



BRITISH
ACADEMY

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The British Academy welcomes the spirit by which the sixth societal challenge within Horizon 2020 has been split to create a new 'Europe in a Changing World: Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies' focused on the social sciences and humanities. We remain, however, profoundly disquieted about the position of the social sciences and humanities in Horizon 2020. The social sciences and humanities are fundamental to all three pillars of Horizon 2020 and its seven societal challenges. The challenges we face today, from crime, to an ageing population, to climate change for example, cannot hope to be tackled through mechanical solutions alone; they require a fully rounded research programme in order to produce effective policy solutions.

Firstly, we welcome the strong support that has been given to the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Curie Actions (MCA) within Horizon 2020. These have both proved their worth to the research community, and through which the UK has been very successful at gaining funds. In discussions surrounding Horizon 2020's budget, those parts that have a track record of success, such as the ERC and MCA, should be reinforced and protected. There must be no salami-slicing; excellent frontier research must be maintained.

Secondly, the split of the sixth societal challenge means that the funding available for social sciences and humanities will be far lower than for any other challenge. This immediately places social sciences and humanities at an unfair disadvantage. We therefore strongly encourage the government to pursue a realignment of the funding across the challenges, which fits with the rearrangement into seven challenges, and ensures a level of funding for social sciences and humanities that is commensurate with the other challenges. At the absolute minimum, and if a realignment of funding does not prove possible in the negotiations, the government must ensure that there is a 50:50 split of the current funding pool between the sixth and seventh societal challenge.

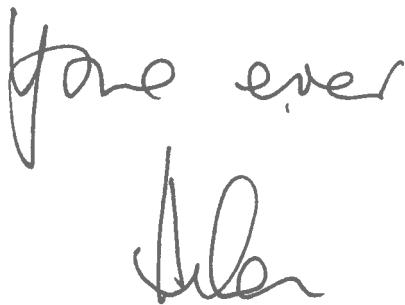
From
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Thirdly, the goal is for the social sciences and humanities to be 'mainstreamed' or 'embedded' across Horizon 2020, however, there is no strategy on how to do so. From past practice, we see little hope of 'mainstreaming' being used for anything other than a fig leaf to cover the lack of a truly multi-disciplinary approach. We thus strongly call on the government to lead the Council in persuading the European Commission to produce and implement such a strategy as a matter of urgency. The UK's social sciences and humanities research community derives significant benefit from EU research funding and to lose out on the opportunities Horizon 2020 present would be a massive loss to our ability to deliver on the UK's global research and economic growth ambitions.

The UK should ensure that the groups within the European Commission that are drawing up the Work Programmes for Horizon 2020 and the terms of reference for its Programme Committees and Expert Advisory Groups are explicitly aware of the need to include and finance the social sciences and humanities and make explicit reference to the cross-cutting integration of the social sciences and humanities in all elements of Horizon 2020 and its practical and financial implementation. It is thus essential that a considerable mass of the social sciences and humanities research community is deeply involved in this process – not an isolated person here and there. The British Academy stands ready to support the UK government and the European Commission in this endeavour.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Wallace', written in a cursive style.

Professor Dame Helen Wallace DBE CMG FBA

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