EU-SPRI Annual Conference 2026

Questioning the contributions of Science and Innovation to Society

Universitat Politècnica de València, 10 – 12 June

Organised by: Ingenio (CSIC-UPV)

Venue: **Universitat Politècnica de València**

10 - 12 June 2026

Final report to Eu-SPRI

Rationale

Rapid technological change and the spread of radical innovations have heightened interest in the effects on society of these changes. This departs from the dominant view in the 20th century, which considered the results of scientific research and innovation to be, essentially, positive. Research and innovation could produce undesired effects, but such could be identified, bounded, and addressed with specific policy interventions. In the main, however, scientific research and technological innovation were seen as positive forces for society. This view still permeates how policy goals are often framed: higher R&D investments are considered desirable, and academics and politicians will often decry low levels of R&D investment. Increasing R&D investment remains a core guiding principle for many science and technology strategies.

Yet, some of the effects of the model of economic growth that has developed thanks to the diffusion of science-based new technologies have proved to be problematic. Depletion of natural resources, global warming, pollution, social inequalities, and loss of biodiversity are but some of the deleterious effects that, at some point or another, have been traced to the massive deployment of new technologies and the new social habits that have accompanied them. Further, new technologies like Artificial Intelligence have raised existential fears rooted in the possibility that they may take over human decisions and thus autonomously shape future societies.

Concern about such developments is progressively penetrating the formulation and implementation of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policies. A set of interrelated policy strategies and objectives, broadly designated as the "normative turn" in STI policy, are triggering profound changes in science and innovation policies and practices. This Conference will aim to reflect on these changes, describe their nature, analyse their implications, and discuss examples of changing approaches to research and innovation and their outcomes and impacts.

Programme

Reduced Programme

Conference day 1: June 10

08:00	09:15	**Registrations / Opening**
09:15	09:45	**Plenary 1: Opening session**
09:45	11:00	Keynote 1 | Dr. Asun Lera St. Clair
11:00	11:30	Coffee corner
11:30	13:00	**Parallel session 1**
13:00	14:15	Lunch
14:15	15:45	**Parallel session 2**
15:45	16:15	Coffee corner
16:15	17:45	Roundtable 1 | "Dark Side of innovation"
17:45	18:15	Concert by UPV Choir
18:15	20:00	**Reception**

Conference day 2: June 11

08:30	10:00	**Parallel session 3**
10:00	10:30	Coffee corner
10:30	12:00	Keynote 2 | Prof. Andy Stirling
12:00	13:15	Lunch
13:15	14:45	**Parallel session 4**
14:45	15:00	Coffee corner
15:00	16:30	**Parallel session 5**
16:30	17:45	Keynote 3 | Dr Amir Lebdioui
17:45	18:15	**Musical Resonance**
18:30	19:30	Transport to Conference dinner
19:30	20:00	**Boat Trip**
20:00	22:00	Conference Dinner

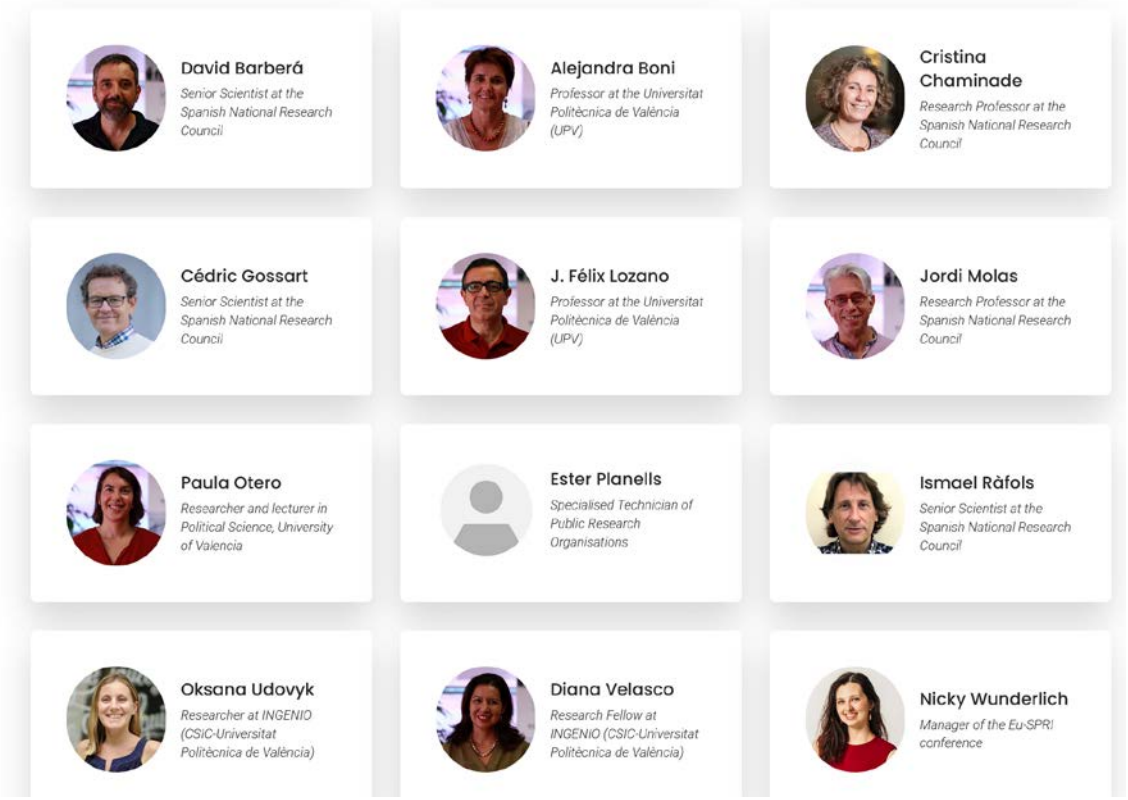
Conference day 3: June 12

08:30	10:00	**Parallel session 6**
10:00	10:15	Coffee corner
10:15	11:45	**Parallel session 7**
11:45	12:00	Coffee corner
12:00	13:30	Roundtable 2 | "Policy Makers"
13:30	14:15	Closing session
14:15	16:30	**Lunch**

European Forum for Studies of Policies for Research and Innovation

ingenio CSIC-UPV

Organising Committee:



Main figures:

- 445 registered participants, mainly from Europe, but also from Asia and America
- 362 papers presented
- 23 tracks (see annex 2)
- 15 special sessions

Submissions received between tracks, special sessions, papers: 559

Rejected: 90

Withdrawn: 68

Budget (figures in yellow are not definitive)

Income: 182.000

Sponsors: 42.000

Eu- Spri: 20.000 This has been spent in hiring part time a conference manager
JRC: 8.000 (Contract with JRC minus 20% of indirect costs. Note that this contract has not been finalized yet). This amount has been dedicated to cover the advisory board expenses; wave the fee of 6 JCR members; paying audiovisuals expenses of main auditoriums)
Regional Gv: 9.000 (pending of receiving the final confirmation)
Cost action: 5.000

Fees: 140.000 (including dinner)

Expenses: 180.000

Catering and social dinner: 90.000
Conference manager and other management and reinforcement staff: 65.000
Others: Indirect cost Ingenio and UPV; Conf Tool, App, T&S, audiovisuals, Badges, presents etc.: 25.000

Total claimed to Eu-Spri: 20.000 €

The difference between the income and the expenses will cover the extra cost of the Early Career Conference estimated in 1.112 euros (see report of the Early Career Conference)

Annex 1: Photographs

Opening session:

Keynote 1 Asunción Lera St. Clair: "Global Environmental Change and Socially Relevant R&I"

Strategic intelligence track

Social innovation in turbulent times track

Round table: The Dark side of Innovation

The UPV choir

Keynote Andy Stirling: "Taking directionality seriously: caring for alternatives in science, innovation and society

Advisory Board Track:

Keynote 3: Amir Lebdioui “The Nature of Innovation: Evolutionary approaches to economic development”

Policymakers roundtable

Social media

Opening: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eu-spri-forum_euspri2026-activity-7470377001137176576-UU3S/

Day 2: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eu-spri-forum_euspri2026-euspri2026-activity-7470747799983321088--wiw/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAAWODsYBjbksPdWSu_pLGLQZtxn24rF5xrE

Day 3: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eu-spri-forum_euspri2026-activity-7471083179060293632-iMkC/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAAWODsYBjbksPdWSu_pLGLQZtxn24rF5xrE

Closing:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ingenio-csic-upv-_euspri2026-activity-7471187622795653120-5rmK/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAAWODsYBjbksPdWSu_pLGLQZtxn24rF5xrE

Interviews with Conference chairs:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eu-spri-forum_euspri2026-activity-7470880279168151552-6-TJ/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAAWODsYBjbksPdWSu_pLGLQZtxn24rF5xrE

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eu-spri-forum_euspri2026-activity-7471112837646651393-YcId/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAAWODsYBjbksPdWSu_pLGLQZtxn24rF5xrE

Radio releases:

https://hokcab01.almacen.api.auditmedia.es//api/Recortes/ab474fd7-f820-428b-8d8f-7f420610cb10/radio.mp3

https://hokcab01.almacen.api.auditmedia.es//api/Recortes/92b29598-d68c-41c7-85f5-9dc7c44bbe97/radio.mp3

Text for blog post

The 2026 EU-SPRI Annual Conference, hosted by Ingenio (CSIC-UPV) at the Universitat Politècnica de València from 10 to 12 June, brought together nearly 450 researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from across Europe, Asia, and the Americas to reflect on a timely question: *What contributions should science and innovation make to society?*

The conference responded to growing concerns about the unintended consequences of technological and scientific progress. While science, technology, and innovation have long been regarded as engines of economic growth and societal improvement, challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequalities, and the rapid development of artificial intelligence have prompted renewed debate about their direction, governance, and societal impacts.

With 445 participants, 362 presented papers, 23 thematic tracks, and 15 special sessions, the conference offered a vibrant forum for discussing the evolving role of science and innovation policy. Contributions explored topics including transformative innovation policy, mission-oriented governance, social innovation, public procurement for sustainability transitions, responsible AI, health innovation, security, and alternative perspectives on innovation emerging from the Global South.

The programme featured keynote lectures by Asunción Lera St. Clair on global environmental change and socially relevant research and innovation, Andy Stirling on directionality and alternatives in science and innovation, and Amir Lebdioui on evolutionary approaches to economic development. These keynote sessions, together with policy roundtables and discussions such as *The Dark Side of Innovation*, stimulated critical reflection on how innovation can better address contemporary societal challenges.

A central message emerging from the conference was the need for more reflexive, participatory, and transformative approaches to science and innovation policy. Participants highlighted the importance of moving beyond a narrow focus on economic growth towards broader concerns of sustainability, social justice, democratic governance, and public value.

The strong international participation and rich interdisciplinary exchanges reaffirmed the EU-SPRI community's role as a leading platform for advancing critical debates on science, technology, and innovation in times of profound societal transformation.

Annex 2:

Description of Tracks

Governance and Public Policy

- **Standardisation and regulation as societal governance mechanisms for science and innovation**
- **Science-policy research collaborations for the public good**
- **Democratising the public management of Green Urban Transitions: new roles and capabilities for public sector innovation**
- **How can funding instruments support S&I policies? The rationales, design and effects of different funding instruments on science and innovation**
- **Implementing missions: frameworks, governance, and learnings**
- **How well do we understand the tools we are offering science policy? Approaches and methodologies for ensuring robustness before policy application**
- **Private and public research organisations in transforming innovation systems: rethinking governance, capabilities and shared value creation for change**

Policies for transformation

- **Public demand for innovation: moving forward the transformative potential of public procurement**
- **The role and governance of science and technology organizations in innovation policies: addressing grand challenges**
- **Transformative evaluation in the making: emerging approaches to monitoring, evaluation, and policy learning for transformative innovation policies**
- **Market (trans)formation for environmental innovations**
- **From policy complexity to ungovernability? Exploring limits of innovation policy for transformative change**

Alternative perspectives on STI

- **Social innovation in turbulent times**

- **Dialogues on the directionality of innovation: alternative innovation paradigms from the Global South**
- **Practice theories and the world of science, technology and innovation**
- **Deep patterns, new directions: exploring multi-system pathways for change**
- **Open, collaborative and participatory science: rethinking knowledge legitimacy, policy and science futures**

Artificial intelligence

- **Artificial intelligence (AI) in science: critical perspectives from responsible innovation**
- **Integrating artificial intelligence in science and innovation policy: opportunities and risks**
- **Public value mapping for artificial intelligence**

Sectoral issues: health and security

- **Increasing interconnections between security and transforming innovation policy**
- **Responsible research and innovation in health: emerging challenges for governance and practice**

Open track