

Workshop

Cooperation and participation in technoscience in the Socialist and the Post-Socialist space

*(Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work
and Culture in Graz, Austria, May 4th and 5th 2009)*

Call for papers

Two turning points have occurred in the modern development of Central and South Eastern Europe: in 1989 the centrally planned system has collapsed, which gave way to the building of free-market economies and in 2004 eight countries became formal members of the European Union. But the events are not limited to Central and Eastern Europe; the ending of what has been called state socialism or the East-West divide is globally significant, as is the social and cultural transformation that ensued.

The workshop investigates the transformations that occurred in the techno-scientific sphere in socialist and post-socialist countries after 1989. On the one hand these developments opened up greater opportunities for international and technology transfer and to strengthen scientific cooperation. On the other hand political and social change within these countries are likely to have changed significantly the boundaries of the techno-scientific sphere and its relationships with broader societal systems, both with regards to the issues of science communication and stakeholders participation to ST decision-making.

One aim of the workshop is to evaluate the transformations which occurred so far. This includes the identification of strengths, weaknesses and new challenges. For Europe, also the model character of the Western European science and technology systems for the reforms in Central and South Eastern European countries can be investigated critically.

A second aspect the workshop attempts to investigate are different patterns of cooperation and participation within techno-scientific areas. Referring to the distinction between emerging technologies (e.g. nano, bio, ICT) and mature technology fields, it can be assumed that the changes in mature technology fields are less extensive than it is the case in emerging technology fields.

A third aspect that can be addressed are the changing roles of firms, scientific institutions and governments. The systems model suggests that the close coordination and interaction of these actors in innovation networks is crucial for successful innovation processes. This includes: cooperations among firms and with research institutes; cooperations within and among industrial sectors; and cooperations on the regional, national and transnational level, including European institutions. So far the development of an integrated, multilevel system of innovation seems to be a major deficit that the workshop intends to examine in more detail; the workshop also aims at developing ideas how to overcome these difficulties.

Within this broad framework contributions are welcome on the following topics:

- whether and how both external (international) and internal integration (domestic) of science and technology has developed in socialist and post-socialist countries after 1989. Concerning internal integration decentralization, democratization and cooperation are seen as key issues. Concerning external integration the focus is on international technology transfer and research collaboration (e.g. the participation in the development of a European Research and Innovation Arena).
- whether and how firms have become key actors in R&D in the course of the transformation towards market economy systems. To what extent have firms developed their research and innovation capabilities and what measures of internal restructuring and external cooperation have they taken?
- whether and how the new political regimes opened spaces for public engagement in techno-scientific issues and whether governments have developed a coherent science and technology policy. What are the areas, topics and measures governments have chosen to further develop the competitiveness of their country? Has internal and external integration become a major focus of this policy? Is the focus of innovation policy shifting from the national towards the regional and trans-national level? What spaces have social movements gained to influence S&T policy?

Empirical investigations adopting network analysis, multidisciplinary and comparative, historical, or longitudinal approaches are welcome.

The organisers especially encourage PhD students and young post docs to contribute to the workshop.

Grants are available to cover the travel and accommodation costs for contributing participants.

Submission Details: Abstracts should be approximately 700-1000 words in length and be submitted by **March 23rd, 2009** electronically at workshop-may-2009@ifz.tugraz.at. Authors should indicate their identification (name, position, affiliation, postal and email addresses), paper title, abstract text, and (for co-authored papers) contact information of the corresponding author. Acceptance/rejection will be notified by **March 31st, 2009**. A long abstract of about 1500-2000 words is to be submitted for circulation among the workshop participants by **April 30th, 2009**.

Further information about the workshop and the grants can be requested at workshop-may-2009@ifz.tugraz.at.

The workshop is promoted by:

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