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Project partners

La Cité des sciences et de l'industrie (Paris, F), Rathenau Institute (Den Haag, NL), Danish Board of Technology (Copenhagen, DK), Centre for Studies of Democracy, University of Westminster (London, UK), Science-Society Interface, University of Lausanne (CH), Citta della Scienza (Napels, I), Deutsches Hygienemuseum (Dresden, D), INSERM (Paris, F), INRA (Paris, F), ARMINES (Paris, F), Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (Paris, F) and the Bonn Science Shop (D).

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I have the great pleasure to announce that the CIPAST platform has been launched. At time of high science and technology issues, it is essential to include civil society in the debates.

Citizen participation has considerably evolved during the last decade. Bringing the actors together within the CIPAST platform will provide an opportunity to foster the emergence of an European culture of participatory democracy in scientific and technological issues.

The CIPAST newsletter provides news, on a three month basis, on the situation of participatory procedures in Europe, news about the project and its members and provides links to useful electronic and print resources aimed at strengthening civil society in Europe.

The CIPAST platform is a participation project, any contribution is welcome. Please feel free to criticise but also to contribute, by sending news, events, short reports or experiences from your special field of work.

Roland Schaer, CIPAST project coordinator

Partnerships and Public Participation

The regulation of scientific-technological innovation becomes more and more hazardous for decision makers. Taking genetic modified organisms, nanotechnology or intensive care medicine as examples: Will the political, economic or social consequences of today's decisions be justified in 10 or 20 years? What if the decisions have been wrong? New governance strategies are based on a principle of partnership between the state, experts, stake-holder interests and citizens. Partnership brings more different values and knowledge to solve problems.

The CIPAST platform, a three years project, coordinated by Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, Paris, aims at bringing together different families of experienced actors from organisations with significant experiences in the use of participatory procedures in scientific and technological issues. Twelve organisations from seven countries cooperate to achieve and encourage improved knowledge and experience transfer between European actors and decision-makers involved in participatory initiatives by structuring a network, disseminating good practices and circulating relevant information.

Setting up a training program

Experience in public participation has reached a critical mass. Organisational learning, dissemination of good practices across institutions and countries, as well as critical self-reflection are now to be achieved among practitioners and users of participatory methods & procedures. The CIPAST work programme will foster the transfer of expertise through the implementation of training programmes for the three identified contexts of decision: "upstream", "regulation" and "social diffusion". A corpus of training tools, based on case-studies and tested in training sessions, will be developed for the pragmatic needs of the potential users.

More about CIPAST at www.cipast.org

NanoDialogue

Project to engage the public in a debate on nanotechnologies and nanosciences

The development of nanotechnologies and nanosciences (N&N) is still at an early stage, but the market for nanotechnology-based products is expected to rise to hundreds of billions of euro by 2010. NanoDialogue is a recently launched project to foster public debate on the developments of research in this field.

Products using nanotechnologies are already on the market, and they already have a growing public profile but public awareness of its real economic and social potential is probably still quite low. Citizens do have a right to know what is going on in European laboratories. Science and technology are vital to the European economy, and increased understanding will finally lead to increased support. But if citizens don't understand the role of science and technology in a modern society then they will not be able to support the right policies for the future or to make justified decisions on what work should be continued or further supported. Dialogue on the societal and ethical issues raised by N&N, between researchers, citizens, civil society and business stakeholders, is becoming indispensable to democratic policy decisions in this area.

The NanoDialogue project, launched in March 2005 under the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) and coordinated by the Naples science centre, the Città della Scienza, is currently in the process of developing a framework of basic channels for communication and social debate on N&N. The project is based on a two-fold strategy: on the one hand, it aims to communicate the latest research developments in the N&N field to the general public, on the other, it will try to engage researchers, civil society and citizens in a social dialogue on nanotechnologies and their related sciences. This dialogue will help the project to identify the main issues and preoccupations of these groups concerning nanotechnologies.

The project partners include eight science centres around Europe, as well as ECSITE, the European Network of Science Centres and Museums. In order to include issues of social participation, the project consortium also includes the Centre for Studies on Democracy at the University of Westminster in the UK. NanoDialogue began with a workshop, held in June 2005, based on the 'exhibition game' methodology, to design the content of the project's communication instruments. These include: seven interactive exhibition modules including hands-on

exhibits; multimedia and educational products on N&N; and a website for disseminating information and for collecting feedback.

The exhibition modules will be shown in the eight participating countries over the course of at least six months, starting in February 2006. Simultaneously, a series of locally organised events, science demonstrations and debates will be organised to further engage citizens. Once the project is completed, at the end of February 2007, the exhibition modules will be shown elsewhere in the participating countries (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Sweden).

Dr Luigi Amodio, project coordinator and Director of the Naples science centre, sets the initiative in the context of the recent Italian referendum on stem cell research and its poor level of participation. "Most people can understand cultural, political or religious arguments, but don't necessarily have the tools to understand scientific aspects," he told CORDIS News and went on: "Science centres are natural places to work on such topics. The hands-on model will be a major part of the relationship between science and society in future, along with science centres and new activities such as science cafés."

As was noted at the European Commission's Science in Society Forum in Brussels in April, there is more and more emphasis on two-way dialogue in science communication. The NanoDialogue project therefore will discuss how to collect data from the public, but as Dr. Amodio explains there are two probable main methods: a combination of multimedia interaction and direct experience in the museums, and involving the public in science shows and demonstrations. These may be complemented by the use of websites.

The project will collect and analyse feedback from the workshop participants, in the exhibitions and via the website. The feedback will be used to formulate a series of recommendations to the European Commission on the 'governance' agenda in the European Research Area (ERA). The recommendations will be discussed in a final European conference gathering relevant experts, decision makers and stakeholders.

<http://www.nanodialogue.org/>

Information on this and other N&N projects funded under FP6 can be found at: http://www.cordis.lu/nanotechnology/src/pressroom_projects.htm



Nanologue launched

Europe-wide dialogue on benefits, risks and social, ethical and legal implications of nanotechnologies

Nanologue, an European Commission-funded project, was launched in February 2005, bringing together leading researchers from across Europe to facilitate an international dialogue on the benefits and potential impacts of nanoscience and nanotechnologies.

In the aftermath of the controversy and debate on genetically modified organisms it has become abundantly clear that in order to harness new technologies for economic and social benefit, governments and businesses will have to address a wide range of social, ethical and regulatory concerns. Nanologue aims at bringing together current leading research on the social, ethical and legal implications of nanotechnology, facilitate dialogue and produce guidance for stakeholders, developers of nanotechnology in particular, on how to address the issues uncovered to the wider benefit of both society and the economy.

This 6th Framework Programme project is led by Wuppertal Institute in Germany and features consortium partners EMPA (the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research) in Switzerland, Forum for the Future in the UK and triple innova of Germany. The project will last 18 months.

Nanologue intends to identify benefits and potential ethical, legal and social impacts of nanotechnology applications and processes from international scientific expertise. The project wants to promote a dialogue between researchers, businesses and the civil society based upon the potential of nanoscience and nanotechnology applications to improve the quality of life, create wealth through novel knowledge-based and sustainable processes, and their potential societal impacts.

To disseminate the findings Nanologue will develop a comprehensive communication and dissemination strategy, targeting a wide range of actors including researchers, educational institutions, businesses, public institutions and regulatory agencies, civil society (including consumer and religious groups), financial markets, and the media. Nanologue will offer media workshops, publicity materials, news articles accompanied by press releases to media closely related to nanotechnology articles, initiate foresight studies, organise conferences and cooperate with a major existing internet-platform on nanotechnology.

To ensure the consideration of short- and long-term ethical, legal and social aspects of research and business activities Nanologue will support public research funds, researchers and businesses with an interactive tool, thus addressing societal preferences and stimulating innovation. In their intention the facilitation of the translation of civil society's ethical, legal and social requirements on nanotechnology research will lead into a real competitive advantage for the European industry.

www.nanologue.net/

NanoJury

A democratic tool to influence how new technologies are developed

A citizens' jury is like a legal jury in that they will give a 'verdict' after being presented with information and perspectives from a range of different witnesses. The NanoJury UK brought together twenty randomly-chosen people from different backgrounds who heard evidence about a wide range of possible futures, and the role that nanotechnologies might play in them.

Over five weeks, the jurors heard from a variety of witnesses with widely varying perspectives, which they draw on in a set of recommendations to the government's Nanotechnology Co-ordination Group. These inform how debates as to how this emerging and potentially revolutionary technology should develop. It is sponsored by the IRC in Nanotechnology at the University of Cambridge, Greenpeace UK, the Guardian and the Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences Research Centre at the University of Newcastle.

NanoJury aimed to:

- to provide a potential vehicle for people's informed views on nanotechnology to have an impact on policy
- to facilitate a mutually educative dialogue between people with diverse perspectives and interests, including critical and constructive scrutiny of the hopes and aspirations of those working in the nanotech-related sectors by a wider group of citizens
- to explore the potential for deliberative processes to broaden discussions about nanotechnology research policy – both in terms of the range of issues and the diversity of people who are given a say

On 21 September 2005 the jurors launched their recommendations at a public event attended by the media, policy-makers and representatives of other interest groups.

www.nanojury.org/



Meeting of Minds European Citizens' Deliberation on Brain Science

Meeting of Minds is a two-year pilot project led by a European panel of 126 citizens. A consortium of technology assessment bodies, science museums, academic institutions and public foundations from nine European countries launched this initiative in 2004 with the support of the European Commission. It will give European citizens a unique opportunity to learn more about the impact of brain research on their daily lives and society as a whole and discuss their questions and ideas with leading European researchers.

The field of brain sciences is rapidly gaining societal importance. With the shift of demographic balances the incidence of many age-related neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, will increase dramatically. There will be a huge demand for ways to alleviate or cure brain-related diseases and the given opportunities will produce important spin-offs for diagnosis as well as neurosurgical and pharmacological treatment. Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a growth in what has become generally known as 'participatory technology assessment' and 'participatory foresight' in various European national contexts. Broadly, the aim of participatory technology assessment and foresight is to address and consider socially relevant issues of science and technology through the active involvement of citizens, civil society actors and policy-makers in various forms of assessment. Especially in the area of biotechnology, public involvement has become a frequently used tool of assessment. So far, at practical level, there have however only been few and limited attempts to implement participatory initiatives at European level.

Developing new forms of social debate

The overall objective of the Meeting of Minds initiative is to involve European citizens in assessing and publicly discussing the issue of brain science with relevant research, policy and ethics experts, various stakeholders as well as representatives of European decision-making organisations. As such, the initiative aims to give relevant inputs into European policy-making and wider public debate on brain science. It will also help set the issue of brain science on the policy and wider political agenda. Meeting of Minds will help develop new forms of social debate and decision-making processes at European cross-national level. The project consists of three national and two European meetings to be held in 2005 and early 2006. Initially, 126 citizens from across Europe will be invited to explore the issue of brain science. This will lead to the creation of a common framework and a common set of questions,

setting out those aspects of brain science that need to be examined further and discussed in greater depth. National panels will take these proposals home and continue working on them at two national assessment meetings. Each panel will produce its own conclusions on desirability and potential of brain science and will put forward selected issues for the European agenda.

The second European meeting will take on board the national conclusions and recommendations and run further with them, producing a European assessment report on brain research issues. The results of the discussions will be incorporated in a European report with conclusions and recommendations to be handed over to high-level European officials and representatives of the European scientific and research community at a public ceremony. One of the aims of this exercise is to create an ongoing dialogue at European level between the general public and policy-makers on science-related matters.

The 'Meeting of Minds - European Citizens' Deliberation on Brain Science' initiative has to be understood as a serious, concerted attempt by leading organisations in the field to move participatory technology assessment and foresight to the European cross-national level. It thereby responds to the various demands for greater public involvement in European technology assessment and related policy-making. Through this approach, the Meeting of Minds initiative wishes to meet EU calls for greater public involvement in the debate on future research, technological decision-making and governance.

More information: www.meetingmindseurope.org

First European Citizens' Convention

The 1st European Citizens' Convention on Brain Science aimed at setting the European agenda for brain research. From 3 to 5 June, in total 123 citizens from the 9 participating countries got together in Brussels and identified themes below to be explored in greater depth during the national discussions which will take place between September and November 2005, and during the second European Convention in January 2006:

- Regulation and control
- Normalcy versus diversity
- Public information, education and awareness
- Pressure from economic interests
- Equal access to treatment

The results of the First European Citizens' Convention on Brain Science with an overview of the different stages of the deliberation process of this First European Convention and the primary outcomes of the event can be downloaded [here](#).



News

ForSociety

ForSociety ERA-Net newsletter

ForSociety ERA-Net is a sustainable and dynamic network, where national foresight programme managers co-ordinate their activities and - on the basis of shared knowledge on relevant issues, methodologies, legal and financial frameworks - regularly develop and implement efficient trans-national foresight programmes that significantly enrich both the national and the European research and innovation systems. The 1st Newsletter includes information on the ForSociety Network and presents interesting articles on foresight. See <http://www.eranet-forsociety.net/ForSociety/index.html> for details.

See through Science

Why public engagement needs to move upstream

Debates about risk are important. But the public also want answers to the more fundamental questions at stake in any new technology. Spurred on by high profile controversies over BSE, GM crops and now nanotechnology, scientists have gradually started to involve the public in their work. In 'See-through Science', James Wilsdon and Rebecca Willis from 'Demos' - an organisation which explains itself as a think tank for everyday democracy - argue that we are on the cusp of a new phase in debates over science and society: Public engagement is about to move upstream. This publication offers practical guidance for scientists, policymakers, research councils businesses and NGOs - anyone who is trying to make engagement work. See <http://www.demos.co.uk> for more details or download a pdf copy [here](#).

E-CIVICUS

Weekly e-newsletter on citizen participation around the world

CIVICUS - The World Alliance for Citizen Participation offers a free subscriptions to their newsletter, e-CIVICUS. This weekly publication informs about the developments that are taking place in civil society organisations around the world. See www.civicus.org or subscribe at news@civicus.org.

Dates & Events

10-12 November 2005

[World Science Forum 2005](#)

Budapest, Hungary

The Hungarina Academy of Sciences established the World Science Forum to promote the quality of dialogue about the new roles and challenges of knowledge in global society. This years conference concentrates on knowledge, ethics and responsibility, giving a special session on "Science for a Democratic World: The Role of Parliaments".

14 November 2005

[Higher Education and Community Engagement Conference](#)

Manchester, UK

The conference aims to support senior managers working in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It will provide a forum to explore how activities can be integrated to into research, widening participation and teaching in HEIs.

14-15 November 2005

[Communicating European Research 2005](#)

Brussels, Belgium

The event will focus on the manifold aspects of science communication and will provide an excellent forum and meeting place for scientists, communication professionals and journalists.

14-15 November 2005

[Science on Stage Festival](#)

Cern, Geneva, Switzerland

The theme of the event is „Science for Humanity“ - a broad theme, which focuses on how science benefits our every day lives. It is also intended to touch on the moral and ethical questions that modern science can provoke.

20-23 January 2006

[Meeting of Minds: Second European Citizens' Convention on Brain Science](#)

Brussels, Belgium

'European assessment' of brain science, focusing on commonalities and differences, the underlying values, differences between European countries and regions, gender differences etc.

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