ITA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Parliamentary Technology Assessment around the world compared & the case of ITA
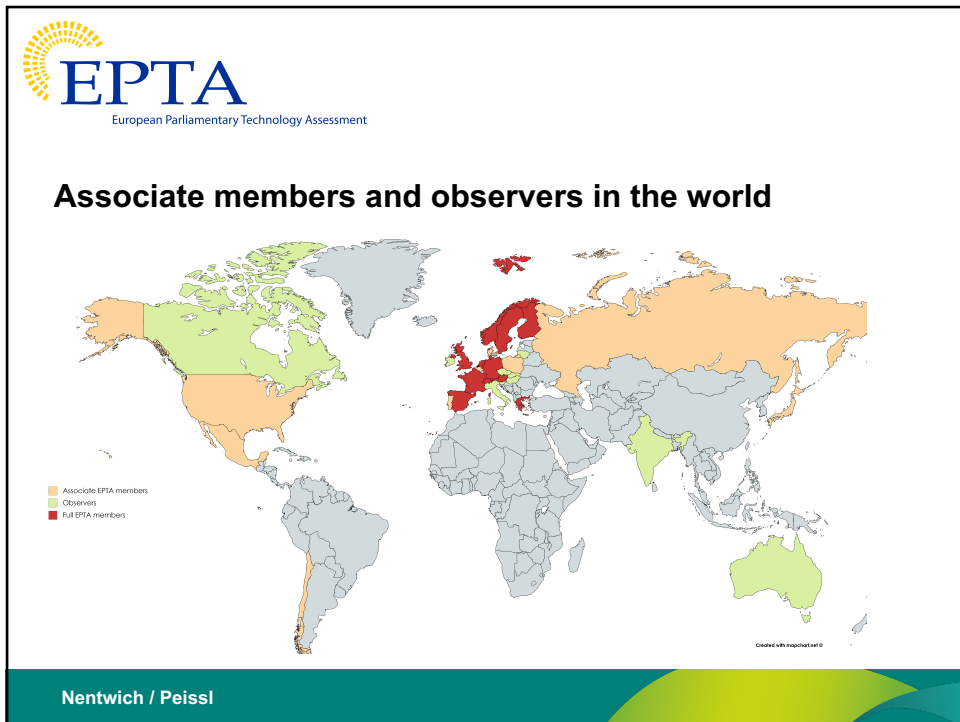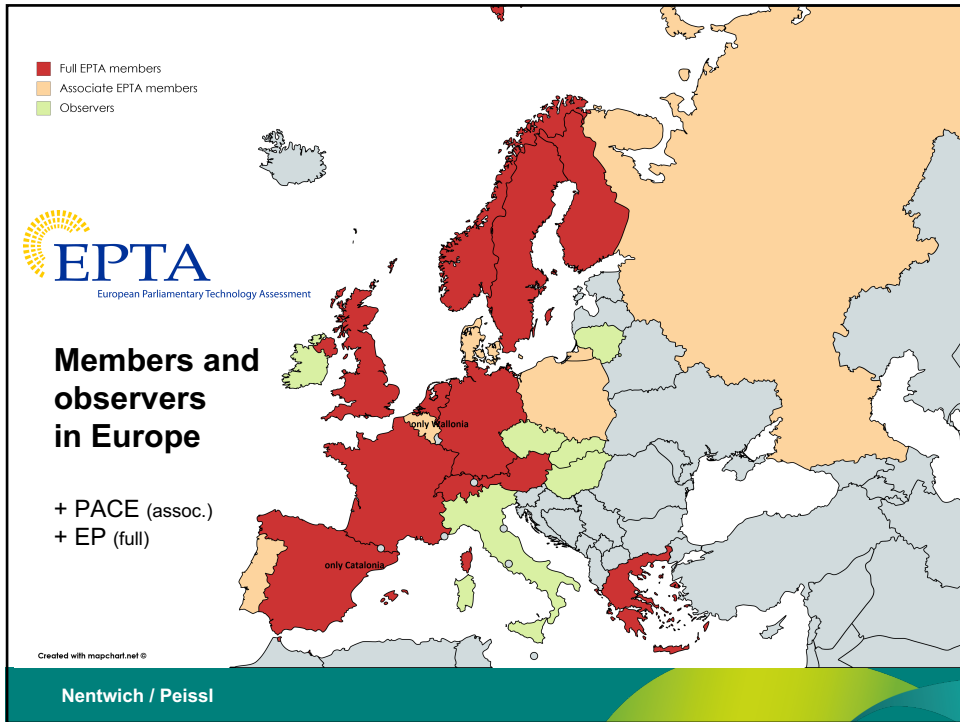
Parliamentary Seminar on

"Discussing a proposal for the creation of a Parliamentary Sub-committee for the Future"

Bratislava, 6th Dec 2017

ÖAW AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Director Dr. Michael Nentwich / Deputy director: Dr. Walter Peissl

---

ITA

EPTA European Parliamentary Technology Assessment

Parliamentary Technology Assessment (incl. Foresight)

- is a concept developed in the **1970s**, first PTA institution:
  Office of Technology Assessment of the US Congress (1972-1995)
- PTA spread to Europe in the **1980s**:
  France, UK, Germany, EU, Denmark, …
- From **2000s** onwards also beyond Europe:
  Japan, Mexico, Chile, US again, …
- Today all PTA institutions (one per country) are members of the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment network **(EPTA)**
- **Full members**: regularly working for their Parliaments
- **Associates**: either outside Europe or still developing into full members
  (22 members, of which 12 are full members)

Nentwich / Peissl

Full EPTA members
Associate EPTA members
Observers

Members and observers in Europe

+ PACE (assoc.)
+ EP (full)

only Wallonia

only Catalonia

Created with mapchart.net ©

Nentwich / Peissl

Associate members and observers in the world

Associate EPTA members
Observers
Full EPTA members

Created with mapchart.net ©

Nentwich / Peissl

These PTA institutions vary a lot

- They fit the political culture, institutional landscape, size of the country etc.
- They develop over time: PTA is dynamic
- A recent systematic comparison of the EPTA members showed variations in the following overall dimensions:
    - Forms of institutionalisation
    - Topics addressed
    - Working methods
    - Handling of TA results in parliament

Nentwich / Peissl

Forms of institutionalisation

- **Parliamentarians as addressees or rapporteurs**
- **Entity within parliament or outside**
- Responsibility within parliament
- Case-by-case funding/commissioning or framework contract
- Focus on parliament or open contracting structure
- Legal status

Nentwich / Peissl

ITA

Topics addressed

- Identifying topics
- Technology reference
- **Thematic time horizon**

ITA

Working methods

- ‚TA secretariat' or ‚in-house TA'
- **Methods applied**
- Staffing and budget

ITA

Handling of TA results in parliament

- Written communication
- Oral presentation and discussion

Nentwich / Peissl

ITA

Typical PTA institutional models

- Committee model
- Scientific unit inside Parliament model
- External contractor model

Nentwich / Peissl

The „Committee for the Future" type

- Two current examples: Finland and Chile
- Thematically not restricted to socio-technical issues, but much wider "future in general"
- Focus on foresight rather than on technology assessment
- …

The Institute of Technology Assessment (ITA)

- founded in 1988
- approx. 25 staff
- interdisciplinary team: both humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and engineering
- part of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
- financed by Academy budget and by third parties on a project basis (European Union, research funds, government, parliament, …) oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/

ITA ÖAW

Clients of ITA

- Executive/Administration
  - Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development
  - Federal Ministries of Innovation and Technology, Research, Environment, Health, …
  - EU Commission (in particular via FP)
- **Legislative**
  - **Austrian Parliament**
  - **European Parliament (STOA Panel)**
- Social partners
  - Federal Chamber of Labour
  - Economic and Social Council
- Research funds (national/International)
- OECD and other international organisations
- Internal funds for basic research

Nentwich / Peissl

ITA ÖAW

Some of ITA's current topics

- Ageing and Technology
- Big data
- Cyberscience
- E-democracy
- Engineering Education
- Green Biotechnology
- Industry 4.0
- Information Society
- Nanotechnology
- Networked Environments
- Participatory Methods
- Privacy

- Safety and Security
- Smart Grids, Smart Meters
- Surveillance
- Sustainable Cities
- Synthetic Biology
- Technology and Sustainability
- Technology Controversies
- Technology Foresight
- Politics of Information Technologies
- Transdisciplinarity
- Web 2.0

Nentwich / Peissl

ITA

ITA in comparison to other TA units

- academic focus
- large independent mother institution
- so far indirect links to politics
- large share of third-party financing
- middle-sized
- both expert-oriented and participatory
- in-house research (not a "TA secretariat")
- both national and international orientation

ITA

The ITA and the Austrian Parliament

- International tender → Framework contract 2017-2020
- Together with a partner (AIT Austrian Institute of Technology)
- Regular **monitoring reports** (twice per year) on socio-technical developments to be discussed in Parliament
    - Current report presents 30 topics, from blockchains to functional food
- Short **TA studies** (1-3 per year) to deepen the preliminary research in the monitoring reports
- Possibly and occasionally **expert workshops** on specific topics on the parliamentary agenda

ITA

ÖAW

Thank you for your attention!

Contact:
PD Dr. Michael Nentwich / Dr. Walter Peissl
A-1030 Vienna, Apostelgasse 23
Tel: +43 (1) 51581 6582
Fax: +43 (1) 51581 6570
Email: mnent@oeaw.ac.at / wpeissl@oeaw.ac.at
WWW: www.oeaw.ac.at/ita