

# Science in Society

Genoa

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# WHY is time to talk about SiS?

- Research intensive universities, from 1980's
- "Grand challenges": societies face problems that cannot be solved without research
- Better educated people – more criticism
- Increasing role of religions
- Increasing role of media: more facts and details available
  - Science as entertainment

# Motivation?

- Giving information
- Marketing research
- Legitimizing research
- Collaboration
- Science is in society: democracy needs discussions

# What's new?

- ESF members (funding agencies, research institutes, academies) are doing much in the area of Science in Society:
  - Dissemination of research results
  - Annual science events
  - Websites with researcher interviews
  - Public lectures
  - Grants for researchers to publish popular science
  - Prizes, awards
  - Outreach programs
  - Scientific cafes

# But...

- Most of the activities are one sided:
  - From science community to laymen
  - On the conditions of science community
- No systematic approach:
  - Easy access disciplines are favoured: technology, medicine (huge public interest)
  - Discipline-based tools and methods?

# More "buts"

- What is the topic
  - Science
  - Research
  - Science policy
  - Applying scientific results
- Who is the actor:
  - "Science"
  - Research institute
  - Researchers
  - Science communicators

# More “buts”

- Value for money?
- Balance between activities: research itself, dissemination of results?
- Public engagement in research?
- Should everybody be engaged with SiS:
  - Collaboration?
  - Division of labour?
  - Different profiles?

# What is needed?

- Analysis of activities
  - What is "popular science" book?
- Analysis of skills needed
- Analysis of results and impact
  - Interpretation of research results
  - Understanding of scientific processes
  - Making use of research results



# Society

- Varieties of audiences
- Varieties of needs
- Political context of needs
- Political and ideological interpretation of research
  
- Good (best) practices:
  - Consensus meetings

# What is needed?

- Separate roles and collaboration between
  - Funding agencies
  - Research institutes
  - Academies

# Research funding agencies

- Separate schemes for SiS activities?
- Embedded funding: every grant includes SiS?
- Evaluation and assessment plans and criteria for funding of SiS activities?
- Documentation of results in reports?
- Evaluation of results and impact?

# Universities / Research institutes

- Training
- Division of labour
- Researcher careers
- Recruitment policies: combination of skills needed at an institute?
- Merits and awards

# Science in Society

- Platforms
- Role of media
- Role of education: from primary schools to higher education
- Values and ethics
- Mutual respect and trust
- A researcher is a layman, too

# Researchers and public?

- Public engagement on all levels:
  - Science policy
  - Research funding
  - Dissemination of results
  - Carrying out research, access to data
  - Interpretation of results
  - Applying results
  - Ethical debates

# Society and science?

- Can we change the view?
- Who should analyse the relationship between Society and Science?
  - Researchers alone?
  - Researchers with other players?

# Ideal world

- Democracy and participation
- Autonomy and criticality of science
- Open discussion



# Should we...

- Ask laymen and "society" for the opinion of SiS activities? How?