

Technology assessment activities and science communication in Czechia
"#FactoryWisskomm: The Convention '22" conference in Berlin

Output available on Youtube [HERE](#)

The guiding questions for the video statement are:

1. We have identified current challenges and opportunities regarding science communication and TA activities in the Czech Republic.

As for the Challenges:

Ch1:

Generally, Czech politicians (policy makers) have got convinced that science plays a crucial role in addressing global challenges, however, they understand it in terms of technological determinism (meaning that science is a tool to solve them), but they still often neglect that science has also been part of the challenge and thus that it shall communicate and discuss more and earlier with stakeholders and wider public the possible scientific solutions to global societal challenges.

Ch2:

Scientists are also still not very much in favor of the idea that all stakeholders as well as public shall be involved in the "scientific" solutions.

Ch3:

TA activities still remain problem oriented – implemented as a project or as a separate study instead of having an institutionalized ongoing strategic process within technology implementation / diffusion.

As for the Opportunities:

O1:

Also in the Czech Republic, science and its communication becomes a more and more important part of policy strategies and solutions related to global / European as well as the national societal, economic and environmental challenges (such as climate change, circular economy, ageing population, sustainable development - SDGs...).

O2:

Czech politicians are slowly getting used to the fact that participatory TA processes and public engagement are becoming a significant part of the science based policy advice as the TA processes / activities, methods and approaches offer an effective tool to deal with complex issues related to implementation of new technologies and their impact on society. In hand with that the public administration keeps improving their demand for TA as well as science based policy advice in general.

O3:

Czech society becomes more open to share their ideas, opinions, needs and wishes – it is basically a generation change after the Velvet Revolution 1989. This makes the public engagement and TA easier and smoother in reaching its aims.

2. What has changed in providing policy advice and doing TA in the last 5 years?

Nationally:

- TA activities and outputs are more and more implemented in a concrete decision-making process during the last decade: study on AI and its impact on labor market; business strategies changed on the basis of recommendations from a national TA project on food waste reduction

in catering; Telemedicine more used as a publicly supported tool for solving the ageing society problem; societal wishes and needs formulated during a European public debate reflected in the Horizon 2020 program supporting international cooperation in research and innovation...

- Generally, in our country: local level – increased public debate (public deliberation) on respective topics of local (public) interest, including the implementation of new technologies; national level: more evidence – based studies supporting responsible policy solutions and more participatory events and inputs from stakeholders and wider public. Covid-19 pandemic has also made the online and hybrid formats of these events more commonly used.
- Inter-sectoral cooperation has improved - Academicians, policy makers, NGOs, media and businesses are more cooperating on solving policy issues including ethical dilemmas and technological change issues such as for example more effective online tools (which the C-19 pandemic speeded up) vs. cyber security and data protection etc.

Institutionally:

- TC CAS has implemented a national mid-term project called STRATIN+ “Strategic Intelligence for research and Innovation Policy” where one of the modules is focused on “Science, technology and society” = Technology Assessment approaches and RRI to support evidence-based and responsible decision-making of the state administration (MEYS, MI 2021-24).
- TC CAS submitted a national project proposal “NCC TeS” (Technology Agency CR Programme Centers of Competence) – this project aims at TA institutionalization in the CR and a systematic use of TA studies – inputs to knowledge-based debate on emerging technologies. It plans to use multidisciplinary approaches and emphasizes complexity in the assessment of interaction among technology and society. The result of the call shall be known in November 2022.

3. When it comes to the future of science communication for policy and political decision makers:

- A new National RIS3 Strategy and National RDI Priorities are just being formulated, reacting on missions. The process plans to include TA and foresight processes and methods to deal with different stakeholders’ positions.
- Science communication has an important role in sharing the scientific knowledge and discuss the societal discourses, post-pandemic and economic crisis, energy crisis etc.
- Science communication and TA activities (studying impact of technologies on society) can help to create the trust and fill the gap between research and business as well as the lack of systematic, interdisciplinary overviews of research areas and practical orientation in research.
- Future means a more intense use of social media in STI as well as in policy making – including the challenge of loss in shortcuts.