

What is CAPCIT?

The Advisory Board of the Parliament of Catalonia for Science and Technology

The CAPCIT members in the presidential office of the president of the Parliament, July 23, 2018.
(Source: Parliament)



Key ideas

- CAPCIT was set up in 2008 by the Parliament of Catalonia.
- It coordinates all information necessary in order to advise the Parliament of Catalonia on its inherent tasks regarding science and technology.
- Since its creation, it has been a member of the EPTA, a network of technology assessment institutions that advise European parliaments.

At the present time parliaments have to find the best way to support scientific and technological innovation in order to grasp the implications of the scientific and technological revolution that is underway.

The Parliament of Catalonia has shown a special sensitivity to science and technology issues and has collaborated with various institutions working in research and dissemination in this field. The Advisory Board of the Parliament of Catalonia for Science and Technology (CAPCIT) is the first scientific and technical advisory organization created directly by the Parliament of Catalonia.

CAPCIT was created by Presiding Board of the Parliament of Catalonia at its meeting of 15 July 2008, during the eighth legislature of the Parliament of Catalonia. The aim of CAPCIT was to coordinate all information necessary for advising the Parliament of Catalonia on its inherent tasks regarding science and technology. Its Constitutive Session, held on 10 November 2008, approved its rules of organization.

The functions of CAPCIT include enhancing the Parliament's knowledge of science and technology, cooperating with the main science and technology institutions, and promoting co-accountability in public policies regarding science and technology. As a principle of its action, CAPCIT must foster a wide range of opinions and scientific and technical alternatives with the aim of providing neutral, objective and independent advice.

The Parliament of Catalonia is currently the only parliament in Spain to have an advisory

body for science and technology. There are no technology assessment (TA) institutions attached to the Congress of Deputies, the Senate or any parliament of the Spanish autonomous communities.

European Parliamentary Technology Assessment (EPTA)

Since its foundation, CAPCIT has been a member of the EPTA, a network of technology assessment institutions that advise European parliaments. CAPCIT was admitted to the network at the EPTA Council Meeting held in London on 2 November 2009.

Catalonia and Wallonia are the only sub-national territories that are members of the EPTA. The European Parliament and the parliaments of Austria, Catalonia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are currently full members. The European Council, Poland, Russia, the United States and Wallonia are associate members.

The EPTA's presidency lasts for one year and is held in rotation by all members. CAPCIT took over the presidency for 2012 from Germany at the EPTA Council Meeting held in the Bundestag, Berlin on 19 October 2011. CAPCIT chaired the EPTA from 1 January to 31 December 2012.

During its presidency, CAPCIT organized the following EPTA meetings:

- The EPTA's Directors Meeting was held in Sitges, Catalonia on 14, 15 and 16 May. The directors meetings are internal work

Constitutive sessions (July 23, 2018). On the right, the legal advisor Ferran Domínguez, secretary of CAPCIT since its creation in 2008. (Source: Parliament)



sessions attended by the directors and the people in charge of the advisory offices.

– The EPTA Council Meeting, its main governing body, and the annual EPTA Conference were held on 22 and 23 October. The theme of the Conference was personalized medicine under the heading “From Genes to Jeans: Challenges on the Road to Personalized Medicine”. The full text of the presentations and the proceedings were published, on the initiative of CAPCIT, in the journal of the Institute for Catalan Studies Contributions to Science, Number 8-2, December 2012 (www.cat-science.cat).

Membership

CAPCIT is a body attached to the Parliament of Catalonia, but its nature, structure and functions are different to those of the other parliamentary bodies.

CAPCIT is a joint body, composed of members of the Parliament and representatives from the foremost Catalan science and technology institutions. It has a total of 22 members:

Ten members of the Parliament of Catalonia: one for each of the five parliamentary groups represented in the Parliament and two deputies for the two parliamentary sub-groups; two members of the Presiding Board of the Parliament; and the president of the Parliament, who also holds the presidency of CAPCIT.

Twelve representatives from the main science and technology institutions of Catalonia: three representing the public universities, designated by the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP), and one representing the private universities; three representing the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC); one representing the Royal Academy of Science and Arts of Barcelona (RACAB); one representing the Catalan Association of Research Centres (ACER); two representing the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation (FCRI); and one representing the Catalan Council for Scientific Communication (C4).

According to CAPCIT’s rules of organization, a legal advisor of the Parliament of Catalonia appointed by the Presiding Board of the Parliament acts as the secretary with

the right to speak but not to vote, draws up the minutes and records the reports that are approved.

The members of CAPCIT receive no remuneration for their membership or for attending meetings.

Technology Assessment

CAPCIT operates as a forum seeking to present the members of the Parliament with the TA tasks conducted by several Catalan science and technology institutions.

TA is generally defined as the assessment of the social impact of the application of scientific and technological advances, i.e. the social consequences of the introduction, extension and modification of a technology, with special attention to unintended, indirect and long-term consequences. Unlike technology prospecting, TA deals with social impact, dissemination and participation by stakeholders.

Parliamentary TA is the advice given to parliaments about the social impact of the introduction of scientific and technological advances. It can often offer very useful recommendations for decision making on the development of public policies regarding the consequences of these advances.

Topics

CAPCIT discusses and decides its own work plan and the issues on which it needs TA reports. Not only the politicians decide the issues on which reports are to be drawn up; the members of science and technology institutions participate from the very beginning in the choice of topics and give advice on the issues on which time and resources should be spent.

When CAPCIT has agreed to work on a topic, it is necessary to decide who will carry out the study and draw up the report. There are two options:

- A member of the science and technology institutions that belong to CAPCIT.
- An external science and technology institution, in which case a procedure is initiated to appoint it.

No remuneration has been paid for any of the reports written so far.

CAPCIT has dealt with topics such as genetically modified organisms, nanotechnology, the relationship between science and business, and scientific education for young people. Vaccines have been studied twice: the first study dealt with the papillomavirus and the second, more extensive one dealt with vaccination in general and its importance to society.

CAPCIT's current composition

Representatives of the Pre-siding Board of Parliament



Roger Torrent i Ramió
President



Joan García González
Third Secretary



Adriana Delgado i Herreros
Fourth Secretary

Representatives of the Parliamentary Groups (PG)



Jorge Soler González
Cs PG



Narcís Clara i Lloret
JxCat PG



Antoni Castellà i Clavé
Republicà PG



Alicia Romero Llano
PSC-Units PG



David Cid Colomer
CatECP PG



Vidal Aragonés Chicharro
CUP-CC PS



Santi Rodríguez i Serra
PPC PS

Specialists Representatives



José Anton Planell
i Estany
Rector of the UOC
and president of ACUP



Joan Elias i Garcia
Rector of the University of
Barcelona (UB)
& vice-president of ACUP



Jaume Casals i Pons
Rector of the Pompeu
Fabra University (UPF)
and secretary of ACUP



Xavier Gil Mur
Rector of the UIC
and representant of
private universities



Joandomènec Ros
i Aragonès
President of the IEC



David Serrat i Congost
Scientific Secretary
of the IEC



Alicia Casals i Gelpí
Vice-president of the
Science and Technological
Section of the IEC



Rafael Marín Gálvez
Managing Director
of the FCRI



Susaina Figuera de Prado
Director of Projects
of the FCRI



Jaume Estruch Peret
President of the Consell
Català de la Comunicació
Científica



Gerard Gómez i Muntané
Vice-president
of the RACAB



José Samitier i Martí
President of the ACER

Conferences and Events

CAPCIT has organized various conferences, events and activities in the Parliament of Catalonia in order to place the members of Parliament in contact with representatives of the science world. Two conferences have been organized by the Catalan Foundation for Research and Innovation (FCRi) to celebrate the opening of Science Week in Catalonia:

– 17 November 2014. A conference on “Vaccine, Science and Society” in the framework of the 19th Science Week in Catalonia analysed the present and future of vaccination and its social importance from a scientific, informative and political point of view. The participants included researchers, doctors, journalists and members of the parliamentary groups of the Parliament of Catalonia.

– 11 November 2016. A conference on Sponsorship and Funding of Research in the framework of the 21st Science Week in Catalonia had a similar format to the previous one.

CAPCIT's newsletter

CAPCIT publishes a newsletter with a variable frequency. This edition is numbered 0 because it was conceived with the aim of providing information on the body and presenting the newsletters that have already been published to the members of the Parliament and any other interested people. The newsletters provide a brief and direct analysis of science and technology issues.

The following newsletters have been published so far:

0. What is CAPCIT? (November 2018)
1. Neuromodulation and Neuroelectronics: Opportunities and Challenges for the Catalan Healthcare System and Industry (April 2013)
2. The Scientific and Technical Education of Children and Youth in Catalonia (October 2013)
3. The Arctic Boom (October 2013)
4. The Young Catalans' Science Parliament (April 2014)
5. Innovative Ideas and Projects in Scientific Advice to Parliaments (May 2014)
6. Vaccines, a Health Need and a Public Asset (June 2014)
7. Research and Business: Collaborating to Compete Better (July 2014)
8. Space Debris (June 2015)
9. Production of Scientific and Technological Knowledge in Catalonia (2000-2014) (April 2016)
10. The Climate Change Bill (July 2016)
11. The Future of Labour in the Digital Era (August 2016)
12. The non-ionizing electromagnetic spectrum (March 2017)

To reach a wider audience, most of the newsletters are published in three languages: Catalan, Spanish and English.

Constitutive session of the CAPCIT (July 23, 2018). (Source: Parliament)

