



International Cooperation in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Outcome Declaration of

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) and
the Science Council of Japan, Section I: Humanities and Social sciences (SCJ-Section I)

Tokyo, October 2019

In November 2017, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) organised the German-Japanese symposium entitled “The Impact of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Discussing Germany and Japan” in Tokyo, with the support of the Science Council of Japan, in order to foster academic collaboration between Japan and Germany in the humanities and social sciences and discuss the societal impact expected from this research.

To follow up on this fruitful exchange, a second joint symposium was held on the topic of “Cultures in Translation: World History – World Literature – World Society. Japan, Germany and the World in a Transcultural Comparison” in Tokyo in October 2019. This event was jointly prepared and co-ordinated by the DFG and the Science Council of Japan, Section I, Humanities and Social Sciences (SCJ-Section I).

The two symposia brought together both representatives of science policy and scholars to discuss research and its funding within a bilateral German-Japanese framework. The symposia offered an opportunity to address current trends in our world with regards to unity and plurality in the fields of history, political science, sociology, social anthropology and literary studies.

The academic panels of the symposia provided an insight into the research interests and achievements of Japanese and German scholars and created starting points for further academic exchange and new collaborations. It became clear that scholars in the two countries work on very similar social issues, such as ageing societies, the role of civil society, globalisation and risk management.

The role and function of the humanities and social sciences were discussed in the science policy panels of the symposia. Since academic research is a costly undertaking, it is neither surprising nor improper that researchers and research institutions are asked to justify their use of public funds. What calls for analysis and discussion, however, is the expectation that such justifications be framed in terms of how likely a given individual research project is to meet “societal needs” or what “societal impact” or “output” it has or is likely to have in the future. The symposia provided insights into the significance and effects of the discourse of “societal impact” and the associated administrative practices.

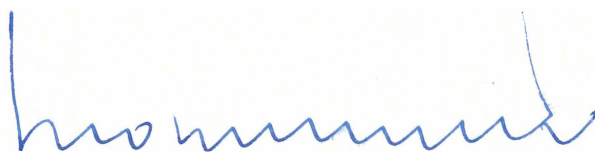
Following on from the symposia, the DFG and the SCJ-Section I:

- Agree to further strengthen their cooperation;
- Recognise the characteristic contribution of the humanities and social sciences, which are highly multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and international; they agree to foster these unique qualities;
- Reaffirm the importance of the humanities and social sciences as a place for reflection on challenges and opportunities in academia, culture, the economy, politics and society;
- Agree to maintain an open and intercultural dialogue on the role and responsibilities of the humanities and social sciences in order to form a basis for the justification of their public funding and acceptance;
- Agree to foster an open discussion on the evaluation criteria for research funding to maintain and gain trust within the research community and in society.



Professor Iwao Sato

Chairperson of the Section I of the SCJ



Professor Peter Strohschneider

President of the DFG

The logo of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) is the letters "DFG" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.