

“Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities”

**Opening speech of prof. Dainius Pavalkis, Minister of Education
and Science of the Republic of Lithuania**

23 September 2013, Vilnius

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to open the conference “Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities”. I would like to thank all the conference speakers and participants who agreed to share their valuable time and even more valuable insights with us at one of the most important events of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Facing challenges of the 21st century and intensive global competition, Europe needs not only technological edge, but also innovative ideas and approaches that bring forward strategic outside the box thinking. Aiming to achieve innovation breakthrough, we have to encourage building multidisciplinary ties and collaboration making full use of the insights that Social Sciences and Humanities research presents us with.

Thus, the Lithuanian Presidency is proud to host the conference on Social Sciences and Humanities role in Horizon 2020 programme. We seek to provide the forum for the fruitful discussions and search for answers on how to better promote research exchange across fields and disciplines in order to build open and growing Europe.

This conference gives an excellent opportunity to discuss the following:

- What issues need to be addressed in Europe, and how can Social Sciences and Humanities contribute in overcoming societal challenges;
- Which structural requirements and preconditions are necessary for a more effective outcome of Social Sciences and Humanities research under “Horizon 2020”;
- How can Social Sciences and Humanities approaches be embedded across the seven challenges in “Horizon 2020”?

I hope and believe that we will have a fruitful discussion and generate great ideas on how to create a forum for Social Sciences and Humanities which will promote scholarly exchange across fields and disciplines, set common guidelines for quality standards and provide adequate representation of Social Sciences and Humanities in the EU policy arena.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I kindly invite all of you to actively participate in the discussions on the input of Social Sciences and Humanities in addressing present and future challenges and look for innovative ways which can contribute to further development of credible, growing and open Europe. And I wish you all success.