

Systemic Reflection of Innovation

Fourth Conference of the Network Technology Assessment at Berlin – Organizer Is the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS)



The NTA4 Conference at Berlin will focus on prospective technology assessment. (Photo: photocase)

Observing and analyzing trends in science and engineering, identifying potentials and risks of technologies, assessing social and ecological impacts, and deriving political actions or regulations, these are the tasks of technology assessment. From November 24 to 26, the Network Technology Assessment will meet at its fourth conference “Systemic Reflection of Innovation” in Berlin. This conference will be organized and executed by the KIT Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis.

The Network Technology Assessment founded in 2004 is an organization of scientists, experts, and practitioners working in the field of technology assessment (TA). Their fourth conference NTA4 at the Berlin conference center “Neue Mälzerei” will be aimed at “reflecting the prospective view on systems to be analyzed, e.g. energy infrastructures or mobility infrastructures, and at highlighting challenges and limitations in technology shaping, “ says Professor Michael

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Decker, spokesman of the network. Applications and practical examples will be presented and methodological and conceptual challenges discussed. An example are requirements on electric high-voltage grids resulting from new structures in the energy sector. "The plenary section will reveal the central role of systems analysis in industry. Scientists will present the ecoefficiency analysis applied by BASF in sustainability assessment," outlines Decker.

The conference with about 40 invited and submitted presentations and posters will be opened in the evening of November 24, 2010, 18.00 hrs, by a podium discussion of "Parliamentary Technology Assessment" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Office for Technology Assessment with the German Bundestag (TAB). Representatives of science and politics will be present. Among them will be the Deputy Head of TAB, Thomas Petermann, Wolf-Michael Catenhusen, former under-secretary of state at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Ulla Burchardt, SPD politician, member of parliament, and Chairwoman of the Research Commission of German Parliament, and Professor Wolfgang van den Daele, member of the German Ethic Council until 2007. The conference will be completed by a plenary section on Friday morning, in which Professor Frieder Meyer-Krahmer, former under-secretary of state at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), will talk about the implementation of systems analysis research in politics.

In focused sections, two relevant types of systemic reflection will be covered. The first section will focus on "Infrastructure Innovation – Transition Management," that is the management of the transition from old to new infrastructures. For example, it will be discussed whether established mobility patterns represent an obstacle to implementing electromobility as tomorrow's driving energy. The second section will deal with "Key Technologies – between Application and Innovation." Key technologies like materials science or nanotechnologies represent technologies "enabling" many applications. Only in a concrete field of application do they become an innovation, and this field only may serve as the context of the systems analysis. The section "Systems Analysis – Methodological Challenges for Technology Assessment" will complement the program.

Apart from scientists and practitioners, representatives of natural and engineering sciences as well as of social and cultural sciences are expected to come. In addition, discussion partners from politics, industry, and civil society, for example, from non-government organizations, such as the Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland

(Friends of the Earth Germany), the Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrradclub (General German Bicycle Club), or the Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche (Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Federal State), will take part.

The conference will be supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The main organizer, the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS), will organize the conference in cooperation with the Institute of Technology Assessment in Vienna (ITA), the Institute of Science and Technology Studies of the University of Bielefeld (IWT), the Center for Technology and Society of the Technical University of Berlin (ZTG), and the Swiss Center for Technology Assessment (TA-SWISS). About 20 ITAS scientists will take part with eight presentations, the institute will publish the proceedings.

Professor Michael Decker, Spokesman of the Network Technology Assessment, and Dr. Martin Knapp, organizer of the conference, will be available to answer questions of journalists on the second conference day on November 25, 2010 from 9.30 hrs to 11.00 hrs. The press meeting will take place at the Seminarraum 3 (5th floor) of the conference center.

Venue:

Tagungszentrum "Neue Mälzerei"
Friedenstr. 91
10249 Berlin, Friedrichshain
Tram M5, M6, M8 "Strausberger Platz"
U5, station "Strausberger Platz"

Further information on the NTA4 conferences and the Network Technology Assessment: <http://www.itas.fzk.de/v/nta4>.

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation and state institution of Baden-Württemberg, Germany. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.