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DEA has with great interest read the Commission working document, consultation on the Future "EU 2020" Strategy. . DEA would like to make a few comments on our view on this Strategy. We are happy to see that one of the key priorities is "Creating value by basing growth on knowledge". In this connection we believe that the European Research Programmes should strengthen their focus on interdisciplinarity.

Challenges

Globalisation and the financial crisis has over a relatively short period changed the world order and Europe is now facing new opportunities as well as more complex challenges. Social science and humanities (SSH) play an increasing role in addressing the key challenges and in advancing robust and relevant solutions of sustainable value. Moreover, an increasing part of the key challenges faced by companies are in the sphere of SSH competences.

With concepts such as sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener economy and sustainable growth DEA sees an increasing demand for new knowledge, research and cooperation across sectors as well as across sciences. We see the need for a multidisciplinary approach to develop new products, services and processes.

As stressed in the mission for SSH in the European Research Area (ERA) the SSH Programme implements EU research activities that address the major challenges facing the social, economic, political and cultural make-up of Europe. As such, the SSH Programme embraces all aspects of European societies. The programme facilitates excellence in research by harnessing and sharing knowledge and by strengthening collaboration between various disciplines. These research activities address the "EU 2020" Strategy and the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives relevant to the European Union.

However, DEA believes that more focus on multidiscipline/interdiscipline in the European research programmes is preferable. The challenges facing European demand for multidiscipline solutions, for instance hard science linked with research in human behaviour, languages, culture and research in innovation.

Another challenge is to ensure that SMEs are involved in the different research and innovation programmes. In Europe we do not have the same profound traditions, as for instance in the US, for collaborations between universities and business. The cooperation between universities and business is especially undeveloped in the area of SSH. This is truly a shame since SSH research is the source to new surprising solutions, services or products in particular in collaboration with other sciences. In this connection Europe could take the leading position as countries like Japan, India and China do not have the same excellent SSH research yet, as we do in Europe. However, the European potential needs to be realised.

Social science and humanities are demanded and needed

The service sector plays an increasingly important role in the economy. It accounts for about two thirds of employment and GDP and it is the only sector in the European economy that has generated jobs in the last two decades¹. The growing significance of services is also reflected in its increasing innovative activity, with services accounting for a greater share of overall R&D activity, patenting and trademark activity.

However, the share of service firms that innovate is still lower when compared with the level of innovation in the manufacturing sector. Empirical evidence suggests, furthermore, that non-technological innovation plays a very important role in making the service sector competitive². The service sector demands for a lot of SSH research, for instance management, user- and employee-driven innovation, consumer behaviour, marketing, new business models, cultural understanding, communication.

The challenges faced by both private as well as public companies are so complex that a single science alone can not provide the solutions. On the contrary there is an increasing demand for working across disciplines. By doing so, Europe will become more competitive through the creation of new and more innovative solutions to the benefit of companies and the European societies at large.

Suggested action

DEA has at a national level undertaken a survey of 100 Danish companies concerning their challenges and needs to which SSH research can help to provide solutions. The responses we have received from our efforts are summarized in the report [When Social Science and Humanities research generate profit](#) which

1 [Europe INNOVA](#) an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General Enterprise and Industry

2 do

we hope will place even more focus on the application and value of SSH research in the private sector. Even though there is an increase in cooperation between the private sector and the research community, these cooperative relations can certainly be improved and expanded.

The analysis has resulted in the development of seven research themes which SSH research should consider taking up in the future. These research themes have been identified and characterised by a broad range of private and public sector companies.

The seven research themes:

1. Quality and innovation
2. Internet – behaviour and communication
3. The aging society
4. Cultural and business understanding
5. Risk and uncertainty
6. Value, relevance and impact
7. Dynamics of change

These are the themes which the companies in seven branches, the gazelle companies and workshop participants found especially relevant and important. DEA suggests that the Commission consider taking up this kind of survey at a European level.

DEA would be pleased to elaborate these findings and suggestions in any way the EU-Commission finds appropriate.

The global financial crisis did reach historic proportions. It remains to be seen how severe the downturn will be and how long it will last. But one thing is clear – Europe's policy response must not only be strong, but also coordinated and able to pave the way for Europe's global competitiveness in the future. In times of crisis, Europe should not decrease investment in research. On the contrary, investment should increase because knowledge has economic value. Policy action is particularly important in relation to the challenges and possibilities of working more across disciplines.

We are becoming fewer to produce the foundation for Europe's welfare and prosperity. That is why we need to think in an alternative and new way to exploit our academic competences in the best and broadest way possible. We need to be wiser, when other countries and regions are cheaper.