



# **SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) and Societal Challenge 'Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing'**



**Rosanna D'Amario**  
**Policy Officer, Strategy Unit o**  
**Health Directorate**  
**Research & Innovation DG**  
**European Commission, Brussels, Belgium**

HORIZON 2020

**HEALTH NCP meeting,**  
**Brussels, 30 April 2015**

## Overview



- ✓ **Why SSH in Societal Challenge 'Health, Demographic change and Wellbeing'**
- ✓ **Examples from the 1<sup>st</sup> call of the WP 2014-2015**
- ✓ **Questions and ideas for the way forward**

## The background

- *Social sciences and humanities research will be fully integrated into each of the priorities of Horizon 2020 and each of the specific objectives... (Regulation establishing Horizon 2020)*
- *The priority "Societal challenges" should increase the effectiveness of research and innovation in responding to key societal challenges by supporting excellent research and innovation activities... Social sciences and humanities research is an important element for addressing all of the challenges (Council Decision Specific Programme Horizon 2020)*

## Where did we start from?

- SSH in Societal Challenge an **expert workshop** organised by DG RTD and DG CNECT on 11 November 2014; about 50 invited experts and Commission staff participated
- A main **stakeholder workshop** organised by DG RTD on 27 November with 14 stakeholder organisations
- A small **joint meeting** between representatives of the Advisory Groups from Societal Challenge 1 and Societal Challenge 6
- + Flagging **topics** with SSH potential and inviting **evaluators** with SSH expertise

## SSH-flagged topics



- **9 Topics flagged as relevant to integrate SSH elements**
  - PHC-1, PHC-5, PHC-6, PHC-17, PHC-23, PHC-31, HCO-5, HCO-14 and HCO-15
- *43 grant agreements signed (WP **2014-2015**)*



# What does 'SSH-flagged' mean?

## ✓ **Topics dedicated to SSH research**

- ❖ issues are framed mainly from an SSH perspective
- ❖ Relevant project partners come from SSH disciplines

## ✓ **Topics with a significant SSH component**

- ❖ SSH expertise is an integral, though not exclusive, part of the research design of topics
- ❖ solutions to the problem are to be generated by integrating knowledge stemming from both SSH disciplines and non-SSH

# SSH disciplines

sociology  
psychology  
anthropology  
cultural studies  
demography  
education  
religion

history  
economics  
administration  
political science  
philosophy  
ethics  
law

## Examples of projects (1)

### Life course pathways underlying social differences in healthy ageing (LIFEPATH)

- WP: Life-course socioeconomic pathways towards healthy ageing and the role of modifiable risk factors
  - 81 PM out of 718 PM (11,3%)
  - LIFEPATH integrates biology, biostatistics, epidemiology and epigenomics approaches with social science approaches (sociology, economics and public health policies).
- **Specific challenge** (Topic description PHC-01)  
"...interaction between the genetic make-up of individual human beings and behavioural, environmental... factors"



## Examples of projects (2)

### Shaping EUROpean policies to promote HEALTH equity (EURO-HEALTHY)

- WP: Socioeconomic, health behaviours and lifestyle determinants of health and wellbeing
  - 82,5 PM out of 457 PM (18%)
  - Expertise: mainly public health and statistics

### **Scope** (Topic description PHC-31):

*"Proposals should identify key driving forces- (external and internal to the health systems) likely to influence health and wellbeing in Europe and beyond in the future. Proposals should contribute to the understanding of the inter-relationships between these factors; analyse their economic and social impact and suggest alternative policy options to respond to the challenges they pose."*

## Examples of projects (3)

### Family-based intervention to improve healthy lifestyle and prevent Type 2 Diabetes amongst South Asians with central obesity and prediabetes (iHEALTH-T2D)

- WP: Health economics
  - 124 PM out of 1317 PM (9,4%)
  - Expertise: health economics, public health

#### **Scope** (Topic description HCO-5)

*"Provide evidence of a health economics dimension such as cost effectiveness of the proposed intervention and its scalability"*

## Examples of projects (4)

### A stepping stone approach towards the Genetics Clinic of the Future (GCOF)

- WP: Public engagement & mutual learning
  - 19 PM out of 117 PM (16,2%)
  - Expertise: social science, political science

### Scope (Topic description HCO-15)

*"MMLs are Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) with at least 10 countries that allow discussion and cooperation between science and society at different stages of the research and innovation process"; "The consortium may also include media, education establishments, science academies, museums, science centres"*



## Other topics

- **12 Topics non SSH-flagged**

- PHC-7, PHC-8, PHC-10, PHC-13, PHC-15, PHC-32, HCO-4, HCO-7, HCO-8, HCO-9, HCO-10 and HCO-16

- *42 grant agreements signed (WP **2014-2015**)*

## Example of projects (a)

### Dynamic hormone diagnostics (ULTRADIAN)

- WP: Health economic input to redesign sampling unit and diagnostic platforms to promote simplification and cost-effectiveness
  - ✓ 51 PM out of 374 PM (13,6%)
  - ✓ five participants
  - ✓ Expertise: health economics, marketing strategies
- PHC-10 (Development of new diagnostic tools and technologies: in vitro devices, assays and platforms)

## Example of projects (b)

### **Conservative iron chelation as a disease-modifying strategy in Parkinson's disease: a multicentric, parallelgroup, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial of deferiprone (FAIR-PARK-II)**

- WP: Health economic evaluation, quantitative continuous assessment in the home environment
  - ✓ 58 PM out of 658 PM (8,7%)
  - ✓ three participants (with one having 48 PM)
  - ✓ Expertise: Health Economics, biomedical statistics
- PHC-13 (New therapies for chronic non-communicable diseases)

## Some questions remain...

- ❖ Which approach to prefer: having SSH dedicated components or significant SSH components in various topics?
- ❖ How to ensure the participation of SSH evaluators and a fair 'dialogue' with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) evaluators?
- ❖ How to ensure that the best SSH scientists are in proposals?
- ❖ How can we ensure that SSH is considered as a real added value and not as an add-on only?



## Options for the future (1)

- ❖ If there are topics that give "appetite" to SSH, it is better to **concentrate on few key topics** fewer SSH flagged topics but of better quality;
- ❖ Some **specific SSH areas** that might be considered for health research are: ethics, vulnerability, inequality and legal matters;
- ❖ SSH needs **to be initiated upstream**, and not simply considered as an add-on → Help achieving **impact** through SSH;

## Options for the future (2)

- ❖ Important to check: a) the level of interaction between STEM and SSH; b) the level of **rigour of application of SSH** c) and, in the scope, the areas that go beyond health economics;
- ❖ Evaluators → look for **evaluators who have a broader knowledge** (economics, statistics, psychology, anthropology and behavioural science);
- ❖ Importance to **disseminate** more information on good practices in embedding SSH.



**More info @**

- Participant portal on SSH:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/ssh.htm>
- General information on SSH in FP7 and Horizon 2020: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index.cfm>
- 'Opportunities for SSH researchers in Horizon 2020 calls' (NET4Society):  
<http://www.net4society.eu/public/ssh-opportunities.php>

# Thank you !



[Rosanna.D'Amario@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Rosanna.D'Amario@ec.europa.eu)