

MIRRIS POLICY BRIEF

IGNORANCE, PARALLEL WORLDS OR APATHY?

THE PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES ORGANISATIONS FROM EU-13¹ COUNTRIES ACROSS HORIZON 2020

Introduction

In October 2015 the European Commission published its report on the „*Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*“. This report assesses how the different Social Sciences and Humanities (abbr. SSH) disciplines have been integrated into the ‘SSH flagged’ projects funded in 2014 under the Societal Challenges and the Industrial Leadership priorities. The assessment also included an analysis of the participation of SSH researchers differentiated by countries, which is taken up and further analysed and processed in this MIRRIS policy brief.

Main findings from the Report²

The findings from the report on the „*Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*“ as well as our own analysis deduced from it confirm a sobering status quo as regards the involvement of partners from the EU-13, although with remarkable differences in terms of the different Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership priorities successfully addressed by SSH research organisations from the EU-13.

In general the report on the „*Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*“ concludes that it is crucial to support the integration of SSH already during the drafting phases of the Work Programmes. A clearly available and reproducible scope for input from the SSH within the topics yielded also higher participation from SSH partners and better integrated contributions from the SSH, confirming that the integration of SSH dimensions needs to happen from the earliest stages of the drafting process. This calls for a stronger (both

¹ EU-13 comprise Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

² If the term „Report“ is mentioned in the text, it always refers to the report on the „*Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*“.

quantitatively and qualitatively) integration of SSH experts in the Horizon 2020 Expert Advisory Groups and a much higher share of SSH experts within the evaluation panels for topics with SSH³.

A detailed analysis of SSH involvement across the 7 Societal Challenges and the Industrial Leadership activities defined under Horizon 2020 also shows, that a still very uneven uptake exists which leaves plenty of room for improvement. This refers especially to the low budget allocations for SSH within the Industrial Leadership priorities (LEIT) and the uneven representation of SSH disciplines too; by now SSH contributions come by the majority from the field of economics, business and marketing. One of the key findings of the report was also, that SSH research is by far not limited to contributions from universities, but that non-profit research organisations, public sector institutions, for-profit research organisations and also civil society organisations have an important stake which challenges the stereotype of 'ivory tower SSH'. However, the quality of SSH integration is highly uneven across the funded projects not forgetting that 28% of the projects funded under topics flagged for SSH did even not integrate any contributions from the SSH.

Overview of the participation of SSH research organisations from EU-13

In terms of participation from EU-13 10% for the SSH partners came from the EU-13 Member States, while SSH partners come predominantly from the EU-15 (83%), in particular from the UK (16%) which strongly confirms its highly influential role within Europe's SSH scene, Germany (10%), the Netherlands (9%), Italy (8%), Belgium (7%), Spain (7%) and France (7%). In particular also the very high shares of the Netherlands and Belgium, given the limited size of their national systems of research, have to be noticed.

The significant geographical divide between the EU-15 and the EU-13 even increases, when the origin of project coordinating partners is under scrutiny; here the share of SSH coordinators from the EU-13 drops to only 3%. 92% of the SSH coordinating partners come from the EU-15 Member States, especially Germany (19%), the Netherlands and UK (both 13%), Spain (9%), Italy (8%), France (6%) and Belgium (5%). Contrasting the coordination figures with the overall participation figures, we can conclude that

- SSH research organisations from UK are well integrated even without an analogous effort of coordination
- SSH research organisations from Germany put a comparatively high emphasis on coordination
- SSH research organisations especially from the Netherlands but also from Belgium are far above average and their respective size of their national systems of research represented
- SSH research organisations from EU-13 are – in general – only peripheral integrated and hardly if at all visible as coordinators.

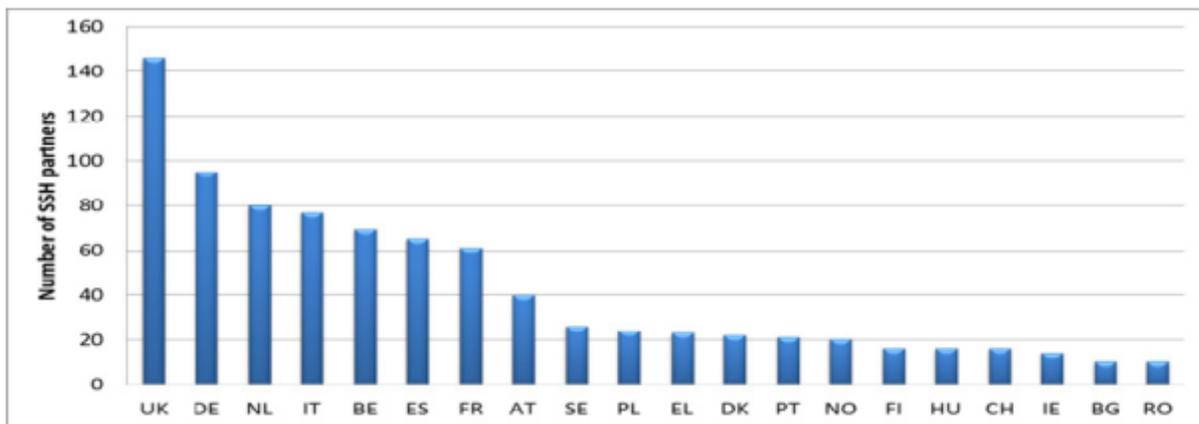
Fig. 1 is taken from the report on the „*Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*“. It shows the 20 most represented countries, which account together for 92% of all SSH partners participating in the SSH flagged topics across the seven Societal

³ The report informs that within a sample of 40 SSH flagged topics in 2014 out of the 688 experts appointed only 10% had a background in one or more SSH disciplines.

Challenges and the LEIT priorities under Horizon 2020 in 2014. If we benchmark the EU-13 Member States against Austria, which is a relatively small but relatively advanced country in terms of its research and innovation system, we see that the two most advanced EU13 Member States in the field of SSH participation, namely Poland and Hungary are well positioned at rank 10 respectively 15. They together have as many participations as Austria (n=40), which is ranked 8th. The share of research organisations from Poland across all SSH flagged topics in 2014 is 3% and that of Hungary 2% respectively. Also two more EU-13 Member States rank among the top 20 countries, namely Bulgaria and Romania with each 10 participations.

Fig. 1: The 20 countries with highest participation of SSH research organisations in SSH flagged calls under Horizon 2020 in 2014

Country affiliation of SSH partners - top 20 countries																				
Country	UK	DE	NL	IT	BE	ES	FR	AT	SE	PL	EL	DK	PT	NO	FI	HU	CH	IE	BG	RO
Partners	146	95	80	77	69	65	61	40	26	24	23	22	21	20	16	16	16	14	10	10
Share	16%	10%	9%	8%	7%	7%	7%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

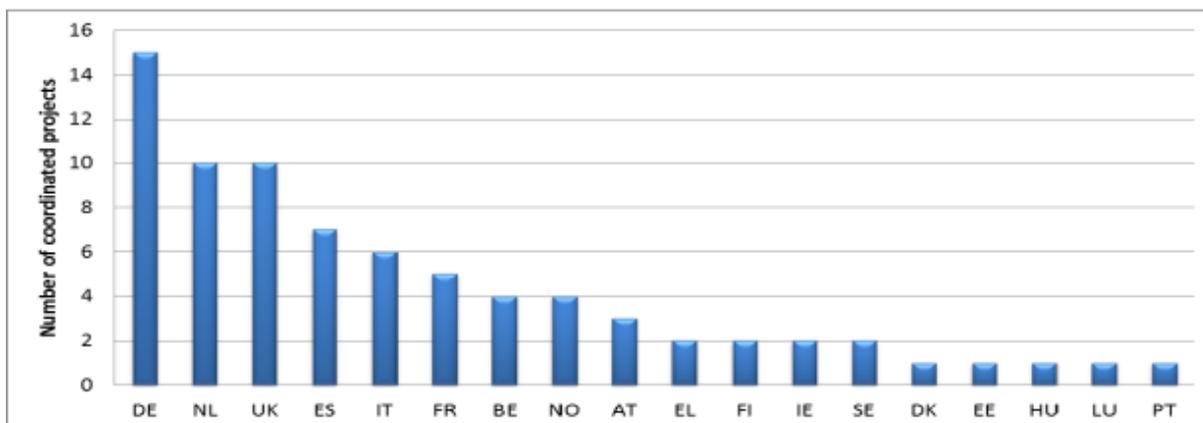


Source: „Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines“, Report published by the European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Unit B.6 – Reflective Societies, October 2015.

Fig. 2, which is also taken from the Report shows the country affiliation of the coordinating SSH research organisations. Only two of the EU-13 Member States are represented with one coordinating research organisation each, namely Estonia and Hungary. They are both ranked 14th (compared to Austria ranked 9th with a total of 3 coordinating SSH research organisations).

Fig. 2: Countries with coordinating SSH research organisations in SSH flagged calls under Horizon 2020 in 2014

Country affiliation of SSH project coordinators																			
H2020 parts	DE	NL	UK	ES	IT	FR	BE	NO	AT	EL	FI	IE	SE	DK	EE	HU	LU	PT	Total
Coordinators	15	10	10	7	6	5	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	77
Share	19%	13%	13%	9%	8%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	100%



Source: „Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines“, Report published by the European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Unit B.6 – Reflective Societies, October 2015.

Detailed analysis of the participation of SSH research organisations from EU-13 across the Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership Priorities

The next sections provide a detailed assessment of the participation of SSH research organisations from the EU13 by the different work programmes.

In the 11 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of 23 topics under Societal Challenge 1 (*‘Health, Demographic Change and Well-being’*), SSH partners account in total for humble 17% of project partners in 60 funded SSH flagged projects. Four of the EU-13 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland and Romania) are participating with each one research organisation. They rank each 16th compared to Austria, which is ranked 7th with seven participations, which is almost double the number of the participating SSH research organisations from the EU-13 countries. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with only 3.5% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates a very low take-up of the topics related to *‘Health, Demographic Change and Well-being’* in the EU-13 countries.

In the 13 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of 37 topics under Societal Challenge 2 (*‘Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy’*), SSH partners account in total for a visible share of 29% of project partners in 20 funded SSH flagged projects. Six of the EU-13 countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia) are participating with one research organisation each. They rank each 17th compared to Austria, which is ranked 14th with two participations. Positive is the participation of Polish SSH research organisations with a total participation of 3, which equals rank 11. This indicates a certain importance of this topic for Polish SSH research. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 8.7% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates an average take-up of the topics related to *‘Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy’*.

In the 16 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of 38 topics under Societal Challenge 3 (*‘Secure, clean and efficient energy’*), SSH partners account in total for 20% of project partners in 53 funded SSH flagged projects. Hungary is ranked 9th with 3 participations and Poland and Slovakia are each ranked 10th with each two participations, indicating a certain importance of this topic for SSH research in

these countries, especially for Hungary which also contributes a coordinating SSH partner. A further four of the EU-13 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Romania) are participating with one research organisation each. They rank each 14th compared to Austria, which is ranked 6th with eight participations. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 8.8% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates an average take-up of the topics related to *'Secure, clean and efficient energy'*.

In the 17 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of 39 topics under Societal Challenge 4 (*'Smart, green and integrated transport'*), SSH partners account in total for only 13% of project partners in 44 funded SSH flagged projects. Poland is high ranked 8th with 4 participations, indicating an obvious importance of this topic for Polish SSH research. No other SSH research organisation from the EU-13 countries is ranked. For comparison, Austria is ranked 6th with seven participations. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 4.7% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates a very low take-up of the topics related to *'Smart, green and integrated transport'*, especially when the exceptional position of Poland is disregarded.

In the only 9 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of 25 topics under Societal Challenge 5 (*'Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials'*), SSH partners account in total for only 11% of project partners in 26 funded SSH flagged projects. Poland is again high ranked 8th with two participations, indicating a certain importance of this topic for Polish SSH research. No other SSH research organisation neither from the EU-13 countries nor from Austria successfully participated in these topics. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 4.9% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates a very low take-up, especially when taking again the exceptional position of Poland into account.

In the 11 topics flagged for SSH out of a total of only 19 topics under Societal Challenge 6 (*'Europe in a changing world- Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies'*), SSH partners account for 88% of project partners in 34 funded SSH flagged projects. Hungary is the best performing EU-13 country in this Societal Challenge. It is ranked 10th with 11 participations, followed by Poland with 9 participations, indicating a critical importance of some of these topics for Hungarian and Polish SSH. All EU13 countries are successfully represented in this Societal Challenge. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania are ranked 20th with each 5 participations. Estonia, which is the only country with a coordinating SSH partner in this Societal Challenge, and Slovakia are ranked 24th with three participations each. Cyprus, Latvia and Slovenia are ranked 28th with each two participations and Croatia, Lithuania and Malta are ranked 31st with each one participation. Austria is comparatively low positioned at rank 16th with six participations. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 16.8% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates not only a very high take-up but can be considered as evidence that SSH in these countries is definitely not irrelevant. It confirms the existing SSH potential of the EU-13 countries, but on the other hand it also demonstrates that SSH research organisations from the EU-13 are probably too much focused on "their" dedicated Societal SSH Challenge 6 and are not sufficiently exploiting the opportunities in most other topics of Horizon 2020.

Finally, in the only 8 topics out of a total of 25 topics flagged for SSH under Societal Challenge 7 (*'Secure societies – protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens'*), SSH partners account in total for a high share of 39% of project partners in 23 funded SSH flagged projects, which indicates a high interest and a high contribution as well as an existing potential of SSH to this Societal

Challenge. This is the only Societal Challenge where a specific comparative advantage of Bulgarian SSH research seems to manifest. Bulgaria is high ranked on 7th position with four participations, followed by Austria and Poland ranked 8th with three participations each, indicating a certain importance of this topic for not only for Bulgarian but also Polish SSH research. Malta and Romania are ranked 16th with two participations each and Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia are ranked 20th with one participation each. The share of EU-13 SSH research organisations with 16.5% of the total participation in this Societal Challenge indicates a comparatively very high take-up and specialisation of SSH research in this Societal Challenge.

The Report also examines the participation of EU Member States in LEIT-ICT (*'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies – Information and Communication Technologies'*), LEIT-NMP (*'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies – Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Biotechnology and Advanced Manufacturing and Processing'*) and LEIT-SPACE (*'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies – Space'*) In total the participation rates of SSH research organisations in these Industrial Leadership Priorities are limited; 19% of all participants within the SSH flagged projects in LEIT-ICT are SSH research organisations. The respective rates for LEIT-NMP and LEIT-SPACE are 24% and 7%. No single SSH partner from the EU-13 has been selected for funding in none of the three LEITs, compared to three participations from Austria in LEIT-ICT (5th rank), three from Austria in LEIT-NMP (1st rank), and one from Austria in LEIT-SPACE (2nd rank).

Conclusions and recommendations

Although the potential and engagement of SSH research organisations from EU-13 countries is visibly demonstrated by their relatively high participation rates in Societal Challenge 6 and Societal Challenge 7, which can be considered as the two Societal Challenges with most obvious topical SSH orientation, the integration of SSH research organisations in the other Societal Challenges and in Industrial Leadership Priorities (LEIT) in Horizon 2020 has not been realised yet. There are obvious gaps regarding the integration of SSH in some Societal Challenges and LEIT parts of the Work Programmes in general. In particular, the obvious underrepresentation of SSH research organisations from the EU-13 results in a significant geographical divide between the EU-15 and the EU-13 which raises concern. There are several reasons for this, but apathy does not belong to them.

It is therefore firstly recommended to adjust the quality and orientation of topics more to the real concerns, needs and challenges of EU-13. This should happen through a pro-active participation of SSH researchers in defining the research questions of the new Work Programmes. To this end, a series of workshops is envisaged to be organised addressing concrete thematic priorities and exploring the concrete needs for interdisciplinary research cooperation to tackle them. Special emphasis should be undertaken to include SSH in the agenda setting and call definition processes. This also calls for a representative representation of SSH researchers in general and from the EU-13 in particular.

Evaluators from SSH within SSH-flagged topics, especially outside Societal Challenge 6, are still underrepresented. Given the problematic disregard sometimes expressed by researchers from natural and engineering sciences towards SSH topics and approaches, SSH representatives are sometimes simply not taken serious enough or sometimes just overheard due to lacking critical

numbers and mass in inter-disciplinary composed peer-review approaches. Thus, it is recommended to increase the numbers of evaluators from SSH throughout all SSH flagged topics.

Thirdly, the strong one-sided orientation of SSH researchers from EU-13 countries towards the two Societal Challenges most obviously disclosed to SSH topics (i.e. Societal Challenges 6 and 7), calls for a stronger and a more differentiated information transfer of NCP systems in these countries highlighting the opportunities provided under the other Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership priorities.

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November 2015

About the MIRRIS project:

The **MIRRIS** project aims at encouraging a better exploitation of European research and innovation programmes and a higher participation of researchers from the EU-13 countries in the European Research Area (ERA) by setting up a process of analysis, dialogue, and mutual learning among key stakeholders, namely research, innovation and other institutional actors. There are countries lagging behind in the effectiveness of exploiting EU funded programs in the field of R&D&I, on which the MIRRIS project targets its activities: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Through an extensive policy learning exercise to identify barriers and to identify how innovation systems can better address the participation to the ERA, MIRRIS supports these countries in their efforts to better exploit the European research and innovation programmes.