



THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

International Conference

Brussels, Hotel Metropole, 22 – 23 October 2009

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE BACKGROUND

This conference is the final conference of the SSH-FUTURES project commissioned by DG Research in the 6th Framework Programme. The project was completed by an international consortium headed by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR Vienna).

The Social Sciences and the Humanities have an important mission in the formation of the Knowledge Economy and Society and evidence-based politics. However, the role and contribution of the Social Sciences have not yet been fully comprehended. There are discrepancies between the potential importance of social science knowledge and the comparatively low attention it receives from politics, other research communities and the public in general.

Social Sciences and, to a lesser extent, the Humanities have contributed to this phenomenon. The landscape is fragmented, as the Social Sciences and the Humanities are, to some degree, split according to national boundaries and disciplines, even sub-disciplines.

This leads to two major threats: to an over-emphasized claim to autonomy (the 'ivory tower' phenomenon), on the one hand, and a misunderstanding of what

'applied research' means for the Social Sciences and the Humanities ('consulting approach'), on the other.

How can the Social Sciences and the Humanities better cope with the needs of society? This is the key question that will decide on their future.

The issue is contingent on three elements: an understanding of what society's needs are, what the Social Sciences and the Humanities have to offer and if knowledge-producing institutions can deliver the expertise requested.

In complex societies, it is evident that single disciplines cannot provide solutions to problems on their own. The co-operation between all types of knowledge producers is important and necessary. 'Useful' research combines knowledge from different disciplines. Hence, interdisciplinary research plays a key role in the acceptance of the new mode of knowledge production, which is expected better to address policy concerns and social demands.

There is a need for social sciences and humanities knowledge. This need has to be substantiated to safeguard the future. The scientific communities have to strive for 'excellence', but the understanding of 'excellence' must be expanded beyond mere bibliographical factors. To reach society, the economy and the political system, good interaction is required between the different intellectual communities, an interaction that overcomes traditional feuds between schools and disciplines.

The CONFERENCE

The conference will be a two-day event held in Brussels. On the first day, the members of the SSH-FUTURES consortium will present the results of their study and discuss potential recommendations and conclusions. The second day will be devoted to the results of similar projects.

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The main objective of the workshop is to discuss:

- the achievement of Social Sciences and Humanities so far,
- the potential of inter- and transdisciplinary research,
- facilitators for and barriers to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Social Sciences and Humanities,
- the expectations of policy makers, NGOs and other funding organizations of the Social Sciences and Humanities and their potential to respond to these expectations.

Papers may contain an analysis of experiences:

- with research and knowledge advancement in social science and humanities research,
- in the interaction between knowledge providers and knowledge users,
- with the assets and liabilities of the 'governance' of social science and humanities research by funding conditions, institutional set-ups, career patterns etc.

The conference does not privilege any mode of research, be it basic/generic or applied, disciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary.

Contributions should follow a conceptual approach emphasizing the overall strengths and weaknesses of the profession, theoretical frameworks, methodology, applied and/or policy regimes, and/or actual or potential social, cultural, political and the economic advantages and disadvantages of different modes of research.

Abstracts should be a minimum of 500 words long and include the full co-ordinates of the author(s) (postal address, fax, telephone and e-mail). The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 30 September 2009.

Selected speakers will be notified within a few days and will be given two weeks to submit their presentation for the conference on 22–23 October 2009 in Brussels. They will be expected declare their readiness to submit a full versions of their presentation for publication by January 2010.

Selected speakers will be reimbursed for their travel and accommodation costs for participating in the workshop. Abstracts should be a minimum of 500 words long and include the full coordinates of the author(s) (postal address, fax, telephone and e-mail). The deadline for the submission of abstracts is September 30, 2009.

For further inquiries and/or the submission of abstracts, please contact Louise Beltzung at l.beltzung@iccr-international.org.

Please feel free to pass this announcement on to anybody who may be interested in the workshop.