



Social Science and the Humanities within Horizon 2020: meeting European Energy Challenges

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The clean-energy transition ...

- *... is at the heart of the "Energy Union" and a top priority for the European Commission*
- *The "Energy System" is about more than energy: transport/mobility, heating and cooling ...*
- *Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) shed light on the role of Europe's consumers and citizens*



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The Commission wants to empower consumers ...

- *More information for consumers to make better energy choices*
- *A more active role for consumers: demand-response and smart technologies, but also prosumers and consumer associations*
- *Better protection of consumers: against unfair practices, against breaches of their privacy*



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... but it's not just about more choice!

- *Citizen involvement is different from consumer empowerment*
- *It can help improve social acceptance (e.g. renewable energy installations, transmission lines) and encourage social innovation*
- *But it can be "inconvenient": to be successful, it requires openness and flexibility*



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Socioeconomic aspects are embedded in the EC's research and innovation support

- *Horizon 2020: Commitment to embed the social sciences and humanities ("SSH") across all the research support provided (including energy).*
- *Why? H2020 is challenge-based: the knowledge needed to address complex societal challenges is spread across multiple disciplines, including SSH*
- *The transition to a low-carbon energy system is such a challenge: a societal, not just a technical problem.*



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Beyond H2020: SSH in the EU's energy policy making

- *SET Plan: Better coordinate energy-research and investment across the EU*
- *Energy Union: Citizen involvement, social dialogue, social innovation as enablers*
- *Accelerating Clean-Energy Innovation: Cities and Citizens as innovation hubs*
- *Mission Innovation: the importance of socially embedding innovative technologies*



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In sum: SSH is critical for delivering the EU's energy priorities

- *A comprehensive approach: SSH underlies all aspects of EU energy research and policy making.*
- *An incomplete agenda: Integrate SSH more fully into H2020, work harder to overcome fragmentation of energy-research communities*
- *A reflection of broader developments in the energy field: merging of products and services, greater importance of co-creation ...*



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Thank You!

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