

STOA

Panel for the Future of Science and Technology

STOA Panel meeting
Thursday, 15 November 2018, 09:30 – 11:00
Room LOW N1.4, Strasbourg

Minutes

- The meeting started at 09:35 with Carlos COELHO, STOA Panel member, in the chair.
- 1. Adoption of the draft agenda (PE 624.264)**
 - The Chair informed Members that interpretation was available in English, French, German, Hungarian and Spanish, and the meeting was being web-streamed.
 - He also announced that the draft agenda is in the dossier and that, as there were no requests for changes or additions, the agenda was deemed adopted.
- 2. Approval of draft minutes - STOA Panel meeting of 25 September 2018**
 - The Chair announced that the draft minutes of the Panel meeting of 25 October 2018 were in the dossier and, as there were no requests for changes, they were deemed approved.
- 3. Ongoing and new STOA projects**
 - The Chair informed Members that all ongoing STOA projects were running to schedule.
 - He then updated participants on recent activities of the European Science-Media Hub (ESMH), informing them that the event jointly organised by ESMH/STOA and DG COMM¹ on how technology could influence elections had taken place on 6 and 7 November 2018 in Brussels, and around 50 journalists from all 28 Member States had participated in the first ESMH training for journalists on online verification of information.
 - The Chair further reported that, at the ESMH/STOA workshop ‘*How to win elections: Reflections on the use and misuse of technology in electoral campaigns*’ on 7 November 2018, a full house of parliamentarians, journalists and citizens had heard a panel discussion, followed by a lively and interesting Q&A, on the role of technology and analytical techniques in contemporary election campaigns.
 - The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, work on projects would proceed as described.
- 4. EPTA² presidency activities and STOA Annual Lecture 2018 - Update**
 - The Chair reported that the Annual Lecture would take place in the afternoon of 4 December 2018 and would be entitled ‘*Quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity: Catching up with the future*’.
 - He highlighted that the lecture would feature two keynote speakers: Anton ZEILINGER, President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and Esther WOJCICKI, American technology educator and journalist.
 - He further noted that the EPTA Conference 2018 would take place in the morning before the Annual Lecture and would address the topic ‘*Digital democracy - opportunities and challenges*’; a compilation of papers prepared by EPTA members, would form the basis of the discussion.
 - The Chair went on to inform Members that the annual EPTA Council meeting would take place in the afternoon of 3 December 2018, with the participation of Members of Parliament and officials from Parliamentary Technology Assessment offices operating in more than a dozen EPTA member countries.
 - The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, preparations would continue along these lines.

¹ Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament

² European Parliamentary Technology Assessment network

5. STOA workshops and joint activities with external organisations

5.1. Forthcoming events

- The Chair referred Members to the table of forthcoming events included in the dossier.

5.2. STOA-LIBE workshop on ethical and fundamental rights aspects of artificial intelligence

- The Chair reported that the LIBE Committee³ and STOA had agreed to co-organise this workshop and that the event would be linked to the own-initiative report on a ‘*Comprehensive European industrial policy on artificial intelligence and robotics*’ led by the ITRE Committee⁴, to which LIBE was associated for opinion, especially on the fundamental rights issues.
- The Chair gave the floor to Michał BONI, MEP and Panel member representing the LIBE Committee, who noted that the own-initiative report was in the early stages of its preparation by ITRE in dialogue with LIBE.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the cooperation with LIBE on this event was deemed approved. The Panel would be asked to approve the date, topics and programme in due time.

6. Visits/External Activities

6.1. Proposal for a STOA delegation to South by Southwest (SXSW) event, 8 - 17 March 2019, Austin, USA

- The Chair noted that South by Southwest (SXSW) is a major international festival that takes place annually in Austin, Texas, and features several tracks and sessions dedicated to topics relevant to STOA. In 2019, SXSW included an ‘*Intelligent Future*’ track, to which the STOA Chair had been invited to give a presentation.
- The Chair announced that, as there were no objections, the Panel had agreed to follow the recommendation of the STOA Bureau and request authorisation from the Conference of Presidents for a delegation of up to five Panel members to attend this event.

7. Discussion on disruptive innovation in Europe

- The Chair announced that the presentations would offer participants an opportunity to hear about various approaches to supporting disruptive innovation in Europe from representatives of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Research & Innovation (DG RTD), and the Joint European Disruptive Initiative (JEDI). He noted that each panellist would make a presentation of ten minutes, before the floor would be opened for questions and discussion.
- The Chair gave the floor first to Mathea FAMMELS, Head of the Brussels Liaison Office of EIT, who reported on three EIT activities, all of which offered substantial disruptive potential in the field of transport : (i) ‘Hardt Hyperloop’, a Dutch start-up that was developing a high-speed intercity mass-transport system; (ii) ‘Lilium’, a German start-up which had developed the first zero-emissions electric jet which could carry up to five passengers and could revolutionise private transport; and (iii) ‘Navya’, a French company which had developed a driverless shuttle bus for up to 15 passengers.
- The Chair then gave the floor to Luis SANCHEZ ÁLVAREZ from the ‘Investments and SMEs’ Unit in DG RTD, who reported on initiatives in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe related to disruptive innovation. Horizon 2020, did not address disruptive technology specifically, but had succeeded in supporting breakthrough, market-driven, disruptive innovation, particularly through its SME Instrument. He also explained how the Horizon Europe programme would support breakthrough and disruptive innovations that were too risky for private investors through its Pathfinder and Accelerator programmes. The Pathfinder programme targeted early stage technologies by providing grants to develop pre-commercial products, while the Accelerator programme provided grants and financing to help innovators bring their products to market, and scale-up their activities.
- The Chair then gave the floor to André LOESEKRUG-PIETRI, spokesperson for JEDI, which involved seven EU Member States and supported disruptive innovation. In his view, disruptive innovation was particularly important at present because Europe was falling behind China and the US in crucial digital technology markets, and was losing the technological battle. He highlighted his point by showing that seven of the world’s ten largest companies were technology focussed, and none of them were European. He suggested that a lack of

³ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament

⁴ Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament

- investment was not the problem, as Europe spent more on research than DARPA⁵, but rather the method by which funds were mobilised. He argued that Europe had to adopt new methodologies for supporting innovation, inspired by DARPA, which emphasised the need to establish bold priorities, invest in early-stage innovation, and ensure that projects that were not developing well were either forced to change or allowed to fail.
- After the presentations, the Chair opened the floor for questions. He first gave the floor to Mr BONI, who commented on the need for greater focus on innovation policy by politicians, especially in preparing the budget.
 - The Chair asked Ms FAMMELS: (i) how extra money would be raised for promising innovations, and (ii) how the disruptive potential of the technologies could be scaled up, considering that the projects were still far from the market. He asked Mr ÁLVAREZ how the EU could activate more venture capital, and Mr LOESEKRUG-PIETRI: (i) whether JEDI would succeed in securing Franco-German funding and (ii) how the EU could compete with the US and China without compromising core European values, such as consumer protection. Finally, the Chair asked each of the three speakers to provide one sentence about the role the European Parliament could play in supporting innovation, while respecting EU values.
 - Ms FAMMELS agreed that the mind-set was important, and explained that more EIT innovation communities would be launched in the next funding period, focussing on areas such as industry and mobility. She underlined that budget would be required to ensure that EIT continues to deliver in areas that would provide benefits in terms of security & resilience, inclusion, integration, migration, creative industries and others.
 - Mr ÁLVAREZ responded to Mr BONI by listing three key topics from the Commission’s proposal for the next framework programme: (i) more emphasis on communication to citizens, (ii) better measurement of impact by extension of KPIs⁶, and (iii) change of the methodology, making it easier to reorient or shut down projects.
 - Mr LOESEKRUG-PIETRI responded by saying that JEDI was bringing together the six most willing countries, because this was more efficient than waiting for agreement among 27 or 28 countries. He argued that, in order to compete with the US and China, the EU had to invest in the next big thing, not in technologies and businesses that already existed. In addition, the EU should demand a level playing field from the companies, requiring, for example, that they do not train their algorithms on unprotected Chinese data, and then come to Europe and crush the competition. As a take-away message, he noted, firstly, that there was an investment gap for truly innovative projects and, secondly, there was a need for more experiments in funding projects.

8. Any other business

- No other issues were raised.

9. Date and place of next meeting

- The Chair announced that the next Panel meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 13 December 2018, at 09:30 in the same room (LOW N1.4).
- He then noted that this meeting would feature a presentation of the outcomes of the technology assessment studies, ‘*Technological responses to fake news*’ and ‘*Tackling fake news: Impact on freedom of expression and media pluralism*’ (titles t.b.c.).

ANNEX List of participants

STOA Panel members

Mr Rübig, Mr Boni, Mr Coelho.

Other Members

Mr Kósa.

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA)

Mr Karapiperis, Mr Pataki, Mr Boucher, Mr Plese.

Other participants

Ms KENT (Assistant to Ms McIntyre), Mr CORSI (European Patent Office), Mr TINDEMANS (EuroScience).

⁵ The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is an agency of the United States Department of Defense responsible for the development of emerging technologies for use by the military.

⁶ Key Performance Indicators