European TA Conference :
"Technology Assessment and Policy Areas of Great Transitions"

Prague, Czech Republic

National Technical Library, Technicka 6, Prague 6 – Dejvice

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Call for Papers – extended version (August 2012)

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Technology Assessment and the Great Transitions

How can we provide for a reliable system of energy supply that at the same time meets the needs of climate change prevention? How can we prepare ourselves for the changes in our everyday life and our working environment due to pervasive ICT technologies? How can we create a sustainable system of transport infrastructures? What changes in behaviour are needed to establish a societal mode of sustainable consumption? What are the prospects of healthcare systems in the face of an ageing society and new medical options offered by modern biomedicine?

These and other questions that we are facing in society and policy making indicate upcoming great transitions connected with scientific and technological development on a global level. Technology Assessment as a concept of problem oriented research, policy consulting and societal dialogue has the goal of supporting society and policy making in understanding the problems ahead connected to the great transitions as well as by assessing the available options for managing them.

Providing a Platform for Technology Assessment in Europe

Two European conferences (2013 in Prague and 2015 in Berlin) aimed at taking stock of and supporting exchange on TA capacities available in Europe are being organized in the framework of the FP7 funded project **"Parliaments and Civil Society in Technology Assessment"** (PACITA). PACITA is a four-year project aimed at increasing the capacity and enhancing the institutional basis for knowledge-based policy-making on issues involving science, technology and innovation, mainly based upon the diversity of practices in Parliamentary Technology Assessment (PTA). Such practices involve a range of methods of cross-disciplinary expert studies, stakeholder involvement, citizen consultation and parliamentary discourse. A major aim of PACITA is to spread knowledge on technology assessment and similar activities to areas of Europe currently unfamiliar with them.

While the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment Network (EPTA, www.eptanetwork.org) is probably the most important point of reference for technology assessment worldwide, the addressees of technology assessment studies are not confined to parliamentarians. Research projects are commissioned by government ministries, industry and civil society organisations and the results are directed at all kinds of decision-makers in society including citizens, who are becoming increasingly involved in the governance of technology. Recent decades have seen the emergence of other types of **future-oriented technology analysis (FTA)** such as foresight, or critical technologies

identification. FTA activities share a common toolbox and frequently pursue similar goals and choices on methods are largely determined by the context of a study rather than the label given to it.

Technology Assessment itself was the subject of three European Conferences on Technology Assessment in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the European Commission's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies has organised four conferences on FTA. The two conferences scheduled in the PACITA project seek to link with this tradition.

TA conference in Prague, March 2013

The first PACITA conference, which is to take place in Prague (Czech Republic), has the title "Technology Assessment and Policy Areas of Great Transitions". Examples of societal areas witnessing such great transitions are health care and ageing society, energy supply, climate change, transport / mobility and emerging technologies in addition to the use of ICT in all areas of society.

The main subject areas the conference seeks to cover include:

- ⚔ The kinds of knowledge and dialogue needed for decision-making in societies in order to accomplish the great transitions,

- ⚔ The kinds of projects and programs, institutions, approaches and methods needed by technology assessment in these processes,

- ⚔ Novel methods, such as the use of various art forms, to reach different types of actors and target groups,

- ⚔ The special interests and needs of EU member states in the various areas of the European Union with respect to policy advice for the great transitions,

- ⚔ Results of projects on topics related to the great transitions, for example:

    - ⚔ Health care in an ageing society (e.g. e-Health, robotics for home care, ambient assisted living)

    - ⚔ Climate change

    - ⚔ Energy supply in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster (e.g. renewables)

    - ⚔ Transport / Mobility (e.g. urban transport, e-mobility, logistics)

    - ⚔ New and emerging technologies (e.g. nanotechnologies, biotechnologies)

    - ⚔ Changes to societal relationships through ICT (social computing etc.)

- ⚔ The use of project results in policy-making and other activities (e.g. ethics in science, technology foresight, innovation research, civil society and research).

Due to the strong client orientation of the studies, **the conference seeks to address all groups of actors in science and policy studies: policy makers in legislation and administration, civil society**

organisations as well as academics and TA practitioners. Instead of sessions consisting purely of presentations of papers, the conference planners welcome contributions in novel forms, such as tandem presentations by the clients of studies and practitioners, and use of the new media or forms of art to stimulate debate or present results.

Contributions are invited not only from the **technology assessment** and **foresight** communities, but also from the **Science and Technology Studies** (STS) and Research on **Ethical, Legal and Societal Aspects** (ELSA) fields **and most particularly** from **decision-makers** benefiting from studies in all of these fields.

Proposals should not be more than one page in length and should clearly address one or more of the topic areas outlined above. In addition to full-length papers, the organizers welcome proposals for **posters** on projects from areas covered by the conference, which are not sufficiently advanced to report results and also for novel types of contribution as outlined above.

Please submit your 1-2 page paper by September 9, 2012 via e-mail to vancurova@tc.cz. All authors of papers and posters will be informed on the acceptance of the paper in October 2012. All accepted papers and posters will be available on the PACITA conference website (http://pacita.strast.cz/en/conference).

For further information, please contact:

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