

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL PARTNERSHIPS – CALL 2020

THEMATIC FIELDS 12: Behavioural Insights applied to Policy-making

JRC RESEARCH AREA DESCRIPTION

The EU has long embraced the principle of *evidence-based policymaking*. In addition, increasingly evidence regarding agents' *behaviour* is seen as an invaluable contribution to the design of specific policy interventions (think at initiatives on environment, health or employment, for example). *Timely and cost-effective* collection and use of behavioural evidence is a *sine qua non* for ensuring its proper incorporation in EU policymaking.

Since 2012 we started to systematically collect, interpret and apply behavioural insights to policymaking. We recently explicitly endeavoured to engage with local public and private stakeholders in *field trials* (where actual behaviour can be properly observed) – e.g., on social biking, taxation, nutritional labelling and soon on vaccination hesitancy – and we will further pursue this path whenever possible in the future.

Collaborative doctoral partnerships would further strengthen our activity, both in terms of designing specific initiatives (lab, online and/or field experiments as well as other approaches for qualitative evidence), interpreting the collected evidence, or yet promoting our results to the academic community, too.

MAIN POLICY FIELDS

At the European Commission, we have been applying behavioural insights to policymaking since 2008. It has been applied to a number of policy areas: consumer policy (on the abuse of default options in online contracts, 2009), competition policy (to increase competition and transparency in the market of browsers, 2009), health policy (the revision of the Tobacco Regulation in 2014), online gambling (to inform the EC Recommendation on Online Gambling, 2014), and on a number of other instances.

We currently have formal collaborations with various Directorate Generals, including DG FISMA and EIOPA (on financial decision-making), DG JUST (both on consumer policy and gender policy), DG MOVE (on exploring the influence of social factors in encouraging urban cycling), DG SANTE (on vaccination confidence and nutritional labelling), just to provide a hint about the range of areas we are involved. In addition to these, we have been working closely with DG EMPL (on issues related to social security), DG ENER (on issues related to energy labelling), DG ENV (on issues related to carbon footprint), DG GROW (on issues related to professional associations) and DG TAXUD (we currently have a field experiment conducted jointly with Ireland and Belgium on reminders for tax declarations).

Collaborative doctoral partnerships could be envisaged in any of these areas, and explored in other areas, too.

LINKS / URL WEBSITES

- Behavioural Insights:
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/behavioural-insights>
- Publications:
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/behavioural-insights/publications>
- BIAP 2016:
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/behavioural-insights/europe>

LINKS / REFERENCES TO RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- The application of behavioural insights to policy in Europe (Emanuele Ciriolo et al., in *Handbook of Behavioural Change and Public Policy*, 2019) <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/handbook-of-behavioural-change-and-public-policy>
- Network interventions for changing physical activity behaviour in preadolescents (Antonios Proestakis et al., *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2018)
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-018-0436-y/>