

Forward

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The contributions to this issue are some of the most significant papers made in the context of the project MIRRORS.

MIRRORS is a project funded by the European Commission in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme (Science in Society-2007-1.1.1.1: Revisiting the challenges of the interaction between science and politics in the European knowledge-based society). As expressed in its acronym form, it is addressed to “Monitoring Ideas Regarding Research Organizations and Reasons in Science” (Grant agreement no.: 217796). MIRRORS assumes as a starting point a critical discussion of the 2000 Lisbon Conference objective to make Europe “the most competitive knowledge-based society and economy by 2010”. The project arose after critical reflection on the possibility of fulfilling such a goal and the desire to contribute to its realization. The group of researchers of the Core Team, that is the participants in the project who are directly affiliated with the Dipartimento di Processi Formativi of the University of Catania, Italy, and the external cooperators, who are affiliated with various European and extra-European institutions, are philosophers, historians and sociologists of science, trained to analyse decision-making processes in science and technology policy. They began started their research thinking that a clear understanding of the dynamics linking science and society might be the key factor in achieving the goals desired by the EU.

Our work proceeded on two levels. At the primary level we drafted a list of tentative science policy recommendations that were debated during the final conference of the project in September 2009 and that will be concretely formulated by February 2010. (Information about the conference can be found at our website: <http://www.mirrors-project.it>.) The secondary level was the metalevel, at which we discussed ways of closing the gap that has developed between philosophy and the other science studies disciplines.

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We believe that the contributions published here have a philosophical and epistemological significance that goes beyond MIRRORS' final objectives; that is, beyond science policy issues per se. In fact, they address the meta-theoretical issues beyond policy-making. Therefore, they can be of interest even for those scholars that are not directly interested in policy. They may find here the epistemological premises needed for a democratic debate among the disciplines that compose the methodologically variegated arena of STS (Science and Technology Studies).