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Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences

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Position of the Swiss Academies on the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation (CSFRI)

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences is the umbrella organisation associating the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS), the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW) as well as the two centres of excellence TA-SWISS (Technology Assessment) and the foundation Science et Cité (Science and City). Their collaboration focuses on promoting scientific careers and education, sustainable use of limited resources, societal impact of new scientific findings and technologies as well as health care system in flux. The Swiss Academies stand for an open and pluralistic understanding of science, representing sciences comprehensively, inter-institutionally and inter-departmentally. We have access to expertise and excellence in the scientific community, and can therefore contribute a special knowledge to important political questions.

We would therefore like to raise a number of issues that we consider being of great relevance in connection with the European Commission's Green Paper "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding". In so doing, this should further refine the outlook and orientation of a follow-up to the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), now termed Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation (CSFRI).

■ Excellence, frontier and basic research

We fully support the principle that excellence must continue to be the guiding principle for funding measures, and that these should not become tools to bring about European science cohesion. The European Research Council (ERC) plays a crucial role in funding frontier research, which it should be able to continue in its future status as a separate entity "Knowledge for Science" in the European Knowledge Framework structure. In this context, we equally insist that basic scientific research must remain a cornerstone in a European research-funding scheme. Neglecting basic scientific research would undermine the goal of rendering the European Research Area (ERA) attractive and sustainable in the long-term.

■ Applied research and innovation chain

One of the strengths of the European Framework Programmes so far has been the innovation aspect, and this should be maintained in the CSFRI. The new Framework should therefore encompass a continuous chain to ensure that results from research projects make their way to the innovation stage. For Switzerland, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are crucial partners in this process, as they are often carriers of and drivers for innovation.

■ Policy-making, forward-looking and foresight activities

We believe that science should take a responsibility in rendering policy-making evidence-based, while ensuring that it retains its credibility, quality and impartiality, and the interaction should be taking place in a transparent manner. The Joint Research Centres (JRC) have to play their important role of providing science to policy, also in terms of forward-looking analyses of future research developments to serve as a basis for joint strategy. As a complement, we strongly recommend to include the task of foresight to these activities, i.e. the early identification of problematic developments relevant to the environment and society and the timely preparation of options of action.

■ **Social sciences are of vital importance**

We are convinced that today's environmental and societal challenges can only be tackled in a joint effort by all disciplines, among them the social sciences. Apart from them feeding horizontally into what is termed "Knowledge for Society", "Knowledge for Growth" and "Knowledge for Science", one Grand Challenge should focus on societal challenges and the thematic priority Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) be retained.

■ **Fostering Europe's young academic talents**

Promoting Europe's scientific future must comprise a strong element of investing in young academic talents. The Marie Curie actions put in place in the FP7 proved to be successful tools to that effect and should certainly be maintained, or even be augmented.

■ **Freedom of research and open access**

It is important to allow maximum possible freedom to the science community to do research and to safeguard the rights of researchers to publish results freely to make them publicly available. We believe that sharing results is a key element in furthering the development of both science and society, and we therefore support the 2003 "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities". In this regard, we advocate a solution whereby means for open access measures would be comprised in funding for research projects.

■ **Large versus small projects**

It appears that the European Knowledge Framework will be placed within the "Innovation Union" Flagship Initiative, and that what used to be called Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development will, combined with the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), become the CSFRI. It should be avoided that this results in large-scale projects in terms of participating partners. The CSFRI funding schemes should try to strike a balance of one third of funding going towards projects with more than 6-7 partners and two thirds to projects with that number of or less partners.

■ **Pooling national efforts**

We favour the pooling of both competence and funding at the European level to stimulate initiatives and promote research activities that could not be carried out by individual countries, notably in the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the Joint Research Centres. As for the Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI), these should be devised such that homogenous legal and financial frameworks will be applied. To avoid parallel structures in possible competition to the envisaged framework, they should serve as seed money for groups comprising some 10 to 15 member countries. We furthermore favour an arrangement in which contributors have a say in determining the topics of individual JPIs.

■ **Simplification of application procedures**

Representing the Swiss science community, we would like to advocate the need to simplify application procedures in all funding instruments and harmonise them to the extent possible. At the same time, this should not be detriment of the quality assurance system regarding the accounting schemes in place.

Contact

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