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EuroScience
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The challenge of using foresight for policymaking at EU level

Session: Foresight as a tool for responsible policy development

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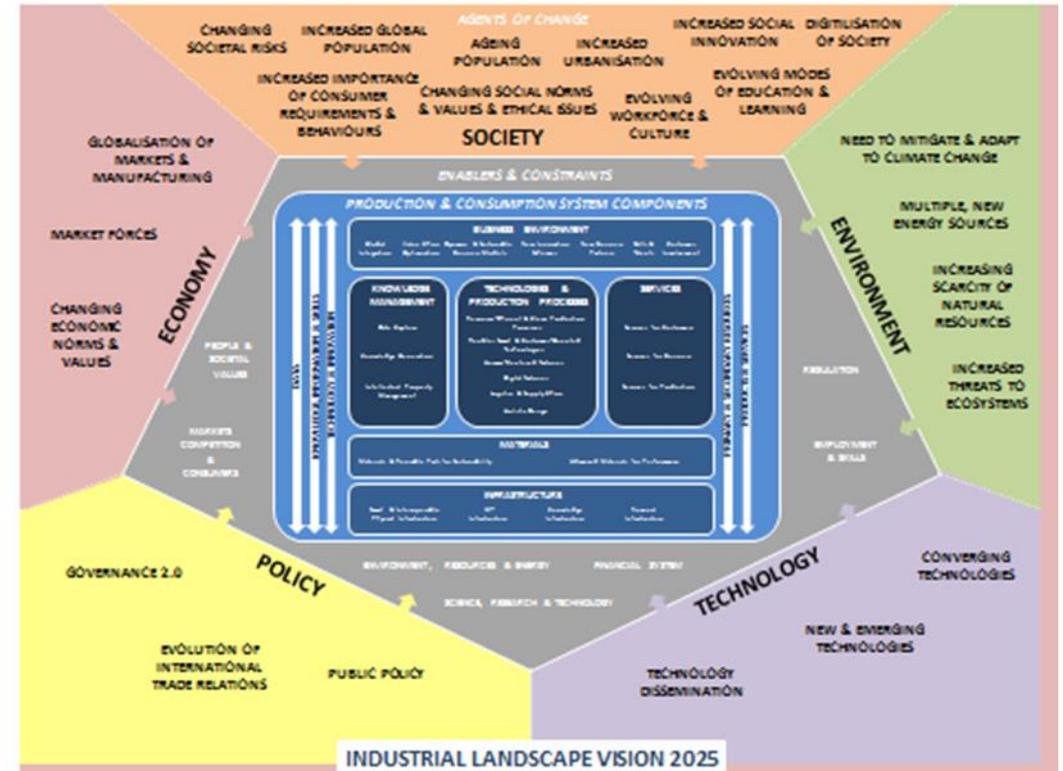
The European Commission Joint Research Centre has a long tradition of foresight study but the challenge is to make foresight more operational to support European policies

- **SYNCHRONISATION:** align the timing of foresight with the European policy-making cycle
- **ENGAGEMENT:** ensure active participation of the right stakeholders
- **POLICY RELEVANCE:** co-design projects with policy DGs so to deliver robust insights to effectively support their specific policy initiatives
- **ACROSS POLICIES:** system thinking often requires working with more than one Commission service on a given project
- **DESIGN:** customise and combine methods and create new fit-for-purpose tools
- **ANTICIPATORY CULTURE:** bring long-term non-linear thinking into the mindset of policy makers

A Foresight approach to support industrial policy at European level

- Build on previously developed industrial landscape vision (ILV) from a foresight study
- Test a methodology that is applicable to different manufacturing sectors and that can be transferred
- Work with industry sectors and, in particular, SMEs (textile and clothing, non-ferrous metals)
- Identify all relevant issues (skills, technologies, resources, trade...)
- Enrich the policy agenda

The project is carried out together with the Directorate-General responsible for Industrial Policy (DG GROW)



New horizons and next steps

- Bridge quantitative and qualitative approaches
- Engage beyond the network of usual experts towards more participatory foresight
- Engage with Member States foresight capacities on EU policy related topics
- Better understand the changing paradigms that policymaking is facing in the 21st century, what are the consequences and requirements for foresight and other disciplines that support policymaking.
 - Revisit the relation with the foresight community and bridge with other communities that aim at support policymaking (design for policy and behavioural insights) for the 2017 FTA conference series
- Develop evaluation methods focusing on impact

Thank you!

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[Please visit our EU Policy Lab blog: blogs.ec.europa.eu/eupolicylab/](https://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eupolicylab/)



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Foresight and anticipation: bringing scientific advice and societal aspirations to policy

“Scientific Foresight at the European Parliament”

Lieve Van Woensel

Scientific Foresight Service

Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA)

European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)

Manchester 2016

Scientific Foresight at the European Parliament

- **Technology Assessment** (*Oxford Dictionary*)
The study and assessment of the effects on society of new technology
- **Foresight** (*Oxford Dictionary*)
The ability to predict what will happen or be needed in the future
- **Strategic foresight** (*World Economic Forum*)
Strategic Foresight is the contemplation of alternative futures for better strategic decision-making in the present
- **Scientific Foresight** (*European Parliament*)
The ability to anticipate possible impacts of techno-scientific developments in the future, using available legal instruments or developing new legal initiatives

Scientific Foresight: steps

1. Technical horizon scan

- By technical/scientific experts

2. Visioning of possible impacts of techno-scientific developments (Workshop)

- By techno-scientific experts – Social scientists – Stakeholders – MEPs or their staff, EP staff
- Brainstorming by looking together through different ‘lenses’, analysing possible future impacts

3. Scenario building

- By foresighters (futures scientists / social scientists)
- Based upon the technical horizon scanning and the identified impacts, a set of *alternative* explorative scenarios are elaborated

4. Scenario analysis to identify future concerns and opportunities (Workshop)

- By techno-scientific experts – Social scientists – Stakeholders, MEPs or their staff, EP staff
- Scenarios explored & elaborated – areas of concerns/opportunities discussed
- Possible future concerns & possible related policy areas are discussed and listed

5. Legal backcasting

- Connecting the future with the present: building on previous steps, translating areas of concerns/opportunities in list of available legal instruments
- Reflection where no legal instrument is available

Aimed impact of Scientific Foresight at the European Parliament

1. Enhanced preparedness for possible future issues

- hopes and fears
- concerns and opportunities

2. Give Members a sense of reassurance about future uncertainties or concerns, by

- Identifying possible future scenarios, their concerns & opportunities
- Identifying available legal instruments to work towards desirable futures

3. Support of Members of the European Parliament in anticipating possible long term futures, including legal areas for further exploration:

- Towards desirable futures
- Avoiding non-desirable future



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Foresight for Policy-Making Promising experiences from Europe

Session name: Foresight as a tool for responsible policy development

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Why foresight in the first place?

1. Dealing with the unexpected & uncertainty
2. Anticipating risks and opportunities
3. Enhancing preparedness of organisations (and people!) for the seemingly unlikely

Two inter-connected policy-related functions of foresight:

- Instrumental: Foresight as a means to support government policy-making
- Governance: Facilitating innovation and change in society

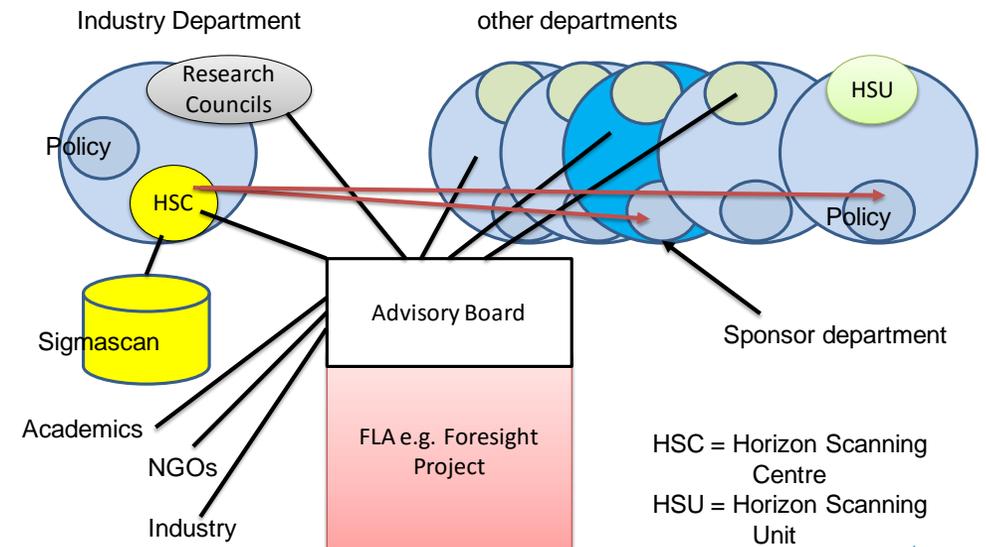
What is needed to make both functions work?

1. Relevance: Tying foresight to decision-making
2. Visibility: High-level support
3. Participation: Process design, networking and alignment of actors
4. Foresight culture: Organisational embedding and absorptive capacity

Relevance: tying foresight to decision-making

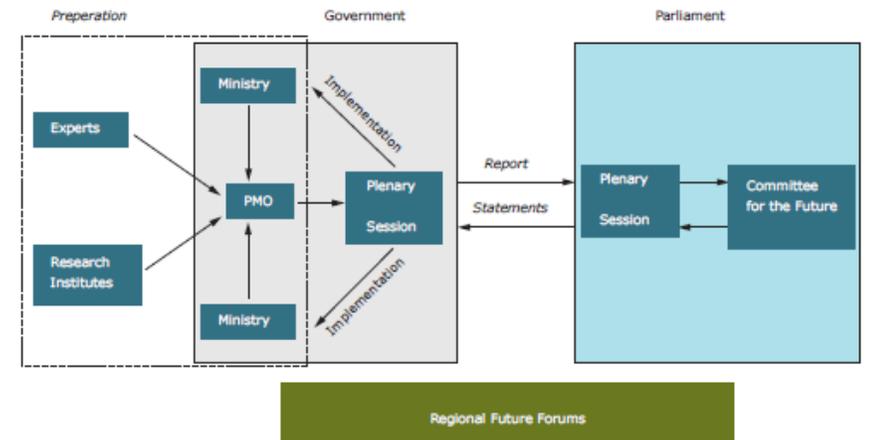
UK Horizon Scanning

- Continuous scanning activities by HS centre
- Network of HS units in departments
- Specific projects need support (“sponsoring”) by (deputy) minister to ensure relevance to policy making



Visibility: high-level support

- Finland Governmental Foresight Reports
 - Prime Minister's office reporting to the Finnish Parliament since 1992
 - Focus on topics of long-term relevance for Finland (climate and energy policy, sustainability and industrial development, etc.)
 - Debated in government and parliament, but also triggering wider debates in economy and society
 - Bringing foresight expertise from Finland together
 - Continued relevance also beyond election cycles



Participation: Process design, networking, and alignment of actors

Strategic processes

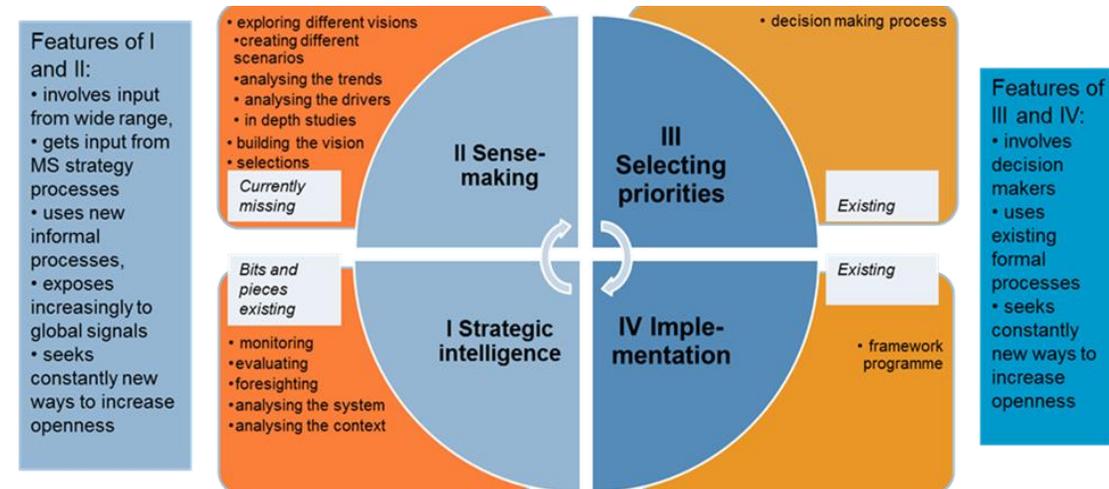
- Finnish TEKES process: involving external organisations in internal strategy processes
- German Futur process: extensive stakeholder participation
- Dutch Nature Outlook: visionary scenarios of how nature is perceived

Local processes

- Cities (e.g. FIT4SET Villach – AT): Local energy strategies involving citizens and local actors – from Vision 2050 to implementation

Foresight culture: Organisational embedding and absorptive capacity

- Enhanced willingness and capacity to act on the basis of foresight in the European Commission / DG RTD
 - Making foresight part of decision-making
 - Building a cross-DG network of foresight correspondents
 - Competence-building initiatives (e.g. trainings, inter-institutional exchange)



Conclusions

- Need to think beyond “instrumental” use of foresight
 - Foresight has broader function in society, in particular in complex times:
 - Informed anticipation
 - Preparedness for the unlikely
 - Experimentation with new options
- Foresight as democratic practice
 - Stakeholder and citizen participation as a means to nurture democratic culture
- Foresight for responsible science
 - Need to reposition science in society: FS as an expression of that repositioning, to enhance dialogue between science and society