



High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU research and innovation programmes

Preparatory questions for stakeholder panel

HLG meeting 6 June 2017

1. How could the impact of future EU R&I programmes be maximised

EASSH believes that the EU needs to respond more closely to the concerns of European citizens and these need to be given greater prominence in the designing future research and innovation programmes. According to the Eurobarometer special survey 451 of December 2016 on the future of Europe, European citizens put “**social equality and solidarity**” very clearly at the top of the list of global challenges, which need to be tackled. The top 5 challenges as identified by Europe’s citizens are: 1) **unemployment** (45%), 2) **social inequalities** (36%), 3) **migration** (31%), 4) **terrorism and security** (31%), 5) **the public debt of EU member states** (26%). All these five challenges including a growing attention to **the education of future generations** are underpinned by social, political and economic dimensions which could be tackled by Europe’s world class base in social and cultural research and scholarship.

Past R&I programmes have looked to invest in technological development, which is of great importance in itself. However, as the Eurobarometer survey shows it is perhaps even more important to address European citizens’ most acute concerns in areas such as migration, terrorism, democracy, inequalities and employment. **EASSH thus requests the development in the next FP of an ambitious collaborative research programme, which will address the social dimension of the challenges for future of European democracies and societies.**

2. What would be your top three priorities for the next Framework Programme?

EASSH has no doubt that **RESEARCH** will remain fundamental for the Research Framework programme, as without research there can be no innovation. It is important to continue investing in research, which has high relevance to policy making and improve the mechanism to channel world class research into understanding challenges and finding practical solutions to address them. Currently around 24% of the ‘Excellence’ budget is awarded to those working in social and cultural research – the success of this is demonstrated by half of the worlds leading research groups in these fields being located in Europe. Meanwhile, less than 5% of the budget for the challenges is spent for

addressing socially driven issues. This means that Europe reaps less of the benefits of its excellent research potential than possible.

We also identify issues related to process and the 'architecture' of the programmes: from definition of research topics to the drafting of work programmes, and in turn the evaluation of proposals. **MULTIDISCIPLINARITY** in research programmes must harness all the talents and direct them to specific questions. However, multi-disciplinarity in research is difficult to achieve, but we believe the rewards could be high. We therefore encourage all concerned to give careful consideration to the appropriate research programme architectures to ensure that challenges with human and social dimensions are examined by those with the relevant research perspectives. It is critical to bring the right scientific expertise to bear on all stages of the research process in the framework programmes.

A long term EU strategic investment in understanding the dynamic forces behind the agreed global challenges is crucial. **The CO-DESIGN of the research agenda** with the support of citizen insights and addressing people benefits is a fundamental priority for our future.

3. How could the societal relevance of EU R&I programmes be boosted?

DG Research and Innovation must develop its coordinating capacity between key scientific networks and EU institutions on the most pressing societal issues to ensure the inclusion of 'the social and cultural aspects'. So far the lack of an internal coordinating hub in DGRI for socially relevant issues has reduced the chances to draw together high impact research funded by the framework programme as well as other DGs, such as DG Home or EEAS. EASSH strongly encourages the HLG to examine the processes, which connect research and policy making in the EU's institutions, and thereby make recommendations for improving the access to and the use of evidence for the major concerns of European citizens.