

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDING RESEARCH PROJECTS ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HUMANITIES IN FP7

Professor PhD **Viorel LEFTER**
The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies
PhD Student **Ecaterina GICA**
National Center of Management Programs

ABSTRACT

The role of research in the development of the European economy is a major one. In this context, financing the research activity becomes the main condition for achieving strategically goals for the entire education system. The financing is carried out through a series of financing projects both from private and institutional area. This present paper explains the importance of participating in the FP7.

KEYWORDS: *financing projects, European funds, framework program, topics*

I. Introduction

In an open global economy, innovation-based sustainable growth is the heart of the European Union's response to the globalization. According to the Lisbon Strategy, research and innovation are the solutions to overcome the great challenges such as energy security, climate change, environmental degradation, exclusion of vulnerable groups, ageing population and disabilities, global health threats, and demographic developments.

In order to finance the challenges mentioned, the Union promotes three key funding instruments to support research and innovation: Cohesion policy - the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund; the Research Framework Programme – FP7 and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programm.

FP7, the EU's main instrument for funding research, is the short name for the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and it will run from 2007-2013. One of the main aims of the FP7, in actual world economic crisis is also to respond to Europe's employment needs, competitiveness and quality of life. Also FP's are the EU's main financial and legal instruments to implement the European Research Area (ERA), which is now high on the policy agenda and part of the strategy for meeting the goal of increasing investment in research to 3 per cent by 2010 as laid down by the Barcelona Summit in March 2002.

The process of initiating and carrying on financing projects represents a complex process involving multiple activities, a certain stage-breakdown and the use of specific resources.

Financial Perspectives 2007-2013 have allocated 53.5 billions € to FP7; a huge increase compared to previous FPs; the third most important budget of the overall EU policy expenditures.

The “Framework Programme” contains four “Specific Programmes” of which “Collaborative research” (which includes “Social Sciences and Humanities”) and “Capacities” (which includes “Science in Society”).

The Commission outlines six major objectives of EU action in the field of research:

1. Creating **European centres of Excellence** through collaboration between laboratories in research centres, universities and companies. The new instruments of FP6, Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects are designed to contribute to this goal, and their efficiency will be evaluated by an expert panel.

2. Launching European **technological initiatives** in promising industrial sectors such as energy, transport, mobile communications, embedded systems and nanoelectronics. 'Technology platforms' are being set up to bring together stakeholders to define a common research agenda.

3. Stimulating **basic research** by setting up a 'European Research Council', which would select projects on the basis of scientific excellence, without any obligation for transnational collaboration.

4. Making Europe more attractive for researchers by promoting the development of **science careers**. A special emphasis will be put on attracting young people to science, boosting the participation of women, knowledge transfer, international mobility and life-long learning.

5. Developing **research infrastructure** of European interest using a similar mechanism to the one used for the trans-European networks (TENs).

6. Strengthening co-ordination between national research programmes, as well as ties between European intergovernmental research organisations (such as CERN or the EMBO) and the EU.

The Commission also intends to improve the **regulatory and administrative environment** of the Community Framework Programmes, in particular by increasing transparency of the evaluation process, reducing delays and minimizing the cost of preparing projects.

The main policy drivers of FP7 are:

- the Lisbon strategy: « revised » and « post 2010 » strategy
- the European Research Area in an enlarged EU:
- the « Ljubljana process »
- Barcelona target: 3% of GDP for R&D
- Sustainable development strategy, International Cooperation
- other EU policies (employment, cohesions, education, energy, environment).

II. New evolution in Socio –economic Sciences and Humanities - SSH

The new approach for EU is to build a new Societal Challenges. The head topic is the identification of important “Societal Challenges” for the EU and each of the Challenges is addressed by a specific large scale research project.

The new approach of SSH programme is structured according the major challenges facing the EU and World:

- Lisbon and post-Lisbon strategy on growth and employment, knowledge society;
- Sustainable strategy with the following objectives: economic, social and environmental;
- Major trends in Society: demography, migration, family, youth, quality of life, cultural interactions, democracy, citizenship;
- Globalization and EU in the world; conflict and peace.

III. Analysis on achievements 2007-2009 calls

Under the 2007 – 2009 Work Programmes, in the SSH topics, EC received high level of participation: **1438 proposals of which 132 projects** have been selected with **1177 partners**¹. Important for these calls was the fact that all the topics have been covered.

Wide scientific community was involved in terms of disciplines. The negative point was there are still geographical disparities; only about 15 % of the overall number of partners comes from new member state especially from Romania and Bulgaria.

International cooperation was quite high, representing 10% of all participants.

Who have participated?

- Universities represent 2/3 of the participants;
- Leading EU Universities/Institutes are also top of the participants;

A high quality of excellence: 14.5/15 range needed to be selected in the majority of topics.

Is necessary to underline the achievements of the calls organized by the EC in 2007 – 2009, such as:

- Good balance between *disciplines*: economic, social, cultural, policy, international; *methods*: quantitative and qualitative, participative approach and *geographical levels*: local, regional, national, Europe and world;
- Important potential for policy making: enlargement of the SSH knowledge base in order to include new issues;
- Topics of high sensitiveness have been intensively addressed by excellent projects and teams: economics of research and innovation, urban development, long term sustainability, migration, impacts of globalization, geopolitics, values and religion;
- High impact of dissemination and support to policies.

IV. New opportunities for funding research projects on socio-economic and humanities in FP7 program

The SSH work programme is divided into eight activities; under these eight activities are research areas and specific research topics. Proposals are invited at the level of the research topic. The topics change with each work programme however the activities are set for the duration of FP7 2007 – 2013.

Activity 1: "Lisbon Strategy" - Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society. Driving force: determinant of the growth and employment taking into account the global context and the diversity of the EU and to improve the role of finance in growth, employment and competitiveness in Europe.

Topics of the Activity 1 – eligible for participation with a proposal:

1. *Changing the role of the financial system to better serve economic, social and environmental objectives.* The challenge of the topic is to enlarge the role of finance in the economy and what should be its roles in relation to the public interest and to change the role of private finance and its impact and how it might better serve economic, social and environmental objectives.

Why it matters for Europe this topic? This topic intends to cover the growth of the real economy, social cohesion, inequalities, employment, personal risk and environmental challenges.

Research dimensions of the topic:

- The evolving role of finance in the economy and society;

- The costs and benefits of restructuring in the real economy;
- Regulation and governance of finance in an international and historical perspectives; related public policy issues;
- The impact on developing countries; development of international treaties and institutions;
- Related challenges for the EU in a context of the crisis.

2. *Demand-driven research and innovation policies for growth, welfare and wellbeing.*

To relevance research and innovation policies include the demand for knowledge as: innovation policies in different good or service sectors and forecast and assessment including indicator development.

3. *The public sector of the future.* The European public sector has major structural changes under the influence of "New Public Management"

Activity 2: "Sustainable development" - Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective. Aims to provide significantly improved understanding of how economic, social and environmental objectives may be combined in an international perspective, e.g. socio-economic factors which shape the post-carbon society, cities and social cohesion. Here we mentioned several topics:

1. *Creating and adapting jobs in Europe in the context of a socio-ecological transition.* The proposals applied by the research entities must promote activities regarding the structure of employment and types of jobs have evolved very slowly and the current crisis will deteriorate the situation and Environment-related requirements and dependence on raw materials push the EU towards new ways of production, consumption, lifestyles, mobility.

The main purpose will be to become EU a leader of the "socio-ecological" transition.

Why it matters for Europe? The Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs is on the policy agenda *must be an instrument to defense on* current economic crisis and to have an relevant impact on employment in Europe.

Research dimensions:

- The dynamics of employment creation in the socioecological transition and the design of new employment policies;
- Education and training policies for new jobs;
- Prospects for more and better jobs for women and older workers in the socio-ecological activities;
- The role of social innovation;
- Comparisons with new employment practices outside the EU in developed and emerging countries.

2. *Local welfare systems favoring social cohesion aims to achieve:* different patterns of local (urban) welfare systems and their effects on social inequalities, to improve the role of different providers and their partnerships. The role of public policy and governance and relationships between formal and informal initiatives has to be developed in a way to improve the quality of life.

3. *Analysis of the impacts of global changes.*

4. EU regions and their interaction with the neighborhood regions. Many regions in Europe have historical, cultural, political and economic links with neighborhood regions

outside the EU. Under this topic can be financed projects who aim to analyses of potential EU policy options regarding strengthening of the cohesion of EU territories and their wider neighborhood.

The long term visions of these regions with particular emphasis on new EU countries will be a priority for the Community's new politics.

5. Social platform on sustainable lifestyles, define a research agenda in the area driven by societal concerns. The players expected to participate need to be involved in societal stakeholders to support the exchange of experiences and development of structures of analysis on current initiatives and practices that aim at new sustainable ways of living, moving, consuming.

Activity 3: "Social trends" - Major trends in society and their implications.

Address the causes of major trends, their effects and likely impacts on quality of life, values and attitudes and on European societies. e.g. birth rates, migration, cultural interactions and multiculturalism in European societies. Topics:

1. Addictions and lifestyles in contemporary Europe

The challenge is to achieve a pervasive feature of contemporary societies and bring concern.

The problem of various substance addictions and high cost of treatment but also the cost of prevention and crime are the new effects of the crisis and the researchers have to find solutions.

Why it matters for Europe?

EU countries must exchange their understanding and experiences of addictions in order to alleviate worst impacts. Addictions constitute a global problem and demand systems of international cooperation. Also, need to combine existing scientific knowledge.

Research dimensions of the topic:

- Social, economic and individual determinants of addiction and behavioral disorders;
- Comparative definitions of addictions and development of quantitative data across Europe;
- Comparative legal and regulatory frameworks for various new substances;
- Trade and profits around addiction development in case of licit drugs or products.

Activity 4: "Internationalization" - Europe in the world. Improve

understanding of how interactions and interdependencies are changing, e.g. Europe's role in global economic governance, conflicts and peace, Europe as seen from the outside:

1. Europe facing a rising multipolar world

The challenge is to have the EU implicated in the multi-polar world (rise of China, India) which supersedes the duo-polar world (USA, Russia). The multi-polar world will be more economically and strategically interdependent.

Why it matters for Europe? The EU is challenges, its prosperity and stability will be in the future determined by outside forces.

Research dimensions:

- The future evolution of global governance and the place of Europe;
- Monitoring and analysis of critical/emerging areas (potential conflicts over resources, areas of influence or values);

- Post or new ‘hegemony’ with regard to the role of the US, the changes in the EU ‘civil power’;
- The process by which certain values come to be contested or shared; their influence on international cooperation and multilateral institutions.

2. Collective challenges for Latin American and Caribbean Countries (LACC)

The topic aims to cover common geopolitical challenges social and economic uses of the environment; role, visions and interdependencies of political, economic and social actors in institutional development.

3. Understanding urbanisation trends and processes in contemporary China

Who can apply? At least 3 cities from different regions in China with potential for new internal developments and historical and forward-looking, including historical and current experience of large cities in Europe.

4. Cultures of governance and conflict resolution in Europe and India

The EU and India face some similar challenges in making a democratic political entity function in a context of internal diversity.

The roles of the EU, India and other actors in global governance with exchanging reciprocal knowledge on political cultures and institutions and to improve the relations between democracy and economic development or linguistic policy in multicultural societies.

Activity 5: The citizen in the EU. The role of the citizen, e.g. democratic ownership and participation, histories and identities.

1. Democracy and the shadows of totalitarianism and populism

Why it matters for Europe?

The legitimacy, effectiveness and very existence of the EU rest on the voluntary cooperation and pooling of sovereignty: nationalism pursued by totalitarian regimes and some populist organizations is at odds with this.

Research dimensions

- History and historical memory as objects and channels of EU politics and policies within Europe and in relation to other areas of the world
- Experiences of totalitarianism and of resistance to it
- The democratic development of the EU and the rise of populism in both older and newer democracies
- The circulation of different experiences, historical narratives, political, legal and administrative cultures, political organizations in the European political space and influence in shaping decision-making in the EU

2. European identities: inner and outer perceptions of Europe and the EU How official identity symbols and personal experiences with the EU are present in citizen's life and how they are perceived and how these interact with common national cultures.

3. Re-interpreting Europe's cultural heritage: towards the 21st century library and museum?

New role for national museums and libraries that allows them to reflect past trends and processes, the impact of museums, galleries and libraries (incl. virtual) on identities and values and the application of research in social sciences and humanities in re-evaluation and re-interpretation of collections and archives.

Activity 6: Socio-economic and scientific indicators. Improve the relevance, quality and quantity of indicators for policy makers' e.g. current use and emerging needs for indicators in policy, statistical issues.

Activity 7: Foresight activities. Forward looks for ERA and FP8, e.g. mapping the past in view of the future developments of the ERA, the future of Universities.

For the Activity 6 and 7 in work programme 2010 was not open a competition.

Activity 8 - Strategic activities Horizontal activities for the implementation of the specific programme objectives, e.g. network of NCP's in SSH, ERA-NETs.

V. Conclusions

Significant differences can be observed as regards the financial sources out of the perspective of the tow major financing programs: The National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation for the period 2007 – 2013 and FP7.

The financing projects will be subordinated to each activity and topic and shall be singularized out of the perspective of methodology and of procedures, as well as of the category of projects they make part of (CSA, Research, etc).

Due to the fact that Romania is defined by the lowest level of practical implementation of innovative results, most of the finances sources have introduced the compulsoriness of implementing the results in economy. In the case of fundamental research, their dissemination must be at the broadest level possible in order to constitute the basis of cooperation projects on FP7.

References

1. Anneli Pauli, *Shaping the European research of tomorrow*, Research'eu – 2009
2. Pierre Valette and Peteris Zilgalvis – *DG RTD Science, Economy and Society – 2010 Work Programme and Calls* – 2009
3. <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm>
4. http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/fp7-factsheets_ro.pdf
5. www.ancs.ro