

# Research Beyond Borders

A group of five diverse young adults are gathered on a canal bridge in Amsterdam. Three people are standing and talking, while two are sitting on a bicycle. The background shows traditional Dutch canal houses and a boat. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

The value of European  
networks in the social  
sciences and humanities



Established in 2004, NORFACE  
– New Opportunities for  
Research Funding Agency  
Cooperation in Europe – is  
a collaborative partnership  
between 19 European research  
councils that support work in the  
social and behavioural sciences.

Since 2004, HERA – Humanities  
in the European Research Area  
– has provided a similar network  
for national funding agencies  
in the humanities. The network  
has grown from 13 to 25  
organisations today.

‘The success of the HERA and NORFACE networks is a tribute to the vision and effort of our partners who, by pooling financial resources and expertise from many national perspectives, demonstrate their commitment to building a vibrant and strong European social science and humanities research community. European Commission funding has been instrumental in establishing and achieving the success of the networks and the funded projects.

NORFACE and HERA are distinct independent networks with their own partners, aims and objectives, and both represent large varied disciplinary communities. From their establishment in 2004, for both networks there has been a clear commitment to a collective vision of European researchers working across countries and across disciplines to achieve the European Research Area for our communities, and to address societal and cultural issues in ways not normally possible within conventional national funding programmes. This remains the key motivation for future work. The value of the networks can be demonstrated by the continued commitment of the partners and the inclusion of new partners over time. In particular we welcome the growing engagement of the newer European Member States.

The impact on the research communities is clear – the projects funded under the joint research programmes have not only produced innovative research, they have also built new networks for future projects, trained new researchers, and promoted knowledge exchange.

HERA and NORFACE are proud to have been able to make a contribution to the European research landscape in this way and look forward to a strong and dynamic future for both networks.’



**Prof. Kerstin Sahlin**

Swedish Research Council  
Chair of the NORFACE  
Network Board



**Dr. hab. Wojciech Sowa**

National Science Centre Poland  
Chair of the HERA  
Network Board



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# Summary

HERA and NORFACE are two **pioneering, high-profile networks** that have shown when researchers and organisations co-operate across borders, far more can be achieved than only working nationally.

Europe, and all countries in Europe, face **complex societal and cultural challenges**. NORFACE and HERA were established in 2004 to enable the **large scale international research collaboration** needed to address complex issues and questions. Together, the networks reflect on what has been achieved and their future aims.

It is clear the HERA and NORFACE networks, programmes and projects are **highly valued** by researchers, policy makers, funding organisations and wider stakeholders. Their trans-national calls are hugely popular and the distinctive contribution both networks make to the European funding landscape and achieving **research with impact** are considered a key strength.

Substantial investment in trans-national projects and other activities have made a major contribution to **establishing the European Research Area, removing barriers to international collaboration and funding excellent multi-disciplinary research**. The networks have led to the creation of new opportunities and shared learning on knowledge exchange and impact with many projects working with a broad variety of organisations from government and museums to community groups.

Research funding organisations benefit from their involvement with HERA and NORFACE in many different ways; because of the **excellence** of their joint research programmes, the value of **sharing best practice**, and the importance of the **relationships** that organisations develop through the networks.

The network partners remain **strongly committed** to HERA and NORFACE in the future. They would like to see HERA and NORFACE continue to fund research, and develop a **leading advocacy role**, demonstrating the **importance of social sciences and humanities-led research across Europe**.



# Leading research for a better future

Today many stakeholders share the vision of an European Research Area (ERA), where ideas and people can flow freely, and research can make the strongest possible contribution to resolving societal challenges and supporting growth and inclusion. Social sciences and humanities are integral to this vision; offering new ways of understanding societies, cultures

— Both HERA and NORFACE have a very good reputation, and getting a grant from them is a prestigious achievement for researchers —

Dr. Ingrid Kissling, director Social Sciences and Humanities, Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

and identities, challenging assumptions, generating new ideas and pushing the boundaries of creativity and knowledge. By acting together in partnership, research funding networks like HERA and NORFACE make an important and unique contribution to enabling and mobilising researchers to ask bigger questions, identifying new topics and issues, developing new approaches and working across disciplines and sectors. They are strengthening European research capacity, and proving how social science and humanities researchers are essential to national and European initiatives.

Over the years both NORFACE and HERA have proven to be successful in, and will continue to strive for:

- Mobilising research in the social sciences and humanities across Europe;
- Funding innovative joint research programmes involving several countries, focused on tackling shared priorities for research;
- Funding excellent research projects enabling collaboration across disciplines, countries and sectors, with an emphasis on maximising impact;
- Co-ordinating and aligning national research policies, increasing their efficacy;
- Sharing best practices in supporting research and thereby maximising its impact.

To date, NORFACE has awarded 52 trans-national projects in four joint research programmes (JRP) with a total investment of € 71.4 million. The results of its fifth JRP are expected in spring 2018. Four of the NORFACE programmes have been co-funded by the European Commission, including the current € 14 million call.

HERA, with European Commission co-funding, has funded three joint research programmes, with a total investment of € 55.6 million to 55 trans-national projects. A fourth € 20 million joint call, with European Commission funding, was launched in summer 2017.

Please find an overview of the programmes on the final page of this brochure.

**The networks have shown that when researchers and organisations co-operate across borders, far more can be achieved. Their funding has stimulated the development of excellent academic, technical and creative thinking and encouraged researchers to maximise**

— ERA-NETS (and the Nordic networks) have remained a priority in Denmark, despite an overall decrease in funding —

Mette Søndergaard Nielsen, Office of the Independent Research Fund Denmark (IRFD)

**the impact of their research to help tackle social problems and gain greater cultural understanding. They have created research networks that continue to flourish and expand even after the projects are no longer funded.**



*Fashioning the Early Modern* examined how fashions spread across Europe, and the relevance of this to contemporary questions of creativity and innovation. A truly collaborative project, it generated significant new knowledge on the establishment of fashion 'systems', trade routes and cultural practices. It opened up national collections to international research, worked with modern day designers, addressed issues of copyright and fed into the new £ 6 million 'Europe 1600-1815' gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum (UK).

*Fashioning the Early Modern* was funded under the HERA theme 'Humanities as a source of creativity and innovation' and was led by Professor Evelyn Welch, Kings College London (UK).



The project *Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study in Four European Countries* (CILS4EU) established the first strictly comparative panel study of youth with and without a migration background. In 2010, students aged 14 years were sampled in England, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, and interviewed in three consecutive years. Data includes comprehensive information on aspects of structural, cultural and social integration of the students, as well as further information from parents and teachers. The project created an enduring infrastructure for intergenerational integration of immigrants and continues to add waves of data collection and countries. Currently, six waves of data collection have been carried out.

CILS4EU was initially funded through the NORFACE Migration programme and is led by Prof. Frank Kalter, University of Mannheim (Germany).



**Questions on, for example, migration, cultural heritage, (in)equality, sustainability, and learning from our shared pasts, cannot be tackled in isolation. By funding excellent research, encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches and removing barriers for international collaboration, HERA and NORFACE have made a major contribution to establishing the European Research Area in the Social Sciences and Humanities.**

**Both networks fund research with impact - to achieve this, partners from a wide variety of sectors, including museums, government, business, archives, education, and community groups are directly involved in research projects. Research funded by HERA and NORFACE has changed policies, opened up national and cultural assets for increased international use, engaged the public, and informed broader policy debates at a local, national and regional level.**







# Fostering new levels of European co-operation

**By bringing together funding bodies, the NORFACE and HERA networks create a unique and invaluable resource for the sharing of specialist expertise and advice relating to national capacity building, which has knock-on benefits across the national systems**

— HERA and NORFACE have definitely had a positive impact on capacity-building in the new EU-13 countries. Besides research, it has helped the researchers from newer EU Member States to develop the skills of writing project proposals, and project management. Learning from the more experienced researchers has been a great advantage of participation in the networks. —

Jelena Dukic, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (CAS)

**involved. Particularly for the newer EU Member States, it has opened doors to establishing new contacts, finding new forms of collaboration, and enabled access to new international funding opportunities. The networks provide an effective support system that helps researchers with limited previous experience.**

Being a small European country, Lithuania values opportunities for international collaboration between researchers.

For the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL), participating in HERA and NORFACE has had great added value, enabling Lithuanian researchers to build new international networks in the social sciences and humanities. As a research funding organisation it has significantly increased knowledge of the management and administration of international programmes. Involvement in the networks has increased understanding of humanities research at a national level, and contributed to the growth of international collaboration in the social sciences.

Kornelija Janaviciute (RCL) says that they are looking forward to further opportunities for closer co-operation between humanities and social science researchers in Europe.

**The strong partnerships and experience of HERA and NORFACE have facilitated wider engagement and joint learning with other activities. The Transatlantic Platform for Social Sciences and Humanities (T-AP), and the European-India Platform for Social Sciences and Humanities (EqUIP), have been able to build on established partnerships and create new relationships between European organisations and global funders and researchers.**

— Involvement in NORFACE and HERA directly influenced our decision to join these platforms, and we now have greater knowledge of these international research communities and funders —

Carlos Almeida Pereira and Luisa Igreja, Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT, Portugal)

# Achievements and ambitions

For the research community, the networks have:

- Created new and innovative funding opportunities of significant scale, with robust assessment, for supporting excellent research and international collaboration;
- Enabled research funding to be pooled to benefit research tackling societal challenges that all European countries face;
- Enabled researchers to build international networks and take part in international consortia and matchmaking events, which has a positive effect on strengthening research in their own countries.

— HERA and NORFACE have provided opportunities for international collaboration for Norwegian researchers, enabling them to carry out research on a scale that would have been very challenging to do within a national programme. HERA has also provided an opportunity to exchange best practices, and an arena for showcasing the important contribution of humanities research in tackling societal challenges —

Lillian Baltzrud and Solbjørg Rauset, Research Council of Norway (RCN)



NORFACE and HERA strive to develop research programmes that address timely and relevant topics that require innovative approaches from the social sciences and humanities. These themes stimulate multi and trans disciplinary working, enable innovative methods and address cross-cutting issues, which will increase potential impact. Across all activities the European added value is an essential criteria and where relevant, they look to build on existing research or infrastructure. For example, the NORFACE Welfare States Futures programme explicitly called for comparative research with European added value and applicants were asked to explore opportunities to use existing data before deciding to collect novel data.



— Among the significant achievements of NORFACE has been the setting-up of a robust and efficient assessment process for research proposals. Some of these rigorous processes have influenced internal discussions at the French national research agency and have ultimately been adopted —

Pierre-Olivier Pin, Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR)

**For the funding organisations, HERA and NORFACE have proven to be stable, well-functioning networks, across Europe and beyond. They continue to be a valuable source for improving policies and practice in supporting excellent science. The networks have:**

- **Contributed to the establishment of a European Research Area in the social sciences and humanities, and created further opportunities for collaboration involving the newer Member States;**
- **Built strong relationships between partners, leading to involvement in other international initiatives and collaborative activities;**
- **Focused attention at a national level on the benefits of international collaboration in research and research policy, and aligning national priorities;**
- **Created a platform for exchanging knowledge and best practice in research funding, both on a national and international level, and finding synergies between research projects.**

**In particular, HERA has:**

- **Increased the visibility of humanities-led research, both nationally and Europe-wide;**
- **Helped to showcase the contribution of humanities-led research in addressing societal challenges;**
- **Provided a coherent voice for humanities-led research, ensuring that it has a place within European research funding programmes (including the Framework Programmes).**

— HERA was fundamental in demonstrating that humanities can do large scale collaborative research. It challenged the established notion of the lone scholar, and raised the profile of humanities research across other disciplines and within universities. It also raised the profile of European Commission funding for the humanities —

Peter Brown, director Irish Research Council (IRC)

**In particular, NORFACE has:**

- **Identified strategically important subjects within the social sciences in its research programmes;**
- **Helped to address these subjects in innovative ways, and with a lasting impact.**

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) has implemented a policy aimed at stimulating the utilisation of knowledge for society and the economy. Knowledge utilisation increasingly takes place in networks of researchers, businesses and civil society organisations. NWO therefore actively supports researchers and encourages their activities where necessary in order to convey the possible importance of their research to society and to involve stakeholders. Since 2013, knowledge utilisation is a required assessment criteria for all research proposals.

Being involved in international collaborations such as NORFACE and HERA and engaging with other organisations in Europe on this subject has been of vital importance in developing and implementing this policy and practice at NWO.





## Looking to the future

Over the next five years, HERA and NORFACE partners would like to see the networks continue to:

- Develop innovative research programmes on important subjects and continue to secure support from the European community, through both the Framework Programmes and partner co-funding;
- Create new opportunities, by involving wide participation of European Member States as well as partners outside of Europe, whilst remaining effective;
- Improve procedures, including around the development and assessment of research programmes and the sharing of best practice across other international activities;
- Advocate for humanities and social sciences-led research within the European Research Area, together and as individual networks representing their respective disciplines;
- Explore joint multi-disciplinary opportunities.

HERA and NORFACE remain strongly committed to the exchange of learning, and are exploring joint activities, both with each other and with other networks, within Europe and worldwide.

- NORFACE has been a strong and positive force in European social science, and we remain committed to its future development —

Jeremy Neathey, deputy director for Research and International,  
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UK)



The HERA partners would like to:

- Formulate interdisciplinary research questions, which help to make the most of humanities-led research in tackling Europe's common societal challenges;
- Develop focused research programmes, with clear goals, to help demonstrate the relevance of humanities-led research in addressing the problems of today: increased co-operation with other research networks could help to achieve this;
- Remain a collective voice, speaking up for the importance of humanities-led research in Europe;
- Continue to strengthen its governance, and consolidate its exchange of knowledge and best practice.

— In the next five years, we would like to see HERA becoming a platform for discussing humanities themes, becoming the leading humanities voice. On the European research and innovation level, we would like to see HERA helping to formulate interdisciplinary research questions, in order to leverage the potential of the humanities in tackling societal challenges

—  
Christa Engel, DLR Project Management Agency (Germany)

The NORFACE partners would like to:

- Develop innovative, unique research programmes with European added value, while helping researchers to extend the scope of the social sciences;
- Continue to enable knowledge exchange and maximise the impact of its programmes;
- Maximise new opportunities to expand whilst remaining effective as a funding network.

— We should not turn away from this model of funding —

Dr. Davor Kozmus, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

Partners therefore remain strongly committed to HERA and NORFACE in the future. They would like to see HERA and NORFACE continue to fund excellent multi-disciplinary research, further develop a leading advocacy role and demonstrate the importance of social sciences and humanities-led research for societal challenges and cultural understanding.



**Table 1 — NORFACE Joint Research Programmes 2004 - present**

Programme	Years	Total funding (M€)	Funded projects
Re-emergence of Religion as a Social Force in Europe?	2006-2010	5.4	12
Migration in Europe: Social, economic, cultural and policy dynamics <sup>1</sup>	2008-2014	29	12
Welfare State Futures (WSF) <sup>2</sup>	2013-2018	19	15
Dynamics of Inequality Across the Lifecourse (DIAL) <sup>3</sup>	2016-2020	18	13
Transformations to Sustainability (T2S; with Belmont Forum) <sup>4</sup>	Launched January 2017	14 (available budget)	T.b.a. Spring 2018

1 This JRP received funding from the European Union's FP7, grant agreement No 235548.

2 This JRP received funding from the European Union's FP7, grant agreement No 618106.

3 This JRP received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020, grant agreement No 724363.

4 This JRP received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020, grant agreement No 730211.

**Table 2 — HERA Joint Research Programmes 2004 - present**

Programme	Years	Total funding (M€)	Funded projects
Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity, and Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation <sup>1</sup>	2009-2013	17.8	19
Cultural Encounters <sup>2</sup>	2012-2017	16.8	18
Uses of the Past <sup>3</sup>	2015-2019	21	18
Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe <sup>4</sup>	Launched August 2017	20 (available budget)	T.b.a. early 2019

1 This JRP received funding from the European Union's FP7, grant agreement No 235366.

2 This JRP received funding from the European Union's FP7, grant agreement No 291827.

3 This JRP received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020, grant agreement No 649307.

4 This JRP received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020, grant agreement No 730211.





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DLR Project Management Agency



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Vetenskapsrådet



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