



EDITORIAL by Klaus Jacob, FUB and Jacques Jansen, ALTEERRA. Impact Assessment remains high on the agenda of the European Commission as several recent publications underlined: The report of the European Court of Auditors with its [evaluation of the IA practice](#), the [Impact Assessment Board Report for 2010](#) or the publications of the [roadmaps](#). A LIAISE survey among ca. 130 experts from 17 countries revealed a high interest in the topic also in the member states. The officials and experts were interviewed on their views and experiences with IA in their country. The [study reveals](#) that the use of methods and models to support IA is not fully exploited and that the tool use is highly dependent on the context in which they are applied. The Network of Excellence LIAISE aims to live up to the expectations on IA. During the annual meeting hosted by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei in Milan on 26-28 January 2011, the achievements of the first year of activities were reviewed. The members of the network renewed their commitment to its joint strategic goals: 1) to develop a shared toolbox, 2) to develop a shared research agenda and 3) to ensure the durability of activities beyond the funding of the network. All the activities of the network contribute to these goals by improving the understanding of the tools, by testing them and by increasing their use. The goal of an improved and adequate use of the tools cannot be achieved in laboratories only. An intensive science-policy dialogue is necessary. On February 1st LIAISE presented its results after the first year of the project at a Policy Board meeting in Brussels to 9 representatives from the EC, EU Member States and the OECD. This second meeting in the science-policy interface on IA tools showed a lively interaction between the communities of IA practitioners and IA researchers around the key question: how to enhance the use of scientific knowledge and tools in Impact Assessments in policies aiming at the implementation of the renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The Policy Board meeting was followed by a round table discussion attended by an additional number of EC officials and other stakeholders interested in IA. The ca. 40 participants discussed the assessment of social aspects, the participation of stakeholders in IA, the assessment of impacts at the national and subnational level and the need for an improved interaction of science and policy on the mid- and long-term planning of policies and scientific capacities.

■ ■ ■ LIAISE News

● **LIAISE Annual Meeting**

LIAISE had its second Annual Meeting from 26 to 28 January, 2011 in Milan, Italy. About 60 LIAISE colleagues exchanged information and discussed on topics related to the LIAISE strategic goals, i.e. the Shared IA Toolbox and Research Agenda and the transformation of the Network of Excellence into a durable Centre of Excellence. The presentations and discussions made very clear that we covered a lot of ground in the 1st year. Many activities have been completed and new ones started. Good progress has been made and LIAISE is now well established. The level of integration, the willingness and commitment of the LIAISE partners to combine resources and the many links with the IA practitioners on European and Member State level is impressive.

● **Meeting of the LIAISE Policy Board**

The LIAISE Policy Board met in Brussels on 1 February, 2011 to discuss the progress and achievements of LIAISE and to provide recommendations for the next steps. The board is composed of experienced officers and experts in Impact Assessment from European institutions, the OECD, member states and think tanks. It is chaired by Jérôme Vignon, former director in DG EMPL of the European Commission. The members of the board discussed possible extensions of the LIAISE competences to cover social aspects. The members also recommended to extend the services of LIAISE also to IA of the member states and to design test cases and the tool box accordingly. The post-funding activities of LIAISE should be closely linked to the activities and priorities of DG RTD and the JRC.

● **LIAISE Round Table Discussion**

On 1 February, 2011 the LIAISE team invited in Brussels for a first public round table discussion on the future of Impact Assessment in Europe. Ca. 40 participants from different European institutions and stakeholders took part in the discussion. The topics were, inter alia, the participation of stakeholders in IA, the involvement of Member States and their practices in IA and the assessment of social impacts. A general conclusion was that – since the contextual conditions are crucial for the use of scientific IA methods and tools – the use of IA in evidence-based policy-making can greatly benefit from a more direct and a more institutionalised interaction between IA researchers and IA practitioners.

● **Library of IA case studies**

This library, developed jointly by the LIAISE Network of Excellence and the ALREG project contains summaries of many case studies of IA. An IA case study is 'a report on a specific process of IA with a narrative - analytical structure', organised by several variables such as tools used, role of consultation and timing in the policy process. Material for the case studies is drawn from a variety of 'sources', including several FP funded projects. They cover IAs undertaken in the European Commission and different EU and non EU states.

● **LIAISE Innovation Report No. 2, 'Impact Assessment Practice in Europe'**

The second issue of the LIAISE Innovation Report on 'Impact Assessment Practice in Europe' is out at the beginning of the second year of the LIAISE project. It includes an article by Camilla Adelle (UEA) on 'User Needs in Impact Assessment' that summarizes the most comprehensive survey yet conducted of tool use and user needs in 17 European countries, which was done as part of the LIAISE project. In addition to the research article, the Innovation Report briefly reviews a number of recent and interesting publications on IA.

● **UK Foresight Study on Global Environmental Migration**

Andrew Jordan is serving as a special adviser on appraisal/coordination issues to the UK Foresight study on global environmental migration. The study will report to the UK Prime Minister in the Spring of 2011.

● **Sustainability Check Luxembourg**

The Luxembourg Ministry for Sustainability in cooperation with Movement Ecologique (one of the main environmental NGOs in Luxembourg) has commissioned the FFU to conduct an exemplary sustainability check on a current policy, and to develop guidelines for future sustainability checks to be carried out.

● **New working group on Sustainability Impact Assessment in the German EIA Association**

The German Association for Environmental Impact Assessment – founded in 1987 – considers environmental precaution as its main target. In this setting, Aranka Podhora (ZALF) and Johanna Ferretti (FUB) initiated a new working group "Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA)". Germany is still in the beginning with its SIA: Two years ago, Germany extended its legal / regulatory impact assessment by an obligatory SIA component.

■ ■ ■ Publications from the LIAISE network

● **Special issue: Methods and tools for integrated assessment of sustainability of agricultural systems and land use**

Special Issue of Agricultural Systems: Methods and tools for integrated assessment of sustainability of agricultural systems and land use. Agricultural Systems 2011, 104: 105-216. Guest Editors: Irina Bezelepina, Pytrik Reidsma, Stefan Sieber and Katharina Helming

● **Special Issue: Model-based systems to support impact assessment—Methods, tools and applications**

This Special Issue consists of eight papers dealing with approaches developed in these large integrated projects and several smaller projects, all related to ex ante impact assessment of (socio)-economic and environmental research questions in the context of current European and international policy challenges in agriculture. These papers reflect the current state of European research related to innovative initiatives to develop model-based approaches for sustainability impact assessment

- **Special Issue: Impact assessment of agri-food policies in Europe: Methods, tools and applications**

This special issue gives an overview of the current state of the art regarding innovative tools and methods in the field of IA. It is built around a series of papers dealing with approaches related to ex ante and ex post impact assessment of specific (socio)-economic and environmental research questions. The present contributions reflect current research trends in different fields such as (sectoral) macroeconomic accounting, intra- and inter-sectoral trade-off analysis and regional analysis from farm- to region- and meso- to macro-scale. All presented papers are related to research performed at the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), either with regard to models regularly used for in-house research or through involvement of IPTS staff in research consortia.



Events

- **European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools Conference**

The 2011 ECLAS (European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools) Conference (Sheffield, 7–10 September, 2011) The conference will focus on two central and historical tenets of landscape architecture: Aesthetics and Ethics. By bringing these twinned but much-disputed aspects of the discipline together, at an event that will be characterised not only by scholarly dissemination, but also by action and debate, it is hoped to ensure fresh perspectives on landscape architectural theory, methods, and pedagogy.

- **19th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition**

19th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition, 6-10 June, 2011, Berlin The 19th EU BC&E offers a unique platform to present innovative results and ideas to Biomass specialists and decision makers from all continents. The subjects for which the organisers are inviting you to submit your contributions are based on the experiences of our previous successful global European Biomass Conferences. Organised by WIP-Renewable Energies ETA-Florence Renewable Energies, DG Joint Research Centre of the European Commission Website: www.conference-biomass.com

- **14th Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis "Governing Global Challenges: Climate Change, Trade, Finance and Development"**

14th Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis "Governing Global Challenges: Climate Change, Trade, Finance and Development" (Venice, 16 to 18 July, 2011) The goal of the Conference is to promote the exchange of ideas among economists conducting quantitative analysis of global economic issues. Particular emphasis will be placed on applied general equilibrium methods, data, and application. Related theoretical and applied work is also welcome. Organizers are the Centre for Global Trade Analysis of Purdue University, the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) and the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, in cooperation with the International Center for Climate Governance (ICCG), the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (CMCC), Climate Policy Initiative - Venice (CPI) and the Center for Thematic Environmental Networks (TEN Center). Website: <http://www.gtap.agecon.purdue.edu/events/conferences/2011/>

- **4th Forum on Agriculture: 'Refocusing security on food and nature – CAP renewal for better farming'**

4th Forum on Agriculture: 'Refocusing security on food and nature – CAP renewal for better farming' (15 March, 2011, Brussels) At this conference the problems facing our agricultural sector to deliver food and environmental security in Europe and beyond will be discussed. During the debates, the impending CAP reform will come under the spotlight at this crucial time ahead of the legislative proposal from the Commission. Organised by the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, European Landowner Organisation, Syngenta.

- **IAIA Congress 2011: Impact Assessment and Responsible Development**

Impact Assessment and Responsible Development for Infrastructure, Business and Industry (28 May – 4 June, 2011, Puebla, Mexico). IAIA11 will be only the second time that IAIA holds its annual meeting in Latin America. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in meetings of several formats in which theoretical and practical aspects of the various instruments of impact assessment (IA) will be addressed. The sessions will address IA applied to energy and oil sectors, water management and coastal zone management, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, mining, production and consumption, and health and pharmaceutical sectors. This Conference should contribute to a greater collective knowledge about how, using a responsible approach in planning, design, construction and operation of infrastructure projects and industries of all kinds, as well as in planning, structuring and operation of all types of businesses (including the financial sector), impact assessment can contribute to sustainable development of cities, regions, countries, and the whole world, aspiring to a better future. Website: <http://www.iaia.org/conferences/iaia11/default.aspx>



Policies

- **ECA Special Report no. 3/2010: Impact Assessments in the EU Institutions - Do They Support Decision-Making?**

The European Court of Auditors released a special report on Impact Assessment in the EU institutions and assessed whether the Commission's IA supported decision-making in the EU. The audit reviewed the periods from 2003 to 2008 and involved a comparison of the Commission's IA system with other systems elsewhere. It examined to which extent the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council consulted IAs when formulating policy proposals. Moreover, the report assessed, if the IAs appropriately supported the development of the Commission's initiatives and whether the content and presentation of the findings was beneficial for being taken into account for decision-making.

- **EC to launch resource efficiency drive**

EC to launch resource efficiency drive The European Commission has announced to publish its flagship initiative on resource efficiency by 26 January. It will be followed by a roadmap to describing the vision of a more resource-efficient economy in 2020 and 2050, it will propose new policy initiatives that enhance synergies between policies, in particular to stimulate greater innovation for short-term and long-term economic and environmental benefits. The study, conducted by Bio Intelligence Service, concludes that though considerable progress has been made, there are wide disparities across the EU. For example, Germany and the UK have reached absolute dematerialisation, though through deindustrialisation; in Spain, resource use is growing faster than GDP.

- **Sustainable Development Leads UN Secretary-General's 2011 Priorities**

Sustainable Development Leads UN Secretary-General's 2011 Priorities 14 January 2011: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon identified his priorities for 2011 during an address to the UN General Assembly on 14 January 2011. He highlighted action on inclusive and sustainable development as the first of eight priorities, and climate change mitigation and adaptation as the second priority.

- **High-Grid Energy Scenario for 2050**

High-Grid Energy Scenario for 2050 A report by Greenpeace based on research undertaken by Energynautics suggests that Europe will need to invest €581bn between 2030 and 2050 in order to achieve a 100% supply of electricity needs with renewable energy. See http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/roadmaps_2011_en.htm

- **UN debates green economy's links with SD goals**

UN debates green economy's links with SD goals The 'green economy' concept that emerged a few years ago must not replace the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development (SD), several government representatives said at a UN meeting this week. Participants noted that, although green economy is gaining growing recognition worldwide, there is still no consensus on a definition. Literature indicates that it can "equate to cluster of economic policies, under the sustainable development paradigm... but this assumption is far from settled", said the G77. See <http://www.unctad2012.org/>

- **Natura 2000 network is expanding**

Natura 2000 network is expanding The number of "Sites of Community Importance" has increased to a total of 739, expanding the network by nearly 27,000 km². This updating round adds a significant amount of marine areas to the Natura 2000 network. A total of 17 marine sites have been added, covering more than 17,500 km². The European Commission gave the go-ahead on 10 January, 2011. The press release is available at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/9&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

- **EEA Report on Consumption and the Environment**

EEA Report on Consumption and the Environment The European Environment Agency (EEA) released its fourth Environment State and Outlook report. Consumption and the environment is one thematic assessment therein. The assessment reveals that the consumption of goods and services in EEA member countries is a major driver of global resource use and associated environmental impacts. Food and drink, housing, mobility and tourism are responsible for a large part of the pressures and impacts caused by consumption in the EU.

- **Impact Assessment Board Report for 2010**

The Impact Assessment Board published a report on its work from 2010. It evaluates recent developments in the IA system, examines the quality of Impact Assessments and gives recommendations for further improvement. The IAB reviewed 66 IA reports and issued 83 opinions.



Links

- **[New Website on Sustainable Production and Consumption in the North American Region](#)**

The United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America (UNEP RONA) is pleased to announce the launch of a new webpage that focuses on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the North American Region. The new webpage (www.rona.unep.org/about_unep_rona/scp/index.html) highlights SCP success stories from North America and serves as a platform for information on SCP in the region. It showcases the work underway on SCP in the UNEP RONA office and in the North American region and provides links to work being undertaken both at the United Nations and by other stakeholders.

- **[New Website: A sustainability tour along the highlights of development towards sustainability](#)**

The Sustainable Society Foundation (SSF) has posted a sustainability tour on their website. This tour offers an introduction to the main aspects of development towards sustainability. See <http://www.ssfindex.com/>

- **[FP7 Project SPIRAL- Interfacing Biodiversity and Policy](#)**

A new FP7 project SPIRAL aims to enhance the connectivity between biodiversity research and policy making in order to improve the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.



Jobs & Funding



LIAISE - *Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise* has received funding under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) THEME 6 Environment (including Climate Change).
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