

STOA

Science and Technology Options Assessment



STOA Panel meeting
Thursday, 26 November 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 563.487)

- 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 29 October 2015 (PE 563.485)

- The draft minutes were approved without modifications.

3. Presentation by Mr Vladimír ŠUCHA, Director-General, Joint Research Centre (JRC)

- Before giving the floor to Mr ŠUCHA, the Chair underlined the strategic character of the cooperation and recent joint work with the JRC, and introduced Mr ŠUCHA as a good friend of STOA.
- Mr ŠUCHA started by expressing his overall satisfaction with the excellent cooperation between STOA and the JRC, also exemplified by the recent STOA visit to IPTS¹ in Seville and the jointly organised 'Science Meets Parliaments' event on 15 September 2015 in the European Parliament (EP). He hoped the latter could become a tradition in the next years, involving even more national parliaments. He also praised STOA's MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme and offered, on behalf of the JRC, a training to the researchers participating in the programme of the 'Brussels week' on better communicating science to policy-makers.
- Mr ŠUCHA then went on to explain that the scientific knowledge and advice provided by the JRC to the European Commission (EC) had broader, both direct and indirect benefits for consumers and society as a whole. On the occasion of completing 10 years of work on consumer protection next year, the JRC would launch a knowledge centre on food fraud and authenticity, working closely with the EC and the Member States, with the aim of preserving the EU's reputation and capacity in food safety and consumer protection.
- Mr ŠUCHA then outlined JRC's work in different policy areas: environment, climate change, and transport; migration; monetary union and its societal impacts; and health, where the JRC intended to set up an EU network on antibiotic resistance. He also noted JRC's outstanding position in terms of scientific excellence: according to its own data and research, the JRC was among the 15 top research organisations in the world.
- Looking to the future, Mr ŠUCHA said that the JRC would work on improving the anticipatory capacity of the Commission and the EU. Among other things, they were working closely with CERN² on developing a tool for monitoring technological trends and developments. The field of foresight was exactly where he saw possibilities for closer collaboration with STOA and the EP. He also called for the support of the EP and STOA in reinforcing JRC's cooperation with EIT³. He concluded by calling upon STOA and the JRC to continue their collaboration and regular exchange of information.
- The Chair thanked Mr ŠUCHA and committed to further deepening the relation between STOA and the JRC.

4. Presentation on the official launch of the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism – Appointment of the High-Level Group of Scientific Advisors:

- Mr Johannes KLUMPERS, Head of Unit, Scientific Advice Mechanism, briefly described the functioning and different structures of the EC's Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM). SAM would comprise the recently appointed High-Level Group of Scientific Advisors, who would be linked to the College of Commissioners and the EC President via Commissioner Moedas. The operational support to SAM would be provided by the unit headed by Mr KLUMPERS in the EC's DG Research and Innovation.

¹ Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, one of JRC's seven institutes.

² European Organization for Nuclear Research

³ European Institute of Innovation and Technology

- The High Level Group would interact with the existing services (such as the JRC), specialist and advisory bodies of the Commission, European and national academies and the wider scientific community. He explained that the seven Advisors were appointed for a 2.5-year period, renewable once; they would start working in December 2015 and select a Chair and Vice-Chair from among themselves. Mr KLUMPERS pointed out that the independent nature of the High Level Group would contribute to building citizens' trust. The Group had a mandate to work on short-, medium- and long-term issues and to act both proactively, identifying policy areas where advice was needed and recommending improvements, but also to be responsive to the needs of EU policy and legislation.
- The Chair thanked the speaker, welcoming these developments and opened the floor for questions.
- Ms Mairead McGuinness, EP Vice-President responsible for STOA, asked about the resources the High-Level Group had at their disposal and the views of the Commission on the sometimes slow provision of evidence-based information and scientific advice that was inherent to the scientific process.
- Mr LEWER, MEP and Panel member, expressed his concern about the lack of a visual identity of the Group.
- In his reply, Mr KLUMPERS explained that five Advisors were contracted for 40, and the Chair and Vice-Chair for 60 working days per year. The Group had a budget of €1 million in 2016 for meetings and possible additional support. €6 million would be made available for a grant to 5 European Academy networks. The operational support in January 2016 would comprise 15 staff members and 3 seconded JRC scientists in his unit. Agendas, minutes and opinions of the Group would be publicly available. Regarding the visual identity of the Group, this would be discussed with the Group at its first meeting with the Commission.

5. STOA projects:

5.1. Update on ongoing projects

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr Theo KARAPIPERIS, Head of the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), who recalled that work was continuing on the STOA Scientific Foresight project on the '*Ethics of cyber-physical systems*', which was supporting the work of the Working Group on Robotics of the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI). In the framework of the STOA project, an expert workshop to discuss the impact of the different techno-scientific trends in robotics would take place on Thursday, 14 January 2016, and Members were invited to confirm their interest in participating by 7 January 2016. Furthermore, a scenario development workshop would take place on Thursday, 18 February 2016.
- Speaking of the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme, the Chair recalled that the 'Brussels week' would take place on 25-27 January 2016 and briefly presented the draft programme for the three days included in the dossier.
- The Chair then gave the floor to Mr Zsolt PATAKI, Head of Service responsible for the STOA Secretariat, who informed the Panel that this edition of the Pairing Scheme featured 30 MEP-scientist pairs (available on the STOA website), which was a good overall evolution compared to past experiences (12 pairs in 2011).
- The Chair invited Mr Momchil NEKOV, MEP and Panel member, who had chaired the STOA workshop on '*The impact of organic food on human health*' on 18 November 2015 to share his impressions of the event.
- Mr NEKOV said that the event had been very successful and recalled the most interesting points regarding the ongoing research on the environmental and health effects of organic food. He further proposed a follow-up study to be produced by a recognised external expert in the field of organic food and human health.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the proposal was approved and the Secretariat would launch the study.

6. STOA Annual Lecture, 9 December 2015 - Update:

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI for an update. He reported that the preparations were advancing well and the invitations for the official lunch had been sent out on behalf of Vice-President McGuinness.
- The Chair invited interested Members to confirm their participation in the lunch by 2 December 2015 and announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would continue with the preparations as agreed.

7. STOA workshops and joint activities with external organisations:

7.1. Forthcoming events

- The Chair briefly mentioned that the events were in the dossier. No discussion took place.

7.2. Workshop 'eHealth in Europe: reality and challenges ahead', 1 December 2015, Brussels

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who confirmed that the preparations were advancing as planned. He briefly recalled the event programme, and invited all interested Members to join.

7.3. High-level conference 'Protecting on-line privacy by enhancing IT security and EU IT autonomy', 8-9 December 2015, Brussels

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who recalled that the conference was being jointly organised by the European Parliament – STOA and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), with the participation of the Committees on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) – and the Luxembourg Presidency. The conference would involve thematic break-out sessions and was expected to come up with concrete proposals for an EU Information Technology and on-line privacy protection strategy for the next years (a 'digital new deal').
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would proceed with the preparations for the conference along these lines, in cooperation with the LIBE Secretariat.

7.4. Proposal for a STOA workshop on Quantum Technologies, March 2016 (t.b.c.)

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who explained that this proposal had come from the EC, as quantum technologies would be a priority under the Dutch Presidency, which was planning a major conference on this subject in May 2016. The workshop's topic was related to this year's STOA Annual Lecture, and, if the event were approved, the details would be discussed with the Commission.
- The Chair then announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would proceed with the organisation of the workshop as described.

7.5. Proposal for a STOA workshop on Nanomedicine, November 2016 (t.b.c.)

- The Chair explained that this proposal had come from the European Materials Research Society (E-MRS) and gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS, who informed Members that the purpose of the workshop would be to report on the status of nanomaterials for medicine and discuss European strengths and weaknesses, as well as possible pathways for the future development of Nanomedicine in Europe.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Secretariat would proceed with the organisation of the workshop as described, in cooperation with E-MRS.

8. Visits / External activities

8.1. STOA participation in the World Science Forum, 4-7 November 2015, Budapest – Feedback

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr PATAKI who recalled that the 7th World Science Forum had been hosted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in partnership with UNESCO, ICSU, AAAS, TWAS and EASAC⁴. Mr RÜBIG had been a speaker in the thematic session 'Enabling science through parliamentary governance' and after his talk had received questions mainly on the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme and STOA's mandate.
- The Chair shared his impressions from the bilateral meetings he had held, on the sidelines of the event, with Mr Tibor NAVRACSICS, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and Mr Martin KERN, Interim Director of EIT.

8.2. STOA visit to Washington and Silicon Valley, May 2016 (t.b.c.)

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS who informed the Panel that this proposal had come from Ms KAILI. The delegation could take place during the external activities ('green') week of May 2016, starting on the 16th and ending on the 21st or 22nd. He suggested spending at least one day in Washington, in order to have the opportunity of meeting with the EU Delegation, and representatives of the US Congress and the Obama administration. Contact had been taken up with the EP Liaison Office in Washington.
- As there were no objections, the proposal was deemed adopted; authorisation of the delegation would be sought from the Conference of Presidents, together with the delegation to the STS *forum* (agenda item 8.4).

8.3. ESOF⁵ 2016, 22-27 July 2016, Manchester

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS who informed Members that, of the three scientific session proposals submitted by STOA, two had been accepted: one, with the JRC, on disruptive technologies, and another one, jointly with the JRC and the EC's DG Research & Innovation, on foresight methodologies in the European Institutions. The proposal on science metrics and university rankings that STOA had submitted together with Policy Department B of the Directorate-General for Internal Policies (DG IPOL) had not been

⁴ UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; ICSU: International Council for Science; AAAS: American Association for the Advancement of Science; TWAS: The World Academy of Sciences; EASAC: European Academies Science Advisory Council

⁵ EuroScience Open Forum

accepted. STOA could, however, be included in a session entitled '*Arts and Sciences: the crossroads of creativity*' via another proposal submitted by Policy Department B, which had been accepted.

- As there were no objections, the Secretariat would proceed with the work along the lines described.

8.4. 13th Annual meeting of the STS forum, 2-4 October 2016, Kyoto

- The Chair gave the floor to Mr KARAPIPERIS who invited Members to read the delegation report to the 12th Annual meeting of the STS forum that the Chair had attended. The report had been prepared by and Mr Joe DUNNE, Acting Director for Impact Assessment and European Added Value in DG EPRS, who had accompanied the Chair. He further informed the Panel about the meeting the Chair had with Mr Koji OMI, Chairman and Founder of the STS *forum*, on 12 November 2015 in Brussels. The main subject of discussion had been the event STOA and the STS *forum* planned to organise together on 4 May 2016 in Brussels. He finally noted that this event, already approved by the Panel, had in the meantime evolved to become a summit of senior European and Japanese policy-makers in the area of science and technology policy.
- The Chair informed Members that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō ABE might participate in the event.
- As there were no objections, the proposal for the STOA delegation was deemed adopted, and the authorisation of the delegation would be sought from the Conference of Presidents, together with the delegation to Washington and Silicon Valley (agenda item 8.2).

8.5. STOA visit to the European Environment Agency, November 2016, Copenhagen

- The Chair gave the floor to Ms Lieve VAN WOENSEL, Head of the Scientific Foresight Service, who briefly outlined the possibilities for the delegation programme and invited Members to review the draft programme available in the dossier, and express their interests and preferences.
- The Chair proposed that the visit should take place from the evening of Thursday, 10 November 2016, until the end of the following day.
- As there were no objections, the Chair announced that authorisation for this delegation would be requested.

9. Any other business:

- Mr TAMBURRANO called for a more efficient use of paper during Panel meetings, which the Chair welcomed. He further enquired about the status of the project proposals submitted by Members in 2015.
- The Chair explained that the Secretariat had processed the proposals by grouping them according to topics and synergies, and classifying them according to the five STOA thematic priority areas. Mr KARAPIPERIS added that five projects approved by the Panel were in the process of being launched. He further explained that several other projects would be launched in early 2016, while a few proposals were still being investigated. He finally invited the Members to contact the Secretariat if they had specific questions.

10. Date of next meeting

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 17 December 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in the same room (LOW N1.4) in Strasbourg, where there would be a presentation by Mr Hans BRUYNINCKX, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency.

The meeting ended at 11:02.

Brussels, 10 December 2015

ANNEX **List of participants**

STOA Panel members:

Ms McGuinness, Mr Rübig, Mr Tošenovský, Ms Briano, Mr Coelho, Mr Lewer, Mr Nekov, Ms Schmidt, Ms Swinburne, Mr Tamburrano.

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA):

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

Other participants:

Ms Grigorescu (Assistant to Mr Lewer), Ms Grahmer (Assistant to Mr Rübig), Mr Ranaldo (Assistant to Ms Beghin), Ms Hollerich (Assistant to Ms Delvaux), Ms Frayling (Assistant to Ms McIntyre), Ms Mio i (Trainee in the office of Ms Petir), Mr Nicolas (EC), Mr Gammel (JRC), Ms Grahek (JRC), Mr Tindemans (EuroScience), Ms Höpel.