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As the UK shows signs of emerging – perhaps, and with a following wind – from its year long pandemic-imposed hibernation, two key plans have been published.

The EU published the strategic plans, and the first calls for the period 2021-2024, for [Horizon Europe](#) on 15 March. With a €95.5 billion budget, and extending out to 2027, Horizon Europe is the EU's research and innovation framework programme.

The three pillars: Excellent Science, Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness, and Innovative Europe, will determine the direction of EU science and innovation for the next six years. Building on the success of the Horizon 2020 programme, Horizon Europe offers an intention, a direction and a funding pool.

We like to think we may have played a small part in this. The SAMI project for the Commission's Research and Innovation Directorate generated reference scenarios for R&I across ten global regions. Deep and wideranging horizon scanning, workshoping, the invention of a new model of scenario generation and testing, and a comprehensive scenario report, all went to give the EU a comprehensive picture of its place in the R&I environment in four potential futures.

We continue our work within SAMI. Our regional specialists remain engaged with their regions; we shall be creating a scorecard process to identify the matching of the scenarios to the real world; and we look forward to engaging fully with Horizon Europe itself.

One day after the publication of Horizon Europe, the UK Government published

its [Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#).

This is a review with a hugely ambitious aim – to set the direction of UK policy for years to come. The headlines – more nuclear weapons, fewer troops, the dangers of a future pandemic – are just the tips of the iceberg of a paper, and a transformation of thinking, that will affect all of our futures. We shall be examining the Review in detail in our blogs; and in the preparation work we are undertaking for a project specifically looking at defence and security in the future, about which more in a later newsletter.

Why do futures? In their [brief guide to futures thinking and foresight](#) the **Government Office for Science** cogently lay out the case:

Policies which are based on assumptions of how the world is today can limit our choices and put us in a position of constantly responding to change, rather than creating the conditions to achieve the future we want. By considering alternative plausible future worlds, based on trends, drivers, and external insight, we can develop more resilient policies with a better chance of delivering the outcomes we are seeking, whatever the future holds.

And they quote Bill Gates:

We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction."

They then go on to provide an introduction to the Futures Toolkit, a set of techniques that SAMI helped develop.

After the success of the **SAMI Cohort**, we are now recruiting for a second cohort. In a small group of other professionals you can explore the issues surrounding your foresight work, from improving your horizon scanning to winning over internal customers. Please contact Jane.Dowsett@samiconsulting.co.uk if you are interested.

SAMI Principals Patricia Lustig and Wendy Schultz have contributed podcasts

to [FuturePod](#). See Wendy's item on "[Evocative and Vivid Futures](#)", and Patricia's piece on a "[Very Practical Futurist](#)". Patricia and Gill Ringland also regularly publish blogs in Long Finance Pamphleteers most recently [Foresight In The Time Of Covid-19 - How Next?](#)

Executive Education

Our online course "Understanding the Future" will be run again on 26th to 30th April 2021. The course fee is £490 + VAT, and discounts may be available for self-funded individuals. For more information, please email us at training@samiconsulting.co.uk.

A range of information on various [futures techniques](#) – our version of the GOS Futures Toolkit - is available on our website.

Futures Issues

Major advances in AI are threatening to [replace many medical roles](#) such as radiologists. But maybe AI will simply be another tool used by medical professionals. Empathy, creativity and physical support may all continue to need humans. Nonetheless, there is a huge transformation coming.

[Oranges](#) falling from Seville's trees cause a slippery hazard but now they are being put to good use – making electricity.

[De-carbonising shipping](#) has been a major challenge, but new advances in bio-ethanol technology have enabled Maersk to bring forward its carbon-neutral plans.

Global warming has opened up the [Northern Sea Route \(NSR\)](#) in the Arctic during the month of February allowing a commercial vessel to sail from Jiangsu in China to the remote Arctic terminal of Sabetta in Russia. What was it carrying? Fossil fuel!

[Falling sperm counts](#) "threaten human survival". Chemicals such as phthalates

and bisphenol-A found in everyday plastics, and unhealthy lifestyle practices (smoking, marijuana, obesity) are disrupting our hormonal balance.

As people work more from home, and perhaps move to "[Zoom Towns](#)", will the interest in self-driving cars increase? The argument is that cars will be needed only intermittently for specific tasks, and so shared vehicles will become more popular. And as your driving skills diminish through lack of use, self-driving cars become more necessary.

Missing physical contact during lockdown? Why not pay for a "[cow cuddle](#)"? Maybe not, they are the most dangerous larger animal in the UK in terms of human deaths.

Our Blogs

Recent blogs have focussed on trade, finance and the future of London. Firstly we looked at [what the future might hold for world trade](#). We then explored possible futures for London, approaching this from two somewhat differing perspectives. One explored the [possible threats of an uncertain future](#); the second blog examined [possible opportunities and strengths](#).