STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (SSH)

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CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary ........................................................................................................2
2. Overall Aims and Methodology ..................................................................................3
   2.1. Overall Aims ......................................................................................................3
   2.2. Strategic Agenda elaboration ............................................................................4
3. SSH funding in European Research Programmes: FP7 and Horizon 2020 ............5
   3.1. 7th Framework Programme (FP7) .....................................................................5
   3.2. Horizon 2020 .....................................................................................................8
4. SSH in Catalonia .................................................................................................................11
   4.1. Catalan Participation in SSH Cooperative Research in Framework Programmes...11
   4.2. Research Infrastructures ....................................................................................14
   4.3. SWOT ..................................................................................................................15
5. Future areas of action in SSH in Catalonia ...............................................................18
   5.1. Action Lines ......................................................................................................18
   5.2. Specific proposals to overcome existing barriers .................................................22
6. Strategic research topics ...............................................................................................24
7. Expected Impact .............................................................................................................34
1. Executive Summary

The Strategic Agenda in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) has as a main objective to contribute to the excellence in SSH research with relevant impact for the Catalan society by promoting a greater participation of Catalan academic community in SSH in the European Projects promoted and funded by the European Commission. This is conducive to two different but relevant goals. First, by helping to the social science Catalan research community to have a more active role in this kind of projects. Secondly, by trying to produce greater externalities of these European research activities in the catalan society. Therefore, it is not only about promoting the participation of Catalan researchers, but also we should also aim to influence in the defined societal challenges set by the European Commission in the Horizon 2020. These challenges are set to deal the main societal and political problems that European societies are currently facing; and contributing and helping to define the common priorities to face these challenges taking into account Catalan research priorities will be also an important goal of this research agenda in SSH. Therefore, the main points intended to be addressed with this Strategic Research Agenda in SSH are the following:

- To identify the research priorities that Catalan public administrations and social agents claims to have a successful development of their actions and positive impact in the Catalan society.

- To distinguish between two kind of potential research resulting from the previous identification: priorities in which Catalonia has enough critical mass for the coordination of European research projects and priorities in which Catalonia can contribute as partners in consortiums coordinated by more experienced institutions in Europe.

- To help designing the right instruments and actions to produce a visible and adequate diffusion of the research scientific evidences and externalities of research results in Europe that might have some impact for the social and political development of Catalonia.

- To produce recommendations to include and coordinate the existing strategic research agendas of Catalonia and to try to fit them into the European priorities and other European strategic research agendas.
2. Overall Aims and Methodology of this Agenda

2.1 Overall Aims

The purpose of the present strategic agenda is three fold:

Objective 1: Creation of a collaborative framework among all main stakeholders (scientists, public and private social agents, policymakers, etc) for the definition of appropriate research strategies and the use of scientific results to face social challenges in Catalonia.

Playing a more important role in decision making about the content and other aspects of the European Framework Programme by contributing to identify challenges and to define research strategies in accordance with Catalan interests and realities. This can be achieved through the identification of priorities that different Catalan agents claims for the successful development of their actions, as it is the way to guarantee the impact of research in dialogue with society.

Objective 2: Enhanced participation and leadership of Catalan researchers in European Research programmes

Facilitating and promoting the participation of Catalan researchers in future European projects as leaders and partners of research consortia in European Projects and incentivising the creation of comparative international and multidisciplinary research groups in and from Catalonia. In this sense, it is basic to distinguish two potential research to be developed in Catalonia: as coordinators (resulting from the identification of priorities in which it exists enough critical mass in Catalonia) and partners (resulting from the identification of priorities addressed and coordinated by more experienced institutions within Europe).

Objective 3. Making recommendations to bring the Catalan R&D policies more in tune with EU scientific standards and frames of reference as well as reinforcing the presence, influence and outputs of the existing Catalan research groups in the European research area.

To achieve this, it is necessary to summarize and analyze scientific evidences of research results in Europe that have had impact in Catalonia. Furthermore, it is also necessary to include and coordinate into the activities of the Catalan agenda other existing strategic research agendas or priorities.
2.2 Strategic Agenda elaboration

2.2.1 Connect-EU Group: SSH

The Strategic Agenda for Social Sciences and Humanities in Catalonia (Spain) is promoted by the Connect-EU Group: SSH created in 2010 with the support of the Catalan regional government. This interdisciplinary team specialises in the social sciences and humanities in the broadest sense is constituted by researchers and managers from different Catalan institutions highly involved in and committed to research in SSH in a European environment. Its purpose is to promote Catalan R&D in this field across all disciplines at a European level for the benefit of the development of the Catalan society. It thus aims to become a strategic forecasting instrument in the definition of Catalonia’s strategy on European programmes and in fostering the participation of Catalan scholars in European projects.

The Consortium is made up of a core group comprising the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), which acts as coordinator, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), the Universitat de Barcelona (UB), the Institut Barcelona d’Estudis Internationals (IBEI), the Centre for European Initiatives and Research in the Mediterranean (CIREM), the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and the Centre for Demographic Studies (CED). One of the main objectives of the Consortium is to create mechanisms and ways of communication with public administration and social agents within the aim of guaranteeing that the activities of research responds to the priorities defined by them. In addition to this core group there are other institutions providing support to the activities developed by the group.

During 2011, the first year of the functioning, the group has already taken different initiatives, being the two most important ones its contribution to the development of “Green Paper: From challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for UE Research and Innovation funding”, and its participation in the public consultation about the European Research Area (ERA) organised by the European Commission.

2.2.2 The elaboration of the present document

The preliminary draft of this agenda has been elaborated by the scientific committee of the Connect-EU Group in Social Science. This document has been created after long discussions among the members of this committee with the idea of trying to be responsive to the major sensitivities of the broad Catalan scientific community in SSH.
However, this is a preliminary draft intended to open a forum of discussion with the rest of the Catalan scientific community in SSH and with the Catalan non academic institutions from public and private sector.

Therefore, the intention for further elaboration and improvement of the present Strategic Agenda in SSH is to propose an open process of cooperation aiming to include views from both academic and non academic institutions from public and private sector working together to face social, economic and political challenges with an integrated approach. The goal, as we already said, is creating a comprehensive strategic plan that includes all the sensitivities and interest and necessities of all SSH fields and subfields of all these sectors of the Catalan society.

To achieve representativeness of all these academic and non-academic sector of Catalan society and include the most possible number of sensitivities and interests, the group has decided to organize a series of working sessions where all the main political, social and economic actors in Catalonia are going to be invited to participate to exchange opinions and discuss different initiatives that might be included in this strategic plan. The discussions will be based on the needs and priorities of the Catalan society in a bottom-up approach.

A final draft of this Strategic Research Agenda document should be also include the results of those working sessions containing a concise and very pragmatic strategic plan in SSH to promote these disciplines in the European Framework programme, including a set of policies to promote enhance the active participation of Catalan research groups in EU and International projects and to increase the impact of these research projects in the Catalan and Spanish society.

3. SSH funding in European Research Programmes: FP7 and Horizon 2020

This section is divided in two subsections. One dedicated to the still current 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and the other dedicated to the new Framework Programme starting in 2014 and title « Horizon 2020 ».

3.1 7th Framework Programme (FP7)

3.1.1 FP7 Overview

FP7 is the short name for the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and it is the natural successor to the previous programme, FP6. This is the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe and
it covers the period from 2007-2013 with a total budget of over € 50 billion. FP7 is also designed to respond to Europe's employment needs, competitiveness and quality of life.

The Specific Programmes constitute the major building blocks of FP7: cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities.

The **Cooperation** programme is the core of FP7, representing two thirds of the overall budget. It fosters collaborative research across Europe and other partner countries through projects by transnational consortia of industry and academia. Research will be carried out in ten key thematic areas where SSH is one of them. This is all of the most important programme for cooperative projects that includes cross-border partnerships (organized by consortiums), specially for SSH.

The **People programme** provides support for researcher mobility and career development, both for researchers inside the European Union and internationally. It is implemented via a set of Marie Curie actions, providing fellowships and other measures to help researchers build their skills and competences throughout their careers.

The **Capacities programme** strengthens the research capacities that Europe needs if it is to become a thriving knowledge-based economy. It covers different activities: research infrastructures, science in society, etc. This is also an important project for social science, especially to promote research infrastructures.

The **Ideas programme** will support "frontier research" solely on the basis of scientific excellence. Research may be carried out in any area of science or technology, including engineering, and also socio-economic sciences and the humanities. In contrast with the Cooperation programme, there is no obligation for cross-border partnerships. Projects are implemented by "individual teams" around a "principal investigator". The programme is implemented via the new European Research Council (ERC).

The majority of RTD activities are in the Cooperation programme and because of this, the strategic agenda is focused on this.

**3.1.2 FP7 Funding Opportunities in SSH**

In FP7, research projects in the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities are funded by the European Commission in Theme 8 of the Specific Programme "Cooperation". Usually some priority topics are collected annually in a Work Programme (WP) and
published in the Call for proposals. The Call for proposals and the WP always covers eight general areas, with different more specified topics each year. It follows a top-down approach (mostly decided by the European Commission in consultation with member states), so proposals must address the given topics. The topics tend to be very broad, so different topics and interest might be fit in those lists of topics.

Researchers can apply for funding their project proposals in a consortium of partners from different countries and disciplines/sectors. Project proposals differ from each other depending on the specific topic to which is addressed and the composition of the consortiums. Those proposals which pass the evaluation process will be granted with funding usually for a 3-years period.

In addition to Theme 8, researchers from SSH can find funding opportunities in all the other areas of the FP7 and other European programmes with SSH relevance. It includes topics of other FP7 calls in the specific programmes as the ones mentioned above such as "Cooperation", "Ideas", "People", and "Capacities". Additionally, there are other funding sources such as ERA-Nets, Joint Programming Initiatives and Article 185 Initiatives. It is important to highlight the potential role of SSH in other research areas, from transport to health or security. At the international level, ranked journals in different scientific fields are publishing contributions with a very interdisciplinary approach that includes socioeconomic sciences and humanities. Furthermore, ranked top universities in the world are also promoting this approach in their research programmes. Therefore, special efforts are necessary to promote this dimension into the Catalan research, not only creating synergies in local contexts but also at the European and international level including and coordinating research agendas.

Detailed information of all the programmes can be found in the yearly publication "Opportunities for researchers in socio-economic sciences and humanities"\(^1\), produced by NET4SOCIETY\(^2\). It is the international network of National Contact Points for SSH in FP7. National Contact Points (NCPs) are set up to guide and to give personalized help and advice to researchers and organisations intending to participate. In Spain, the related NCP is placed in CDTI (Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico e Industrial, www.cdti.es). A full list of all NCPs for all areas can be consulted\(^3\) at the web page of the Spanish European Office.

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\(^1\) http://www.net4society.eu/_media/Opportunities_for_SSH_Researchers.pdf
\(^2\) http://www.net4society.eu/
\(^3\) http://www.oficinaeuropea.es/programa-marco/puntos-nacionales-de-contacto
3.2 Horizon 2020

3.2.1 Horizon 2020 Overview

Horizon 2020 will go beyond FP7 in scope and ambition. It is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020, after the finalization of the current FP7, with an €80 billion budget, the EU’s new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe. It will combine all research and innovation funding currently provided through the FP7, the innovation related activities of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

The proposed support for research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will have three main pillars implemented through specific programmes and a dedicated financial contribution to the EIT:

- **Strengthen the EU’s position in science** with a dedicated budget of € 24 598 million. This will provide a boost to top-level research in Europe, including an increase in funding of 77% for the very successful European Research Council (ERC). In this objective ERC grants, Marie Curie Actions, Research Infrastructure and Future Emergent Technologies will be included. Although, as in the previous framework research programmes, RTD activities are focused in concrete actions included in the priority “Societal Challenges” in Horizon 2020.

- **Strengthen industrial leadership in innovation** € 17 938 million. This includes major investment in key technologies, greater access to capital and support for SMEs.

- **Societal Challenges** with a budget of € 31 748 million to help address major concerns shared by all Europeans across six key themes:
  
  1. Health, demographic change and well-being;
  2. Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy;
  3. Secure, clean and efficient energy;
  4. Smart, green and integrated transport;

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4 http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm
5 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
6 http://ec.europa.eu/cip/
7 http://eit.europa.eu/
8 http://erc.europa.eu/
5. Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials; and
6. Inclusive, innovative and secure societies (possible to split in two different challenges)

Compared with FP7, Horizon 2020 will emphasise funding for projects that solve specified challenges (or particular aspects of them), as opposed to prescribing the specific research topics that must be addressed. In many cases, it will mean multidisciplinary, multi-actor actions that bring together different competences across Europe and beyond as in the previous framework programmes.

Despite this change in approach, the societal challenges and key enabling technologies identified for Horizon 2020 will provide a measure of continuity with the ten FP7 themes in the Cooperation programme. Furthermore, the FP7 Work Programmes for 2012 and 2013 have been specifically tailored to prepare the ground for H2020.

3.2.2 SSH in Horizon 2020

SSH research will be integrated within each of the main pillars of Horizon 2020 in different ways.

In particular, societal challenges in Horizon 2020 will include several goals with a wide range of possible interdisciplinary activities. In the official document “Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon2020- The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020). 2011/0401 (COD)” the description of societal challenges are related to SSH sciences. From Health to smart, green and integrated transport or climate action, very diverse references to potential contributions of SSH are provided.

Why do we need a SSH-centred programme in SSH in Horizon 2020?

The SSH scientific community has contributed with evidences to the development of theories and actions that demonstrates to have added value for European societies. The EU targets for inclusive growth in 2020 contain relevant social aims like at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion, to reduce school drop-out rates below 10%, and at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing third level education and 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed. In this sense, The European Union is going through important political, economic and social challenges that need to be tackled with the maximum scientific responsibility and rigour, creating mechanisms that put in common social needs with research. This fact implies to make a special effort to work on the basis of priorities defined by the administration and social agents, within the objective to have a relevant impact into the Catalan society. If the key challenge for Europe is “to stabilise the financial and economic system in the
short term while also taking measures to create the economic opportunities of tomorrow” (as mentioned in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions), we cannot afford to set aside the potential impact of the Social Sciences and Humanities in terms of providing relevant knowledge for evidence-based policymaking that respond to this challenge. The European Framework Programme of research has played and will play a key role in providing this knowledge and to inform such policies. We need to go in depth into the European research evidences that have demonstrated to have impact in Catalonia.

It will be important that the new Framework Programme, Horizon 2020, includes a SSH-centred programme at least with a meaningful budget, as in previous editions. The need for a specific SSH programme has been supported by a wide range of relevant scientific institutions in SSH.

The current sixth Challenge “Inclusive, innovative and secure societies” (Brussels, 30.11.2011 COM(2011) 809 final) will be split in two: the SSH part (inclusive, innovative societies) and the “secure societies” part. Behind this debate, what is important is to make sure that the SSH research programme under Horizon 2020 will get sufficient funds to uphold the objectives of Europe 2020, the European citizenship initiative and the foreign policies of the EU where SSH are essential.

After different discussions and dialogues with a wide diversity of agents involved in social sciences and humanities research, the SSH communities in Europe agree that they cannot be solely supplementary to other sciences. In other words, there are very important issues like education, employment, youth and so on which deserve specific specialised SSH knowledge at European level.
4. SSH in Catalonia

Before going in the details of the discussion of this Strategic Plan in SSH, it is necessary to describe a diagnosis of the current situation of the SSH in Catalonia.

4.1 Catalan Participation in SSH Cooperative Research in the Framework Program

Data included in this section are coming from a study carried out on behalf of AGAUR. They are related to projects from FP5, FP6 and 2007-2010 period of FP7.

In absolute terms and even in comparative terms the role of Catalonia in Social Sciences and Humanities has increased in the last few years and the Catalan position in coordinating FP projects is very relevant: it is the 10th European region with more coordinated projects, considering FP5, FP6 and FP7. In this sense, it is important to highlight that in the period 1999-2010, Catalonia has coordinated 7 SSH research projects, 3 in the FP5, 1 in the FP6 and 3 in the FP7. Another positive aspect with regards to the Catalan participation in the FP is participation as partner in consortiums. In the period 1999-2010, 33 Catalan research groups had participated in one or more than one SSH cooperative research projects. These groups have participated as partners in a total of 42 projects, some of them participating in more than one project. Specifically, 6 groups have been partners in two or more projects and 27 have participated in 1 project.

However, the significant activity and collaboration of EU research projects in Catalonia is concentrated in a very short list of scholars and research groups. For instance, more than 66 percent of the existing groups in Social Science do not have any kind of participation in a European Project, and this distribution is very similar in all the disciplines of SSH (Economics, Law, Education and Communication and Information). The only discipline with slightly better results is Political and Social Sciences with a 53.3% of their groups with participation in two or more EU research projects (although the number of groups in Political Science is lower with higher concentration of researchers).

This problem is not only reduced the presence of EU projects. It is a general problem related with the lack of the internationalisation of the great majority of the existing research groups in SSH. For instance, the presence of these Catalan groups in other

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9 Qualitative and Quantitative Diagnosis about Internationalisation of catalan research groups
11 Data on Humanities was not available at the moment of writing this document.
international research projects is also very concentrated in the very same reduced but highly active groups. Another symptom of the general lack of internationalization of SSH in Catalonia is the scant participation of the members of all these groups in International Conferences or meetings. Finally, these research groups accumulate most of the publications in international journals of academic impact.

All of the above actually points to the same source of the problem. All these indicators about the internationalisation of SSH research Catalan groups are highly correlated. For instance, there is a strong relation between participation in International Conferences and the participation in EU projects and international projects in general. The relation is a good starting diagnosis point since it is in these professional international meetings where scholars and researchers normally establish the networks that allow them to form part of the European projects. The same can be said about the intellectual production measured by the publication in international journals. To be part of a European project you need to be known in your field by participating in these conferences and by publishing in journals with high impact in your discipline. Publication in local, regional and even national journals is not contributing to the impact of Catalan research in SS in the international community and therefore it has little impact on the internationalisation of the groups. Publications in local, regional and state-wide journals is also a good strategy for diffusion in our scientific community, but it should be a secondary strategy when it comes to promote the internationalisation of research groups.

The common features of the successful research groups in participation in EU projects are:

1. Excellent scientific production
   
   Publication of research results in the most relevant ranked journals of the international scientific community (JCR, Journal Citation Report)

2. Group composition and organisation based on:

   Interdisciplinarity
   Interinstitutionality
   Large dimension of the group

3. Team work and development of actions to promote young researchers:

   Team work and elaboration of ranked publications in coauthorship
   Diversification in the direction of research projects within the group
   Promotion of young researchers’ careers
   Integration of people with training or research stays in other countries

In fact, as far as internationalisation and the promotion of participation of Catalan groups in EU projects are concerned, two types of groups should be distinguished to create policies and initiatives accordingly:
1. Existing groups highly active in EU projects. Our goal should be to know and identify these groups, and promote their active role by creating policies fostering a more active role in the existing projects, helping them to obtain more projects and coordinate them, and, also, help them to obtain greater dissemination of their activities in the Catalan and Spanish society.

2. Identifying the current Catalan groups that may have the potential to be involved and active in EU research projects. Our goal for these groups is inviting them to take leading initiatives in EU projects or helping them to connect with the existing networks in their discipline and other related disciplines in Catalonia, Spain and Europe.

The critical mass of the existing Catalan research teams covers different SSH fields. To get a preliminary idea about the successful groups and the areas in which they work, we provide the list of the projects of the European Research Framework Programmes (FP5, FP6 and FP7) in which Catalan groups are involved as coordinators within the period 1999-2010 are 12:

- IAREG. Intangible Assets and Regional Economic Growth. FP7
- CLICO. Climate Change. Hydro-conflicts and Human security. FP7
- EU4SEAS. The EU and sub-regional multilateralism in Europe’s sea basins: Neighbourhood, Enlargement and Multilateral Cooperation. FP7
- WELLCHI. The Wellbeing in Children. The project was funded as a Coordination action under FP6
- MIP. Women Integration and People. Analysis of the Processes of socio-labour integration of women in prison in Europe. FP5
- ECONCHANGE. Economic Change: Micro-Foundations of Organisational and Institutional Changes in Europe. 5FP
- INCLUD-ED. Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education. 6FP
- WORKALO. The creation of new occupational patterns for cultural minorities. FP5

One of the goals of this initiative is identifying the priorities arising from public administration and social agents, and creating a clear roadmap in SSH research that links these priorities with the existing research groups, but not only to coordinate projects, but also to promote the participation in European projects as simple partners.

4.2 Current Status about Permanent Research Infrastructures

One of the most relevant increasing priorities in the European Research Area is the creation of Permanent Research Infrastructures. Permanent Research Infrastructures guarantees continuities of the research teams and initiatives and provides and expands existing research networks. This is an important area of potential growth projects in SSH.

The problem, however, is, to defend the idea of Permanent Research Infrastructures in SSH. We should understand and defend that data bases and research archives are the infrastructures of SSH. Producing, storing and updating historical documents and any kind of data, including quality survey data (historical, political, social, demographic or economic) should be considered a fundamental and relevant infrastructure activity for SSH. These data also should be harmonized, produced all over Europe with the same protocols and quality. In recent years, these infrastructures, despite their limitations, have had a great impact on comparative research in social science.

The European Commission approved 32 main projects for the ESFRI map road. Five of those are in Social Sciences and Humanities and they are already forming the ERIC (European Research Initiative Consortium) to give continuity and visibility to these infrastructures. In Catalonia, fortunately, some research groups are actively involved in some of these European research infrastructures (at different levels). They are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Catalan research group</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Social Survey (ESS)</td>
<td>A highly methodological advanced comparative survey research implemented in more than 30 countries in Europe every two years containing a lot of different questions about different topics in social sciences.</td>
<td>Research and Expertise Centre for Survey Methodology (RECSM), UPF</td>
<td>Spanish coordinator and member of the core group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It offers scholars the means to use language processing technologies as analytical and exploitation tools when addressing one or more of the multiple roles language plays (i.e. carrier of cultural content and knowledge, instrument of communication, component of identity and object of study) in the SSH research.

Technologies of Language Resources (TRL-IULATERM), UPF

Spanish Coordinator

Promoting and participating in these research infrastructures, promoting the creation of new ones, and helping existing Catalan groups which are already participating in the existing ones should also be a priority. It is a way guaranteeing the funding of these important research activities that are meant to be long lasting and so significant in Europe as well as in Spain.

4.3 SWOT in SSH Catalan research

STRONGTHNESS

• The existence of previous research groups which has been successful and have even coordinated some European projects. The presence of some European projects that have demonstrated the importance that this scientific projects might have on Catalan society through scientific evidences.
• Good level of excellence and quality of the scientific outputs in some groups in SSH in Catalonia.
• Catalonia has strong centres and universities in SSH.
• The reduce number of research groups currently participating in European programmes are very active and well ranked.
• Real interest of a reduce group of research groups in participating in European programmes and willing to contribute to face societal challenges from the Horizon 2020 research framework.

WEAKNESS

• Lack of effective and continuous spaces of communication between the academia and public administration and social agents.
• Lack of identification of successful research results developed in Europe that has impact in the improvement of the quality of the research Catalan system and in the Catalan society.
• Low coordination of research actions on the basis of other European strategic research agendas.
• No incorporation of aspects included in the most important research agendas in European countries with high success in participation in European projects, as the United Kingdom.
• Insufficient internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and intersectoriality of the Catalan SSH with some relevant exception from some highly active research groups and institutions.
• High concentration of the participation in European programmes in a few Catalan research groups.
• Most of existing groups in SSH display low levels of internationalization, with a very scan participation in international congress.
• Researchers in SSH normally tend to show low levels of networking and interaction with other researchers. This is also true in Catalonia where researchers tend to work very isolated from the rest of the Catalan, Spanish and European SSH community.
• Low knowledge of funding opportunities and mechanisms of participation concerning European programmes.
• Publications in journals of substantial international impact is still low and concentrated in a reduce number of groups.
• Lack of important and well define policies in R&D to promote and recognize the relevance of the European projects and the internationalization of the research groups.

OPPORTUNITIES

• To open a set of discussions with Catalan public administrations and social agents with the objective of identify the priorities for research with impact in Catalonia.
• To have a potential list of lines of research to be developed in Catalonia through the identification of priorities: priorities in which Catalonia has enough critical mass for the coordination of European research projects and priorities in which Catalonia can contribute as partners in consortiums coordinated by more experienced institutions in Europe.
• To summarize and analyze scientific evidences of research results in Europe that has had impact in Catalonia.
• To include and coordinate into the activities of the agenda, other European strategic research agendas, especially those with more success.
• SSH is considered as very relevant in Horizon 2020
• To take into account societal issues in technological projects would contribute to a better implementation of the technological outputs and a higher involvement of SSH research groups, although the SSH programme should be also remained separate as it has been so far.
• To get a higher involvement of all stakeholders in European projects should help to a better understanding and knowledge of each other and would facilitate the collaboration, making research proposals more attractive and with higher impact.
• To bring together final users with existing problems and providers of solutions (research groups) should contribute to define better project consortium, aims and outputs.
• In global terms, policies based on scientific evidence have a higher impact and are more effective in facing societal challenges.
• The Connect-EU group in SSH promoted by the Catalan Government is an innovative instrument to bring together researchers from different disciplines in SSH interested in carrying out research in a European context and users from public and private institutions i.e. policy-makers. It is also a potential instrument to educate researchers to apply and participate in European projects.
• The presence in Catalonia of two groups participating of The Permanent Research Infrastructures is an important active to be supported and replicated by other actives groups.

THREATS

• The quality of good quantitative comparative data in the SSH is still low. They are fragmented, dispersed, inconsistent and not comparable cross-nationally. There is a lack of a more systematic approach to data collection following similar methodological and design criteria.
• The reduction of funding for research programmes, especially in Catalonia and Spain is an obstacle and will make difficult to keep the current quality standards.
• The loss of competitiveness and economical resources in benefit of other scientific fields more organised and with higher level of networking which carries out a regular activity of lobbying.
• The complexity of preparing a European project is a barrier to the participation. The lack of specialised support and dedicated funding to cover the related expenditure is not encouraging the participation.
- Lack of support of successful active groups or to those already participating in the Permanent Research Infra-structures could deteriorate the existing situation.

5. Future areas of action in SSH in Catalonia

This Strategic Plan needs to propose a set of action lines and recommendations or specific proposals linked to the main objectives of the Agenda to be conductive to improve the participation of Catalan groups and institutions in the EU projects. Since the diffusion and discussion of the present Strategic Plan is going to take place almost at the finalization of the current 7FP, all actions described below are linked together and defined bearing in mind the future structure of Horizon 2020 such as it is currently proposed (at the time of writing this document).

5.1 Action Lines

In the description below it is proposed a set of action lines for each one of the three main objectives of the Agenda described in section 2.1

Objective 1: Creation of a collaborative framework among all main stakeholders (scientists, public and private social agents, policymakers, etc) for the definition of appropriate research strategies and the use of scientific results to face social challenges in Catalonia

Horizon 2020 proposal is based on a societal challenge-based approach which will bring together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines, including social sciences and the humanities.

Projects falling under a specific societal challenge should integrate different disciplines and sectors and also explain how technology can provide an innovative solution to resolve specific problems. Social and humanities aspects and the impact on society and citizens in general should be taken into account in the project definition. As a consequence, joint collaboration between researchers of research institutions or universities, enterprises, non-profit organisations, institutions from the public sector, etc. will be necessary to reach the project objectives. Previously to this, special efforts should be done to identify the priorities at the Catalan level in order to respond to them guaranteeing the identification of potential research to be developed coordinated by Catalan teams and potential research to participate as partners.
It is also very important to achieve greater involvement of public and private stakeholders, including enterprises or public institutions in its role of policy-makers during the project execution, not only at the end of a project or once it has been completed in order to guarantee that results can be transferred and useful for end-users.

One of the key aspects in Horizon 2020 will be to explain the impact of projects in terms of exploitation and dissemination of results even more than in FP7 not at the end of the project. A detailed plan should be included since the beginning of the project with specific roles assigned to all project partners and with the involvement of end-users and social agents. Dissemination material such as policy briefings should reach target public: politicians, users etc. and should be clearly defined at the beginning of the project.

**Action Lines**

The following action lines are defined to achieve the objective 1:

- **Action line 1.1 (A1.1):** To create a dialogue and a set of discussions with the diverse agents of the Catalan society for the identification and collection of priorities with positive impact and in benefit of the Catalan society and in order to guaranteeing the inclusion of the needs of all stakeholders into the Agenda.

- **Action line 1.2 (A1.2):** Higher involvement of end-users in the proposals in particular public administrations in its role of policy-making. It should be done at all stages of the project development and could even include citizens and public target, not only as “objects of study” (new methodological approach).

- **Action line 1.3 (A1.3):** Better diffusion of the results towards society by i.e. organizing Media Briefing with journalists from different European countries or delivering press releases and additional materials for journalists in order to report on specific outcomes.

- **Action line 1.4 (A1.4)** Strengthening the final impact of Catalan R&D by bringing together to a larger extent theoretical and applied research in order to facilitate the diffusion and percolation of social and political innovation;

- **Action line 1.5 (A1.5)** Promoting policies and initiatives to improve the collaboration of the social and political actors in the dissemination of the research results. This collaboration among actors should be defined from the very beginning of the research through the identification of priorities.
Objective 2: Enhanced participation and leadership of Catalan researchers in European Research programmes

Funding opportunities for SSH in the Horizon 2020 framework programme are important. SSH funding will be integrated within each of the main pillars of Horizon 2020. In particular, concerning the societal challenges, SSH will be integrated in the "Inclusive, Innovative and Secure Society" challenge although the split of this challenge in two could be made with a specific budget for SSH. In addition, it is possible that SSH research aspects will also be included in all the other five societal challenges as well. Additionally, SSH researchers could also receive funding via the European Research Council, Marie Curie Action and initiatives under the Research Infrastructures Programme although these initiatives in majority does not include RTD activities.

Therefore, Catalan research groups in individual researchers have at their disposal an important amount of potential funding that might enhance and foster research activities in SSH and their potential implications for the Catalan society. This is also more important now, in the current situation of constant cutting in R&D funding in Spain and Catalonia, especially in SSH.

Action Lines

The following action lines are defined to achieve the objective 2:

- Action line 2.1 (A2.1): Identifying the potentialities of the Catalan research teams with regards to the priorities previously defined in two roles: coordinators and partners.
- Action line 2.2 (A2.2): Enhancing the potential of Catalan R&D and building its critical mass and capacities by stimulating research groups and institutions to draw more on European resources as well as helping them to overcome barriers to internationalisation (see section 5.2 for a set of specific recommendations and proposals)
- Action line 2.3 (A2.3): To incentivize the presence of project coordinators of Catalan institutions in European cooperative projects on the basis of the identification of priorities in which Catalonia has enough critical mass for it.
- Action line 2.4 (A-2.4). To increase the participation as partners in European projects through the identification of priorities that more experienced institutions will coordinate.
Objective 3: Making recommendations to bring the Catalan R&D policies more in tune with EU scientific standards and frames of reference as well as reinforcing the presence, influence and outputs of the existing Catalan research groups in the European research area

The new and innovative approach in Horizon 2020 implies both opportunities and challenges for the research groups in SSH and continues creating a common framework to include and coordinate other strategic research agendas with the Catalan one. To benefit from that would mean increased participation in the programme and a higher level of importance and impact of SSH.

In addition, experience shows that those policies based on scientific evidence have better results and are more effective in getting the expected outcome. In this sense, it is important to highlight the relevance of identifying evidences of European research results that have had relevant impact in Catalonia.

Action Lines

The following action lines are defined to achieve the objective 3:

- Action line 3.1 (A3.1): To defend the research interest’ areas of Catalan institutions in the specific work programmes, putting in common and coordinating the actions of other strategic research agendas.
- Action line 3.2 (A3.2): Collecting scientific evidences of finalised researches of the different Frameworks Programmes that have had impact and have benefited the Catalan society.
- Action line 3.3 (A3.3): Defining the successful elements of European projects with impact in the Catalan society in order to allow its inclusion in Catalan research.
- Action line 3.4 (A3.4): Reviewing the best research agendas in Europe to include its successful elements into the Catalan one.
- Action line 3.5 (A3.5): To include and coordinate into the activities of the agenda, other strategic research agendas that exists in Europe.
- Action line 3.6 (A3.6): To define strategies to integrate interdisciplinarity in the projects through the identification of how the best research agendas in Europe are doing this.
- Action line 3.7 (A3.7): To define strategies to integrate intersectoriality in the projects through the identification of how the best research agendas in Europe are doing this.
- Action line 3.8 (A3.8): Increasing the visibility of Catalan R&D by building its symbolic capital and improving its credit and prestige among policymakers and the general public. One of the ways in which this can be done is by explaining better
what social scientists are doing and can achieve, by teaching researchers to disseminate and drawing implications from research in order to propose evidence-based policies for a further improved institutional design and by demonstrating the usefulness of research findings for personal well-being and social cohesion. This can be achieved through the successful elements of European projects with impact in the Catalan society.

5.2 Specific proposals to overcome existing barriers

There are a number of measures that could improve the impact and excellence of the Catalan participation in SSH cooperative projects and contribute to overcome barriers to internationalisation.

a) Enhanced internationalisation of research academic groups

1. By boosting specific measures (i.e. specific line of grants) it could be promoted the inclusion of SSH research groups in consortium of cooperative projects from other disciplines through the identification of priorities arising from discussions with public administration and social agents. It will contribute to get higher interdisciplinarity in projects and will increase the opportunities of being involved in European projects to SSH research groups. In addition it would allow taking into account different approach in the project execution.

2. Economical support should be provided to those research groups demonstrating to be competitive (i.e. providing them with funding to hire dedicated staff to manage and prepare European project proposals or to subcontract specialised consulting) and with potential to achieve research results that improve the Catalan society development.

3. Autonomic research grants to research groups should not be given across-the-board, but should rather be giving an important weight to their international accomplishments and relevance to achieve priorities for the benefit of the Catalan society. In particular, only groups with an international impact should be distinguished as 'consolidated', Catalan research policy should follow EU guidelines and be coordinated with the FP programmes and relevant strategic agendas developed in other European contexts as well as the best agendas that have demonstrated success in their results. Departments and research institutes should be encouraged (by means of grants and incentives) to host collections of working papers in English. Catalan journals publishing preferentially in English should be awarded a special line of funding. Public research calls should be circulated abroad through the standard circuits
and projects submitted to AGAUR should be drafted in English so that they can be assessed by foreign experts.

b) Enhancing the impact and exploitation of research results in SSH

One of the ways in which the impact of research in SSH could be enhanced is by encouraging policy makers at different levels of the Catalan administration to devise legislation drawing on the results of research. It is important that public policies are based on evidence rather than on ideology. Any bill or plan which is not based on a serious diagnosis of social problems involved and which is not providing for a regular evaluation of public measures in terms of outcomes should not be acceptable to legislators. This would not only mean a more efficient use of public resources and produce better results in terms of outcomes but would also probably dignify the status of SSH in the eyes of citizens.

c) Enhancing the quality of research in SSH: the special case of research infrastructures

SSH research is currently faced with unprecedented volumes of scientific information, at a scale still not fully envisaged.

The quality of good quantitative comparative data in the SSH is still very low. There are many topics on which we have none or very limited information (the few existing EU-wide surveys such as the Eurobarometer or the EU-SILC are clearly insufficient). Our research still relies on data which are fragmented, dispersed, unarticulated, inconsistent and not comparable cross-nationally. It is true that we have very good surveys on certain topics in some countries, but we still lack a more systematic approach to data collection following similar methodological and design criteria. More funded incentives are required to collect data at the European level that could be basic for the analysis and understanding of our political and social systems. *It is badly needed long-term calls for producing data archives on essential topics in social sciences and humanities.* Thus, in SSH, large projects should be oriented to long-lasting data producer projects (i.e. ESS, EES, ...).

Ideally, all this information should be provided as microdata to researchers and available in a homogeneous way at both the territorial level (countries and regions) and sectorial level (economical sectors). Good examples of this are the European Social Survey (ESS), the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)
(previously European Community Household Panel, ECHP), or the Integrated European Census Microdata project (IECM).

And finally, the lack of common criteria to build databases is a problem which should be faced by the scientific community with the involvement of the EU official institutions (i.e. EUROSTAT). The need of such collaboration is key to give a definitive impulse high quality research in SSH.

- Research Infrastructures in SSH are a key element to strengthen Europe’s science base and build the European Research Area (ERA) as well as contributing to develop the vision for Horizon 2020. Financial support should be given both at national and European level.

6. Strategic Research Topics

It should be guaranteed that European research will be brought closer to the main stakeholders through its involvement in the establishment of research agendas and increased consultation of the scientific and non-scientific community.

Some strategic research topics have been identified at the time of closing of the current document collected from the main partners involved in the ConnectEU-SSH group with a large experience and knowledge about European projects. Obviously they do not reflect all the possible themes but they represent an example about what can be done in a coordinated way at European level. It is foreseen that more research topics are incorporated in the future and specially for Horizon 2020 through a wider consultation process.

a) The democratic deficit in representative democracy in the contexts of multilevel governance and economic crisis

Description

Setting the problem: European citizens’ attitudes towards their democratic systems have long attracted the attention of the media, the public, and the academic community. Over the last two decades, one of the clearest empirical trends is an
increase in “critical citizens,” i.e. those who are cynical towards, dissatisfied with, and/or disaffected from their political systems. This trend is observed in long-standing democracies of Western Europe as well as in newer democracies that emerged from the breakdown of authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe and state-socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. This problem and trend is also present in Catalonia.

There are two major phenomena whose implications for Europe’s representative democracies are making this process more exacerbated. First are the growth of multilevel governance and its broadening scope. If these processes heighten the sensation that crucial decisions are being taken by people they cannot sanction, they could fuel criticism about the level of vertical accountability in European democracies. Secondly, the recent “euro zone” economic crisis and its consequences might exacerbate Europeans’ cynicism and discontent, leading them to adopt generally critical views of the functioning and representativeness of their democracies. Observers have interpreted recent increases in electoral abstention, null and blank voting, and support for anti-system parties, the decline of traditional political parties, and the proliferation of alternative social and political movements as obvious symptoms of this aggravated problem. This widespread malaise has become prominent on various the agendas of the mass media, the general public and scholars in Europe Spain and Catalonia and increasingly viewed as interwoven with the current economic crisis.

We therefore, propose, a set of several vital and interrelated questions: (i) if and (ii) where the worrying trends of criticism towards the mechanisms of political representation in Europe, Spain and Catalonia have continued or accelerated. Causally, we propose investigate the linkages between Europeans’ discontent with democratic institutions and (iii) the multilevel nature of and scope governance in European polities, (iv) the current economic crisis and its concomitantly high levels of unemployment, (v) citizen perceptions of the functioning of their representative democracies during the economic and social crisis and (vi) a mistrust between Europeans of other nationalities, and sub-state nationalities namely net-donors to and net-debtors of the European Union and their multinational states. A final theoretical consideration is (vii) how these critical attitudes affect citizen general support for and understanding of democracy.

Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia

These questions indicate a fully comparative study of democratic attitudes and their consequences for democratic support and political behaviour among European, Spanish and Catalan citizens is warranted and dearly needed. Such questions are
especially timely given Europe, Spanish and Catalan’s current social, political, and economic upheaval. Therefore, the main social and political actors (representative institutions, political parties, social organizations of collective interest) in Catalonia and Spain might be particularly interested.

Links to European priorities and impact

In line with EU and National priorities and strategies: this proposal falls within the scope of the general strategy set by the European Commission in 2010: *Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. The strategy is designed to face a moment of transformation where *the crisis has wiped out years of economic, political and social progress and exposed structural weaknesses in Europe’s economy*. In this sense it is crucial to analyze the position of the EU citizen in terms of European democracy, the impact of unemployment and the governance issues mentioned above. Furthermore, the topic proposed is in line with the future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation: *Horizon 2020*. The European Commission has set, as a key priority, the so-called *Societal Challenges* which reflects the policy priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and addresses major concerns shared by citizens in Europe and elsewhere. The Spanish government submitted its formal position in 2012 supporting the aforementioned priority as a key aspect within the future framework programme.

b) Successful Educational Actions

Description

The improvement of the educational level in Catalonia is one of the main objectives to achieve a more inclusive society. However, recent data shows that the percentage of 18 to 24 year old students who have dropped out of primary, lower or upper secondary education in Catalonia is 29% while the EU target for 2020 is to decrease the percentage of early school leavers to less than 10%\(^{13}\). This implies an educational problem that needs to be addressed. Different Catalan social actors claim for the implementation of successful educational actions that have proven to have a positive and relevant impact on the educational results in different European countries. Its full development in Catalonia would bring about a progress toward the 2020 objectives. In

this sense, it is important to highlight the European recommendations linked to successful educational actions resulting from research.

Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia

The overcoming of educational exclusion and the improvement of the results in all schools are included in the goals of several Catalan social actors, such as the Department of Education of the Catalan Government, the Catalan Federation of Associations of Students’ Parents and civil society organizations and associations working on the field of education. At the European level, education is a horizontal issue in the Horizon 2020, included in very diverse issues affecting different social dimensions, such as growth, employment or scientific careers. State members are including the educational European objectives in their agendas and common efforts are being developed to extend successful educational actions in very diverse contexts.

Links to European priorities and impact

All the European countries would be interested to develop this approach. Among them, those that have higher levels of school drop out rate compared to the EU27 percentage (14,1%) such as Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, and so on. EU candidates for instance, Turkey would be also interested,

c) Roma People

Ten out of twelve million of Roma in the world live in the European Union and the majority live under the poverty threshold. Catalonia is not an exception to this situation and even with committed political advances in the recent years, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve the full integration of Roma citizens into the Catalan society.

The Europe 2020 strategy has represented a step forward in the pursuit of Roma inclusion in the continent. Not only did each member state had to design and submit to the Union a National strategy but also monitoring tools have been put in place in order to make sure that the coming decade is the one when Roma inclusion is achieved. Research could contribute to enhance and support this process by providing significant knowledge that allows policies and actions to be effective in tackling Roma social exclusion in Catalonia and Europe, being this the main expected impact.
Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia

The Social Affairs Department of the Catalan Government is involved in a political process aimed at putting an end to Roma social exclusion. Furthermore, among the main actors involved, it is necessary to mention major Roma organizations as well as the grassroots actors spread around the European Union. Main stakeholders are civil society organizations working in the field of Roma rights who might be actively involved in processes of policy-making, for instance those participating in the Catalan Integral Plan for Roma people and the Catalan Advisory Council of Roma People.

Links to European priorities and impact

All the European countries would be interested to develop this topic. Among them, those that account for a major Roma population such as Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, and so on. EU candidates would also be interested in the topic, for instance, Turkey or Serbia. Finally, countries that have become destination for recent Roma migration flows like the UK, Germany, Italy, France, among others would be interested too.

d) Social economy-cooperatives

Description and Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia

The current economic crisis generates a new framework to restructure the Catalan economy taking into account the lessons learned from economic practices with successful results. In this sense, cooperatives have been proven to be better resisting the crisis if compared to conventional enterprises. Catalonia has a long cooperativist tradition that creates an appropriate context to further develop the social economy with success. Moreover, there exists a clear interest at the political level, for instance by the General Director of Social Economy, Cooperative and Autonomous Work of the Catalan Government (with a wide experience in cooperativism). Other relevant Catalan social actors involved in the social economy are cooperativist groups, foundations for the promotion of cooperatives, entities of the third sector and consumers.

Links to European priorities and impact

At the European level, two different influences coexist in this field: on the one hand, the increasing interest for the development of the social economy and the relevance of the cooperatives in resisting the crisis and on the other hand, the risk of new legislations towards the reduction or elimination of tax advantages that favors cooperativism in Europe, which would also affect the current situation of cooperatives.
in Catalonia. The economic dimension is horizontal in the Horizon 2020 and it is mentioned as one of the main points to be addressed by research. Achieving economic performance and sustainable growth is a priority in Europe as a whole and in the different member states. In this sense, it is important to mention that the Economic and Social Research Council Delivery Plan 2011-2015 of the United Kingdom, identifies the need to find new ways to address resulting social changes and enhance economic performance and growth. The social economy and the cooperatives prove to be one of the possible ways related to this goal. All the European countries would be interested to develop this topic. Among them, those with greater cooperative initiatives, such as Spain, Italy, Germany, and so on, among others. EU candidates would also be interested in the topic.

e) Governance and Population Diversity in Catalonia: Demographic, Social and Territorial Challenges in Lean Economic Times

Description

The economic recession in the EU, starting at the end of the first decade of the XXI Century, is impacting heavily on the local, regional and central government in managing the diversity of the demography of immigration in Europe. The increase of intra-European (internal) migration of EU-nationals and non-nationals has become a new important feature which is likely to transform both sending and receiving countries throughout Europe. However, no attempt has been made so far to put forward evidence of the impact of the economic recession on the establishment of new chain migration processes locally, regionally and nationally within the EU. Whilst the future development of Europe’s diverse cities and towns is subject to the role played by local governments in urban policy and management of populations, perverse and unintended impacts might be prompted by the growing economic disparities across different regions and states in Europe, thus requiring specific actions from national to local level focussed on the social cohesion and sustainable population strategies in the old and new geographies of migration.

Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia and European impact

The crucial point to make here is that all levels of government (municipalities, provincial, regional and national governments) and social agents (unions, migrants associations and NGOs) are increasingly facing conditions of social vulnerability which demand policy development in ways that best reflect the particular circumstances of both the demography of immigration and the geography of individual communities.
Within this context, the experience of international migration in Catalonia is seen as timely and relevant not only for its key role in the migration turnaround of Southern Europe at the end of the XX Century, but also for currently experiencing a drastic reverse migration, mostly of high-skilled nationals to other countries, whilst the settlement of non-nationals is still taking place in cities and towns. What this topic is specifically seeking is further research to shed light on the ongoing interactions between government and population diversity by taking into consideration the demographic, social and territorial challenges in lean economic times.

f) Cultural Heritage

Description

The Communication of the European Commission about Creative Europe [COM(2011) 786 final] point out that in 2008 the cultural and creative sectors contributed an estimated 4.5 % to EU GDP, and employed some 3.8% of Europe's workforce. Beyond this direct contribution to jobs and growth, these sectors trigger spill-overs in other areas such as tourism, content for ICT and provide benefits for education, social inclusion and social innovation.

However, this sector have to face important challenges such as cultural shift and globalization, both issues are key elements in order to maintain competitiveness in this important economic sector. Innovation applied to the cultural industry could help many European regions to overcome economic crisis. In fact, cultural heritage is the driving economic force for many European regions. In this regards, investing to do research in this field is the way to add value and better maintain and exploit this important resource. Furthermore, research applied to cultural heritage is significant not only for economic reasons, but also better understand the past and maintain European identification in the future.

Cultural Heritage is the core of a multidisciplinary topic that includes fields from the humanities such as art, history or archeology, but also from experimental and technological sciences. Sciences can provide tools and methodologies to better protect and disseminate tangible cultural heritage.

Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia and European impact

Public authorities in charge of Cultural policies and the promotion of Tourism should be involved in the definition of this topic. These entities would be not only at regional level but also more locally, such us municipalities or “Consells Comarcals”.
These public administrations will be key stakeholders for the design of strategies that could provide solutions and innovations at local level.

Regarding the European impact, the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage: a new Challenge for Europe provides a framework within which Member States address jointly areas where public research programmes can respond to major societal challenges. A concerted research action is needed to allow Member States to maximise and exploit at best their research efforts.

Protection of cultural heritage in the face of global change is thus becoming a major concern for decision-makers, stakeholders and citizens in Europe. To maximize benefits and impact of research strategies, the voice of European representatives from the cultural and creative industry should be taking into account.

Investing in Research and Innovation on European Cultural Heritage will contribute in the strengthening of this as an important economic sector and could help many European regions to overcome economic crisis. Furthermore, citizenship and related organisations ask for a better protection, promotion and use of the European cultural heritage and of the European common identity.

**g) Euro-Mediterranean relations**

**Description and Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia**

Recent political developments during the last two year in South Mediterranean and Middle East countries are opening many opportunities for transforming Euro-Mediterranean relations in a profound way, transforming a status quo that remained almost unchanged for more than twenty years. In this context, Catalonia is interested in developing and strengthening euro-Mediterranean –relations for several reasons. First, because its strategic position in the Mediterranean area and all the potential involved; second, due to the long-term efforts to place Barcelona as central node in the Mediterranean space, since the Barcelona Conference in 1995 up to the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean headquarters in Barcelona recently; third, because of the existence of a network of think tanks (CIDOB, IEMed, etc.) and already established research groups focusing on different topics related to the politics, economics and societal dilemmas of the Mediterranean area in Catalan universities.
Links to European priorities and impact

Fostering research in Euro-Mediterranean relations would also involve the interest of different countries in the European Union. Obviously, countries like France and Italy, that share similar interest in the area, but the whole Union has an interest to take the opportunity of the Arab spring to strength all possible ties and contribute to the consolidation of democratic regimens in those countries.

h) Inclusive and effective education, training and employment policies for young people

Description

Reframing education, training and employment policies for young people in Catalonia is one of the main challenges to achieve a more inclusive society. Recent data shows that the situation of young people in Catalonia is far worse than European average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and employment indicators for young people, 2011 (%)</th>
<th>Catalonia</th>
<th>EU27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early school leavers (Population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education)</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 20 to 24 that has completed secondary education</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (population aged 15 to 24)*</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment on population aged 15 to 24*</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For Catalonia, population aged 16 to 24 instead of 15 to 24.
Source: Idescat and Eurostat

Several trends are behind these figures. First, the current economic crisis, which in Catalonia is having a special impact in terms of school-work transition and youth unemployment, a fact that challenges, to large groups of young people, their expectations of employment, economic empowerment and transition to adulthood. Second, the very deficits of the Catalan education and training system, which despite the various initiatives that have been taken in recent decades, has failed to overcome the extreme polarization of youth skill levels, with high rates of school failure and drop-out at secondary education and high rates of graduates. Finally, the weaknesses of the Catalan production system, which consolidated an economy oriented towards low value-added and intensive-employment activities during the years of economic
growth, with scarce presence of those activities most intensive in knowledge and technology. This model provided employment opportunities for young people, although in the case of many of the high-skilled young people, it did not provide opportunities for employment and professional development commensurate with their level of qualification, creating the so-called under-occupation.

Non-academic Stakeholders in Catalonia

The overcoming of educational exclusion and the improvement of the results in all schools are included in the goals of several Catalan social actors, such as the Catalan Government, the Catalan Federation of Associations of Students’ Parents as well as civil society organizations and associations working on the field of education, among others.

Implementing measures for reducing high youth unemployment and raising youth employment rates is also a widespread claim among Catalan social actors, from social movements and young associations to trade unions, employers’ organisations and Catalan Government. They should cover in an integrated manner the sequence of steps for young people in the transition from education into work and ensure safety nets for those who risk dropping out from education and employment.

In spite of this widespread consensus, however, deep divergences arise when it comes to agree on strategies, measures and resources.

Links to European priorities and impact

Education and training has long been a European priority, although school drop-out rates have been persistently high in some European countries. Besides, economic crisis has put employment policies for young people in the political agenda. The most serious long term labour market consequence of the economic crisis may be the long term detachment of certain groups in the labour market. Young people moving from education into work are at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives, as they will experience great difficulties in establishing a foothold in the labour market.

European research on change in young people’s transitions from school to work largely agrees upon a diagnosis of ongoing de-standardization, individualization and fragmentation of transitions which appears to be exacerbated by the current economic crisis. It further points to the persistence of ‘old’ inequalities according to social background, education, gender, region and ethnicity underneath these ‘new’ transition structures.
Although all Member States have youth employment policies in place, and many have taken additional action during the crisis, a new coordinated policy action is called at European level to support youth at risk. The ‘Europe 2020 Agenda’ stresses the need of outlining policies aimed at reducing youth unemployment and at promoting young’s people entry into the labour market through apprenticeships, traineeships or other work experiences. Besides, it establishes 2 specific educational targets for young people:

- Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%
- At least 40% of 30-34–year-olds completing third level education

The need to focus on youth at risk is thus central in the European strategy. In terms of research, youth at risk has been one of the priorities in FP7 whilst Horizon 2020 envisages to give continuity to this line of action.

7. Expected Impact

The bottom-up definition of a Strategic Research Agenda in SSH is itself a very important milestone in the field of SSH. To be able to integrate in a single document the different views from research groups, public administrations, social enterprises, policy makers and in definitive from all main stakeholder constitutes a motivating challenge. To reach a consensus agreement is not an easy task and require a lot of time and effort. This is the reason why the present document is an open Agenda which should be updated and full completed with the contributions from all the SSH community. The final reward and impact will come in Horizon 2020. Goals and objectives of the future research and innovation programme have been taken into account in the elaboration of the Research Agenda and will guide the future new versions in order to help SSH community to success in European research proposals.

In addition, justifying the social need of research in the SSH in a way that can contribute to the development of the Catalan society is becoming a priority, being also one of the most important forthcoming challenges for the SSH scientific community. Researchers have the role to provide scientific evidences to demonstrate the potential impact of their work for society. The development of policies or actions depends on citizenship and their representatives. We have to go in depth into the evidences that are benefitting European and Catalan society resulting from previous SSH research projects. In order to be influential in Europe (and in the Catalan Society), the agenda of
the SSH should place this social impact as a clear priority. If we are able to demonstrate the impact of the SSH scientific activities and create a consensual agenda in Catalonia, the Catalan SSH research could be an example for the rest of the State and the EU, particularly, for the SSH within the Horizon 2020. This is what European administrators of the SSH are waiting for. This is why the present agenda should be not only the reflection of the participation of the scientific community, and the different political, social and economic actors, but should also contain policies oriented to promote the diffusion and impact of scientific results in Catalonia, Spain and Europe.

Better and major research in SSH should lead to improve the impact of any research in any field in the society. To consider social aspects in technological projects would contribute to better implementation of the technological solutions. The cost of not doing is much higher than doing something.