

## Research Collaboration in the Social and Human Sciences between Europe, Russia, other CIS countries and China

### GlobalSSH Action Policy Recommendations "Rethinking the Social and Human Sciences. Towards a framework for creativity in global context" published



Prof. Björn Wittrock

Dear friends,

The GlobalSSH Special Support Action has come to an end in May 2009. The overall objective of Action has been to promote transnational cooperation across the range of social sciences and humanities (SSH), in particular between the EU and its member countries, the Eastern European and Central Asian (EECA) countries and China. The ambition has been to outline conditions for a sustained engagement of Europe with other regions in the world in the field of the social sciences and humanities, in particular with regions that are of immediate significance due to size and growth in terms of economic and scientific resources, such as China, as well as with the region of Russia and other EECA countries that have a significant capacity in terms of research as well as close links to and a shared history with the countries of the European Union.

Within the Action, key partners of the GlobalSSH Consortium concentrated their work on studies of historical conditions for the growth of the SSH in a long-range perspective; as well as on studies of SSH research capacities and policy frameworks for support of SSH in China, Russia and EECA countries; and institutional arrangements for the EU – third countries research cooperation.

Based on the conducted studies a draft policy recommendations report was prepared and discussed at the GlobalSSH policy workshop in Uppsala in March 2009. The ideas and suggestions of the draft report have been submitted to a process of assessment and dialogue with a number of scholars outside of the project as well as research policy experts and practitioners. This phase of the project has had as its focal point a research policy conference on April 24–25, 2009, in Uppsala, co-organized by Global SSH, the European Commission, and the Swedish Research Council (thereby indirectly serving as a bridge to the coming Swedish Presidency of the European Union and the large opening conference in Lund of that Presidency, organized by the Swedish Research Council).

After the Uppsala Conference, the GlobalSSH Action policy recommendations have been finalized and the full text is available at the Action website [www.globalsocialscience.org](http://www.globalsocialscience.org). Please see the summary of the policy recommendations presented in this newsletter.

With the publication of this policy recommendations report Global SSH has accomplished all objectives which it committed itself to perform in the "Description of Work". However, the members of Global SSH have decided to go significantly beyond what they originally committed themselves to. Above the deliverables listed in the "Description of Work" four further publications in book format will be produced by the members of the project and will be published by internationally highly recognized publishing houses. These four book publications are specifically listed in the GlobalSSH "Final plan for using and disseminating the knowledge".

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### Summary of GlobalSSH policy recommendations for funding and support of research in the social sciences and humanities

- The social sciences and humanities are more urgently needed, of higher potential societal relevance and more crucial to Europe's possibilities of coming to terms with its global interconnectedness in both economic and cultural terms than ever before. Europe urgently needs vital research capacities and environments at the highest international level in order to grasp and master current global transformations and the rise of new economic, cultural and scientific centres.
- The humanities emerged out of the dual engagement with the cultural legacy of classical Greece and Rome as well as with efforts of European countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' to interpret their own cultural and national heritage and identity. There is now an urgent need to articulate a new and critically important role for the humanities in the twenty-first century: to provide the resources that may allow for a meaningful dialogue and mutual interactions on a global scale. Precisely those humanistic disciplines, which have sometimes tended to be viewed as superfluous or dismissed as "small" or "orchid" disciplines may be of the greatest significance provided links to the other social and human sciences are clearly spelt out.
- Transnational collaboration in the social sciences and humanities must move significantly beyond an earlier pattern of what might be labeled "scholarly diplomacy", i.e. a tradition with its roots in the late nineteenth century and with its general consolidation and diffusion phase in the period after the Second World War, characterized by a mode of international scholarly interaction modeled on the example of the United Nations and UNESCO.
- This tradition has served many useful purposes. However it is now high time to move beyond a tradition of large congresses with different national scientific or professional associations as the main actors and with scholarly work taking the form of cross-national comparisons. Outside of these frameworks, new forms of collaboration, more compatible with an era of multiple and entangled modernities are emerging and involve deep-seated trans-national, not to say trans-civilisational, scholarly collaboration. Such instruments as networks of institutes for advanced study play an important role in this respect but adequate funding instruments are yet only partially in place, although the European funding body for Russia and other EECA countries, INTAS, may provide a number of examples of efficient and cost-effective forms of transnational col-

### Global SSH focused its activities in the following areas:

1. Mapping and assessing SSH capabilities in seven Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; and China. This includes studies of the institutional landscape (including institutional innovation and change) and the research policies that structure advances in SSH research in the region.
2. Investigating the internationalisation of social sciences, the research infrastructures for internationalised social sciences and the experiences and capacities in transnational SSH research in the EU, Russia, other CIS countries and China.
3. Placing the above mentioned areas in historical context by synthesising what we know about the rise and transformation of the social and human sciences, in Europe and beyond, as these were related to the emergence of modern states and universities.
4. Identifying common agendas for future transnational research and formulating policy recommendations for setting up priorities in the SSH and the designing of future research programmes within the context of the enlarged ERA, supporting the mobilisation of scientific co-operation between the EU-CIS and the EU-China research communities.



This Special Support Action is supported by the European Community under the Sixth Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration (FP6) Thematic Area "Citizens and governance in a Knowledge-based society" Call FP6-2004-CITIZENS-6 --8.3.3 - Promoting international research and policy cooperation in social sciences and humanities. Action contract Nr. is 028997.



Additional support to the Action is provided by INTAS under INTAS Thematic Call in Social and Human Sciences 2005 through a research project "Mapping the social sciences and humanities research capacities in Europe and the NIS", contract reference Nr. is 05-1000006-8446.

laboration of this type. This leads on to another major point.

- Global SSH has undertaken an extensive review of existing procedures for measuring and assessing excellence of research in the social sciences and humanities. Standardised quantitative measures have become used as a matter of course in recent years and are, across a range of countries, if in different ways, being increasingly tied to decisions about the allocation of resources for re-

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search. Advanced standardised techniques for measuring productivity, quality, and impact are inevitable as information sources about developments in the social and human sciences. However, they also inevitably rest on assumptions that it is legitimate to substitute proxy variables – such as productivity in the form of number of publications for creativity or the number of quotations as a measure of quality and originality.

- These measures are valuable in the sense that they establish some of the minimal requirements that funders and users can and must legitimately insist on being satisfied. However, they are not sufficient as evaluation tools for the most promising, significant and original forms of scholarly contributions in the social and human sciences. If resources are not to be misspent on good but unimaginative and suboptimal research efforts, there must be vital and well-articulated forms of high-quality judgments from within the scholarly community.
- This is of particular importance for fields of research with relatively small but highly specialized research communities but also for the collaboration of European social and human scientists with areas of the world outside of the Atlantic seaboard, not least with Russia and other EECA countries as well as with China, where high quality research exists in a number of the social and human sciences but with publication outlets that leave few traces when now standardized techniques are employed. Both INTAS and several European institutes for advanced study have long and successfully subjected scholars from these countries to the same stringent quality assessments as applied to scholars from Western Europe and North America.
- Some of these lessons can and should be further explored and generalized in order to facilitate transnational scholarly collaboration. Most importantly, however, it is necessary, if Europe is going to be able to maintain the highest scholarly standards in the social and human sciences at large, to insist on the development and use of more stringent interpretive tools of research assessment of a qualitative nature. There is a large number of examples of such tools being employed both in leading North American and European scholarly institutions but they now tend to become overwhelmed and replaced by standardized techniques that rely on proxy-variables.
- These changes in institutional practices should be complemented by a series of structural measures to ensure research environments at the highest international level in the social sciences and humanities in the member countries of the European Union but also in Russia and the other EECA countries as well as in China. These measures include:
  - The strengthening of European university environments; more specifically the example of the European University Institute provides a series of important lessons for the establishment of first-rate transnational Ph.D. programmes in Europe. One obvious measure to help promote diversity and competition would be to establish two or three new institutions of a similar kind as the EUI in other parts of Europe and involving stronger components of collaboration and enrolment from areas outside of the European Union.
  - A less resource demanding, and perhaps also less risky, approach would be to create a specific programme for transnational Ph.D. training to be hosted by consortia of European universities and research institutes in collaboration with analogous institutions in Russia, other EECA countries or China as well as other parts of the world. The experience of Max-Planck international research schools indicate that this is a viable, highly efficient as well as flexible model to promote first-rate research training in European environments.
  - Funding bodies of a new kind. The establishment of the European Research Council (ERC) is a remarkable step towards the promotion of excellence in research also in the social and human sciences in Europe. Resources for this body should grow. National research councils should also be encouraged to start functioning in analogous ways by opening up to applicants on a European-wide and indeed global scale. The experiences of INTAS demonstrate that such an initiative might easily be extended to areas beyond the members countries of the European Union not only in terms of the openness to applicants but, equally significantly, in terms of the direction and rules of the programmes itself, involving explicitly symmetric relations between the European Union and other major regions of the world.
  - Analogously, private foundations should be similarly encouraged to move beyond national concerns and start funding more research initiatives and environments on a transnational scale. The Volkswagen Foundation programme on key themes in the cultural sciences provides an interesting example of support to the social and human sciences that encourage collaboration also with natural, medical and technological sciences in forms that are more sustained than that of projects and less formalized than that of establishing new institutes. Similar examples on a transnational scale would be a welcome contribution to the growth of first-rate research in the social and human sciences.
  - Support for exceptionally promising scholars at the stage beyond the doctorate and before the professoriate are crucial for the long-term vitality of research in the social and human sciences. It is excellent that the European Research Council has made an ambitious

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programme with so-called Starting Grants a keystone of its activities. In addition, all experience indicates that Institutes for Advanced Study constitute perhaps the single most efficient instrument for stimulating the most promising early career researchers and for helping them to formulate ambitious enough objectives for their research but also to become linked up at an early stage to networks of internationally leading scholars.

- The fact that the United States created such institutes decades before similar developments took off in Europe is plausibly at least one of the reasons behind rapid American advances in the social, behavioural and human sciences in the decades after the Second World War and for the lead position that American scientists were long able to uphold in these fields. Today, the leading European institutes for advanced study are not inferior in terms of quality to the leading American ones. However, on the whole they are supported by considerably smaller and more precarious resources. Furthermore, virtually all their funding is of a national, if not of a regional or local, character.
- One of the simplest and most cost-effective measures that could be undertaken on a European-wide scale would be to provide European-wide support for the leading institutes for advanced study. Even support just in the region of some one and a half percent of the total expenditures for R&D of the European Union

would be sufficient to fund two European institutes for advanced study on the same scale as that of the famous Institute for Advanced Study Princeton or alternatively some 15-20 institutes on the same scale as that of the presently foremost European institutes for advanced study.

- The METRIS project of the European Commission proved already during its first year to be an effective tool in analysing and assessing important trends, strengths and weaknesses and needs at the level of research funding, research performance, and articulation of research communities in Europe.
- This has inspired the GlobalSSH Action Consortium to outline a proposal for the establishment of a similar observatory for monitoring global changes of SSH, including research agendas, institutions, policies, and funding possibilities. In the full-scale, book version of the report, this proposal will be drafted in some more detail.
- While the GlobalSSH Consortium has had research and expert capacity to set up a global network for monitoring global changes in SSH, such an activity needs to be supported on regular basis, not in the form of a series of ad-hoc projects. In some form, Europe will need to create a capacity of this type that, however, cannot be constrained to reviews with regard to the objectives of current Framework Programmes.

### Final conference of the GlobalSSH Action "Social Sciences and Humanities: Emerging Trends and Future Prospects. Europe in Global Context"

The GlobalSSH Action final conference took place on 24-25 April 2009, Uppsala, Sweden at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS). The conference was a joint event of the EU FP6 Special Support Action GlobalSSH and METRIS: "Monitoring European Trends in Social Sciences and Humanities" Expert Group. The conference was aimed at debating emerging trends in research in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) in Europe. Special interest was given to Europe's international research agenda, to EU-third countries international research cooperation in SSH and to elaborating policy recommendations for strengthened cooperation in this particular research area. The conference was co-organised by Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study and the Swedish Research Council. Support to the organisation of the conference is provided by the Swedish Research Council and European Commission Directorate-General for Research, Science, Economy and Society Directorate.



Prof. Huang Ping, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences



Prof. Poul Holm, Trinity College Dublin

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The region in focus – Events and news

**25-27 June 2009, Tallinn, Estonia**  
**Workshop “Lessons learned and perspectives of bilateral S&T cooperation programmes between EU Member States and Associated Countries and Russia”**

The workshop was organised by Archimedes Foundation as a part of the FP7 ERANET-RUSSIA Action “*Linking Russia to the ERA: Coordination of MS/AC S&T programmes towards and with Russia*”. The workshop participants discussed experiences in bilateral S&T programmes of EU Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) towards and with Russia in basic and applied/innovation oriented research.

Information on the ERANET RUS project and workshop presentations:  
 Jörn Sonnenburg, ERA.Net RUS Coordinator,  
 International Bureau (IB) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)  
[Joern.Sonnenburg@dlr.de](mailto:Joern.Sonnenburg@dlr.de)

ERA.Net RUS project webpage: [www.era.net-rus.eu](http://www.era.net-rus.eu)

Information on the workshop:  
 Ülle Must, Director, Research Cooperation Centre,  
 Archimedes Foundation  
[Ulle.Must@archimedes.ee](mailto:Ulle.Must@archimedes.ee)

**16-17 June 2009, Athens, Greece**  
**Stakeholders Conference “EU – EECA S&T cooperation: The way forward”**

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) has organized a conference “EU – EECA S&T cooperation: The way forward” in the context of the “S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia – IncoNet EECA”, a large project funded by the European Commission to support the bi-regional S&T cooperation, coordinated by ICBSS. The aim of the conference was to allow an informal dialogue of senior experts from ministries and research organisations from both, the EU and Associated Countries and the EECA. The dialogue is thought to focus on the state-of-the-art and the perspectives of EU-EECA S&T cooperation. Participants of different related projects will have the opportunity to make the results of their activities visible to a wide range of political decision makers and representatives of research and funding organisations.

Information on the workshop and IncoNet EECA project:  
 Dr. George Bonas, S&T Advisor,  
 IncoNet EECA - Project Coordinator, ICBSS  
[gbonas@eie.gr](mailto:gbonas@eie.gr)

**A book “The Social Sciences and Humanities: Research Trends and Collaborative Perspectives”**

ISS RAS has published a new book “The Social Sciences and Humanities: Research Trends and Collaborative Perspectives” in July, 2009. Contributors of the book are scholars from Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, and Switzerland. The book represents a collection of articles, based on presentations made at the International Seminar “Cooperation between Russian and EU Country Scientists in Social Sciences and the Humanities: Problems and Perspectives” held in Moscow on 23–24 October 2008. The book is issued in English and Russian versions.

More information is available at ISS RAS website:  
[www.issras.ru/eng/publication/index.html](http://www.issras.ru/eng/publication/index.html)

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Announcements

**1-2 October 2009, Moscow, Russia**  
**International Conference “Governance of Science in the 21st Century: Mechanisms and Perspectives”**

The conference will take place at the Russian Academy of Science and is organised and supported by the Institute for the Study of Science of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The objective of the conference is to provide in-depth discussion on different aspects of governance of science and the state's role in modern scientific and technological development, in particular:

- to discuss and evaluate governance mechanisms of modern science, not only well-known and widely applied but also emerging ones;
- to shed light on new functions and risks of the state as a major regulator that sets up “rules of the game” in S&T;
- to mirror emerging trends in the interaction of science and society.

Information about the conference:  
 Dr. Liudmila Pipiya, Deputy Director  
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 E-mail: [L.Pipiya@issras.ru](mailto:L.Pipiya@issras.ru)

Conference website:  
[www.issras.ru/conference\\_2009/index.php](http://www.issras.ru/conference_2009/index.php)

**Six Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships for the Academic Year 2009/2010**

The Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence (Max-Planck-Institute) is pleased to announce a non-residential doctoral/postdoctoral fellowship program for the academic year 2009-2010, entitled: Art, Space and Mobility in the Early Ages of Globalization. The Mediterranean, Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent (MeCAIS) 400-1650. The program is sponsored by the Getty Foundation. It rethinks the postcolonial agenda through a study of premodern “world orders” and historical concepts of space and mobility with special attention to artistic objects, monuments and heritage.

The fellowship program is intended for young scholars who are working towards a Ph.D. as well as those candidates who already possess a Ph.D. (obtained no earlier than 2004). The fellowships are mainly open to archaeolo-

gists, art historians and, in exceptional cases, to scholars of related fields like anthropology, history, philology and religious studies. The program especially welcomes applications from young scholars of Mediterranean countries and Asia. We seek fellows whose work combines the thorough study of objects with a broad appeal, and whose interests focus on the intercultural and interartistic agency, the mobility of ideas, artists and works of arts as well as the creation or transformation of spaces within the chronological and topographical framework of the program. Applicants should be interested in the study of premodern models of globalization from an art historical point of view, adopting an interdisciplinary perspective in their study of objects, images or texts. They are invited to participate in the creation of a research network that will connect specialists in Western, Islamic, Byzantine, Indian, Central and East Asian art. Projects may consider the following questions according to the thematic focuses of the program: The (Trans)formation of Topographies/ The Spaces of Power and Religion/ Borderlines between Nature and Culture/ Visual Culture and Systems of Knowledge/ Transforming Artistic Languages/ Making, Remaking and Exchanging: Art and its Techniques/ Historiographies and Narratives.

The fellowships are non-residential. Research could primarily be conducted at the fellows' home institutions. At the same time, fellows will participate in a series of workshops in Berlin and Florence as well as Summer schools and seminars to be held in countries of the MeCAIS region.

A conference organized by the directors of the program will be designed specifically for this research program. The working language is English.

Fellowships are for one year. Their amount follows international standards and varies according to the specific conditions of the applicants. A second fellowship year will be considered upon presentation of the researcher's first year results.

The deadline for application is September 15, 2009. Results will be announced in early October 2009. Applicants should send a C.V., a research proposal, one substantial writing sample or a portfolio, and two letters of recommendation to:

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Wolf, Director,  
 Kunsthistorisches Institut - Max-Planck-Institut,  
 Via Giuseppe Giusti 44, I- 50121 Firenze, Italy.  
 The envelope should be marked “Art Space and Mobility”. Applications by e-mail are particularly welcome; these and questions concerning the program should be sent to the following address: [dirwolf@khi.fi.it](mailto:dirwolf@khi.fi.it)

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Participants of the GlobalSSH Action final conference in Uppsala.

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