

WITH TSAST TEMPUS JEP TOWARD A EUROPEAN COOPERATION

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Some readers may request an introduction decoding the title. What TEMPUS is may be less problematic for scholars working for the higher education in Europe, TEMPUS is perhaps the main resource to restructure higher education at least in some of the late socialist, the 'eligible' countries. According to its Vademecum it is the acronym for the Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the European Communities, within a perspective of five years, beginning on 1 July 1990. It is founded to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It promotes the quality and supports the development of the higher education systems in countries of Central and Eastern Europe through encouraging their growing interaction. A JEP (Joint European Project) is an institutional cooperation of at least one university from a Central or Eastern European country and two from EC, aiming at cooperative education and training actions and on structural development of higher education.

TSAST is our acronym for a special TEMPUS JEP. It means Teaching Social Assessment of Science and Technology. It is a teaching project oriented towards undergraduate and graduate university levels (the first ten semesters), towards a level that is several times disadvantaged for post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral studies.

The network TSAST has two East-Central European universities, the Technical University of Budapest and the Prague Czech Technical University. From the 24 countries we had 10 cooperators from 6 countries for the first year and some more want to join us the next year.

The target group for teaching, the undergraduates and graduates, was especially emphasized by the Hungarian partner from the very beginning. The persuasion was that at least one of the objectives of STS studies should be that it raises sensitivity of a wide mass of engineering students (later of economic students, too) to the effects of technology and science devel-

opment on society. Giving education to a lot of students who are at the beginning of developing their professional invocation and specialization, a listening to integrative problems may awake or keep their interest in these problems in a very natural way.

This concentration to teaching on undergraduate and graduate level does not mean, of course, that postgraduate and doctoral specialist trainings are not held for important, just the reverse. But they cannot substitute basic education and awake sensibility in a wide mass of students. Some sort of integrative STS (Science - Technology and Society) study is under realisation. But the word assessment in the acronym should put emphasis on evaluation and on connection to technology policy in a wide sense and technology assessment (TA).

During the setting up period of the network a lot of universities from the West declared their intention to participate. Different universities offered various expertise, of course. Concerning the main topics, from a disciplinary point of view these are philosophy, sociology, economics, history of science and technology, policy science, the teaching project became promising.

But to reduce the cooperation to introduction of some sort of teaching would be not clever. Part time doctoral studies furthered by TEMPUS point to something more, already. The network gave a unique opportunity to begin to develop some joint research projects, too. Philosophy of science and technology, research on the cultural and social conditions of technology transfer, applying social constructivistic methods to history of technology or to recent technological debates are among the emerging topics where joint research projects have been developed or are to be developed soon. The planning of the teaching course needs a regular meeting of the network members to be able to discuss, among other things, the topics that should be included into the complex teaching process. Some overviews of the state of the art of research at some fields and presentations applying new perspectives on case studies were the discussion topic for the first joint meeting in Budapest. These overviews are subject of this issue of the Social Sciences and Humanities Series.

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