

Core competences in contemporary research and innovation oriented societies

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More than ever before contemporary societies see their potential futures linked to advances in research and innovation. In the European context this idea is very clearly formulated in the most recent research agenda „Horizon 2020“. National policies follow a similar orientation. Simultaneously with this move towards a strong innovation agenda, also explicit concerns are raised: one the one hand about the way citizens would position themselves towards science and technology and on the other hand that scientists would need to reflect upon and address more explicitly questions of broader societal values related to their research. While so far science and society issues have been predominantly addressed through special events (e.g. science weeks, citizen conferences,), recent years have seen a call for integrating reflections on ethical, social and legal aspects of research into the very research processes.

Addressing this latter aspect, I will start my presentation by identify some of these key tensions and challenges arising through this strong shift towards an innovation agenda. In a second move I will then reflect on the competences researchers (and citizens alike) – i.e. capacities of reflecting ethical issues, of communication beyond the own field, or of addressing democratic challenges – have to acquire in order to face this new situation. This reflection will be accompanied by more practical examples of how such competences might be acquired and how space has to be made within research and beyond to cultivate and develop them.