



**On 27 November 2019 ‘PoliSSH perspective on Horizon Europe’ event took place in Staszic Palace in Warsaw (Poland). The conference was jointly organized by Polish Science Contact Agency (PolSCA) of the Polish Academy of Sciences and National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU in Poland.**

**The main objective was to support the participation of Polish scientists in EU Framework Programmes, especially in the Social Sciences and Humanities’ field. Other objectives of the event were: to bring the European context closer to Polish scientists, to network them with foreign partners and to disseminate information to increase participation in the EU Framework Programs.**

#### **CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT**

Currently, European Union countries are in the process of consulting the next research and innovation program ‘Horizon Europe’. The importance of the program is underlined by its proposed budget, which for the first time reached 100 billion euro in the European Commission proposal, and even 120 billion euro in the proposal of the European Parliament. Increased funding for research and innovation is also a greater opportunity for Polish scientists to raise their funds. The fact is that Poland, as an EU member state, does not fully exploit its potential under Horizon 2020, similarly to other EU-13 countries. Thus far, this region has obtained only 4.8% of H2020 funding, while it represents over 17% of EU researchers. In addition, the funds available for financing research and innovation based on ERDF funds (so-called structural funds) are likely to be reduced in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework. Hence, an urgent need to introduce system solutions that support participation in the next Framework Program, but also to build confidence in the national scientific community that Horizon Europe is an excellent chance to strengthen and develop the research sector in Poland.

**‘PoliSSH perspective on Horizon Europe’ event was particularly addressed to representatives of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) due to many reasons.** Firstly, because the objective of Horizon Europe is to bring science and innovation closer to members of European societies - this is a task for SSH researchers who are to ensure understanding of

research results among decision makers and representatives of diverse environments. According to [SSH-Impact Pathways and SSH Integration in EU Research Framework Programmes](#) report, they are to provide specialist knowledge in terms of placing specific problems in wider contexts by combining a local and global perspective. Moreover, SSH helps to better understand the socio-economic impact of research policy itself and enhance its societal impact in the future. Secondly, the previously agreed joint proposal of the Parliament and the Council clearly states that Horizon Europe provides a multidisciplinary approach and stresses Social Sciences and Humanities' integration in all clusters and activities developed under the program (cross-cutting issue). The position that achieving the main goals of Horizon Europe requires both technological, engineering, mathematical (STEM) and SSH disciplines is supported by various networks e.g. [European University Association](#) (EUA) or [European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities](#) (EASSH).

Taking initiatives to strengthen the integration of social sciences and the humanities is extremely important for one more reason - the insufficient participation of SSH representatives in Horizon 2020. Such conclusions can be drawn from [the latest report of the European Commission](#), monitoring the development of SSH as a cross-cutting issue under the Horizon 2020 Program.

Furthermore, the need to ensure adequate representation of researchers of social sciences and humanities in the EU Framework Programs is also pointed out by European scientific networks, including All European Academies (ALLEA) with its [Working Group Horizon Europe](#), focused on guaranteeing full representation of SSH disciplines. The one of its members is prof. Przemysław Urbańczyk, director of the PIAS Institute of Polish Academy of Sciences.

The 'PoliSSH Perspective on Horizon Europe' event finally brought together over 80 participants, representing various institutes of Polish Academy of Sciences, universities, research funding agencies and other research institutions. The conference demonstrated the opportunities offered by EU programs and showcased the "success stories" of beneficiaries, not only from Poland, but also from other European countries. All information, including speakers bio and final agenda, can be found [here](#).

## **OPENING AND WELCOMING ADDRESSES**

The conference was officially opened by **prof. Paweł Rowiński, Vice-President of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS)**, who warmly welcomed all the participants. The Vice-President briefly described the efforts of the Polish Academy of Sciences in obtaining European grants and underlined that research priorities of the Polish Academy of Sciences encompass interdisciplinarity (including social changes, climate change, energy). He also expressed his

appreciation to the conference organizers, wished participants a productive exchange and encourage all of them to engage in active and open discussions.

**Prof. Małgorzata Molęda- Zdziech, Director of the Polish Science Contact Agency in Brussels (PoISCA)**, used her welcoming address to give an overview of PoISCA activities and of the conference's program as well. She stressed out that we need Social Sciences and Humanities to understand and tackle global challenges, for instance climate change. She expressed a hope that the conference provide us with hints for preparing a good research projects, especially in Horizon Europe.

**Dr. Zygmunt Krasieński, Director of the National Contact Point for EU Research Programmes in Poland**, emphasized the importance of EU funds in supporting research and innovation in Member States. He said that we already set up clear goals, which we would like to achieve in terms of Polish participation in Horizon Europe.

#### **KEYNOTE SPEECH**

The keynote speech was given by **Mr. Harald Hartung, Head of Unit E4 in Directorate General for Research and Innovation of European Commission**. Mr. Hartung briefly described the preliminary structure of Horizon Europe and pointed out the main changes, comparing to Horizon 2020. What is more crucial, the special attention was paid to Cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society, which focuses on challenges pertaining to democratic governance, cultural heritage and the creative economy, social and economic transformations. The challenges are interconnected and have been chosen because they respond to the most pressing social, political, economic and cultural concerns and expectations of European citizens.

Mr. Hartung also made an appeal to SSH researchers for providing the extremely important human factor in R&I. He underlined that no single discipline can fully address very complex and current societal challenges. That is why there is an urgent need to foster multi, trans and interdisciplinary cooperation between disciplines, including inter-action between STEM and SSH fields. It is necessary if we would like to be able to examine the societal impact of science and research in the future, in particular for novel policies such as behavioural changes, level of acceptance of new technologies or ethical dimensions.

#### **PANEL DISCUSSION**

The first part of the event began with panel discussion, the aim of which was to describe the position of Social Sciences and Humanities in EU framework programmes, identify main

drivers to integrate SSH research into EU framework programs as well as to underline potential opportunities for SSH representatives. The panel was focused on specific actions undertaken by different institutions to explore such opportunities and on proposals as to how such opportunities might be further developed. The need for the strengthening of the existing SSH stakeholder communities by networking and improving capacity building activities was also discussed.

In the panel discussion, took part:

- **Mr. Jon Deer**, Governing Board member of the European Alliance for Social Science and Humanities (EASSH) and the Campaign for Social Science (UK), Director of Research and Enterprise, City, London University;
- **Mr. Harald Hartung**, Head of Unit E4 in Directorate General for Research and Innovation of European Commission;
- **Prof. Małgorzata Kossowska**, Head of the Social Psychology Unit and Centre for Social Cognitive Studies in the Institute of Psychology at Jagiellonian University, Chairwoman of the NCN Council, Member of the PAS;
- **Prof. Valentina Lepri**, Professor of History of Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of PAS, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow (H2020);
- **Dr. Geny Piotti**, Spokesperson of Research on Societies Europe (ROSE), Head of UE-Research Affairs at the European University Viadrina;

The discussion was moderated by **dr. Anna Plater-Zyberk**, Director of the International Cooperation Office of PAS.

**The general conclusions from the panel are provided below:**

- To be more active in Framework Programmes and ensure full integration of SSH we need to work on mechanisms and formats for closer cooperation among Social Sciences and Humanities as well as between SSH and other sciences;
- Bearing in mind some differences between SSH disciplines, we should look for common grounds and common language among the SSH community because the integration is a great opportunity for the SSH in itself;
- Networking should be seen as a key factor to succeed – we need to create our networks or join existing ones to be more visible with our ideas. Network is always remains, even if we would like to take part in different research initiatives than EU-funded research projects;
- Qualitative indicators in monitoring SSH participation should be taken into account – for example, in terms of networks, an insight who is engaged, how and at what level should be provided;
- There is an urgent need to be engaged from the same beginning by joining consortia, participating in info days and looking for partners;
- If we want our researchers to be successful we need more holistic support for them;

- The success in EU programs also depends on national strategy to support universities/ research institutes. This strategy should include structural changes, which are definitely needed, particularly when it comes to research support offices. What is more, it should be in line with institutional strategy of research development;
- Many issues should be solved locally – this is the role of NCPs;
- The issue of impact in Social Sciences and Humanities has to be pointed out;
- Do not use abbreviation “SSH” because it is very often misunderstood by people outside;
- Applying for EU-funded grant is never waste of time for researchers, projects managers, institute or university. It is a good lesson to learn for everybody.

### TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Undoubtedly there is a strong role to play for SSH in Horizon Europe. We know that ¼ of the budget for individual grants (ERC and MSCA) goes to SSH. There are also numerous opportunities for scholars working in SSH in various consortia funded under FP. To be successful research community need to think about an interdisciplinary approach, think about impact and get involved in the consortia from the very beginning. Providing a system of incentives and holistic support at European, national and institutional level is a key to increasing Polish participation in the EU Framework Programs.

As Harald Hartung mentioned, we cannot be humble!

After lunch, **Mr. Mikołaj Pyczak, SC6 NCP and Programme Committee Expert from Polish National Contact Point**, presented opportunities and open calls under SC6. Current calls are focused on following topics: migrations, transformations, governance for the future. He also encouraged all researchers to look for collaboration opportunities by taking part in networking or by adding your profile in [Partner Search Tool for SC6](#).

### SUCCESS STORIES PRESENTATIONS'

What has helped in terms of writing proposals, submitting applications, obtaining EU grants? What makes a success in H2020? The next session was concentrated on showcasing various “success stories” of beneficiaries of EU programs, not only from Poland, but also from other European countries, such as Germany or Lithuania. The primary aim of the session was to share best research practices, exchange ideas and provide practical hints for SSH researchers.

This session was attended by:

- **Dr. Jan Barski**, CityScience Lab, HafenCity University Hamburg
- **Dr. Magdalena Góra**, Institute of European Studies, Jagiellonian University in Cracow
- **Dr. Maciej Maryl**, Digital Humanities Centre, Institute of Literary Research of the PAS

- **Mr. Tomasz Mazuryk**, FundingBox ACCELERATOR Sp. z o.o.
- **Dr. Justyna Olko**, Center for Research and Practice in Cultural Continuity, Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw
- **Prof. Gintautas Mažeikis**, Department of Social and Political Theory, Vytautas Magnus University

The session was moderated by **dr. Justyna Kramarczyk** from Polish Science Contact Agency (PoISCA) in Brussels.

**The main points, which were highlighted at the session, include:**

- Institutes/universities should provide their researchers with efficient research support offices, transparent internal procedures, specialized knowledge on dissemination (e.g. social media). There is a vital need to establish **cooperation between academics and administrative workers**;
- **NCP support** is also crucial in this process. We need to increase participation in brokerage events, take part in NCP’s mentoring programmes and arrange individual consultations with experts;
- Central to being successful in EU grants is the development of **networking skills** – researchers should create new or join already established networks. The success of the project depends on mutual trust and support;
- When it comes to **consortium building**, putting an advert on the participant portal and proper identification of desired partner profile are advised;
- Another key word is **teamwork**. We need well-managed and diverse teams with clear structure and division of labour as well as democratic and transparent project management procedures. Even the process of writing a proposal is a team effort.
- Research community should be aware that the **external audiences/ stakeholders are part of the process and key to success**. Participation in the broader research community and effective internal/ international communication are essential .

**TAKE-HOME MESSAGE**

Close cooperation between academics and research support offices, being part of the networks, strong support from NCP, effective communication, clear-structured and well-managed research teams are crucial to achieving success. In general, key to being successful in EU funded projects is to bring all research community – researchers, academia authorities, project managers, stakeholders, external audiences, society, non-governmental - together. There is a need for the united and engaged voice.

The event ended with a presentation given by **Ms. Ewa Kuśmierczyk, Director of the Excellence in Science Department of PAS**, entitled 'ERC grants in SSH – increase your chances for success'. Ms. Kuśmierczyk provided the audience with numerous examples of support of the Excellence in Science Department to ERC applicants in Poland, including general ERC workshops or ERC Mentoring Initiatives.