



Conference on pan-European Parliamentary Technology Assessment - pEPTA

Date: 7 September 2011, 15:00-18:30
Venue: European Parliament, Brussels, room A5G-2

Technological development plays an important role in the progress of European economies: it contributes to increased industrial competitiveness, environmental sustainability, better health care, improved labour conditions, higher welfare, and solutions for many other societal issues. Based on the idea that technological development requires specific policies, technology assessment started in the late 1960s as a tool to inform members of parliaments about possible negative effects of new technologies. Since then, it has evolved into an instrument that supports parliamentary decision-making and strategy development on innovation. Recently, the increased involvement of civil society organisations in research policy processes has induced new forms of governance that have also its impact on technology assessment.

Parliamentary Technology Assessment (PTA) in Europe has been initiated and developed first in northern and western parts of Europe and later also in Southern Europe. In general PTA activities of today follow proactive approaches that feed into demand-driven policy-making processes on science, technology and innovation (STI). Given the urgency of a number of societal challenges (climate change, energy, health, ageing, degenerating cities, etc) and economic challenges (maintaining and strengthening Europe's competitive position), STI policy-making in parliaments should be informed with intelligence that is geared to providing solutions to these challenges. PTA may provide important contribution to this.

Recently a working document was prepared for the European Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) Panel that provides an overview and analysis of the current situation in Europe. The report provides detailed information (institutional settings, methods, themes) of PTA activities of the fourteen PTA organisations in Europe (EPTA full members) and about the impact of these organisations on parliamentary decision-making. The study serves as a source of inspiration for developing new PTA initiatives at a pan-European level and as a source of information for new PTA entrants.

In order to explore the opportunities, desirability and conditions for a successful pan-European approach, a conference will be organised that has two important goals:

- inform members of parliament (European, national, regional) and those (preparing to get) involved in PTA activities about PTA in Europe;
- explore and develop perspectives for pan-European activities.

More specifically, this conference on pan-European PTA (pEPTA) will focus on the following issues:

- Motivation for and added value of pan-European approaches and activities in PTA;
- The roles of stakeholders (EPTA members, new PTA entrants, parliaments) and civil society organisations and their interactions in developing such approaches;
- Conditions and contents (themes/domains) to be addressed in a successful pan-European PTA approach and the future governance of STI policy based on this approach.

Draft programme:

1. Opening (15:00-15:15) by Mr P. Rübige, MEP, STOA Chairman, and Mr. C. Tabajdi, MEP, STOA, project supervisor
2. PTA in Europe:
 - *Overview of PTA in Europe*, by Christien Enzing, co-author of the report 'Parliamentary Assessment in Europe', Technopolis Group, The Netherlands (15:15-15:35)
 - *Examples of PTA in Europe*, by representatives of national and regional PTA organisations. The presentations will show the different models of PTA and cover different European regions, illustrating the diversity in PTA approaches across Europe:
 - Paula Tiihonen, Committee Counsel, Committee for the Future, Finland (15:35-15:55)
 - Frans Brom, Head Technology Assessment, Rathenau Instituut, The Netherlands (15:55-16:15)
 - Judit Castellà, Member of CAPCIT and Director of Programmes, FCRI, Catalunya, Spain (*invited*) (16:15-16:35)
3. Pan-European approaches and perspectives:
 - *Potential and challenges for PTA in policy-making*, by Mr. António Correia de Campos, MEP, STOA Vice-Chairman (16:35-16:50)
 - *Transnational TA in Europe*, Gerhard Banse, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (16:50-17:10)
 - *Governance of science-in-society*, Ulrike Felt, Social Studies of Science, University of Vienna, Austria (*invited*) (17:10-17:30)

– *Panel discussion* with members of parliament (regional / national / European), Lars Klüver (EPTA, PACITA), Gerhard Banse, Ulrike Felt (17:30-18:15)

4. Closing by Mr. C. Tabajdi, MEP, STOA (18:15-18:30)

Meeting chaired by Mr. C. Tabajdi, MEP, STOA

Co-chair and facilitator: Prof. dr. Wiebe Bijker, Science and Society, University of Maastricht, Netherlands

The pEPTA conference is an initiative of STOA. The conference is organised in close cooperation with EPTA, the network of European Parliamentary Technology Assessment organisations (www.eptanetwork.org).

The pEPTA conference will be a first discussion on pan-European PTA, which will later be explored further and elaborated on in the PACITA project¹. The outcome of the STOA project and the pEPTA conference in particular are relevant for the goals of the PACITA project:

- Creation of sustainable forms of cooperation, consultation and dialogue between different stakeholders involved in (future) PTA activities;
- Identifying and discussing topics and opportunities for further multi-actor cooperative research.

The second PACITA consortium meeting will take place at the time of the pEPTA conference, on 7-9 September 2011 in Brussels.

¹ The PACITA Mobilisation and Mutual Learning Action Plan (funded by EU FP7) is aimed at increasing the capacity and enhancing the institutional foundation for knowledge-based policy-making on issues involving science, technology and innovation, mainly based upon the diversity of practices in Parliamentary Technology Assessment (PTA). Most activities will be executed by so-called 'pairing' partners from European countries, which do not have established PTA institutions and partners from countries, which already have PTA-institutions