



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY  
CRIS

Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies



## Future Trends Series - GR:REEN Project

### Title of the report

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**Challenging Futures of Science in Society – Emerging Trends and Cutting-Edge Issues**

### Area

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Science and technology

### Reporter

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European Commission - MASIS Expert Group

### Type of the Reporter

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International Organisation

### Periodically updated?

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No

### First issued year

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2009

### Latest update

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### Official website

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[www.masis.eu/english/home](http://www.masis.eu/english/home)

### Language available

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English

### Short summary

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Europe is undergoing changes, and not only in size and composition. This also brought new challenges for science in society, not least because it has been given a significant role in the development of the EU in the Lisbon Strategy of 2000 and the Vision 2020 of the European Research Area (Council of the EU 2009). Citizens have an increasing stake in the European Research Area (ERA) and in science in Europe in general.

This forward-looking report represents a collective overview and reflection on emerging trends and important cutting-edge policy and research issues, priorities, strengths and weaknesses that influence the "Science in Society" dimension in the ERA and which could develop further into transnational activities.

### Key trends

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- Trends and challenges. Re-contextualisation of institutions and practices, increased number of stakeholders, developments in the governance of science in society, strengthening potential and science communication. All these trends mean that European institutions tend to attribute a more active and creative role to their publics and – as a result – further encourage such social capacity: this will not be straightforward, but it should be supported and also systematically evaluated in order to enable learning. This is where the EU Science in Society programme and its successors can, and should, play a role.

- Cutting-edge policy issues. The future of science in society will depend to a great extent on whether the values that unify the EU or the cultural, social and political differences between member states will prevail. 'Science in society' can be considered as part of an emerging European identity. Due to the ERA there is more interaction and collaboration between researchers and science institutions: by embracing the diversity of national values, the science in society policy has a potential role in bridging the gap between the EU and its citizens. With increased European integration and with a forward look to the establishment of a broad European citizenship, participatory assessment practices involving European citizens will be important.

## Suggestions

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- How to increase the impact of science in European policy and society? First of all, increased dissemination of all scientific results is necessary, and all means of communications are needed for this purpose, both traditional mass media and new internet-based forms of dissemination. Increased open access to all scientific projects might in principle be the way, but this requires awareness among policy makers and citizens in general of the potential benefits and risks that can be found in research.
- How to engage more citizens at the European level? Even if in principle or in reality open access to all kind of research activities is established, the amount of information will not be used unless citizens are empowered. This is where education and capacity-building become very relevant, as factors that enable people to more easily search for information, understand the messages and act on their own behalf with the help of 'new' science-based information.
- What needs to be prioritized? The general diagnosis of a patchwork of transformations and tensions is visible, such as the need for the debate on the place of science in society to continue and to have dynamic governance, which opens up opportunities for experimentation rather than closing them down. There are some concrete opportunities to do better. There are differences within the EU between old and new member states and cultural differences between northern and southern Europe: the diversity of the EU is an opportunity for further experimentation and learning.
- SiS should be embedded in other parts of the Framework Programmes because its absence endangers the credibility of the SiS logic, and at the same time makes the science-in-society approach isolated compared to other EU-funded research projects.

## Methodology

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Modelling

### Reference to other trends reports? If yes, which reports?

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- STRATA (2003) Strata Consolidating Workshop, Brussels, 22-23 April 2002. Report of EU Directorate-General for Research, Science & Technology. Policies in Europe: New Challenges and New Responses, Brussels: March 2003 (EUR 20440)