



European
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EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



EULAKS

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

Grant agreement no.: 217190

Ongoing project

SUMMARY

Objectives of the research

EULAKS connects socio-economic research on the dynamics of the knowledge society in the European Union (EU) and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries.

The evolving knowledge society – meaning that theoretical knowledge and knowledge-based services have become major components of any economic activity – poses new challenges for policy making. The creation of capabilities to produce, process and disseminate knowledge is central for the socio-economic development of nations. Here, the role of social sciences and humanities (SSH) is crucial in the process of promoting, building and shaping the future knowledge-based societies.

As the transformation of societies into knowledge societies is a global concern, international cooperation and collaborative research in this field is of great importance. In that sense, EULAKS focuses its activities on the building of partnerships and networks between social science communities between the EU and LAC region in order to foster a shared understanding of the challenges in the construction of knowledge societies. In both regions social science communities and institutions shall be linked closer to policymakers.

Scientific approach / methodology

During its first year and a half of operation, the EULAKS project has started a variety of analytical studies and supported a number of knowledge sharing activities that promote a shared understanding of the dynamics of the emerging Information and



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Knowledge Society in both regions.

**New knowledge and/or
European added value**

EULAKS provides strategic policy-relevant thinking on the construction and evolution of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area. The knowledge sharing activities that are supported by the project are embedded in the EU-LAC policy dialogue on S&T co-operation and shall contribute to deepen the bi-regional S&T policy dialogue between the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Key messages for
policy-makers,
businesses,
trade unions and
civil society actors**

The target groups addressed by the EULAKS project are social science communities and institutions, policymakers and practitioners of Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) in the EU and the LAC region. A closer collaboration between those actors is needed to evaluate and address appropriately the new challenges that evolve in the knowledge-based society. Bi-regional collaborative research on trends, risks and opportunities of the evolving knowledge society with a strong participation of the SSH may be an important step towards shaping the future.

Objectives of the research

The reflection on new concepts and perspectives in the construction of knowledge societies in Europe and Latin America is a major research objective of EULAKS. Here, the question of the relevance of SSH research capacities is of special interest. On the basis of scientific research and policy-oriented analysis, policy recommendations shall be given to promote the emergence of the knowledge society in the EU and LAC countries and to strengthen the co-operation in SSH between both regions. For that reason trends and patterns of existing co-operation in the SSH between the EU and LAC countries will be identified and the role of the SSH in the design, implementation and monitoring of science, technology and innovation (STI) policies reviewed.

A central subject of research of the EULAKS project are the scientific communities and collaborative EU-LAC research networks with their strengths, weaknesses and future challenges.

Scientific approach / methodology

The scientific approach of the EULAKS project includes various analytical and empirical tasks as the development of questionnaires, interviews, case studies, fact finding missions, literature analysis, mappings, etc.

Main analytical tasks are a review of trends and patterns in SSH co-operation between the EU and LAC which is basically a mapping process based on information gathered through a bibliometric analysis and an online questionnaire-based survey on international research collaboration between LAC and the rest of the world (with special attention to Europe).

Further, an analysis of the role of SSH for STI policy design and implementation in LAC and EU will be implemented. Data will be gained through bibliographic and web searches as well as through semi-structured interviews to researchers and policy makers.

An analysis of scientific communities and collaborative EU-LAC research networks will include three case studies on specific scientific communities to investigate the role of collaborative scientific linkages.

Further analytical and empirical tasks are a EU-LAC comparison of indicators for the knowledge society and a fact finding trip to discuss how the European Digital Ecosystem approach could be implemented in the socio-economic context of Argentina.

New knowledge and European added value

When looking at the figures, the LAC region still lags behind in practically all indicators that measure the progress of the knowledge society. Also the EU has to make greater efforts to promote knowledge as the key engine to secure socio-economic development.

When looking at global patterns of R&D expenditures worldwide in 2007, three regions predominate. North America accounts for 35% of worldwide R&D performance; Asia for 31%; and Europe for 28%. The R&D of countries in the Latin America/Caribbean though only account for 2,4%.¹

When comparing data for PhD graduates in science and engineering and other fields, we have an amount of 308 graduates per million population in Sweden, 178 in the USA, and only 23 in Mexico (even if Mexico shows a rather high annual growth rate in PhD graduates on international level).² Even if there is a lack of reliable knowledge society indicators (here, EULAKS tries to counteract by dedicating a work task to the assessment and improvement of statistical data that makes LAC knowledge society dynamics comparable to EU and OECD standards), the need to catch-up for the LAC region and also some countries of the European Union is evident.

The EULAKS project contributes to the building of a scientific basis for policy making for the building of future knowledge societies in the EU and LAC. This happens through a variety of research activities on the dynamics of the knowledge society and the role of the SSH in the shaping of the knowledge society.

These research activities include:

- A review of trends and patterns in SSH co-operation between the EU and LAC
- An analysis of the role of SSH for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy design and implementation in LAC and EU
- An Analysis of scientific communities and collaborative EU-LAC research networks
- An EU and LAC Comparison of indicators for the knowledge society
- A pilot case studies of Digital Ecosystems in LAC countries

Outputs of the analytical work will be a mapping of Science, Technology & Society capacities in all LAC countries (main institutions, research groups, disciplines, topics and approaches) and the identification of thematic fields of priority. This knowledge will reveal mutual research interests between the EU and LAC region and potential fields and topics for future collaboration. Personal linkages between professionals of

¹ Figures from the National Science Foundation

² Figures from the OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2008

specific fields of interest of both regions are promoted through diverse knowledge sharing activities organised by the EULAKS project.

Joint research activities on specific societal problems will again build a basis for the formulation of policy recommendations. Those policy recommendations shall have the intention to strengthen the co-operation in the SSH between the EU and LAC on the one hand, and to develop a common understanding and perspectives on the building of the knowledge-based society on the other hand.

The creation and exchange of knowledge is the main concern of the EULAKS project and was successfully achieved in the joint realization of a number of high-level knowledge exchange events (as an international conference in Vienna and a summer school in Mexico) .

They gave support to the consolidation of networks between European and Latin American SSH research communities that are engaged in the development of systematic participatory vision-building processes on the future of science, technology and society in both regions. To name a concrete example for a networking building activity of EULAKS, the work package on Digital Ecosystems Research has to be named, where new collaborations between communities and networks in EU and LAC engaged in research on multi-disciplinary approaches concerned with the role ICTs and new media are established.

Various knowledge sharing activities of EULAKS are:

- An international conference on the knowledge society development in EU and LAC in Vienna
- A summer school in Mexico City on the role of the SSH in the construction of the knowledge society
- A workshop on knowledge society foresight capacity building
- A final policy workshop with recommendations for policy makers

In sum, the organization of knowledge sharing events, the building of EU-LAC learning and research networks and the dissemination of information material and policy papers shall contribute to raise awareness within societies in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean for common challenges in the emerging knowledge societies and for the relevance of the SSH in the building of the EU-LAC policy dialog on science and technology cooperation.

**Key messages for
policy-makers,
businesses,
trade unions and
civil society actors**

In societies based on knowledge, regulation of knowledge has enormous powers to either enlarge the options and opportunities of people to use new knowledge to their benefit and socio-economic development. Or, it enhances the risk of pushing dynamics of social exclusion.

The growth of knowledge and technical capacities is more and more driven and controlled by economic and military purposes. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Social Sciences and Humanities to adopt a strong role in the shaping of public policies in a way that social and environmental costs of the application of new knowledge is reduced, respectively converted into positive effects on society.

EULAKS therefore stands for a proactive regulation of new knowledge with a strong participation of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Knowledge understood as a public good calls for strong public policies, respectively for the recognition of « knowledge politics » as a new field of political activity that includes the involvement of all parts of society and all scientific disciplines.

Research on the dynamics of the knowledge society lays the ground for the formulation of public policies. The SSH may analyze social effects of new knowledge, technology and innovation and make recommendations for the management of the innovative change.

Also, as S,T&I policies are getting more complex, the SSH shall focus considerable research efforts on the matching of social needs with technological capacities and work closely together with the whole S,T&I community (here, technology foresight – also promoted by diverse EULAKS activities – may be applied very successfully).

SSH research may also contribute to the development of organizations that are conducive to knowledge production and dissemination and advise policy makers on matters as resource allocation or best practices.

As we think of the evolution of knowledge societies as a global phenomenon, research on this topic has to be thought and conducted on a global level as well.

It is important to support current and future collaborative research endeavours in the field of SSH and to strengthen networks that link social science communities and institutions to policymakers and practitioners. EULAKS focuses here on the bi-regional research collaboration between the countries of the

European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Especially in terms of the realization of a EU-LAC Knowledge Area, which according to the Guadalajara Declaration (2004) "should be built on the results of the successful science and technology bi-regional dialogue and include reinforcement of cooperation in science and technology, higher education, innovation and information and communication technologies", networks and partnerships between social science communities of both regions shall be supported and a shared understanding of the challenges in the construction of knowledge societies be fostered.

Knowledge sharing activities are here a strong instrument to accomplish the joint building of a EU-LAC Knowledge Area. The EULAKS project supported a number of such knowledge sharing events (such as the expert policy workshop on foresight, the EULAKS conference and the EULAKS summer school) that were furthermore embedded in the EU-LAC policy dialogue on S&T co-operation. EULAKS provides therefore strategic policy-relevant thinking on the construction and evolution of the EU-LAC Knowledge Area.

In the final policy workshop at the London School of Economics the results of the analytical work carried out by the EULAKS project will be presented to targeted groups of relevant stakeholders and policy makers. So, a bridge will be built between SSH research on dynamics of the knowledge society and public policy making.

PROJECT IDENTITY

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