

Conference Foresight at the Heart of the Regional Action of the Elected Officials Deauville, 12 and 12 of June 2009

Report of the Forum “Foresight and Development Sectors” with the contributions of Philippe Durance, CNAM, France, Karheinz Steinmüller, Z-Punkt, Germany, Ibon Zugasti, Prospektiker, Spain, facilitated by Ute Hélène von Reibnitz, SCENARIOS + VISION, France

The forum has been placed under the heading of “Foresight and Development Sectors” with regional foresight experiences from the province of Gipuzkoa, Spain, from the Centre, France and from a Forest Project in Germany.

The Q&A session with the speakers was organized around the questions:

- What was unique in your exercise?
- What are the visible changes after the exercise?
- What would you change in a future foresight process?
- What are your recommendations for other regions who want to run a foresight exercise?

All speakers confirmed that after the process there was a new perception and understanding of the region (Gipuzkoa and Centre) and a more profound understanding of problems, challenges and their future impacts. In Gipuzkoa it leads also to the establishment of the “Strategic Office for the Future” and more clarification of leadership and the role of innovation as a driving force for the region. In the Centre, it was the first time that the region undertook such an exercise, which clarified the different positions, opened a debate amongst all actors about a shared vision of the region and new governance models.

The forestry project showed the complexity of the exercise in terms of mobilising political, economic and social actors with conflicting interests, and the difficulty to anticipate alternatives for such a long-term time horizon of 2100. At least in one German region the exercise and its outcome has led to a better problem consciousness with implications on policies.

The recommendations of speakers and plenary in a nutshell:

- Have a clear client who makes the Regional Foresight exercise his/her “baby” and who has the power to implement (of course in cooperation with other political, economic and social actors) the outcome. Be aware that the leader has to be able to bring together different actors and interests and that he/she is a good federator.
- Prepare the exercise very well in terms of methodology, processes, information gathering, actors involved, what kind of decision making can be done at what level, budgets and financing, etc.
- Be open-minded towards the environment outside the region and integrate – if possible – neighbouring regions
- Have an experienced facilitator, open-minded towards future changes and challenges who enables and empowers learning lessons for all actors
- Communicate the project, the results and the decisions via all means of modern communication (on-site and on-line)
- Involve all actors concerned and don’t forget the young generation who will live in the future we are talking about; ask them to participate and to shape their region and therefore their future

Ute Hélène von Reibnitz, SCENARIOS + VISION, June 15, 2009