

Actions speak louder than words

First ACCOMPLISSH conference shows the need for academia to move beyond their institutions

On the 21st of November, 200 people from all over Europe gathered together in Rome to attend a conference on the importance of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) research and the potential this research could have for society. The conference has been organised by the ACCOMPLISSH consortium, in which municipalities, enterprises, civil societies and universities from 12 different European Countries are collaborating.

The conference was not only successful measured by the number of attendees, but also because it brought together experts from different sectors on an equal basis because for the first time. With this radical approach, ACCOMPLISSH likes to get rid of the (in)visible barriers between partners and countries.

The keynote speakers zoomed in on the role this project could have on important issues like **Open Innovation** (*Bror Salmelin - special advisor for the European Commission*), the importance of **interdisciplinarity** to tackle challenges (*Georgios Papanagnou Policy advisor for the European Commission*) in Europe and the role **national funding agencies** could play in this (*Renée van Kessel-Hagesteijn - Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research*).

The ACCOMPLISSH consortium believes that genuine and impactful changes can only happen when people working closely together in a process called 'co-creation'. Part of the project is therefore set up new projects between universities, governments, civil societies and enterprises. The first results of this process of 'co-creation in practice' were also being presented at the conference. In the afternoon, a panel of European experts on impact discussed the challenges and opportunities SSH research could have in a changing Europe.

During a side event one day later in the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome, around 100 people from different sectors took the co-creation approach a little bit further and came up with a preliminary set of recommendations to the European Commission. Conclusion so far: 'let's stop talking, let's start involving people and work together to improve Europe'.

The ACCOMPLISSH (ACcelerating CO-creation by setting up a Multistakeholder Platform for the Social Sciences and Humanities) project has been funded by the European Commission and is being coordinated by the University of Groningen. The project started in spring 2016 and will run for three years. For more information about the project, please contact j.e.kwakkel@rug.nl or visit our website www.accomplissh.eu

