

## Responsible Use of Emerging Technologies

European Conference on Technology Assessment in Berlin Focuses on Scientific Advising of Political Actors – Manifesto: More Participation of Citizens in Technology Debates



*ITAS organizes the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on Technology Assessment. (Graphics: PACITA)*

**Alternative energies, big data, biotechnology - technologies are dominating more and more areas of our life. Which impacts do these new technologies have on society? What are their long-term opportunities and risks that have to be considered by political decisions? These aspects are in the focus of technology assessment and of the EU project PACITA. PACITA will be concluded by experts from all over Europe meeting at the Umweltforum Berlin for the conference “The Next Horizon of Technology Assessment”. From February 25 to 27, 2015, this conference will be organized by the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT).**

**Representatives of the media are cordially invited. For registration, please send an e-mail to [jonas.moosmueller@kit.edu](mailto:jonas.moosmueller@kit.edu).**

Having scanned one's own genetic material might be affordable at reasonable costs soon. This would allow for an early diagnosis of diseases, also of diseases that might never be noticed. What can

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genetic diagnosis actually do? And: Which ethic, social, and legal consequences does it have? “This example studied by the PACITA project shows that the relevance of scientific-technical progress to man and society increases, and so does the importance of technology assessment,” Professor Armin Grunwald, Head of ITAS and of the Office of Technology Assessment with the German Parliament (TAB) that has been run by ITAS since 1990, says. “We contribute to responsibly designing technology for the future by cooperation with other scientists and engineers, but also with citizens and stakeholders.”

PACITA was aimed at further enhancing parliamentary technology assessment, as it is done by TAB in Germany, and direct exchange of science and politics. “Europe needs decision processes based on knowledge. Technology assessment should therefore be institutionalized in all EU member states and cooperate closely across borders,” PACITA project head Lars Klüver of the Danish Board of Technology Foundation emphasizes.

The project partners summarized the importance and tasks of technology assessment in a manifesto that will be presented at the conference. Therein, the scientists emphasize the key role of technology assessment for the responsible use of innovations and scientific knowledge in Europe and the necessity of integrating citizens into the debate: “As technology strongly influences their lives, all citizens of Europe have the democratic right to be heard by politics.”

The conference will be opened by the chairperson of the Committee for Education, Research, and Technology Assessment of the German Parliament, Patricia Lips, MP. Afterwards, more than 50 sessions will focus on current aspects of technology assessment. A panel discussion will concentrate on the role of science journalism (see conference program).

### **The Next Horizon of Technology Assessment (TA) Second European Conference on Technology Assessment**

February 25 – 27, 2015, Umweltforum Berlin

The sessions will take place in English!

## Selected Sessions of the Conference Program

### Wednesday, February 25, 2015

- 13.30 – 14.00 hrs      Opening  
Patricia Lips, MP, Chairperson of the  
Committee for Education, Research, and  
Technology Assessment of the German  
Parliament  
Lars Klüver, PACITA Project Coordinator,  
Danish Board of Technology Foundation  
Armin Grunwald, KIT, Institute for Tech-  
nology Assessment and Systems Analysis  
(ITAS) and Office of Technology Assess-  
ment (TAB) with the German Parliament
- 14.00 – 15.00 hrs      Keynote: Technofideism and Climate  
Change, Naomi Oreskes, Professor of the  
History of Science of Harvard University
- 15.30 – 17.00 hrs      Engaging Citizens in E-participation  
Responsible Research and Innovation for  
Energy Transition  
Advanced Genomics in Healthcare? - Re-  
sults of PACITA  
Governance of Big Data and the Role of  
TA (Part 1)  
*(parallel sessions)*

### Thursday, February 26, 2015

- 09.30 – 10.30 hrs      Keynote: Technology Assessment as Polit-  
ical Myth? Roger Pielke, Jr., Professor for  
Environmental Sciences of the University  
of Colorado
- 10.30 – 12.30 hrs      The Future of Ageing – Results of PACITA  
Debating Future Citizen Engagement in  
European Policy Making – Results of PAC-  
ITA  
*(parallel sessions)*
- 14.30 – 16.00 hrs      The Importance of Science Journalism in  
TA

16.30 – 18.00 hrs      Panel Discussion: What's Next for TA?

**Friday, February 27, 2015**

09.00 – 11.00 hrs      TA of Human Cognitive Enhancement

11.15 – 12.45 hrs      Drilling Deep for Heat: Chances and Challenges of Deep Geothermal Energy

**For the complete program of the conference, click:**

<http://berlinconference.pacitaproject.eu/progamme/>

**Information for Journalists**

Armin Grunwald, Head of the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) of KIT and of the Office of Technology Assessment (TAB) with the German Parliament, PACITA project coordinator Lars Klüver of the Danish Board of Technology Foundation, and other scientists will be available for interviews during the conference. In case you wish to make an interview, complete the respective section of the registration form enclosed.

**On the PACITA EU Project**

The final conference of the PACITA EU project will be the first international conference on technology assessment of this order of magnitude. About 300 participants from about 30 countries, inclusive of members of parliaments of various countries, will take part.

PACITA was funded by the European Union from 2011 to 2015. Under this project, seven countries, in which parliamentary TA institutions have not yet been established, cooperated with eight countries running parliamentary TA institutions. Work was aimed at learning from each other how parliamentary technology assessment may be established.

Within the framework of PACITA, extensive studies were performed and numerous documents and recommendations were drafted with the participation of citizens, scientists, and politicians from all EU member states. The studies covered the following questions: How can we make our consumption sustainable, what are the consequences of an aging society, and how does progress in genetic diagnosis change our healthcare system? Citizens of eleven European countries, for instance, discussed possibilities of saving resources and enhancing the environmental compatibility of our eve-

ryday consumption and they developed recommendations for politics. As regards the topic of “genetic diagnosis”, experts of twelve European countries and the USA assessed clinical, economic, and ethic-social aspects of an increased use of genetic diagnosis methods. Together with a group of parliamentarians, they discussed the necessity and possibilities of political control.

Project page on the internet: [www.pacitaproject.eu/](http://www.pacitaproject.eu/)

**Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation pursuing the tasks of a state university of Baden-Württemberg and of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. The KIT mission combines the three strategic lines of activity of research, higher education, and innovation. With about 9,400 employees and 24,500 students, KIT is one of the big institutions of research and higher education in natural sciences and engineering in Europe.**

This press release is available on the internet at [www.kit.edu](http://www.kit.edu).