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Project partners

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More about CIPAST at www.cipast.org

This is the seventh issue of the CIPAST newsletter. This quarterly newsletter provides news on the situation of participatory procedures in Europe and news about the CIPAST project and its members. Based on the results of the first CIPAST training workshop, held in Dresden, June 2006, the second CIPAST training workshop was now organized in Procida-Naples. The wonderful mediterranean atmosphere of the island of Procida in the Gulf of Naples and the phantastic organisation by the host Città della Scienza allowed a fruitful exchange of experience and expertise and offered much scope for establishing contacts or consolidating networking.

Yours sincerely,
Norbert Steinhaus, Editor



From Dresden to Naples

CIPAST workshops „How to design and organise public deliberation“

As citizens, do we have legitimacy to discuss emergence of new technologies? The answer is yes, this is our planet. Therefore the 2nd CIPAST training workshop „How to design and organise public deliberation“ from June 17th to June 21st 2007 presented the state of the art of knowledge on public participation in science and technology and referred to concrete experiences in European countries. 80 participants from 20 countries enjoyed the wonderful Mediterranean atmosphere of the island of Procida in the Gulf of Naples which allowed a fruitful exchange of experience and expertise. The perfect organisation by the host Città della Scienza offered much scope for establishing contacts or consolidating networking.

The first CIPAST workshop was held in Dresden, exactly one year ago. It was a first structured preparation of a training package which should address the most important issues regarding organisational learning and dissemination of good practices across institutions and countries, as well as critical self-reflection. Respecting the feedback from Dresden the recent workshop in Naples/Procida allocated more time for training through participatory exercises and allowed more interaction between the participants.

The whole Naples workshop was organized in three streams: It started with an input on methods and methodologies. Location for these introductory lectures in plenary sessions was S. Giacomo church on Procida, the only venue on the island which allowed the whole group to come



together in one place. It was an extraordinary experience to follow the lectures when all spoken words had this ceremonial echo which is common in churches. To follow the presentations and working in groups demanded high concentration. And not only from the participants. Marc Lipinski, Vice-President for Research at the Région Ile de France, who was invited to discuss in an evening session the lessons learned from a Citizens' Conference on Nanotechnology he initiated, had to come to terms with the echo as well. But it worked.

The second part of the workshop was built on case studies developed and prepared by the CIPAST steering committee. Case study work in the CIPAST context was not only having a presentation. The exercises and the preparatory documents gave elements of the real context so that participants could really enter into the situation of a participatory process and build the case according to an existing problem - as if they were in a "real life" situation. Supported by CIPAST members, participants working in small groups performed tasks which illustrated some of the difficulties of the design and implementation of public participation in practice: How to choose a procedure, how to draft a rationale for public participation for a given policy maker, or how to make a press release, etc. A support materials' folder was available for each case study. The city council of Procida in Terra Murata, high above the rest of the island, was a good place for this work in small groups.

A new and rather challenging approach was the idea to work on participants' material and problems in the third stream of the training exercise. A call for contribution in December 2006 led to proposals for 19 posters and 26 case studies. Ten case studies have been accepted

for problem-solving exercises during the training workshop - of which 6 finally have been discussed in detail in Procida. There was a big diversity in the case studies. In fact there were differences between the objectives and outcomes of the case studies, too. The lessons learned (for the coming training package) were, that at least the minimal objectives that can be reached must be ensured, which either can be: a) learn how to frame or b) know better about the methodological choice.

Every participant had the possibility to work on at least two such studies: one proposed by CIPAST members and one prepared by CIPAST members on the basis of the results of the call for proposals. All preparatory documents for all case studies - such as background papers, workshop design or materials for exercise - were available in advance at the CIPAST website. The participants at least had the chance to be prepared for their lessons.

Many of the case studies which could not have been selected for a detailed discussion in work groups were prepared as posters and presented during the workshop's poster session. Some questions and experiences raised in the participants' case experiences were also adapted for a discussion in the workshop's Open Space session. The CIPAST Open Space was not only an open space in the figurative sense. It was organized under big sunshades in the fresh air. Generally this method is a self-organising practice that enables groups of any size to address complex, important issues and accomplish meaningful work. So the CIPAST Open Space was the opportunity for participants to present and discuss specific experiences or transversal questions. It was a marketplace of inquiry, where participants offered their topics of interest for discussion: About the English language in international meetings, about the question who should initiate processes of public deliberation or about



the acceptance of lay people's knowledge by scientists. In fact it was also used for informal networking among the participants.

The presentations of the last day were held at Città della Scienza in Naples, an innovative structure designed to give assistance to local development within a national, European and Mediterranean framework, offering



different kinds of services including a Science Centre; a Business INNOVATION Centre (BIC); a Centre for Advanced Training and Vocational Guidance; and a Congress Centre.

Having all the different venues for the workshop was a challenge and a real burden for the organizers. But it was managed extremely good. And to be honest: After spending the last day in Naples, it think it was a good decision to have the workshop in the more quiet atmosphere of Procida (Although I'll never forget the speed of the Microtaxi). In my opinion the CIPAST consortium made a good offer to the participants with a lot of information and input. Of course, more informal time in the programme for individual networking would have been better, especially because there was a big interest in networking.

But after Dresden and Naples we now have an embryo of a network of CIPAST correspondents. This existing network should be enlarged foster the emergence of a European culture of participatory democracy in scientific and technological issues. With the CIPAST database and the CIPAST discussion list there are already existing tools for future exchange and keeping contact.

Norbert Steinhaus



The **case study materials and posters** can be found at www.cipast.org/cipast.php?section=4022

Additional presentations which were held in the plenary can be found at www.cipast.org/cipast.php?section=42&article=427

Pictures are available at www.cipast.org/cipast.php?section=4022&article=463 (for participants only)

The CIPAST Database

The CIPAST platform intends to support the structuring of an expanded network of European organizations already involved or interested in participatory processes regarding scientific and technological issues. With this objective in mind, the CIPAST consortium decided to set up a database, in order to facilitate knowledge and information transfer between the members of the network.

The [link to the CIPAST database](#) can be found on the CIPAST website. In general the database is meant to be a tool for actors involved in science and technology, with a special focus on technology assessment and citizen participation. In particular it identifies key persons or institutions that may concretely contribute to promote the development of participatory procedures in science and technology in their country. It also gives an overview of several past or ongoing participatory processes. In addition the database provides statistics on the kind of actors and thematic fields represented.



Data always is in a state of flux. Thus the CIPAST database will always be under construction

what means constantly updated. Even though it does not pretend to be exhaustive, it provides reliable information about actors and participative processes in Europe.

The CIPAST database is meant as a tool for actors involved in science and technology issues. It has a special focus on technology assessment and citizen participation. The database aims at identifying key actors and giving an overview of past or ongoing participatory processes, in order to foster networking and experience sharing between STS actors throughout Europe. If you are interested to be listed in the database - either as actor, or with a process - you are kindly asked to fill the database registration forms on the CIPAST website.

Subscription form 'Actors' www.cipast.org/cipast.php?section=1032

Subscription form 'Processes' www.cipast.org/cipast.php?section=1031

For further information, please don't hesitate to contact the [database manager](#) or the [webmaster](#).



The Cafe Scientifique Network

Café Scientifique - as fostered and supported in a current project by the British Council, United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations - provides a unique forum for the discussion of topical and thought provoking scientific issues in a way that is much more relaxed, informal and accessible than a public lecture. Meetings have taken place in cafes, bars, restaurants and even theatres, but always outside a traditional academic context. Each begins with a short talk from a speaker who is usually a scientist or science writer. The audience consists of people who have an interest in science but generally never have the opportunity to discuss their views on the implications of science for society.



Photo: British Council

The first ever Café Scientifique took place in Leeds, UK in 1998. From there, cafes sprang up in Newcastle, Nottingham and Oxford and then gradually spread throughout the UK. There are now Café Scientifiques across the UK and also globally from Singapore to Buenos Aires. The British Council has also adapted the principles of cafe scientifique to create multilateral events linking together different audiences via video-conference. A leading scientist will give a short talk to audiences of 30 to 40 people in two different countries simultaneously anywhere in the world. Events so far have brought together audiences from as far away as India and Malaysia to discuss social and ethical considerations in science.
www.britishcouncil.org/science-society-cafesci.htm
www.cafescientifique.org/

2nd international cafe scientifique organisers' conference

From 12th-13th May 2007 the second international cafe scientifique organisers' conference took place in Leeds, UK. Around ninety organisers from different parts of the world (including the UK, US, Europe, New Zealand, Ja-

pan and South America) shared their experiences. The conference was supported by the Wellcome Trust and the British Council. The aims of the Conference were - besides others - to examine how different countries and cultures adapt the form of the café to local needs and discuss whether new technologies could enable the content of cafes to be more widely spread.

Conference report: www.cafescientifique.org/downloads/conference%20report.pdf

See also

Science at the cafe - Paolo Politi, organiser of Caffè-Scienza, Florence, writes about Caffè-Scienza for Humboldt Kosmos, the magazine of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Download from www.cafescientifique.org/downloads/kosmos_Sciencecafe.pdf.

Nanotechnology and public engagement

Taken from the Scientific Alliance's newsletter, 15 June 2007
Nanotechnology is fashionable and, like most new technologies, has had its potential over-hyped by many. (...) Nevertheless, the unique properties of materials at the nano-scale make this a fruitful area for development but, along with projected benefits come potential hazards. (...) Poorly handled, such issues have the potential to be a major public relations disaster in the similar way to GM crops. One way to avoid this - pushed hard by the think tank Demos, among others - is public engagement. The concept is that, by involving lay people in the debate early on, concerns are raised and addressed and the direction of research influenced in ways which are likely to increase acceptance by society. This is the currently fashionable view of how relations between scientists and the public should be handled, replacing the 'deficit model' addressed by the much-derided Public Understanding of Science (PUS) movement.

Actually, we (The Scientific Alliance, the ed.) have never thought that the idea of scientists telling lay people about their work was a bad one, but in this post-modern world 'fact' is a dirty word, and lack of knowledge is not seen as a barrier to involvement. It is interesting, then, to see the latest views on public engagement from Richard Jones (chair of the UK government's Nanotechnology Engagement Group), published in Nature Nanotechnology. In his view, the process is not being successful (that is, it is not raising the public profile of the area) partly because of the lack of agreement on the objectives of the exercise among the various stakeholders. Another problem is the difficulty of non-scientists understanding the complexities of the topic. Perhaps more PUS is needed after all.

There is a view that, despite the laudable intentions of the Public Engagement enthusiasts, the general public is profoundly uninterested in getting involved in broad, diffuse issues relating to cutting-edge technology. That leaves scientists (public and private sector), policy makers and pressure groups as the three sectors engaged in debate. Continued attempts to involve the general public at an early stage will generally result in NGOs, think tanks and activists taking part as their self-appointed proxies. In many cases, they will be profoundly distrustful of science and - in true post-modernist fashion - try to trump natural science with social science.

We find this a worrying concept. Increased scientific literacy of the general public is to be encouraged by all means possible, as is the role of working scientists in communicating their work in everyday language. But the Public Engagement movement is in danger of handing control of science policy to unrepresentative pressure groups. The Nature Nanotechnology report suggests that this may not be as productive an approach as its protagonists suggest in any case. In the meantime, all scientists should be aware of the social implications of their work, and aim to communicate with other stakeholders as much as possible. read the full text at www.scientific-alliance.org and follow [newsletter/archive](http://www.scientific-alliance.org/newsletter/archive)

If you want to start a discussion on the raised opinions or share your view on public interest and public engagement please address to CIPAST discussion group at cipast@yahoogroups.com and send a copy to info@scientific-alliance.org

The Scientific Alliance

Formed in 2001, the Scientific Alliance is a non-profit membership-based organisation, now based in Cambridge. The Alliance brings together both scientists and non-scientists committed to rational discussion and debate on the challenges facing the environment today. Members of the Scientific Alliance are concerned about the many ways in which science is often misinterpreted, and at times misrepresented, within both policy circles and in the media. The Alliance thus works to overcome this misunderstanding by aiming to: Promote sound science in the environmental debate, ensure that scientific arguments remain prominent throughout the policy making process and facilitate an informed dialogue between all stakeholders involved in the environmental debate through events and publications. The Scientific Alliance is led by a Scientific Advisory Forum

comprised of respected scientists and experts from many different fields. They set the Scientific Alliance's general policies and together with other members of the Scientific Alliance, act as spokespeople for the organisation. The Alliance's director is Martin Livermore.

Taken from www.scientific-alliance.org

News

The 3rd Living Knowledge conference

'Communities building knowledge: innovation through citizens' science and university engagement' will take place in Paris from 30 August 30 till 1 September 2007.

Theme 5 of the Living Knowledge Conference will deal with Participatory Processes in Science and Technology. Contributions will cover critical analyses of participatory methods: what are good practices, or what limitates and obstacles participation? Registration forms, detailed descriptions of the themes and accepted contributions are available on the conference websites. (French: http://sciencescitoyennes.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=114, English: http://sciencescitoyennes.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=115, or at the website of the International Network of Science Shops: www.livingknowledge.org.) For additional information about the conference you can contact citizens-research-LK3@sciencescitoyennes.org

Call for Contribution

Participatory Activities in Nanotechnologies

In this autumn we intend to publish a special edition of the CIPAST newsletter on participatory initiatives in the field of nanotechnology. We would really appreciate if you could support our editorial work by sending us information about participatory activities and processes you took note of. Have you heard of a Consensus Conference or a Citizens Jury which which was organized on the topic of Nanotechnology? Or have you taken part in a Science Café to discuss expectations or concerns? Please send us weblinks or reports, and if possible a contact person.

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