

Consultation on the

Draft research agenda for Theme 8 "Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities" in the 7th Community RTD Framework Programme (2007-2013)

A. Context of this consultation

Objectives of the consultation

This consultation invites the public, and notably the scientific community, to comment on the draft research agenda for the dedicated socio-economic sciences and humanities part of the next Framework Programme for EU research (FP7).

The consultation covers only Theme 8 of the 'Cooperation' specific programme, entitled 'Socio-economic sciences and the humanities'. Its objectives are:

To generate an in-depth, shared understanding of complex and interrelated socio-economic challenges Europe is confronted with, such as growth, employment and competitiveness, social cohesion and sustainability, quality of life, education, cultural issues and global interdependence, in particular with the view of providing an improved knowledge base for policies in the fields concerned.

This draft research agenda builds on earlier consultations, the progress of research in previous EU programmes, the current state of research in the fields concerned and takes account of policy needs.

Background

FP7 will cover the period 2007-2013. The Commission, following a consultation in 2004, proposed an outline Framework Programme in April 2005 and followed this with a more detailed proposal in the form of specific programmes in September 2005.

The Framework and specific programmes are currently under discussion by the Council and the European Parliament, who will decide on the programmes later this year. These negotiations may lead to some changes in the current text.

The budget initially proposed by the Commission in September 2005 for the socio-economic sciences and humanities theme was 792 Million Euro. Following the recent agreement on the financial perspectives, this is likely to result in a reduced figure of just above 600 Million Euro over the seven years.

Once approved, the specific programmes will be implemented through annual work programmes.

Consultation period

Comments are invited up to the end of June so that they will be received in sufficient time to be taken into account in the preparation of the first annual Work Programme.

Workshops may be organized for further discussion on the draft research agenda.

B. The Consultation process

The document under consultation outlines the research agenda within each of the following 7 activities:

1. Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society
2. Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective
3. Major trends in society and their implications
4. Europe in the world
5. The citizen in the European Union
6. Socio-economic and scientific indicators
7. Foresight activities

Each Activity is organised around research areas and each area is broken down into research topics.

Respondents are invited to comment on any area or topic by providing comments that would improve the overall thrust of research to be undertaken. Respondents can also suggest new topics. However, they should bear in mind the reduced budget and the need for all new topics to be in line with the content of the Specific Programme.

All comments and suggestions must also take into account that the proposed research agenda has to address the following requirements:

- They should address shared or European level problems;
- Research topics should be policy relevant;
- They should be innovative, taking into account the state of research and potential in that particular field of research for Europe;
- They should promote inter-disciplinary research when appropriate;

The consultation is organised around **7 sections**, corresponding to each **Activity**. Respondents are also asked to complete an identification section.

Respondents can comment on one, several or all **Activities/sections**.

The introduction of each section provides the objectives as described in the proposal for the Specific Programme, and is followed by a rationale, the research areas and suggested research topics.

The views expressed by respondents will be analysed by Commission services and will provide an important input to the preparation of the work programme of this theme.

Activity 1: Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society

Specific Programme

This will aim to develop and integrate research on the issues affecting growth, employment and competitiveness in order to provide an improved and integrated understanding of these issues for the continued development of a knowledge society. It will benefit policy and support progress towards achieving these objectives. The research will integrate the following aspects of the question:

- The changing role of knowledge throughout the economy, including the role of different types of knowledge and competences, education and lifelong learning, and intangible investment.
- Economic structures, structural change and productivity issues, including the role of the services sector, of finance, demographics, demand and the processes of long-term change.
- Institutional and policy questions, including macroeconomic policy, labour markets, institutional contexts, and policy coherence and coordination.

It will include important new challenges and opportunities from increased globalisation, emerging economies, relocation, and EU enlargement. Employment questions will include unemployment and underemployment.

Rationale

Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society are major issues and concerns for Europe's citizens and policy makers. These issues are currently expressed, in particular, in the renewed Lisbon strategy. Simultaneously, the European knowledge society is facing a number of challenges and opportunities in the 21st century such as globalisation, sustainable development, enlargement, ageing population etc. which will influence Europe's ability to achieve the Lisbon goals.

This research agenda encourages problem oriented, policy relevant research. It will be carried out through economic research, including economics, economic history and business economics, and interdisciplinary research across the social sciences and humanities. It seeks to support new and innovative research which builds upon existing research results, in particular, the research of the 4th, 5th and 6th Framework programmes concerning knowledge, structural change and institutions. Policy oriented research could also be undertaken through research on qualitative and quantitative methods, including econometrics, simulation exercises and modelling.

Progress in policy relevant research is sometimes limited by the fact that data may not be available, may be out of date or of poor comparability or quality. In view of such restrictions, research may also address the development and improvement of methodologies which allow the collection of more and better data or the linking of existing datasets.

The following three Areas propose a number of research topics which are central for supporting growth, employment and competitiveness policies in Europe. Research may address issues across these three Areas in order to provide a more integrated understanding of growth, employment and/or competitiveness. The research may focus individually on growth, employment or competitiveness, or their relation to each other. Research also needs to take into account the European diversity, enlargements and globalisation which influence importantly the policy making environments. Unemployment and underemployment may be addressed where relevant.

Area 1. Changing role of knowledge throughout the economy

Research should relate the changing role of knowledge to growth, employment and competitiveness in Europe. The aim is to link knowledge creation and dissemination to economic performance and social well-being. Research needs to contribute to the formulation of European policies and strategies while taking into account European diversity, demographic development and increasing globalisation.

Research topics could include:

Predictions and validity of growth theories based on information, knowledge, innovation or diffusion: evidence for contributions to growth, employment and competitiveness as well as productivity in European economies; the role of individual countries' policies and institutions as well as "soft factors"; how policies could reverse the low long term growth rates in Europe.

How knowledge can be transformed better into growth, employment and competitiveness: at firm level, at industry level (including service and creative industries), at regional and country level; comparison of policies and instruments; effectiveness of the different commercialisation mechanisms for public sector research results; public policies supporting R&D and innovation in the commercialisation process.

Supply and demand side determinants and conditions for intangible investments and innovations in Europe: determinants of the rate of return on intangible investments across European economies; the diversity of conditions in explaining different performances; effects of EU enlargement, EU patent systems and regulations among others, as well as the process of globalisation and technological development.

Implications of different types of knowledge for aspects of the economy: competition, employment, competitiveness, regulation, trade, finance, taxation, industrial and technology systems or clusters, entrepreneurship, organisational change, management and product markets among others.

Internationalisation and networking of European research and innovation activities and systems: characteristics and the impact of the internationalisation of research and innovation systems on research, science, education, and innovation policies, including regional R&D policies.

Education and training systems, policies and their reforms in Europe: knowledge creation, including social capital, transfer and absorption of knowledge as well as competences and skills; alternative funding models in higher education systems; education systems facilitating life long learning, creativity and entrepreneurship; causes of drop outs and early school leavers and the consequences for policies including youth policy.

Area 2. Structural changes in the European knowledge society

The area 2 connects growth, employment and competitiveness as well as productivity in a knowledge society to economic structures and structural change in Europe which concerns both manufacturing and service industries, and the internationalisation of the European economy as well as financial markets. It includes long term issues and effects of demographic development. The aim of the research is to develop European growth, employment and competitiveness policies and strategies.

Research topics could include:

Structural change in Europe and its relation to growth, competitiveness and employment: factors determining structural changes in manufacturing and service industries and future perspectives; entrepreneurial, industrial and structural policies; adjustment mechanisms in manufacturing and service industries such as creation of new firms, company and organisational learning; and adjustment patterns across industries; the role of demand.

Evolution of European service economy in relation to productivity, growth, employment and welfare in Europe: across all types of services; analysis of the input factors, production processes and outputs of individual service industries and their changes over time, in the context of knowledge economy and internationalisation of services; contribution of services as inputs to other sectors, aiming to capture the contribution of services to the economy; measurement of services inputs, outputs and productivity changes; determinants and types of innovations in services; effective policy instruments in the service economy.

Globalisation and growth, employment and competitiveness in Europe: changing international specialisation, the effects of delocalisation of production, of internationalisation of innovation activities, and of networking of firms; European integration; applicant and neighbouring countries; emergence of new growth regions; transatlantic economic integration; international regulations and standards in trading new technologies.

European international competitiveness and capacity to attract investment: changing determinants of international competitiveness of European business; comparison of the concepts of firms' competitiveness with a country's competitiveness and their relations to growth and employment; factors and conditions in attracting inward investment; factors determining European outward investment and its potential for economic development.

Role for and relationship of finance to growth, employment and competitiveness: integration of financial markets; location of financial activity; external aspects of financial integration; innovations in financial services in Europe; effects of demographic development on the financial markets, including inter temporal analysis; liberalisation of international financial markets and services, capital mobility and financial stability; the possible future role of the Euro.

Impact of European demographic developments on growth, employment and competitiveness: effects on labour supply, government budgets, consumption and financial markets; the role of pension systems and their reform, health care, housing and immigration policies; policy alternatives.

Long term issues concerning e.g. energy, the environment and natural resources: economic effects of so-called "new risks" (GMOs, criminal economy, climate change, global diseases, security) on present and future growth perspectives and long-term growth policies; factors facilitating and preventing the emergence of "new risks"; policies for effective energy markets and supply in Europe.

Area 3. Institutions and policies in Europe

Research is needed on the relation of policy governance and coordination, institutional issues, macroeconomic policy and labour market, including social models to growth, employment and competitiveness in a European knowledge society. This research needs to take into account European diversity and demographic developments but also the specialization and specific skill requirements. In particular, research should consider the effects that structural change and globalisation have on the policy making environment.

Research topics could include:

Role of policy coordination and coherence for growth, employment and competitiveness: coordination of micro- and macro-policies; policy design on public and private sector partnerships; issues on the compatibility of microeconomic reforms with respect to policies supporting research and innovation systems; issues concerning the coherence of research, innovation and commercialisation policies.

Role of institutions, including international institutions for growth, employment and competitiveness: at the Member State, regional and the EU level, in the short and long run; issues such as intellectual property rights, legal systems, corporate governance and the role and effectiveness of regulations, rules, norms, conventions and values.

Macroeconomic policy and growth, employment and competitiveness: macroeconomic policy design; innovative new instruments, institutions and policy coordination; design of tax and public sector spending policies; issues relating to European monetary policy, international monetary integration and developments, the effects of the enlargement of the euro area; effects of changing expectations and behavioural assumptions.

Effect of labour market policies: organisations and institutions in work places facilitating learning; effectiveness of labour market institutions and policies in reducing unemployment or in increasing the rate of employment; wages, migration and labour market access in Europe; effectiveness of labour market instruments in reducing unemployment rates and increasing employment rates; labour market policies, income distribution and growth.

Alternative models of social policies and growth, employment and competitiveness: integration of socially weak groups; experiences concerning social policies aiming to improve the capacity to adjust and perform in the changing environment; sustainability of alternative social models; implications of changing labour market institutions and rules for social and economic institutions and relations.

Activity 2: Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European Perspective

Specific Programme

This aims to support the societal goal of combining economic, social and environmental objectives and so improve the basis for sustainable development. The research in this activity will address two interrelated issues:

- How European socio-economic models and those outside Europe have fared in combining the objectives, the conditions under which this occurred including the role of dialogue, social partnership, institutional change and their ability to confront new challenges.
- Economic cohesion between regions and regional development in an enlarged EU; and social cohesion (including inequalities, social protection and social services, taxation policies, ethnic relations, education and social exclusion, and health) as well as its relation to social problems such as poverty, housing, crime, delinquency and drugs.

In addressing these issues, consideration will be given to the existence of trade-offs or synergies between the economic, social, environmental objectives in the world context, spatial aspects, long-term sustainability, and issues for developing countries.

Rationale

Over a long period, European societies have made a variety of broadly-based efforts to combine economic and social approaches in order to address changes in society. The European Community and subsequently the EU incorporated the combination of objectives in the Treaty (Art. 2) and they were included as a key

part of the Lisbon objectives. The socio-economic models that have evolved in Europe embody inter alia ways of dealing with these combined objectives.

Social and regional cohesion are particular aspects of these questions. Social cohesion presents a difficult challenge today with a number of economic, social and cultural changes and instabilities in society. Regional cohesion also presents a major challenge especially following the recent enlargement and some regions already in the EU also face particular development questions for the future.

The challenges faced in combining these objectives today are clearly major, from increased globalisation, demographic change, migration, ecological challenges, particular issues for developing countries such as large-scale urbanisation, etc. The variety of approaches taken in Europe and their different historical backgrounds provide a laboratory for understanding how the objectives might be successfully combined or otherwise. Comparison with relevant other world regions can further enhance understanding.

The overall aim therefore is to provide a significantly improved understanding of how economic, social and environmental objectives might be successfully combined in an international perspective, through addressing how European (and other) societal models have fared in doing this, how they are evolving and addressing the new challenges they face, and how the key social and economic cohesion issues in an enlarged EU can be addressed, thereby providing a basis for major decisions on relevant strategies and policies.

Gender issues are important in many of these questions and should be introduced where relevant. Questions related to power (economic, political, social or cultural) may also be included if considered relevant.

Area 1. Socio-economic models

The objective is to understand how European and other socio-economic models have fared in combining the objectives, the conditions under which this occurred, their ability to confront new challenges, and to draw lessons for policy.

Research topics could include:

Socio-economic models and the combination of objectives:

The different approaches taken to combining the objectives (whether explicitly or implicitly) in different countries or regions, how these are embodied in the various socio-economic models, and their degree of success. The usefulness of typologies of national models in this context and the degree of coherence or consistency of the models.

The historical development of socio-economic models in Europe and elsewhere, how their combination of the objectives evolved over the years, their degree of success, and the circumstances under which change took place.

Supra-national efforts at combining some or all of these objectives, especially at EU and global levels, their degree of success, and their relation to socio-economic models at national or regional level, within Europe or outside.

The ability to confront new challenges:

How newer developments are affecting the combining of objectives and the ability of the various socio-economic models to address these, e.g. increased globalisation of trade, finance and investment, demographic change, new kinds of migration, environmental challenges.

Institutions and institutional change and combining objectives: In the context of new challenges, the ability of institutions that were developed over the years (including norms, practices and laws) to address such challenges, how institutional change took place, and the success in combining objectives. The process of setting international rules in relevant domains and Europe's influence on them. Role of public and private actors.

The outlook for the future for the various models, as well as for supra-national efforts at combining the objectives, whether at international or regional (e.g. EU) levels.

Area 2. Regional and social cohesion

The objective is to address challenges facing regional cohesion and development and social cohesion in the context of the broader economic, social and cultural changes taking place, the effectiveness of policy in addressing them, and lessons for policy.

Research topics could include:

Regional economic cohesion and regional development:

Changing regional economic disparities in Europe, and the causes of such changes, including their relation to EU integration, enlargements and trends in globalisation, as well as the outlook for the future.

Regional development challenges in an evolving international context, for example specialisation issues, clusters, growth poles, competition from other areas, role of services, innovation, relocation of economic activities, restructuring, fiscal policy, the possible extension of the euro-zone, rural development, effectiveness of different policy approaches.

Urban development: how this is changing, how it varies across Europe, and the outlook, including for cities of various sizes and city-regions; the role of economic, social and cultural factors in urban development, in quality of life and in environmental issues. Particular urbanisation challenges for developing countries.

Policies and governance in regional and urban cohesion and development, including policy integration in planning and practice, multi-level governance, participation, spatial planning and combining economic, social and environmental objectives.

Social cohesion:

Social inequalities and their relation to cohesion, including inequalities in income and wealth, life chances, social mobility, inheritance of inequalities, cultural issues, poverty and their consequences, including any relation to crime and drug addiction.

Social cohesion and changes in employment and labour markets, including precarious employment, informal work, underemployment and unemployment, questions of working conditions, and possibilities for training and career development, and effectiveness of employment policy and related policies including activation measures.

Social cohesion in cities and their environs, including housing, spatial segregation, access to facilities, land use and spatial planning.

Services of general interest and social transfers in social cohesion: role of services of general interest including both social services (health, education, welfare, housing) and network services (such as transport) in social cohesion; role of social security, including pensions, and taxation in social cohesion.

Migration, ethnicity and integration: including intergenerational difference in the integration of migrants, gender and family formation issues, access to labour markets, education, cultural issues in integration including language; patterns of discrimination and segregation; settlement and integration policy and its relation to social and human rights, citizenship, political participation, media treatment; management capability of integration systems; trafficking of migrants.

Youth and social exclusion, including employment, education and training, location issues, discrimination, cultural issues, delinquency, access to leisure facilities, participation, and policy effectiveness.

Education, training and social cohesion: life chances, social mobility, impact of education systems compared to social and cultural advantage, education objectives and their impact on social cohesion, education methods for social cohesion, differential access to education systems of varying resources and quality, dropping out, impact of different education policies and education systems on social cohesion.

Area 3. Cross-cutting issues

The objective is to explore some broad but fundamental questions that are relevant for understanding how economic, social and environmental objectives might be combined, and their implications for policy.

Research topics could include:

The extent to which trade-offs or, on the contrary, synergies or mutual support, exist between the different aspects, e.g. growth, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, quality of life.

Effect of changes in world conditions on combining the objectives: key changes in world conditions that affect the ways in which the objectives can be combined, compared to the past, and the outlook; how changes affect the ability to combine the objectives and what strategies can be adopted to deal with them. Whether or not relevant world conditions can be modified to improve the possibility of combining objectives.

The role of democratic governance in managing the trade-offs and synergies between different objectives: distributive issues between and within generations; behavioural and institutional changes for 'transition management' towards sustainability; long-term visions and translation of such visions into policy-making; the development and impact of participatory approaches.

Activity 3: Major trends in society and their implications

Specific Programme

The aim is to understand and assess the implications of particular key trends in European society that have major consequences for citizens, their quality of life and for policies, and thus to provide an underpinning for many policy areas. Empirical and theoretical research will address initially three major trends:

- Demographic change including ageing, births and migration.
- Changes in the related aspects of lifestyles, families, work, consumption, health and quality of life including child, youth and disabilities issues.
- Cultural interactions in an international perspective including traditions from different societies, diversity of populations, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Gender issues and changing values will be included. In addition, changes in criminality and crime perception will be examined, as will changes in corporate social responsibility.

Rationale

The last fifty years have been characterised by important changes in the way people live their lives and deal with evolutions in society, social structures and values.

Demographic changes are widely recognised as one of the major challenges for Europe. They include population ageing, low birth rates and immigration flows, and changes in gender roles in this context. These changes are affected by a number of economic, social and cultural factors and policies. But in turn, they also have an impact on a wide set of policy domains, ranging from the long-term sustainability of welfare, pension and health care systems, to education, lifelong learning, migration, transport, housing, etc.

Other major societal trends relate to the changing nature of work and of private life (in particular of family life and gender roles), the evolution of lifestyles, consumption patterns, values, attitudes and beliefs of contemporary societies.

Cultural interactions are another feature of current societies. Migration, technological developments, globalisation of economies and societal transformation processes have led to increasing cultural exchange within Europe and with other parts of the world and to a different perception of values and beliefs.

Comparative research is needed to understand, on the one hand, the causes of these trends, and on the other, their effects and likely future impacts on quality of life, values and attitudes and on European societies, as well as their implications for national and EU policies.

Area 1. Demographic changes

Research should aim at providing further understanding of the interactions between current demographic and societal trends at European and international level, the implications of trends such as ageing, low fertility rates and migration for, e.g., European welfare systems, and identify policy measures which could assist in meeting these challenges.

Research topics could include:

Ageing society: Economic, social, political and cultural impact and potential of an ageing society, as well as aspirations of ageing people.

Low fertility rates: Economic, social, psychological and cultural factors influencing current low birth rates and the individual and collective change in attitudes and in public policies, needed to modify these rates.

Migration: Factors determining migration flows, and the circumstances in which they occur, as well as prospective analysis of scenarios of future migration flows and their consequences for European societies.

Area 2. Societal trends and lifestyles

Research is needed to provide knowledge on the evolution of some key trends, such as in family life, the changing nature of work and of private life, the evolution of lifestyles, consumption patterns, values, attitudes and beliefs of contemporary societies, and their implications for people's quality of life and health, including children, youth, disabled and the aged. The role and impact of public policies, of the global economy and of corporate organisations on the evolution of those trends and associated values should also be addressed, as well as the identification of the key policy measures which could contribute to improving quality of life.

Research topics could include:

Family life: Current trends in family formation and dissolution, their causes and consequences, e.g. for children's development and socialisation, the well-being of the partners and the care and social integration of the elderly and disabled (physically or mentally).

Combining private and working life: Impact of the changing patterns of time-use (including work and leisure), work organisation and flexible working hours on quality of life, including of the most vulnerable groups.

Conditions of work: Impact of employment precariousness and low-paid jobs on people's attitudes, values and social behaviour, in particular of the youth.

Societal dimensions of lifestyles: Identification of the main features which characterise current lifestyles and analysis of their impact on quality of life and health, including of the most vulnerable groups in society.

New patterns of social life and socialisation: Understanding new patterns of social life and forms of socialisation, especially of children, adolescents, youth and people living alone, in relation to changes in the organisation of society, in values, attitudes, beliefs and meanings, as well as in the use of technologies and in the spatial organisation of urban areas.

Changes in consumption: Changes in consumption patterns and cultures of contemporary societies, how they have developed, and their impact on society; outlook for the future.

Changing impact of business cultures: Impact of business cultures in society and the role of corporate social responsibility in this.

Area 3. Cultural interactions in an international perspective

Research is needed to understand how European societies will develop in a context of increasingly different cultural backgrounds. In particular, the role of cultural interactions in the processes that might lead to acceptance and social integration or to intolerance, racism and xenophobia should be addressed. Research should also address the "crises of the multicultural society", and

provide insights on how European societies can reconcile cultural differences and mutual respect.

Research topics could include:

Cultural interactions: Historical migration of peoples into Europe, and related transport of language, traditions and religion practices, values and beliefs.

Multiculturalism and parallel societies: Comparative analysis of different multicultural societies and impact of the development of “parallel societies” within host societies.

Changing perceptions of cultural differences in European societies: The relation of the mixing of cultures, religions, values, beliefs and norms of behaviour to changes in phenomena such as racism, intolerance, xenophobia, use of violence and affirmation of exclusive cultural traditions.

Coexistence of different cultural identities: Cultural, historical, political, social, educational and economic factors which facilitate or inhibit the peaceful coexistence of different cultures.

Activity 4: Europe in the World

Specific Programme

The aim is to understand changing interactions and interdependencies between world regions and their implications for the regions concerned, especially for Europe, and the related issue of addressing emerging threats and risks in a world context and their connection to human rights, freedoms and well-being. The research will involve two related tracks:

- Flows of trade, finance, investment, migration and their impact; uneven development, poverty and sustainability; economic and political relations and global governance. This will explore cultural interactions including media and religions and distinctive non-European approaches.
- Conflicts, their causes and resolution; the relation between security and destabilising factors such as poverty, crime, environmental degradation and resource scarcity; terrorism, its causes and consequences; security-related policies and perceptions of insecurity and civil-military relations.

In both, Europe’s role in the world, the development of multilateralism and international law, the promotion of democracy and fundamental rights including different notions of these, and Europe as seen from outside, will be addressed.

Rationale

Global interactions and interdependencies are taking different and sometimes new forms, and have major impacts on the economy, other parts of society, institutions and security in Europe and in the rest of the world. At the same time, European countries and especially the European Union are not only reacting to events, but actively changing their role in world affairs.

The changing interactions and interdependencies between world regions and the rise of new global players are giving rise to major economic, political, institutional, cultural and social challenges to the current international system. At the same time, new geopolitical borders, conflicts and threats are also emerging, showing that global interdependence and global stability may not be automatically related. An improved knowledge base is needed to identify and tackle these issues.

Research under this theme should improve our understanding of how interactions and interdependencies are developing and changing and why conflicts and new threats are emerging. It should also analyse the implications for the regions concerned, particularly for Europe, as well as for the global economy, institutions, and for other societal and cultural developments.

Considering the global approach of this research theme, the participation of teams from third countries is particularly relevant. Also, the inclusion of non-European perspectives, through research undertaken by non-Europeans, on the topics detailed below is encouraged where relevant.

Contributions from research focusing on particular regions (e.g. in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Mediterranean) are also welcomed, particularly when they address interrelations with other regions.

Area 1. Interactions and interdependences between world regions and their implications

The main aim is to understand better the driving forces of global interactions and interdependencies, as well as the differential impacts of increased global interdependence on different regions (and especially for Europe), economic sectors and social groups, including uneven development and poverty.

Research topics could include:

Development of frameworks and rules for international interactions: global governance, public-private relations, democratic legitimacy of international institutions, changing hierarchies of influence in setting rules.

Changing interactions between regions of the world and their causes: including changes in flows of trade, finance, direct investment, natural resources, migration and their interrelations; how globalisation is developing in various fields; the role of multinational companies.

Impacts of changing globalisation: on the role of different regions and countries in the world, on degrees of freedom for policy, on poverty, “brain gain” and “brain drain”, cultural heritage, gender relations.

Uneven development and its causes in historical and comparative perspective: influence of investment, trade, financial relations, international aid; influence of colonial, post-colonial and other relations.

Development paths: notions of development including human development and their relation with economic development; capacity building across countries and social groups; different paths towards sustainable development.

Cross-cultural interactions, tensions and communication across world regions: different attitudes and values in relation to role of state, gender relations, work, nature; emergence of religious fundamentalism and dialogue; construction of images of ‘the other’.

Area 2. Threats, conflicts and human rights

The objective is to understand better the emergence and perceptions of threats, identify the roots and dynamics of violent conflicts, how the rule of law has developed, and how to enhance Europe’s capacity to play a role in conflict prevention and resolution, and the further development of human rights.

Research topics could include:

Root causes of violent conflicts across and within countries: the role of state failure, hegemonic politics over minorities and opposition groups, corruption, organised crime, resource scarcity.

Causes and consequences of terrorism: terrorism and other forms of political violence in the context of inter- and intra-state conflicts; home-grown terrorism and trans-national networks.

Perceptions of insecurity and fears and their relations to conflicts: definition of threats across countries, policy areas and over time; relation with response options.

Conflict de-escalation, transformation, reconciliation: peace-making processes, mediation, disarmament, distributive issues, the role of and impacts on women and children, emergence of cooperation across borders.

Articulation of rule of law at national, European and international levels: role of international courts; developments of criminal justice and humanitarian law; civil-military relations and related accountability issues.

Role of the EU and others in promoting democracy and human rights: consistency between internal and external standards, e.g. binding or non binding status of human rights; security and fundamental rights aspects of tackling trafficking, terrorism and other crimes; ‘promoting’ vs. ‘exporting’ democracy.

Area 3. Europe's changing role in the world

The objective is to improve the understanding of the changing role of Europe in world affairs including the current shift of the EU from being mainly an economic power to an increasingly strategic role in tackling regional and global challenges and threats; how Europe is seen by people outside Europe; the implications of the above for Europe and for its relations with other regions and countries.

Research topics could include:

Multilateralism and its perspectives: the role of the EU and its member states in international institutions; accountability and effectiveness of such institutions; multilateralism and bilateral relations including transatlantic relations, and neighbourhood policy.

Europe as a world power: changing notions of the EU as a 'civilian' or other type of power, relations between economic external policy and strategic foreign policy, geopolitics.

Europe seen from outside: how Europe and the EU are seen by people, elites, governments, media and popular culture from outside Europe; implications for policy and inter-cultural dialogue.

Activity 5: The Citizen in the European Union

Specific Programme

In the context of the future development of the EU, the aim is to improve understanding of, first, the issues involved in achieving a sense of democratic "ownership" and active participation by citizens as well as effective and democratic governance, and, second, Europe's diversities and commonalities in terms of culture, institutions, law, history, languages and values. The research will address:

- Participation (including of youth), representation, accountability and legitimacy; the European public sphere, media and democracy; various forms of governance in the EU and policy processes; the role of civil society; citizenship and rights; and related values of the population.
- European diversities and commonalities, including their historical origins and evolution; differences in institutions (including norms, practices, laws); cultural heritage; various visions and perspectives for European integration including the views of the populations; identities; approaches to multiple coexisting cultures; the role of language, the arts and religions; attitudes and values.

Rationale

The European Union has often been associated with democratic consolidation and fundamental rights. Examples are the political rise of the European Parliament since its direct election, the recognition of the regional reality through the Committee of the Regions, and enlargements which have served as tools for enhancing or consolidating democratic processes and citizens' rights in applicant States. At the same time, critics suggest that the European Union is still an elitist project and that lot remains to be done to 'democratise' it. The debate on the Constitutional Treaty recently pointed to both the importance and the challenges related to enhancing democratic accountability and citizens' involvement in the EU.

At the same time, the development of the EU has involved the bringing together of countries and regions with a rich diversity - as well as commonalities - of cultures, historical experiences and narratives, and institutional settings. The further development of the EU will benefit tremendously from a deeper understanding of these diversities and commonalities.

It is vital to conduct interdisciplinary research to address the issues involved in achieving a sense of democratic "ownership" and active citizens participation as well as to foster effective and democratic governance and better understand and harvest from Europe's diversity and commonalities.

Area 1. Participation, Citizenship and Governance in Europe

Research should concentrate on improving understanding of the issues involved in achieving a sense of democratic "ownership" and reflecting upon contemporary definitions, perceptions and practices of citizenship in the context of the European Union. The participation and representation of citizens in the context of the European Union including the perspectives of youth, women, and minorities is important to incorporate.

Research topics could include:

Democratic 'ownership' and participation: participatory mechanisms; role of associations, civil society, non-governmental organizations, political parties, trade unions; social dialogue; factors leading to (non) participation; parity democracy.

Democratic practices and governance: accountability and legitimacy; attitudes towards politics; electoral abstention; democracy at the supranational level; EU constitutionalisation processes; enlargement and the EU; economic governance and responsibility.

Democracy, the European public sphere and the media: conditions for their interrelated development in contemporary Europe.

Reassessing citizenship within the context of the European Union: 'European' citizenship; the "European social model" and citizenship; and citizens' perceptions and positions, especially young people, women and minorities.

Citizenship and rights: social rights and/versus political rights; rights of the citizen and non-citizen; trafficking of human beings and human rights; gender aspects of human rights.

Citizenship, social capital and education: formal and informal education and social capital as related to active citizenship and participation in public debate.

Citizenship, belonging and social inclusion: in relation to gender, age, ethnic and cultural groups, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

Area 2. Diversities and Commonalities in Europe

Research needs to address the European Union's diversities and commonalities in cultures (and institutions), bringing together a wide range of social science and humanities disciplines, to assess their influence on the creation of the current European societies as well as the various visions and perspectives for European integration including the views of diverse populations and a gender perspective.

Research topics could include:

Histories and approaches to multiple coexisting cultures: histories of European cultures; critical assessment of multiculturalism; visions and perspectives for European integration including the views of the citizens/non-citizens.

Culture heritage in the context of European diversities and commonalities: The role of European cultural heritage in European integration, including the events, symbols, values and collective or individual actors that have played a role in this context.

Institutions: differences and commonalities in institutions within Europe, (including norms, practices, and laws), and their role in European integration as well as the nature of this integration; the development of European values and their incorporation in institutions; perspectives for future integration in this context.

Definitions and perceptions of identities: reassessing conceptualisations of identity; identity as an inclusive and/or exclusive notion; gender, ethnicity and identity; space, borders and identity.

Language, the arts and religions - bridging gaps between people: societal, political and historical role and specificity of contemporary arts, literature, philosophy, history, religion and language in bridging gaps between people.

Differences and commonalities in attitudes, values, knowledge and practices in European cultures: including particular sections of society such as young people, minorities and socially excluded groups.

Role of media and popular culture in Europe: contemporary cultural critique in this context; media convergence; media ethics; journalism issues; the role of popular culture as well as that of the creative industries.

Activity 6: Socio-economic and scientific indicators

Specific programme

With a view to improving the use of indicators in policy, the aim is to develop a more profound understanding of their use in policy development and implementation and to propose improvements in indicators and methods for their use. The research will address:

- How indicators are used in policy objectives, policy development and implementation, in a variety of fields and from macro to micro levels, the adequacy of existing indicators and their use, and proposals for new indicators and sets of indicators.
- How evidence-based policy might be better supported by indicators and methods for their use; indicators for policy with multiple objectives, for policy coordination and for regulation; support by official statistics for such indicators.
- Use of indicators and related approaches for evaluation of research programmes including impact assessment.

Rationale

The European Union, its Member States and regions are all involved in policy making. Policy should not be driven solely by indicators but it should be evidence based and make appropriate use of quantitative and qualitative indicators and analytical methods. To do this indicators are needed that really address the policy issues in question. Research under this topic should aim to both improve the indicators made available to policy makers and the ways that they are used by them.

One aspect of this research is to address the new and existing fields where appropriate indicators are not available and to help to lay the foundations making it possible to produce the necessary indicators in an efficient and cost and burden effective way. Another is to address how indicators are used in policy and to propose ways of improving such use. The production of socio-economic and scientific indicators is also heavily dependent on the availability of high quality,

timely, complete and comparable official statistics. Work under this activity should concentrate on finding better ways of using as well as producing statistics and indicators and of improving all dimensions of their quality rather than on actually producing new datasets.

This research activity will also look at how research programmes are evaluated. Both ex ante and ex post evaluations play an increasingly important role in providing both the justification and the accountability for publicly-funded research activities while supporting the design of new proposals. Thus research programme evaluation faces new challenges which require the development of new tools and approaches and in the Community context there is a requirement for evaluation in general to be better integrated with all aspects of the policy-making cycle and for research evaluation to address the broad policy questions which arise from major policy initiatives.

Area 1. How indicators are used

The underlying objective of this research is to improve policy by use of indicators and evidence based methods.

Research topics could include:

Current use of indicators in policy: How indicators are currently used for policy, the problems associated with this, and how better use can be made of them, the ways that indicators are used in the different phases of policy work, from defining policy needs and objectives through to evaluating policies and their impact.

How to make it easier for policy makers to use indicators: Including, how to present indicators appropriately, the interpretation of large and complex sets of indicators accessing large datasets, linking different datasets and situations where data are dispersed across different repositories, and policy use of indicators in conjunction with decision support systems, modelling, econometrics or other advanced methods.

How to ensure that indicators and their use lead to more reliable and efficient decision making: Including making sure that only the most appropriate indicators are used with the best analytical methods, using different sets of data together, getting the correct balance between additional data collection and analysis of existing information; finding the right balance between using indicators at macro, meso and micro levels, using indicators in forecasting, and the using them for policy with multiple objectives and for co-ordinating policies.

Area 2. Needs for new, improved and more appropriate indicators

Use of indicators for policy can be complicated by the fact that some of the indicators currently available are inadequate or inappropriate for policy use. They may be of poor quality and sometimes they do not adequately address the questions that need to be answered but reflect what is already available or easy

to obtain. Research is needed into new and improved indicators to adequately address certain policy issues in key policy areas.

Research topics could include:

Improved ways of measuring both the potential for and impact of policies: The direct and indirect impact of key policies, and how to identify what factors could and do contribute to any such impact. A key area is the assessment of the contribution of R&D and other aspects of the innovation system to growth, competitiveness, employment, sustainability, the environment and quality of life, aiming to support the formulation and implementation of better policy. The design indicators and methodologies which take into account a variety of different factors be they economic, systemic, institutional, historical, geographical, cultural or sector specific.

Areas for new or improved indicators: Identification of the areas where new and improved indicators are needed to support policy. Including the many fields where only highly or inappropriately aggregated data are available, or where information on important new sectors of the economy such as the service and new technology based industries are not available, SMEs, mobility and migration, crime, education, or many others.

Methodological issues: Generic methodological problems relating to indicators, as well as specific methodological issues affecting individual sets of indicators.

Area 3. Provision of underlying official statistics

Research is needed on official statistics to guarantee that there are solid foundations for indicators for policy. This research may look at problems associated with existing official statistics but can also address needs for new official statistics.

Research topics could include:

Research on broad statistics issues: Ways of improving the collection and dissemination of official statistics; improving their quality, comparability, timeliness, availability and relevance for policy making, concentrating on statistics for EU policies. Improving and consolidating the underlying statistical, institutional, technical and methodological frameworks. Improving the management of confidentiality in respect to the duty of transparency.

Specific statistics issues: Enhancing the comparability of data and indicators by appropriate harmonisation and standardisation, taking into account the diversity of implementation required by different cultural and legislative contexts. Addressing gaps in data coverage by combining data from different sources and of different natures; methods to expand coverage to smaller regional units and sub-threshold and rare events. Streamlining the statistical process including novel methods for the entire life cycle of statistical production. Supporting quality in its widest sense including coverage, timeliness, comparability, confidentiality vs. usability, relevance and reliability. Identifying the best ways of making

statistical data accessible, usable and of presenting them clearly, including enhancing access to data and metadata as well as their production.

Area 4. Use of indicators and related approaches for the evaluation of research programmes

Increased attention is being paid to programme evaluation and ex ante impact assessment and the contribution these can make to public policy and decision-making together with more effective and efficient public sector interventions. There is a need for a better understanding of the ways in which EU research policies and activities can and have contributed towards high-level goals as well as those specific to the individual interventions. Research in this field will focus on methods, notably involving quantitative and qualitative indicators and related analytical techniques, for research programme evaluation including ex ante impact assessment.

Research activities could address one or a number of the following topics.

Modelling and network analysis: the collection, manipulation and analysis of complex data for modelling the performance of research systems, including research exploitation, aiming at a better understanding of EU research impacts; analysis of the role, function and impact of types of networks resulting from EU research and related policies, including those for policy, research and research exploitation.

New methods and indicators: analysis of the long-term impacts of EU research and related policies, including development of appropriate techniques; innovative methods for ex ante impact assessment including cost utility analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, social cost benefit analysis; further development and innovative use of science, technology and innovation indicators, including bibliometrics and patent indicators, for assessing impacts of EU research programmes; the impact of different organisational structures for designing, contracting and implementing evaluations including the effective delivery and take-up of evaluation results.

Additionality: analysis of behavioural additionalities and the structuring impacts of EU research; evidence-based analysis of the European Value Added of EU research and related policies.

Human resources: the development of scientific human resources as a result of EU research and related policies.

Activity 7: Foresight Activities

Specific Programme

The aim is to provide national, regional and Community policy-makers with foresight knowledge for the early identification of long term challenges and areas of common interest that can help them formulate policy. Four types of activities will be covered:

- Wide socio-economic foresight on a limited number of key challenges and opportunities for the EU, exploring issues such as the future and implications of ageing, migration, globalisation of knowledge, changes in crime and major risks.
- More focused thematic foresight on the developments in emerging research domains or those cutting across existing domains, as well as on the future of scientific disciplines.
- Foresight on research systems and policies in Europe and on the future of key actors involved.
- Mutual learning and co-operation between national and/or regional foresight initiatives; co-operation between EU, third country and international foresight initiatives.

Rationale

A strong European research and innovation area needs a prospective vision of sustainability, of socio-economic developments. Foresight can assist in identifying today's research and innovation priorities in support of the Lisbon strategy concerning growth, employment and competitiveness. Foresight can inform European decision makers on prospective science and technology policy issues. Foresight can therefore contribute to the preparation of the future research framework programme.

Foresight in the Social Sciences and Humanities research theme will study subjects relevant at European-wide or world-wide scale by prospective studies on science, technology, and innovation related themes, and support mutual learning and co-operation in foresight.

Area 1. Early identification of long term challenges in science, technology, and innovation

Science and technology and innovation have a high impact on the future of the EU as indicated in the Lisbon agenda. This area will carry out studies in order to identify early long term challenges and opportunities for the socio-economic dimensions of Europe's future in relation to science and technology.

Research topics could include:

Depletion of natural resources: e.g., socio-economic challenges to/from global environmental change, the tensions from accelerated consumption of scarce resources like energy, water and raw materials, the role of science and technology in the balanced sustainable development;

S&T industries and business systems: e.g., Europe's competitive industrial renewal including its service industries, dynamics of new industries in ICT, nano-materials, service management and engineering, biotechnologies in food and health;

Security and Safety issues: e.g., vulnerability to natural or human caused disasters of technology dependent societies, interaction between internal safety and external security factors, threats perception and risk preparedness;

Health prospects: e.g., opportunities and threats derived from growing life expectancy and an ageing population, S&T prospects in health services developments; a sustainable knowledge-based bio-economy for human health.

Area 2. Focused thematic foresight

Thematic foresight activities will focus on developments in emerging research domains or on those cutting across existing S&T domains, as well as on the future of scientific disciplines.

Research topics could include:

New fields of science and technology e.g., which disciplinary developments and apparent convergences are pointing to new RTD fields;

Global food issues: e.g., food security in its various aspects, bio-diversity preservation and the food chain, implications of climatic change, genetic engineering;

Rural development: e.g., which advances in S&T, education and innovation can foster sustained development in rural areas;

Greening of the transport system: e.g., what are the likely roles to be played by bio-fuels, fuel-cells, and the integration of renewable energies with transport systems.

Area 3. Research systems and research policies in Europe

These Foresight activities explore the long-term issues and factors influencing the future of European research systems. The studies will focus on the future of their architectures, interactions, drivers of change and key actors involved.

Research topics could include:

The future of the European Research Area (ERA): e.g., dynamics and barriers for emergence of ERA between European and national research funding, dynamics of new European funding instruments and the role of multinational firms and philanthropic funding, optimal synergies with innovation and education;

Human resources in science and technology: e.g., demographic trends, ageing, and migration flows as well as on the attractiveness and capabilities of the education systems and labour markets; global sourcing for researchers;

The prospective role of Emerging Economies: e.g., prospective assessment of developments, opportunities and EU's capabilities, strategic cooperation and competition, evolution and preparedness of the EU RTDI systems;

Universities: e.g., identification of their role and functions in training and research in the knowledge society, the value of certification, universalism/specialisations in a growing service economy, the forms of operation, management and ownership/control.

Area 4. Mutual learning and co-operation

These activities will concentrate both on mutual learning and co-operation between national and/or regional foresight initiatives, their sponsors and practitioners and co-operation between EU Member States, third countries and international organisations.

In several Member States Foresight programmes and initiatives have been set up to explore issues relevant to policy design needs. In order to provide added value to those activities at the European level, a platform for co-operation and the exchange of experiences and results will be established.

The European Foresight platform will continue to support the exchange of foresight knowledge.