

Social Sciences and Humanities in the Framework Programmes

COST Seminar

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Intro

- Personal background
 - Over 20 years in DG RTD
 - Head of Unit
 - „Social sciences and humanities“ (2000 – 2007)
 - „Evaluation and monitoring“ (2007 – 2014)
 - Retired since 2014
 - Publishing analytical comments on peter-fisch.eu
- The content of this presentation does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the views expressed therein lies entirely with the author ...

Overview

- *The past*

Short history of SSH from FP4 to H2020

- *The present*

Achievements and open issues

- *The future*

Challenges ahead

... *(Instead of some conclusions)*

Two things I do not understand ...

Short history: FP1 to FP3

The “dark decade” 1984 to 1994

- Research as a new activity field at European level
- Key drivers
 - Political ambition (EURATOM)
 - Industrial policy (ESPRIT)
- Top-down programme logic
- Developing slowly into a comprehensive research portfolio

- No coverage of social sciences and humanities

Short history: FP4 (1994 – 1998)

The modest beginning with TSER

- “Targeted Socio-Economic Research”
- Restricted to three clearly separated areas:
 - Evaluation of science and technology policy options in Europe
 - Research on education and training
 - Research into social integration and social exclusion in Europe
- No mention of humanities ...
- No incentives for interdisciplinarity...

Short history: FP4 (1994 – 1998)

A painful start ...

- Hostile reaction in major parts of the scientific community
- European programme in social sciences widely regarded as “mission impossible” – bound to failure
- Almost “pre-historic” conditions
 - Applicants phoning Brussels to get basic information
 - Sending “Info Packs” by mail
 - Proposal abstracts sent by fax
 - Proposals sent as parcels
 - Evaluators selected based on recommendations ...
 - ...

Short history: FP5 (1998 – 2002)

Developing a wider perspective

- Key Action “Improving the socio-economic knowledge base”
- Objective: “Define the base for employment-generating social, economic and cultural development and for building a European knowledge society.”
- Topics:
 - Structural, demographic and social changes
 - Relationship between technological development, employment and society
 - Changing role of European institutions, systems of governance and citizenship in the process of European integration
- Emerging role of the humanities
- Coordination of the “socio-economic dimension” across FP5

Short history: FP6 (2002 – 2006)

Towards new structures for SSH?

- Priority 7 “Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society”
- Objectives: *“Support and develop Social Sciences and Humanities to produce high quality research in areas of policy relevance ...while structuring Social Sciences and Humanities in such a way to fully exploit the opportunities of the emerging European Research Area”*
- Large projects (Networks of Excellence, Integrated Projects)

Short history: FP7 (2007 – 2013)

ERC – A new opportunity for SSH

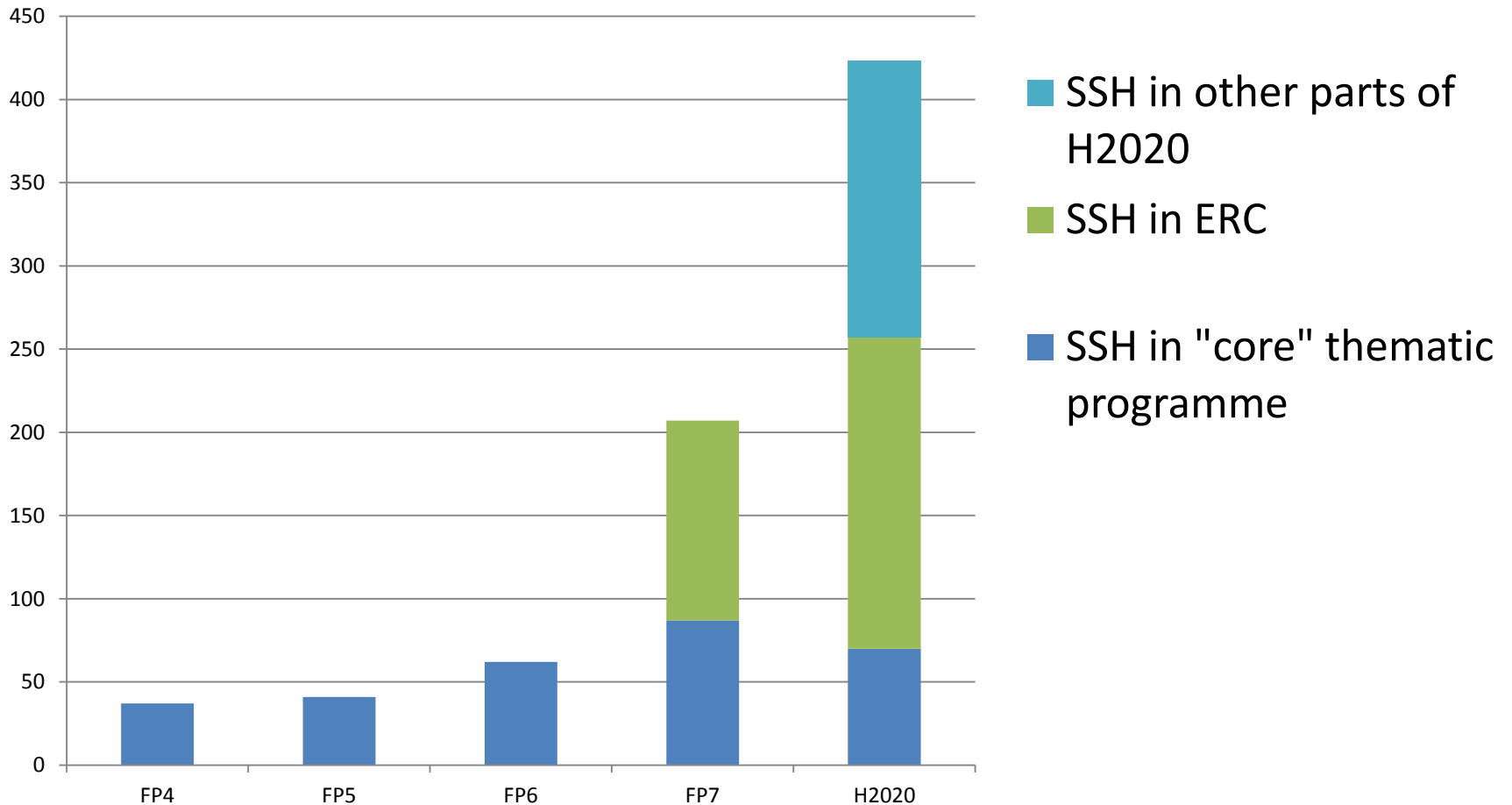
- “Socio-economic sciences and the humanities”
- Topics:
 - Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society)
 - Economic, social and environmental objectives
 - Major trends in society and their implications
 - Europe in the world
 - The citizen in the European Union
 - Indicators; Foresight ...
- European Research Council - New bottom-up funding scheme (mainly) for individual researchers (cf. presentation by Angela)
- “Market share” of SSH in ERC around 16% - as compared to 2% in the top-down parts of FP7

Short history: H2020 (2014 – 2020)

SSH is everywhere...(!?)

- SSH research is “embedded” across Horizon 2020
- Focal point Societal Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world - Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies “
- Systematic coverage of SSH funding opportunities in all parts of Horizon 2020 (“flagging”) (cf. presentation by Philippe)

“Quick and dirty”: SSH Funding per year (M Euro)



Achievements and open issues

Funding opportunities

- Massive financial support for SSH in Europe
- Continued upward trend in SSH funding from FPs
- Accumulated amount of funding over 20 years (1984 to 2014): almost 2.5 billion €
- FP funding is in many Member States the most important (or even only available!) source of project funding
- “Market share” of SSH funding in EU research budget still below 5% - much lower than share in the “scientific population” (around 20%)
- Lack of underlying basic funding in many Member States

Achievements and open issues

Training and Networking

- Over 1000 projects
- Over 10.000 project participants
- Huge contribution to building a SSH research community in Europe
- Much improved “connectivity” of SSH across countries and disciplines
- Internationally trained young researchers ...
- ... no longer “young”, but in senior positions!

- Participation still characterised by huge inequalities (West – East; North – South)

Achievements and open issues

Standing

- SSH acknowledged as relevant part of the European research portfolio
- Research results now seen as a valuable contribution to the European policy making process
- “Mind change” underway – continuous efforts to facilitate and increase cooperation between SSH and natural/technical sciences

- No strong institutional position within DG RTD
- Interdisciplinarity at equal footing?
 - “Who is in the driving seat?”

Challenges ahead

Innovation

- Integration of “innovation” into a research programme more complex than initially thought...
- Introducing “direct applicability” as a selection criterion and the focus on high “technology readiness levels” seems not a sustainable solution
- Role of SSH still often reduced to a “facilitator” for new technologies or products ...
- SSH has to play a far more active role in developing a broad conceptual framework for innovation in Europe
- Do we need more innovation policy, or rather more innovation in policy ...

Challenges ahead

Impact

- “Impact” might become one of the most important buzz words for the next Framework Programme
- Impact has many different dimensions:
 - Not only short term tangible effects
 - New jobs, additional turnover, product improvements...
 - But also long term structural effects
 - Training, community building, disruptive ideas
- SSH will need to demonstrate their impact
- Highlight the relevance of a better understanding of societal phenomena and the importance of new conceptual approaches for better policy making...

Two things I do not understand

1

- **If ...**

SSH is the only field of research where collaborative research across countries/ languages/ disciplines generates genuine new knowledge and real “added value” ...

- **Why?**

... are SSH the only field of research in the Framework Programme where the funding for individual researchers (ERC) exceeds the funding for collaborative projects?

Two things I do not understand

2

- **If ...**

Europe is in a deep crisis and the future of the political, economic and social integration of our continent is at risk ...

- **Why?**

... does a European research programme for the SSH not address these pressing and important issues upfront, in a strategic and comprehensive approach and as the absolute top priority? Who else, if not the Framework Programme, could do this?

Thanks

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