

EURAB 03.076 –final

European Research Advisory Board (EURAB)

**Recommendations on the European Research Area (ERA) and
the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)**

January 2004

ERA AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Summary of Recommendations

EURAB recommendations are targeted towards the European Commission. It is hoped that these recommendations will have some impact on the preparation of the remaining “calls for proposals” under FP6¹, but the principal thrust of EURAB’s recommendations looks towards FP7. Their purpose is to seek an appropriate framework in which to develop a European policy towards the social sciences and humanities in the context of building the European Research Area. The recommendations are grouped under four headings ranging from the strategic to the operational, as follows:

Strategic SSH themes “in their own right” that have high “European-Added-Value” in structuring the European Research Area.

Recommendation 1: Social Sciences and Humanities research activities “in their own right” should command a more prominent place in future Framework Programmes in addressing social, economic and political issues and challenges facing the further construction of the European Union and its relations with the rest of the world. Research themes should be concerned with the interactive and multilevel character of Europeanization and the transformation of modern societies beyond culturally-integrated nation-states. Examples are given of high “European-Added-Value” topic areas in relation to “Democracy” and “European Cultural Heritage” as pointers towards how FP6 Priority 7 might be built upon in future, but SSH researchers are best placed to formulate a fuller range of topics, scientific models and approaches.

SSH Research Infrastructure requirements and needs.

Recommendation 2: Future work programmes and calls for proposals of the FP6 programme, “Support for Research Infrastructures: Structuring the European Research Area”, should make specific reference to the inclusion of the social sciences and the humanities within its remit, and measures should be taken by the European Commission to enhance its “visibility” among the SSH research communities. The term “research infrastructure” should be allowed the widest possible definition to cover the breadth of SSH disciplines and an expert “task force” should be established to elaborate this (or the task could be given to ESFRI²).

¹ FP = Framework Programmes

² ESFRI = European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures

Measures to strengthen the “Socio-Economic Dimension” in main FP RTD³ themes.

Recommendation 3: The “Socio-Economic Dimension” of FP RTD main science and technology programmes should be expanded beyond the present emphasis on *ex-post* analysis of “social and economic impacts of science and technology” and “foresight” assessments to the full integration of socio-economic research components in the work programmes and “calls for proposals”.

Recommendation 4: The European Commission should undertake an analysis of the number and range of SSH disciplinary experts involved in successful proposals to the first “calls for proposals” of FP6 Thematic Priorities 1 to 6 where “socio-economic dimensions” were emphasized. The purpose of the analysis would be to measure the extent of actual as opposed to simply rhetorical reference to the importance of the “socio-economic dimension” of the research projects.

Recommendation 5: The European Commission should increase SSH expert participation in both the design stage (Advisory Groups) of the work programmes and in the evaluation process of FP6 Thematic Priorities 1 to 6 as well as in future FPs.

Recommendation 6: All aspects of “Science and Society” interactions and perspectives (introduced as a separate component in FP6) should become a “horizontal issue” applicable across all FP RTD programmes, and hence become embedded in EU project coverage in a similar way to those parts addressing gender and ethical issues.

Operational advice on “Instruments and Procedures” to improve the position and involvement of SSH researchers in Framework Programmes and in building the European Research Area.

Recommendation 7: In addition to the new instruments of IPs and NOEs, the European Commission should review the option of retaining smaller funding instruments to support projects in SSH fields.

Recommendation 8: The European Commission should take the initiative to organize a consultative conference involving both national and international funding bodies for humanities research and research community representatives to tackle the question of how to structure most effectively the contribution of the humanities to “problem-orientated research” in the European Research Area.

³ RTD = Research and Technology Development

Recommendation 9: The European Commission should consider the creation of a new instrument, tentatively named here “SSH Research Innovation Spaces”, where both early career and established researchers from across the breadth of SSH disciplines and national institutional backgrounds (university and non-university) have the opportunity to cooperate for a limited period (up to two years) to explore innovative research directions and to widen their perspectives.

Preamble: Approach to the Task

Scope

EURAB established a Working Group⁴ with the task of preparing recommendations that would serve to guide the European Commission and other relevant actors in the following respects:

- to make better use of existing SSH knowledge in Europe, including its complementary (or even contesting) relationship to knowledge production in the natural, medical and engineering sciences,
- to help SSH organize better on the European level,
- to set up criteria to guide the selection of problems in both content and major themes,
- to promote innovative ideas on new mechanisms suited specifically to facilitate better integration, impact and visibility of SSH on the European level, mainly under FP7 which should be more accommodating to the specific nature, needs and potential of SSH,
- to include the role that SSH can play in advancing other goals and EU research policies, in particular relating to “Science and Society”, but also to other areas, e.g. how science and technology should be brought closer to citizens and be considered part of the culture of Europe and its identity.

In operating within the above broad terms of reference EURAB felt that its priorities should be to produce a focused set of recommendations that would be targeted mainly towards the European Commission. It is hoped that EURAB’s recommendations would have some impact on the preparation of the remaining “calls for proposals” under FP6, but the principal thrust of the recommendations look towards FP7. Their purpose is to seek an appropriate framework in which to develop a European policy towards the social sciences and humanities in the context of building the European Research Area.

EURAB was properly sensitive to the fact that its membership did not cover the full breadth and diversity of SSH disciplines. Consequently, some additional advice was sought from the SSH research community, including the New Member States.

From Socio-Economic to SSH Research

Social sciences and the humanities cannot be treated as in the same situation vis-à-vis their actual and/or anticipated involvement in EU Framework Programmes. The social sciences (often described “socio-economic research” in EU terminology) had been integrated gradually within EU Framework Programmes, most significantly from FP4

⁴ EURAB Working Group 10 Membership: R.Sohlberg (Chair); L.Amancio; P.Blasi; G.Davies; J.Grimson ; M.Hatzopoulos ; M.Jepsen ; G Mirdal; R Tarrach; F.Uggeri; R.Vihko; L.Walloe; J.Smith (Rapporteur).

onwards, whereas this had occurred on a much more limited and recent basis with humanities disciplines. For this reason, EURAB has given particular attention to the important and relevant contributions to be made by the humanities in the FP6 and beyond. EURAB wished to emphasize that, although the situation had improved, social sciences research remained under-represented in FP6. EURAB's recommendations seek to underline that a stronger role for the social sciences was needed in addressing key issues that were vital to the future development of the European Union. Widening the coverage of "socio-economic research" to include necessary contributions from the humanities required, therefore, an increased share of future FP budgets.

EURAB has noted that over 10% of all "Expressions of Interest (EOIs)" submitted to the European Commission in 2002 in anticipation of the FP6 were directed towards Priority 7 "Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society". This shows both the success of creating a visible SSH programme at EU level and the demand for European level research opportunities in these fields.

With respect to how to better organize SSH and make better use of existing SSH knowledge in Europe, EURAB decided to highlight the crucial importance of the further development of research infrastructure (RI) facilities. SSH research infrastructure requirements tended to be somewhat overlooked in science policy debates on this key issue, as it was often assumed that RI needs were of less relevance to the SSH than the other sciences. To rectify this situation, EURAB has formulated a specific recommendation based upon its view that the term "research infrastructure" as expressed in current EU language required a wider definition to encompass the needs of SSH fields. This recommendation has been integrated also within the broader framework of the EURAB Recommendations on Research Infrastructures.⁵

Finally, EURAB found that there was a substantial amount of recent relevant reports and advice on future SSH input to the ERA, presently somewhat dispersed within the Commission services, which would benefit from being pulled together in terms of main recommendations made.

⁵ Research infrastructures are defined as 'facilities and resources that provide essential services to the research community in both academic and/or industrial domains. Research infrastructures may be 'single-sited' (single resource at a single location), 'distributed' (a network of distributed resources, including infrastructures based on Grid-type architectures), or 'virtual' (the service being provided electronically). EURAB acknowledges the need for adopting the widest possible definition of the term to cover the specific needs of the social sciences and the humanities. In any case, the crucial importance of access to up-to-date, world-class research infrastructures to enable and secure competitiveness of European research is emphasised. (Excerpt from EURAB doc. 03.053 on Research Infrastructures).

Full Text of Recommendations

Clustering of Recommendations

Drawing upon the “Lessons Learned”⁶, EURAB recommendations are clustered under four headings ranging from the strategic to the operational, as follows:

- Strategic SSH themes “in their own right” that have high European-added-value in structuring the European Research Area.
- SSH Research Infrastructure requirements and needs.
- Measures to strengthen the “Socio-Economic Dimension” in main FP RTD themes.
- Operational advice on instruments and procedures to improve the position and involvement of SSH researchers in Framework Programmes and the European Research Area.

Strategic SSH themes “in their own right” that have high “European-Added-Value” in structuring the European Research Area.

Recommendation 1: Social Sciences and Humanities research activities “in their own right” should command a more prominent place in future Framework Programmes in addressing social, economic and political issues and challenges facing the further construction of the European Union and its relations with the rest of the world. Research themes should be concerned with the interactive and multilevel character of Europeanization and the transformation of modern societies beyond culturally-integrated nation-states.⁷ Examples are given of high “European-Added-Value” topic areas in relation to “Democracy” and “European Cultural Heritage” as pointers towards how FP6 Priority 7 might be built upon in future. However, SSH researchers are best placed to formulate a fuller range of topics, scientific models and approaches.

By way of example, it is suggested that a greater focus is required on the working of modern democracies in Europe and the central issue of the degree to which national laws and institutions were becoming inadequate to deal with cross-national social, economic and political problems, and the implications of this. How to interpret these “new realities” in the world, in terms of the growing interdependence between national, regional and global development demanded greater input from SSH fields in future EU research programmes. The dominance of economic thinking on policy measures to maintain and

⁶ In September 2003 EURAB made an analysis of the experience of the first to years and summarized this in a document, “Lessons learned” (EURAB 03.059).

⁷ The New Member States in particular, are not giving up their identities and their internal political, social and cultural integration within the united Europe, rather the EU membership may guarantee a space for a full expression of their identities previously suppressed by Soviet domination. At the same time, only internally well-integrated societies are able to function properly within the EU and contribute to the joint European identity.

strengthen European competitiveness should be supplemented by greater research focus on the consequences at the social and political level, particularly in relation to social movements, public perceptions and attitudes on issues concerning the appropriate levels (local, national and European) at which decisions should be made on their behalf.

Evidence from referenda results in recent years show the persistence of a “deficit” in terms of democratic accountability on key issues and people’s perceptions that public interests are being eroded. Such a “people focus” for new research would provide important theoretical and empirical insights on social and political prerequisites for policy development to tackle the essential contemporary challenge of sustaining public support for (and creating a “sense of belonging” to) the further construction of the European Union.

The draft “Constitution for Europe” at Title I, Article 3.3 states that “...the Union shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and shall ensure that Europe’s Cultural Heritage is safeguarded and enhanced”. The concept of European Cultural Heritage in the context of the Enlarged EU could also be a key focus for a new research effort to explore its meaning in Europe’s growing and diversified multi-ethnic societies. European Cultural Heritage cannot be viewed as a “neutral” shared concept, but is subject to constant interactions of different values and belief systems across both time and space. And, crucially, such re-defining of the concept should not be exclusively inward-looking but, in an increasingly interdependent world, should address the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. There should be a concerted European effort to integrate humanities disciplinary expertise, together with the social sciences, within a “problem-orientated” research framework. The purpose should be to create conditions in which national specialist knowledge in history, culture and literature could be shared to foster mutual understanding and to direct this into policy-making at the European level.

In giving the above two examples of research themes, EURAB would suggest that the guiding criterion for future research efforts might be the provocative question: “Is there a European way of life and, if there is, is it worth preserving and why?” Such a question is particularly salient today because the nature and challenges of many problems facing Europe and the world should command competing visions and approaches (for example, on models for social and economic development, reductions in poverty, security needs and cooperation, bio-ethical issues and humanity’s ability to pass on sustainable planetary conditions to the next generations). In such circumstances sound insights into the historical processes behind cultural differences, and the mechanisms creating conflict or harmony, would be beneficial in informing future EU policy. Otherwise, many mistakes may be repeated, or perhaps more sanguinely, we will know the extent or not to which we are “doing things differently this time”.

SSH Research Infrastructure requirements and needs.

Recommendation 2: Future work programmes and calls for proposals of the new FP6 programme, “Support for Research Infrastructures: Structuring the European

Research Area”, should make specific reference to the inclusion of the social sciences and the humanities within its remit, and measures should be taken by the European Commission to enhance its “visibility” among the SSH research communities. The term “research infrastructure” should be allowed the widest possible definition to cover the breadth of SSH disciplines and an expert “task force” should be established to elaborate this (or the task could be given to ESFRI).

With respect to research infrastructures, SSH fields lag behind in comparison with the natural, medical and engineering sciences. While considerable progress on European (and international) cooperation has been made through the individual work and efforts of nationally-funded research infrastructures concerned with survey research and methodology, data archiving and data services to the research community (and collectively through the activities of CESSDA, Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives, as a prominent example), the “gap” in the provision of research infrastructure for SSH fields compared to other sciences is substantial. Further support for research infrastructure development is crucial to the strengthening of SSH research in the European Research Area, and the European Commission has a key “European Added-Value” role to play here.

In the natural sciences, over many decades, major public investments have been made in research infrastructure and equipment (i.e. accelerators, telescopes, research ships, Antarctic bases, etc.). The creation of such research infrastructure facilities has often been a defining element in the progress of the internationalization of these sciences. SSH research fields also need more infrastructure support to carry out research within a European (and international) framework. The traditional context of the development of the SSH disciplines in “nation state-building”, to a greater extent than in other sciences, has tended to inhibit the pace of European collaborative research and infrastructure support.

What are the needs of SSH fields in terms of research infrastructure? SSH fields need support for developing high quality comparative data (both new and the preparation of existing data, surveys and administrative, for secondary analysis), high standards of measurement and data collection/handling, and new mechanisms and instruments for consolidation and exchange (including “virtual” forms) between research institutions, archives, libraries and museums, e.g. a European Citation Index for the Humanities.

But data, in itself, of course, is not enough. Most importantly, researchers’ methodological skills need to be further enhanced through the networking of existing expertise, technical support and services. Methodological expertise in cross-cultural, comparative research is a scarce resource (and unevenly spread) in Europe, and hence the promotion of appropriate mechanisms and instruments for its future development across the enlarged EU should be an essential priority for support of SSH fields in the European Research Area.

What would be the benefits and results of investing in more research infrastructure for SSH fields? Creating mechanisms to establish a firm link between European policy-

orientated research needs and the best available data and methodological expertise should be a fundamental goal of the ERA in SSH fields. Enhanced methodological expertise in cross-cultural, comparative research projects would strengthen the robustness of the findings and their future utility for further analysis, e.g. through EU project data, as a condition of the contract, being stored for access through networked research infrastructures.

Support for research infrastructure development is an essential means of structuring the SSH research communities on the European level. At present, many SSH infrastructure facilities are concentrated in “Northern” locations with smaller and dispersed facilities in Southern Europe and the New Member States. The European Commission can play a greater role in fostering mechanisms for knowledge-sharing, raising standards and quality of methodology through “networking” and “integrating initiatives” across research institutions and hence strengthening infrastructure support to comparative research project design and implementation.

To date, EU Research Framework Programmes have made important initial contributions in this respect through the “Access to Research Infrastructure Programme” (FP5) which provided individual researchers with opportunities to draw upon the resources and expertise of data archives and research libraries etc., and the “Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme” (TSER/FP4) and the “Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base Programme” (FP5) which have supported collaborative research projects between national social science data archives, museums and libraries. And, most recently, the latter programme has financed the central costs of mounting the European Social Survey, a pioneering venture in mounting an academically-driven, European wide survey instrument, while the participating countries have financed the actual data collection.

However, there is a priority need for greater promotion of the eligibility of SSH fields within the new FP6 Specific Programme of “Support for Research Infrastructures: Structuring the European Research Area”. While it is recognized that the programme is open to all fields of science, a wider definition of infrastructures is required to encompass the above needs of SSH disciplines. A “Task Force” should be established to elaborate this definition. If appropriate, this task could be assigned to the recently-formed European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Working Group “European Research Infrastructures within Social Sciences and Humanities”. This is suggested on the understanding that its schedule allowed the completion of this task before the finalization of the work programme for 2004-6. Given the limited resources available for SSH research within Thematic Priority 7, accounting for only 1.5% approx of FP6 budget including its extended coverage to the humanities, it is important that available opportunities for SSH research infrastructure support in this Specific Research Infrastructure Programme are “visible” to, and taken up by, the research community.

Measures to strengthen the “Socio-Economic Dimension” in main FP RTD themes.

Recommendation 3: The “Socio-Economic Dimension” of FP RTD main science and technology programmes should be expanded beyond the present emphasis on *ex-post* analysis of “social and economic impacts of science and technology” and “foresight” assessments to the full integration of socio-economic research components in the work programmes and “calls for proposals”.

This recommendation arises from EURAB’s concern that the scope for SSH research input into FP6 Thematic Priority Research Areas 1 to 6 appeared to have diminished in comparison with FP5⁸. More incentive mechanisms for interdisciplinary collaboration “bridging the two cultures” should be offered through making explicit reference (in the work programmes) to topics requiring input from SSH disciplines in Priority Areas dealing with biotechnology for health, information society technologies, food quality and safety, sustainable environments, etc. In addition, broader priority areas covering important contemporary social problems, including those connected with enlargement, could be formulated (also see Recommendation 1).

Lessons and experience from national research programmes that have been opened to a broad range of disciplines could be valuably drawn upon in this regard. In particular, interdisciplinary collaboration in the fields of cognitive sciences, information and communication sciences, industrial technology and design (including social and cultural aspects of “European” design and marketing) and health and environmental sciences have become well-established in many European countries. These research fields, *inter alia*, deal with health-environment-safety (HES) issues, human – machine interactions, technology and social innovation, social variations in health expectancy, and individual and group behaviour concerning quality of life issues relating to lifestyles at home and in the workplace, disability, ageing, transport and mobility etc. They offer substantial insights on how interdisciplinary research including SSH can play a fuller role and enrich research fields if harnessed within a comparative research agenda and linked to European policy development.

The following three recommendations in this category propose a series of steps to gather necessary information and to create incentive mechanisms to help achieve the general goal of strengthening the socio-economic dimension in FP RTD programmes.

Recommendation 4: The European Commission should undertake an analysis of the number and range of SSH disciplinary experts involved in successful proposals to the first “calls for proposals” of FP6 Thematic Priorities 1 to 6 where “socio-economic dimensions” were emphasized.

⁸ FP5 contained the Thematic Programme “Quality of Life” which was very wide as regards the scope of the content, whereas FP6 contains a narrower and more specific Thematic Priority Area 7, “Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society” where most of the project proposals on social problems have been submitted.

Such an analysis would provide an essential learning process on the extent of actual (rather than rhetorical) SSH research perspectives in these programmes and throw light on where interdisciplinary collaboration “bridging the two cultures” was achieved, or not. Information gathered would build valuably on the recent European Commission published study on “The Overall Socio-Economic Dimension of Community Research in the Fifth European Framework Programme” which focused on the key importance of the “outreach” function of the socio-economic dimension in Framework Programmes in terms of contributing towards the Lisbon Summit Objectives and the 3% RTD investment targets.

Recommendation 5: The European Commission should increase SSH expert participation in both the design stage (Advisory Groups) of the work programmes and in the evaluation process of FP6 Thematic Priorities 1 to 6.

EURAB is aware that such expertise was already drawn upon in some Thematic Priority Areas such as biotechnology in relation to the need to take account of ethical issues, but this should be extended to other “socio-economic dimension” issues (e.g. public health and safety, etc.). Again, as in Recommendation 4 above, an analysis of actual numbers of SSH experts involved, in what disciplines and topic areas, would be a valuable first step in devising measures to strengthen the interdisciplinary research context of addressing “socio-economic dimensions”.

Recommendation 6: All aspects of “Science and Society” interactions and perspectives (introduced as a separate component in FP6) should become a “horizontal issue” applicable across all FP RTD programmes, and hence become embedded in EU project coverage in a similar way to those parts addressing gender and ethical issues.

As a practical measure to sharpen the focus of “Science and Society” (and “Socio-Economic Dimension”) elements in RTD programmes, the European Commission could include within contracts a requirement to hold a “dialogue workshop” once research results were available from “new instrument” activities (IPs and NOEs⁹). Such “dialogue workshops” would provide an incentive to scientists from across the “two cultures” to establish a common language (an understated but essential goal) in which to exchange views and perspectives on complex issues.

These proposed workshops would stand a greater chance of success if SSH expertise was included at both the design stage and evaluation process of RTD programmes (Recommendation 5 above). This would encourage a process of continuity in the minds of research teams in giving fuller consideration to the socio-economic dimensions of their research. Additionally, these “dialogue workshops” would better prepare the ground for future dissemination activities that aimed to promote the research results to relevant “user groups” and the wider public audience.

⁹ IP = Integrated Projects, and NoE = Networks of Excellence.

The establishment of “dialogue workshops” requirements in FP RTD new instrument contracts might also provide, in the medium term, a useful framework within which to identify strategic choices for the launching of “European Technology Platforms”.

Operational advice on “Instruments and Procedures” to improve the position and involvement of SSH researchers in Framework Programmes and in building the European Research Area.

Recommendation 7: In addition to the new instruments of IPs and NOEs, the European Commission should review the option of retaining smaller funding instruments to support projects in SSH fields.

Reflecting its reservations over the appropriateness of the new instruments as the main instruments for support of SSH research, EURAB felt that there remained a critical need also for smaller funding instruments to support innovative projects and new network-building, and a significant proportion of available funds should be devoted to them. While it was recognized that IPs and NOEs may be valuable instruments in helping to overcome the fragmentation of the research communities (i.e. widely dispersed expertise and a tendency towards individual scholarship, particularly in the humanities), there were serious concerns about the limited number of contracts to be offered on specific research topics in the Priority 7 work programme (one contract in some cases). Bearing in mind also the nature of SSH research in terms of providing critical analysis and alternative interpretations of contemporary human societies and their historical development (including the challenging of conventional wisdom), the sole use of the “integrating” new instruments may not be appropriate in SSH research and, at worst, may even inhibit innovative work.

As an immediate step in 2004, the Commission should conduct an analysis of the experiences and outcomes of the competition for “new instrument” funding under the first “call for proposals” of Priority 7. The analysis should examine the demand for the new instruments vis-à-vis the “old instruments”, STREPs¹⁰ etc (the latter were offered in the first part but not the second part of the Priority 7 call in 2003). The outcomes (successful applications) should be looked at in terms of how they related to the stated goals of the new instruments in achieving an “integrating effect” of bringing together major national institutes, research teams and individual researchers in the chosen topic areas. Also, the degree of any overlap between members of research teams in IPs and NOEs should be examined.

From the perspective of the New Member States, EURAB wished to draw attention to an underlying concern that with the “new instruments” the situation may arise where many talented researchers, and support services, might be devoted to a few selected research activities located and coordinated largely in Western European countries, and that the

¹⁰ STREP = Specific Targeted Research Project

potential negative implications of this for research capacity-building in the New Member States should be considered.

Recommendation 8: The European Commission should take the initiative to organize a consultative conference involving both national and international funding bodies for humanities research and research community representatives to tackle the question of how to structure most effectively the contribution of the humanities to “problem-orientated research” in the European Research Area.

The conference should address the specific challenges for humanities disciplines posed by the building of the European Research Area, and the support measures that could be explored. Critical questions that might be addressed, *inter alia*: What does priority topic selection imply for the development of humanities disciplines? What is the extent of fragmentation of the research communities? What should be the balance between funding support for individual research and promoting project team research? Is “small still beautiful”? How to tackle the question of language and language diversity as major European policy issues?

It was noted that the European Commission had already established an “Advisory Group for the Social Sciences and Humanities”, other expert groups and commissioned reports to address questions of the implementation of the ERA and the state of the art in SSH fields¹¹. Also, some recent FP5 projects (3rd Call of the “Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base” Programme) were addressing some of these issues. These recent initiatives could also provide key input to the proposed consultative conference.

Such a “consultative conference” might set a valuable precedent for further events that address social and economic problems and challenges that European countries have in common (e.g. ageing population and its implications for pension and social security systems) but which currently were analyzed and dealt with mainly on the national level. As another means of improving research coordination mechanisms, this type of conference would complement the ERA-NET scheme.

Recommendation 9: The European Commission should consider the creation of a new instrument, tentatively named here “SSH Research Innovation Spaces”, where both early career and established researchers from across the breadth of SSH disciplines and national institutional backgrounds (university and non-university) have the opportunity to cooperate for a limited period (up to two years) to explore innovative research directions and to widen their perspectives.

“SSH Research Innovation Spaces” should be instruments that, on the one hand, could provide senior researchers with an extended period of “creative time” to think and reflect on their fields of expert knowledge, free of the increasingly heavy burdens of university administrative duties and teaching loads etc. On the other hand, “SSH Research

¹¹ Advisory Group for the Social Sciences and Humanities “Position Paper”; Implementation of the European Research Area in the Social and Human Sciences “Discussion Paper; Defining a Methodology to Assess the State of the Art of Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe “Discussion Paper”.

Innovation Spaces” could also offer opportunities for young post-doctoral researchers to benefit from working within a European interdisciplinary context during the formative years of their careers in order to broaden their perspectives.

The present Institutes of Advanced Studies, several of which exist throughout Europe including the New Member States (e.g. Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin; the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, SCASSS, Uppsala; the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies, NIAS; Collegium Budapest; the Centre for Advanced Study, Oslo; The Danish Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Copenhagen) could be seen as a “model” for these new “Research Innovation Spaces”. Other “models”, where specific efforts have been made to establish interdisciplinary SSH research centres (e.g. Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, MSH; the “Finnish model” of centres of excellence; and other regional centres for SSH research) should also be considered. Through linking fellowships with innovative research themes, FP6 activities such as the Marie Curie Fellowships and the NEST¹² scheme could be tailored to offer EU funding opportunities to these new “nodes” of SSH interdisciplinary research.

¹² NEST = New and Emerging Science and Technologies