

PART V

THE HUMANITIES AS A BUILDING BLOCK
FOR FUTURE SCIENCES

In the Shadows of a Pandemic: Humanities in European Research and Innovation

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The COVID-19 pandemic has amply demonstrated the need for all human knowledge to join in tackling our biggest societal challenges. The crisis triggered not just large-scale medical research into understanding and fighting the virus; it also necessitated a deep understanding of the pandemic's effects on social inequality, human behaviours, political behaviours and cultures, and in the ways these were interconnected. As a report by the British Academy noted, the pandemic affected 'lives, livelihoods, communities and economies within and across nation-states' (Morgan Jones et al. 2020: 167).

No organisation is better placed to foster research across nation states than the European Union, which has funded research in the EU and in associated countries since 1984. Originally awarding €3.3 billion over four years, European research funding per annum has increased considerably over the past thirty years. In the seven-year period between 2014 and 2020, the EU spent €120 billion on research and innovation (R&I), including €75 billion through Horizon 2020, and €40 billion through European regional and structural funds (The Royal Society 2016: 5). Although R&I spending within this period contained some variations, the overall figure of €120 billion translates to a notional average spend of €17.14 billion per year. In 2017, private R&I expenditure in all EU countries (including the EU itself) amounted to €209.2 billion, or 66 per cent of a total R&I expenditure of €317 billion (European Commission 2019a). Providing only around 5.4 per cent of total European R&I expenditure, the EU might seem a relatively insignificant actor. However, amongst public actors, its role was rather more significant. Given that only one-third of total R&I investment came from public actors in 2017, the EU accounted for 16.2 per cent of public R&I expenditure in Europe.

In fact, the EU has become the largest single funder of excellence-based R&I projects in Europe. For instance, in Germany, the German Research Foundation (DFG) spent €3.4 billion on competitive grants in 2019 (DFG 2020a), while the UK research funding councils within UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) spent €1.66 billion (£1.5 billion) in 2018–19 (UKRI 2020: 111). This compares with €12.4 billion spent by Horizon 2020 in its penultimate year, 2019 – a figure that does not even comprise R&I spending through structural and regional funding (Wallace 2019).

As EU funding is accessed by scientists from all EU member states, its effects may not be as keenly felt in universities as national third-party funding. Indeed, a significant part of Horizon 2020 was spent outside universities (for instance, on small and medium-sized enterprises). In Germany, for instance, the DFG awarded €8.2 billion in new grants between 2014 and 2016, including €7.3 billion going to universities. In the same period, Horizon 2020 made awards to the value of €3.9 billion to German recipients, of which

only €1.2 billion went to universities (DFG 2019: 45, table 3.1). Nonetheless, there is no question that EU funding has a significant impact on European research funding. The thematics of EU challenge-driven research topics motivate scholars across borders in transnational teams, whilst frontier-led research – for instance, through the European Research Council – creates Europe-wide dynamics for research excellence. Decisions at EU level have major implications for the nature of scientific enquiry in Europe – and that includes the social sciences, arts and the humanities (SSH).

This raises the question of how the EU has prioritised research in the humanities. As Europe struggles to live with the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, it is important to ask how EU research funding can strengthen the contributions of humanities to embrace our most critical research challenges. And it is important to examine how the EU's approach to the humanities undermines particular subjects and modes of enquiry.

This chapter will begin by examining the overall impact of the EU on European research funding in general, and on research in the humanities and social sciences in particular. It will argue that in Horizon 2020 (2014–20), the EU's track record in supporting SSH – and the humanities in particular – was decidedly mixed, and that its successor programme, Horizon Europe (2021–7), is likely to provide a more challenging environment for the humanities still.

Because of the relative fluidity between some subjects in the social sciences and humanities, and because EU funding statistics often do not distinguish between the humanities and the social sciences, this discussion centres on the social sciences and humanities (SSH), focusing on the humanities where possible and appropriate. Against this background of opportunities and threats for SSH-research in Europe, this chapter also considers where research is endangered due to scarcity of funding, and which SSH approaches are likely to benefit from EU funding priorities. Indeed, as the EU seeks to realise its growing aspirations for agenda-setting in European R&I, it is this agenda-setting role that could set an increasingly challenging environment for subjects in the arts and humanities in a post-pandemic Europe. For while a number of EU research priorities are critical concerns for future humanities research, these are far from comprehensive. The EU's focus on technological solutions and industrial innovation will create an increasingly challenging environment for humanities research leading or contributing to interdisciplinary approaches to societal challenges.

In one critical respect, the EU has been a key supporter of bottom-up research in the humanities, through the European Research Council (ERC), established with the seventh Framework Programme (2008–13). An instrument devoted entirely to funding bottom-up research, the ERC's funding grew from €7.7 billion in 2008–13 to around €13 billion under Horizon 2020 (2014–20) (European Commission 2016). In 2019, just under 10 per cent of awards went to arts and humanities researchers (37 out of 407); adding the social sciences, a total of 115 awards were made to SSH researchers – equivalent to 28 per cent (European Research Council 2020). This is a significantly higher proportion than most other national funders provide (DFG 2019: 110).

In the United Kingdom before Brexit, it meant that in 2014/15, five humanities subjects drew more than 25 per cent of their third-party research grant income from the EU: archaeology (38 per cent), classics (33 per cent), media studies (27 per cent), law (26 per cent) and philosophy (25 per cent) (Smith and Reid 2019: 12). The UK figures are particularly marked because of the relatively low share of arts and humanities grant funding in the UK, and the disproportionate success among UK academics from the social sciences, arts and humanities in securing ERC research grants. In 2016, for instance, UK researchers

were alone in Europe in winning more ERC starting grants from the SSH domains than from the Life Sciences and Physical Sciences (European Research Council 2016).

The impact of the ERC on the arts and humanities was amplified through its influence at the national level, as eleven EU member states launched schemes inspired by the ERC structure, and eight states launched new national research councils in response to the ERC (European Research Council 2014). For instance, the National Science Centre was set up in Poland in 2011, and it funds bottom-up research in all fields of the sciences and humanities. It is hard to imagine that this kind of momentum for bottom-up funding irrespective of subject domain could have happened without the ERC's example and the will of individual countries to copy its success as part of their efforts to support the European Research Area.

At the same time, the impact of collaborative funding in Horizon 2020 on SSH, and the arts and humanities in particular, was far less positive. Of over €29 billion devoted to collaborative funding to address Europe's societal challenges for the seven-year funding period, only €1.31 billion was devoted to the SSH-led Societal Challenge 6 (SC6) addressing 'inclusive, innovative and reflective societies'. In response to widespread criticism of its neglect of SSH concerns, Horizon 2020 acquired, in its legal base, the formal objective of the integration of social sciences and the humanities throughout the programme. It meant that the European Commission became legally accountable for the ways in which expertise from the social sciences and the humanities was used to address all seven of Europe's societal challenges, and not just SC6. To achieve this aim, the Commission flagged calls in which expertise of the social sciences and the humanities would be particularly appropriate as part of an interdisciplinary approach.

In practice, of the €1.65 billion available for calls for proposals in the Societal Challenges in 2016, for instance, only €155 million (9.5 per cent) went to a participant identified as from the social sciences and humanities. One-third of this money was allocated within SC6 (Strom et al. 2018: 15). When untangling which subjects in social sciences and humanities have received this funding, it is important to note that 11 per cent of SSH funding was attributed to non-research related activities, as expenditure on project management and other activities performed by staff with an SSH background was included in the statistics on SSH integration (Strom et al. 2018: 9). Beyond this, participation was almost exclusively skewed towards a few subjects in the social sciences, including economics (34 per cent), political sciences (13 per cent) and public administration (13 per cent). Sociology and business/marketing attained 8 per cent each, leaving negligible participation from subjects in the arts and humanities, including history (2 per cent) and anthropology (1 per cent) (Strom et al. 2018: 9). For the European Commission, arts and humanities appeared of scant relevance in considering the societal challenges facing Europe.

The imbalance between the social sciences and humanities subjects is not unusual. In Norway, for instance, the Norwegian Research Council (NRC) allocated 3 per cent of its portfolio to the Humanities (NOK317 million), and 15 per cent to the Social Sciences (NOK1.56 billion) in 2019 (Forskningsrådet 2020). In response to a 2017 parliamentary report which noted that the humanities were underutilised in addressing societal challenges, the NRC would increase the funding share for the humanities to 5 per cent by 2022 (Forskningsrådet 2020). But this is still not far from the small funding share reserved for humanities subjects in the EU.

But the problem for humanities in Horizon 2020 has not simply been in its share of funding allocated to challenge-led research. The challenge-led pillar on the Societal Challenges was devoted principally to the creation of growth and jobs. In practice, this

led to a privileging of funding calls requiring high technology readiness levels (TRL), of solutions that promoted new close-to-market technological applications (DANDELION 2018: 9). That also explains why, even within the SSH-led Societal Challenge 6, there was a remarkable shift in the type of actor benefiting from EU funding. If in the seventh Framework Programme Higher Education institutions attracted 47 per cent of challenge-led SSH funding, and research organisations another 29 per cent, in 2017 only 36 per cent of funds went to Higher Education institutions, and 15 per cent to research organisations – figures that are broadly comparable to previous years under Horizon 2020. By contrast, private for-profit entities increased their share of SSH funding from 9 per cent in the seventh Framework Programme, to 19 per cent in 2017 (European Commission 2019b: 10).

Clearly, for funding opportunities to support collaborative research, scholars from arts and humanities subjects had to look elsewhere, including specific binational initiatives such as the UK-German funding initiative in the humanities led by the DFG and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (DFG 2020b). At a European level, perhaps the key supporter of arts and humanities research beyond the ERC has been the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA), a network of twenty-six funding agencies which, with the support of the European Commission, has sponsored a total of four joint research programmes since 2008. These research programmes invited research on ‘cultural encounters’ (2013–16), ‘uses of the past’ (2016–19) and ‘Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe’ (2018–21). The first three calls comprised a total budget of €56 million, to fund fifty-five transnational projects. As the HERA grew in membership, from its original three funding agencies in 2002, it faced challenges of governance and funding, but it also enjoyed interest in developing collaboration with non-European partners such as the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (HERA 2018). Even though its budget has been relatively small, it is clear that for researchers in the arts and humanities, HERA was by far the most important trans-European initiative funding collaborative research, given the lack of support from Horizon 2020.

In designing the successor programme to Horizon 2020, the European Commission promised ‘evolution, not revolution’. Horizon Europe’s nominal budget increased slightly (adjusted for inflation), but post-Brexit the budget was allocated only to twenty-seven member states, with the UK, which associates to the programme, providing an additional 18 per cent of the budget. As a result, Horizon Europe effectively increased the EU budget for R&I over 20 per cent relative to Horizon 2020. Although it could be argued that this increase was not commensurate with the challenges faced by European societies at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase was nonetheless significant, especially given the fragile state of public finance in European economies. The increased size of EU funding for research and innovation was good news for researchers overall.

At the same time, Horizon Europe increased even further the role of innovation and high TRL research. Horizon Europe now includes a new body, the European Innovation Council (EIC), created to fund breakthrough innovation, and it comprises a challenge-led pillar whose share of the overall budget has increased from one-third to over 50 per cent. Even though the integration of social sciences and the humanities is, once again, a formal objective of the programme, it is unclear whether SSH subjects will have stronger traction in the new programme. Given the significance, in Horizon Europe, of the Green Deal with its overall objective for Europe to become a carbon-neutral continent by 2050, it is possible that some subjects in the behavioural sciences will receive a boost from Horizon Europe funding.

Like its predecessor, Horizon Europe does have one cluster devoted to SSH-led collaborative research, now entitled 'Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society'. For the first two years of Horizon Europe (2021–2), thematic calls have focused on changes of, and challenges to, democracy, and Europe's social and economic transformations (including work, migration, ageing societies, etc). In the humanities, it concentrates on cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries. There are glimmers of hope for the arts, as this thematic area includes, for instance, a call towards a competitive and fair music ecosystem. Still, the Commission has, for its challenge-driven collaborative calls, a perspective that appears to be more inclusive of the social sciences than its predecessors, combined with a highly applied understanding of the value of the humanities (European Commission 2021).

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the arts and humanities, and for SSH more generally, comes in the renewal of the European Research Area (ERA), launched with the Commission ERA Communication on 30 September 2020. Originally launched in 2000, the ERA aspires to a common market for researchers and ideas. Through the ERA, member states have committed themselves to an ambitious target of spending 3 per cent of GDP on research and innovation (in 2019, expenditure stood at just over 2 per cent). And ERA aspires to provide a framework for the closer coordination between national and European research and innovation systems. The desire, within this framework, to strengthen research excellence in Europe led to the creation of the ERC in 2006, and its inspiration of national funders of bottom-up research excellence. It also provided the framework for the Humanities in the European Research Area programmes.

By contrast, the Commission's 2020 ERA Communication abandons the pursuit of greater research excellence for that of sharing excellence among European researchers. It urges that the EU and member states coordinate better their funding priorities for common policy objectives, and that the ERA enhances the translation of research and innovation results into the economy. Across the twenty pages of the document, the word industry/industrial is mentioned forty-seven times; fundamental/frontier research is only mentioned once, in a descriptive passage about the first pillar of Horizon Europe (European Commission 2020a).

The ERA Communication provides a framework for joint action in research and innovation between member states and the European Commission. In doing so, it also sets the direction of travel for future discussions about research and innovation in Europe. If the European Research Area defines the added value of European research and innovation purely through applied research, focusing *exclusively* on the value of research to industry, then a consequence of this could be that curiosity-driven research, and research in arts and humanities, is no longer considered to be integral to the objective of European research and innovation. This perspective, if left unchallenged, could have critical consequences for the ways in which the successor to Horizon Europe is framed. Indeed, it could even undermine frontier research and the flagship programmes, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and the European Research Council. And this would have disastrous consequences for breakthrough research in the social sciences, arts and humanities.

This challenge is likely to be reinforced by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its economic consequences. Even though the developer of Europe's first effective anti-COVID-19 vaccine, Uğur Şahin, was a recipient of EU funding for curiosity-driven research for almost twenty years, culminating in an ERC Advanced Grant in 2017, the pandemic has had the effect of strengthening the focus of policy makers on technology-oriented research, to ensure Europe's 'technological sovereignty' from other continents, including

in health care (BPA 2020). In coming years, this concern about the need for innovations to fuel economic recovery could reinforce the industry focus of ERA, as EU member states also prioritise spending on applied research not only in response to ERA but also in an attempt to boost their economies. In this focus on economic growth, there is a real danger that the significance of SSH research in understanding the consequences of the pandemic and responding to them quickly and appropriately is all but forgotten.

The increasingly reductionist view of what kind of research is important at the European, transnational level is problematic not only for frontier-led research (including in the humanities). It also blocks out a range of fundamental challenges that are of pressing concern to Europe. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of critical issues that need urgent scholarly attention. In particular, the post-pandemic recovery cannot flourish without a prominent engagement of scholars from the humanities and social sciences. Post-pandemic policy-making will need to be cognisant of local as well as global context, mindful of historical and specific cultural links, as it charts a path towards recovery that addresses challenges of social and economic inequalities, within the pressing need of environmental sustainability. It is hard to see how this complex matrix of considerations can be effected without making use of the insights of humanities research.

At the same time, the pandemic has illustrated the costs of researchers' inability to develop interdisciplinary methods and understandings across different subject domains, as epidemiologists and economists struggled to develop common understandings of the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, its costs and the opportunity costs of different policy approaches (*The Economist* 2020). As the societal and cultural consequences of the digital and environmental transformations of the fourth Industrial Revolution are still imperfectly understood, it is critical to invest in enabling researchers to address common challenges across epistemological divides.

Arguably, the societal challenges of the post-COVID-19 world are not new, but they have been reinforced by the global experience of the crisis. In 2019, the deans from the social sciences and humanities from nineteen universities organised in The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities came together to discuss urgent research priorities as a way to urge the European Commission to prioritise investment in addressing some of the most pressing issues through the tools of SSH researchers (The Guild 2019). The strategic considerations emerging from these discussions form a useful context for evaluating the priorities the Commission articulated for Horizon Europe – and the important research questions that remain unaddressed at a pan-European level as a result of low budgets.

To begin with, The Guild's deans shared the Commission's view about the importance of examining democracies, by focusing on how we could strengthen democratic resilience in Europe, in the face of constant technological, social, cultural and environmental change. Thus, many of the aspects that are important for democratic resilience – the changing nature of media participation; the importance of education; civic and democratic participation – will be addressed through Horizon Europe, even if the budget available for this is – at the time of writing – still unclear.

But in addition to the need for understanding the changing nature of democracy, governance and mass participation, and the challenges these face, deans from The Guild's universities also identified the importance of understanding societal needs and human resilience at a time of technological change (The Guild 2019: 2–3). Positioned at the interface between social sciences and the humanities, this fundamental concern – which is not reflected in the challenge-led pillar of Horizon Europe – addresses how technological

change at a time of accelerated globalisation affects information and financial flows, and how it impacts on work and social relations. The Guild's deans assert that there is an urgent need to ask how digital technology and its uses change our social relationships, and how we guard against a loss of social cohesion, the growth of inequality and the undermining of human rights. Moreover, the changes of the world of work and of technology cause fundamental educational challenges, which have only become too apparent in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include the question of how in a world characterised by the digitalisation of our everyday lives we could avoid the opening up of new digital divides, in part underlining and in part cross-cutting existing generational, social and educational divides (The Guild 2018: 6–10).

As COVID-19 has accelerated the transformation of social and work interactions, a further fundamental problematic emerges at a most important level: how to ensure human happiness and well-being. This research problematic had fundamental – and different – implications along gendered lines, but it also impacted on minorities and different demographic groups in different ways. It raised the question, for instance, of what new ways of working empowered gender equality, and what ways undermined it? Which new sectors of employment would reduce inequality – and which would increase inequalities, and along which characteristics?

This fundamental research challenge around the impact and potential of technological change embraced interdisciplinary collaboration, with a particular emphasis on affecting how technology and digital innovation is developed in service to societal and human needs – and not independent of them. And this research challenge urged a dialogue with policy makers, to ensure that they encourage laws and regulations in the pursuit not of maximum economic benefit, but of maximum well-being for society, including the need to strengthen human resilience to embrace future technological transformation.

A third priority area for European funding identified by The Guild's deans in 2019 related to language and culture, noting that by 2035 access to culture and languages would be transformed (The Guild 2019: 3–5). The deans noted that in future, 'access and consumption of culture will be far more democratic, diverse, and contested. Far more cultural content will be curated not only physically but also virtually. This has fundamental implications for who defines what culture is, and how hegemonies of culture – including languages – are established, challenged, and re-constructed' (The Guild 2019: 3). This related closely to challenges around migration, which disrupted – but also complicated and enriched – discourses around culture and identity, belonging and dislocation. It posed a fundamental challenge in the specific context of the EU, because to enhance the Single Market there was a need for greater multilingualism and a greater urgency for intra-European communication, recognised through the European Education Area with its goal of enhancing the language skills of the European workforce (European Commission 2020b). At the same time, it came with fundamental challenges for the cultures and societies of the EU.

This problematic raised one issue picked up by Horizon Europe's 'culture, creativity and inclusive society' cluster, the ways in which we can create new forms of cultural artefacts, what they mean, and how they are accessed. But the thematic challenge for the Guild's deans goes much further. The paper asks how new technologies change access to culture, and how they can give shapes and contours through minority cultures that are not part of a majoritarian discourse. It urges us to consider how minority dialects and languages, threatened otherwise by distinction, can be preserved, revived and celebrated in new ways. It raises the question of pedagogies we need to help us navigate our

multilingual and multicultural environments. And The Guild's deans asked how artificial intelligence affected meaning and understanding – of artefacts, of discourses, of communication.

At its core, The Guild's deans identified in this challenge of language and communication a new opportunity for the EU to (re-)connect with citizens. For it would not be possible, they argued, to halt the forces of globalisation and the ways this would affect dialects and language communities. But researchers would be able to aid our understanding of ways in which local cultures, languages and identities could be preserved, sustained and celebrated, through EU funding. It would be a way for the EU to reach out to local and individual concern, and support citizens through the uncertainties of globalisation.

Finally, the EU has provided a unique and important transnational frame for excellent and collaborative research within Europe, but that raises a critical question about research collaboration beyond. Given the transnational nature of our societal challenges such as sustainable development and digital transformation, it is critical that researchers in the humanities and other subject domains focus not just inward, but foster global perspectives. To be sure, international research collaboration is fostered through third-country participation in European Framework Programmes for research and innovation, as well as educational collaboration and exchange through Erasmus+. But in this domain, the EU could have a much stronger role in supporting collaboration, especially with neighbouring underfunded regions such as Africa, in two ways. First, the African Union has articulated a number of key challenges which complement those of the EU extremely well. Priorities such as 'Migration, Mobility and Overcoming Discrimination' or 'Good Governance, Peace and Security' align closely with EU research priorities in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe (ARUA-The Guild 2020). Second, whilst African researchers and students can take part in EU programmes under third-country status, collaboration through specific projects raises the question of how we can build sustainable capacity at African universities beyond the duration of individual projects. If we want to develop equal, sustainable partnerships we need to foster institutional partnerships for the long run that encourage African researchers at all career stages to address key challenges in their locality – and this includes the humanities (Maassen 2020). We need new approaches to strengthen partnerships between EU research institutions and their counterparts in Africa and other lower-performing research systems, to complement those international research collaborations that already work well. And here the humanities and the social sciences have to take a prominent part to make full use of the distinctive histories, environments and cultures that different international partners bring to the table in addressing common challenges.

This article has considered the support given to the arts and humanities, and to SSH more broadly, through EU funding. It has shown that, amidst a growing focus on innovation and applied research in successive EU framework programmes, the social sciences, arts and humanities have enjoyed resilient support from the European Research Council, and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. And as far as collaborative research is concerned, the humanities have also received significant support from the small but important funds provided by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) initiative. Through these opportunities for bottom-up and collaborative funding, it will be possible to fund some of the research questions outlined above.

Indeed, there are some important research challenges that Horizon Europe is enabling researchers to address, in relation to how we better understand democratic transformation, and how we increase democratic resilience. But more broadly, the lack of funding over-

all for collaborative research risks leaving fundamental challenges that are common to Europeans unaddressed, especially from the perspective of the humanities.

But the challenge for humanities and, to a lesser degree, the social sciences, lies not simply in the funding available at the EU level. It lies also in the increasing emphasis of EU collaborative funding on applied research, ignoring the fact that fundamental concerns for humanities scholars – around who we are, how we live and what makes us human as individuals and within communities – are essential for social welfare, but have little to do with technological solutions. It is critical for humanities scholars to ensure that future discussions around the European Research Area do not lose sight of the nature of scientific enquiry, the importance of frontier-led research and the need for all subjects of academic enquiry to be strengthened.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised many new questions for researchers in the humanities and social sciences, around the societal, cultural and economic dimensions of public health and the disruptions to it – locally and globally, past and present. But this chapter has also argued that it has reinforced fundamental research perspectives that were apparent before. Indeed, even in the early days of the pandemic, researchers in the humanities and the social sciences have demonstrated the disruptive impact of the pandemic (and thus of public health more generally) on gender relations (at work and in the private sphere), of how we work, how we communicate and on the changing types of work needed. The pandemic has also caused fundamental cultural shifts in how the arts are consumed, how communities are formed (and dissipate . . .), and on the role of science in political debate. The pandemic has reinforced the urgency of addressing the changing nature of democracy, whilst increasing the opportunity cost of not addressing other concerns such as the impact of technological change on human health and well-being.

With the dearth of funding for transnational collaborative research at the European level, there is a fundamental question about how these critical issues will be addressed in the future. They certainly cannot be addressed adequately through the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA), unless its levels of funding are increased significantly. And any bilateral funding initiative will only be able to make a marginal contribution towards addressing these research questions.

The ship has sailed for including many of these pressing research questions in Horizon Europe. But there is no replacement for a European Framework for research and innovation. It is critical for humanities researchers, over the coming years, to press policy makers at national and EU levels about the pivotal importance of these challenges – for the welfare (and well-being) of citizens, for their culture and identity, and thus ultimately also for how the EU relates to citizens – and how the EU is perceived by them. It is not too soon to develop a counter-narrative to a European Research Area communication exclusively focused on industry, and articulate how the humanities are essential for meeting core policy objectives. And, perhaps most importantly given the relatively small proportion of funding earmarked for SSH-led concerns, it is time to double down on institutional efforts to integrate social sciences and humanities in interdisciplinary projects, by way of strengthening cross-cutting perspectives that have humanities' concerns at their heart, not at their margins. In the coming years, it will be critical for humanities researchers to articulate and demonstrate how their subjects are critical to interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability, climate change, digitalisation and industrial transformation. And it is important that humanities scholars look beyond Europe to embrace new, lasting partnerships that bring out the importance of understanding different local, historical and cultural contexts in the common pursuit of global challenges.

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