

STOA

Science and Technology Options Assessment

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

The meeting started at 09:35 with Mr Paul RÜBIG, MEP and Chairman of the STOA Panel, in the chair.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda (PE 547.420)

- The Chair informed Members that interpretation was available in English (EN), German (DE), French (FR), Czech (CS) and Bulgarian (BG), and that the meeting was being web-streamed.
- He then welcomed Mr Andrzej GRZYB, MEP, Ms Renata BRIANO, MEP, and Ms Kay SWINBURNE, MEP, all members of the ENVI Committee, as well as Ms Anthea McINTYRE, MEP and member of the AGRI Committee, and congratulated them on their appointments as new members of the Panel. He also recalled that Ms Mady DELVAUX, MEP and member of the JURI Committee, and Ms Vicky FORD, Chair of the IMCO Committee, had already been appointed by their respective committees.
- The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

2. Approval of draft minutes - STOA Panel meeting of 21 May 2015 (PE 547.418)

- The draft minutes were approved without modifications.

3. Presentation of the final report of the STOA project ‘Collaborative Economy: Impact and Potential of Collaborative Internet and Additive Manufacturing’

- The Chair informed Panel members that this project had started in October 2014 and the contractor was *AcrossLimits* from Malta, one of the STOA framework contractors. The Chair then welcomed Mr Johan BENGTTSSON, Mr Patrick CREHAN, Ms Angele GIULIANO and Mr Steve ROBERTSHAW from *AcrossLimits* and gave the floor to Ms GIULIANO and Mr ROBERTSHAW for the presentation.
- Ms GIULIANO introduced a video clip giving a preview of what life could be like in a future integrating collaborative economy instruments. She then highlighted the benefits that additive manufacturing (3D- and bio-printing), open and big data, crypto-currencies and Bitcoin could bring to people’s daily lives.
- Mr ROBERTSHAW explained that the so-called fifth industrial revolution was already underway, with the time at our disposal to react to changes shrinking enormously, due to the pace at which technology develops. He claimed that threats and opportunities posed by technological innovation overlapped under different points of view, and pointed out major ethical and moral issues: different interests in society could collide (e.g. music piracy); the understanding of self and identity might be altered (e.g. 3D- and bio-printing); the availability of massive personal data may influence the market (e.g. people may not know what they can or cannot do with their personal data); in his opinion, this convergence had legislative implications. Finally he asserted that a new approach to regulation was needed, comprising a better, timely legislative response, a global scope and a greater attention to social and ethical issues.
- The Chair thanked the speakers for their presentation and opened the floor for discussion.
- Ms FORD, MEP and Panel member, suggested focusing on clarifying how such issues as competition and liability would be affected by the collaborative economy in the future.
- Mr KÓSA, MEP, wanted to know more about the effect that the collaborative economy might have on employment and remuneration and whether high-level standards would be maintained in Europe.
- Ms ROZIÈRE, MEP and Panel member, enquired about the downside of the collaborative economy. In particular she referred to the use of new technologies for criminal purposes.
- Mr TOŠENOVSKÝ, MEP and second STOA Vice-Chair, argued that being aware of the fast and unpredictable technological developments we were experiencing would make it possible to think about alternative ways of tackling these challenges through the legislative process.

- Mr BENGTTSSON reassured the audience on the possible lowering of quality standards in Europe: quality and competitiveness would remain the same or increase. In his view, the focus should be on creating the new digital jobs.
- Mr CREHAN stressed that more collaboration between policy-makers and producers of new technologies was needed, in order to boost the development of such technologies, protecting the consumers without blocking growth opportunities.
- Mr ROBERTSHAW admitted that there was a possibility for new technologies to be used for undesirable purposes. Yet threats were as many as the opportunities presented by these developments.

4. Update on STOA projects

4.1. Update on ongoing projects

- The Chair reminded Members of the projects that were still on-going and informed them that, as announced at the previous Panel meeting, a successful workshop on '*Graphene in Europe*', chaired by himself, with interesting presentations and a fruitful discussion, had taken place on 2 June 2015 at the European Parliament in Brussels; a workshop report has been distributed; he went on to convey his own impressions from the workshop and then gave the floor to Ms KAILI, MEP and first STOA Vice Chair, who had made the final remarks at the workshop.
- Ms KAILI expressed her satisfaction with the workshop, which, in her opinion, had demonstrated how far research on graphene had already gone, and declared her optimism about the future, given the variety of fields where graphene found applications: from light bulbs to contact lenses and tennis rackets. She stressed that we should follow up closely future research on graphene.

4.2. Discussion on new project proposals

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Zsolt PATAKI, Head of Service responsible for the STOA Secretariat, who recalled that, at the Panel meetings of 12 March and 30 April 2015, Potential Projects No 1 to 10 had been approved as STOA projects; he also informed Members that, at its meeting of 21 May 2015, the STOA Bureau had decided to recommend Potential Projects No 12 to 15 for approval as STOA projects; he noted that Potential Projects 12 to 15 included two workshops, an internal briefing and an update of an earlier study; as such, they would draw upon minimal budgetary resources.
- As there were no objections, the Chair declared Potential Projects No. 12 to 15 approved as STOA projects and asked the Secretariat to implement the decisions related to the projects approved so far. The Panel agreed with the Chair's suggestion to write to the committees and Members, who had submitted proposals, informing them about the projects that had been approved. He further announced that, once all new Panel members would be appointed, they would be given an opportunity to propose new STOA projects.

4.3. MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme - Update

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI, who explained that the STOA Secretariat had launched the 2015 edition of the 'MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme' on 1 June 2015, following endorsement of the concept by the STOA Panel on 30 April 2015 and of the details by the STOA Bureau on 21 May 2015.
- He further informed Members that the invitation for interested scientists to participate in the scheme had been published on the STOA website and advertised via the EPRS blog, and would appear also on the websites of STOA's scientific partners, such as those of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC), the European Council of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering (Euro-CASE) etc. The launch event '*Science meets Parliaments*' would be co-organised by the JRC and STOA on 15 September 2015 at the European Parliament in Brussels; a draft programme was in the dossier, for comments and approval. As there were no objections, the draft programme was deemed approved.

5. STOA workshops and joint activities with external organisations

5.1. Forthcoming events

- The Chair informed the meeting that STOA would hold a workshop entitled '*Robots: enabling the disabled or disabling the abled*' on 23 June and another on '*Health Literacy in Europe*' on 1 July 2015.

5.2. STOA workshop '*Robots: enabling the disabled or disabling the abled*', 23 June 2015, Brussels

- The Chair explained that, at the request of Ádám KÓSA for a Scientific Foresight project on "Assistive technologies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, education and employment", the STOA

Panel had decided to host a preliminary workshop on the same topic, in order to better define and refine the specifications for the study. The workshop would be chaired by Mr KÓSA.

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KÓSA, who explained that assistive technologies represented an important area of development and innovation, and were relevant for the whole of society. He also expressed his satisfaction with the concept and the organisational aspects of the workshop, and thanked the Secretariat for the good cooperation.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue with the preparations.

5.3. High-level working breakfast with Commissioner Moedas, 30 June 2015, Brussels

- The Chair recalled that, in January 2015, the Panel had expressed an interest in inviting Commissioner Carlos MOEDAS to one of its meetings in Strasbourg for an exchange of views on developments in EU research policy. It was finally agreed that this could take the form of a working breakfast in Brussels.
- The Chair explained that Commissioner MOEDAS had offered to discuss more in detail the new Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM), presented by the Commission on 13 May 2015; this discussion topic had been endorsed by the STOA Bureau on 21 May 2015.
- The Chair then invited Members to propose additional topics they considered appropriate for the discussion and announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations.

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

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Theodoros KARAPIPERIS, Head of the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), who recalled that the workshop would include presentations by high-level officials from the European Commission's DG CONNECT, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the World Health Organisation (WHO), as well as academics and representative of European patients' organisations. They would present the health literacy concept and explain how e-health advancements can be a means of improving health literacy in Europe.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations.

6. Visits / External activities

6.1. ESOF¹ 2016, 22-27 July 2016, Manchester – Call for scientific session proposals

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who informed Members that, with the approval of the STOA Bureau, the Secretariat was working on proposals it would submit jointly with Policy Department B and the JRC for scientific sessions in response to the ESOF Call for Scientific Session Proposals.
- The joint proposal with Policy Department B would draw upon the 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 continue work on the proposals along these lines.

7. Any other business

- The Chair informed the Panel that the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA) had been recently reinforced with a new Administrator, Mihalis KRITIKOS, an expert in European law and the ethics of new technologies.

8. Date of next meeting

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 9 July 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in Room LOW N1.4 in Strasbourg. The meeting would feature, if confirmed, a presentation by the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies.

The meeting ended at 10:58.

Brussels, 26 June 2015

¹ EuroScience Open Forum

ANNEX
List of participants

STOA Panel members:

Mr Rübig, Ms Kaili, Mr Tošenovský, Ms Briano, Mr Coelho, Ms Ford, Mr Nekov, Mr Pirinski, Ms Swinburne.

Other Members:

Mr Kósa.

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA):

Mr Karapiperis, Mr Pataki, Ms Van Woensel, Mr Plese, Ms Manirambona.

Other participants:

Mr Dunne (DG EPRS), Ms Thirion (Assistant to Ms Rozière), Mr Lovászy (Assistant to Mr Kósa), Ms Giuliano (AcrossLimits), Mr Crehan (AcrossLimits), Mr Robertshaw (AcrossLimits), Mr Bengtsson (AcrossLimits), Mr Ide-Kostic (LIBE Secretariat), Mr Corsi (European Patent Office), Mr Cooper (ECR assistant), Mr Desforges (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Ms Karanjac (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Ms Grahek (JRC), Mr Seltz (EuroScience), Mr Decker (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology - KIT), Mr Maghetiu, Mr Giesinger, Mr Walter, Mr Lang, Ms Horn, Mr Kull, Ms Saebel, Mr Czink, Mr Kollmer, Ms Fenske and Mr Schneider (all KIT students).