

To
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To
Member of EU-Parliament
Herbert Reul | EP ITRE Committee Chair
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The President

Prof. Dr. Michal Buchowski
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Reg. | Downsizing of Social Science Research Poznań,
Funding in FP8

Dear Mr. Smits, Dear Mr. Reul,

A number of proposals for FP8 have attracted the attention of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), Europe's leading professional Association in the discipline.

As President of EASA, and on behalf of its Executive Committee, I would like to express my unease at these developments for FP8, as they may impact severely on the future of Social Sciences and Humanities, and specifically on our discipline of Social Anthropology in Europe.

My colleagues and I think that these disciplines have their societal importance, particularly in times when the project of Europe is facing dissatisfaction among its populations, when they no more understand what this project symbolises, or how the impact of institutions on their life-worlds is experienced and imagined by them.

Our greatest concerns are, firstly, the downsizing of funding for socio-economic and humanities research projects in FP8, and second, that the focus on major topics of transformation is taking into account only to a small degree the cultural and social interconnections of these "thematic structures". By doing so, I have the impression that it neglects the contribution of these disciplines in these fields, be it for discerning and understanding problems, or for solution orientation.

My colleagues and I acknowledge the intention to prioritize researches in Europe that make major contribution to solving big challenges of mid- and long-term societal transformations. Considering these "Grand Challenges" as they are outlined in many preparatory papers to FP8 – climate change, ageing population, new pressures in global markets, a sustainable energy supply, or social cohesion (what actually about the social perspectives of youth?) – all these topics nevertheless refer to a need for flexibility, for innovative creativity, and for multi-disciplinary approaches within which Social Sciences cannot be relegated at a downgraded, secondary level.

Europe's position in world research is closely connected to its openness, its conjunctures across borders, its great pluralism of equally considered disciplines. These qualities now seem to be threatened! If we truly think of the further development and implementation of the ERA, I acknowledge required structural adjustments and improvements concerning cross-border networks. But my colleagues and I too envision a true and sustainable ERA on the grounds of including scholarly disciplines, which consider the people, the citizens, their ways of life, their hopes, their fears, their imagination, their creativity ... from the bottom. Thus, we understand

pluralism as well in the structural approaches to these requirements and visions of ERA2020. Competitiveness (industry|market determined) then is but one such network, others would be constituted with the centrality of civil society actors, others with basic research networks (centrality of scholars).

Speaking in particular for our discipline, Social Anthropology, its major feature actually is "to bring people in". As I understand it, this was the *raison par excellence* why Jean-Michel Baer, Director of Directorate L | DG Research, had invited a group of Social Anthropologists to a seminar in Florence – "Seminar Anthropological Perspectives in a Changing Europe – 'Bringing People In' " (October 2008). Even if focussing on the Programme *Cooperation*, these two days very clearly helped to emphasize main issues of Social Anthropology as related to different activities of the Programme, and in my view fit very well into the "Grand Challenges" as outlined for FP8. I would like to cite but a few from the brochure your institution has produced (EC 2009. pp. 17-18)

- * Activity 3 | Major Trends in Society: generation, new kinship relations and their socio-economic importance, consumption and identity, racism;
- * Activity 4 | Europe in the World: human mobility for work and security, representations of Europe, mobility of ideas and things, colonial legacies in Europe and the World;
- * Activity 5 | The Citizens in the European Union: borderlands and border crossings, forms of diversity, European citizenship, the crisis of political representation, power-symbols-language, hopes, humiliation, cultural avant-gardes as a European phenomenon.

Mr. General Director Smits, Mr. Parliament Committee Chair Reul, as President of the European Association of Social Anthropologists I would appreciate if the ongoing vision and the concrete structuring of FP8 could be readjusted and amended as to "bringing the people in" – to see their capacities in contributing with their ways of life, their imaginations and aspirations to solving the "Grand Challenges" Europe and the societies of the world are facing. Thus, I kindly request you to reconsider for FP8 the possible qualitative contributions of Social Sciences, as well as their important role in truly multi-disciplinary projects for dealing with socio-economic transformations of the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Michal Buchowski
President of EASA