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The text was endorsed by programme committee members from Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Israel, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK

"Understanding Europe in a global context: transitions towards innovation societies"

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The vision "Europe 2020" recognizes that in the field of research Europe needs to break down national, disciplinary and, equally important, sectoral barriers. Only by doing so, will Europe be able to make meaningful progress towards a knowledge-driven, social market economy for the 21st century. This rejuvenation of the knowledge systems in Europe needs to happen at a time, when Europe is undergoing internal and external pressures for transition that put its societies under levels of stress not known in its entire post-World War II history. With tools to harness experiences from the past, to analyze relevant forces at play in the present, and to sketch future scenarios, the Social Sciences and Humanities research in Europe can help to better understand the underlying causes for change and, consequently, to equip European societies with the tools to better manage change.

I.   Societal Grand Challenges

There is agreement that the fast-paced changes facing Europe and the world are all rooted in social changes: they embrace the fields of *culture* (issues as diverse as values, identity, family structures, media etc.), *demography* (changing life-course patterns, aging societies, migration, etc.), *economic and political institutions* (the notions of democracy, of the rule of law, of poverty and social security, of the market and global responsibilities), and others. These dynamics need to be considered (and considered in a global context) also when tackling societal Grand Challenges, such as global climate change, energy and food security, human-machine interaction for different purposes etc.
Important societal and individual choices will need to be made, if these scientific endeavours are to contribute towards sustainable European societies.

Social and human sciences therefore need to be involved centrally in the development of all research programmes aiming to tackle societal Grand Challenges; this involvement needs to start at the very beginning of any research programme development, and needs to include all stages of assessment and evaluation.

II.   SSH research and the Europe 2020 strategy

First and foremost, however, for societies to function as European societies, they need to learn fast how to adapt to changes in national and Europe-wide social and cultural cohesion, transregional and transnational interconnectedness, and global governance.

The three priorities of the Vision Europe 2020 point in the direction of the SSH expertise to be harnessed: intelligent, inclusive and sustainable growth. Question-guided support for core areas of SSH research can provide essential cues to translating these objectives into policies:

-    How is knowledge created, structured, articulated, transmitted and used by individuals and societies?

Cognitive science, linguistics, communication and educational studies will explain the structures needed for a society to be able to address innovation needs;

- How do societies develop effective and resilient social, political and economic structures at all levels (institutions - such as families or markets -, governments, inter- and non-governmental governance etc.)?
Insights into the requirements for intergenerational and international justice and security – and the institutional and governmental governance tools needed – will be provided;

- What is the role and value of culture in transition processes?
Historical and cultural research in a global context will illuminate new dimensions of conflicts and coalitions, of identity and integration, and advance a better understanding of past political failures and future policy needs.

By mobilising world-class experts in these core areas of SSH research, a Grand Challenge research programme would contribute directly to the core objectives of the vision Europe 2020 (education, employment, combating poverty, climate targets), and help place them in a global cultural, socio-economic and political context.

*A challenge theme **"Understanding Europe in a global context: transitions towards innovation societies"** would produce European-level, societally relevant research, focusing on transition processes and producing basic research for evidence-based decision-making by political, social and economic actors.*

In-depth and longitudinal comparative studies with a global scope, projections and scenarios based on long-range empirical data, specific projects aimed at updating educational content and structures and at a better understanding of global processes, would be among the kind of research needed.
Since integration and cohesion will be major themes in the coming decade, special emphasis will need to be placed on the adequate inclusion of research capacity from and on the EU-12, associate and candidate and neighbourhood countries.

*By the same token, and in line with the demands that will be put on European global diplomacy, the **inter-relationship between Europe and other world regions** must be included into all the sub-themes under an SSH-challenge theme. Dedicated support for area studies (language, religion, history, economy, sociology, politics etc.) will help to ensure that this global dimension will be present also in all other scientific Grand Challenges.*

III.   SSH core research themes and the objectives of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth

The politically defined three priorities of the Europe 2020 vision already demonstrate the need for a separate SSH-led Grand Challenge as the locale for producing the necessary evidence-base for basic decisions on the direction Europe wishes to take.

Intelligent growth:

An SSH-centered research programme will help understand, what forces in society are to be mobilised to enable them to face and embrace innovation processes successfully, and for innovation itself to be developed and assimilated by individuals and societies.

Who are – in a long-term perspective - the key actors and how can they be involved, what are the main processes that need to be stimulated and steered, how can the meaning of innovation and societal change be conveyed to all sectors of society?

Sustainable growth:

An SSH-led analysis will produce insights into the decision-making processes that define sustainability objectives, and make proposals how better to involve all relevant actors.

In the field of institutional a analysis, proposals can emerge as to what governance structures are needed for a Europe- and world-wide transition towards sustainability.

SSH expertise will explain what to take into account in order to balance environment, society and culture in terms of intergenerational justice.

Inclusive growth:

An SSH-led Grand Challenge would address themes such as capacity-building across different societal groups under headings such as working lives, health, education (including: life-long learning), as well as the issue of societal cohesion within a context of diversity and inequality. SSH-based research alone will help policymakers to understand culture and diversity as sources of creativity and innovation, and to prepare their inclusion policies accordingly.

IV.   SSH research themes for a Grand Challenge:

Building on the general considerations above, the following specific Grand Challenge research areas can be identified:

Harnessing diversity, overcoming inequality: towards innovative societies: aiming at identifying institutional elements for a social market economy for the 21st century (in Europe and beyond), a societal design will be proposed based on intergenerational equity, political and economic participation, sustainability, knowledge and integration.

The basis is at a better understanding of the deep causes and long-lasting consequences of socio-cultural diversity and social inequality. Research would examine socio-economic inequality, poverty, gender and socio-cultural diversity, all factors that have an influence on political and social participation; as a corollary, the issue of normative-legal pluralism and possible new inequalities caused by trans-nationalisation would be addressed.

Governance Issues (European and International): aiming at an analysis of governance, management and coordination processes within all structural levels of politics, society and business / economics, research undertaken under this heading would employ normative, institutional and reflective approaches. Research will be informed by the working hypothesis that the global competitiveness of governance structures will be decisive for the course that innovation processes, economic growth and social and political participation will take, and for the ways in which competing agendas can be negotiated.

Memory, identity, cultural change: providing time-depth to an assessment of the forces of culture (traditions, religion, social institutions and innovation) across Europe, the historic and

cultural perspectives developed in this line of research will produce, *inter alia*, a better understanding of the needs of 21st century education, and of the ways in which world views and life concepts influence the capabilities for innovation in societies (politics, business, civil society etc.). A better understanding of cultural diversity will serve also as a source for detecting creative and innovative potential, as a key determinant for society's adaptive capabilities in the face of change, and as a resource for successful global communication.

Here as in all other sub-themes, the global context (comparison as method; competition and cooperation as topic) will be considered.

V.   **Overall** r**ecommendation**

SSH-expertise, clustered in a large-scale, Europe-wide research programme around a number of key societal challenges (including the meanings and actors, possibilities and predicaments of innovations processes in Europe in a global context) will create the necessary knowledge base for decision-makers in all sectors of public life (and, it is hoped, private enterprise). An approach that would see SSH-expertise as ancillary to the scientific grand challenges in other fields, on the other hand, runs the risks of failing to produce the higher-level insights to inform policy decisions.

The holistic approach here advocated requires supranational funding and networking of national expertise, so that decision-makers at national level can have easy access to appropriately presented information and insights in their interaction with issues identified as demanding action at the European or global level.