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The European Confederation of Political Science Associations: position paper on the Commission's Green Paper

The European Confederation of Political Science Associations (ECPSA) welcomes the Commission's Green Paper and has sought to respond to it on behalf of the profession across Europe. The ECPSA has consulted widely in all areas of the continent and has been particularly conscious of the needs of scholars in states in which social science in general are at a nascent stage.

Political science, along with other HSS disciplines, has a great deal to offer the EU in addressing the Grand Challenges it has set itself. The future of Europe as a world leader in innovation and entrepreneurship is, in large part, dependent on political initiatives in public policy and democratic engagement. Nevertheless, the political science community in Europe recognises the shortcomings that need to be addressed to maximise the HSS contribution to the research agenda. Consequently, if the need for a specific grand challenge is a strong priority, the Confederation asks the Commission to launch a period of reflection about creating policies and instruments exclusively dedicated to the building of a more efficiency, consistent and accessible European field of SSH.

The State of the European Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS).

The ECPSA made this diagnostic of HSS in Europe. On one hand, it suffers from

- fragmentation;
- nation specific methodologies; and,
- lack of financial resources

The ECPSA also point out that the way that HSS faces up to the internationalisation challenge can be greatly improved. The costs (financial, time, linguistic training) introduced by this trend have been largely underestimated. To this respect, a particular endeavour is needed to foster the European values, included multilingualism, intellectual diversity, accessibility to consistent European reviews, integration of the young, women and people for all countries in the European space (included countries on the borders of EU) as a member of the European Community of HSS researchers.

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At the same time, Europe's strengths are formidable:

- high degree of diversity;
- substantial capacity; and
- strong tradition in multidisciplinary.

Interesting models of innovation, such as the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, have helped secure the European advantage of scholarship based on its major contributions for several centuries and its major contributions in the latter half of the last century. Europe still boasts a critical mass of researchers and talent – assets boosted by recent Framework Programmes. The ECPSA particularly points to the high potential for scholarship on the implementation of policies aimed at the major social and societal issues facing Europe – global warming, tightening supplies of key resource, ageing societies, economical and social exclusion and security. It also wishes to highlight the need to understand the challenges to Europe's democratic and social model in a world deeply transformed by the new global political, economic and social issues.

The need for a new EU Policy for HSS

Given these different elements, the ECPSA asks the Commission to encourage the HSS in two ways.

- Proposal 1. Build a significant and specific Grand Challenge in order to achieve the societal aims mentioned in the Green Paper
- Proposal 2. In parallel, launching and setting up a period of reflection and debate about the specific needs of the European SSH in the globalisation context.

Some avenue should be encouraged in this regard:

- creating a council of SHH, close to the model existing in some big country in order to build a framework for the specific needs and rule appropriate for HSS;
- setting up a consultation with and within the HSS community, raising these questions (and others);
- building a more accessible translation capacity, available in plural language, and for relatively small project;
- encouraging diversity of publications, in supporting new collections or support for already known collections but less dependant for global editorial market bias in order to develop quality and innovation;
- increasing the number and the accessibility of European database in HSSP; and,
- encouraging European learned bodies in the field to build tailored assessments for social sciences less reliant on bibliometrics.