

5.1.2.

STOA RULES

ADOPTED BY THE BUREAU ON 4 MAY 2009

The Bureau,

- having regard to Rule 23(2) of the Rules of Procedure¹,
- having regard to its decision of 1 September 2003 on the future mandate, principal type of activities and organisation of STOA,
- having regard to the STOA Rules adopted by the Bureau on 19 April 2004,
- having regard to the report, dated 15 April 2009, by the Vice-President responsible on STOA activities in the sixth parliamentary term,
- having regard to the draft STOA rules, as submitted by the Vice-President responsible,

HAS DECIDED:

Article 1 - STOA's objectives

1. Parliament's Bureau (decision of 26 May 1992, amended on 18 September 1995, 17 February 1997, 13 January 2003 and 19 April 2004) set up STOA (Science and Technology Options Assessment) to implement technology assessment projects. The activities carried out by STOA form an integral part of Parliament's official activities. These Rules regulate this in further detail and replace the rules adopted on 19 April 2004.
2. STOA shall contribute to the debate on and the legislative consideration of scientific and technological issues of particular political relevance.

To that end, STOA shall:

- provide Parliament's committees and other parliamentary bodies concerned with independent, high-quality and scientifically impartial studies and information for the assessment of the impact of possibly introducing or promoting new technologies and shall identify, from the technological point of view, the options for the best courses of action to take;
- organise forums in which politicians and representatives of scientific communities or organisations and of society as a whole shall discuss and compare scientific and technological developments of political relevance to civil society;
- support and coordinate initiatives to strengthen parliamentary technology assessment activities in the Member States of the European Union, including creating or enhancing parliamentary technology assessment capacities in European countries, especially new Member States.

¹ This reference to the Rules of Procedure is to the version in force during the seventh parliamentary term.

3. STOA shall carry out its work in such a way that the results are relevant to Parliament in its role as legislator.
4. STOA's work shall have long-term objectives and it shall differ from the work of the Secretariat's research departments, the task of which is to meet specific sectoral or short-term research requirements.

Article 2 - STOA's activities

1. For the purposes of technology option assessments, STOA shall carry out studies and organise workshops, expert discussions and visits to scientific and technical institutions. STOA shall employ the full toolbox of modern parliamentary technology assessment. The dialogue on scientific and technical developments shall be conducted within the framework of conferences, the STOA Annual Lecture or other activities decided by the STOA Panel. STOA publications shall serve the above aims.
2. STOA studies shall be carried out as open-minded scientific enquiries and shall be beholden to no vested interest that could limit their objectivity. The results of STOA studies shall not be adopted or voted upon, with the exception of the cases referred to in Article 6(4). The results of STOA studies will not therefore necessarily represent the majority view of Parliament. All studies submitted by contractors in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract shall be published by STOA without prejudice to the provisions of the Article 6(4) of these Rules.
3. Any Member or Parliament body may submit a proposal to the STOA Panel for STOA activities to be carried out.
4. STOA's administration shall be the responsibility of the Directorate-General for the Internal Policies of the European Union, which shall set up a secretariat for STOA within the appropriate policy department.
5. Budgetary means made available to STOA via the European Parliament's budget are managed by the Directorate-General for the Internal Policies of the European Union in accordance with the Financial Regulation and the implementing rules, as well as any further internal rules established to this effect.²

Article 3 - STOA Panel

1. The STOA Panel shall form an integral part of Parliament's structure.
2. The STOA Panel shall decide on STOA's activities.
3. The STOA Panel shall comprise 15 members with the right to vote:
 - the Vice-President of Parliament with responsibility for STOA;
 - four members appointed by the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy;
 - two members appointed by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs;

² Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (as amended); and Commission Regulation, (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

- two members appointed by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety;
 - two members appointed by the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection;
 - two members appointed by the Committee on Transport and Tourism;
 - two members appointed by the Committee on Agriculture.
4. The members of the STOA Panel shall be appointed for a renewable two-and-a-half-year period. Where a member is replaced, the term-of-office of the substitute member shall run to the end of the two-and-a-half-year period concerned.

Article 4 - Election of STOA Panel and its method of operation

1. Every time they are constituted, the committees referred to in Article 3(3), shall, within three months, appoint their members of the STOA Panel and notify the appointments to Parliament's Bureau.
2. The Vice-President of Parliament with responsibility for STOA shall convene and conduct the constituent meeting of the STOA Panel pending the election of the chair and two vice-chairs, who shall form, together with the Vice-President, the Bureau of STOA, which prepares meetings of the Panel.
3. The STOA Panel shall meet at least six times a year. The draft agenda shall be circulated at least one week before the meeting. Minutes shall be drawn up for all meetings.

Article 5 - Contracts with external providers of scientific services

1. In compliance with the Financial Regulation and the implementing rules, the STOA Panel may invite the competent authorizing officer to commission external scientists to evaluate the request for a technology assessment project prior to its execution, and to evaluate the quality of a study after its completion. The framework contracts or individual contracts concluded for this purpose with external service providers shall stipulate that such contractors may not themselves carry out any other projects for STOA.
2. In compliance with the Financial Regulation and the implementing rules, technology option assessment studies shall, as a rule, be carried out by one or more external contractors with which the competent authorizing officer shall conclude, at the request of the STOA Panel, a framework contract following a public invitation to tender. Each contractor must have available the expertise of several scientific institutions from several Member States. The service provided under the contract shall comprise project management, the scientific analysis of the issue, the highlighting of options for action, and a presentation of the results in a manner understandable to a layperson. The contract shall be carried out by the contractor to whom the contract has been awarded or may be carried out in part, but under the same terms and conditions as those laid down in the invitation to tender and subject to prior approval by the STOA Panel, by a third-party subcontractor whose technological and/or scientific qualifications shall meet the same standards and qualifications as laid down for the contractor himself. Exceptionally, technology option assessment studies may also be carried out by external contractors through individual contracts.

3. Contracts with external suppliers of scientific services may stipulate that a fraction of the contractual price not exceeding 15% shall be dedicated to awareness-raising and visibility-enhancing campaigns for the project in question.

Article 6 - Technology option assessment studies

1. Technology option assessment studies shall provide an answer to medium- to long-term, complex and interdisciplinary problems relating to the impact of scientific and technological developments on society.
2. The proposals submitted for that purpose shall be approved by the STOA Panel on the basis of the following criteria:
 - the relevance of the subject to Parliament's work;
 - the scientific and technological interest of the proposal;
 - the strategic importance of the proposal and its alignment with priorities defined by the STOA Panel; and
 - the availability of scientific evidence covering the same subject.

Before a decision is made, external scientific expertise shall be called upon if the Panel deems this necessary. If the decision is made in favour of a study, but the Parliament Vice-President with responsibility for STOA has voted against, authorisation from Parliament's Bureau shall be required.

3. The contractor shall inform the STOA Panel of interim results and shall submit a final report that is understandable to a layperson.
4. The STOA Panel may, if it deems it necessary, have a final report subjected to an evaluation or review by independent external scientists. Until such evaluation or review is available, the Panel may decide to withhold publication. The evaluation or review may be published with the study. In the case of a negative evaluation, the Panel may decide not to publish the final report.

Article 7 - Ramón y Cajal scholarships

1. The Ramón y Cajal programme shall offer scholarships to university graduates with a first vocational qualification (Bureau decision of 17 February 1997, last amended on 13 January 2003). Candidates must have a university degree (first degree or Master's degree) in a scientific or technical subject. Scholars shall be assigned to STOA research activities.
2. Ramón y Cajal scholarships shall be advertised in scientific publications and on the Internet. The selection procedure shall be carried out in conformity with the relevant internal rules.

Article 8 - Annual report

STOA shall publish an annual report on its activities, including its use of its budget, which shall be forwarded to Parliament's Bureau and published on the Internet.

The annual report shall be drawn up under the responsibility of the STOA Chair and approved by the STOA Panel.

Article 9 - Cooperation with other institutions

Under the patronage of the President of Parliament, STOA shall be a member of the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment (EPTA) Network and shall support initiatives to consolidate the parliamentary dimension of EPTA. STOA shall cooperate with other parliamentary technology assessment bodies and shall participate in the exchange of results of their work.

Article 10 - Revision clause

These Rules shall be evaluated before the end of the 7th parliamentary term on the basis of a report dealing with STOA's activities during the seventh parliamentary term submitted to the Bureau by the Vice-President with responsibility for STOA.

Article 11 - Final provisions

Save where these Rules provide otherwise, Parliament's Rules of Procedure shall apply by analogy. These Rules shall come into force on 1 July 2009.