

SSH research and education essential for mankind

Upon invitation of *the League of European Research Universities (LERU)* and Leiden University, some of the world's leading research university associations gathered in Leiden, the Netherlands, to discuss and stress the importance of Social Sciences and Humanities research in a globalized world.

Mankind is confronted with complex problems such as economic fragility, religious extremism or an ageing population. Solving these, and many other problems cannot be done without Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

The research in SSH is crucial in developing the knowledge to confront these complex societal problems because it contributes to better cross-cultural understanding, whether this be through history, law, economics, literature, sociology or any other SSH discipline. Furthermore a fully effective implementation of technological responses to global challenges requires a profound understanding of human needs, values and motivations.

Next to essential research, Social Sciences and Humanities have an crucial role in educating us how to understand, interpret, and respect our commonalities and our differences. Increased globalization brings increased cultural, social, and economic tensions. Therefore a peaceful and sustainable future based on successful economic and societal development requires an awareness of different perspectives and an understanding of diverse cultures, histories and social institutions. Mutual understanding can foster the respect necessary for a peaceful and stable world order in which economic and societal progress is possible.

The [League of European Research Universities](#) (LERU), the [Association of American Universities](#) (AAU), the [Association of East Asian Research Universities](#) (AEARU), the [Group of Eight Australia](#), the [RU11 Japan](#), the [Russell Group](#) (UK), and the [U15 \(Canada\)](#) committed themselves to working together to advance the characteristics described in the '[Leiden Statement](#)'.

With this statement the research-intensive university networks want to restate and champion the fundamental role that SSH play in our global community and call for an expanded role for the SSH in tackling problems through interdisciplinary research. The signatories committed themselves to:

- 1) Ensure that SSH disciplines continue to receive effective support within their institutions
- 2) Highlight the contributions of these disciplines to national and global wellbeing;
- 3) Ensure that SSH research and education programs flow without unnecessary constraint to the wider community;
- 4) Promote strong funding and support for SSH research;
- 5) Advance global research collaborations, including interdisciplinary approaches.

LERU Chair, Prof. Alain Beretz (president of the University of Strasbourg), reacts: "SSH research is crucial to understanding and solving the problems global society is dealing with and will need to deal with in the future. Furthermore LERU believes that a better support and promotion of interdisciplinary research, and of global research collaboration, will lead to new understandings that improve the quality of life".

The Chair of the LERU Community of SSH, Prof. Wim van den Doel (dean of Humanities at Leiden University) adds: "Students from the Social Sciences and Humanities work in government, business and the non-profit sector and add tremendous value to society by taking with them the knowledge and understanding of languages, cultures and societies of the world which enables them to create a richer, resilient and of more divers and humane society".

Signatories of the Leiden Statement:

The League of European Research Universities - <https://www.leru.org>

The Association of American Universities - <https://www.aau.edu/>

The Group of Eight (Australia) - <http://www.go8.edu.au/>

The Association of East Asian Research Universities - <http://www.aearu.org/>

The RU 11 (Japan) - <http://www.ru11.jp/>

The Russell Group (United Kingdom) - <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

The U15 (Canada) - <http://u15.ca/>

More information

Please contact Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General LERU: +32 499 80 89 99 - kurt.deketelaere@leru.org

Media contact - Bart Valkenaers, Press and Communications Officer:
+32 498 08 43 49 or bart.valkenaers@leru.org

About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
- Universiteit Leiden
- KU Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lund University
- University of Milan
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Pierre & Marie Curie University
- Université Paris-Sud
- University of Strasbourg
- Utrecht University
- University of Zurich

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