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## European Foresight Platform

The European Commission is providing the means to continue the important networking activities of foresight initiatives. Setting out on the previous work of the European Foresight Monitoring Network and For-Learn the new European Foresight Platform resumes its work.



## Minutes EFP Review Meeting, Seville, May 11, 2011 (IPTS premises)

*Assessing the EFP approach to provide foresight information to policy makers and practitioners*

The purpose of the EFP Review Meeting was to discuss the methodological approach of EFP in providing foresight information and support to policy makers and practitioners. In addition, the aim was to refine the various policy support approaches and to review the first policy workshops in order to draw conclusions for the subsequent implementation.

*How to reach policy makers?*

One of the central questions in the discussion about the EFP approach was: How to reach the audience of policy makers in a way that FLAs have an effect? There seem to be two sides of the medal: Either to make FLAs and its outcomes more appropriate to policy makers and design them compatible to the existing policy structures assuming that there is sufficient absorptive (or receptive) capacity on the side of the policy makers; or to train the absorptive capacities of the policy makers for integrating FLA knowledge and the respective outputs into the decision making process and policy options. Both approaches have to come together in the end. FLAs can only have an impact if their design takes into account the existing policy structures and the way the policy makers think and act. Certain regulatory constraints and procedures cannot be overcome by FLA recommendations.

*Gather knowledge about the policy maker as a client*

Related to this is the question who are the decision makers and who are the policy makers? The different target groups ask for different messages. Policy makers are not necessarily the same as decision makers. It is important to understand that FLAs provide input for the policy making *process* and not for the policy makers themselves.

This is not to say that FLAs have to be in line with the ruling terms of governance. On the contrary, FLAs are only relevant if they have some innovative potential and if they dare to call into question the existing structures. In this respect, FLAs are not only about generating new insights into the future of research and scientific development but in confronting and exchanging different aspects of certain scenarios. Where can FLA really add value to policy debate?

Nonetheless, the in-depth knowledge about the policy maker as a client supposes sufficient insights of the people, structures and procedures which can only be achieved by studying them.

*Customizing policy support*

At the same token we have to distinguish different levels and different roles of policy makers. We find policy makers in very different organisations. Besides, in some countries it is suitable to have champions speaking out for hot topics that are treated in an FLA, in other policy traditions this is counterproductive. There are policy makers who are drafting policies; (senior) policy makers who need to be consulted on how to formulate the visions; and there are policy makers who implement the policy strategies, and some of them also have influence on drafting the policies. Others, however might not want to take over responsibilities for changes. At times, they see themselves as providing input for the policy



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	<p>making process, not policy making itself. Therefore, some policy makers should rather be called policy shapers to lighten their perceived burden.</p>
<p><i>Keep it simple and short</i></p>	<p>Experience with transferring foresight results into policy making shows that many policy makers have a preference for converging ideas. They want only to have a few messages they can work with instead of many different diverging ones. This helps them to be on the safe side. But how should the policy framework be formed to handle with fragmented or even diverging views on societal concerns? Foresight or FLA practitioners want to provide new inputs of course and not repeat well known things. So it will be important to clear the objectives with the client always at the beginning and to find a common language, identify the hidden agenda, manage the delicate balance between whatever is feasible and what is revolutionary, and to make use of the convincing power of messages. These points could find more prominence in the EFP Manual for Policy Support presented and where the three different approaches should be distinguished. For example, for policy makers, good practice and success cases could be useful, while newcomers might need more training on how foresight works and how to exploit the results.</p>
<p><i>Managing a delicate balance</i></p>	
<p><i>Raising awareness for foresight issues</i></p>	<p>In order to increase the awareness of policy makers for foresight and to raise interest in FLA results experience from Canada shows that the “sell to the pain”-market approach is quite successful where the most painful statements are formulated and solutions discussed. At the same time, it is important for FLA projects and outcomes to have an appealing website and have policy makers look at it.</p>
<p><i>How can EFP have an effect on policy making?</i></p>	<p>Some participants asked “what can be the effects of FLAs and policy workshops in the context of FLAs”? Besides providing a common knowledge base to the stakeholders, one very important function of FLA and related policy workshops are that different aspects of the same matter are introduced. This way, not only are new insights presented but also connected to each other. This strategy makes clear how large the scope of policy issues actually has to be to deal with specific future challenges. FLAs will in most cases not generate new knowledge on technologies, rather on the options of governance for such issues and their consequences. Learning from good practice should be promoted not only on websites but for example in academic journals and other media. For the depiction of the content, this includes the coverage and analysis of conditions under which foresight results have been taken on board by policy makers. This then raises the question: can similar success cases be constructed by shaping the conditions accordingly?</p>
<p><i>Connecting the different parts of policy making</i></p>	
<p><i>Identify knowledge gaps</i></p>	<p>Especially for the EFP to have an impact it is necessary to understand the policies around EIP. The content is not the point but the interlinkage of the different parts attached to the core topic – including the key players and their interests, linking the links to the policy is crucial for the impact. At the same token, EFP can help to identify the gaps, as was the case for example in the Policy Workshop on Urban Europe.</p>
<p><i>Leverage effect on national strategies</i></p>	<p>Spreading such results will also have some effect on the national policy agendas. European strategies often serve as leverage to the national</p>

activities. Participants from the own country at European level events can serve as anchors and facilitators to transfer strategic knowledge and awareness to the national authorities. For example, Malta is now starting an initiative on urban issues.

At EU level, EIP was perceived as a paradigm shift to bring together various knowledge triangle members to tackle societal challenges. EFP workshop results should be fed into the discussions at the EC because the actors there could take a great interest in outputs, for example of Urban Europe.

*Reaching out to society*

Issues with large societal impact such as active and healthy aging should even go beyond policy makers and address the society as a whole. FLA can and should play a role in the public debate, for example in order to discuss certain positions on the introduction of new technologies or the governance thereof.

*Linking foresight to innovation*

An important issue is the interlinkage between innovation and foresight. Where foresight is focused on consensus building and shared understanding, the focus will be more on incremental innovation. Transformative innovation will take place in these foresight areas which are often not mainstream. There is a tension between evidence based policy making and innovation future, requiring bold people taking bold decisions.

*Looking beyond Europe*

Finally the participants stressed the importance of looking at FLA for policy making beyond Europe. Not only to take alternative approaches into account but also in order to disseminate findings from the EFP all over the world.

Annex:

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Agenda EFP Review Meeting</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 15:30 - 18:30h</p>	
<p>Location: JRC-IPTS Meeting Room 56 Edificio EXPO / WTC C/ Inca Garcilaso, 3 E - 41092 SEVILLA, Spain</p>	
15:30	Welcome by Mark Boden (JRC-IPTS) and brief Tour de Table
16:00	Introduction to EFP by Susanne Giesecke (EFP Project Coordinator, AIT)
16:20	Feedback and Discussion
16:40	Presentation of EFP Policy Support Approaches by Vicente Carabias (WP4, JRC-IPTS) and of first EFP Policy Workshops by Annelieke van der Giessen and Miriam Leis (WP5, TNO)
17.00	Feedback and Discussion
17.20	Exchange further thoughts to refine the policy support approaches, conclusions for the subsequent implementation of the foresight framework (EFP Manual for Policy Support)
17:50	Beyond the EFP: Presentation of the (under creation) European Forum on Forward Looking Activities (EFFLA), the Commitment 8 of the Innovation Union by Voula Mega (DG RTD), Discussion
18:20	Wrap-up by Susanne Giesecke (EFP Project Coordinator, AIT)
18:30	End of EFP Review Meeting, Pre-registration to the FTA 2011 Conference