TA News from Europe - No.3, Fall-Winter 2016/2017

Spring and fairer weather may still be some way off, but the landscape of European Technology Assessment is in full bloom already. Here's an overview of the latest news and current events.

ITA (Vienna)

With the autumn season came questions regarding autonomous vehicles, especially in regard to data protection. The results of this project were summarized by Jaro Krieger-Lamina. Media attention was sparked by the EPTA-conference, held at the Austrian Parliament at the end of October, with a discourse on policy advice having been triggered before the event.

For the first time the European Network for Parliamentary Technology Assessment (EPTA) was held in the Austrian Parliament on the 21st of October. The topic covered various aspects of digital work environments and their impact on the workplaces of tomorrow. A report with contributions of the member countries was published in November.

ITAS (Germany): Promoting RRI approaches in European Industry

Companies in the EU still lack experience in Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices. The new PRISMA project aims to show the added value of opening up the innovation process for social engagement, gender equality, transparency and other ethical issues.

Funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 program ITAS together with partners from the Netherlands, Italy and the UK carries out eight Europe-wide pilot projects in a real-world industry context. They focus on implementing RRI for some of the major transformative technologies in the EU, including nanotechnology, synthetic biology, Internet of Things and self-driving or automated cars. The aim is to integrate RRI in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies of the participating companies.

The ITAS team led by Christopher Coenen and Maria João Maia will conduct one of the pilot studies. Furthermore, it is responsible for developing and conducting five stakeholder dialogues with actors from areas that are important and influential for RRI. Their input will feed into a RRI-CSR roadmap for transformative technologies in the European industry.

Further information: www.itas.kit.edu/english/projects_coen16_prisma.php

NBT (Norway)

The Norwegian Board of Technology has been participating in the CIMULACT Project, and at the end of November we presented the results from our national citizen vision workshop.

In December the NBT published the Norwegian part of the report – The future of labour in the digital era: Norway. As a spin-off we have made an overview, describing the different ways governments have reacted to the sharing economy. The list describes current regulations in several countries and cities, and will be updated regularly.

January has been a very busy month. Our annual seminar on the International Data Privacy Day, which is co-hosted by the Norwegian Data Protection Authority was fully booked weeks in advance. This year's report was about AI and personalization and describes opportunities and challenges for the public sector and financial services. We also presented results from a recent survey, the main finding of which is that most people are positive about the use of data and AI in order to uphold our welfare state (for instance keeping high school students in school, and catching tax evaders. However, few are willing to share data to "AI computers" belonging to an insurance company in order to get cheaper insurance (sorry, the report is in Norwegian only.)

We also organized a meeting with the parliament's technology group "Teknogruppen" about Artificial intelligence. We accordingly released the publication "AI – clever or frightening?

TA-SWISS (Switzerland)

2017 will be a busy year for TA-SWISS, since it has the honor of resuming the presidency of EPTA and will host the EPTA conference, the topic of which is going to be «Mobility of the future» - certainly a core issue on our societies path to sustainability. The conference will take place from November 7-8 in the ideal setting of the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne, Switzerland's most popular museum showcasing the development of transport and mobility from the legendary Gotthard stagecoach to remote-controlled rover vehicles for missions on Mars.

In January, TA-SWISS has presented the results of its latest study analyzing the impact of digitalization on the media and democracy – a hot subject since Parliament will debate different media legislation issues this year and next, not least the role of the public broadcaster SRG SSR.

TA-SWISS is also launching two new studies: The first will be looking at the blockchain (call for tenders expired), while the second will analyze genome editing (call for tenders open until March 17, 2017).

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