



Building Blocks for the Future
PILAR I – SOCIETY

Transformative Economy

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everythink



About this white paper

This document aims to compile and summarize the speeches, thoughts and bold ideas shared during the Open Sessions of the 2021 Annual Event of the Business and Innovation Network, recording, for future reference, the contribution of a group of impressive people from all over the world who gathered in Porto to share, evolve and create knowledge and visions for the future of Humanity. This was a collaboration between BIN@ Network and Everythink, a design company.

About BIN@ Business and Innovation Network

Business & Innovation Network (BIN@) is an international network of academic and industry partners engaged in supporting open innovation and the creation of sustainable forum for sharing good practices and opportunities in innovation. BIN@ promotes a set of activities ranging from brokerage events to softlanding opportunities for startups. BIN@ has currently around 4500 delegates worldwide and so far has held 14 international events in Portugal, UK, Brazil, Romania, Poland and one fully digital event. You can see more about our activities on the official website: www.businessandinnovation.net.

About Everythink

EVERYTHINK is an award-winning studio for creativity, design and innovation, established in 2008 in Porto. Through design, they put creative methodologies and strategic thinking at the service of companies' innovation, to create new services, products and experiences, impacting people in a positive, easy and happy way. Everythink's approach with customers, users, and stakeholders is key to create new products, services and experiences, with a positive impact on people's lives. The team works on different areas and outputs, offering diversity and experience in an effect of cross-pollination offering innovative insights, efficiency and time-to-market. Find more at www.everythink.com

Transformative Economy

A conversation with



Glenn Cezanne

Time & Place Consulting & CharIN e.V.

Glenn Cezanne runs his own consultancy Time & Place Consulting and, as an European Union lobbyist, influences decision making at the public affairs and public relations side of things. He is also the head of EU governmental affairs at the CharIN association, the worldwide promoter of interoperability based on the Combined Charging System (CCS) and ISO15118, as the global standards for charging battery powered electric vehicles. In parallel, he has taken a very much linked new twist, that belongs to the bigger picture. He decided to become a movie producer, building a media productions company and starting to film this year. Understanding public perception and capturing the viewers attention, that's essentially what lobbying is also about.

The new Regulation for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure is a true milestone for the European Commission's Green Deal. It involves billions in investment from the EU and from the member states, and obviously, also from industry. So, there is an overall impact.

The European Union needs to remain competitive on a global market, not least when looking at all elements of the electric charging eco-system. Within this context the importance of European and global standards are often under-estimated.

e-mobility or hydrogen ?

On the policy side of things, the conscience is prevalent that both electric and hydrogen are the way forward; that the EU discourse has moved completely towards both options. Of course, there is the argument that combustible engines, depending on where the energy comes from, are not actually as bad as people think, especially because diesel engines are more efficient, and so on and so forth.

First of all, though, it's evident that with hydrogen or electric mobility, we're taking the pollution out of the cities. And I think that has

a strong health element to it. Now, when it comes to hydrogen, the amount of energy you pump into it to gain the relevant yield, is something, notably from a personal view, where clarity is needed in light of the plethora of available scientific statistics. And at the end of the day, let's be honest, studies are done with questions and very often even the conclusions already set, no matter what sector. In this case though, I have the luxury that I don't have to argue either for hydrogen or electric mobility.

Depending on infrastructural availability, the best argument seems for the moment is to still have a mix between the three (hydrogen, electricity & combustion); if necessary, just to keep mobility going. How the relevant public authorities and public funds might help with building the infrastructure will always also very much have something to do with it. But the question that will remain to be set is, regarding how much that municipality or that country would want to invest in one technology, or the other?

I think the path that we're taking right now is a good one. Indeed, when you have the facilities to charge your car, it's a whole different game. What you need to do when you're looking at human centric capacities, is

to look at the available technology to facilitate it for the population. Of course, you have to think about education, people getting more comfortable with it, focusing on the millennials and newer generations; looking towards harnessing and accommodating their opinions. But if you have somebody who was waiting in the parking lot, there are only two chargers, and he/she has to go to work the next day and can't charge the car, they're not going to go and buy an electric car; especially if the other two cars are there for the next six hours, because that's how long it can take with a lower amount of KWs per hour in terms of charging power. So, you need to look at necessity, but very often necessity isn't a sufficient driver, when it comes to new technology, because people don't necessarily know. Not everybody is "truly" aware of or concerned with the environmental and social impact of running diesel cars, because people can be much more worried of getting to work rather than taking in second-hand smoke from car fumes in the city. So, very often, people need to be introduced to the technology and its contribution to human centricity.

When looking at innovation and human centricity, it is necessary to look at three sides

of the contextual square which surround human centricity – i.e., business, society, technologies and the political context. As representative of CharIN, I am working with pretty much all elements of the electric mobility eco-system. And I am working together with other key e-mobility actors within a subgroup of the European Commission, primarily with a view of advocating for a set of standards with focus on for the communication between the vehicle and the charging station. Within this context, a main underestimated question remains. What is the cost of non-standardisation? Imagine every mobile phone company still having its own charger? It would certainly not be a very human-centric approach.

In general, though, transformation related to society, politics, and business are essentially the three elements I look at. The legislative package for mobility published under the Green Deal touches upon pretty much everything when it comes to the roll out, from hydrogen to e-mobility capacities. And now, what you have is a strongly Western centric infrastructure, that you must expand to the East, to the Baltic states, Poland and so forth. So, in the bigger picture of transformation and technological implementation, it is really also about the political level, creating a balance within society, and the necessary appetite for private and public funding. For example, the proposed legislation in the

alternative fuels' investment regulation states that, in the corridors, from west to east, north to south, there should be a charging station every set amount of kilometres for heavy duty vehicles. One of many necessary key elements.

The digital world

Another part of my world is a digital one. I am representing a client interested in providing open-source contributions to various EU projects. So, we're looking at Horizon projects, which can involve increasing health-care capacities, solutions for an ageing population and big data interpretation. I believe that the beauty about open source, is the true democratization and human-centricity of software. (And yes, I am also a strong advocate of cryptocurrencies.) It truly is a biological form of technology whereby most large companies are taking it on board, transforming and adapting it. Tailored solutions based on publicly available code... It comes close to what I would consider some mantras of what human-centricity should be about.

Taking a step back to look at digitalization across the EU, there is a digital (and as such arguably a societal) divide within the European Union that I would like to highlight; not necessarily a negative one as divide often



Photo: André François McKenzie / Unsplash

implies. What might be very interesting is the discussion between the North and the South, because that's essentially where a significant form of digital divide exists. This is also something I experienced when I was working in the gambling sector. The North was much more digitally advanced; maybe Germany less. So, when it came to gambling, a lot of citizens from southern states went outside and to the shops to bet, whereas in Nordic countries, you'd have a lot more people betting online.

All in all, though, and beyond gambling, of course, if it wasn't for the EU, I believe the digital and societal divides would be much further behind. Herein, I think a very important question to ask is often seen as a very uncomfortable one: Are we really aware enough of the technology that is changing our society; for us to understand it as a critical enough mass of the population? I mean, look at Cambridge Analytica and Facebook. Dominic Cummings' use of Facebook essentially caused Brexit, and people are still using Facebook.

So, the question is: Is it already too late for us to understand? Are we just in the flow of it, and that's it? There are plenty of things

happening well – i.e., with a positive impact - , but we've suffered through a pandemic, and we've also suffered from a wave of far-right populism. Both have done a lot of damage, also because attention, credibility and investment was actually taken away from key pillars which should have mattered more – i.e., education, society, progress, innovation (not least the technological innovations promoted and funded by the EU). Horizon 2020 was to a large degree a very effective policy umbrella, as well as Erasmus plus, and I think this is where our strong points really are. One is the capacity to get people together and to create a sort of democratization and proliferation of access, including in infrastructure. As half a Romanian, I have seen the brain-drain marking people leaving Romania because there was no hope; there was nothing or very little to build a sustainable future on. And now, I look at a lot of my young friends who left to find a job abroad, who are now looking at finding a way to go back to Romania and invest in their own country and work in the factories as engineers or inhouse lawyers there. But these are still for some part still unspoken things; although increasingly noticed.

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A sense of responsibility

Three years ago, I did a motorbike trip from Brussels all the way to Montenegro, alone, tent in the back, stopping at various camping sites and just talking to people. I don't think anybody really ever said anything nice about the European Union, nor about Angela Merkel, notably because of her immigration policy. And this is where I think the problem is evident. It's not in what the EU is doing, necessarily, even though it can be argued that some things could be done more efficiently. It is more because the advertisement and public relations capacities are absolutely terrible in reaching out to the whole EU population on the benefits of what the EU brings and societal values it holds. For example, in Wales, you have a population that was one of the highest beneficiaries of EU funds across the Union. And they were one of the highest voters for Brexit in all the UK.

The overall main issue for me though is a lot more complex, for a simple reason. I don't believe most people are looking to have a broad sense of responsibility towards one-another anymore. I know it is a very nihilistic perception. Nonetheless, I see this notion growing rapidly, primarily because everybody is so overcome with the necessity to survive within their own world. We talk about responsibility, and how people need to feel that they should contribute to society. But the bigger the cities, the more complex it gets. People are seeing the change as a cost rather than an enjoyable factor or rather than the feeling of really being part of something. When we were talking about the recycle,

reuse generations, people felt like they were contributing, they were part of a wave, going against the wastefulness of our grandparents and our parents. But now, everybody is bombarded with things that they're doing wrong. "You shouldn't be doing this!" "Why are you doing that?" We're getting scolded. People are told they shouldn't be on their cell phone that much, stop playing so many video games, you're working for the wrong industry, etc. Indeed, people are more and more spinning within a negative spiral.

I'm not a sociologist, but when I look at what's been going on in Europe over the last decades, in many cases, the feel-good element has disappeared, because people are often looking for the cynical side of things. People are looking for the faults, they're not looking to motivate others anymore, because scolding is the easiest defensive mechanism that you can have. Apparently, rather than looking for change, people feel that as long as one is right, then it's fine.

And I think most people are also just super tired with the pandemic. People are tired of making efforts, people want to be back or stay out. I look at the youngsters here in Brussels that said they were part of the 60s and 70s flower power generation, by going outside and demonstrating for their own rights. I really think it's just a way for people to manifest their discontent. And even more so, many people feel disenfranchised; their rights, youth and future taken from them. This can easily be extremist spawning ground. ■

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Building blocks for the future

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