



European Foresight Platform
supporting forward looking decision making
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Workshop Agenda

Meeting	EFP European Policy Workshop
Date	October 26, 2011
Place	Neth-ER, Aarlenstraat 22 (Rue d'Arlon 22), Brussels
Start / Close	09:30-17:30

Policy options for surprising and emerging futures in Europe

Background

Over the past few years we have witnessed a growing number of technological, economic, environmental, political, social and ethical surprising and emerging issues ('wild cards') with very high impacts in Europe and the world. The following three examples show that these surprising and emerging issues often have associated early warning signals (weak signals) that warn us about their potential occurrence. However, our blindness or reluctance to foresee radical changes in our lives rather often makes their manifestation look surprising.

Global Economic Crisis

- Wild card features: Industries and governments in Europe were caught by surprise. At the European Union level the crisis has created huge debt affecting national budgets leading to major cuts in social welfare, health and education, for example.
- Associated weak signals:
 - The Lehman Brothers bankruptcy in September 2008 was one of the many signals of the global financial crisis.
 - Housing bubble in the United States and some European Countries (e.g. Ireland and Spain).

Fukushima Disaster

- Wild card features: The 9.0 scale earthquake in Japan, followed by a powerful tsunami and the Fukushima disaster. These surprises obviously had an enormous impact in the Japanese society and economy. Also in Europe, several multinational companies have been affected due to major global supply chain disruptions and other market-related factors. But perhaps it is the nuclear sector itself that will be shaken the most. The Fukushima situation has already strengthened anti-nuclear movements (in Germany, for example) and has led to the creation of several government task forces aimed to scrutinise existing and future nuclear plans and investments.
- Associated weak signals:
 - Two years before the disaster the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sent warnings to Japanese authorities about security shortcomings in the Fukushima nuclear plant. Wikileaks showed a leaked cable explicitly mentioning that Fukushima was not able to withstand an earthquake of a magnitude higher than 7.
 - In 2008, other groups, such as the G-8 Nuclear Safety and Security Group had also raised serious concerns over safety issues in Japanese nuclear plants. Furthermore, some leaked cables show that in the last four decades guidance on how to protect nuclear plants from earthquakes had been updated three times.

Arab Spring

- Wild card features: The 2011 socio-political changes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have brought mixed outcomes to the region. On the positive side, there are hopes for more democratic and transparent MENA societies in the future. But these hopes are being challenged by the growing unrest, uncertainty and unstable conditions, which range from crisis of governance in some countries to armed conflicts in others. The impact of the MENA revolutions in Europe can be wide-ranging, including uncontrolled mass-migration, direct involvement in military actions, unstable energy supply, etc.
- Associated weak signals:
 - The role of social media (Twitter & Facebook), new ICT allowing real-time reporting of developments using , for example, Blackberry Messenger, etc.
 - The role of Wikileaks informing about major corruption networks in MENA governments

Worldwide, there are several initiatives that aim to identify, collect and interpret emerging issues and potential surprises that could have an impact of the economy and society. Also in Europe the EC launched a number *blue-sky research* initiatives aimed to identify issues that should not be left “out of the policy radar” because they could have an impact on the European economy and society and could be important in shaping the European Research Area. These foresight and forecasting projects include:

- INFU: Innovation Futures in Europe: A Foresight Exercise on Emerging Patterns of Innovation
- SESTI: Scanning for Emerging Science and Technology Issues
- FarHorizon: Use of foresight to align research with longer term policy needs in Europe
- SANDERA – The future impact of security and defence policies on the European Research Area
- IKNOW – Interconnecting knowledge for the early identification of issues, events and developments (e.g. wild cards and associated weak signals) shaping and shaking the future of science, technology and innovation in the European Research Area
- CIVISTI - Citizen Visions on Science, Technology and Innovation: identify new, emerging topics for the EU R&D policy by consulting citizens in 7 European countries (Denmark, Austria, Flanders/Belgium, Finland, Malta, Bulgaria, Hungary).

While it is true that the role of foresight and forecasting is NOT to predict future surprises but to enhance anticipatory intelligence, the so-called blue-sky initiatives of the European Union have identified and analysed hundreds of potential surprising and emerging issues. These have been studied in terms of their relevance for ERA and their interconnection with several thematic areas addressed by the European Framework Programme for RTD, including: health; agriculture and biotechnology; ICT; nanotechnology; energy (including nuclear); environment; transport; social sciences and humanities; security and space. Similarly, these RTD projects have identified hundreds of early warning signals or weak signals (ambiguous observables and developments) and assessed them in terms of their significance and potential implications for Europe.

As a knowledge hub for foresight, the European Foresight Platform (EFP) brings together the information and knowledge base on foresight in Europe and internationally. As a result, EFP has an extensive overview of emerging issues and potential surprises identified in various foresight activities.

EFP workshop objectives

The European Foresight Platform workshop will bring together the emerging issues and potential surprises identified in various foresight and forward looking activities. More particularly, the EFP workshop will focus on those issues and surprises that could shape the European Research Area (ERA).

This workshop aims to discuss and prioritise the most important emerging issues and surprises for Europe as well as to identify policy requirements and research questions to address these surprises. Moreover, the workshop will discuss in more detail how the European and national *early warning* monitoring and management systems look like and how we take into account the specific nature of the various member states (risk assessment culture and practices, levels of vulnerability and resilience to certain surprises).

The EFP workshop aims bringing together national and European stakeholders to support the development of proactive policy options for European governments intervention in selected priority issues.

The EFP policy workshop will have seven interconnected blocks on potential policy *IMPACTS* of researching surprising and emerging issues:

1. Introducing EFP and EU Blue Sky research on surprising and emerging issues
2. Mapping surprising and emerging issues from EU-funded research
3. Prioritising and discussing surprising and emerging issues
4. Assessing potential implications of surprising and emerging issues
5. Contextualising surprising and emerging issues into EU research and innovation policy
6. Transferring know-how from national actors mapping surprising and emerging issues
7. Supporting EU and national cooperation on surprising and emerging issues research

Programme for the EFP workshop

9:00 – 9:30 Registration and coffee

Block 1: Introducing EFP and EU Blue Sky research on surprising and emerging issues

09:30	Susanne Giesecke, AIT - Welcome and introduction to EFP and to the workshop: Agenda, desired outcomes, chairing, rapporteurs
09:35	Tour de table - The participants' name, affiliation and relationships to the workshop issues
09:45	Introduction by Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero, DG RTD
09:50	Annelieke van der Giessen, TNO and Rafael Popper, MIOIR – Presenting the background information and approach to the workshop

Block 2: Mapping surprising and emerging issues from EU-funded research

10:15	<p>Presentation of 5 to 10 emerging issues and early warning signals identified by four Blue Sky projects (15 minutes each).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ INFU – Susanne Giesecke (AIT) ○ SESTI – Vicente Carabias (IPTs) ○ FarHorizon – Matthias Weber (AIT) / Victor van Rij (AWT) ○ iKnow – Rafael Popper (UniMan / MIOIR)
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Block 3: Prioritizing and discussing identified surprising and emerging issues

11:15	<p>Working groups will discuss the list of emerging issues and early warning signals presented in block 2 and come to a first “prioritization” and discussion of these emerging issues and surprises.</p> <p>The first round of prioritisation and selection will be based on four dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plausibility ○ Impact and reach ○ Novelty of the emerging issues and early warning signals to policy makers ○ Extent to which policy can influence the emerging issues.
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12:15: Working lunch

Block 4: Assessing potential implications of surprising and emerging issues

13:00	<p>The second round of prioritisation and selection will discuss in more detail the potential implications of surprising and emerging issues..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment of short-term (up to 10 years) and long-term (10+ years) priority for policymaking ○ Assessment of relevance to societal challenges and more specific to the European Innovation Partnerships themes: Active and Healthy Ageing, Smart Cities, Water-Efficient Europe, Sustainable supply of non-energy raw materials for a Modern Society, Smart mobility for Europe’s citizens and businesses, Agricultural productivity and sustainability ○ Assessment of impacts on several policy areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical infrastructure and Virtual infrastructure ▪ Social welfare ▪ Economy & employment ▪ Education ▪ Security ▪ Environment & ecosystems ▪ Science, technology & innovation (STI) systems ○ Assessment of the level of preparedness by policy makers
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Block 5: Contextualising surprising and emerging issues into EU research and innovation policy

14:00	Identifying the policy requirements and policy actions needed to anticipate, manage and address the selected emerging issues Identifying where further research may be needed to explore the emerging issue
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15:00: 5 minute feed-back presentations by rapporteurs of the working groups

15:20 Coffee break

Block 6: Transferring know-how from national actors mapping surprising and emerging issues

15:35	<p>Presentations from Tim Sweijts, HCSS presenting the Dutch 'early-warning' system for risks and surprises and from Barrie Stevens, OECD on Future Global Shocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do national risk/surprise management and early warning systems look like? What is the approach followed? ○ How can national risk registers benefit from Pan-European surprise and early warning systems? ○ What do Pan-European risks mean for the national policies? ○ Can national early warning systems learn from other nation's risks/surprises? ○ How do governments address and manage the emerging and surprising issues
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Block 7: Supporting EU and national cooperation on emerging and surprising issues research

16:30	<p>Brainstorming session on potential synergies, complementarities and ways forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How could a (pan-) European early warning system for emerging issues and surprises look like? ○ How could European surprise monitoring and management systems be used at the national level? ○ How do we take into account the specific nature of the various member states (risk assessment culture and practices, levels of vulnerability and resilience to certain surprises)? ○ How can national and European governments address and manage emerging and surprising issues
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17:15: Summary and concluding remarks

17:30: End of workshop

Venue

The workshop will be take place at the premises of Neth-ER at:

Neth-ER
Aarlenstraat 22 / 22, Rue d'Arlon
1050 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

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[Google maps](#)

The office of Neth-ER is on the Aarlenstraat (Rue d'Arlon), which is situated on the Luxemburgplein (Place Lux). The closest metro stations are Troon (Trône) (a 5 minute walk) and Maalbeek (Maelbeek) (an 8 minute walk).

When you arrive by train in Brussels there are several ways to arrive at the Neth-ER office:

By train to station Brussel-Luxemburg (Bruxelles-Luxembourg)

On North station you switch trains (every 15 minutes) in the direction of Namen (Namur) or Luxemburg (Luxembourg). At the underground station Brussel-Luxemburg (Bruxelles-Luxembourg) you leave the train and cross the square, this is a 3 minutes walk, to the Neth-ER office. (NB. The train ticket for Brussels is also valid for this station.)

By metro from Brussels Central station

From Centraal station (Gare Central) you take the metro (line 1) in the direction of Stokkel (Stockel) or Hermann Debroux. In Maalbeek (Maelbeek) you leave the metro and follow the Aarlenstraat (Rue d'Arlon) (an 8 minute walk). You can also switch metros at Kunst/Wet (Arts/Loi) (line 2) in the direction of Delacroix and leave the metro at the next station Troon (Trône), from here you follow the Luxemburgstraat (Rue Luxembourg) (a 5 minute walk).

If you arrive by car, the best option to park your car is parking Wetstraat (Rue de la loi):

By foot from the parking Wetstraat (Rue de la Loi) to the Aarlenstraat 22.

This walk takes about 8 minutes.

After leaving the parking you turn to the Aarlenstraat (Rue d'Arlon).

Walk down the Aarlenstraat until the Luxemburgplein (Place Lux). Neth-ER is situated on your right at number 22

Contact

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