



**Professionalization and Social Impact of European Political Science**

## **Future Scenarios of the European Political Science**

**Design Thinking Event**

**19 September 2019**

**New Babylon Conference Centre - Anna van Buerenplein 29, 2595 DA Den Haag, The Netherlands**

**Guidelines for discussion**

## Future Scenarios of the European Political Science

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### Introduction

*Luca Verzichelli*

This event aims at discussing future scenarios of European Political Science, promoting a collective reflection on the drivers and branching points that might lead to (or prevent) future relevant outcomes for the discipline of Political Science. The scholars that will take part to this discussion will help us to shape the prescriptive conclusions of the present project. The result of this gamification will be ultimately translated into a unitary policy brief, which would ideally launch a «legacy» from the PROSEPS community to be forwarded to the European Commission, the experts of higher education in Europe, the national associations of Political Science and the supranational communities (ECPR, EPSA, IPSA, IPPA, etc.).

The briefing produced after this brainstorming exercise will be transformed in more systematic documentation, to be disseminated to a wider audience in order to provide a contribution to the discussion on the future of European Political Science via one or more scientific articles dealing with specific challenges.

Among the topics to be addressed, the following have been extremely relevant in the discussion within the Cost Action:

1. **The institutional consolidation of the discipline in Europe;**
2. **The current degree of internationalization of the European Political Scientists in comparison to other disciplines and to other areas of the globe;**
3. **The current degree of public visibility of the discipline in Europe;**
4. **The most relevant ethical issues for the discipline in Europe;**
5. **The development of specific aspects of the discipline: the impact of political scientists as advisors, their role as policy advocates, their impact on media impact, etc.**

Three «tables» of about 20 people will be formed to delineate three scenarios for the European Political Science in the next five years. The tables will address:

- 1) **the state of mobility-circulation-interaction among the European Political Scientists, both in terms of teaching and research;**
- 2) **the renewal of the role(s) of professional political scientists in Europe, and the amount of innovation emerging in their professional profiles;**
- 3) **the usefulness of political science as a tool for developing democratic quality and the perspectives of a more effective social dissemination of the discipline.**

A number of suggestions will be discussed and then proposed by the three tables to the general audience that will be then called to vote a statement for each of the tables. The final statements will individuate

realistic scenarios to be reached in five years from now (avoiding decline, pursuing stability; creating conditions for growth) and they will include a few specific items, implementing precise measurements and employing specific resources in order to reach the goals of the discipline in the near future.

### Goals of the Event

After an open discussion and a careful analysis of all the resources and all the constraints, each table will have to propose to the audience of the participants what realistic scenarios to prospect for the discipline of Political Science in the years to come. Each of these scenarios will be summarised applying one of the following three formulations:

1. **Decline.** At the end of the discussion, we may argue that European Political Science cannot avoid coping with some risks of regression, given the scarce availability of resources and its inherent weaknesses. The measures proposed will be finalised to reduce these risks, and to individuate a mid-term strategy to invert the trend.
2. **Stability.** All things considered, European Political Science seems to live a phase of steadiness. The measures proposed will be therefore finalised to consolidate such an «imperfect» but somehow systematic persistence, and to maximise the effectiveness of the discipline in our society.
3. **Growth.** The debate shows that there is room enough to envisage a significant development of the discipline: indeed, there are perspectives for the circulation of scholars and ideas, the achievement of new and innovative roles in our society, as well as for new significant activities of civic engagement.

The event will be organized so as to encourage a wide discussion in a way that guarantees to all participants the possibility to express themselves and to collaborate with the production of the final document. For this purpose, participants will be divided into 3 tables. Each table will be chaired by a member of the PROSEPS core group. Moreover, each table will count on the work of a facilitator, who will encourage mutual listening and the exchange of views, even when they are diverging. Finally, one or more discussants – both expert senior members of the discipline and young scholars – will have to discuss the ideas developed by each table in order to reach a coherent set of proposals.

The group will have to report to the plenary assembly showing a time-chart to be drawn in a white-board. They will have to draw the steps, the use of resources to ask, the main constraints to take in count, the branching points that can shift the evolution of the discipline, and of course the realistic outcomes in the years to come.

The working group sessions will alternate with plenary sessions, where the results of group discussions will be shared and commented. During the intermediate plenary session, all the participants will have the chance to send short messages to the groups in order to suggest further drivers and branching points. The second working group meeting will have the aim to integrate all the suggestions and to come to a final proposal about the future scenarios of European Political Science.

These proposals will be then collectively discussed and adopted or refuted by the final Plenary session.

## Event structure

### 9.15 - 10.30

#### **Plenary meeting – Introduction to the Design Thinking Event**

*After the opening from the Action Chair and the local host, Luca Verzichelli briefly introduces the goals and the rationale of the event. The chairs, the facilitators and the discussants, who will animate the 3 tables, will be also introduced.*

### 11.00 - 13.00

#### **Deliberative tables' meeting: first round on the individuation of goals, drivers and outcomes**

*After a few words from the chairs, each group starts discussing moving from the food for thoughts included in this briefing. Chairs have to apply strict rules of participation in the debate. Each participant to the table will have 1-2 minutes to add suggestions about the goals and the use of resources. Then, the discussants have 5 minutes each to describe their views. The facilitator stimulates the discussion and summarizes it writing the significant notes on paperboard and connecting lines between goals, drivers and branching points.*

### 14.00-15.00

#### **Plenary Session: first exchange on the definition of concrete goals for each scenario**

*The three chairs introduce three rapporteurs appointed within the group who report for 5 minutes to the plenary. A short session of comments is open. Participants can also send short messages to the groups using sticky notes. The main goals of this plenary discussion are to provide feedback to the reports of the three tables and to align the scenarios delineated by the three groups.*

### 15.00 – 16.00

#### **Deliberative tables' meeting: second round on the definition of a comprehensive scenario**

*Participants to the three tables react to the stimuli that emerged during the plenary discussion. The Discussants resume the main arguments and the concrete proposals, while the facilitator translates this summary in a new Knowledge map. At the end, a few suggestions for the future and a general idea of the scenario (avoiding decline; pursuing stability; creating conditions for growth) will be defined by each table.*

### 16.30-17.30

#### **Plenary Session: Three Scenarios for the European Political Science - Wrap-up and Conclusion**

*The three rapporteurs have five minutes to illustrate the new maps defined by the three tables. A short session of comments and clarifications about the goals to be reached in five years is open.*

*At the end of the session, the three knowledge maps are submitted for the approval of the general audience.*

# **Future Scenarios of the European Political Science**

Design Thinking Event

19 September 2019

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR THE THREE TABLES**

## **Table 1: Expanding Political Science Mobility. Teaching and Research**

### **Premises**

The Proseps Survey has revealed a very proactive and mobile dynamics within the discipline. Indeed, European Political Scientists tend to attend international conferences. They tend to spend time frequently in universities abroad to teach, to organize research networks and to socialize with other countries/realities. However, we know all that glitters is not necessarily gold. Self-Selection of «internationalised sub-communities» can explain this high degree of commitment. In any event, international mobility does not always determine a full «professionalization» on a truly European scale. Career patterns and assessment processes remain anchored to domestic traditions and to domestic rules.

### **Decline: threats and risks of regression in the 5 years coming**

There are serious risks of regression in the future of European Political Science. Mobility is largely asymmetrical: some national communities, some disciplinary groups, some generations are more mobile and more oriented to international cooperation. In addition to that, the great economic recession of the last decade will leave long term effects on the patterns of intra-European mobility, decreasing the resources available, especially in some areas of the continent.

Other factors of involution are the success of a new wave of «sovereignist» political actors and the problems within the EU. The rise of populism and nationalist ideas can determine the conditions of weakening of scientific cooperation, while a hard-exit conclusion of the Brexit experience will surely trigger a number of further phenomena of reduction of mobility for the discipline, perhaps also toward countries different from the UK.

### **Stability: tools to consolidate the status quo in the 5 years coming**

All things considered, the picture of the mobility of political scientists in Europe, in such a complicated scenario, is not too bad. The stimuli for the new generations of scholars are anyway growing. However, the factors above indicated make the opening of a new virtuous cycle of internationalization and cross-fertilization among the European Political Science communities rather unlikely. Therefore, the general aim we can outline is that of an overall harmonization of the current «acceptable» level of mobility, using the same tools and resources.

### **Growth: Goals to be reached in the 5 years coming**

Political Science is a proactive and truly European professionalised discipline. Political scientists are «natural born» travelers and they are provided with the right instruments to get more and more mobile and «global». That of further mobility of European political scientists is surely a mandatory goal: we can do it much better than now, and we can do it in five years from now. The most important resource to be mobilised is motivation. Therefore, national communities of scholars, the National associations, and the European associations have a pivotal role in the years to come. They should collect new financial resources and employ all the instruments they have, including virtual-mobility, joint teaching programs and participation to international research projects, to reach such an ambitious goal.

### **Resources / Constraints**

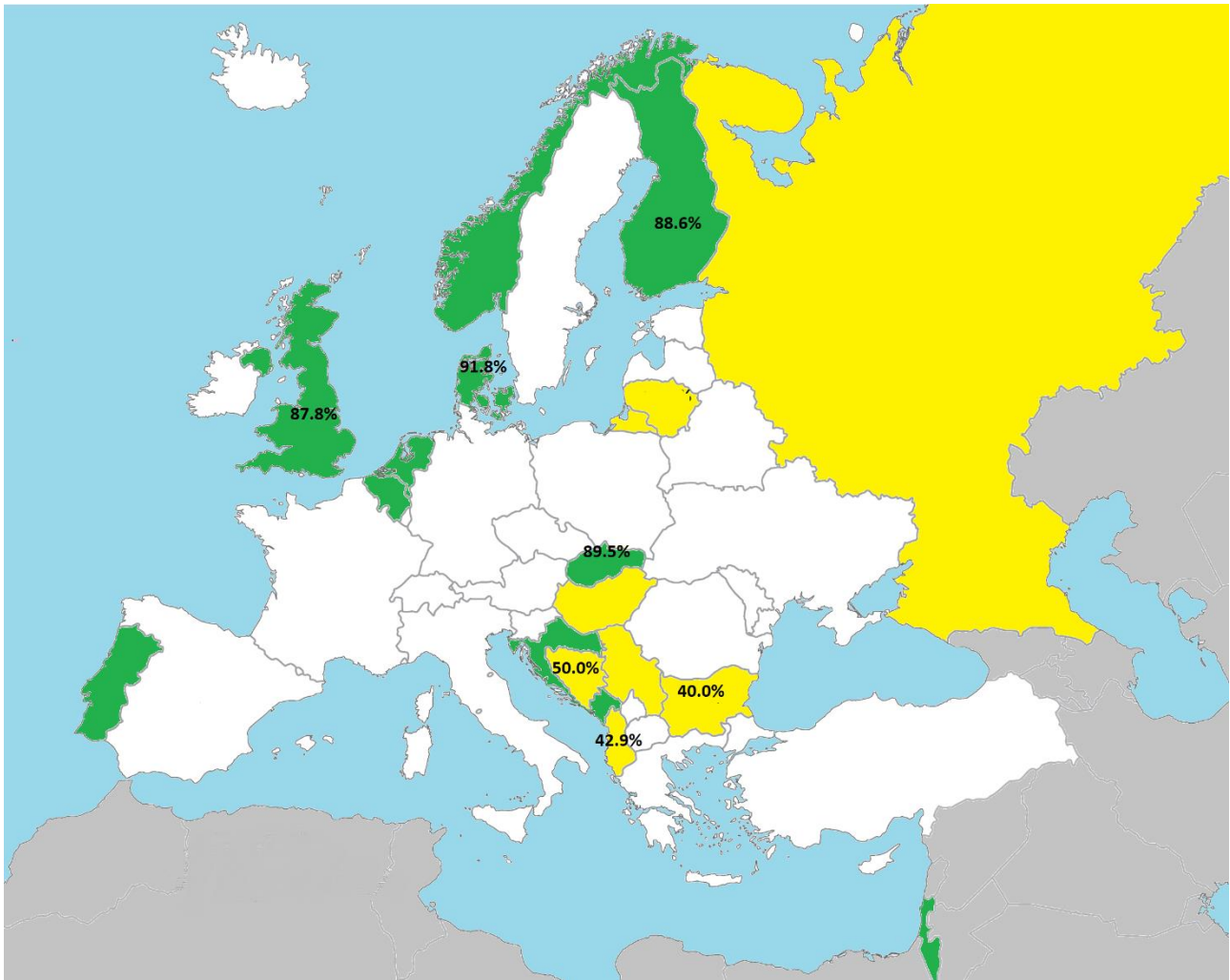
- ☺ More money on Erasmus + 2020-2025 and more resources to other overseas mobility schemes
- ☺ More money on ERC research oriented funding
- ☺ Presence of political scientists in some strategical initiatives (for instance the “European Universities”
- ☺ More degrees in PS «federated» by double degree initiatives. International PhD programs in PS
- ☹ Reduction of room for mobility due to the limitation of academic freedom in some European countries

☹ Persisting differences in the structure of curricula and teaching organizations (failure of the *Bologna Process*)

## Quotations

- ... *The fact remains that a field called comparative politics is densely populated by non-comparativists* Macridis R. (1953), 'Research in Comparative Politics', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 47 641-675. Quoted in Sartori G. (1991), 'Comparing and Miscomparing', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 3. 243-257
- [the problems of American Political Science are...] ... narrow parochialism and methodological bias toward the quantitative, behavioral, rational choice, statistical, and formal modeling approaches" Monroe, K. R. , (2005, ed.) *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- ... On April 2, 1831, Tocqueville and Beaumont boarded the American ship Le Havre. ... After 38 days, they reached New York. During the next nine months, they toured cities—New York, Albany, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Montreal, and Quebec. They passed through towns like Buffalo, Cincinnati, Detroit, Knoxville, Louisville, Mobile, Montgomery, Nashville, Memphis, New Orleans, and Pittsburgh. They ventured into the hinterlands as far west as Lake Michigan. They visited Niagara Falls. They traveled along the Hudson River Valley. They saw the Mohawk River Valley, the setting for James Fenimore Cooper's bestselling novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. They took a boat trip down the Mississippi River. They inspected many prisons. They met many notable Americans including Unitarian leader William Ellery Channing, historian Jared Sparks, Senator Daniel Webster, former President John Quincy Adams, and Texas adventurer Sam Houston. They talked with Cincinnati lawyer Salmon Chase, who was to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and with Charles Carroll, last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence.  
J. Powell (1996), *Alexis de Toqueville*, FEE.



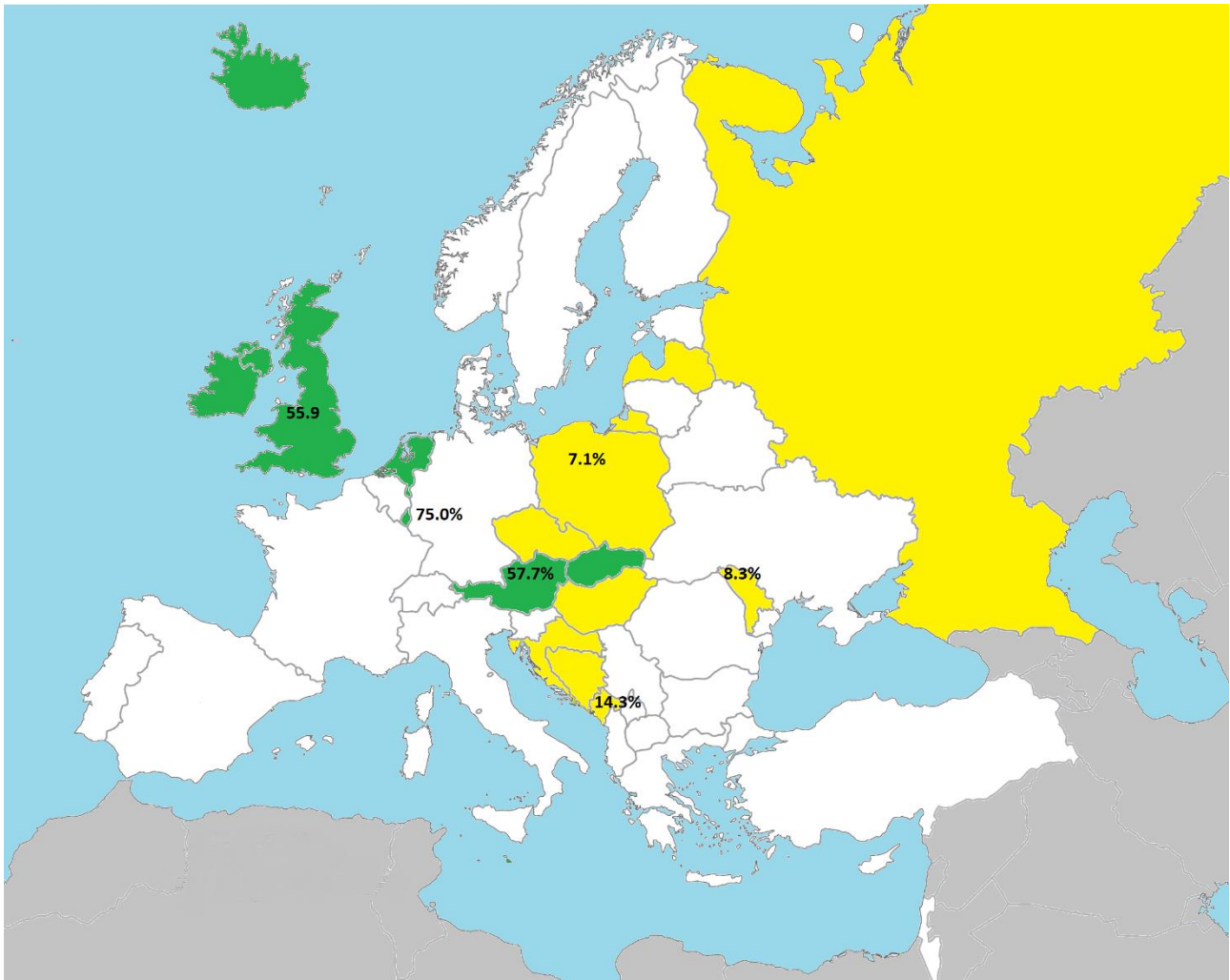


## PROSEPS SURVEY 2019

### Participation (presented a paper or acted as discussant) to at least an international conference per year

In GREEN the countries whose political scientists are clearly above the average (1<sup>st</sup> quartile: = or > 85% of participation). In YELLOW the countries whose political scientists are clearly below the average (4<sup>th</sup> quartile: less than 62% of participation)





#### PROSEPS SURVEY 2019

**Have you ever worked in any contracted research or teaching position in another country (not including visiting positions)?**

In GREEN the countries whose political scientists are clearly above the average (1<sup>st</sup> quartile: = or > 50% of positive answers). In YELLOW the countries whose political scientists are clearly below the average (4<sup>th</sup> quartile: less than 25% of positive answers)

## **Table 2: Innovative roles for the Profession of Political Scientist**

### **Premises**

According to the 2018 PROSEPS Survey, the majority of European political scientists have engaged in some kind of advisory activities during the last three years. Interestingly enough, a variety of advisory activities emerges in our data: political scientists do not just deal with «political forecasts» and «electoral polls» but also are active in advising on policy issues, on democratic institutions, and on administrative reform. They do this on a more structural basis or ad hoc, and senior academics seem more involved in this compared to young scholars. The pattern that emerges from the survey, however, does not reveal or suggest a tendency towards an *advisory turn* in the discipline. This relates to a second pattern found in the survey, on the perception of relevance and impact of political science. While the discipline is believed to be widely visible, the impact of knowledge produced seems more conditional.

These findings require discussion of their implications. What does the picture tell us, how can academics in political science best develop professional skills, and what challenges exist to younger scholars facing increasing demands for impact? What measures can and should be taken in order to develop a set of modern and functional "political science skills" to be invested in the future job market? Here, skills development should connect also to the awareness of self-perception of normative orientations of political scientists towards the domain of practice they all study.

### **Decline: threats and risks of regression in the 5 years coming**

We may imagine that the picture above indicated would be not enough to establish a stabilisation of a virtuous situation. The scenario, in that case, is that of a very modest and not-too-much innovative role for the profession of political scientist.

### **Stability: tools to consolidate the status quo in the 5 years coming**

The data available tell us that the consolidation of the profession is possible but the overall impact of the discipline in activities other than academic research and teaching will be still relatively modest. The scenario we would outline, therefore, is that of stability

### **Growth. Goals to be reached in the next 5 years**

A «perfect game» for the discipline in the next five year would be consolidating the picture we have described above with a qualitative and quantitative increase of relevance for the profession. The scenario of growth, therefore, is realistic if some general objectives will be reached in the years to come. We can indicate those objectives as follows:

1. Providing a set of soft and professional skills relating to advising and producing impact to complement the classical methodological "package" presented by the PhD programs in Political Science.
2. Increasing the rate of participation of young political scientists in interdisciplinary projects.
3. Creating opportunities to discuss the role of political scientists in different social and political processes, to be better defined.
4. Increasing the social relevance of specific policy-related studies, to be better defined.
5. Stressing the relevance of political science in new broad areas of studies like gender. studies, sustainable development, major policy themes on the global public and political agenda.

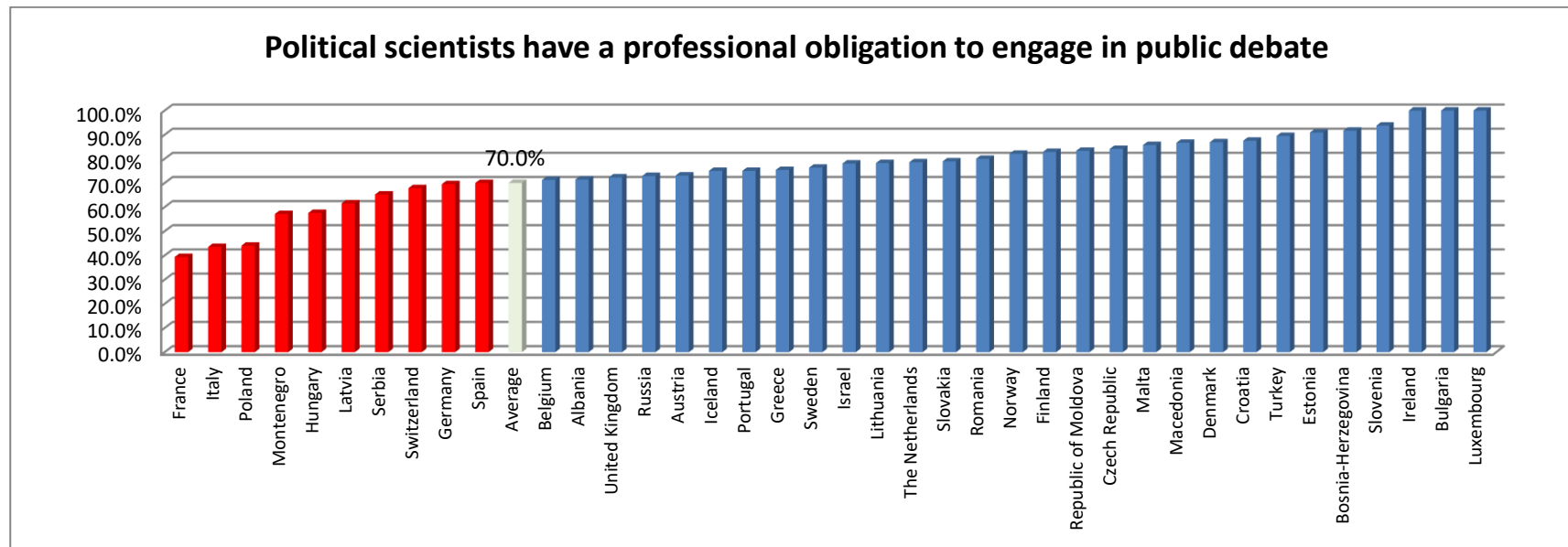
### **Resources / Constraints**

- ☺ More resources and flexibility in the formulation of PhD programs
- ☺ More resources for interdisciplinary projects (Horizon Europe; ERC synergy grants ect.) where the role of political scientist could be crucial

- ☺ Organizational and strategical changes of National PS associations, with a consequent increase of attention towards the innovative roles of the discipline
- ☹ Emergence of «political turns» in many European countries determining the downscaling of projects on gender studies, ethical problems and sustainable development
- ☹ Negative effects of the «publish or perish» paradigm on the development of some innovative roles for the discipline.

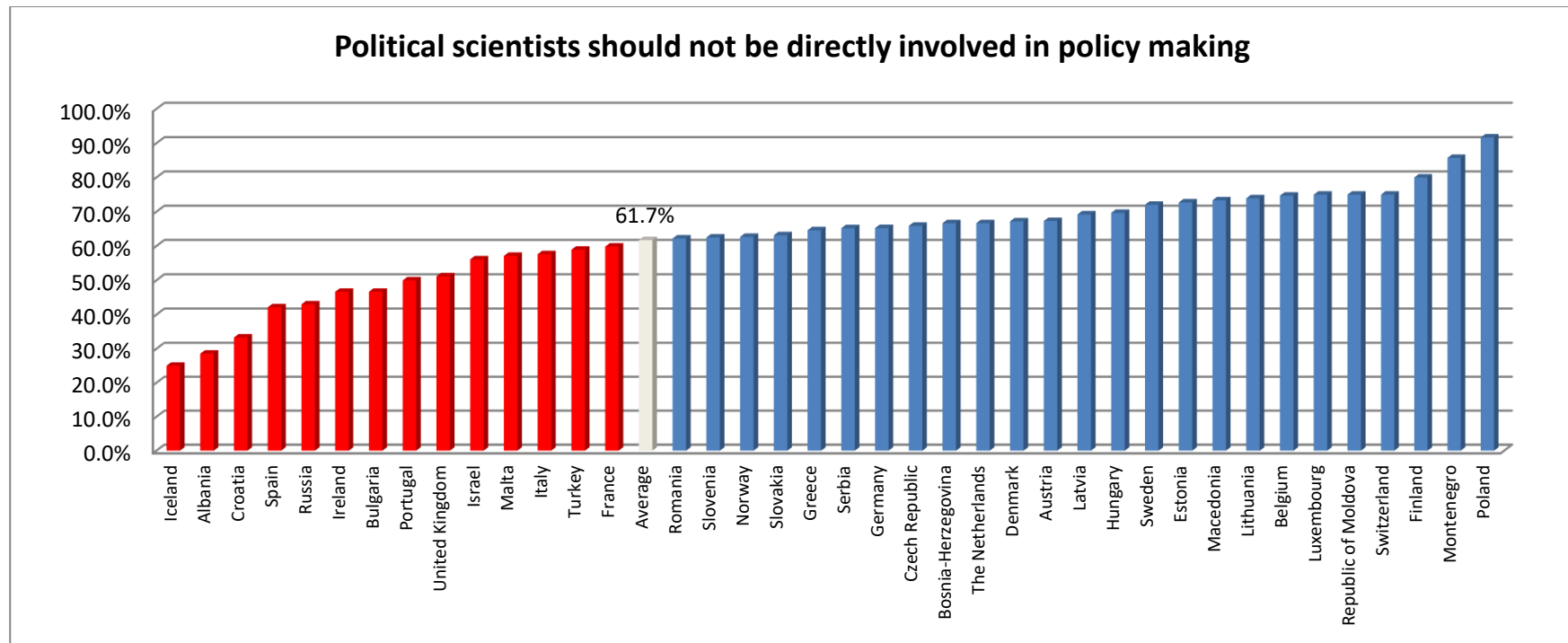
## Quotations

- .... Like medicine, Public policy can be scientific in searching for evidence and diagnosing a problem through cause-and-effect analysis...  
Rose, R. (2014), *Learning About Politics in Time and Space*, Ecpr Press.
- ... It is clear that in Lasswell there is a recurrence of a historic tendency towards a closed scientific system in which the prospect is held out that all the issues vital to man can be tentatively entertained and, as the occasion permits, answered within the scope of science. The claim is broad and perhaps arrogant and premature, but it has a history in the last three centuries that cannot be ignored. It is a challenge to the social sciences that they cannot avoid or escape.  
David Easton, 'Harold Lasswell; Policy Scientist for a Democratic Society', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 450-477



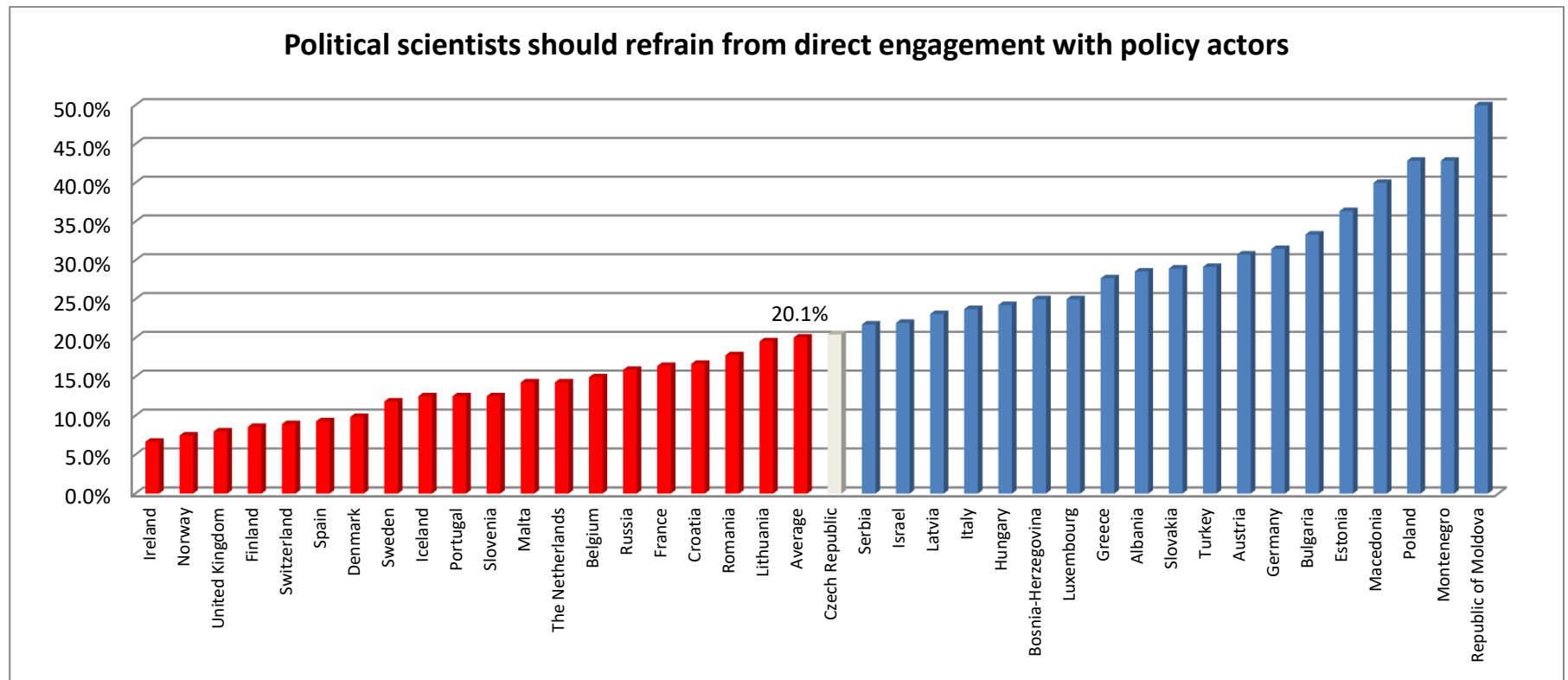
#### PROSEPS SURVEY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS 2019

% of "Agree"



**PROSEPS SURVEY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS 2019**

**% of "Agree"**



**PROSEPS SURVEY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS 2019**

**% of "Agree"**

### ***Table 3: A Science for democracy. Political Science and Civic Engagement***

#### **Premises**

The role of social sciences and of Political Science in particular is becoming problematic today: the rise of populism, fake news communication, social media, risks to damage the social legitimization of those disciplines that focus on the empirical study of social and political behaviours. The illiberal shift that is emerging in several democratic societies might be represented as a danger for practitioners and scholars of political science.

In sum, political scientists' professional and scientific knowledge seems to be dramatically challenged in our days. The academic competition for financial resources (research funds and academic posts) as well for «social» legitimization and reputation between social sciences, economics and law could drive to losses for political science.

In the European context, the developments of EU dynamics could significantly change the meaning of Political Science. On the one hand, EU resources can be used to promote benchmarking and analysis of best practices. On the other hand, the introduction of such instruments can accentuate the differences within the EU and between the EU area and the rest of Europe.

In general, this table is finalised to understand to what extent Political Science can be seen in five years from now as a discipline of democracy and, in particularly, for a democracy at risk.

#### **Decline: threats and risks of regression in the 5 years coming**

1. The degree of internationalization of European Political Scientists is still too low and the degree of parochialism still too high to envisage an effective improvement of studies and researches oriented to a general public.
2. The flourishing of thematic conferences, standing groups and hyper-specialization may bring to a too fragmented and uncommunicative discipline.
3. The diffusion of on line journals and the declining relevance of monographic work for the career of political scientists will inevitably reduce the production of broad theories and researches oriented to make the general audience aware about the perils of anti-democratic drifts.
4. The lack of coordination among the domestic research institutions will probably limit for the next five years the creation of a strong «federation» of data infrastructures promoting the civic engagement activities of political scientists

#### **Stability: tools to consolidate the status quo in the 5 years coming**

1. National Associations should do their part to maintain a minimum of network among them. This would help in order to pay attention during national and international conferences to some «hot» political issues like democracy, academic freedom, etc.
2. Political scientists should engage themselves to make political science more «friendly» in university courses. This especially in those countries where university degrees does not have a *major* in political science.
3. Established and senior scholars should be engaged to help the younger colleagues to focus their research projects on issues that are relevant from the social and the political point of view

#### **Growth: Goals to be reached in the 5 years coming**

1. The available resources should be used to make political scientists more engaged in the politics of their context (local or national)
2. Some resources should be pooled by national and supranational authorities to establish an European network to make political science more disseminated among ordinary people and more useful for «Fact Checking» activities. Also, ECPR and other organizations should be convinced to start a Research Network like «Engaging Science for improving democracy»
3. Efforts should be done to promote lobbying activities finalised to a European-wide use of political science engagement in the democratic life (both at the national and at the supranational level)

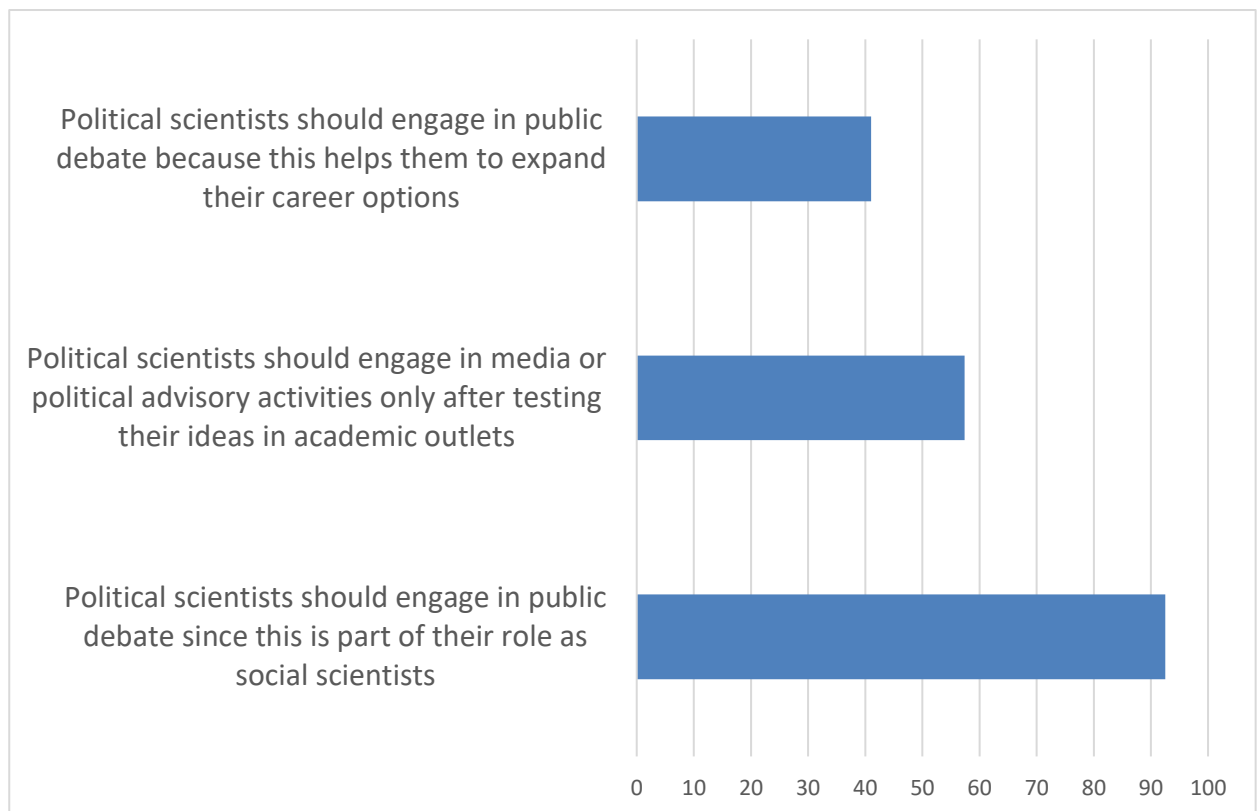


## Resources / Constraints

- ☺ Increase of financial resources from the DG Education, Youth, Culture (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe)
- ☺ Increase of financial resources available for scientific research and dissemination (ex. ERC)
- ☺ Increase of financial resources budgeted by the PS European and International associations for applicative and disseminative activities
- ☺ Diffusion of technologic devices to be spread to general public (i.e. Voting Advice devices, free on line resources, available data from FH, V-Dem, etc.)
- ☹ Limitation of academic freedom in some European countries
- ☹ Increasing appeal of nationalistic and populist narratives in some European governments
- ☹ Relative and unbalanced diffusion of data on democratic quality in Europe
- ☹ Long term effects of budget cuts and austerity policies imposed in many European countries to the HEIs

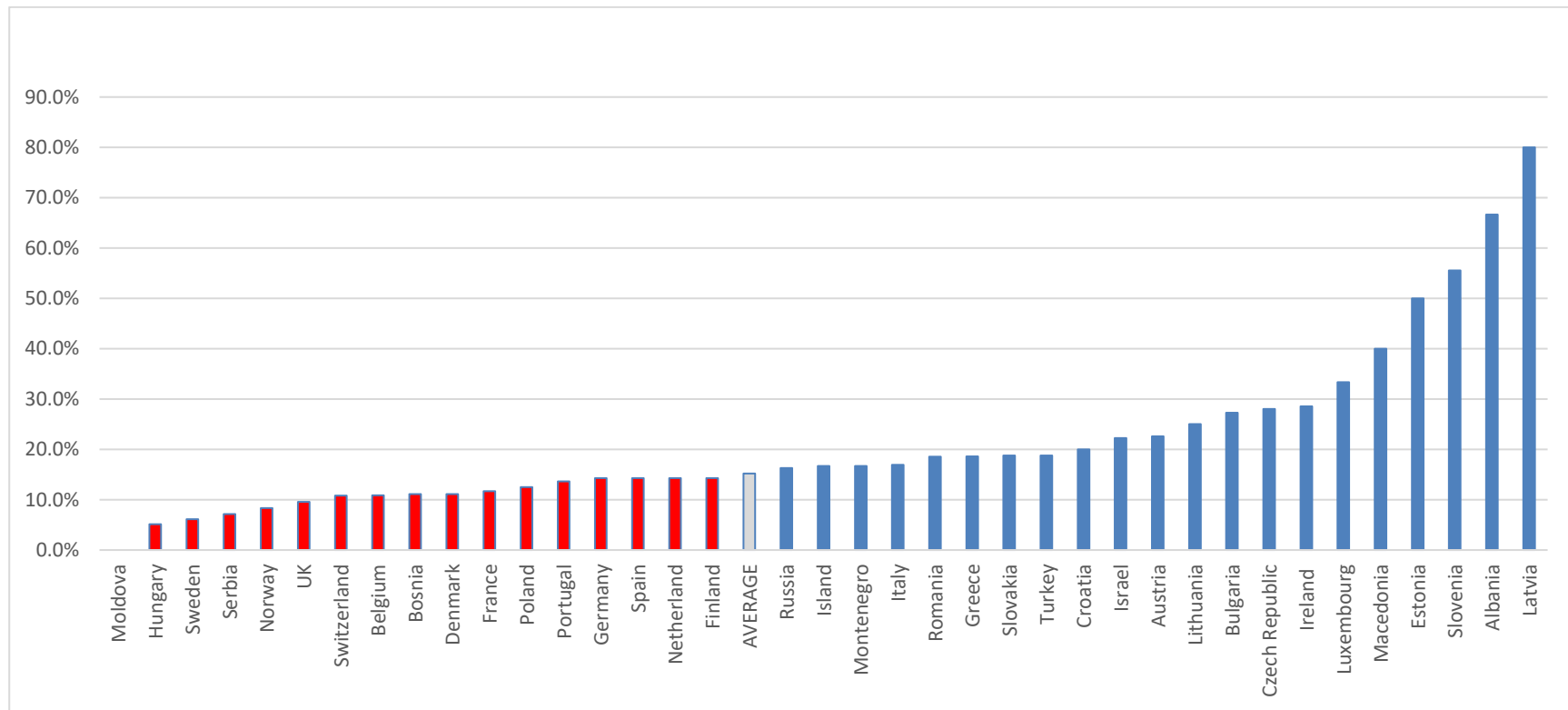
## Quotations

- ... Political science must be relevant, it does not involve studying butterflies. Remark attributed by Political Scientist Gianfranco Pasquino to Giovanni Sartori. <https://www.resetdoc.org/story/sartori-the-theoretician-of-democracy-who-brought-logic-to-politics/>
- ...if we agree on common values associated with the preservation of democracy, then we can also agree that it is appropriate to be vocal about violations of the institutions that have contributed to the preservation of democracy  
J. Victor (1996), *A political science call to Action*, vox.com
- ... Anyone worthy of the name of scientist must be able to struggle with considerable success against jealousy, envy, bigotry, and any other attitude that interferes with clarity of perception and judgement.  
Lasswell, H. D. (1971) *A Pre-view of Policy Science*, New York, Elsevier.



#### PROSEPS SURVEY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS 2019

% of "Agree" to the above statements



## PROSEPS SURVEY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS 2019

**The most important mission of national associations of political scientists is to promote a stronger presence of political science in the public sphere.**  
 % of respondents who indicate this item among the three most important missions