

Humanities for Science/Policy for Humanities

*The European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH),
Gabi Lombardo*

The twenty-first century has brought a profound change in the policy landscape. Post-war efforts to direct scientific research to the challenge of economic growth are being replaced by a new agenda: sustainability and societal well-being. Alongside the mission for economic development, we now see an emerging policy language emphasising the cultural and the social dimensions of the challenges we face, and an acknowledgement of the limits of using narrowly scientific approaches or technology alone to advance knowledge.

Policy makers increasingly recognise the interconnections and complementarity between the arts and humanities and the other sciences, mobilising the potential for creativity and innovation that these connections can generate. The COVID-19 crisis has been perhaps the most significant recent example of such acknowledgement.

The emerging narrative of the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 and the UN Agenda for Humanity has encouraged many countries to increase research and development spending and the overall number of researchers. However, it is crucial that new national and global science and technology strategies allow for a strong participation of scholars from the humanities in their coordinated calls and the interdisciplinary design of research opportunities. A coordinated effort from the arts and humanities to work also with social science disciplines is crucial to ensure that the ideas and insights from this research can systematically inform the politics and policies of tomorrow. In order to achieve such aims, research must be well funded, and national governments must commit to support the long-term sustainability of the full range of disciplines and the emergence of new multidimensional scientific approaches and methods.

The research policy landscape is thus undergoing a tectonic shift. The changes hold promise for the arts and humanities. The question is: Is the humanities community ready to respond?

The European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH) has an important role to play in assisting this engagement. EASSH has a mission to promote and advocate for diversity of research, and in particular to support the arts, humanities and social sciences in producing knowledge that is instrumental in informing and supporting policies and decision making. EASSH as a trusted and independent advocacy group provides the arts and humanities with a partner to engage with the policy institutions in Europe and in member states, and build bridges between scholars and policy makers.

1. Humanities and Science Policy: Old Challenges and New Opportunities

Research in humanities has been a core part of scientific investigations for as long as human beings began pushing their boundaries in search of knowledge to understand their own existence and the context of that existence. Yet in recent years, the combination of a science policy targeting economic growth understood as being generated chiefly by technological development and a strong partnership with private sector funding has marginalised the fundamental contribution of the humanities (and social sciences) in research funding frameworks. Scholars working in these fields have not seen research funding as critical to supporting their work. There has been a gradual drift or divergence where important questions for scholars in these disciplines have not remained aligned with the policy agenda.

However, over the last ten years, the narrative around our global challenges has shown a renewed interest in these disciplines and their research questions, and a recognition that cultural and social dimensions need to be understood if the major challenges are to be solved. Europe's future sustainability will not only depend on new technologies and new products, but in securing a new 'social contract' that prioritises citizen well-being alongside economic development. Understanding the dynamics of cultural and social change needs to be given equal significance for research investment as other technical, environmental and health challenges to achieve Europe's long-term goals.

Although European policy makers and funders show new interest in tapping into art humanities and social sciences research to address complex societal challenges and inform social policy, a better dialogue between the researchers and the policy makers needs to be established. Funders will need to design programmes with a clear understanding of social and cultural research rather than focus exclusively on technical solutions to challenges. Art and humanities scholars will need to grasp the opportunity to communicate transformative new insights from their disciplines, while at the same time collaborating with teams of colleagues from other fields.

In Europe the major source of funding for research in humanities remains public funding, and well-established research systems typically present a very similar framework for the allocation of public funding. At present, the majority of research funding in Europe is provided through the schemes of individual countries. However, many countries also collaborate in bilateral and multilateral programmes to tackle their shared policy agendas.

As new policy agendas emerge internationally, many of these are also adopted nationally. The SDGs or Global Goals are a wonderful recent example. Created by the United Nations and adopted since 2015 by the majority of UN member states, the SDGs were updated, and a new set was adopted as AGENDA 2030. These policy agendas touch every part of national government and international governance institutions.

The new European funding programme Horizon Europe (2021–7)¹ has now been launched, designed to finance the knowledge we need for a green and sustainable future. Apart from the completely 'bottom-up' scheme of European Research Council (ERC), which has an almost equal distribution of budget across the three domains of science – Physical and Engineering, Life Science and Social Sciences and Humanities – the other major share of Horizon Europe is assigned across Clusters. The Cluster which provides the strongest focus on SSH-driven research is Cluster 2: 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'. Not only is this the very first time that the word 'Culture' has appeared in such a

prominent place in a Framework Programme; this Cluster has also received more funding for SSH research than any previous Framework Programme.

The new programme shows a high level of ambition. It has broadened the narrative around multidisciplinary research and strengthened the integration of key humanities aspirations and expertise. Also, given that the European Framework is a seven-year commitment, we can assume that there is a certain long-term engagement towards the art and humanities to inform decision making at the European level and to make a real contribution with original and pioneering research with potential for policy relevance. A new attention to aligning policies for culture, research and innovation emerges from the design of the new European funding programme.

Less clear from these early days is precisely how humanities research contents will be integrated or managed within the funding calls. The general approach of ‘flagged topics’ (calls that require the contribution of SSH) has been implemented already in Horizon 2020. However, interim reviews by the Commission itself and external organisations identified a general lack of success with SSH integration, despite good intentions and some positive stories. The same mechanism in Horizon Europe will need substantial improvement in its implementation, based upon a better understanding of the diversity of SSH research contributions and the complex challenges of interdisciplinary research. There will need to be more meaningful engagement with SSH experts to advise directly or indirectly on the design of the calls. In spite of a loud call from researchers to engage with the Horizon Europe architecture, the European Commission seems to have invested more effort to coordinate the internal feedback from the European Commission institutions and directorates than with outside scholars and organisations.

There is thus some understandable scepticism about whether the approaches adopted will achieve their objectives. Humanities and social sciences research and their values and methodologies have to compete with much larger and better-supported research priorities. More importantly, other sciences still tend to dictate the mechanisms of funding allocation. Even in a more globalised ecosystem, national science strategies and their political and economic interests retain paramount importance in determining the overall funding of different scientific areas. In spite of the policy narrative around sustainability and the human-centric approach, the focus on technologically driven economic growth still remains a dominant goal in many cases.

In the remainder I want to set out the challenges we are faced with and suggest how a new approach could improve the chances of the research system being more successful in providing guidance, evidence and innovation to address the challenges by placing cultural and social factors at the heart of the programmes.

2. The Role of Humanities in the 2030 Agenda

As discussed previously, Europe’s future progress will not depend only on new technologies and new products, but on securing a new ‘social contract’ that prioritises citizen well-being alongside economic development. Understanding culture and society – what is driving change and how this dynamic will function in the future of humanity – ought to be of equal significance for research investment as other technical, environmental and health challenges to achieve Europe’s long-term goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is becoming the major global policy backdrop. All signatories to the UN agenda take seriously their obligation to make progress. The majority of nations see science and innovation as powerful mechanisms for the change needed. They also see the

social and cultural dimensions as significant factors which need to be understood and challenged.² In fact, many of the Global Goals themselves have significant social and cultural challenges built into them as topics to address.

European policy makers increasingly accepted that SSH research can contribute to the decision-making process in the grand challenges. The EU Commission is now seriously interested in tapping into humanities and social sciences to inform its social policy, including the Green Deal, labour market reforms and trade, and the challenges of technological transformation.

In fact, we can mention three examples along these lines. The New European Bauhaus initiative connects the European Green Deal to living spaces. It calls on mobilisation designers, architects, engineers, scientists, students and creative minds across disciplines to reimagine sustainable living in Europe and beyond. Their website calls all Europeans 'to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls'.

Another important example of integration of humanities in policy decision making is the European Commission's 'Proposal for a Regulation on a European Approach for Artificial Intelligence', published on 20 April 2021. The proposal centres itself on principles of ethics, human rights and legislation which sees the interests of citizens to be placed first. These key informing concepts of fairness and transparency, respect for privacy (along the lines of the GDPR) and openness of practice are rooted in core humanities traditions of historical understanding, philosophy, ethics, law and human dignity, putting the human experience at the centre of technological innovation. The proposal is a trend-setter in this area and aims to inspire other countries in following such direction. 'With these landmark rules, the EU is spearheading the development of new global norms to make sure AI can be trusted. By setting the standards, we can pave the way to ethical technology worldwide and ensure that the EU remains competitive along the way', said Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age.³ An artificial intelligence industry which aims to be also ethically robust and support companies with principles of fairness and transparency is the result of a long-lasting engagement of philosophy and ethics in policy-making and demonstrates the need to integrate other, non-technical, knowledge and ideas into the debate.⁴

Social policy relies heavily on the humanities and social sciences to continue providing important evidence and contents to reinforce and strengthen pluralistic views for society. More importantly, the humanities have the capacity to form and shape new generations of political and social thinkers who have the intellectual tools to pursue, protect and create new processes and institutions to sustain a fair, free and healthy society. At the same time, researchers in these areas must engage in making their research visible and accessible to provide the evidence needed for decision makers and societal actors.

What more do scholars working in these fields need to do for their contribution to be recognised and have impact? Scholars alone will not achieve this; they must find ways to work in partnership with civil society, with NGOs committed to caring for social and human well-being, and with creative, cultural and heritage industries.⁵ The power and credibility of a common message from these actors will be very powerful when presenting evidence to policy makers from a united platform. All should be mobilised to become activists for science and to expand the definition of science beyond the lab.

3. The European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities

It would not be a surprise to identify that the recent changes in science policy did not just emerge from global narratives. In 2015, a group of eighteen European disciplinary associations and universities decided to formally register a new Alliance, EASSH, the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities.

The new Alliance had its roots in a bottom-up movement that in 2012 had forced the inclusion of a last challenge in Horizon 2020 which had a stronger focus on society. This became Challenge 6 'Europe in a Changing World'.⁶ Over 100,000 signatures had been submitted as a request to then commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to include a challenge which 'aims at fostering a greater understanding of Europe, by providing solutions and support inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies with an innovative public sector in a context of unprecedented transformations and growing global interdependencies'.⁷

Another group of formally organised science organisations, Initiative for Science in Europe and Euroscience, coordinated the introduction of a further key innovation in H2020. The successful experiment of the European Research Council, a programme funding only fundamental research that was launched in Framework Programme 7, was reinforced and extended with an major budget not so different from the thematic programme of the Challenges (€13 billion). Today, the ERC represents the most important development at a global scale in terms of funding for SSH, bringing these disciplines on the same level as all other disciplines and investment in fundamental research. The funding allocation based on demand and distributed on excellence resulted in almost an equal spread of the budget across all the three domains, being a bottom-up programme where the only criterion of evaluation is high research quality. Furthermore, an analysis of research trends has demonstrated how fundamental research across all areas of science, including SSH, contributes and goes well beyond global challenges.

Thus, the group of European disciplinary associations and organisations had achieved the inclusion in Horizon 2020 of a humanities and social science-led Challenge 6, but subsequent developments were somewhat discouraging. The positive wording in Horizon 2020 on the value of the humanities and social sciences was seen by some as little more than window-dressing, and the promise of SSH 'mainstreaming' in H2020 risked producing simply 'ornamental' additions to science projects.

At the turn of 2016–17, Horizon 2020 was undertaking the first review since its implementation in 2013. The new formed Alliance, EASSH, found its role in monitoring the uptake of the promises made, and in monitoring the implementation process of the SSH integration. The organisation focused on providing expert technical papers on the bottleneck of the mechanisms to implement such integration, and pointed out the scarcity of funding relative to researcher interest and demand in Challenge 6, a fact which resulted in success rates as low as 3 per cent in some of the calls. The organisation engaged in specialistic and technical discussions with the architects of the programme, from design to evaluation of proposals, and highlighted some of the weaknesses of the delivery of H2020. Most importantly, EASSH provided clear recommendations and guidelines to introduce new strategies to improve the ambitions of interdisciplinarity of the Grand Challenges section of the programme.⁸

The above story shows how a coordinated and coherent voice for scientists in a given group of disciplines influenced the course of European funding and supported important fundamental research. EASSH found its natural habitat in just such an interface between

researchers across Europe and European institutions. In fact, EASSH is an association which argues not for the sake of its members but for the inclusion of opportunity for SSH research in funding strategies at national, European and international levels. EASSH argues for the social dimension of the global challenges to be given its important place alongside the technologically driven agenda of the past. More importantly, EASSH, with a series of strong position papers, is gradually raising its visibility around issues – more or less technical – that highlight how some key changes in call design, evaluations and programme implementation can ensure a more equitable access of all researchers, including those in humanities and social sciences.

Thanks to its ability and networking support, EASSH contributed to the very first discussions for the next European Framework Programme, being invited with only a few other organisations in Brussels, well-funded and established advocacy groups, that have already influenced previous European programmes. In 2018, a committee of experts, the Lamy Group, was appointed by the EC to design the first white paper for the new Framework programme, now known as Horizon Europe. EASSH was one of the few stakeholders to be invited to provide feedback on the contents for such a committee back in 2017. The importance to highlight how a funding programme for 2020–7 must have looked at a human-centred research perspective was crucial for the inclusion of humanities and social sciences research in the new programme. As mentioned above, so far Horizon Europe represents a success story of acknowledgement of these disciplines in addressing current and unforeseen challenges.

Today, the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities is an umbrella organisation gathering European-wide disciplinary associations and universities. Born out of a group of eighteen members, it is now the largest disciplinary organisation with more than sixty-five members across Europe. The main focus is and remains the dynamics of science policy both at the European and at the national levels. How research is financed, which areas attract public and private funding and how this research is so important for citizens as well as public and private institutions across the world must be appropriately resourced is the focus of the Alliance activity. More importantly, the Alliance presents a coherent and coordinated front to give visibility and attention to the needs of disciplines in humanities and social sciences.

Collaborating with other different organisations, university associations, science and infrastructures platforms, foundations and other large disciplinary umbrella organisations, EASSH provides humanities and social sciences scholars with a presence in debates where the diversity of perspectives is required and contributes to understanding how science and research take different pathways to discovery and to social development. Collaborating with the private sector, publishers and large open access databases, EASSH seeks to reinforce the visibility of this research not just among peers and the academic audience, but as a resource for our society at large.

Individuality and specific disciplinary traditions and methods are not obscured by the alliance but are exposed and highlighted; the Alliance's main purpose is to highlight the needs, the strengths and the specificities of our research, as well as the similarities of this research with other scientific domains. The research funding structures need to be able to harvest all types of research we will need for the agenda for humanity in 2030 and beyond.

Humanities have gradually caught up with other scientific investigations in terms of demand for funding, making the gap for resources needed much narrower. Just as in any research field, the humanities are finding innovative tools to conduct research, and many of these are new and expensive. As an example, technology had a profound and deep

impact on these disciplines' research practices. New technology is changing the way research is done across all scientific fields, but perhaps the greatest change is being seen in the social sciences and humanities (SSH). Big Data analysis, the use of MRI for behavioural studies, satellites used to map and measure economic growth, laser scanner data for archaeological excavation, and general digitalisations have not just changed the scale of the results, but have also profoundly transformed the methodologies and the training of all scholars today. The Internet has had a multiplier effect on cultural production as well as cultural demand, and the effort to study, catalogue, preserve, analyse and critique so much new material makes it increasingly resource-hungry.

If funding 'caps' are applied to the SSH research based on historic norms, then Europe will not be able to access the research at the cutting edge, which could have a profound impact on the way we describe, understand and address social and human processes. At the same time, if researchers do not communicate their ambitions to policy makers, the new demand is not evident to those designing and calibrating funding opportunity for future research.

4. EASSH Agenda from 2021

In the previous paragraph, I showed how the Alliance from the outset achieved a role of interlocutor with the European institutions to communicate researchers' needs. More importantly, through a number of technical interventions EASSH highlighted weaknesses and bottlenecks in H2020 implementation. EASSH has thus taken on the role of a monitor and inside advisor as well as a coordinator of views from a very diverse community that until now had only scattered and discontinuous representation in science policy.

EASSH aims to contribute to the visibility and understanding of research in humanities and social sciences. The organisation is working with national ministries and local authority to ensure that long-term sustainable funding of these disciplines will be always a point on the agenda of national funding frameworks, while also holding to the fundamental right of scholars to retain neutrality and independence to preserve good science. EASSH is also active in European and other international roundtables to coordinate messaging about the value of humanities research evidence in policy advice.

At the moment, for example, in Europe there are some very large discussion fora, such as the European Research Area and the Higher Education Transformation Agenda or Open Science. The decisions taken in these fora have an impact on all researchers – as we all know – and being included to express a voice within this research community means to contribute to the design of the future of the European research ecosystem. Other discussions at national levels include processes of evaluations of research output and the assessment of new and alternative forms of research output to be considered for career promotions and assessments. Issues of academic career precarity and successful stories of gender balance from SSH case studies are also among the issues under discussion.

Crucially, EASSH can translate humanities researchers' concerns in negotiating their relationship with policy makers and the general public, an area where there is often a lack of experience and training among humanities scholars. EASSH is active in coordinating a strong visibility for humanities research and creating channels to make it more discoverable, searchable and available to audiences beyond the community of academic peers. A systematic mechanism of knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange to target policy makers is still missing in most of the SSH disciplines, although the integration and value of the humanities infrastructures like CLARIN and DARIAH⁹ within the European

Open Science Cloud offer new opportunities. The Higher Education Transformation Agenda is putting increasing pressure on universities to develop their so-called 'third mission', that is, a wider and stronger engagement with society at large. Research provided by the humanities on markets, innovative and sustainable urban design, legal contexts, accountancy, ethics and morals, text mining, philosophy, human attitudes and behaviour, languages, radicalism, cultural heritage, and so on is a key resource for a growing number of research users, stakeholders, companies, NGOs, international organisations, as well as local authorities. The demand for such research is high and is not necessarily tied to academia.

In fact, although it is understood that interdisciplinarity is not an aim in itself, the clearer and more accessible the research results are, the more discoverable these become, and the easier it is to collaborate with others under large thematic areas. Publishers have a key role to play in this area. They can manage articles across disciplinary areas and offer access to knowledge from different perspectives. Editors can play a crucial role in the process of research discoverability as in today's knowledge society the demand for academic research comes from a wider group of organisations well beyond the academic community.

5. Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Interplay: The Portfolio Approach

The section above showed the trends and patterns of funding in European and global science policy and the importance that an Alliance for SSH, a coherent voice on science policy issues, can play. As mentioned, the challenge approach offers opportunities and the emerging narrative of the Sustainable Development Goals and an agenda for humanity encourage a large set of contributions from our disciplines, beyond technical and mechanical solutions, opening up the role that society can play in addressing these collective and global problems.

The largest economies are increasingly encouraging interdisciplinarity and collaboration across research areas and geographical contexts to achieve viable solutions to real-life problems and current challenges; academic institutions, organisations and research funders pushing towards breaking disciplinary silos and wide collaboration. In a recent publication, the OECD pointed out that:

In part, this growing awareness rests on a recognition of the importance of coupled human-environment systems (HES) at multiple scales and their implications for society. Causal pathways in such systems transcend disciplines or sectors and are highly context dependent. Addressing their manifold consequences requires thinking and acting beyond the traditional bounds of individual scientific disciplines, and indeed beyond the scientific enterprise itself, to other relevant stakeholder domains. It calls for better integration between natural sciences and social sciences and humanities (SSH), a more direct relationship between science and society, and the inclusion of non-scientific stakeholders in research processes at all stages.¹⁰

This is a crucial transition, and a coherent voice from our disciplines is key in this context. The Alliance has been very vocal about what it means to work together on the challenges and how design of funding is crucial for such a process. The key word remains 'diversity'. EASSH has highlighted how collaboration does not mean merging of disciplines, or that

all disciplines should engage with all aspects of every challenge, issue or question. On the other hand, all questions have a social and human perspective that may need to be addressed. If the process is inclusive and not prescriptive about how to address a question, then all scientists (and non-scientists alike) will have equal opportunity for access.

EASSH fulfils a role to gather information to make the contributions of arts, humanities and social sciences discoverable and to safeguard the robustness of methods and approaches. It is also a bridge between the ever-changing demands of the policy narratives and the large community of scholars. It would be a mistake to assume that all scholars must adapt to the changing policies, and to find in their work an angle that satisfies trends in science policy. It is instead necessary to design a platform which can identify within the community those who are best placed to contribute to a given challenge or scientific quest, making available tools, evidence and infrastructures to broker across the two worlds, in tandem with universities, which must strengthen research development units in which the multidisciplinary blend of different research areas can be encouraged and supported.

As an example, in a paper published in May 2020, EASSH called for European policy makers and funding agencies to ensure that all domains of research are mobilised to address the challenges of COVID-19, using a mission-type 'portfolio approach' of projects and disciplines. In addition to medical and biological research, studies into the social, cultural and human aspects of our lives are crucial for tackling this crisis. We need multiple and diverse types of expertise and methodologies to provide the accurate, informed and ethically sound evidence required by our policy makers.¹¹

In our final recommendations, EASSH urged national ministries and European institutions to take two key actions:

1. Designate the COVID-19 crisis as a research 'mission', requiring a portfolio approach where contributions from many disciplines, including humanities and social sciences, are brought together to address the multiplicity of interrelated research questions.
2. Ensure that scholars from all scientific domains, including the humanities and social sciences, are active participants in all expert task forces dealing with framing the challenges of the crisis from different perspectives and with dedicated sets of data.

With reference to Research and Innovation, EASSH called for both national and European funders to:

1. Support and fund research projects from different disciplines on COVID-19 including the studies of vital importance provided by the humanities, social sciences and creative arts.
2. Ensure the research approaches of social science and humanities are funded to contribute to current and future missions. Methodological work and dissemination, historical data and databases will be crucial to address forthcoming challenges. New solutions will also require careful consideration of fundamental rights such as privacy and data protection.
3. Inform future research and policy strategies using insights emerging from the current crisis around the intersection between public health, structural inequalities, political systems, and cultural norms and values. Thereby it will be key to investigate the interaction and tensions between national and European levels and the need for coordination at the European level to ensure efficiency, transparency and global presence.

Identifying specific areas of expertise has become key for ensuring a substantial contribution from arts, humanities and social sciences research, and for bringing clarity to the blurred Framework narratives of ‘integration’ and ‘embedding’. The cooperation of disciplines in the COVID-19 crisis did not mean that all researchers sat in a lab designing a vaccine, but that each scientific area could address and connect with the different aspects of the impact of the pandemic on society.

6. The Need for Institutionalised Representation for our Research Community

The organisational strength offered by EASSH does have impact. The COVID-19 crisis spurred EASSH to help make available the resources of their research communities in order to address, from different angles and perspectives, a crisis which was medical but also socio-economic and even cultural. Humanities researchers helped to show how important it is to gather and interpret social and cultural data – for example, about human behaviour, cultural norms, the impact of values – and to identify and understand patterns of human resilience from historical data. Thanks to an institutionalised approach to support research communities, EASSH managed to:

1. Encourage the EC to fund an emergency call for the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.
2. Mobilise the research community to send proposals (159 were sent within three weeks).
3. Partner and support the establishment of WPRN, a database of SSH-driven projects on pandemic diseases to make this research easier to discover.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed, in an unprecedented way, the acuity of questions about inequality, freedom and resilience (both individual and collective). It has also, importantly, demonstrated that these societal dimensions are appreciated at the highest political levels, and among the national and international research funders who responded with funded calls for research on the crisis. In a time of crisis, policy makers do turn to scientific research to provide answers to questions, be it pandemic, climate change or other challenges.

Of course, even beyond moments of crisis, policy makers must be reminded that research is worth the investment across multiple dimensions. Research has broad and long-term social value. It is neither a ‘luxury’ nor simply a tool to resolve everyday policy issues; it is a fundamental resource for supporting communities, building social cohesion, promoting inclusivity and informing citizenship. Our political systems are at stake, as has been argued and demonstrated by recent elections and by the impacts of social media disinformation and ‘fake news’. Without the insights of research across multiple fields, including the humanities, we will not be able to comprehensively understand the impact of such looming crises.

Scholars must have a coherent voice and platform to assist their responsiveness to policy needs, to facilitate the co-design of research programmes and maximise their opportunities. Disciplinary associations, research communities and professional bodies must contribute to the research policy agenda and encourage research modalities that bring humanities methodologies and approaches to bear on larger societal questions, and also to highlight our research achievements which can address new ideas and new challenges.

EASSH provides a powerful partner to support this engagement with policy institutions in Brussels and in member states, and to influence science and education policy design and ensure an open circulation of ideas and approaches.

7. Final Remarks

In this short final section, I would like to highlight a few key messages.

The SDGs today offer a unique opportunity for the arts and humanities to inform tomorrow's history, directly translating their philosophical approaches, historical knowledge, political ideals and artistic creations into a defence for human rights, building trustworthy technology and creating sustainable societies.

Art and humanities engagement in science policy is not only instrumental for the design of future funding programmes along the lines of their research questions, approaches and methods, but it is also necessary. These disciplines bring ideas, understanding and insights that preserve our environment, design innovative thinking, and respect our human capacities, not just as citizens of a *polis* but above all as beings living together on our planet and exploring the space around it. Policy makers need an arts, humanities and social sciences perspective to unpack a complicated and interconnected world.

EASSH is a platform which can bridge the gap between researchers, scholarly associations and institutions on the one hand, and the architects of science funding mechanisms and policy makers on the other. EASSH also works with foundations, publishers, companies and the private sector to channel the voice of arts and humanities and bring these stakeholders into dialogue with our research.

Finally, EASSH will continue encouraging national science systems in Europe and beyond to remain accountable for supporting fundamental research in these disciplines and to invest in research that embraces all types of knowledge to harvest results from diverse evidence. All knowledge contributes to designing a better and more sustainable future.

Notes

1. See https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en
2. In terms of some of the key attributes that AHSS disciplines bring see the SHAPE-ID (<https://www.shapeid.eu/>).
3. Europe Fit for the Digital Age: Commission Proposes New Rules and Actions for Excellence and Trust in Artificial Intelligence (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1682).
4. Also, social sciences research is taking an important place in guiding the EU decision making in key areas like the development of the labour market. The Directorate General of Employment has launched an initiative and the main flagship is the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) report (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=791&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes>) based on the latest analysis, evaluation and assessment of the changes in the labour market and its impact on European society.
5. For example, see the latest report of the Irish Research Council and Royal Irish Academy *Research for Public Policy. An Outline Roadmap* (May 2021).
6. In truth, the European funding has made available an SSH-driven funding programme since Framework Programme 4 (1994–8) when the European funding for research doubled in size (from 6.6 to 13.2 billion). However, the first design of the challenge approach seemed to

have lost the component of society analysis and heavily engaged the STEM disciplines only to provide technical solutions for the European challenges. Social and humanistic scientists across Europe mobilised and reinstated the importance of carving space for a programme that could focus on important issues of population, society transformation and more human-centred research. Yet the actual mechanisms to ensure truly interdisciplinary programmes were weak and inadequate.

7. Net4Society (<https://www.net4society.eu/en/Societal-Challenge-6-1845.html>).
8. See EASSH position papers (<https://eassh.eu/Position-Papers>), in particular those focused on commenting on the EC integration reports (Interdisciplinary Perspectives for Horizon Europe: Lessons from the 4th SSH Integration Monitor Report (<https://eassh.eu/Position-Papers/Interdisciplinary-perspectives-for-Horizon-Europe--Lessons-from-the-4th-SSH-Integration-Monitor-Report~p1246>) and Horizon 2020: Struggling with Interdisciplinarity. The 3rd SSH Integration Monitor Report Reveals the Truth about Top Down Interdisciplinarity (<https://eassh.eu/Position-Papers/Horizon-2020--Struggling-with-Interdisciplinarity-The-3rd-SSH-Integration-Monitor-Report-Reveals-the-Truth-about-Top-Down-Interdisciplinarity-June-2018~p1251>)).
9. CLARIN is a digital infrastructure offering data, tools and services to support research based on language resources (<https://www.clarin.eu/>); and DARIAH is a network to enhance and support digitally enabled research and teaching across the arts and humanities (<https://www.dariah.eu/>).
10. OECD Global Science Forum, 'Addressing Societal Challenges Using Transdisciplinary Research', p. 15 ([https://one.oecd.org/document/DSTI/STP/GSF\(2020\)4/FINAL/En/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DSTI/STP/GSF(2020)4/FINAL/En/pdf)).
11. Mission Covid-19: Global Problems Need a Research Portfolio Approach (<https://eassh.eu/Position-Papers/Mission-Covid-19--Global-problems-need-a-research-portfolio-approach~p1132>).