

EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



“Strengthening the role of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities on the European Research Area”

June 2009

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

PLATON+ (www.platonplus.net) aims to increase awareness of European research in Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and popularise relative research results in other research areas, namely it targets to:

- (1) *to communicate* socio-economic research results and assets to policy makers, Civil Society Organisations and to business communities across Europe, and
- (2) *to show ways* of collaboration and *bring into contact* socio-economic researchers and researchers from other disciplines.

To address these objectives, a wide range of activities have been designed to:

- determine the potential of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities research domain in the European Research Area; and
- promote the use of expertise and knowledge provided by researchers from social sciences.

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Objectives of the project

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Remark: due to the nature of the project (namely being a Support Action), the foreseen activities are not focusing on a specific socio-economic issue, but rather span horizontally to all socio-economic research areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN THE 1ST YEAR

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the first year of the project, the following activities have been carried out:

- investigation of the socio-economic perspective of the European funding strategy for research as it is expressed through the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes for Research and Development;
- analysis of the role and contribution of researchers from the socio-economic field in EU-funded research projects under the following thematic Priorities of the 6th Framework Programme:
 - Information Society Technologies (IST)
 - Food quality and safety (FOOD)
 - Life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health (HEALTH)
 - Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems (SUSTDEV)
 - Research for policy support (SUPPORT)
 - New and Emerging Science and Technology (NEST)
- development of one (1) SSH Policy Review analysis of the socio-economic aspects of EU-funded research projects under the TRANSPORT domain;
- development of four (4) SSH Policy Briefs providing an overview of the extent to which key socio-economic issues are addressed in the following research areas:
 - Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
 - Transport
 - Life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health (HEALTH)
 - Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology (FOOD)
- development of eight (8) SSH Fact Sheets that provide a short description of a key socio-economic topic and its social, economic political and cultural impact on the European Union;
- organisation of one (1) Policy Dialogue Meeting (26/06/2008, Dublin, IE);
- organisation of seven (7) events to promote the role of socio-economic sciences in interdisciplinary knowledge production;
- organisation of an exhibition stand during the 'ICT 2008' event (25-27/11/2008, Lyon, FR) to promote the collaboration between researchers from the "Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities" and "Information and Communication Technologies" areas;
- development of a web-portal (www.platonplus.net), acting as an information source (knowledge hub) for scientific expertise and knowledge deriving from EU supported research activities in the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities domain, hosting a publicly accessible on-line repository (e-Library);
- promotion and publicity campaign at European as well as national level.

INVESTIGATION OF THE EUROPEAN FUNDING STRUCTURE FOR RESEARCH

During the 1st year of PLATON+ an analysis of the workprogrammes of all thematic areas under the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes has been carried out, aiming to illustrate the potential of the social sciences to contribute useful knowledge outside the FP6-CITIZENS (*"Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society"*) Priority and FP7-SSH (*"Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities"*) Theme. By pointing out the SSH related aspects of those work programmes, the use of the expertise and knowledge provided by researchers from the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities field was highlighted.

Socio-economic aspects were included in numerous ways in all research areas, whereby social sciences and economic aspects played a more prominent role and humanities are quite rarely covered. SSH aspects were not just addressed by the Calls for Proposals but also by the 'preamble' of the

work programmes, i.e. the general description of the programmes. The following examples illustrate how SSH aspects were addressed within the research activities in other domains:

- *FP6 "Food Quality and Safety - FOOD" Priority (Call 3, 2004, p.4):*

In all cases, a wider and innovative combination of disciplines beyond those traditionally used will be deployed, depending on the issue. In addition to combining production, processing, nutritional and analytical expertise, ***consortia should also draw on expertise from such areas as genomics, medicine, information technologies, ethics, environmental, economic and social sciences***, as appropriate, to achieve their aims. Accordingly, integrated approaches that cross-cut several research areas and adopt a "total food chain" approach are anticipated."

- *FP7 "ENERGY" Theme (workprogramme 2007-2008, p.10-11)*

Integration of the socio-economic dimension and societal concerns: "To become the most advanced knowledge-based society in the world, Europe must create a social and cultural environment conducive to successful and exploitable research. Therefore, ***legitimate societal concerns and needs have to be taken on board, entailing an enhanced democratic debate with a more engaged and informed public and better conditions for collective choices on scientific issues***. This is particularly the case in the energy field which has an impact on the everyday life of all citizens. [...] Wherever possible, actors in the energy field will be encouraged to develop science in society perspectives from the very beginning of the conception of their activities. [...] Opportunities for the integration of the socio-economic dimension and societal concerns occur throughout this work programme."

In general, we found that SSH aspects were addressed within other research fields in several ways:

- as a ***main aspect*** of the foreseen research activities;
- as an ***important aspect*** "treating" them nearly as equal, namely cthe socio-economic dimensions of the research activities should be taken into account;
- As an ***added aspect*** where SSH aspects were considered as an 'added task' accompanying the more important central project tasks; and
- ***not directly addressed*** but the use of related knowledge was an assumed condition (e.g. the impact of globalisation).

A detailed analysis of the socio-economic aspects address within the various research areas under FP6 and FP7 is included in the following PLATON+ publications:

- *"Mapping of the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities research sub-areas within the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes"* [Ref. 1]
- Policy Brief *"The role of socio-economic research in the ICT domain"* [Ref. 2]
- Policy Brief *"The role of socio-economic research in the TRANSPORT domain"* [Ref. 3]
- Policy Brief *"The role of socio-economic research in the HEALTH domain"* [Ref. 4]
- Policy Brief *"The role of socio-economic research in the FOOD domain"* [Ref. 5]

CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE IN OTHER RESEARCH FIELDS

Socio-economic sciences have an important mission in the formation of the Knowledge Economy and Society and evidence-based politics. To shed some light on the role of social sciences in the *interdisciplinary* knowledge production, the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in Social Science* (PLATON+ partner) conducted a survey among co-ordinators of projects funded by the 6th Framework Programme under Priorities other than the “*Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society – CITIZENS*”, namely:

- Information Society Technologies (IST)
- Food quality and safety (FOOD)
- Life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health (HEALTH)
- Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems (SUSTDEV)
- Research for policy support (SUPPORT)
- New and Emerging Science and Technology (NEST)

The targeted projects had a multi-disciplinary nature and their coordinators were asked about the involvement of researchers from the SSH domain in their projects (namely their role and contribution to the projects objectives). The sample size included 586 e-mail addresses from the aforementioned FP6 thematic Priorities. They were selected based on their socio-economic relevance and their completion date (the majority of those projects were recently completed).

Table 1: Number of contacted FP6 project coordinators

FP6 Priority	Contacted coordinators	Responses	Response Rate
Information Society Technologies (IST)	150	61	40,7%
Food Quality and Safety (FOOD)	169	90	53,3%
Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health (HEALTH)	17	11	64,7%
Sustainable Development, Global Change and Ecosystems (SUSTDEV)	101	40	39,6%
Research for Policy Support (SUPPORT)	124	70	56,5%
New and Emerging Science and Technology (NEST)	95	46	48,4%
Valid addresses	586	318	54,3%

Note: in some cases an organisation coordinated more than one project

From the survey the following can be drawn:

- **SSH scientists are currently working on about 40% of the EU-funded projects under other research areas.** However, this number may overestimate the involvement of SSH researchers as the portion of the project budget earmarked for SSH related activities was not covered by the survey.

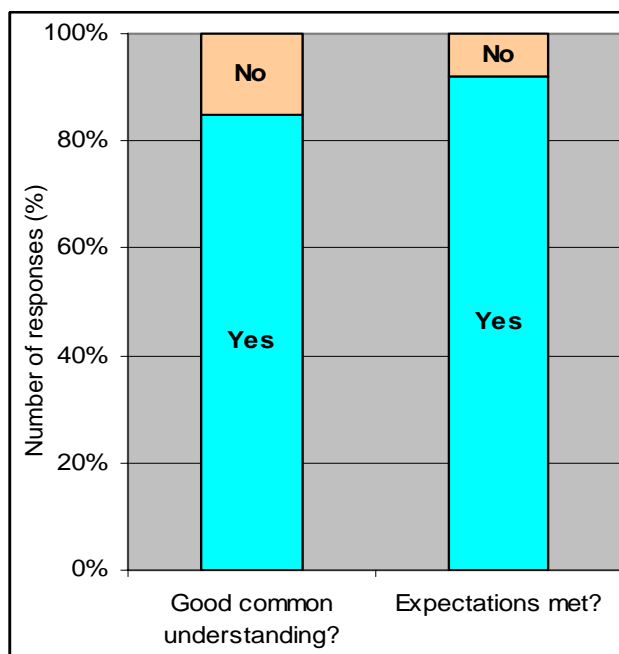
Table 2: Number of SSH researchers involved in EU-funded projects under other research areas

FP6 Priorities	No of responses	SSH researchers involved?
FOOD / HEALTH / SUSTDEV	141	47 (34%)
IST / NEST	107	35 (33%)
SUPPORT	70	46 (66%)
TOTAL	318	128 (40%)

Note: in some cases the coordinator of the project is an SSH research organisation

- Co-operation between SSH and non-SSH researchers was evaluated rather positively, leading to greater willingness for future interdisciplinary long-term co-operation. Interdisciplinarity is not a one-time issue, but an approach, followed and exploited for a lengthy period of time. The majority of the coordinators (being non-SSH researchers) asked considered their cooperation as 'good' or 'very good' with a 'good common understanding on the project objectives'.

Figure 1: Assessment of the collaboration between SSH and non-SSH researchers



Note: No of responses=84, since only those from other disciplines were asked

- Distinguishing between the most 'recognised' disciplines of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, the '**Economics, Business and Administrative Studies or Law**' was at the top of the list (58% of the interdisciplinary projects), whereas core disciplines like '*Sociology or Political Sciences*' (categorised under '*Social Sciences*') appear second (46%). This is insofar remarkable as the type of knowledge provided to the consortium addresses some of the main topics of the latter.

Table 3: SSH expertise contribution (by field)

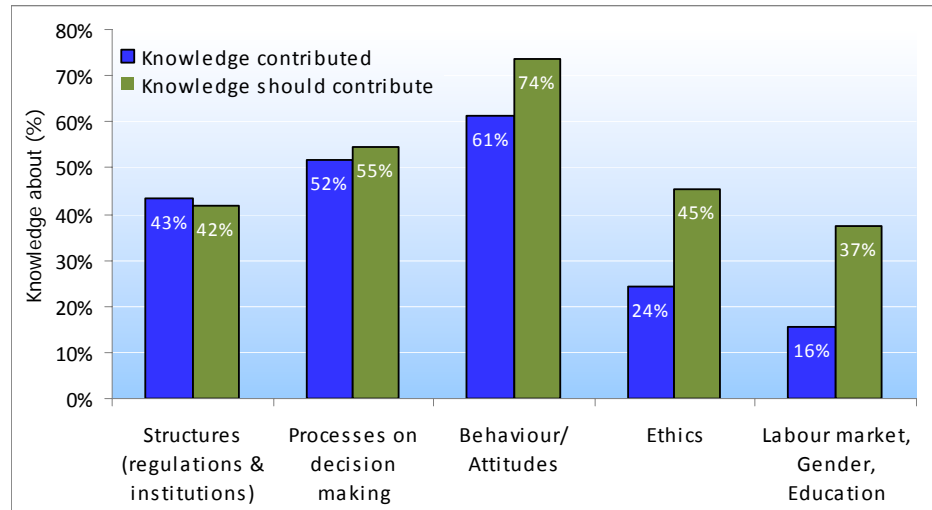
SSH disciplines	
Economics, business and administrative studies, law	58%
Social Science (<i>Sociology (inc. Demography), Political sciences and Social Anthropology</i>)	46%
Humanities	35%
Environmental science/geography	33%

Note: in many projects SSH researchers from more than one disciplines were involved (No of responses=84 - only non-SSH coordinators were asked)

- For the majority of projects, **information about behaviour and attitudes was the type of knowledge most commonly contributed by SSH researchers**. This fact is quite surprising, since the background of the researchers who were most involved – economics and law – does not

directly imply that they are experts on behaviour and attitudes, whereas this circumstance would be more likely from disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Furthermore, Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities **are expected to contribute more knowledge** in nearly **any field** than they already contributed, even though significant differences exist.

Figure 2: SSH expertise contribution (per task)



Note: No of responses=84, since only those from mother disciplines were asked

A more detailed analysis of the results of the survey is included in the PLATON+ publication "The Perception of Social Sciences and Humanities by researchers in other areas" [Ref. 6]

CASE STUDY: THE TRANSPORT RESEARCH DOMAIN

To highlight the role and contribution of SSH knowledge and expertise in other research areas, within the 1st year of PLATON+ an analysis of the socio-economic aspects of EU-funded research projects under the TRANSPORT domain has been carry out.

The European Commission has ambitious goals in the field of transport policies and has set activities in several fields. Based on a comprehensive review of these activities, those areas with more direct relevance for the citizen and transport user and, hence, possibly for the social sciences has been singled out.

Urban Transport

In the recent Green Paper "Towards a New Culture for Urban Mobility", the European Commission (2007) reports on the results of a series of consultations with local authorities, citizens and other relevant stakeholders with respect to the future of urban transport and the role of EU policy. The paper notes the key problems of urban transport in Europe today, namely chronic congestion, environmental pollution, road traffic accidents, and points to the **necessity to invest more in collective transport and the organization of 'co-modality' between different modes of collective transport.**

The role of the EU in the field of urban transport is to assist cities to exchange information and transfer 'good practices' and, of course, to contribute to the creation of 'external' but also general policy conditions that are conducive to the implementation of sustainable strategies in the field of urban transport.

Surface Transport

The significance of sustainable development becomes evident in the case of surface transport: transport and mobility are coupled to economic growth but have, at the same time, negative implications for the environment and, occasionally, for social cohesion. Consequently, **transport policy has to find the right balance between environmental concerns, social aspects and actions to facilitate competition and economic growth**. It must balance the demands of *competition policy* and the *Single Market* with those of the *European Environmental Action Plans* and *labour market requirements*.

Economic growth and the enlargement of the European Union have led to a significant traffic increase and to more competition between operators and modes of transport. **Transport governance has to ensure that the demand for mobility (of persons and goods) is satisfied without degrading the quality of transport services or that of the environment**.

Social aspects of 'Transport and Mobility'

'Transport and Mobility' are relevant questions for social sciences as well. Just to mention a few:

- What about the **access to (public) transport?** (a question relevant for the distribution of wealth in a socially stratified society)
- What about **participation in transport planning?** (the users' perspectives)
- How can policy-makers **ensure comprehensive politics** in order to avoid contradictory policies? Competition policies in transport and economy in general, for instance, might undermine environmental policies (and vice-versa); to ensure sustainable development means the strategic definition of the balance between economy, social aspects, and the environment.
- How can transport policies become efficient and effective in a multi-level governance system that is based on democratic legitimacy by **including citizens' views?**

These questions are often understood as normative questions to be decided politically. The need for scientific knowledge in this field is frequently neglected. Social and political sciences have a potential to respond to "societal needs" going beyond mere ideologies. The key for the future is to overcome the actual "mismatch" between the modes of knowledge creation, the attitudes of the knowledge providers, and the perception of knowledge stakeholders.

It is evident, that the social sciences cannot provide solutions for transport and mobility problems on their own. In complex societies, the collaboration of all types of knowledge producers is important as **there is a growing demand for (scientific) knowledge as input into decision-making ("Evidence-Based Politics") and for the public at large ("Knowledge Society")**.

The role of Social sciences in TRANSPORT research field

Already in the 4th Framework Programme (1994-1998) it became obvious that **merely economic or technological research on transport did not suffice for satisfying the demand of effective and efficient policy-making**. An important issue was to raise public awareness and, at the same time, to achieve political acceptance and legitimacy in ensuring the participation of informed citizens in the decision-making process.

Traditionally, a lot of knowledge production in the field was done through service contracts mostly awarded to transport consultants and technology developers. **Basic knowledge or knowledge that increases the capacity to act was produced through the Framework Programmes, but the offer (and the demand) of knowledge and advice was limited to**

technical solutions and feasibility studies. The result was quite frustrating: without questioning the importance of technical and economic feasibility studies, it became clear that in the 'real world' the recommendations of the experts could not be implemented without additional knowledge.

These problems led to a new research strategy of the European Commission: **the European Commission launched a sub-programme within all Framework Programmes since FP4 addressing the transport domain to deal with strategic aspects of transport policies.**

Social sciences can be expected to make a significant difference to policy-relevant research in the context of a task-oriented scientific approach as:

- Technological development and economic feasibility studies are important but unable, on their own, to provide solutions to contemporary transport problems. This is because **transport (policy) takes place in a broader context involving social, cultural and political factors.**
- The strength of Europe is its diversity; this is evidenced, among else, by the different pathways followed in implementing European policies in different countries and regions. **Social sciences can translate the goals and concepts of public policy makers on the European, national and regional levels and, conversely, translate the visions of the citizens to the policy-makers.**

A number of research projects have been financed by the European Commission illustrating the contribution of interdisciplinary research, in general, and social sciences, in particular, to transport research. Certain indicative examples of such projects under the **Surface transport** and **Urban transport** domain are presented in the PLATON+ Policy Review "Shy Social Sciences in TRANSPORT research?" [Ref. 7]:

- THINK-UP - "Thematic Network to Understand Mobility Prediction" (FP5, completed, www.netr.fr/think-up)
- Foresight for Transport (FP5, completed, www.iccr-international.org/foresight)
- RAISE – 'Raising citizens and stakeholders' awareness, acceptance and use of new regional and urban sustainability approaches in Europe" (FP6, completed, www.raise-eu.org)
- MOVE-TOGETHER – "Raising Citizens Awareness and Appreciation of Urban Transport Research in Europe - An EU project for sustainable mobility" (FP7, on-going, www.move-together.net)

PROMOTION OF THE SSH EXPERTISE AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Analysis of the usage of scientific research results under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities domain

To better understand the use of scientific results deriving from EU-funded projects in the field of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, a survey was contacted in spring 2008 in all countries represented by the PLATON+ consortium (i.e. Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Turkey).

From the responses, the following can be drawn:

- **The research efforts undertaken at EU level** (through the implementation of EU-funded research projects) **are highly appreciated** as the vast majority of the responders argued on the existence of a high added value quality towards the information deriving from such activities embracing an international and comparative perspective. However, **new**

ways should be found to ensure that access to the respective information does not consist of a complicated and time-consuming process.

- **Internet consists one of the main sources for finding research results** but search time should be kept minimum, highlighting the importance of developing thorough e-Libraries and suitable search engines. The only drawback is the existence of many non scientifically accredited resources which are often objective.
- In addition to the on-line sources of information, **the organisation of conferences and consultation meetings / roundtables is also appreciated** since it provides the opportunity of direct contacts and discussions with the researchers who constitute the 'actual source of information'.
- **The level of expertise and degree of accreditation of the organisations involved in the research activities** are important parameters for the selection of an information source.
- The information from EU-funded projects is of specific interest for them especially when it is available in a **revised format**, namely short concise documents in simple and clear language that include policy recommendations. Such documents should consist of an interesting and thought-provoking summary of the main findings that should trigger further exchange of knowledge

Within the same survey, the targeted organisations were asked about their areas that need scientific advice, namely their 'priorities' for future research in the socio-economic Sciences and Humanities field. Not surprisingly, the areas recognized as 'priorities' at each country are already described within the Framework Programmes and have been addressed through relevant research activities. Namely, **a number of (on-going and completed) research projects have been funded by the EU and constitute valuable sources of information and expertise**, while they may be conceived as 'case studies' indicating future research directions and ways of collaboration.

A detailed analysis of the survey is included in the following PLATON+ publications:

- *"Survey of the research priorities identified by European organisations in the field of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities"* [Ref.8]
- *"Mapping of research priorities at European and organisational level"* [Ref.9]

Support to policy dialogue

A Policy Dialogue Meeting, entitled *"Making the best of Globalisation"*, was organised in Dublin (IE) on 26 June 2008. The discussions focused on recent trends and new challenges arising from the intensification of the globalisation process in recent years for the case of Ireland. It brought together researchers, policy decision-makers from government departments and agencies, representatives of the business community and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The discussions were based on policy relevant results of the research project ***"Dynamic Regions in a Knowledge-Driven World Economy: Lessons and Policy Implications for the European Union"*** (DYNREG), funded under the European Union's RTD 6th Framework Programme (<http://www.esri.ie/dynreg>).

Globalisation, broadly defined as an *increased integration of product, capital and labour markets* has been on the rise since the middle of the 19th century driven mainly by technological change and policy initiatives. The new phase of globalisation experienced since the 1990s is distinct from the previous phases by its size and speed.

In particular, the falling transportation and communication costs and the integration in the world economy of new players such as China, India, Central and Eastern Europe and former USSR countries have led to a significant acceleration of international integration of product, capital and labour markets along the following dimensions:

- Increased internationalisation of production due to increased tradability of tasks and the creation of global supply chains;
- Increased ICT-enabled trade of services;
- Globalisation of financial markets; and
- Increased migration flows including migration of highly skilled workers.

The discussions concentrated to the following important policy questions:

- i. How is globalisation affecting trade specialisation patterns and how well is Ireland coping with the new challenges?
- ii. Has the surge in foreign direct investment to China in recent years come at the expense of foreign direct investment into European Union countries?
- iii. How do migrants' flows affect bilateral trade flows between host and home countries?

The result of the discussions are summarised in the PLATON+ publication "*Making the best of Globalisation*" [Ref. 10]

Elaboration of 'SSH Fact Sheets'

To disseminate the value of research results in a short but concise format, eight (8) "SSH Fact Sheets" have been developed within the first year. These 1-page documents provide a short description of a key socio-economic topic and its social, economic political and cultural impact on the European Union. They are addressing the members of the businesses community and researchers from other than the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities disciplines, aiming to *stimulate discussions* while *highlight a number of 'open' areas* for future research rather than provide a detailed presentation of the topic.

Table 4: List of SSH Fact Sheets developed within the 1st year

No.	SSH fact Sheet	SSH Topic Addressed	Partner Responsible
1	Is your company an advocate of society's interests?	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	International Environment and Quality Services North Greece Ltd
2	Labour market mobility affects the work-life balance of the individual!	Flexible labour markets	International Environment and Quality Services North Greece Ltd
3	From the focal to the local Successful Community development requires from developing agents going into the field!	Community Development & Conservation Management	International Environment and Quality Services North Greece Ltd
4	Social Entrepreneurship - New Forms of Social Value Creation: Development and Social Transformation	Social Entrepreneurship	Athens Laboratory of Business Administration
5	Migration and the EU: an Opportunity or a Challenge?	Migration	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey

6	Europe is coming of age Challenges and Opportunities of population ageing	Population ageing	Hill & Knowlton Eesti AS
7	WEB 2.0 – A Social Revolution for the Industrial World?	Web 2.0	ALMA Consulting Group
8	European Citizenship - Beyond borders, across identities	European Citizenship	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey

All SSH Fact Sheets are publicly available in the project web portal:
www.platonplus.net, Home → Publications → SSH Fact Sheets

Organisation of events

To facilitate the exchange of ideas a series of awareness creation and networking events have been organised within the 1st year in order to:

- inform the research community and business communities, policy makers, and Civil Society Organisations about valuable knowledge derived by the EU-funded research projects from the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities domain; and
- support the creation of interdisciplinary research teams bringing together researchers from different disciplines.

Table 5: List of events organised within the 1st year

	Organiser <i>(PLATON+ partner)</i>	Date and place	Title of the event
1	Leibniz Universitaet Hannover – uni transfer	05/06/2008 Hannover (DE)	EU funding opportunities for SSH
2	Agency for the Promotion of European Research	22/09/2008 Rome (IT)	National Security info day
3	Agency for the Promotion of European Research	13/10/2008 Bari (IT)	Environment and socio- economy: a necessary union
4	Agency for the Promotion of European Research	17/10/2008 Milan (IT)	Socio-economic sciences and humanities in the 7th framework programme
5	ALBA Graduate Business School	07/11/2008 Athens (GR)	Funding Opportunities within the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities Research Field
6	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey	13/11/2008 Ankara (TR)	National SSH info-day
7	Hungarian Science and Technology Foundation	17/12/2008 Budapest (HU)	Information Day on the Open Calls of the FP7 Environment Theme

In addition, a promotion stand have been organised during the “**ICT 2008**” event (25-27 November 2008, Lyon, FR http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict/2008/index_en.htm). The biennial ICT event is the most important forum for discussing research and public policy in information and communication technologies at European level and brings together researchers and innovators, policy and business decision-makers working in the field of digital technologies. PLATON+ participation aimed to promote the value of inter-disciplinary research activities with special

focus on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, through dissemination of research results from previous ICT projects that incorporate socio-economic aspects.

RECOMMENDATIONS Social Sciences and the Humanities have an important mission in the formation of the Knowledge Economy and Society and evidence-based politics. *The value of SSH contributions to this new mode of knowledge production has to be accentuated to make best use of this opportunity.* There is a need for interdisciplinary scientific support to improve our understanding of the socio-economic changes taking place in European society while identifying ways of managing those changes and addressing new forms of relationships between citizens, as well as between citizens and institutions in a knowledge-based society.

The areas that socio-economic expertise can provide valuable knowledge in certain (indicative) research areas are highlighted below and constitute future research priorities to be considered when structuring the next workprogrammes.

A detailed analysis of the socio-economic aspects address within the various FP6 Priorities and FP7 Themes is included in the PLATON+ Policy Briefs available for download at www.platonplus.net (Home → Publications → Policy Briefs).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Only very few calls of the ICT related research activities address socio-economic and humanities aspects directly. Most calls rather included SSH aspects as an *additional task* or as an *assumed precondition* but not as equally important contributor to the subject matter. The following socio-economic aspects can be found in the FP6-IST and FP7-ICT programmes:

- Identification and analysis of relevant *legal, regulatory, ethical, psychological* and *socio-economic* issues associated with **development and deployment of ambient assisted living technologies and services for the elderly** that require organizational and financial re-engineering.
- The *regulatory, social, cultural* and *economic* obstacles to **e-business take-up within the enlarged Europe**
- **ICT research for innovative Government:** *modernise and innovate public administrations* at all levels, to foster good governance, to provide citizens and industries with new service offers, and thus create new public value.
- Improvements in the *security, performance, dependability* and *resilience* of **complex and interdependent critical infrastructures** while considering as well *organisational dynamics, human factors, societal issues* and related *legal* aspects.

The potential of SSH research to provide knowledge about social, economic and legal structures, about attitudes and behaviours and about (decision making) processes remains mostly unused. More emphasis should be put on a wide range of topics and research areas '*requesting*' these types of knowledge and '*demanding*' an interdisciplinary approach. Important topics may include:

- **Impact of ICT on working conditions:** A comprehensive analysis and identification of past and upcoming work changes related to ICT developments is necessary to understand the impact of ICTs on the organisation of working time, routines and production procedures. Research in this field will be useful for the developers of ICTs solutions as well as the employers and their associations.
- **ICT as major teaching and learning device:** A foundation for the proper

use of ICT in teaching and training should be established and offered to teachers and trainers. On the other hand, proper technologies should be created to fulfil teachers' and trainers' needs. On this subject, a close cooperation between educational science, ICT scientists, and teachers / trainers is inevitable.

- **Acceptance of ICT solutions:** In order to be able to better address users' requirements the patterns and reasons for acceptance and rejection of certain ICT developments should be identified and analysed jointly by SSH and ICT researchers, producers and users.
- **The ICT labour market:** As an innovation driven market the ICT sector, is exceptionally dynamic and demanding for both employees and employers. The effect of the 'new' working conditions on the innovation potential for ICT enterprises should be analysed to gain insights about sustaining the long term productivity of this sector and to devise concepts of better policies for ICT in Europe. Remaining obstacles for woman, if any, to participate in the ICT labour market should also be identified and potential solutions should be elaborated.

TRANSPORT

The transport related workprogrammes of FP6 and FP7 clearly emphasise research on technological innovation in transport. Those few research activities that include SSH relevant considerations mostly focus on the important aspects of safety and improving the transport system for disadvantaged groups of the population:

- **Human factor of aircraft safety:** Improve the understanding of the human factor in support of human-machine interaction and crew performance in the cockpit
- **Consideration of human behaviour in the conceptual design of the air transport system,** e.g. with regard to the mission of the crew and maintenance personnel, with special consideration of abnormal situations and crisis management.
- **Understanding interactions between air transport, environment and society:** e.g. role of air transportation in a future socio-economic context
- **Understanding the behaviour of the different actors and drivers of the air transport system:** behaviours and strategies of key actors under consideration of technological, market, financial, low-cost travel, regulatory, socio-economic, policy and organisational factors.
- **Mobility concepts for passengers ensuring accessibility:** Development of new concepts aiming at a more efficient organisation of mobility in cities, including provisions for elderly and disabled persons.
- **Human components of safety and security for surface transport systems:** Development of solutions for quick evacuation systems of passengers from large vessels, trains, congested tunnels and terminals, with attention to psychological aspects in panic situations
- **Technologies and concepts for surface transport:** Develop innovative automated and/or driver assisted road vehicles for passengers and goods.

In addition to those ongoing research activities it is recommended that the TRANSPORT workprogramme should also include research on the more strategic aspects of transport policy. Inevitably this will encompass interdisciplinary research with key contributions from socio-economic disciplines. Specific recommendations for SSH relevant transport research themes include:

- **Accessibility of air transport:** the integration of air transport with other modes of transport is still a major weakness in many regions of Europe. Research in this field should address the issue of accessibility of airports by land transport with a focus on integrating airports as central nodes in international high speed rail transport networks. This should include a

socio-economic analysis of transport policy scenarios representing a wide range of options for a re-orientation of existing land transport networks.

- **The urban dimension of international transport:** In current EU research activities, urban transport and international transport are largely separated but many problems in international transport are difficult to solve without taking the urban dimension into account. Urban agglomerations are not only 'bottlenecks' on international transport routes they are also the most important origins and destinations for international passenger and freight trips. Thus, any planning of long distance / international transport infrastructure and concepts for traffic management schemes should be integrated with urban planning schemes and supported by research on the socio-economic implications of the proposed policy measures. Furthermore, an improved understanding of the stakeholders and their interest can lead to a more efficient implementation of infrastructure projects and other policy measures, e.g. road pricing or parking schemes for passenger cars.
- **Understanding travel behaviour:** Understanding the motivations for travel behaviour is a central element for influencing the choice of transport mode. Research on understanding travel behaviour has traditionally been carried out mainly by transport psychologists but interdisciplinary studies involving sociological aspects of certain groups of the population and economic motivations for travel behaviour show additional promise of policy relevant results.
- **Integrated data collection:** EU research on transport data is already using a wide variety of data sources but more effort should be invested in integrating traditional transport data (e.g. road transport statistics) with other transport relevant data sources that are associated with economic research (e.g. trade statistics) and sociological research (e.g. household level studies on income, work, schooling of kids, etc.).
- **Transport concepts in land use planning:** Decisions in land use planning influence travel patterns of persons and transport patterns of goods for years to come. Transport planners have been acutely aware of this problem for many years and some EU Member States are further advanced in integrating transport in land use planning than others. On the EU level research should be undertaken on the multi-level governance aspects of integrating two different policy fields (i.e. transport and land use planning/urban planning) across several levels of government (i.e. local, regional, national, EU) with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders and actors (from local politicians to European transport operators).

HEALTH

The World Health Organisation (WHO) clearly emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to health research. In a position paper of 2006 they state that "*advances in biomedicine alone will not be sufficient to improve global health. New knowledge is required in all fields of health research, including operational, behavioural, economics, social sciences, and health systems and policy research*" (WHO 2006, p 7).

The HEALTH domain of the European Commission's funding programmes FP6 and FP7 largely incorporates this interdisciplinary principle. The programmes are already strong in terms of the topics *health care workforce* and *management and organization of health care*:

- **Health care workforce**, includes the topics of the mobility of health care professionals, human resource planning in nursing, clinic working hours and patient safety.
- **Organizing/managing health care** addressing the improvement of clinic decision-making, the quality and safety of hospital care, the continuity of clinic care, leadership and patient safety culture in health care organizations and the impact of cross-border collaboration on the health services.
- **Intervening health care policy** such as the benefit of financial and non-

financial incentive schemes to healthy behaviour among children and adolescents; the evaluation of the (cost-) effectiveness of public health intervention and policies in improving recommended vaccination cover against infectious diseases among different sections of the population; strategies and policies for improving reproductive health.

- **Ethical, social, legal and economic aspects of specific life science practices and medical therapies** e.g. of genome-based therapeutic drugs for psychiatric disorders; of the development and production of cell lines for cell-based therapies; and when to use and exchange human samples and medical/personal data.

On the other hand, much more emphasis should be placed on research on health systems in general. Indicative topics are:

- **Funding the healthcare system:** The different financing strategies of health insurance and care in Europe (e.g. public, private or mixed)
- **Cover of health care and health insurances:** Inclusion and exclusion of different groups from health care in Europe. Open or restricted access to health insurance and health care for different groups (e.g. jobless, poor, immigrants, atypical employees).

Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology (FOOD)

Research in this field is entirely devoted to the policy goal of building a **Knowledge-Based Bio Economy** (KBBE). It goes without saying that research simultaneously addressing social, economic and environmental challenges serves this purpose better than disciplinary, narrowly structured research approaches that lack the necessary comprehensive perspective. The large number of calls in FP7 requesting interdisciplinary research shows that the stated objective is taken seriously. The following socio-economic topics are addressed in the workprogramme:

- **Consumer behaviour and attitude:** improving the comprehension of the factors determining food patterns and eating habits in general, reasons for unhealthy eating habits and ways of preventing them, the consumers' role in the whole food production-retail-consumption chain, etc.
- **Sustainable use of seas and oceans, grassland and agricultural commodities, e.g. legumes and the societal impact of organic farming.**
- **The interrelationship between agricultural economics and policy:** e.g. the economic impact of quality assurance schemes on rural development in the EU, comparative analysis of factor markets (e.g. land sale/lease, labour and capital markets) for agriculture throughout the Member States and impacts of non-tariff trade barriers on the competitiveness of the EU and selected trade partners. In addition, research on the spatial dimension in EU rural development programmes, understood as preparation for a common agricultural policy, and research on the impact of climate change on the safety of European and global food markets are related to this area.
- **Ethical and social aspects** (e.g. public acceptance) **of new and future bio-technological developments:** e.g. integrated bio refineries, synthetic biology and novel foodstuffs.
- **The institutional, legal and technical aspects of Fisheries Management** based on the 'maximum acceptable limits of negative impacts'.

However, some issues, including those pointed out by the *International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development* (IAASTD), have not been included in the European research strategy yet. **Issues related to the bio-economic workforce** include:

- What new challenges and necessary qualifications emerge from the

implementation of more and more technology or the explicit abandonment of technology and chemical additives in the production of food?

- What is the size of the available workforce in the bio-economic sector?
- What are the incentives and obstacles for young farmers to stay in the rural region and in the sector?
- In this light, research has to be conducted on the situation of poor and small farms and enterprises and the involvement of women in the bio-economic sector.
- Research on the extent of, causes of and ways of better preventing industrial accidents in the whole of the bio-economic sector, including accidents with the involvement of machinery and equipment, e.g. tractors, harvesters and hazardous material.

Remark: By the term 'Bio-economics' the European Commission refers to "industries and economic sectors that produce, manage and otherwise exploit biological resources (and related services, supply or consumer industries), such as agriculture, food, fisheries and other marine resources, forestry, etc." (FP7-FOOD work program, p.4)

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