

## Science and Society in the next Framework Programme

*This text is an English summary of a non-paper written on the basis of inputs from a group of French individual experts, followed by a broader consultation of French stakeholders. This document is not a position of French national authorities, neither a formal position of any French research institution, especially not a formal position for FP9. However, the main observations and recommendations are in line with the French national strategy for scientific culture published in 2017.*

The issue of the relations between science and society has always been an important topic but this is even more the case when taking into account recent news. From the development of post-truth attitudes and fake news (as in the USA, for instance) which weakens the legitimacy of scientific expertise, to the cases of religious extremism in particular among some young people who grew and were schooled in our democracies, as well as the current crisis at European level which calls for the rehabilitation of the European project and its values, all of these situations call for a renewed dialogue between science and society, in order to make people interested and involved in scientific processes, building on new methods which should be more participative and more inclusive. Indeed, we are also observing a gap within our societies in terms of access to knowledge and education level. **It is thus important to maintain this trust between science and citizens in Europe, and in order to do so, to engage citizens in research and innovation and to make accessible and comprehensible results produced by science.**

But of course the current context is not only negative. On the contrary, there are several positive aspects that are also calling for the development of links between science and society. First many citizens are still expecting progress in important areas such as health or environment, thus expecting more well-being. Secondly there is an increasing willingness from citizens to participate more and to be engaged, in a general context of participatory democracy and a wish to renew political processes. Third there is always a strong curiosity for science, for what it is and for what it brings as new knowledge. Besides, many players are already mobilized on that issue and what is needed is mainly to reinforce them, respecting their diversity, and to develop policies and incentives for the development science & society ecosystems. There are already the universities – including the students – and other research organizations, museums and science centers, as well as other mediators including a great number of associations that are very committed, and also school which remains a central pillar.

**Thus the issue of relations between science and society is high on the agenda and calls for the involvement of all stakeholders, from the researcher to the mediator, from the citizen to the policy maker. In this context, we cannot imagine that the next framework programme will not put a strong emphasis on this topic, given the challenges at stake.** This should build upon what has already been done in Horizon 2020, with both a dedicated programme and a transversal approach, but it is needed to improve this science and society pillar in terms of visibility, budget and more generally in terms of impact, by ensuring a better follow-up of projects and a better dissemination of good practices to the whole FP.

This science and society pillar in the next FP should include in particular the following items:

- **Discussing the place of science within the society**, and the role of science per se

- **Favoring exchanges between science and society** in both ways – including citizens in scientific processes and favoring the involvement of researchers in other parts of the society
- **Promoting citizen science approaches** – allowing for the creation of new knowledge, the dissemination of the scientific process and also the development of curiosity which is a fundamental value
- **Accompanying researchers and research institutions** in those processes – including incentives for institutional changes or training activities
- **Developing ecosystems for interfaces and mediation between science and society** – by exchanging good practices between the various stakeholders, and providing skills and spaces
- **Contributing to territorial policies in the area of science and society** – by helping local initiatives which already include numerous stakeholders

All those aspects are included in the general movement of Open Science and Open Innovation which is developing and has appeared as a top priority at European level. **In addition to this value of openness, the science and society pillar should also promote the values of inclusiveness and responsibility.** Inclusion means taking into account the diversity of the society and targeting when necessary the citizens and territories that are the least connected to science. Responsibility in science means promoting the good practices in research processes and ensuring that researchers are aware of their role within society and are provided with the sufficient tools that allow them to be reflective on their own studies. **These values of openness, inclusion and responsibility should also be promoted at international level** through projects with third countries, with a specific focus on developing countries where challenges linked to the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals are particularly high.

**In order to address those issues, we propose to have on the one hand a specific programme with a dedicated programme committee. Given the challenges at stake, we also propose that this specific programme be considered as a societal challenge,** but not as the current challenge 6 in H2020 which is too broad and lacks consistency. This programme should allow to perform research activities on domains linked to science and society, to favor initiatives coming from various stakeholders, in different territorial contexts but with common objectives, and also to provide incentives to research organizations in order to promote structural changes which will eventually favor activities in the area of science and society (training, evaluation, funding, career advancement, etc.). This dedicated programme will benefit from a high-quality follow-up of projects and more efforts on the dissemination of results and good practices. **This should lead to the establishment of a community of MS/AC and EC representatives in charge of the articulation between the specific programme and the transversal approach.**

Some suggestions for projects to be funded within this programme:

- **Research projects on the mechanisms and processes in the area of science and society:** research on citizen sciences, on the role of science, on ethics, integrity, as well as on the issue of scientific expertise and evidence-based public policies (those projects will benefit, among others, from SSH disciplines such as philosophy, epistemology, sociology, political sciences, etc.)
- **Develop networks and help structure the stakeholders in order to exchange best practices** between different actors and different countries – including outside Europe – in particular all

types of mediation between science and society, with a focus on the training of researchers and mediators, as well as the establishment of dedicated spaces

- **Set up pilot actions** such as agenda-setting (co-construction of research programmes with citizens) or scientific democracy exercises based on plural expertise and citizens' choice
- **Promote structural changes in research organizations and other institutional actors** (including national and/or regional authorities) in order to develop incentives for science and society policies: implementation plans for RFOs or RPOs, Mutual Learning Exercises or pan-European structuring actions such as ERA-NETs

**We also propose on the other hand to continue and deepen the transversal approach which consists in the identification of good practices that allow to better connect science and society and/or to promote the values of openness, inclusion and responsibility of research and innovation.** This should build upon the current concept of Responsible Research and Innovation and its pillars. Some pillars, such as gender, ethics and Open Access, are already taken into account more or less broadly but they will benefit from improvements (for instance, more emphasis on gender in research content). Some other pillars should be clearly more developed in the transversal approach, mainly science education and public engagement. That is why we propose to **develop the participation of non-academic and non-industrial participants, for instance with a dedicated budget**, and also **include education/training aspects within the traditional workpackage on communication and dissemination of projects.**

More generally, research and innovation activities and education and training activities should feed from one another. Thus, **links between the two main corresponding programmes (the FP and Erasmus+) could be developed, as a step toward more synergies between the ERA and the EHEA. This could eventually lead to a fourth priority added to the 3 current priorities from Commissioner Moedas: Open Education.** It could also be needed to develop new pillars or to integrate other transversal objectives already taken into account such as sustainable development. **Moreover, the transversal approach will also benefit from the enlargement of the notion of impact.** Indeed, the impact of projects funded by the FP should include scientific (new knowledge), economic (new products and value), societal (improving well-being) and policy (evidence-based policy making) impacts.

Finally, the issue of participation rules in the FP is important and those rules present some challenges for non-traditional participants, which is often the case for structures that are mediating actors between science and society. That is why **their participation could be improved through targeted simplification schemes**, such as use of flat rates or lump sums, or cascade funding with large "umbrella" projects (including co-funding instruments for science and society).

**All those reflections should be taken as food for thought in view of elaborating the next FP. However, the issue of the relations between science and society is important and should be addressed in it. Not only because there is a need to better connect the society to science (and vice versa) but also because it is a good opportunity to promote a very positive European project with the goal of giving every citizen the tools to address societal challenges and deepening the knowledge society that Europe wants to establish with values that can be shared by all citizens: openness, critical mind and progress.**