



STOA

Science and Technology Options Assessment

STOA Panel meeting

Thursday, 12 February 2015, 09:30 > 11:00

LOW N1.4, Strasbourg

Minutes

The meeting started at 09:37 with Mr Paul RÜBIG, Chairman of the STOA Panel, in the chair.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda (PE 527.419)

- The Chair:
 - announced that interpretation was available in the following languages: English (EN), German (DE), French (FR), Czech (CZ), Bulgarian (BG), Polish (PL), Hungarian (HU) and Croatian (HR);
 - welcomed Mr Czesław SIEKIERSKI, MEP, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and, when she joined the meeting later on, Ms Vicky FORD, MEP, Chair of the Committee on Internal market and Consumer Protection (IMCO).
- The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

2. Approval of draft minutes - STOA Panel meeting of 15 January 2015 (PE 527.414)

- The draft minutes were approved without modifications.
- A draft letter from the STOA Chair to the President of the European Commission, on the subject of the use of scientific advice in European policy-making in connection with the abolition of the post of Chief Scientific Advisor, was endorsed by the Panel without objections and would be sent to the EP President for a possible final transmission to the President JUNCKER.

3. Presentation of the draft report of the STOA study ‘Technology options for deep seabed exploitation – Tackling economic, environmental and societal challenges’

- The Chair:
 - informed Panel members that Ms Marijana PETIR, MEP, was Lead Panel Member for this project, which started in October 2014 and was carried out by Triple E Consulting; the draft study, layman's summary and Options Brief could be found in the dossier;
 - gave the floor to Ms Katarina SVATIKOVA, from Triple E Consulting, for the presentation.
- Ms SVATIKOVA briefly explained the state-of-play and the main legal and technological issues and economic considerations related to exploration and exploitation activities concerning mineral and biological resources in the deep sea, with a focus on the EU Member States. She also reflected on the possible environmental and societal impacts of such activities. She ended the presentation by outlining the possible policy options, based on the knowledge gaps and challenges identified by the study, for the EU in relation to deep seabed exploration and exploitation.
- Ms PETIR suggested that some parts of the study should be improved before it was to be published, namely the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and the policy options. She explained that the CBA should clearly outline the competitive advantages and possible costs and consequences of exploration and exploitation activities in the deep sea. Furthermore, in her view, the policy options should be turned into more concrete actions.
- Mr Ricardo SERRÃO SANTOS, MEP with an interest in the topic, reflected on specific legal issues in relation to deep seabed mining, namely the extension of national jurisdiction on the extended continental shelf, beyond the EEZ¹, and the lack of transparency at the ISA² level. For bioprospecting,

¹ Exclusive Economic Zone.

² International Seabed Authority.

there was lack of transparency in labelling products containing compounds originating from marine organisms. In his view, technological developments would make it possible for the mining industry to move off-shore in the future regardless of the real need for extracting the minerals from the deep sea.

- Additionally, Mr SERRÃO SANTOS pointed out that Portugal would likely be the first European country to mine in European waters. As regards the environmental impact of deep seabed mining, he mentioned the relevant EU directives (on Marine Spatial Planning and on Marine Strategy Framework), the ISA technical study envisaging the establishment of marine protected areas in relation to deep seabed mining, as well as a scientific cruise assessing the environmental impact of deep seabed mining activities in the Pacific since the 1989 and the Solwara 1 case off the coast of Papua New Guinea.
- Ms JAZŁOWIECKA, MEP, enquired about (i) the actual exploitation potential of deep seabed resources, (ii) the lack of criteria for assessing the environmental impact of such activities, (iii) which countries had an interest in the topic, and (iv) the lack of specific legislation for regulating the exploration and exploitation activities in the deep sea. Furthermore she wanted to know who sponsored the study and who was funding the research and deep seabed mining and bioprospecting in general.
- The Chair explained that this study was commissioned by STOA, while Ms SVATIKOVA added that research in this field was in general funded by the EU's research framework programmes, including Horizon 2020, as well as by industry and the scientific community.
- Mr Stijn BILLIET, Policy Officer responsible for maritime policy in the Atlantic, Arctic and outermost regions in the European Commission's DG MARE³, informed the Panel that DG MARE had launched a study focusing on deep seabed mining, which would soon be published and shared with STOA.
- Before giving the floor to Ms SVATIKOVA for the final statement, the Chair stressed the need for having more concrete policy options as the main result of the study.
- Responding to comments, Ms SVATIKOVA stressed the lack of data for a more detailed quantification of the CBA, and agreed with the need to provide more concrete policy options. She confirmed the lack of transparency at the ISA level and in relation to labelling of products resulting from bioprospecting. She explained that the study considered Solwara 1 and the position of Portugal, by interviewing four Portuguese experts. She concluded by pointing out the interest of countries and the mining industry in moving off-shore and emphasising the need for a concrete EU position on deep seabed mining.

4. Priorities for the new legislature and implementation of the Action Plan

- The Chair:
 - reminded Members about the importance of the implementation of the Action Plan 'A STOA strategy for the future' endorsed by the outgoing STOA Panel at the end of the 7th legislature;
 - gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, Head of the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), for briefly presenting the next steps in relation to the Action Plan.
- Mr KARAPIPERIS referred Members to the note prepared by the Secretariat on STOA priorities for the 8th legislature, building on the above-mentioned Action Plan, aiming to reinforce STOA in its commitment to maintain and enhance its role as the reference point for strategic science and technology advice within the European Parliament, in the service of parliamentary committees. The note outlined the main activities of STOA, namely studies and events.
- As Mr KARAPIPERIS explained, STOA fulfils an important part of its mission through projects of an interdisciplinary character, focusing on the identification and assessment of the widest possible range of options for future policy action. STOA's activities also aim at bridging the gap between the scientific community and policy-makers, by stimulating dialogue and discussion forums, especially in the form of workshops, the STOA Annual Lecture and the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme
- He then recalled the five STOA priority areas established in the 7th legislature: *Eco-efficient transport and modern energy solutions; Sustainable management of natural resources; Potentials and challenges of the information society; Health and life sciences; and Science, technology and innovation policy.*
- Mr KARAPIPERIS also reminded Members about the most prominent actions of the Action Plan: recognising STOA as the permanent European Parliament body with an explicit foresight role in Science and Technology, firmly anchored in the agenda-setting phase of the policy cycle; employing a

³ Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission.

good knowledge and understanding of the long-term policy framework to assess policy options, with an emphasis on timely and effective communication of the results to Members; further developing close relations with parliamentary committees, supporting their work and providing personalised advice to MEPs on demand; re-balance long- and short-term products in favour of shorter timelines (preferably between four and twelve months for a technology assessment study); setting up clear criteria for the selection of workshop topics, format and content; and promoting relations with key European policy-making, research-funding and academic institutions and the European Union agencies.

- Mr KARAPIPERIS ended by inviting Members to come forward with any suggestions they considered necessary for modifying the priority areas.
- The Panel endorsed the actions as presented, notably the one confirming its commitment to favour shorter timelines (between four and twelve months) for future technology assessment projects.
- Mr SIEKIERSKI suggested inviting Members of different committees to STOA Panel meetings depending on the topics to be addressed and their potential areas of interest; Ms FORD emphasised the need for active and timely promotion of STOA studies and events among potentially interested Members; the Chair welcomed the suggestions.
- Mr NEKOV reminded the Panel about the project proposal he had submitted in relation to potentially different effects that organic and conventional products may have on human health.
- The Chair acknowledged that Mr NEKOV's proposal had been received and informed Members that there would be a first discussion of project proposals at the next Panel meeting.

5. STOA Annual Lecture 2015 - Preliminary discussion on possible topics and speakers

- The Chair:
 - noted that the STOA Annual Lecture series had been a great success in recent years;
 - gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS to explain about possible topics and speakers for 2015.
- Mr KARAPIPERIS informed Members that 2015 was the International Year of Light and suggested this, on behalf of the Secretariat, as a source of inspiration for the topic and speakers of the Annual Lecture 2015. He invited the Members to submit any other proposal they might have in relation to this or any other topic and explained that possible ideas would be first discussed at the next Bureau meeting.

6. Update on ongoing projects

- The Chair reminded Members about two recent scientific foresight publications, namely '*Towards Scientific Foresight for the European Parliament*' and '*Ten technologies which could change our lives*'. He pointed out that dedicated blog posts were also published and emphasised the importance of promoting STOA activities on the social media.
- Ms Eva KAILI, MEP and first STOA Vice-Chair, suggested developing a STOA platform dedicated to campaigning for and discussing science and technology matters of political interest on the Internet.
- Mr Ádám KÓSA, MEP, presented the proposal he had submitted, with the support of Ms Danuta JAZŁOWIECKA, MEP and Panel member, for a study to assess the impact of new, innovative technologies on the quality of life of persons with disabilities. This study could have a foresight dimension. He also called for the STOA Annual Lecture to be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Ms FORD suggested doing a macroeconomic study on the competitiveness of the Internal Market, including new types of indicators.
- The Chair thanked Mr KÓSA and Ms FORD for their respective proposals.

7. Joint activities/workshops with external organisations

7.2. STOA - JRC high-level meeting

- The Chair reminded Members of the working breakfast of Panel members with representatives of the JRC scheduled to take place on 24 February 2015, 08:00-09:00, at the MEP Restaurant in Brussels.
- The Chair further noted that Members had been informed by e-mail from the Secretariat about the date, time, venue and format of the meeting, so that they could schedule their attendance.

7.3. Workshop on Ebola

- The Chair informed Members that preparations for this event were proceeding as agreed by the Panel.

8. Visits / External activities

8.1. STOA participation in EXPO 2015, Milan - 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life'

- The Chair invited Members to read the Discussion paper of the EXPO 2015 EU Scientific Steering Committee and submit their possible comments to the Secretariat by 23 February 2015.

9. Any other business

- The Chair drew Members' attention to a list of studies recently published by DG EPRS in the dossier.
- Ms PETIR suggested changing the timing of Panel meetings, due to frequent overlaps with other obligations of the Panel members during the plenary session. More concretely, she suggested holding Panel meetings in Brussels, as this would ensure more time for discussions among Panel members, while specific seminars and round table debates could be organised in Strasbourg.
- The Chair suggested that the format of Panel meetings could be discussed during the next meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 12 March 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in Room LOW N1.4 in Strasbourg.
- At that meeting there would be a presentation of the final report of the STOA project '*Learning and teaching technology options*'.

The meeting ended at 10:52.

Brussels, 23 February 2015

ANNEX

List of participants

STOA Panel members

Mr Rübig, Ms Kaili, Mr Coelho, Ms Jazłowiecka, Mr Nekov, Ms Petir, Mr Pirinski, Ms Schmidt

Other Members

Ms Ford (IMCO Committee), Mr KÓSA (EMPL Committee), Mr SIEKIERSKI (AGRI Committee)

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA)

Mr Karapiperis, Mr Pataki, Ms Van Woensel, Ms Kuljani , Mr Pleše

Other participants

Mr Teasdale (DG EPRS), Mr Dunne (DG EPRS), Mr Billiet (DG MARE, EC), Ms Canales (EASAC), Mr Cardigos (Assistant of Mr Serrão Santos), Ms Feltes (Assistant of Ms Schmidt), Ms Grahek (JRC), Mr Hanus (German Marine Research Consortium), Ms Karanjac (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Mr Seltz (EuroScience), Mr Sochorek (Assistant to Mr Tošenovský), Ms Trump (Assistant of Ms Ford)