

ANNUAL REPORT

# 2019

[IrishHumanities.com](http://IrishHumanities.com)



## About the Alliance:

The Irish Humanities Alliance is a joint initiative of humanities researchers within eleven higher education and research institutions, including all the universities, North and South and the Royal Irish Academy which houses and supports the Alliance.

The Alliance is working to generate public awareness of the importance of humanities teaching and research in higher education and society at large. Since its establishment, the Alliance has provided a platform for all-island humanities collaboration and consultation thus enabling the diverse range of humanities disciplines across the island to speak with a single voice. In the context of Brexit, the Alliance is especially keen to support an all-island approach to humanities collaboration.

The Alliance engages with National Experts, National Delegates and National Contact Points in Ireland and Northern Ireland to bring an effective, co-ordinated humanities response to bear on draft EU Work Programmes in *Horizon 2020* and its successor programme *Horizon Europe*. At an EU level the It is an active member of the European Alliance for the Social Sciences and the Humanities (EASSH), a body representing more than 55 members from across Europe.

This short document aims to provide an overview of the Alliance's work during 2019.

## IHA Summary for January- June 2019:

The period from January to June marked the final phase of the Alliance's project, coordinated by the Strategy Steering Group, to develop a strategic vision for the humanities on the island of Ireland. The group members were: Professor Patrick O'Donovan (Convener, UCC), Professor Anne Fuchs (IHA Chair, 2018-19, RIA/UCD), Professor Eugene McNulty (IHA Vice-Chair, 2018-29, DCU), Professor Noel Fitzpatrick (TU Dublin); Professor Victor Lazzarini (MU); Professor Mary O'Dowd (RIA/QUB) and Dr Mel Farrell (Director, IHA). Professor Imelda Maher (RIA/UCD) and Dr Aoibhín de Búrca (IHA) are former members of the group.

The strategy document, now available on the Alliance website, is based on extensive consultation with member institutions of the IHA and on the Alliance's close involvement in the development and implementation of research policy at national and European level. The calls by engaging with various agencies.

The Alliance continued to engage with national and European agencies on research policy. Open Access and the transition to an Open Research Environment were areas of concern in 2019. Prof. Eugene McNulty, IHA Vice-Chair, 2018-19, was also involved in the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH) working-group on Plan-S/ Open Access. In February. the Alliance issued its own statement on Plan S and Open Access highlighting issues of particular concern to the humanities and continued to engage with national agencies on these issues.

In May the Alliance published *Beyond Markets: the cultural case for Ireland in Europe* - an event report hosted by the Alliance in collaboration with the Humanities Institute UCD and the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, TCD with support from the French and the German Embassies. That same month Alliance members were featured prominently in an Irish Times piece by Peter McGuire entitled *Why arts? Arts degrees still have the single biggest intake of students.*

## 14 June: 'AHSS in Horizon Europe', Royal Irish Academy:

On 14 June the Alliance hosted a workshop entitled 'AHSS in Horizon Europe' in the Royal Irish Academy. Dr Gabi Lombardo, Director of the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH) delivered a wide-ranging address on the current policy landscape at EU level.

While the basic structure of *Horizon Europe* is familiar to us from *Horizon 2020* there are some changes. In the process of developing *Horizon Europe*, EASSH has been advocating for a broader focus that does not concentrate undue attention on narrow technical solutions. Pillar 2 of the programme – Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness – reflects the Commission's vision for: People, Prosperity, Healthy Planet and Clean Planet.

After Dr Lombardo's keynote, the meeting broke into round-table discussions that brought forward a wealth of constructive suggestions about the potential for the humanities in the *Horizon Europe* programme. Participants were asked to consider how their research activity aligned with the six cluster areas with sectoral focus in Pillar 2 of the programme: Health, Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society, Civil Security for Society Digital, Industry and Space, Climate, Energy and Mobility, Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment.



Fig. 1 Dr Gabi Lombardo delivering her keynote.



Fig. 3 Prof. Eugene McNulty, IHA Chair, 2019-20.



Fig. 2 Dr Niamh Nic Ghabhann, IHA Vice-Chair, 2019-20.

## IHA Summary for June-December 2019:

In the period from June to December the Alliance remained active in the national and European policy scene. In the autumn, IHA Board member Prof. Seán Ryder was elected to the EASSH Governing Board. The Alliance also responded to various requests for feedback and was represented at briefings on the Bologna process, the EASSH General Assembly in Brussels and an important Stakeholder Workshop on *Horizon Europe* implementation – hosted by Enterprise Ireland.

The Alliance also worked to generate public awareness of the importance of humanities through its website and social media. Blog posts by Dr Gillian O'Brien on the value of teaching history and Dr Sarah Kerr entitled *Humanists know the value of understanding the past – are we the only ones?* are notable examples in this regard.

The Alliance's blog also showcases new and emerging fields within the humanities and the relevance of these perspectives to societal challenges. Prof. Desmond O'Neill submitted a piece on the impact of the humanities in medicine while in October, DCU PhD students Ellen Howley and Tomas Buitendijk submitted a blog post on the engagement of the humanities with the seas and oceans. In December Phil Baty, the Chief Knowledge Officer at Times Higher Education, submitted an important piece on the vital role of the arts and humanities in the digital revolution Technological innovation & what it is to be human.

The Alliance also finalised the design of its strategy document and made arrangements for a November launch by Dame Marina Warner, Professor of English and Creative Writing, Birkbeck, University of London. The Director also worked closely with colleagues in Ulster University (UU) on finalising the arrangements for its annual conference on the theme of 'Border heritage'.

## 24-25 October: 'Border heritage' conference, Ulster University:



*Fig. 4 Delegates to the 'Border Heritage' conference, UU.*

On 24-25 October the Alliance (IHA), in collaboration with colleagues in Ulster University, hosted a multi-disciplinary conference on the theme of border heritages. The conference took place on the beautiful surroundings of Magee Campus of Ulster University, which is only a few miles from the border with Donegal. Over the course of two days, participants explored the themes of: the partition of Ireland from historical and contemporary perspectives, Brexit, culture, identity, language, migration, heritage, security and the effects of partition.

Attendees also heard stimulating keynote lectures by Bryonie Reid, entitled 'Telling the Border: Why we should listen to other people's stories' and Mads Daugbjerg who spoke on 'Concrete heritage at the water's edge: Bunkers, borders and belonging in a re-fortifying Europe'. The Alliance is working on various outputs from the event and will shortly post these to [irishhumanities.com](http://irishhumanities.com).



*Fig. 5 Bryonie Reid delivers her keynote.*



## November – December and looking ahead to 2020:

On 6 November the Alliance was honoured to welcome Dame Marina Warner, to Dublin for the official launch of its strategy *By Imagination We Live: a strategy for the humanities, 2020–2030*. The launch took place in the Royal Irish Academy. Speaking at the launch Dame Marina Warner said 'I congratulate all those involved in putting together this clear, all-Ireland vision for the humanities. We all need to use our imagination, especially now in this technological age. The IHA Strategic Plan places great value on the contribution that humanities disciplines can make in addressing the most pressing social, political, cultural, technological, and environmental issues of the 21st century'.

While in Dublin Marina also spoke to Seán Rocks, the host of RTÉ Radio 1's flagship arts, culture and entertainment programme, about the IHA's strategy for the humanities. The clip can be found [here](#).



Fig. 6 IHA members with Dame Marina Warner.



Fig. 7 Prof. Anne Fuchs, IHA Chair, 2018–19, introduces Dame Marina Warner.

On 14–15 November, Prof. Eugene McNulty and Dr Mel Farrell represented the Alliance at the EASSH General Assembly in Brussels. Prior to the EASSH General Assembly they heard presentations by Commission

representatives Irene Norstedt and Harald Hatung on the shape and structure of Horizon Europe. IHA Board member Prof. Seán Ryder (NUIG) has just been elected to the EASSH Governing Board while Dr Mel Farrell has been co-opted on to the EASSH Working Group on Communications.

On 2 December the Alliance was also represented at the Stakeholder Workshop on Horizon Europe implementation – hosted by Enterprise Ireland. The Alliance will continue to engage with Irish national experts, delegates, contact points and other relevant stakeholders in the development of Horizon Europe.

Looking to the future, the Alliance is now inviting proposals for its 2020 annual conference. Academic staff, at all stages of their career, including post-docs and early career scholars on full-time, part-time or temporary contracts in Higher Education Institutions that are members of the Alliance are eligible to apply.

In 2020 the Alliance will continue to work with its partners in all areas of national and European policy relevant to the humanities. It will also work to build on the vision laid out in *By Imagination We Live*, both within the Alliance, and beyond.

## **IHA Member Institutions:**

Dublin City University

Maynooth University

NUI Galway

Queen's University Belfast

Royal Irish Academy

Technological University Dublin

Trinity College Dublin

Ulster University

University College Cork

University College Dublin

University of Limerick

## **IHA Board Meetings in 2019:**

18 January 2019 - University of Limerick

29 March 2019 - Maynooth University

14 June 2019 - Royal Irish Academy

4 October 2019 - Dublin City University

## **IHA Executive Members, December 2019:**

Prof. Eugene McNulty (DCU, Chair)

Dr Niamh Nic Ghabhann (UL, Vice-Chair)

Dr Mel Farrell (IHA, Director)

**Irish Humanities Alliance**



## **Further information**

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