



Acronym

SS-ERC

Title

Social Sciences and European Research Capacities

Short description

The project's overall objective is that of enhancing the **role of social sciences** in order to increase the quality levels of European scientific and technological research. The focus of the project is the **socialisation of the European research**, that is an enhancement of the capacity of research actors, policy makers, private sector and civil society in acknowledging, interpreting and dealing with the social elements increasingly involved in science and technology production as well as in managing science-society relationships. The project is organised into four main actions; a **research** on science and technology socialisation in five member states; **five experiments** on the use of social sciences in promoting science and technology socialisation; the draft of a **handbook** on the socialisation of scientific and technological research; **dissemination** and **sensitisation** activities.

Aim and Objectives

SS-ERC project is intended to cope with the overall rapid **transformations affecting scientific and technological research in Europe**. On the one side, the ways in which research is produced are profoundly changing: boundaries among disciplines are weakening; application fields are multiplying; research is asked to be more effective, fast, accountable, trans-disciplinary, result-oriented and able to generate benefits for people and firms. On the other side, strong changes in science-society relationships are also occurring, at multiple levels: an increasing number of actors and stakeholders are involved in research production; pervasiveness of technology is rendering users an active part in technological development; economic and social interests on science and technology are growing on a global scale; new democratic and ethical issues emerge.

Due to these transformations, scientific and technological research is increasingly becoming a **"social undertaking"** where social dynamics are playing a deciding role both in the production of research and in the exploitation of its results. Moreover, science-society relationships are more intense, complex and problematic.

Hence the need for enhancing the level of **socialisation of the European scientific and technological research**, by increasing the capacity of research actors, stakeholders and policy makers of recognising and orienting social dynamics involved with science and technology and science-society relationships.

In this framework, SS-ERC project is also aimed at **strengthening the role of social sciences** in supporting scientific and technological research and promoting the cooperation between social researchers, policy makers and research institutions, in order to sustain the socialisation of science and technology in Europe.

The achievement of this overall aim entails the pursuit of four different specific objectives:

- Generating **new knowledge** concerning the social dynamics (in the broadest sense, and thus including cultural, economic, political, psychological, communication and other dynamics) involved in science and technology;

- Identifying the **hindering and facilitating factors** in order to deal with these dynamics;
- Providing an **interpretation** on the current and potential contribution of social sciences in the advancement of scientific and technological research;
- Proposing a **set of measures** for more effectively managing the social processes connected with science and technology.

- The **Handbook** on socialisation of science and technology, organised in three parts: PART A provides a picture of transformations affecting research and its possible risks and potentials for European research; PART B dwells upon the concept, use and implications of science and technology socialisation; PART C offers a set of orientations for developing policies and measures in six socialisation areas (scientific practices, scientific mediation, scientific communication, evaluation, governance and innovation).

Beneficiaries

SS-ERC project wants to allow a potentially large audience to approach the issues of science and technology socialisation and to develop effective actions in support of socialisation processes. Therefore, among the project beneficiaries, one can include all individuals and organisations directly or indirectly involved with production, governance, and use of science and technology, such as policy makers at the European, national and local levels, individual scientists, social researchers, universities, research institutions, science centres, science parks, technology transfer offices, media, innovation networks, industrial associations and firms, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

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Partners
Five partners from five countries contributed in the project:

- University of Maastricht, Faculty of Arts and Culture, Department of Technology and Society Studies, Maastricht (The Netherlands)
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl
- Laboratorio di scienze della cittadinanza, Rome (Italy)
www.scienzecittadinanza.org
- University of Aarhus, The Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy (Denmark)
www.cfa.au.dk
- University of Primorska, Science and Research Centre of Koper (Slovenia)
www.zrs.upr.si
- General Foundation of the La Rioja University, Logroño (Spain)
fundacion.unirioja.es

Activities

The project comprised a set of interlinked actions:

- A **research on science and technology socialisation processes** which entailed: a literature review exploring the issues and themes dealt with by social sciences on science and technology; the conduct of in-depth interviews and the organisation of focus groups in five countries (Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain); the setting up of a computerised inventory of European social research institutes specialised in the study of science and technology;
- The planning and implementation of **five experiments** on the socialisation of scientific and technological research respectively one in Denmark (on scientific evaluation), two in Italy (respectively on scientific practices and on innovation), one in Slovenia (on scientific communication) and one in Spain (on scientific mediation);
- The draft of a **Handbook** on the socialisation of scientific and technological research in the framework of the European Research Area;
- The organisation of a set of **sensitisation and dissemination initiatives** (including workshops, networking activities and the establishment of the project website).

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Specific Targeted Research Project

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€1,089,985

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€1,089,985

Website
www.techresp.eu

Deliverables

The main deliverables of the project are:

- The **report** on the literature review on themes dealt with in nine disciplinary areas (Psychology, Economics, Anthropology and Ethnography, Communication Sciences, Management Sciences, Evaluation Sciences, Political Sciences, Sociology of Science, Science and Technology Studies) on science and technology;
- A **computerised inventory** of European social research institutes specialised on science and technology;
- The final report of the **research** on socialisation of science and technology carried out in Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain;