

## SCIENCE POLICY IN THE HUMANITIES

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### Abstract

*This article deals with selected problems of science policy in the humanities and social sciences. The problems of the Czech research (connected with the transformation changes, production of knowledge, evaluation, financing), and the position of the humanities and social sciences in a constituting European research area in general, are discussed in detail. The project HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area), the solution of which has been supported by the 6th framework programme of the European Union, is described in this context.*

Research in the humanities and social sciences constitutes an important component of overall learning, known to contribute to the task of directing human activities when coping with social problems, while helping to shape a vision of our future as well as the values on which our life is grounded and which affect our personal and social behaviour. The evaluation and the analysis of the Czech research in the social and economic sciences and humanities, of course, has to respect the specific nature of a complicated historical development and its current public perception.

At the European level, similar correlations manifest themselves, and, moreover, an increasingly important role is played by the fact that the European civilisation strives to become a knowledge-based society. In this process, the increasingly extensive access to information and knowledge of all kinds is more and more relevant, especially as regards the knowledge related to complex social, political and economic processes affecting behaviour and individual lives of European citizens.

The European Union intends to strengthen its standing in a globalising world (the so-called Lisboa process concentrates especially on the economic competitiveness). European society therefore needs to increase its

competitiveness in its different aspects, and this requires an active approach on the part of its citizens, seeking to solve problems at the European, national, and regional levels. The citizens will be demanded to become active actors in the European society, contributing to its development, while respecting cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences. Without doubt, an important role will also be played by the humanities – together with a constant educational activity and lifelong educational doings of the citizens.

### **1. Transformation changes in social sciences and the humanities in the Czech Republic**

After 1989, the sphere of social sciences and the humanities faced the goal of implementing a far-reaching and multi-faceted transformation of these branches in terms of their ideas and methodological focus, their social application and inner structure. In that sense, during the 1990s the social sciences in the Czech Republic passed through a truly landmark period, characterised by a massive personnel, institutional and cognitive restructuring. The last mentioned dimension of this reorganization process has continued unabated to the present time, as new problems keep emerging in the humanities and social sciences throughout the transformation of the whole society. In 2003, according to the Yearbook of Statistics <sup>1</sup>, 1 533 employees had full time contracts in the area of social sciences <sup>2</sup> (737 of them were women); 1 850 (FTE) employees had full time contracts in the area of the humanities <sup>3</sup> (878 of them were women). People working in the area of social sciences and the humanities make up 12 per cent of all people employed in the area of science, research and development in the Czech Republic; this number is slightly below the bottom bound data for countries of the European Union –

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<sup>1</sup> Research and Development Indicators in 2003, Czech Statistical Office, Prague 2004, p. 23

<sup>2</sup> The following disciplines were included among social science: psychology, economy, law, sociology, education and practice, anthropology, ethnography, demography, political science, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The following disciplines were included among the humanities: history, linguistics, philosophy, sciences of art, theology, etc.

15,<sup>4</sup> where the number of people working in the humanities and social sciences is about 20 per cent in most countries. The comparison between the situation in 2002 and 2003 reveals both absolute and percentage accrual of the FTE personnel in the humanities – this holds true both for the accrual of the overall number and the number of women. The participation of women in social sciences and the humanities is, in long-term numbers, roughly 50 per cent.

The qualifying structure in the humanities and social sciences is favourable (see Tab. 1); 30,5 per cent of people working in the humanities finished their PhD. studies (in social sciences the number is even higher: 35,2 per cent). Also the number of employees with university degrees is high: both in overall numbers and in case of women.

In terms of expenses, 3,2 per cent of the overall spending on research and development in the Czech Republic was expanded in the humanities in 2003 (30 per cent accrual in comparison with 2002); in social sciences it was 2,7 per cent (12 per cent per cent accrual in comparison with 2002).

Research in the area of the humanities and socio-economic sciences is largely concentrated at the Academy of Sciences (and in addition to the universities). The original staff of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic was reduced by more than a half, with a large-scale personnel turnaround (as much as three quarters of its employees have been replaced)<sup>5</sup> in the composition of research teams at its institutes working in the field of the humanities and social sciences. Departments and research tasks, strongly accountable to the totalitarian regime and its ideology, were disbanded immediately at the beginning of 1990. In those departments in the area of the humanities and social sciences, where genuine research had not been

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<sup>4</sup> For detailed information see Simona Frank: R & D personnel in the EU. Statistics in focus, Science and Technology No. 3, 2005, Eurostat, Table 3.

<sup>5</sup> A detailed analysis of the transformation of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic can be found in: Provaznik, St., Filacek, A., Krizova-Frydova, E., Loudin, J., Machleidt, P.: Transformation of Science and Research in the Czech Republic (in Czech). Filosofia, Prague 1998

compromised in the past by ideological schemes, only research tasks were changed and the research staffs were modified.

At present, the Academy's research personnel in the humanities and social sciences accounts for 18.4 per cent of the total number of all researchers working at the Academy of Sciences; in case of the humanities it was 779 FTE employees in the area of research in 2003<sup>6</sup> – 546 of them were researchers (14,4 per cent of all researchers). The participation of women in research in the area of humanities within the Academy of Sciences is about 30 per cent. In terms of expenditures, the share of this area of research is roughly 17 per cent of the overall budget of the Academy of Sciences. The consistent transformational changes have contributed to the fact that the humanities and social sciences at the Academy of Sciences now have their own key, long-term and coherent research programme resulting from consensual attitudes expressed by the scientists from their perception of social priorities.

If we analyse the transformation period of the development of the Czech science in the 1990's, we may say that<sup>7</sup> after the radical reduction of government funds into research in the early 1990's, the Czech Republic's science and research community did not resort to a defensive "survival strategy", but decided to take up public demands addressed to science together with the internationally recognised standards of evaluation of the quality of research. Following on from there, changes were made in re-orienting and restructuring research and in reducing substandard sections of the country's research potential which proved to be unable to adjust themselves sufficiently to the new conditions. Many researchers experienced the radical application of the new evaluation criteria as a shock, but a positive attitude to this step soon turned out to be a key to the success of the entire transformation of the Czech research institutions. All the signs suggest that a positive approach to evaluation and active participation in the transformation of the research

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<sup>6</sup> More detailed information can be found in the Annual Report of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, see [http://www.cas.cz/cz/vz/2003/priloha\\_1.html](http://www.cas.cz/cz/vz/2003/priloha_1.html).

<sup>7</sup> This fact is recognized even in the international comparative studies, see for example Weingart, P.: *Self-Conception, Strategies of Transformation, and Moods in Coping*. In: Mayntz, R., Schimank, U., Weingart, P. (eds.) *East European Academies in Transition*. Kluwer Publ. Dordrecht 1998.

institutions is a sound foundation for an optimistic outlook for final results of the transformation of the Czech research sector.

## **2. New trends in the production of knowledge and the role of basic research**

The changing status of science and knowledge is internally connected to the changing structure and dynamic of knowledge itself. It is often discussed in terms of the new social functions of science (Provazník<sup>8</sup>) and a new mode of knowledge production (e.g. M. Gibbons et al.<sup>9</sup>). New mode of knowledge reflects the intellectual, social, economic and cultural interests: it is organized with respect to practical social ends resulting from specific needs of a given social environment. From the very beginning, it is determined by the attempt at solving practical problems, while respecting cultural values and socially relevant interests. This approach to knowledge opens up a large space for social sciences and the humanities as regards the cooperation with research in the area of natural and technical sciences.

In opposite to earlier forms of knowledge, described as academic and disciplinary, today's knowledge is becoming transdisciplinary, contextual – concerning the mode of its formation, its subject matter and the actual impact on the functioning of society. The knowledge outcomes are often striven with a view to the solution of future problems and the anticipation of future applications and innovations. This establishes new relations between basic and applied research – and between research orientation pursued in natural sciences, technical sciences, or oriented towards innovation – and the research realized in social sciences. The significance of social sciences and the humanities is then growing, since in shaping so-called knowledge economy and knowledge society, it is necessary to come to understand new contexts and

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<sup>8</sup> New aspects in the functioning of science with respect to democracy and the production of innovations are discussed in detail in Provazník, St. Social function of science. *Theory of Science V (XVIII)*, 1996, No. 1-2, pp. 59-154 (in Czech).

<sup>9</sup> Gibbons, M. et al.: *Production of Knowledge – The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. Sage, London 1994.

conditions of human existence, and grasp possible consequences of our action (including negative effects of the launching of new technologies).

At this point, it is necessary to mention so-called *tacit knowledge* (Lundvall, Borrás<sup>10</sup>), which is especially important in the humanities and social scientific research. The significance of this knowledge, which inheres in the specific knowledge of the object, in the knowledge about the connections of the working process, and is based both on the specific experience of the research worker, and on the flexible choice of a research strategy, and on the selective data interpretation, is increasing nowadays. This is caused especially by the fact that the spread of a new information technology, by implication, increases the number of available data and information and thus it is necessary to make a continuous erudite selection, which must be carried out by the specialists. New information and communication technologies become basic parts of the equipment of the research infrastructure in the humanities, in libraries, archives, museums, depositories, etc. Frequently only after mastering and implementing a new technique, the newly codified scientific and technological knowledge becomes applicable and available to potential users. The problems with tacit knowledge trajectory are one of the most central causes of long-term technological differences among individual regions and countries. From the growing significance of tacit knowledge it follows that it needs to be pursued with the increase in competence and lifelong education.

Thus, it is generally valid for the support of innovation processes and the commercial applicability, that even from a commercial perspective, when applied to research, development and technological innovations, it is useful to support basic scientific research, even if it did not create any immediate economic profit, as it always fulfils important cultural, civilisation or political functions, namely, for example, in terms of the advancement of the educational and cultural level of people, in health care, environment protection, etc. From this viewpoint, basic research in the humanities and social sciences is irreplaceable in a modern knowledge society. It follows not only from the general cultural and social significance of these sciences for a

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<sup>10</sup> Lundvall, B.-A., Borrás, S.: The globalising learning economy: Implications for innovation policy. DG Science, Research and Development, EC 1997.

specific national, linguistic, ethnic or differently delimited community (e.g. basic research in terms of its history, culture, language, etc.), but also from its significant socio-economic effect, which is produced especially due to the support of disciplines engaged primarily in economics (survey of socio-economic behaviour of the population for the purposes of the market, utilisation of the knowledge of specific languages and cultures for the purposes of business and international cooperation, high quality design of industrial products, historical and artistic evaluation of sights as economically significant centres of travel industry, etc.).

The fundamental impact of social and economic character, in terms of future maybe the most important one, is the potentiality of scientific research (and not only in the area of social sciences and the humanities) to nurture key skills and capabilities, where so-called tacit knowledge comes into play, which is necessary for the formation and adoption of innovation. Science and research represent, among other things, a way of educating and cultivating highly competent labour force. A society oriented towards production of innovations needs theoretical knowledge, not only in the sense of some codified information, but especially as a „lively“, permanently regenerating system of knowledge and skills, sustained by the community of people unceasingly refining their perception, intelligence, and understanding. No society can afford to underplay the necessity to cultivate its potential talents in the area of research.

In addition, there is a growing interest within the Czech society in the issues of spiritual, philosophical, cultural and ethical nature, in the problems that seem to proceed from a greater appreciation of the actual weight of cultural and moral values and the human dimension in all walks of life. In the domain of the humanities, these issues are connected with an urgent need to restore its domestic cultural-historical traditions, while safeguarding the development of what are seen as unique (irreplaceable) Bohemian studies.

### **3. The problems of evaluation in the humanities**

The significance of evaluating scientific outcomes in the area of the humanities is growing as the results of this evaluation are increasingly projected in the way of financing these disciplines. Lately, we can see a growing pressure of the general public on the social accountability of research in the developed European states. This concept expresses the interest to involve the question of how, and to what social and economic needs and goals it serves, the research works, and what are the concrete merits and benefits from the funds spent on research. In terms of the formation of integrated Europe, the added value both at the regional and national level, as well as the so-called European added value, becomes especially important. There is also a growing pressure on the practical and effective spending of limited public expenses directed to research.

The government authorities in most countries are adapting their conceptions and procedures of their decision-making in the area of science, research and development to this condition. It is apparent both in forming of the science and research policy, in the greater emphasis on its interconnection with the other policies (especially innovation, economic and education policies), and in setting priorities in case of supporting research directions, which are relevant for social and economic needs. The concrete form of the arrangement is different and it proceeds from the practised model of directing research and development; what is a common feature, is the emphasise put on regular assessment of the results of the research programmes and research institutions.

In the conditions of the Czech Republic, the emphasis on the assessment of research institutions and research outcomes has been already present in the formulations of the National Research and Development Policy of the Czech Republic <sup>11</sup>, as well as in the course of the preparation of the National Program

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<sup>11</sup> National Research and Development Policy of the Czech Republic. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Research and Development Council of the Government, Prague 2000; <http://www.vyzkum.cz/index.asp?link=narpol/narpol.eng.html>



of Research and Development<sup>12</sup>. Nowadays, the updated Methodology of the evaluation of research and development<sup>13</sup> in the Czech Republic is finally prepared; this methodology has been used for the whole sphere of the Czech science, research and development, that means that it also has been used in the evaluation of workplaces in the area of the humanities. It was used for the first time in the evaluation of the situation in 2004.

The problem we face in humanities in the above mentioned evaluation is a general utilization of concrete methods (e.g. scientometrics) for comparative purposes among individual research fields, without explicitly taking into account the specificity of evaluation in humanities resulting from predominant or often exclusive orientation of these research fields to a society of one nation or state. First and foremost, in the humanities

- a. There is a clearly demarcated national context (e.g. Bohemian studies are developed in the whole scope only in the Czech Republic, which is their natural „world’s“ centre);
- b. In some discipline we also find inescapable subjectivity of used scientific methods (e.g. sciences of art, literary science);
- c. There is a distinctive difference of the subject matter and methodological procedures from purely objective, nationally and linguistically undifferentiated sciences of nature.

The practice reveals that for the evaluation of research results in the humanities it is necessary to use specific criteria adapted for these disciplines, since many of those evaluation procedures, which are without doubts legitimate in natural, technical and medical sciences, cannot be meaningfully applied to the results of social sciences and the humanities. This holds true especially for the evaluation procedures using scientometric methods. There are also citation indicators from the SSCI a A&HCI databases in these fields, but their ability to be provable is associated with distinctive limitations resulting from the following facts:

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.vyzkum.cz/index.asp?link=npovav/npovav.html>

<sup>13</sup> More detailed description (in Czech) can be found in the document of the Research and Development Council of the Czech Republic:  
[http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx\\_idsekce=9757](http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx_idsekce=9757).

- Databases produced by ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) and Thomson Company are definitely not representative „worldwide“, especially in case of the humanities. These databases are thematically relatively narrow, not providing necessary data for the humanities in Europe. They are also not adjusted to the European standards and, for example, they do not comprise books (monographs, collections of essays), which play an important role in the humanities;
- The low citation level of the Czech production, and the small impact factor of our journals, was numerically influenced by the fact that in the SSCI and A&HCI databases there was an absolute predominance of scientific journals published outside Central and Eastern Europe (more than 95 per cent), where our authors might have had better chances that their work would have found its audience. Furthermore, owing to different conceptual approaches in the 1970's and 1980's – and often ideologically antagonist cognitive paradigms – it may be concluded that there was no possibility to continue in a social scientific research in the conditions of our totalitarian society, and therefore the production of our authors was not cited. Moreover, there was a negative influence of the restriction of scientific intercommunication and practical impossibility to enter into personal scientific contacts;
- The Czech (or formerly Czechoslovak social scientific journals) were – with only a few exceptions (e.g. single issues of the *Journal of Philosophy*, *Sociological Journal*, *Theory of Science*) – published in the Czech, or Slovak, language with a resume in foreign language, which created a distinctive language barrier.

In 2003, there was an initiative of the European Science Foundation, which enabled to set up The European Reference Index for the Humanities<sup>14</sup> (ERIH). It serves mostly European purposes and 17 European countries take part in its setting up. Also the HERA project (discussed later in chapter 5 of this article) plans to help with establishing this database.

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<sup>14</sup> See Kiefer, F., Mustajoki, A., Peyraube, A., Vestergaard, E.: Building a European Citation Index in Humanities. *Sciences de l'homme et de la société*, No. 69, May 2004.

It has been decided that a list of journals meeting normal international academic standards (citation techniques, reference system, etc.) will form a basis of ERIH and that also books (monographs and collections of essays) will be incorporated into the system. Scientific journals will be classified in three categories:

- i. Journals ranked A, i.e. high-ranking international publications that have a very strong reputation among researchers of the particular field in different countries. The journals should be regularly cited all over the world;
- ii. Journals ranked B, i.e. standard international publications that have a good reputation among researchers of the discipline in different countries;
- iii. Journals ranked C, i.e. scientific publications that have an important local significance and which can be occasionally cited outside the publishing country though their main target group is the domestic academic community.

The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic as one of the partners of the HERA project (see chapter five in this text) presented a suggestion (after consulting other publishers of scientific periodicals) that scientific journals published in the Czech Republic should be taken in the European Reference Index for the Humanities. 15 journals in this list were proposed to become journals of A category, about 20 journals of B category and approximately 25 journals of C category, that means the journals of national reach and significance.

In conditions of the Czech Republic, a system of the evaluation of the research results has been introduced by the Research and Development Council of the Czech Republic. The scientific workplaces would be evaluated according to the above mentioned methodology,<sup>15</sup> which will be (for future evaluations) adjusted so that it better include shown scientific outcomes in the

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<sup>15</sup> See the document of the Research and Development Council of the Czech Republic: [http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx\\_idsekce=9757](http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx_idsekce=9757).

area of research carried out in the humanities. The practice in the humanities reveals that

1. the outcomes of the scientific work are to be judged with regard to their quality and gains, not only to quantity;
2. scientometric data can only be one of the bases for evaluating workplaces;
3. the evaluation system should always include peer-review methods or international panels of specialists concentrating on comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes;<sup>16</sup>
4. the quantitative evaluation of the publication activity cannot mechanically provide an insight into the quality of the research work; it can only serve as one of the starting points for evaluating research workplaces, which can signal either exceptionally high or low productivity of a workplace;
5. the evaluation system based on classification on points, which would become a reason for hunting points, would be counterproductive (in preferring quantity to quality) in its consequences.

The Academy of Sciences therefore suggested to include following evaluative and accountable results into the future system of the evaluation of workplaces, which will be implemented by the Research and Development Council of the Czech Republic on the bases of existing databases of research results:

1. Scientific monographs published, or in print, abroad;
2. Scientific monographs published, or in print, in domestic publishing houses, and scientific monographs published in internal editions of the institutes;
3. Scientific work published, or in print, in reviewed foreign and domestic scientific journals or collective volumes;

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<sup>16</sup> This way of evaluation has been cyclically used in the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic; the last evaluation can be found [http://www.cas.cz/cz/vz\\_vysledky.htm](http://www.cas.cz/cz/vz_vysledky.htm) (in Czech)

4. Scientific work (including collection of essays) published, or in print, in other foreign and national scientific journals or collective volumes, and scientific monographs published in internal editions of the institutes;
5. Expertise, analysis (social, political, legal, etc.), database and data archives, text-based specialist databases on the Internet, CD ROM, etc.;

In the humanities, it is also necessary to include other types of scientific work such as a monograph and a primary work:

- a) a dictionary as a unit;
- b) a critical commented edition of an important work (including demanding translations requiring self-contained professional commentary).

After the evaluation made in the years 1992-93, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic introduced the first cycle of its regular evaluations between 1994 and 1996<sup>17</sup>, with the second cycle coming in the years 2000-2001<sup>18</sup>, and the third cycle in 2004.

We may state that during these evaluating cycles, all evaluating commissions (including the commission for the humanities) proceeded with detailed knowledge of the subjects under review, frequently being more demanding than the foreign experts. Neither did they shirk their responsibility, sometimes even lowering the resultant level of their judgements passed over some of the research projects. The fact that – in spite of that – the research projects of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic were still classified – on a proposed scale of five – as above-average (finishing in the range of the first two grades on a scale of five) is perceived by the Academic Council primarily as reflecting the following circumstances:

- a) The Academy of Sciences itself has introduced a system of external independent periodic evaluation, while three evaluations have been held since 1993. Proceeding from their results, below-average research in the Academy

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<sup>17</sup> See description in Jeník, J.: Quality Assessment of Research in a Multi-spectral National Institution. In: Pačes, V., Pivec, L., Teich, A., H. (Eds.): Science Evaluation and Its Management, IOS Press, Ohmsha, NATO Science Series, Vol. 28, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> For more information (in Czech) see <http://www.cas.cz/cz/News/hodnoceni.htm>

was terminated or substantially curtailed; at the same time, some institutes were abolished <sup>19</sup>,

b) Ongoing evaluation at all levels (including award of diplomas to scientists) constitutes an integral part of managerial work, encompassing also a differentiated manner of allocating funds to institutes and – inside the institutes – to individual research teams.

As for fund allocations from the state budget, we may note that the evaluations made in the years 2000-2001 yielded sufficient information on the scientific performance of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic displayed since their previous evaluations, providing the Academic Council with a topical yardstick for future differentiated allocation of institutional resources to individual institutes. Evaluation results were first taken into account in budgeting for 2002, and since then they substantially affect especially the accrual of expenses directed to science in the evaluated workplaces.

#### **4. Humanities in the European Research Area**

The statement that the European research area would be incomplete without social sciences and the humanities sounds naturally and clearly; however, the present practical implementation of the ERA does not provide satisfactory possibilities for this kind of research. It is due to the fact that research has its own specific features, practices, procedures and effects in this area <sup>20</sup>, from which we can draw following insights:

- A. The humanities are dealing with phenomena and process generally bearing on the human existence and thus, they should be universally engaged in the development of the general cognition of the human being. It still holds true that this kind of research is ultimately dependent on national financial resources (much more than, for example, the

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<sup>19</sup> In 1993, 18 scientific centres and four service facilities were abolished, and the number of personnel in the Academy of Sciences was reduced significantly as compared with 1989; this reduction was the highest in the humanities and social sciences.

<sup>20</sup> The conference held in Copenhagen (3.-4.10. 2002) „Humanities – Essential Research for Europe“, was devoted to the problems of research in social sciences and the humanities.

research in natural science or in technology, which is supported, to a much greater extent, by private resources of business sector, which results in the fact that national priorities and national research programmes are playing the most decisive role;

- B. Social sciences and the humanities comprise a great number of specialities and various disciplines, which are not so closely interconnected as the disciplines in natural or technical sciences. Moreover, they are strongly embedded in the national research traditions, and last but not least, in national language and culture. This naturally limits the sharing and exchange of the research outcomes and knowledge;
- C. The consequence of above-mentioned attributes is the fact that the concepts, such as coordination, cooperation, concentration, integration, or excellence, do not have a shared and uniform meaning in social sciences and the humanities. Further development will be necessary so that the concepts could be effectively and naturally implemented into national systems of social scientific research and, in consequence, improve the quality of research in the ERA.

The statistical analyses reveal<sup>21</sup> that Europe is substantially lagging behind as regards the expenses directed to R&D, both in absolute values and as a share of GDP. The European Union recommended (and is active in this respect) that till 2010 the European Union should achieve an average (in the EU member states) 3 per cent proportion (of GDP) of expenses directed to R&D. Recently, this average value was 1,93 per cent (in 1999 and 2000). The highest expenses are shown in Sweden (3,78 per cent), the lowest in Greece (0,68 per cent). The expenses in the Czech Republic are very close to the expenses in Ireland (1,21 per cent). Comparative data for the United states are: 2,69 per cent; for Japan – 2,98 per cent (source of the data – DG Research EU – Key figures 2003).

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<sup>21</sup> Towards a European Research Area. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. European Commission, January 2000.

This falling behind in the expenses directed to R&D is naturally evident also in the area of the humanities. One of the main reasons in case of the Czech Republic is the insufficient financial motivation of young scientists to continue their careers in research. This goes hand in hand with the overall insufficient financial backup. It is a crucial problem of further development of the humanities for two main reasons. First – there is no material motivation of employees with the highest qualification to continue their careers in the area of research (and for this reason only those who do not want to work in private sector continue to work in research); second – with the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union the last administrative obstacles for qualified people ended and they could find jobs within the European Union. The so-called brain drain is one of the topics of the European Report on Science and Technology Indicators 2003. It is revealed that 10,1 per cent of foreign scientists in the United states come from the European Union – 15, where at the same time the researchers are not so undervalued as in the Czech Republic.

In terms of the research in social sciences and the humanities, the international cooperation is an integral part of all research activities. Attaining scientific knowledge without international cooperation is in most research specialities basically unimaginable. The target is not only its attainment, but also its utilisation. The specific topics for cooperation with the British scientists, which were appealing for the institutes from the area of social sciences and the humanities, and examined by the survey in March, 2004, are to be found in Appendix 5<sup>22</sup>. In the direction from the scholarly research to the applied, or specifically oriented, research, the significance of the international cooperation is partially diminishing; it is also due to the need to protect some forms of intellectual ownership. Taken together, however, on the way to the knowledge society (knowledge based society), the international cooperation in R&D is an eminently important factor.

From the above-mentioned discussion it follows that social sciences and the humanities have, despite many obstacles, good reasons for further

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<sup>22</sup> The expression of selected topics as proposals for cooperation was requested by Economic & Social Research Council, UK.



constituting and deepening of the European Research Area. Among them we can find:

- Comparative research providing supranational research perspective is crucially important in the humanities, since it enables to acquire additional knowledge giving evidence about the uniqueness of the phenomena and processes under study. In historical sciences we can consider Parallel history of the new member countries and its integration into the European history as such an actual research topic;
- The humanities (as well as, of course, social sciences) have a good chance to play an important role both in diagnosing the future image of united Europe (since they enquire into its most relevant conceptions, such as governance, European identity, civil society, etc.), and in exploring common European roots and history. In this context, for example, the recent topic Moral and political philosophy and culture for future Europe comes into play;
- European decision authorities, as well as the politicians, are demanding contributions of the social sciences leading to a better common understanding of extending European Union and its role in the globalising world (in conditions of globalisation and the intensification of the economic competition). In connecting and adopting various cultures and intellectual approaches, one of the decisive roles is played by language and culture of communication. For future, we can suggest a relevant research topic The role of national languages, literature and cultures in the unified knowledge based Europe;
- The 6th Framework Programme has opened the possibility for wider exercise of social sciences and the humanities in the European Research Area, and it is an imperative to use this opportunity and be even more successful in subsequent Framework Programmes. The coordination project HERA, which is described later, strives to make a contribution to this effort.

## **5. HERA project - Humanities in the European Research Area**

In October 2002, „Research Councils in Humanities“ from the Scandinavian countries organized a conference in Odense (Denmark), reflecting the results of workshops conducted from 1999 to 2001, out of which the so-called „European Network of Research Councils for the Humanities (ERCH)“ has been instituted, and the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic has become its member. This grouping acquired a status „ERA-NET preparatory project“. Its main intention was to push forward the interest of the humanities in shaping the European research area.

In 2004, the structure of HERA project activities has been elaborated and concrete targets divided among partners. In September 2004, an international conference was held in Amsterdam, where this project was presented and discussed. After implementing critical remarks from (especially) representatives of ESF, the project was submitted to DG Research in October, 2004. The section of the humanities of the European Science Foundation has become one of the project partners. The draft of the HERA project was approved for financing from the beginning of March, 2005.

The HERA project takes four years (48 months), and it is a coordinative (not a research one) project (of ERA-NET type), which should support close cooperation of the national research programmes in the area of the humanities in forming the European research area. A detailed description of the project, together with its aims, implementation schedule and expected outcomes utilizable in science policy in the humanities, can be found on [http://www.erch.info/Files/Filer/HERA DoW final January 24 2005.pdf](http://www.erch.info/Files/Filer/HERA_DoW_final_January_24_2005.pdf).

The opening meeting of the executors and exponents of individual HERA project partners was held in Den Haag (Netherlands), in June, 2005. The problems with the project commencement, coordination of activities in the first years of the project solution, the way of financing and presenting results to the partners in DG Research EC, were discussed thoroughly at this meeting. Also the procedures of mapping the state of research infrastructure in the humanities in countries concerned, and the state of the European Reference

Index for the Humanities (ERIH) – originating within the ESF activities – were examined in detail. Nowadays, individual humanities classify their journals and divide them into three categories; the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic concerns itself with affecting this classification and enabling the enlistment of selected Czech journals in the group with international reputation.

13 countries take part in the project (represented mostly by their „Research Councils“), together with ESF (European Science Foundation) and two other subsidizing institutions: SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation, Switzerland) a FNRS (Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique, Belgium).

### **The list of partners**

NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research), Netherlands – the chief coordinator

IRCHSS (Irish Research Council for Hum. and Soc. Sci.), Ireland – the coordinator of one part of the project

DRA (Danish Research Agency), Denmark – the coordinator of one part of the project

ESF (European Science Foundation) – the coordinator of one part of the project

AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council), Great Britain – the coordinator of one part of the project

AKA (Academy of Finland), Finland – the coordinator of one part of the project

EstSF (Estonian Science Foundation), Estonia

RCN (Research Council of Norway), Norway

ASCR (Academy of Sciences Czech Republic), the Czech Republic

Rannis (The Icelandic Centre for Research), Iceland

VR (Swedish Research Council), Sweden

MHEST (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology), Slovenia

FWF (Austrian Science Fund), Austria

FWO (Fund for Scientific Research – Flanders), Belgium

The project activities will be realised within 9 work packages, which will be put into effect in 7 steps. The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic will participate in all these activities; the author of this article is the project manager nominated by the Czech side. The overview of individual steps:

*Step 1: Establishing the network and exchanging information*

The first step comprises establishing the network utilizing previous European Network of Research Councils in Humanities, establishing HERA as a forum for research-funding agencies, integration of new partners, exchange of information, joint surveys on best practice (concerning peer review and other quality assessment approaches), investigation of legal and administrative barriers to joint research activities.

*Step 2: Strategic activities concerning the work of HERA*

This step pays special attention to organisation of conferences and seminars aimed at identifying priority areas, objectives, research programme topics, and the ties to the development of research infrastructures (including mapping of accessibility of research infrastructures in Europe).

*Step 3: Linking of existing research programmes*

This step will include an analysis of the possibilities of cooperation among recent nationally-funded, targeted research programmes on cognate topics; among other things there will be short-term exchanges of programme managers. Also recent and future research programmes will be identified in this step, which might be coordinated and maybe co-financed during the cultivation of the European Research Area.

*Step 4: Topping-up of existing national programmes*

Adding a comparative perspective to programmes with a common theme that have a primarily national focus by funding additional

activities related to current programmes. The assumed pilot project will concentrate on mapping the possibilities of financing additional comparative projects; the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic will present three projects of multinational orientation.

*Step 5: Joint research initiatives*

This step will pay special attention to finding strategically important research topics for the European research in humanities (including future Framework Programmes of EU), to formulation of joint research programmes, including preparation of joint calls for proposals, common evaluation using the instruments analysed in HERA work packages, to detection of possible legal barriers to the formation of joint research programmes in the humanities, etc.

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