

Draft minutes

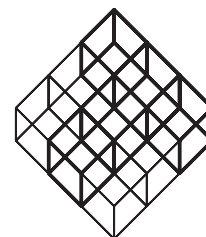
Tema: EPTA Directors' meeting 2006

To: EPTA Directors

Date: 3-4 April 2006

Place: Spitsbergen Hotel, Longyearbyen, Norway

Date of draft: 06.10.10



Teknologirådet

EPTA Directors' meeting 2006

1. Present

Walter Peissl, Institute of Technology Assessment, Austria (ITA)

Michael Nentwich, Institute of Technology Assessment, Austria (ITA)

Bellucci Sergio, TA-SWISS

Lars Klüver, The Danish Board of Technology

Eivind Osnes, The Norwegian Board of Technology

Tore Tennøe, The Norwegian Board of Technology

Cathrine H. Edvardsen, The Norwegian Board of Technology

Mitsuaki Mickey Hosono, National Institute of Science and Technology Policy, Japan

Jarka Chloupková, STOA Secretariat, European Parliament

Theodoros Karapiperis, STOA Secretariat, European Parliament

Ulrica Gabrielsson, Committee for the Future, Finland

David Cope, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), UK

Chandrika Nath, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), UK

Leonard Hennen, ETAG

Armin Grunwald, ITAS/TAB, Germany

Rinie Van Est, Rathenau Institute, Netherlands

Jordi Mas, FCRI-CACIT, Catalonia

Montserrat Torné, FCRI-CACIT, Catalonia

João Ary, Council of Europe

Kostas Papadimitriou, Greek Committee of TA

Matthieu Meissonnier, OPECST – Senat, France

Apologies were received from Robby Berloznik, viWTA, Jan Staman, Rathenau Institute and Antonio Menè from VAST.

2. Welcome and introduction

Tore Tennøe assumed the chair, and bid everyone welcome to the EPTA Directors' meeting 2006. Those attending the Directors' meeting for the first time were given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the group.

There were no comments to the agenda presented by the chair.

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3. Presentation of the EPTA joint project on privacy and ICTs

Walter Peissl, ITA, gave an overview of the analysis and conclusions of the draft report on Privacy and ICT in Europe. The report, which is the result of a joint EPTA project with 6 participating institutions, had been distributed to the EPTA directors before the meeting.

In general, the report was very well received by the meeting, and it serves as a proof of principle that joint projects are valuable for the network.

The ensuing discussion centred on the concluding chapter. The key question was exactly who concludes: EPTA or the project partners? The meeting agreed that the report speaks only on behalf of the partners, and that the report will carry a statement in the introduction about who is responsible, a description of how the project has been organised, and how the results were reached.

Other comments on the contents will be considered by the partners in the last revision of the report.

There are plans for an open workshop in Brussels to disseminate the results of the report, and this was encouraged by the meeting.

Experiences

Tore Tennøe presented experiences with the project work. The report is presented on time, and there has been good coordination and cooperation between the partners.

In addition to the production of the draft report, the project has had other positive effects: a practical exchange of working methods and knowledge; a general strengthening of EPTA relations; and a spin-off project on privacy and security research funded by the EU.

There are good experiences with the rotating responsibility for the project workshops. This has made it possible to run the project with no common budget, and it has promoted the feeling of shared ownership for the project.

The partners' reviews in English of their own projects have served as the raw material for analysis and the basis for shared insights. The reviews have also proved valuable for the partners' communication in English on their own websites. The Danish Board of Technology has provided a project intranet, which has served as a reliable, up-to-date hub and common workspace.

The group recommends using external experts and workshop with intended recipients to challenge preliminary conclusions, and as a reality check of what interests the addressees. Other lessons includes the necessity of a clear focus on the output and a good project design in order to integrate the work in the partners' annual plans and to improve predictability for the project managers. A dilemma in joint projects is connected to the scope: If it is too broad, it might be a challenge to develop precise insights – if it is too narrow, the pool of relevant projects might be too small.

4. New EPTA project on GM plants and food

Armin Grunwald from TAB, presented the proposed EPTA project on GM plants and food.

The objective of the project is to provide information on regulatory challenges for the EU system in the years to come; points of public debate in the future, and suggest approaches for TA to handle future issues. A combination of two major methods is proposed to achieve the project objectives: A look in the past with project reviews – and a look in the future with a questionnaire survey.

The reviews will include relevant TA projects and other important TA activities such as national participatory events carried out over the last six years. The project group will draft a standard scheme for the reviews. Studies on scientific/technological, economical or sociological issues only will not be included.

The questionnaire is indented as a broader survey on the key questions of the project. The aim is to collect information and informed guesses from TA practitioners and key actors on new challenges in the area of GM plants and food. It is suggested to send the questionnaire to all EPTA members. The questionnaire can then be filled out by the of the member institution itself or distributed to 5 to 10 experts (from science, administration, industry, NGOs etc.).

The project on GM plants and food still has the status of a proposal. A revised version will be prepared for the EPTA Council meeting.

At the moment, the Project Group consists of Peter Border (POST – United Kingdom), Soren Gram (DBT – Denmark), Rolf Meyer (ITAS/TAB – Germany) and Helge Torgersen (ITA – Austria). All EPTA members and associates are invited to take part in the project and join the Project Group. EPTA members and associates can join the project until the end of the data gathering phase in spring 2007.

It was remarked that at least one director should be part of the project group to ensure direct communication with the network.

5. STOA and the ETAG consortium

Theo Karapiperis presented how the European Parliament, and STOA in particular, is making use of scientific expertise in the decision-making process.

The STOA panel is an integral part of EP structure and decides on STOA activities. In addition to the EP Vice-President, STOA consists of 14 MEPs from different committees. The members are elected each parliamentary term for a renewable 2 ½ year period. The STOA Bureau includes the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the EP Vice-President.

STOA work is focused on scientific assessment of the impact of new technologies and identification of policy options relevant to Parliament's role as legislator. The projects address medium to long-term issues and are distinct from the projects carried out within the expertise budgets of parliamentary committees.

STOA is currently building a network of contacts and cooperation with other parliamentary technology assessment bodies and in particular other EPTA members. A functioning framework contract is now at work and the first research projects have been commissioned with important results scheduled to be delivered within 2006.

The selected framework contractor, the European Technology Assessment Group (ETAG), was approved by the EP Bureau 26 September 2005, and a contract signed for 3+1 years. A short list of potential projects was first decided by STOA Panel, and a final list of projects approved on the basis of opinions delivered by the contractor. Following this, individual Panel members have been appointed as supervisors for the execution of particular projects.

Leo Hennen, coordinator of ETAG, presented the framework. ETAG is a partnership of 5 institutions: ITAS; viWTA; POST; the Rathenau Institute; and The Danish Board of Technology. All institutions are EPTA members and have extensive experience in parliamentary TA, are familiar with the history and operation of STOA, and can draw on complementary ranges of TA methods.

The contractor's network operates on a three-tier system:

- the contractor's partnership itself,
- an extended network, which includes TA Swiss, The Norwegian Board of Technology, OPECST, CSIC, ETEPS AISBL, SMIT/VUB, HIVA, KULeuven, ISOE, STEM, IZT etc., and
- the partnership's network with other European TA Institutions.

The management Committee includes directors or senior staff members of ETAG organisations. It is responsible for all decisions regarding work for STOA and has two meetings p.a.

The coordinator (from ITAS) is responsible for day to day management of network and is the first contact point for the STOA panel Secretariat as well as for the project leaders.

The project leaders (from ETAG partners) oversee scientific implementation of each project and are responsible for quality, meeting deadlines, and production of deliverables (reports etc.). They participate in all meetings related to the projects.

6. Framework for future EPTA projects

A draft proposal for a standard framework for joint EPTA projects had been distributed by the presidency before the meeting. This was based on the decisions made in the Council meeting in Bern in 2004 and the practical experiences with the joint project on privacy and ICT (see point 3).

Concepts for different types of projects were presented to the meeting by Mr. Tennøe and followed by a workshop in four different groups. The ensuing plenary discussion

resulted in a revision of the draft framework. It was agreed to present the revised draft to the EPTA Council Meeting in Oslo.

7. EPTA web site

The EPTA website www.eptanetwork.org has been renewed in a joint effort by the Danish Board of Technology, viWTA and the Norwegian Board of Technology. Lars Klüver from the DBT gave an overview of the most important changes in design, structure and functionality. This was highly appreciated by the Directors.

Most important is the creation of a new project database, where anyone can search in English with keywords in all recent and on-going EPTA projects.

The following EPTA institutions had so far contributed to the project database on the EPTA website (number of projects described in parenthesis):

The Danish Board of Technology (46)

The Norwegian Board of Technology (21)

TAB, Germany (17)

viWTA, Flanders (17)

Institute of Technology Assessment, Austria (ITA) (16)

TA-SWISS (7)

FCRI-CACIT, Catalonia (1)

The following institutions had no contributions:

STOA, European Parliament

Committee for the Future, Finland

POST, UK

Rathenau Institute, Netherlands

Council of Europe

Greek Committee of TA

OPECST – Senat, France

RIFO, Sweden

VAST, Italy

An updated version of this list will be presented at the Council meeting in October. It was a general agreement that all members need to contribute. Different kinds of project information will be presented by different institutions.

New functionalities are planned – a preview function; news function; and a standardised EPTA letter paper and PowerPoint template. It was also suggested to add another new feature to the EPTA web site: the Virtual Library on TA of ITA.

8. EPTA conference and council meeting 2006

Tore Tennøe of the Norwegian Board of Technology (Teknologirådet) presented the plans for the EPTA conference and council meeting 2006, which will be held in Oslo 16-17 October. Mr. Tennøe suggested that the conference should focus on energy policies in Europe. The background was that many EPTA institutions are currently doing energy projects; that technological, political and environmental developments have placed energy high on the parliamentary agendas; and that energy is a policy area where the NBT and Norway has high competence.

The suggestion was well received by the directors. It was agreed that the Norwegian presidency continues to develop the theme with special focus on the transition of energy systems that is going on in different European countries. Nuclear energy, technology for renewable energy and clean fossils were mentioned as important topics for further planning.

Mr. Tennøe also stated that the NBT, in line with the efforts of the viWTA presidency, is aiming at a conference where parliamentarians and board members will have a central role. Parliamentarians will accordingly be given priority as commentators. The meeting continued to discuss how to make the conference attractive also for MPs that do not have a role to play at the EPTA Council Meeting. It was decided to change the normal procedure, so that the council meeting and reception will take place on a Monday, and the conference on a Tuesday. This way, the conference will be given some more time and the MPs the possibility to spend just one day. Poster sessions and fringe meetings were suggested for added value, and the NBT will take this into consideration.

A suggestion was put forward that Brussels might serve as the location for all future conferences. The reason for this was to delimit travelling time and costs for participants. This was rejected for several reasons: the structure and identity of EPTA as a decentralised network with no secretariat or common funds; the value for the members of presenting the EPTA network in their own parliament and capital; and the relevance of other places than Brussels in many areas – e.g. Oslo and Norway in matters of energy policy.

9. EPTA overview on energy

Following the discussions on a joint project framework and the EPTA conference on energy, it was suggested by several participants to make an EPTA Overview of energy transition in Europe. The work will be carried out by the member institutions after decision by the respective boards.

This initiative was applauded by the meeting. The Norwegian Board of Technology agreed to take on the coordination of the project, given that enough partners, and to suggest a project design that will be adequate for all member institutions.

The Overview should be ready for presentation at the EPTA Council meeting and Conference in Oslo in October.

10. Minutes of the EPTA Council meeting in Brussels

The transcripts of the EPTA Council meeting in Brussels were discussed briefly. The transcript of the presentations and discussions had been circulated to the members and subsequently revised by viWTA. However, it was agreed that the transcripts were too detailed to serve as minutes on the EPTA website, and that they will be supplemented by minutes.

11. EPTA Presidency 2007

The Permanent Committee of Technology Assessment in the Greek Parliament was suggested as a candidate for the EPTA presidency for 2007. Mr. Papadimitriou stated that Greece was ready to assume the presidency, and this was applauded by the meeting.

The question was raised about whether associated members can hold the EPTA presidency. It was decided to prepare a discussion of this question at a later stage.

12. News from the members

Mrs. Montserrat Torné from CACIT gave a brief talk about the current status of TA in Catalonia. This was followed by an invitation from Mrs. Torné's colleague Jordi Mas to plan a TA event at the ESOF 2008 in Barcelona, where CACIT is involved. Tore Tennøe and Michael Nentwich agreed to join Mr. Mas in a planning group for this event.

Information was also given about the plans for a European Institute of Technology and several forthcoming conferences: "Ways to European Future" in Prague in May 2006; "Technology Assessment in World Society" in Berlin in November 2006, and ESOF 2007 in Munich.