PRESS RELEASE

EASSH position on the European Commission DG for Research and Innovation report on the integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020[1]

November 16, 2016

EASSH welcomes the publication of the European Commission's first report assessing the success of the policy to 'integrate' social science and humanities research across all areas of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme. The Commission is also to be commended for publishing a report which shows so clearly – even by the Commission's own estimation – how much work still needs to be done to turn the policy aims into reality.

The Commission flagged around 37% of the topics under the 2014 calls as likely to invite SSH contributions. Based on the consolidated results, the Commission reports itself that **only a quarter of consortia partners in projects funded under topics flagged for SSH have SSH expertise** and will contribute it to their projects. When excluding Societal Challenge 6, the share of SSH partners amounts to less than a fifth. **Even more worrying is the fact that 28% of funded projects under the SSH-flagged topics in 2014 do not include any SSH research dimension to address the issues at stake and do not include any SSH partner.**

Around 16% of the funding in those projects will be allocated to SSH research. **Across the 2014 calls addressing Europe's major societal challenges as few as 7% of projects will benefit from insights from social and humanities scholars.** In total, the share of budget going to SSH partners out of the total call budget will stand only at 6%.

EASSH calls on the Commission to recognise the systemic problems which are almost certainly responsible for the disappointing results of the first call and asks that the following be addressed urgently:

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[1] Official report to be downloaded here: http://www.eassh.eu/p/reports

1. **Improve the data collection systems** which can improve both the accuracy in tracing SSH participation and improve transparency around the data collection
2. Work with the SSH community to **develop a more robust methodology** for analysing the integration of SSH research in projects. Measuring the number of so called "SSH Partners" is not a robust indicator of the depth of integration in the fundamental research of any project
3. **Review the membership of the European Advisory Groups and Evaluation panels** where the current minimal levels of SSH representation need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Little input to the design of work programmes and framing of topics, along with lack of SSH experience has contributed to the low integration of SSH in projects.

EASSH is happy to work with the Commission and Parliament to ensure better understanding of the issues preventing integration of SSH and ensuring the successful implementation of the SSH integration policy in the future.

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The European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH) brings together scientific networks, associations, disciplines and universities. The main purpose of EASSH is to promote research on social sciences and humanities as a resource for Europe and the world. EASSH currently represents 26 member organisations regrouping more than 35,000 social science and humanities scholars in Europe.