

# Humanities in need of wider Horizon 2020

28 November 2013

We are deeply concerned by the plans for Horizon 2020, the European Union's forthcoming seven-year research and innovation programme. The promises made by Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, commissioner for research, innovation and science, about the humanities and social sciences playing a "central role" in tackling Europe's problems are not being met.

We strongly recommend changes to Horizon 2020: first, a substantial increase in the budget proposed for humanities and social sciences research, particularly in the societal challenge Europe in a Changing World – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies. The current budget provides considerably less funding than has been available through the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme and is certainly not "the significant space" Geoghegan-Quinn has promised. The disciplines need more money, not less.

Second, the funding options available to researchers must be restructured. As it stands, Horizon 2020 would finance only large-scale projects, which will lead to low success rates and alienate researchers. We recommend that the Commission also support a substantial number of small- and medium-sized grants, thereby getting more bang for its buck.

The promise to embed humanities and social sciences research in Horizon 2020 has proved empty so far, and as it stands there are no structures in place to make it a reality. As a result, the solutions that the disciplines could offer to Europe's problems will be lost. Fundamental change is needed to ensure this does not happen.

**Dame Helen Wallace, foreign secretary, British Academy**

**John Bell, professor of law, University of Cambridge and chairman, Social Sciences and Humanities**

**Working Group, All European Academies**

**Sir Ian Diamond, principal and vice-chancellor, University of Aberdeen**

**Sir Roderick Floud, provost, Gresham College**

**Duncan Gallie, professor of sociology, University of Oxford**

**William Brown, former master, Darwin College, Cambridge**

**Sir Ivor Crewe, master, University College, Oxford**

**Martin Daunton, master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge**

**Anthony Forster, vice-chancellor, University of Essex**

**David Sanders, pro vice-chancellor (research), University of Essex**