

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Research Infrastructures in Europe – The Foundations of European Research
Book release on future developments in the Humanities and Social Sciences

There is little room to dispute that natural scientists rely on a highly developed infrastructure of computers, human resources and elaborate equipment in order to work efficiently and innovatively. However, this is not only true of the Natural Sciences. The Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) are driving forces of impetus and analysis in understanding and evaluating cultural processes in Europe, and also require specific infrastructures. Which digital infrastructures will play a key role in the work of SSH scholars over the coming years? What kind of changes are we seeing in archives, libraries and antique collections? What challenges and opportunities does Big Data pose for the SSH?

In the recently released book “Facing the Future – European Research Infrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences” by Adrian Dusa, Dietrich Nelle, Günter Stock and Gert G. Wagner (eds), experts from research, politics and research management discuss digital infrastructures of the present and the future in twenty articles. They highlight the developments and problems they anticipate, focussing in particular on advancing digitalisation in the SSH.

The book draws together the insights gained at a conference of the same name, “Facing the Future”, held in Berlin in November 2013. The conference was attended by 70 experts from 19 European countries who met to discuss the new challenges posed by the increasing necessity of integrating digital research tools into everyday working life. It was organised by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), the federation of All European Academies (ALLEA), the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, and the German Data Forum. It took place as part of a project financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) entitled Survey and Analysis of Basic Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe (SASSH). The project is run by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities in cooperation with ALLEA and hosted by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences.

The SASSH project is producing the first ever survey and analysis of basic research in the SSH at the science academies, learned societies and related research institutes of Europe. The project will bring much needed transparency to research activity in these disciplines and point to the potential for pan-

European research collaborations between projects run in multiple countries around Europe. The project's long-term aim is to initiate a European research programme on European cultural heritage and identity, and the survey results will provide the data and insights upon which to base this.

The book is co-published by five institutional partners and is available for download as a free e-book from:

www.akademienunion.de/BMBF_Projekt/FACING_THE_FUTURE.pdf.

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