

S&T Foresight in Central and Eastern Europe

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Outline

Introduction: why Foresight

Foresight in CEE: diversity

**Needs and opportunities for Foresight in
CEE**

Conclusions and prospects

Appendix: International co-operation

Policy Challenges (all countries)

Complex, inter-related challenges (quality of life, HR, social gaps, globalisation, environment, etc.)

⇒ new approaches, methods

Change attitudes and norms (at all levels)

Develop new skills

Speed of technological changes vs. ability to devise appropriate policies

Cut budget deficits

Improve accountability

Ease social concerns about new technologies

Facilitate co-operation, networking

Policy Challenges (emerging economies)

General pressures: even stronger

Fragile international competitiveness

Poor quality of life

Brain drain → circulation

Short ↔ long-term issues

constant tensions

global crisis (2008)

Raise the profile of STI
issues in politics and
devising economic
policies



Foresight in CEE

Practically all CEE countries have some foresight experience

Diversity

- foresight, key technologies, other prospective techniques**
- methods (Delphi, futures, ...)**
- frequency/ repetition**
- geographic scope: national, regional**
- sponsors: EC, national and regional gov'ts**

Size as a challenge

Needs and Opportunities for Foresight in CEE

1) 'General' needs for, and relevance of, foresight

2) Transition

fundamental political, economic and social changes

Major changes in the environment

economic, political, technological, environmental, etc.

1 & 2 \Rightarrow even stronger needs for strategic thinking in CEE **BUT ...**

Needs and Opportunities for F in CEE (2)

- 3) Discredited long-term thinking (failure of central planning)**
- 4) Policy-makers do not rely on modern decision-preparatory tools (do not know or reject them?)**
- 5) Most policy-makers do not understand the role of RTDI in socio-economic development**
 - Science-push model of innovation**
 - spending on R&D when “we can afford” and/ or for boosting prestige**
 - isolated ST and I policies [if the latter exist at all...]**
 - lack of co-ordination of major policies (as elements of a broad socio-economic development strategy)**

Needs and Opportunities for F in CEE (3)

3 & 4 & 5 ⇒

Slim chances for [serious] foresight programmes:

- **serious consideration/ implementation of policy recommendations**
- **new decision-making culture**
 - new way of thinking**
 - communication, co-operation, and consensus**
 - commitments to take joint/ orchestrated action, based on a shared vision**

Needs and Opportunities for F in CEE (4)

Exceptions are due to

- ‘enlightened’ policy-makers (working in isolation in their own organisation/ the gov’t)
- ‘fashion’ [me too] or ‘demonstration’ effects: other countries are conducting foresight ⇒ we cannot be seen as ‘laggards’
- external pressure and/ or funding opportunities
the early 2000s
smart specialisation strategies (EU SF 2014-2020)

Needs and Opportunities for F in CEE (5)

‘History does matter’

cf. evolutionary economics of innovation

CEE countries had been dominated by external powers for centuries – some did not exist for decades/ centuries

Authoritarian systems for decades in the 20th century

Needs and Opportunities for F in CEE (6)

Legacy/ repercussions:

- **Vertical, hierarchical links prevailed for long**
- **No opportunity for gaining experience in**
 - **horizontal co-ordination**
 - **communication, dialogues among equal partners**
 - **networking and co-operation**
 - **building trust**
 - **reaching consensus**
- **Breaching the rules := heroic, patriotic behaviour**
tacit opposition against the 'evil' state/ external power

Conclusions and Prospects

Complexities of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development & the role of *STI policies* in tackling them

Foresight processes can assist decision-makers facing these tasks
STI policies and *beyond*

⇒ **F is a policy preparatory tool
not a scientific project!**

Conclusions and Prospects (2)

Legacy of the CEE countries ⇒ Prospects of foresight

Mind-set, skills, experience: decision-makers vs. organisers, methodological experts of foresight programmes

⇒ ‘Tailored’ capacity building efforts

Responsibilities of decision-makers vs. participants of foresight programmes

Conclusions and Prospects (3)

Cost of foresight; results of other countries' F programmes \Rightarrow just "borrow" those results

BUT F is relevant in small(er), less developed countries, at the semi-periphery, too:

- SWOT, relevant strategies
- process benefits
- NIS

Programme design is crucial

relevant objectives (developing new technologies and/or diffusing and exploiting knowledge), themes/topics, methods and questions, participants, communication strategy

Conclusions and Prospects (4)

International co-operation in F can help in

- changing attitudes
- creating synergies and economies of scale
- offering *additional* financial and intellectual resources

Request from the EC (S3 processes)

2014-2020 is too short a time horizon for most themes/ topics ⇒ this strategy setting process should be embedded in a foresight programme with a longer time horizon (and perhaps a broader approach)

Thanks!

Questions, comments?

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Annex:
International Co-operation for/ in
Foresight Programmes

Questions

‘Hot potato’: ex/ inclusion of partners, sensitivity, etc.

Issues (selection of topics)

Participation

selection of participants (countries, communities)

practical difficulties (costs, logistics, language, etc.)

different backgrounds (norms, attitudes, ways of thinking)

Methodological difficulties → experiments

Possibilities

joint background studies (on general STEPI trends)

scenarios on European/ global developments

partially ‘aligned’ (national) scenarios (structure, variables)

Possibilities

Informal or semi-formal methodological co-operation

**transfer of methodological experience/ expertise
at face-to-face meetings, discussions, seminars
organised for the clients, participants**

Formalised methodological co-operation:

**following the same set of methods, e.g. in the
frame of a project, but not aligning the content/
substance of the programme**

Possibilities (2)

Jointly designed, simultaneously run national/ regional programmes

- **same/ similar topics/ themes and methods;**
- **nationally/ regionally organised panels, WGs, etc.**
- **comparative analysis of results at the end of the programme (nationally and/or by a small, international group of experts)**

Truly co-operative, jointly designed, organised and financed multi-country [region] programmes

- **a single set of topics/ themes and methods**
- **participants from a number of countries working closely together, e.g. as members of the same panel;**
- **producing and analysing the (preliminary) results together, during the programme**