its implementing rules should become as flexible as possible, consistent and user-friendly. This would make EU funding more attractive and easier to access for all types of innovators and researches, especially for the humanities and the social sciences. Excellence should represent the decisive criterion for the selection of supported research activities even more so when basic research is concerned. Furthermore, EU research and investigation funding must follow the principle of transnational cooperation and a proven European added value of the supported activities.

In this context, the great success and significance of collaborative research must be highlighted. The benefits of EU-wide collaborative research projects are particularly important for issues like the societal Grand Challenges since they can only be tackled on a European level and by implementing trans- and interdisciplinary cooperation with broad historical, cultural and social perspectives.

Research Infrastructure

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities would like to stress the importance of existing research infrastructure programmes and of the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), especially the Europe-wide projects *Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure-Programme* (CLARIN) and *Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities* (DARIAH). To furthermore promote the preservation, exchange and reuse of research data on a consistently high level, the funding schemes on infrastructure programmes in the Common Strategic Framework should be augmented.

The long-term and up-to-date availability of data is a major future problem in all research areas, because the technical prerequisites are changing at least every few years. Especially in the

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Humanities, the establishment of digital research facilities and structures of electronic publishing represent an overall challenge in the context of future research infrastructures. The Common Strategic Framework should therefore by all means ensure the access to existing infrastructures and further develop digital research infrastructures to provide the preservation of the cultural heritage in Europe.

Bringing together the full range of EU-instruments for research and innovation is the underlying idea of a Common Strategic Framework. Therefore the EU should continue to strongly contribute to the funding of research infrastructure programmes and avoid a shift in the direction of member state responsibility in this area. Only a Europe-wide approach with consistent transnational standards will create sustainable benefits for the collaboration between researchers on a pan-European level.

Innovation and Basic Research in a Common Strategic Framework

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities appreciates that innovation has been set on the heart of the EU 2020 Strategy to tackle the grand societal challenges that the European Union is facing. As one of the flagship initiatives, the *Innovation Union* aims to improve conditions and access to financial sources for research and innovation in Europe, to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs. In consistence with the position of the Federal Government of Germany, we strongly advocate a definition of innovation that includes social innovation and societal aspects of innovation processes.

A mere focus on direct economic and financial outcomes in the field of research can not create the intended long-term effects for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as envisioned in the EU 2020 Strategy. Applied research requires basic research as its basis. Innovation processes - embracing societal and cultural aspects – hence can not be exclusively linked to market-orientation. The full cycle must include excellent basic research in a wide range of scientific disciplines as the backbone of a socially consented innovation policy.

Sustainability of Innovation Processes

To ensure the sustainability of innovation processes, instruments need to be developed that accompany the upcoming changes and include a long-term and broad perspective on

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innovation. Without research on the historical, cultural and social aspects of European societies and the concerns of European citizens regarding the innovation processes there will be no successful and sustainable innovation processes.

A cross-cutting, horizontal funding element should be established harnessing expertise from basic and interdisciplinary research from the humanities, economic and social sciences to better understand these societal processes that accompany innovation and to guarantee its sustainability.

Tackling the Grand Societal Challenges

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities welcomes that European research and innovation policy, and thus its funding, focuses on tackling the Grand Challenges of our time such as climate change, ageing society, energy efficiency and food security. These challenges are rooted in underlying social changes. They embrace the areas of culture, demography, migration, governance, social security and others. When tackling societal Grand Challenges, these dynamics should be considered not only as side actions. From the outset the humanities, economic and social sciences should substantially contribute to the conceptualization and management of the Grand Challenges. By definition they are all “societal” and thus research in these areas should not play a mere auxiliary role. An adequate interdisciplinary approach would create a better understanding of the underlying causes for changes and these can equip policy makers and stakeholders of the European societies with the tools to better manage the resulting challenges.

Grand Challenge Programme on Social, Political and Cultural Cohesion in Europe

Apart from the interdisciplinary contributions of the humanities and social sciences to various Grand Challenges, we would like to explicitly second the German Government’s demand for an independent and intrinsic research programme in the humanities, economic and social sciences that faces the processes of cultural and societal changes considering all aspects of global interdependence. It would serve all disciplines as a researchers’ toolbox to contribute to specific existing questions and to adapt to newly arising challenges.

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities therefore proposes a challenge programme on social, political, and cultural cohesion in Europe - this is one of the

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greatest challenges in a Europe faced with disintegration. It can be worked out in the context of the EU 2020 Strategy that already emphasizes social and territorial cohesion.

European values in the Common Strategic Framework

The EU and its treaties are about much more than economic integration. Europe encompasses values such as democracy, participation, European identity, multilingualism, social and cultural cohesion, peace and international cooperation. In its communication on the EU 2020 Strategy, the Commission itself states that - counting “on our strong values, democratic institutions, our consideration for economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity, our respect for the environment, our cultural diversity, respect for gender equality” - Europe can succeed in recovering from the current crisis by the year 2020.

Research and investigation of these issues represent “instruments with proven European added value”, one of the key principles underpinning the future EU-budget. The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities concludes that the Common Strategic Framework will give consideration to these issues which guarantee that the European project not only encompasses economic integration and growth but also our common European values and the enriching cultural diversity in its future agenda.

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