

Wolfgang Schieder: Humanities - and no end?, in: zeitenblicke 8 (2009), Nr. 1.

Based on the dichotomy between humanities and natural science, as characterised by Dilthey, this article examines the current position of the humanities in the scientific system. After a phase of differentiation and a subsequent interdisciplinary opening special attention should be paid to the preservation of subject-specific methods. After all, inter-disciplinarity presupposes disciplinarity. At the level of research promoting the trend of project-based group research is gauged as irreversible. This trend will have to be confronted. The complementary system of university and non-university research – a system with which up to date positive experiences have been made – is worth preserving and should therefore be maintained.

Ulrich Herbert: Bureaucracy of creativity. Perspectives and desiderata of the promoting policy for the humanities, in: zeitenblicke 8 (2009), Nr. 1.

“On an international scale German research in the humanities continues to have a very high standard, even if not in all disciplines and at all universities.” With this statement on the situation of the humanities in Germany, the German Science and Humanities Council (WR) aroused a certain amount of attention and almost consistent agreement (Recommendations on the development and promotion of the humanities in Germany, January 2006 [Drs. 7068/06]). The proposal to create humanities research colleges was well received in practice by both the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF); the promotion of the so-called fringe subjects has also since increased. However, the WR statement also included clear criticism of the dwindling basic apparatus and the overemphasis of third-party funding, of the neglect of teaching, but also of the ubiquitous talk of the “humanities crisis” in Germany. This article examines some of these aspects: the development of the humanities since the turn of the century around 1900, the talk of crisis, the reforms possible (if any) and those necessary, as well as the question as to how excellence in research can be promoted best.

Peter Strohschneider: A sense of possibility. The humanities in the scientific system, in: zeitenblicke 8 (2009), Nr. 1.

The article outlines on the one hand the institutional status quo of the humanities in Germany and emphasizes the state of expansion of her research system, as well as specific problems in the field of academic teaching. On the other hand, the legal, symbolic and political-practical benefits and implications of a traditional scientific culture are addressed, which does not make a division between the historical-hermeneutical subjects as humanities and the sciences, but sees it more as a “science within sciences” (German Science and Humanities Council - WR) integrated in the scientific system. Special attention should be paid to the provision for humanities in research promoting (including the excellence initiative) as well as to the administrative and science-political performance evaluation and control of the scientific system. In this context the specific epistemological functions of the humanities should be considered that are sketched under the keywords ‘composition of complexity’ and ‘sense of possibility’.

Matthias Kleiner: The Franco-German cooperation in the humanities – a pioneer for collaborative research in Europe?, in: zeitenblicke 8 (2009), Nr. 1.

The article examines to what extent the Franco-German cooperation in the humanities can do pioneer work for the collaborative research in Europe. Here the annual open-topic calls for

proposals by the DFG and the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) in humanities and social sciences take on a special model function.

On a European level a complementary organisation of research promoting is advocated, taking into account the principle of subsidiarity. Three pillars are constitutive here: first, the national promoting organisations with their experience in bilateral and multilateral (promoting) cooperation, second, promoting by multilateral organisations, such as the European Science Foundation (ESF) and third, the support programmes of supranational institutions, such as the European Commission or the European Research Council (ERC).