

Conference on pan-European Parliamentary Technology Assessment - pEPTA



7 September 2011
European Parliament, Brussels



Programme of pEPTA conference

- 15:00 Opening
 - *Mr P. Rübig, MEP, STOA Chairman*
 - *Mr. C. Tabajdi, MEP, STOA, project supervisor*
 - *Prof.dr. W. Bijker, Chair of the Conference*
- 15:15 PTA in Europe
 - *Overview of PTA in Europe, Christien Enzing*
 - *Examples of PTA in Europe, Oras Tynkkynen and Paula Tiihonen, Frans Brom, and Ferran Domínguez Garcia*
- 16:35 Pan-European approaches and perspectives
 - *Potential and challenges for PTA in policy-making, Mr. António Correia de Campo*
 - *Transnational TA in Europe, Gerhard Banse*
- 17:30 Panel discussion

Technology across borders

Part 1. Overview of existing PTA practices in Europe

Part 2. pEPTA Conference

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Monique Rijnders-Nagle, Jon van Til, and Erik Arnold

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PTA in Europe: an overview

- Technology assessment is a scientific, interactive and communicative process, which (products) aims to inform and contribute to the formation of public and political opinion on societal, ethical, legal and economic aspects/impacts of science and technology
- Parliamentary TA: parliament as main client of the TA activity
- The report provides an overview of PTA in Europe in 14 member states:
 - *Organisational settings of PTA*
 - *Methods for PTA: practices, products and processes*
 - *Effects of PTA on policy and political decision-making*

1. Organisational setting of PTA in Europe

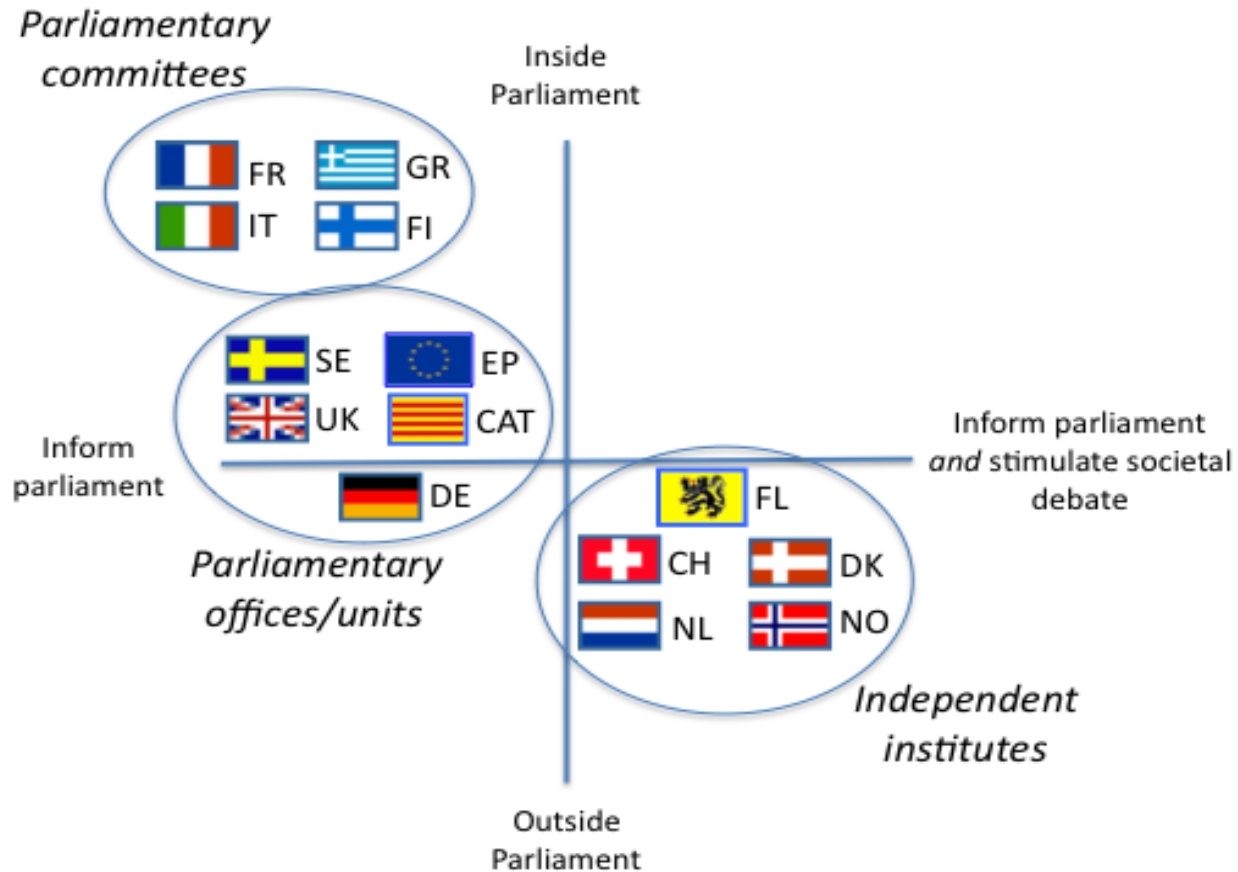
- Three models based on 2 dimensions:
 1. the PTA function is organised within or outside parliament.
 2. the mission of the PTA organisations: to inform parliamentarians (and other) in matters related to S&T and/or stimulate (public) debate on S&T and its impacts
 - **The Parliamentary Committee model:**

A dedicated parliamentary committee leads the technology assessments
 - **The Parliamentary Office or Parliamentary Unit model:**

Parliament has its own office or support unit for TA studies on request by parliament
 - **The Independent Institute model:**

The TA organisation operates at a distance from parliament, but parliament is the main audience
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1. Overview of PTA organisations in Europe: three models



1. Parliamentary committee model

- France (OPECST, 1983)
 - Italy (VAST, 1997)
 - Greece (Greek Committee of TA, 1997)
 - Finland (Committee for the Future, 1993)
 - Sweden (Evaluation & research unit in Research Service of Parl., 2007)
 - *Internal organisations (office, committee, research unit) to Parliament*
 - *Main aim: support political decision-making on S&T policy*
 - *Parliamentarians actively involved on a permanent basis*
 - *Small staff/ secretariat (typically 1 to 3 FTE)*
 - *Small budgets (<€ 100.000 / yr)*
 - *Relatively simple governance structures (no Board)*
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1. Parliamentary office or Parliamentary unit model

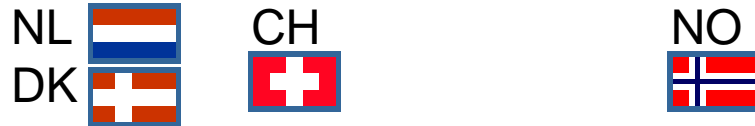
- UK (POST, 1989)
- Germany (TAB, 1990)
- Flanders (IST, 2000)
- European Parliament (STOA)
 - *Within (UK, FL) or closely linked (GER) to Parliament*
 - *Main aim: support political decision-making on S&T policy*
 - *In addition to politicians, experts are involved on a permanent basis*
 - *Staff: 6 - 10 FTE*
 - *Budget: 1.5 – 2 million euro / yr*
 - *Governance structures include a Board which includes non-MPs*
 - *Some degree of autonomy*

1. Independent institute model

- Netherlands (Rathenau, 1986)
 - Switzerland (TA SWISS, 1992)
 - Denmark (DBT, 1995; successor of TB, 1986)
 - Norway (NBT, 1999)
 - Flanders (IST, 2008; successor of viWTA, 2000)
 - *Independent institutes, at a distance from Parliament*
 - *Main aim: support political decision-making **and** stimulate debate*
 - *Broader set of audiences, addressees (incl. government, public)*
 - *Specific attention needed to keep parliamentarians involved*
 - *Staff: 8 - 25 FTE*
 - *Budget: 1 - 3 mln euro / year*
 - *Governance structure with separate Board*
 - *Relatively large degree of autonomy*
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1. No historical succession or convergence of PTA models

Independent



Office/Unit



Committee



1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010

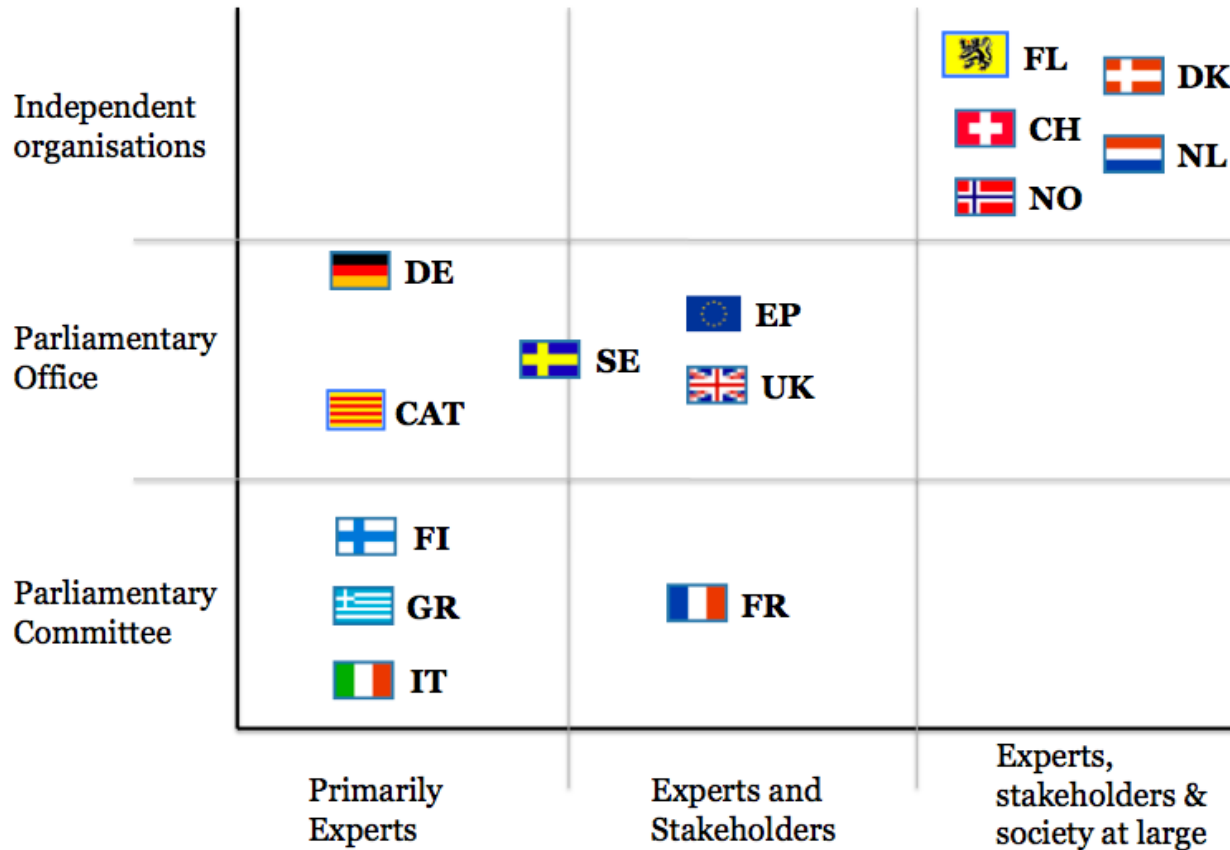
1. Developments in organisational settings

- “Committee model” organisations: no major developments
 - *Swedish TA organisation is newcomer (est. in 2007)*
 - “Office/Unit model” organisations: mixed picture
 - *POST (UK): permanent office since 2001. Growth in budget and staff*
 - *IST (FL): new name in 2008. More transparency in defining work programme, better alignment with Parliament*
 - “Independent model” organisations:
 - *Independence remains essential (credibility)*
 - *Working for other ‘clients’? (DK)*
 - *Relations with Parliament got more attention*
 - *Communication recognised as integral element of TA practice*
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2. The practices of PTA: process & products

	Committee model	Office/Unit model	Independent model
Scientific	Main type of method used	Nearly the only method (excluding Flanders)	Main method
Participatory/ interactive	Small-scale use/experiments	Seldom used, exc. for Flanders where it is main method	Main method
Recent developments	Broader, global socio-technical issues ask for interactive methods – participatory might increase. But expensive	UK: reduced use of participatory methods - expensive FL: increased use of participatory methods	Started relatively early with participative studies: “politicians need both expert and public opinions”. Mix of all types of methods, depending on projects

2. The practices of PTA: stakeholders involvement



2. The domains of PTA activities

- Combination of socio-economic issues and technologies (a requirement for any TA study)
- Most often framed in socio-economic terms, e.g.
 - Ageing
 - Global warming
 - Gender issues
 - Welfare/poverty
- Framing in technological terms often for ‘big’ technologies with a high perceived impact on society or controversy, e.g.:
 - ICT
 - Life science / biotech
 - Nanotechnology

3. Typology of effects of PTA

Issue dimension	S&T aspects	Societal aspects	Policy aspects
Impact dimension			
1. Raising Knowledge	Scientific assessment	Social mapping	Policy analysis
2. Forming attitudes / opinions	Agenda setting	Mediation	Re-structuring the policy debate
3. Initialising actions	Reframing of debate	New decision-making processes	Decision taken

Tami-project, 2004

3. Effects of PTA

- Committee model (FR, IT, GR, FIN, SE):
 - *Mainly effects in terms of ‘raising knowledge’*
 - *Moderate effects in terms of ‘forming attitudes and opinions’*
 - *Some examples of effects in terms of ‘initialising actions’*
 - *Initiation of dialogue between ‘political world’ and ‘S&T world’*
- Office/Unit PTA model (UK, GER, FL, EP):
 - *‘Raising knowledge’ is a basic effect*
 - *More in the area of ‘forming attitudes and opinions’ and ‘initialising actions’*
- Independent model (NL, CH, DK, NO, FL):
 - *Takes it a step further than the office/unit PTA model towards ‘initialising actions’*

Overall: settings, methods and effects of PTA

- Relationship between organisational settings and effects of PTA
 - *Difference in aims, targeted audiences and intended effects*
 - *Size matters*
 - *Link with Parliament*
 - *National contexts, cultures*
- Relationship between the methods applied and effects generated
 - *No clear-cut answer (often a mix of methods)*
- Contribution of communication
 - *Communication as essential part of PTA, especially for independent organisations*

Finally,

- The typology using three PTA models has been useful for creating some order in the large diversity of PTA settings, methods and effects in Europe
 - Countries/regions where PTA is now being initiated can learn from this overview of how PTA can best be organised given their specific national/regional contexts (institutional, political, societal and cultural)
 - These new PTA activities might lead to even greater diversity in Europe of how TA-intelligence on science and society supports decision making in national/regional parliaments
 - 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
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Thank you for your attention

Technopolis Group has offices in Amsterdam, Ankara, Brighton, Brussels, Frankfurt/Main, Paris, Stockholm, Tallinn and Vienna.
