

STOA

Science and Technology Options Assessment

STOA Panel meeting
Thursday, 21 May 2015, 09:30 > 11:00
LOW N1.4, Strasbourg

Minutes

The meeting started at 09:36 with Mr Paul RÜBIG, Chairman of the STOA Panel, in the chair.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda (PE 547.416)

- The Chair announced that interpretation was available in the following languages: English (EN), German (DE), French (FR), Croatian (HR), Czech (CS) and Bulgarian (BG), and informed Members that the meeting was being web-streamed for those who were interested, but could not be present.
- He welcomed Ms Vicky FORD MEP, Chair of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), and congratulated her on her official appointment as a new member of the Panel.
- The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

2. Approval of draft minutes - STOA Panel meeting of 30 April 2015 (PE 547.410)

- The draft minutes were approved without modifications.

3. Presentation by Lars KLÜVER, Director of the Danish Board of Technology Foundation, on ‘Lessons learnt from the PACITA¹ project’

- The Chair informed Members that PACITA was a project funded under the 7th Research Framework Programme, with the aim to increase the capacity and enhance the institutional foundations for Parliamentary Technology Assessment (PTA) in Europe. STOA had been involved in PACITA as an observer. The Chair then welcomed Mr KLÜVER and gave him the floor for the presentation.
- Mr KLÜVER:
 - defined Technology Assessment (TA) and ‘TA-like’ activities as tools in support of policy-making, as TA fostered debate, and produced analysis and policy options on issues pertaining to science, technology and innovation in our societies;
 - explained that various models for integrating TA in political or parliamentary activity were used in different countries, depending on their traditions and cultures. In some countries such as Italy, Finland and Greece, parliamentary committees for TA had been officially established, whereas in Germany and at the European Parliament (EP) TA offices were run inside parliament, commissioning external studies when needed; lastly, TA could be delivered via close cooperation between parliament and independent institutions, such as universities and national science academies;
 - pointed out the three main methodological clusters in PTA – expert-based approaches, stakeholder involvement and citizen consultations – which were mirrored respectively in three cross-European PACITA projects: public health and genomics, ageing society and sustainable consumption;
 - elaborated on the basic constituents of the PACITA process, namely documenting, training and debating TA; PACITA aimed at both mobilising those actors that did not have a structured or institutionalised approach to TA, and at demonstrating how a knowledge-based approach to policy-making on techno-scientific topics had a potential positive impact on political activities;
 - presented the PACITA Manifesto, and stressed that there was a clear political will to enhance parliamentary dialogue across Europe on techno-scientific topics.
- The Chair thanked the speaker for his presentation and opened the floor for discussion.
- Ms COELHO, STOA Panel member, agreed on the importance of employing TA in policy-making. On the other hand, he stressed the cost of this service for the European and national parliaments, and was

¹ Parliaments and Civil Society in Technology Assessment

critical of the form in which these assessments were sometimes presented to politicians. He finally asked how a European research network could provide high-quality research at a lower cost.

- Ms PIRINSKI wanted to know what the concrete impact of TA on policies was (e.g. concerning additive manufacturing on traditional manufacturing), and what the effective outputs thereof were. He also asked what were the criteria employed in accessing techno-scientific issues.
- Mr KLÜVER explained that TA carried out at the European level was useful for national assessments, especially through the comparison between the two. He also stressed that TA was mainly conveyed in the form of policy briefs, which seemed to be generally appreciated. Mr KLÜVER also addressed the issue of copyright: he expressed the will to work toward an agreement according to which what was produced by national parliaments would be free for the other parliaments to use – a good way to reduce costs and duplication. Finally, he considered early warning over possible future scenarios the best service provided by TA, and urged policy-makers to take a proactive approach and incorporate TA into their work.

4. Update on STOA projects

4.1. Update on ongoing projects

- The Chair reminded Members of the projects that were still on-going and confirmed that they would all be completed in June/July. He also:
 - informed Members that, as announced at the last Panel meeting, a successful workshop, chaired by himself, with interesting presentations and a fruitful discussion, had taken place in relation to the STOA project '*Learning and teaching technology options*' on 6 May 2015 at the EP in Brussels;
 - acknowledged the success the workshop had on Twitter: 148 tweets in total using the dedicated hashtag created for the event, out of which 121 tweets on the day of the event (a normal peak for every STOA event), including 18 tweets from the official EPRS account.

4.2. Discussion on new project proposals

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI, Head of Service responsible for the STOA Secretariat, who reminded Members that, at the Panel meetings of 12 March and 30 April 2015, Potential Projects No 1, 2, 3 and 4 had been approved as STOA projects;
- He also informed the Panel that, at its meeting of 30 April 2015, the STOA Bureau decided to recommend Potential Projects No 5 to 10 for approval as STOA projects;
- He then announced that Potential Projects No. 11 to 15 would be examined by the STOA Bureau at its meeting later that day with a view to recommending them to the Panel for approval in June 2015;
- The Chair gave the floor to Members for comments; as there were no objections, he declared Potential Projects No 5 to 10 approved as STOA projects, and asked the Secretariat to implement the decision.

5. STOA workshops and joint activities with external organisations

5.1. Forthcoming events

- The Chair informed the meeting that STOA would host a workshops entitled '*Graphene in Europe*' on 2 June 2015 and a workshop on '*Health Literacy in Europe*' on 1 July 2015.

5.2. STOA workshop '*Graphene in Europe*', 2 June 2015, Brussels

- The Chair explained that the workshop would serve as a platform for discussing the potential Europe had in graphene-related science and technology, and in the economic exploitation of new graphene-based products. There would be presentations by high-level scientists, including a Nobel Prize Laureate, explaining how and why graphene promised to be a revolutionary material and describing the role of the Graphene Flagship, a 10-year, €1-billion EU research initiative launched in 2013.
- He then informed Members that the European Commission would organise an exhibition at the European Parliament on the day of the workshop, as well as a drink reception after the meeting.
- The Chair finally gave the floor to interested Panel members for comments/discussion and announced that, as there are no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations along these lines.

5.3. STOA workshop on *Health Literacy in Europe*, 1 July 2015, Brussels

- The Chair explained that health literacy empowered patients to take sound decisions about their health, fostered access to health, and put citizens and patients at the centre of healthcare; health literacy would therefore improve health outcomes and help make healthcare systems more sustainable and efficient.

- The Chair further informed Members that the workshop would include presentations by high-level officials and scientists, who would present the health literacy concept and e-health advancements as a means of improving health literacy in Europe.
- The Chair then gave the floor to interested Panel members for comments/discussion and announced that, as there are no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations along these lines.

6. Visits / External activities

6.1. EXPO 2015, Milan - EU Scientific Steering Committee – Feedback

- The Chair informed Members that a STOA delegation, consisting of Vice-President Mairéad McGuinness, Ms Marijana Petir and himself, had visited the World Exhibition EXPO 2015 in Milan on 8 and 9 May 2015; on 8 May the delegation had attended the all-day conference of the EU Scientific Steering Committee on a research agenda for global food and nutrition security, where the Vice-President and himself were speakers, while Ms Petir participated in the discussion; on 9 May he and Ms Petir had participated in the celebration of 'Europe Day' at the EXPO site; he then gave the floor to Vice-President McGuinness to give her impressions of the delegation visit.
- The Vice-President described the conference of the EU Scientific Steering Committee as an important and successful event that would have further impact through follow-up activities during the year. She noted that STOA was constantly part of techno-scientific discussions at a high level, and that its voice was well represented.
- Ms McGuinness suggested that STOA should work on a publication – not duplicating work already carried out / or that would be carried out by the Steering Committee or others – to be released in parallel with or in addition to the EXPO final report in October/November. She also stressed the importance for STOA to identify core elements stemming from the EXPO discussions and advise committees to take effective action at the EU level.

6.2. ESOF 2016, 22-27 July 2016, Manchester – Call for scientific session proposals

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Karapić, Head of the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), who informed Members that, with the approval of the STOA Bureau, the Secretariat had started preparations for submitting joint proposals with Policy Department B and the JRC² for scientific sessions in response to the ESOF Call for Scientific Session Proposals (submission deadline: 1 June 2015). The joint proposal with Policy Department B would draw upon the recent STOA study on Science Metrics, and a project on assessing the quality of higher education, managed by Policy Department B. Two other proposals would be submitted jointly with the JRC: one on science advice to policy-makers in the face of disruptive technological developments and one on the growing use and importance of foresight in EU institutions.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would proceed with the preparation of the proposals as described above.

7. Presentation on STOA's presence on social media

- The Chair informed the Panel that the STOA Bureau had agreed to invite Mr Mitja Brus, social media coordinator in DG EPRS, to make a short presentation about STOA's presence on social media.
- He also explained that the goal of this presentation was to make Members more familiar with the use of social media by STOA, as a means of increasing the visibility of the Panel and promoting different STOA activities. The Chair welcomed Mr Brus and gave him the floor.
- Mr Brus:
 - explained the main channels the social media team was using to promote STOA: (i) STOA played a prominent role on the EPRS blog; the blog had 3,000 views per day and 1,100 followers that received notifications on new publications; (ii) Twitter was widely used to promote publications and events, as well as for live tweeting during workshops; the EPRS Twitter account had 6,800 followers, among whom 120 MEPs, several of them regularly interacting with the EPRS account; (iii) even though currently under construction, LinkedIn was growing in importance for promoting STOA activities.
 - described STOA's presence on social media as substantial – with the last workshop STOA had potentially reached 236,000 people; EPRS tweets alone reached 22,575 actual impressions – even better results were achieved in the past;

² Joint Research Centre

- reminded Members that DG COMM offered individual training on how to use and behave on social media.
- The Chair thanked the speaker for his presentation, and asked whether it would be possible to have the monthly statistics on STOA activities, and individualised statistics for each Member. He also wanted to know if the EPRS social media service is already collaborating with the EuroparlTV.
- Mr BRUS stressed that statistics were already produced after each STOA event and the EPRS social media service could discuss with the STOA Secretariat how to best meet the Chair's request. He added that his service was cooperating with DG COMM on a pilot project regarding podcasts and infographics, but had no direct contacts with EuroparlTV.

8. Any other business

- The Chair informed Members of the decision taken by the Parliament's Bureau on Monday, 18 May 2015, to increase the number of Panel members from 15 to 24, with the increase distributed among committees as follows: ITRE: +2; EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, AGRI: each +1; JURI, CULT: 1 (new).
- Vice-President McGUINNESS welcomed the Bureau decision and added that the Bureau had also addressed the need of efficiently managing existing resources and had asked the STOA Panel to keep translation and interpretation costs, following its increase, within the budget – this had already been duly considered by the Secretariat, by using an efficient system of interpretation planning based on confirmation of Members' presence in Panel meetings.
- The Chair informed Members that the STOA Bureau was recommending that there should be only one Panel meeting in October, namely on 29 October 2015. As there were no objections, he announced that there would be no Panel meeting on 8 October 2015.
- The Chair further informed Members that the European Commission had announced on 13 May 2015 that it had decided to set up a mechanism for high quality, timely, independent scientific advice. He then gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who explained that, according to the Commission's announcement, "the future mechanism [would] draw on the wide range of scientific expertise in Europe through a close relationship with national academies and other bodies, coordinated by a High-Level Group of Independent Scientists. Commissioner Moedas had been tasked to implement this new arrangement over the coming months, involving other Commissioners and making the most of effective cooperation between Commission services". The Commission's press release and a PowerPoint presentation of the new mechanism have been distributed.

9. Date of next meeting

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 11 June 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in Room LOW N1.4 in Strasbourg. The meeting would feature a presentation on the final study '*Collaborative Economy - Impact and Potential of Collaborative Internet and Additive Manufacturing*', the last study approved by the previous Panel, at the end of the 7th legislative term.

The meeting ended at 11:02.

Brussels, 28 May 2015

ANNEX **List of participants**

STOA Panel members:

Ms McGuinness, Mr Rübig, Ms Kaili, Mr Tošenovský, Mr Coelho, Ms Ford, Mr Nekov, Ms Petir, Mr Pirinski.

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA):

Mr Karapiperis, Mr Pataki, Ms Van Woensel, Mr Evrard, Ms Villers.

Other participants:

Mr Dunne (DG EPRS), Mr Brus (DG EPRS), Mr Schichl (Assistant to Ms Schmidt), Ms Cooper (Assistant to Ms Ford), Mr Hill (Assistant to Mr Nekov), Mr Seltz (EuroScience), Ms Helman (European Science Foundation), Ms Karanjac (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Ms Lotti (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe).