

# STOA

## Science and Technology Options Assessment



STOA Panel meeting  
Thursday, 10 September 2015, 09:30 > 11:00  
LOW N1.4, Strasbourg

### Minutes

The meeting started at 09:34 with Mr Paul RÜBIG, MEP and Chairman of the STOA Panel, in the chair.

#### **1. Adoption of the draft agenda (PE 563.478)**

- The Chair informed Members that interpretation was available in Bulgarian (BG), Czech (CZ), English (EN), French (FR), German (DE) and Italian (IT), and that the meeting was being web-streamed.
- The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

#### **2. Approval of draft minutes - STOA Panel meeting of 9 July 2015 (PE 547.428)**

- The draft minutes were approved without modifications.

#### **3. Welcoming Mr Dominique RISTORI, Director-General for Energy, European Commission,**

- The Chair introduced Mr RISTORI by saying that he was one of the experts that had been accompanying STOA for some time, a good friend and partner, and he welcomed the fact that Mr RISTORI kept an important role in the energy sector, regarding gas and electricity, especially when it came to the issues of energy storage and security.
- The Chair then gave Mr RISTORI the floor for the presentation:
  - Mr RISTORI thanked STOA for the invitation and said that STOA had a long and rich tradition of providing the scientific and research context which had driven European Union (EU) policy-making for almost 30 years. Over that time the work of STOA had helped to inform and equip decision-makers with the best knowledge and most up-to-date tools to carry out their work. Mr RISTORI emphasised that throughout that time his approach had always been the same: EU policies should be based on strong scientific evidence and an evidence-based approach was exactly what was driving the Energy Union.
  - He then emphasised the strong need for an Energy Union given that EU leaders had backed ambitious 2030 targets: a 40% cut in green-house gas emissions, at least 27% of energy efficiency at EU level, and at least 27% share of renewables in the energy system at EU level. By completing the internal energy market there would be savings of up to €40 billion per year, while the EU oil and gas import bill stood at €400 billion in 2014, representing over 3% of GDP and at present nearly 11% of European homes were ‘energy-poor’ and high costs for businesses acted as a handbrake on industrial competitiveness.
  - He went on to talk about the strategy to achieve the 10% electricity interconnection target and the financing of interconnection projects, via for example the €5.35 billion Connecting Europe Facility. He further mentioned that in two months the European Commission would publish the first State of the Energy Union report that would be followed by the revision of the energy efficiency legislation and the renewable energy package in order to stabilise the relevant regulatory framework in a 2030 perspective.
  - Mr RISTORI then referred to the ‘New Deal for Consumers’, based on the idea that consumers should be able to control their own consumption and production, and to benefit from lower wholesale prices and market competition. The Commission would address these issues through a legislative proposal on market design in 2016 – based on the results of the consultation - and a communication on the progress towards the 15% interconnection target. The aim was to give consumers the tools they needed to be active participants and enable them to control their consumption, lower their bills and benefit from new smart energy technologies, which helped to integrate more renewables into the energy system.
  - Furthermore, Mr RISTORI stressed that it was important to not only fund the research, but also embrace the right policy platform and culture to make sure that research can be brought into the market. He stated that the European Commission would very shortly be presenting its views on the Integrated Strategic Energy Technology Plan. In 10-days time, a high-level SET Plan Conference and the Informal Energy Council with a strong focus on research and innovation would take place in Luxembourg.
- Finally, he emphasised that research and scientific progress were essential for the success of the transformation of the European energy system and that his vision for an energy market was based on new

technologies, smart grids and smart homes that helped to empower consumers. For that reason, he stressed that there was a need for a robust governance system to ensure that both EU and national actions were consistent with each other and with the overall strategy. He concluded by stating that being one of the five dimensions of the Energy Union, research and innovation would play a central role in that and that he looked forward to coming back to the STOA Panel in the months and years to come to show how science and technology led the way to a sustainable energy future for Europe.

- The Chair thanked Mr RISTORI for his presentation and opened the floor for questions. He himself asked Mr RISTORI about the Commission's plan to coordinate the work of the two energy-related EU agencies (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications - BEREC, and Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators - ACER), and how these would contribute to the completion of the single market.
- Mr Andrew LEWER, MEP and Panel member, asked Mr RISTORI's opinion about the EU's energy relationships with Algeria and Iran, and about fracking and nuclear energy as alternative forms of energy that could be produced domestically.
- Mr Dario TAMBURANO, MEP and Panel member, asked about electric mobility and solutions available.
- Mr Evžen TOŠENOVSKÝ, MEP and 2nd STOA Vice-Chairman, enquired about alternative energy sources including gas, and the possibility of using hydrogen on a large scale and of storing unused energy.
- In his replies, Mr RISTORI emphasised the need to strengthen the synergies between the Commission and the energy-related agencies and enhance the transparency in their operation. He further stated that there was currently a momentum and potential to reach an agreement with Algeria and Iran, and referred to the role of nuclear energy in the decarbonisation process and the need to work more on nuclear safety and security matters. Regarding fracking, Mr RISTORI mentioned that this was a sensitive issue and it was better at this stage to identify existing reserves in shale gas in Europe. He further stated that electromobility should be limited to urban areas for the time being and it would not be wise to abandon research and technological development in this field, with a focus on energy consumption that could benefit the consumers. This would represent a new opportunity for European companies.

#### 4. Update on STOA projects

##### 4.1. Update on ongoing projects

- The Chair reminded Members of the projects that were still ongoing. He further asked Members to approve the appointment of two new Panel members as Lead Panel Members for the projects '*ICT and Low- and Middle-Income Countries*' (Mr TAMBURANO) and the internal study '*Technological innovation strategies in substance use disorders*' (Ms Kay SWINBURNE). This was adopted without comments.

##### 4.2. MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme - Update

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Zsolt PATAKI, Head of Service responsible for the STOA Secretariat, who informed Members about the state-of-play with the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme:
  - Mr PATAKI said that the recently launched fourth round of the scheme had received 326 applications from scientists and researchers by the deadline of 31 July. This was an unquestionable success for STOA and the European Parliament, which had never experienced such direct interest among scientists. The candidates were from more than 30 different countries, with Spain, the UK and Germany being the most represented. The majority of the applicants were specialised in medicine, the life sciences or engineering, but disciplines such as anthropology, art, criminology, forensics and law were also represented.
  - Mr PATAKI further said that, due to the huge number of very high-quality applications received, the Secretariat finished screening them on 3 September. In order not to exclude entirely valid candidates, they chose to increase the number of eligible scientists to 108, instead of the originally planned 60. The list of selected scientists was published on the STOA website on 4 September and an e-mail was sent to Panel members with a link to the list. Interested Members were requested to select a scientist they would like to be paired with and communicate his/her name to the Secretariat as soon as possible.
- Then the Chair informed Members that the event '*Science meets Parliaments*', co-organised by STOA and the Joint Research Centre (JRC), would take place on 15 September 2015 in Room ASP 1G2; Members would find the final programme and the poster in their file, and they were all warmly welcome to the event.
- The Chair drew Members' attention to an afternoon best-practice panel, organised by the JRC on the same day (14:30 – 16:00) in the European Commission's Van Maerlant Building (Rue Van Maerlant 2); interested Members could register via the contacts given in the e-mail about the Pairing Scheme they had received;

- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would carry on with the implementation of the scheme as described.

## **5. STOA Annual Lecture, 9 December 2015**

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI who explained that Professor Serge HAROCHE had formally accepted to be keynote speaker; a concept paper on the event was sent to him by the Secretariat and STOA was now awaiting his comments on its proposals; according to the concept proposed by the Secretariat, the Annual Lecture would have, as in recent years, the form of a two-hour afternoon session, with a keynote speech, possibly coupled with the projection of a video clip and talks by other scientists from the same discipline; a questions and answers session would close the event; the event would be web-streamed, and social media would be extensively used.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations along these lines.

## **6. STOA workshops and joint activities with external organisations**

### 6.1. STOA workshop 'Transition towards sustainable and liveable urban futures', 29 September 2015, Brussels

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Mihalis KRITIKOS, Administrator in the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), who explained that, in the context of a new urban research and innovation paradigm to bridge the innovation space from strategic research to implementation, the objective of the workshop was to present the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) of the Joint Programme Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe, and to discuss its research and innovation approach. The workshop would also allow mayors and deputy mayors from cities across Europe to share their experiences of managing the transition of their cities with EU policy-makers and the public.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations along these lines.

### 6.2. LIBE proposal for a high-level conference entitled 'Protecting on-line privacy by enhancing IT security and EU IT autonomy', 8-9 December 2015

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KRITIKOS who explained that the protection of online privacy was becoming a primordial digital human right, and that, with the digital revolution expected to further accelerate due to developments such as the Internet of Things, big data and cloud computing, finding ways to protect our online privacy would be crucial in the years to come.
- Mr KRITIKOS further said that the objective of this high-level conference was exactly to break through the different silos and bring together outstanding academics and professionals from various fields dealing with online privacy and security to discuss, interact and come up with bold, innovative, out-of-the-box ideas and help foster an EU Information Technology (IT) and online privacy protection strategy for the next years (a 'digital new deal'). The conference would be jointly organised by the European Parliament (STOA and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs - LIBE), with the participation of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy - ITRE, and the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection - IMCO) and the Luxembourg Presidency. By applying a format of 'brainstorm-like' thematic break-out sessions, the conference aimed to be truly connecting and cross-cutting, where complex issues could be freely debated and seen from different angles, while also leading to practical solutions to increase European citizens' online privacy and trust.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue the preparations along these lines.

### 6.3. STOA workshops in health area:

#### 6.3.1. 'Health impact of organic agricultural products as compared to conventionally grown ones', 18 November 2015, Brussels

- The Chair reminded Panel members that this workshop was a STOA project proposed by Mr NEKOV, MEP and Panel member, and approved by the Panel in June 2015.
- He then explained that over the last 10 years, the organic food market experienced a dynamic development, driven by a strong growth in demand; as a result, the surface area used for organic production in the EU had doubled since 1999. In this context, consumers started to look for safer and better controlled foods,

produced in more environmentally friendly and local systems; the number of studies analysing the safety of organic vs. conventional food was growing rapidly. The STOA workshop would be a good opportunity to discuss with experts from different EU countries the effects of organic foods on human health.

- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the preparations for the workshop would continue as planned.

#### 6.3.2. ‘Innovative ICTs for healthcare’, 1 December 2015, Brussels

- The Chair recalled that this workshop had been approved by the Panel in July 2015. He then gave the floor to Mr Theo KARAPIPERIS, Head of the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), who provided Members with further details about the workshop.
- Mr KARAPIPERIS explained that European countries were facing a growing demand for healthcare services. For example, as an effect of the ageing of the population in general, the number of citizens with chronic diseases was increasing and this was a great challenge for both the well-being of the citizens and the public healthcare systems. Healthcare solutions provided by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), also known as e-health, could provide solutions to these problems; a variety of national and regional healthcare institutions in several EU Member States already explored this approach. The objective of this workshop was to report on lessons healthcare delivery organisations had learned from different experiences in Europe and identify areas where policy support at regional, national and EU level would be welcome.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the preparations for the workshop would continue as planned.

### **7. Visits / External activities**

#### 7.1. EPTA Council meeting and Conference, 23-24 September 2015, Paris

- The Chair informed the Panel that he and Ms Mady DELVAUX, MEP and STOA Panel member, would participate in this conference. He then gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who provided Members with further details about the conference.
- Mr KARAPIPERIS recalled that the Chairman of OPECST (Parliamentary Office for Scientific and Technological Options Assessment, STOA’s French counterpart) had written to Vice-President Mairead McGuinness, asking her to appoint one Panel member to attend the conference, organised by OPECST (which held the EPTA Presidency in 2015) on 24 September 2015 at the Assemblée nationale in Paris; more Members were welcome to join the one appointed by Ms McGuinness. He further recalled that the STOA Panel had decided in July that Mr RÜBIG and Ms DELVAUX would represent STOA at this conference. The conference would explore how technological innovation could be used to mitigate climate change and, as such, pave the way towards the COP 21<sup>1</sup> meeting to be held in December 2015 in Paris. The conference would also offer an opportunity to mark the 30th anniversary of the first OPECST report.
- Mr KARAPIPERIS explained that the regular EPTA Council meeting, comprising political representatives from EPTA members, would take place in the afternoon of the previous day (23 September 2015). In the morning of 23 September, there would be a workshop on how technology assessment organisations can detect trends and on their policy implications.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the organisation of the delegation would proceed as planned.

#### 7.2. STOA delegation to the JRC Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, 15-16 October 2015, Seville

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI who informed the Panel that the Secretariat had been in contact with the JRC and a preliminary programme had been established by the host institute. The programme would start in the afternoon of 15 October and finish in the afternoon of 16 October 2015.
- Mr PATAKI recalled that a delegation had been authorised for up to three Panel members and asked if up to two additional Members would be interested in joining the Chairman; given the proximity of the dates, interested Members should express their interest without delay.
- The Chair invited potentially interested Members, who needed more information in order to decide, to contact the Secretariat, which could provide them with background and logistical information concerning, in particular, travel and accommodation possibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue preparations for the delegation along these lines.

### 7.3.STOA participation in the World Science Forum, 4-7 November 2015, Budapest – Update

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI, who informed Members that, following contacts of the Secretariat with the organisers of the World Science Forum, the STOA Chairman had been invited to participate as a speaker in a thematic session for parliamentarians entitled '*Enabling science through parliamentary governance*', to be held on Thursday, 5 November 2015. He then confirmed that, as decided by the Panel at its last meeting, an authorisation for him to attend the forum had been requested from the President.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, he would proceed with his participation in the conference, if the latter were authorised.

## **8. Any other business**

- The Chair recalled that an internal note was requested by the STOA Panel in March 2015 on Science Advice in Europe, with the aim of obtaining a literature overview of the various European approaches to how scientific advice was structured and organised in Member States and at European level.
- He then informed Panel members that the note '*Science Advice in Europe: The role of science advisory structures in the governments of EU Member States*', carried out internally by the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), could be found in the dossier;
- The Chair asked whether there were any other issues Members wanted to raise or discuss. There were none.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 29 October 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in the same room (LOW N1.4) in Strasbourg, where there would be a presentation of the final study of the STOA project '*ICT in developing world*'.
- The Chairman recalled that there would be no meeting of the STOA Panel meeting on 8 October 2015 (October I part-session).

The meeting ended at 10:58.

Brussels, 20 September 2015

## **ANNEX** **List of participants**

### STOA Panel members:

Mr Rübig, Ms Kaili, Mr Tošenovský, Ms Beghin, Ms Briano, Mr Coelho, Ms Delvaux, Mr Lewer, Ms McIntyre, Mr Pirinski, Mr Tamburrano, Ms Schmidt, Ms Jazłowiecka

### Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA):

Mr Karapiperis, Mr Pataki, Ms Van Woensel, Mr Kritikos Mr Plese

### Other participants:

Mr Dunne (DG EPRS) Mr Thaler (Assistant to Mr Rübig), Mr Schichl (Assistant to Ms Schmidt), Mr Romano (Assistant to Ms Beghin), Mr Lewis (Assistant to Ms Moody), Ms Thirion (Assistant to Ms Rozière), Ms Tristano (Assistant to Ms Briano), Mr Ide-Kostic (LIBE Secretariat), Ms Grahek (JRC), Mr Corsi (European Patent Office), Ms Hartstein (EC, DG ENER), Mr Nevens (EC, DG ENER), Mr Amillategui (Policy Advisor, EFDD), Ms Ramanauskaite (PACE), Ms Wannasek (Visitor)