Connecting Socio-Economic Research on the Dynamics of the Knowledge Society in the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean Countries

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Policy Paper

“Promoting the Dialogue between SSH Research on the Construction of the Knowledge Society and Policymaking: The EULAKS Experience”

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1) Executive Summary

The principal goal of the EULAKS project was the creation of a space for horizontal learning between SSH scholars and communities of relevant stakeholders and policymakers. To attain this goal, the project connected European and Latin American researchers, research organisations and key agencies from a broad range of disciplines that vary in their research focus and methodological preference, yet made significant contributions to the building of a shared understanding of the Knowledge Society. The purpose of the project as a horizontal support action aimed at strengthening the role of the Social Science and Humanities (SSH) in the context of European – Latin American S&T co-operation, was not only research but also to facilitate the interaction among stakeholders, researchers and policymakers. In this sense, the project as a whole contributed to the promotion of the dialogue both among the communities of SSH researchers of both regions and between SSH research and policymaking.

This paper is structured as a summary of the major findings of the analytical tasks of the project that were carried out between February 2008 and October 2010. The presentation of findings includes the results from on analysis of the trends and patterns in S&T co-operation between the EU and LAC, a study on the perception of the nexus between the SSH research and policymaking in Latin American countries, the results of a comparative analysis of knowledge society indicators in Europe and Latin America, and the development of a policy analysis visualisation tool.

The findings are complemented by some key message that have been summarised from a policy workshop that was held in London in September 2010 with the explicit aim to submit the findings of the project for discussion to a targeted audience of stakeholders from the spheres of practice and policymaking. The paper concludes with some general remarks about the need to rethink the SSH – policymaking nexus in the context of the evolving EU – LAC Knowledge Area.
2) Background and methodology

2.1) Introduction

In accordance with the ongoing commitment of the European Community and its Member States to the opening of the European Research Area (ERA) to other regions of the world, the designation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a target region for EU funding is also linked to the evolution of the EU – Latin America and Caribbean Knowledge Area, which has been placed on the political agenda since the objectives related to the strengthening of the bi-regional strategic partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean were formulated at the Summit of Madrid and the Brasilia Action Plan (2002) and subsequently endorsed by the Declaration of Guadalajara (2004), the Salzburg Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on S&T Co-operation and the EU-LAC Vienna Summit (2006). A central objective of the Guadalajara Declaration has been the prioritisation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a “target region for the EU Framework Programmes, […] thereby contributing to deepening and developing bi-regional links and encouraging mutual participation in research programmes”1 and the building of an EU-LAC Knowledge Area. In the same spirit, the Vienna Declaration stressed the importance of EU-LAC platforms for S&T, aimed at reinforcing the EU-LAC partnership through the promotion of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area understood as a “common area for science, technology and innovation.”2 The EU-LAC Summit in Madrid in May 2010 renewed the focus on how to harness the ‘Knowledge Triangle’ (education, science and technology) in support of sustainable development and social inclusion. The development of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area is embedded in the shared political and operational commitment in many areas and underpinned by the ongoing Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation, which is supposed to develop into a “framework within which all the countries involved and their regional organisations and mechanism can shape their works towards these ends” (European Commission, 2010b: 5).

During the first three years of the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7: 2007 – 2013), the number of projects with Latin American and / or Caribbean participation came already close to those of the five years of FP6: 515 participations of Latin American (500) and Caribbean (15) teams in 226 projects. In the Work Programme 2011 of FP7 a special focus on Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to boost this cooperation further with particular attention to topics of direct relevance to the Summit theme, including those related to health

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1 Guadalajara Declaration, III EU-LAC Summit in May 2004, paragraph 93
2 Vienna Declaration, IV EU-LAC Summit in May 2006, paragraph 53
as well as on major environmental and climate change challenges (European Commission, 2010b).

Against the background of this process of consolidating bi-regional relationships between the EU and the Latin American and Caribbean countries, the EULAKS project (“Connecting Socio-Economic Research on the Dynamics of the Knowledge Society in the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean Countries”) was aimed at raising the profile of SSH research and networks in Latin American and Caribbean countries in order to make sure that the ERA can fully benefit from key contributions in this field. The support for knowledge sharing activities in the framework of the EULAKS project was aimed at promoting a shared understanding of the evolving Information and Knowledge Societies in both regions. A principal goal of the project was the creation of a space for horizontal learning between communities of SSH scholars and communities of relevant stakeholders and policymakers. To attain this goal, the project connected European and Latin American and Caribbean communities of scholars, research organisations and key agencies from a broad range of SSH disciplines that vary in their research focus and methodological preferences, yet have made significant contributions to the building of a shared understanding of the Knowledge Society.

Along the globally converging definition of the factors that influence the construction and advancement of knowledge societies, the EULAKS project established a scientific learning and training network aimed at promoting the dialogue between European and Latin American Socio-Economic and Humanities (SSH) researchers and policymakers. The enhancement and consolidation of a EU-LAC collaboration space in the SSH through the promotion of linkages and partnerships through EULAKS complemented several past and current horizontal programmes the EU established to support Latin America through the fostering of co-operation between both regions in Higher Education (ALFA I-III, Alßan), or for the Research and Academic Networks through the @LIS programme and other programmes like OBREAL-EULARO for instance.

Having introduced the contextual remarks, this policy paper has two main objectives: First, to present the main research findings of the individual work packages and work tasks performed in the framework of the EULAKS project. Second, the paper fulfils the objective to stimulate thinking on the enhancement of the role of the SSH in the shaping of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area. Since it is, of course, impossible to boil down the heterogeneous set of results from the horizontal support activities that were carried out in the framework of
EULAKS to a set of clear-cut and consensual conclusions, we will outline some general remarks that could support the development of policy thinking in this area.

2.2) *Focus and methodology of the policy paper*

The central focus of this policy paper is on the nature of the links between SSH research and policy-making. It is based on a brief summary of the findings from the strategic studies of research capacities and analyses carried in the framework of the project, which add to the understanding of the role of the SSH in the design, implementation and monitoring of science, technology and innovation policy. Based on the analytical results, a series of critical issues concerning the enhancement of the SSH research – policy nexus will be sketched. This brief discussion will integrate the observations made by the invited experts and participants of the final EULAKS policy workshop at the London School of Economics and Political Science held in September 2010, which was organised with the explicit aim of discussing the findings of the project with relevant audiences of stakeholders and to consult policymakers about possible ways of distributing the generated results to target groups related to policy formulation and implementation (both at the national and the European level), thus bridging the gap between SSH research and policymaking.
3) Part one – A synthesis of the analytical project results

3.1) Findings from the review of trends and patterns in S&T co-operation between the EU and LAC

A large-scale questionnaire survey has been designed to better understand what are, at the level of the individual researchers in LAC countries and the EU countries, the main determining factors initiating, promoting and enhancing international collaboration in S&T and the extent to which the internationalisation of their activities contribute to increased knowledge transfer and production in their respective countries. Thus the focus of this study is more on the collaboration between individual researchers (a fundamental determinant in the creation of scientific communities) rather than on policies to support international research collaboration, although a particular effort has been made to apprehend the specific role played by policy instruments (e.g. calls for proposals / funding promoting international S&T cooperation between Europe and Latin America) developed by EU Member States, LAC countries as well as the European Commission.

A first word is needed about the representativeness of this survey. While at no point can we claim to have a “representative” survey, we do believe the sample that responded in Latin American countries is very close to the research population in these countries. The sex and discipline distribution seems to follow the ones we know about in the statistics provided on these countries. Moreover, the high response rate to our requests for LAC scientists (44,8%) and the relatively low one for EU scientists (27.7%) show a very strong interest for the subject of scientific collaborations with Europe in Latin America. A rather unusually high number of persons responded spontaneously after having been informed by some colleague about the survey. Also the distribution by discipline of our respondents in LAC countries corresponds to the distributions that we have found with the bibliometric analysis of co-authorships. Again the figures for European respondents do not match the world distribution or the national distribution of research output as measured by publication counts. Our results are thus in line with the LAC production, not the European production. And the results of the survey should be read more from the standpoint of Latin American researchers, and not so much from the standpoint of European researchers. This is an important caveat: Most policy tools are designed from the EU towards the partner countries. Many of the opinions expressed in the survey can thus be understood as a voice oriented towards Europe, and not vice-versa.
The comprehensive description and detailed analysis of the results of this survey on international scientific collaborations taking place between European and LAC scientists are presented in a report that is publicly available on the EULAKS website (http://eulaks.eu/document/4251.html). For the purpose of this synthesis, the following general aspects of the findings are highlighted:

i) The institutional context plays a major role as far as collaborations are concerned. The number of collaborations can increase either because one enters as dependent of a powerful partner or as equal in intellectual terms. The latter is the case between most LAC partnerships with Europe as reported by the questionnaire and mostly all scientists living in LAC countries agree to the fact that science could be in a better position but is already strong enough to be considered as equal partner with Europe. In addition, institutional and national funding programmes promoting international cooperation are becoming increasingly important in LAC, notably in the four main scientific countries.

ii) The EU builds partnership based on a certain cultural proximity and interestingly this is despite the fact that the USA is an important country for post-docs for LAC as for EU scientists who did a post-doc abroad, but the main reason to collaborate is definitely not “cultural” but rather lies in the scientific reputation of the partner institution / researcher. The overall EULAKS data also indicate that one can do a PhD at home to a very large extent (57% for the four main science producers in Latin America) or with the USA and collaborate internationally as well as publish scientific papers with scientists in Europe. This is the case for more than half of the scientists in the four main LAC science producing countries. In addition, getting a PhD in North America or in another LAC country does not preclude scientists to collaborate with Europe.

iii) Scientists choose to work not with a foreign country or institution but with a scientific partner: an individual or a laboratory that is going to be his / her partner in the future. Bilateral funding schemes are the more frequently mentioned and this reflects the active policy of France, Spain and UK (mainly). Most international collaboration born out of either a personal contact when working in a lab abroad or through conferences and other meetings. Friendship and trust do also play a very important role as confirmed by most interviews: “you do science collaboration better with your friends”, says a scientist from Mexico.
In sum, scientific reputation and other scientific interests seem to be paramount when seeking a partnership. Policy can only find a way to encourage these collaborations when previous scientific interest is secured.

3.2) SSH research and STI policymaking in Latin America: Findings from a nexus perception study

The task of the EULAKS project to which this study responded consisted in analysing the role and status of SSH research in designing and implementing innovation policies. Implicit in this task is the assumption that there are both encounters and mismatches between SSH research and policy development in the field of innovation, and that a better understanding of the interface between these two processes would help to conceive ways to foster the nexus. The objective of this study was thus to explore the science, technology and innovation (STI) research-policy nexus, based on the perception of this nexus by researchers and policymakers (PM). Capturing the complexities of this interface is essential to answer such questions as:

- How could PM make a better use of all that SSH research has to offer, from an innovation perspective?
- How could SSH researchers be more engaged in the development of public policies for innovation?
- What are the challenges of bringing both sides together with a view to matching innovation policies and the countries’ development needs?

The study was based on: 1) the identification of SSH research groups on innovation, mainly in Latin America; 2) an extensive literature review on the SSH research-policy links, which provided the conceptual framework for the field work; and 3) a survey consisting in the conduction of around 50 in-depth, semi-structured interviews to researchers and policymakers from selected Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela), and to a few selected researchers from developed countries (Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United
A qualitative data analysis program (Atlas.ti) was used to process the information gathered.

The objective of this study was to gain a better understanding of the STI research-policy nexus, based on the perception of this nexus by researchers and policymakers (PM) in Latin America. Plenty of studies deal with the research / knowledge-policy nexus but we found no one focusing on the STI field from a social sciences perspective. The comprehensive description of findings and conclusions from this research are presented in a report that is publicly available on the EULAKS website (http://eulaks.eu/document/4265.html). The findings include the following:

i) The empirical work enabled us to propose a taxonomy of modes of articulation between research and policy-making:

   a. **Arm’s length mode**: the national research community and policy-makers work at a distance. The logic that moves both parties, including the incentive system, precludes a jointly negotiated research agenda.

   b. **Connected distance mode**: bridges exist between the two communities but no systematic connections, which still results in independent agenda fixing.
c. **Hands-on mode**: innovation research agenda and policy design are strongly connected.

ii) Overall, the main types of influence of SSH research on policy perceived by the interviewees are: *conceptual* (influencing the way of thinking of PM) and ‘*embodied*’ (through the movement of persons between the academy and the policy sphere). Few cases of *instrumental* use were reported. Researchers’ perception is that the impact of their research is mainly intangible, built up through time and through many actors, and highly dependant on the particular institutional and political context of the moment.

iii) There is a wide-ranging diversity in researchers’ view on the obstacles to the research-policy nexus. We classified them in five intertwined categories: (i) mismatches between research supply and demand, or related to the so-called ‘two communities problem’; (ii) limitations of research itself; (iii) obstacles derived from the mere nature of the policy-making process; (iv) governability issues; and (v) external influences.

Nexus develop, among others, through: people moving from academia to policy positions and vice versa; joint calls for policy oriented research projects, further debating results and recommendations; specific think tanks, etc.

Though no country fits exactly or invariably into one of these stylised modes, if we were to classify the surveyed countries Brazil, Chile and Cuba would belong to the hands-on mode, Venezuela presently to the arm’s length mode, and Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay, at a different rate, to the connected distance mode. The articulation modes appear to be highly dependant on the specific institutional context as expressed in the corresponding National Innovation System.

In sum, how project results are disseminated and, more generally, how dialogue is strengthened between SSH researchers and policy-makers, especially with a view to agenda fixing in the field of STI, should be a major concern in Latin America in order to make a better use of research capacities. No single or simple solutions can be put forward, but seeking to lower the barriers identified in the study is a way to tackle the problem. For example, researchers should be incentivised to develop policy-relevant projects, where they engage with policy-makers and other stakeholders from an early stage (design) and end up with policy briefings that are understandable and useable by policy-makers in framing, selecting
and / or evaluating policies. More broadly, in the first world, best practices increasingly recognise the importance of knowledge brokerage and other forms of ‘boundary work’ (think tanks, advisory bodies, etc.) between scientists and policy-makers to overcome the ‘two communities problems’. Latin America has a long way to go in this presently underexplored action field. In terms of the above mentioned taxonomy, a main challenge is to devise institutional tools to facilitate the move towards more hands-on modes of articulating SSH research and policy making in the field of STI; doing so implies changing the innovative context.

3.3) Findings from an EU – LAC comparison of indicators for the Knowledge Society

There has been a great deal of attention paid to measuring Information Society developments. There have been efforts to develop new statistics and systems of indicators to measure the diffusion of new information technologies (IT) in business and to examine levels of use and styles of use (e.g. e-commerce). The efforts are ongoing and provide valuable material with which to compare different countries, regions and industrial sectors. There have also been many efforts to measure information activities, ranging from simple headcounts of information occupations to more elaborate maps of information industries.

Other features of the knowledge-based society have also attracted a great deal of attention. Indicators are an important instrument for monitoring the dynamics of knowledge societies and to generate information for better policy interventions. In this sense, the main purpose of the research has been to understand the differences between European and Latin American countries in accomplishing their strategies and policies to construct and access the knowledge-based society. The central focus of the work was the assessment of the need for an improvement of knowledge society indicators and for statistical capacity building in order to capture the dynamics of the Knowledge Society in Latin American and Caribbean countries and to make them comparable to EU and OECD standards. The research was based on three different approaches.

The first approach was to analyse the use of indicators, mainly based on the OECD and World Bank methodologies, which are supposed to show the building of knowledge capacity of societies. A review of the current status of Knowledge Society statistics in a
selected number of Latin American countries was carried out for this purpose. Besides the differences between European and Latin American countries, the research also focused on the identification of the gaps in the construction of indicators among Latin American countries. In order to better understand such differences, the analysis also took into account the socio-economic conditions required for the access to the Knowledge Society.

The second approach was to analyse innovation surveys as a component of the set of indicators of the knowledge-based society. It includes three main areas which have been studied by means of literature review and analysis of policy documents: (a) the history and rationale of science and technology statistics, (b) the emergence and characteristics of innovation measurement, and (c) the comparative analysis of European and Latin American innovation surveys.

The third approach was a particular aspect of the advancement of Latin American and Caribbean countries in constructing and creating access to the Knowledge Society through the use of virtual education, which is considered as a new tool to learn and disseminate knowledge. Here, the analysis was focused on two dimensions: (a) the organisational changes in universities that implement virtual education services and methods, as well as the universities’ capacities to harness ICT for new learning processes. The analysis was based on an online questionnaire, which was complemented with several interviews to officials responsible for virtual education programmes.

The following summarises the general findings from each aspect of this research:

i) The is a gap between the countries of the European Union and Latin American countries as regards the variables that can be used to measure the access to the Knowledge Society. While the countries of the European Union benefit from a considerable advantage, as they have managed to put together a set of specific variables and standardise the available data of the member states. In the case of the Latin American countries, the task of defining variables and taking measurements is till pending. What is measured in these countries are essentially knowledge result variables, and even though significant progress has been made in the standardisation through regional networks and organisations like RICYT, there are still no signs of a determined drive to make analytical and conceptual progress towards setting suitable parameters for the Knowledge Society.
Of the Latin American countries analysed, the ones that have taken the biggest steps forward in defining an indicator matrix are Mexico and Brazil. In the case of Mexico, in the field of science and technology indicators, the INEGI has a subset of indicators relating to the Information Society. This is the result of a major, albeit incomplete, effort to create indicators to gauge the progress made by Mexican society in its insertion in the knowledge-based society.

ii) The comparison of the EU Community Innovation Surveys with the efforts made in Latin America to develop a region-oriented innovation measurement manual (Bogotá Manual) as well as diverse examples of national innovation surveys, revealed that there are very little differences between the European and Latin American surveys. In short, they are mainly based in the OECD Oslo Manual. It has to be mentioned that the Latin American efforts had certain influence in the amendments included in the third edition of the Oslo Manual (2005).

The conclusions show, firstly, that despite the OECD efforts to move away from the framework of orthodox economics with regard to STI policies, concerning innovation indicators, these are still heavily based on this economic theory, since the input-output approach is some sort of accountable version of the production function. Concerning knowledge society indicators, innovation indicators could be very useful in as much as they include knowledge transfer and innovation capabilities, entrepreneurial behaviour, framework conditions and other factors as drivers of the Knowledge Society. Particularly these latter could be used to analyse gaps with regard to economic catch-up, the democratisation of knowledge and its equal distribution across society.

iii) Virtual education structures are active nuclei of the Latin American Knowledge Societies. The research showed the main organisational characteristics of virtual education structures in a set of 41 universities in Mexico (26 cases) and the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The results were organised according to three organisational principles:

a. the actors (the group of people who manage the virtual education structures),
b. the processes (the data on the dynamics of the virtual education systems), and
c. the structure (the social and technical characteristics of the virtual education systems).
The findings about the actors were that managers of virtual education systems have several educational backgrounds and trajectories, but their responsibilities have collaborative and innovative tasks. About processes, we proposed a conceptual model for the modes of expansion of virtual education structures, according to four drivers for that expansion.

Virtual education is a powerful expansion vehicle for Latin American universities and from the point of view of information it is probably the most active producer of data from the university itself. This leads to a question for the future: How can Latin American universities face the challenge of assimilating the reflective and economic power of virtual education structures and virtual education practices, to generate a new strategy for organisation? This question is linked to another: How are Latin American universities transformed or, more specifically, which areas of the university are transformed by the presence of these new actors and practices of the Knowledge Society?

3.4) Findings from strategic studies on research community building between Digital Ecosystem between EU and LAC

In this activity the implementation process of Digital Ecosystems (DEs) was analysed, assuming a dependence on specific regional contexts. We summarised the state of the art of DE definitions and goals, and underlined the relevance of DEs as an approach to sustainable development through innovation that considers technology adoption as a social process, driven by social networking actions and collaboration. This implies at least three important elements. First, there has to be collaboration among social actors (in other words, connectivity among agents is required for the implementation of DEs). Second, it is required that social actors have something to offer to other actors, otherwise the collaboration may not be possible and / or sustainable (learning capacities and absorption capacities have to be heterogeneous and close to the state of the art, and possibly determined by local common practice). Third, it is supposed that ICTs can amplify both connectivity and absorption capacities.
The research was motivated by the desire to strengthen the link between theoretical and policy-oriented research relevant to DEs theory. This resulted in an improved understanding through the integration of three distinct research perspectives: theoretical, based on hypotheses and assumptions to be verified or falsified when applied to the Latin American context; qualitative and quantitative empirical data gathering and analysis, including the visualisation and analysis of networks of firms and institutions in Argentina; and applied, focused on the development of a policy analysis visualization tool, whose main contribution is the possibility of comparing relatively different regions through the aggregation of their regional characteristics and framework conditions (i.e. stage in the development process), and allowing the formulation of tailored policy options.

As shown in figure 2, the tool aims to visualise the main dimensions of policy-making that are relevant to sustainable development and consistent with the DE hypotheses. In addition to Absorption Capacity, ICT Adoption, Connectivity, and Social Capital (not shown in this figure), we postulate that a fifth dimension should be added: ‘Level of participatory governance’. By governance we mean, for example, the manner in which open source communities of SMEs and developers are organised (e.g. the Plone community). Communities of firms could organise themselves in a manner similar to how communities of OSS developers organise themselves for those aspects of their work that require coordinated collaboration (standards, business modelling languages, regulatory environment, etc.). This is an argument for (1) the benefits of more structure in the market than the atomised (ideal gas) model of neoclassical economics and (2) a bottom-up process for arriving at such a structure.

Figure 3 shows the mapping of the different indicator categories to the DE hypotheses. Additionally, the appropriation conditions (understanding them as micro-meso-macro formal and informal regulations able to restrict or promote some production activities and/or behaviours) of each context could affect the connectivity and ICT adoption dimensions and their relationship, and hence ultimately the innovation processes in a given region or territory. Our research is therefore indicating that an effective strategy to achieve sustainable socio-economic development is through the integration of processes of social innovation with the adoption of information and communication technologies in an economic context characterised by a balance of competition and collaboration.
**Figure 2:** Policy analysis visualization tool

**Figure 3:** Map of policy indicators and DE hypotheses
4) Part two – Summary of key messages from the EULAKS policy workshop

The policy workshop of the EULAKS project, which was held at the London School of Economics on September 23 – 24 2010, served as the final milestone of the project in order to submit the above summarised findings for discussion to a targeted audience of stakeholders from the spheres of practice and policymaking. On the whole, the findings of our research revealed significant gaps in realising the full potential the SSH can make to public policymaking. The discussions during the workshop were centred on three clusters of topics that can orient the rethinking about possible ways and methodologies to insert the SSH more effectively in the policymaking process.

The first cluster focused on approaches to assess the impact of research on policy. The presentation by Annette Boaz (Kings College London), which considered the ways in which organisations go about assessing the impact of research on policy, was guided by the question how do we know whether research is feeding into policy. By drawing on research conducted for the EU Scientific Knowledge for Environmental Protection (SKEP) funding stream, her presentation brought to bear that the assessment of contributions from SSH research to policy in a context where public policies involve both governmental and non-governmental actors requires the selection of methods to capture the context and complexity of the interactive processes of knowledge production and its demand by public policy.

The second cluster was focused on the strengthening of the SSH research – policy nexus. By drawing on the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme Christina von Fürstenberg (UNESCO) addressed the issue of how to adopt an innovative approach to the research – policy nexus, i.e. how to make social science the facilitator of participatory public policy approaches and of the creation of spaces that would promote public policy deliberation. In her presentation she staked out this argument, and linked it with the establishment of online deliberative spaces for bridging social science knowledge, public policies and action. The activities of the MOST Programme, which are “going beyond established ‘evidence based’ approaches that more often than not adopt an almost causal attitude towards the interpenetrating processes between the realms of policies and knowledge” (Papanagnou, 2010: 7), have made significant steps towards innovating the SSH – policy nexus, especially with a focus to define new tools for distributing social science knowledge to target groups.
The third cluster looked at the way collaboration networks between Europe and LAC countries have developed over the 24 years since the first Science, Technology and Development (STD) Programme in 1984. The presentation by Jane Russel ( Autonomous National University of Mexico), which was based on the results of a bibliometric work in Mexico, started with a global view of research from Latin America showing increased international visibility and networking and went on to illustrate the role of collaboration with the EU in this scenario.

On the other hand, various speakers and experts that participated in the workshop touched upon a set of issues that looks like an emerging new perspective to carrying out social science research. Central to this perspective is that the social sciences are regarded not as a set of disciplines but as a process of interactive and continuous learning. Applying concepts of organisational learning (Annette Boaz) to: (1) the performance of social sciences knowledge, seems to be a promising way to go. Such a perspective calls for the creation of new intermediate structures to bridge researchers with decision-makers.

Transforming the SSH into a societal process centred on learning, knowledge brokering and public involvement (Christina von Fürstenberg), presents a major challenge for both European and Latin American SSH research communities. And, if this is the road to take, then funding structures, disciplinary organisations and even epistemic foundations of the SSH will also face huge challenges in both regions.
5) Part three – Rethinking the SSH – policymaking nexus in the context of the evolving EU-LAC Knowledge Area: Drawing on the EULAKS experience

Performing influential research means breaking the routine of policymaking and adding new knowledge and new concepts from new perspectives (including the SSH). This means not only effecting particular policies from a research basis, but having a long lasting influence on a country’s capacity to broaden its policymaking horizon and improving the ways in which governments make decisions. Research only gets valuable for policymaking when it is translated into practice. The nexus between the socio-economic science and policy is a profoundly practical concern: Whether they realise it or not, policymakers need enhanced links between research (in particular socio-economic research) and policy because, in their absence, policies are unlikely to achieve their objectives. The challenge consists therefore in establishing a renewed basis for policy that takes account of its indispensable anchoring in rigorous social science knowledge.

The principal goal of the EULAKS project was the creation of a space for horizontal learning between SSH scholars and communities of relevant stakeholders and policymakers. To attain this goal, the project connected European and Latin American researchers, research organisations and key agencies from a broad range of disciplines that vary in their research focus and methodological preference, yet made significant contributions to the building of a shared understanding of the Knowledge Society. The project as a whole contributed to the promotion of the dialogue both among the communities of SSH researchers of both regions and between SSH research and policymaking. The key messages of the findings of the EULAKS project, which are also related to defining the role of the SSH in the evolution of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area, are currently prepared for inclusion in the ongoing drafting process of a roadmap as part of the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation between the European Union and Latin America. And, in a broader sense, it will be important to feed the findings of our research into a context of international policy networks where social science researchers facilitate the use of social science research in policymaking and negotiate the ways how to make more efficient use of SSH research in the policymaking cycle.
6) References


European Commission (2010b), *Towards the EU-LAC Knowledge Area: Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union for Sustainable Development and Social Inclusion*, Brussels: European Commission


