Building Blocks for the Future
PILLAR II – CIRCULARITY

Human Centric Civilisation

Violeta Bulc

Ecocivilisation

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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

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A conversation with

Violeta Bulc
Ecocivilisation

Violeta Bulc, is the curator of Ecocivilisation movement, and lecturer at universities and conferences. Bulc has a bachelor's degree in computer science and informatics at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, a master's degree in Information Technology at the Golden Gate University of San Francisco, and PMBA at the Bled School of Management, Slovenia. With relevant roles at DHL in Burlingame, California and at Telekom Slovenia, later she became vice-president of Telemach and CEO of Vibacom. Bulc joined Slovenian politics in 2013, serving as a minister responsible for development, strategic projects and cohesion.
In October 2014, Bulc was confirmed by the European Parliament as an European Commissioner in the Juncker Commission, where she served until December 2019, with the transport portfolio.

Ecocivilisation is a movement, a global community that I have started to curate in April 2020. It is emerging as a new shared global destination, just possibly a ticket for our survival beyond the expected climate change. The weak signals of the crisis of the Western Civilization can be seen everywhere: decadency, lack of respectful public values, lack of trust, transparency, decomposition of democratic laws. THose are strong indicators that it is time to regenerate, reinvent ourselves or become a part of history as yet another civilisation that got lost and fell. The concept of Ecocivilisation did not happen as an overnight inspiration. It is a result of an ongoing observation of our societies, many intense and deep discussions with colleagues from all over the world and of a strong influence of the International System Science Society principles. Prior experiences from the corporate and entrepreneurial world, innovation ecosystems, local communities, European politics, as well as a deep interest in cross civilizational wisdoms, helped me to broaden my mind, and to dare to look beyond the established societal frameworks.

Out of that, infused by the collective consciousness and the concept of "knowledge as universal good", the model of Ecocivilisation was born: 5 entities (beings, communities, consciousness, land and relationships), as the core of a new societal framework. I feel that the Ecocivilisation era will be a global civilization and will emerge from a global consciousness.   During my mandate in Brussels, the EU went through serious challenges, starting with the Greek crisis, then post economic crisis with rising left and right fundamentalism, then terrorism, the refugee crisis, then Brexit, Trump, and so on… I could see how every one of these challenges had severe consequences on people's lives, as well as on the established structures, which were struggling to respond to the challenges in an efficient and sustainable manner, mostly due to their static structures, lack of resilience and absence of an innovative spirit. That is exactly what the Ecocivilisation movement tries to overcome.

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SOCIETY

BEINGS

CONSCIOUSNESS

RELATIONSHIPS

LAND

ECOCIVILISATION

EARTH AS AN ECO ZONE | POPULATION OF UNIVERSE | INFINITE COLLABORATIONS | RELATIONSHIP BASED SOCIETY | NETWORK STRUCTURE

Osti jarej!

6 global mega trends with a profound impact on our lives

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is real. It is one of the natural behaviors of the planet Earth. However, with our, human intervention/bad behavior, we have speed up the normal cycles to the point that we, people, are almost incapable of readjusting. In the last 50000 thousand years, people had time either to move from one place to another, or to reorganize themselves and adjust. But now, we speed up the cycle so much that substantial changes are happening in one lifetime, in one generation.
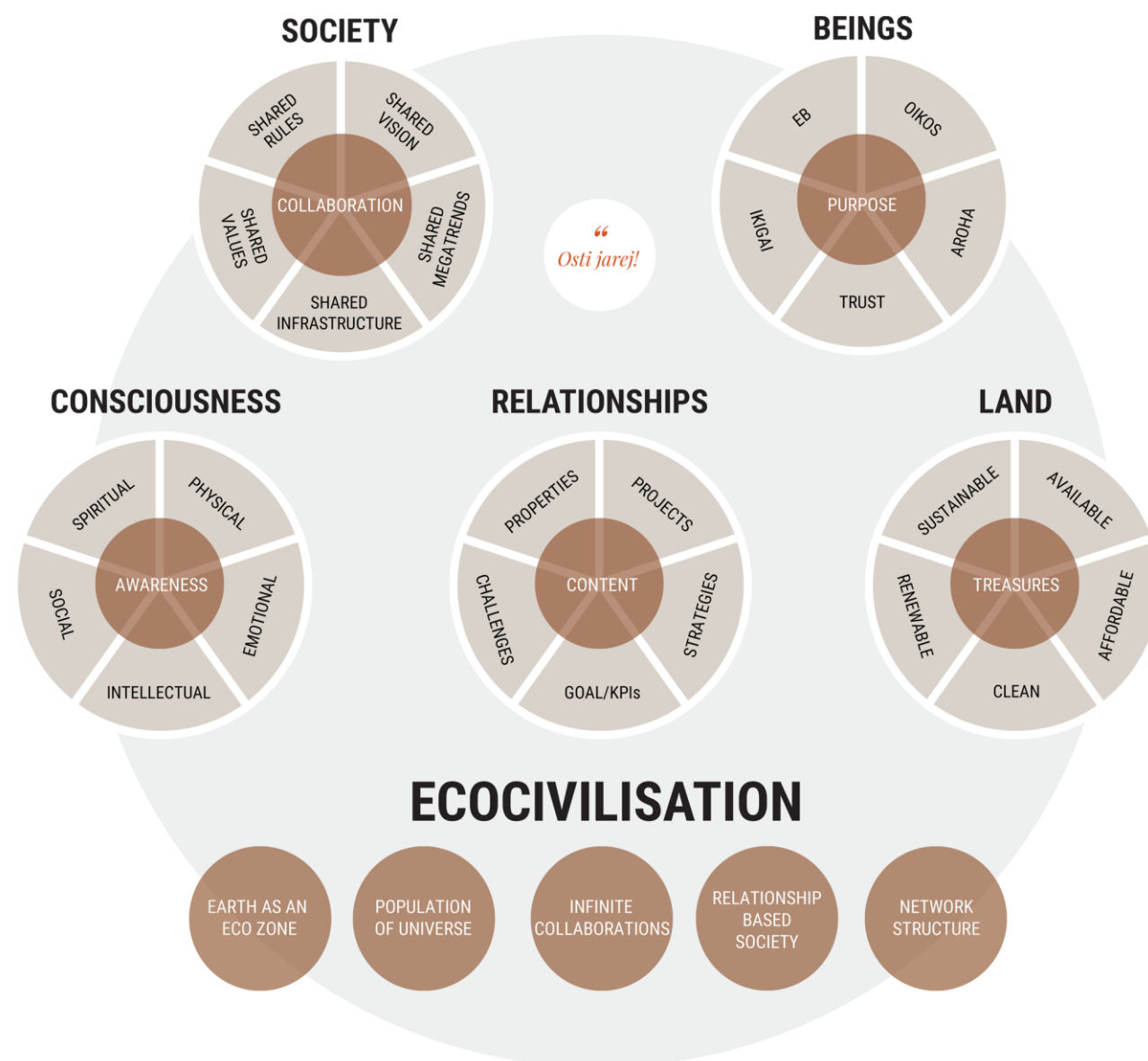
Many civilizations had disappeared because of the climate changes in the past. Do we have a chance as a species to be the first avoiding the destruction? Are we any different from the previous civilizations which all had their glorious days and at one moment started to decline and fall? I can think of two: the planet is all claimed with no land to move to without causing a serious global conflict, pushing us to find solutions at the place where we are, and availability of data in real time from all over the world, giving us a chance to act and possibly re-invent ourselves, leading the way to a new civilizational paradigm. No matter what we do, we must face the climate change at the place where we live.

How to start preparing people to be ready for the climate change at their place? Consequently, we talk a lot about circular

economy and capacity building on the ground. But without overcoming the four missing problems, regardless if we talk about the SDGs , or the European Green Deal, or circular economy, we will not make it. These are: organizational re-design and restructuring to be added to all climate related projects, an improved governance model, and an improved measurement to be able to get a system picture about the climate change and human contribution to it. Last but not least, without an honest commitment and acts by our global leaders, politicians, all good wishes and goals will fail as they have been failing so far.

The EU has been experiencing a double edge effect: on one hand a growing pollution due to the oil-based lifestyle, on the other hand more than 90% of all energy used being oil based, as well. So, in order to decrease the pollution, the EU needed to find a new, reliable energy source, possibly on home territory to decrease the vulnerability due to the fluctuation of the oil prices and the supply of oil. That was the major drive behind the green agenda, with additional positive social impacts like decrease of premature deaths due to the pollution, a new field for the burst of innovation and creation of a higher value.

The EU was the first global power to push for a green vision. It still has a chance to be among the most influential global green powers , however, it will have to move from

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projects to organizational redesign. In order to lead, the EU needs a system approach with the commitment to some painful organizational changes along the way. And one good point to start showing its soft power is in addressing and solving the growing green poverty around the world. The goal of Ecocivilisation is to ensure that Earth stays an ecozone of our galaxy.

DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization helped us to dramatically increase the number of connections with different subjects and objects through diversified communication channels, paving the way for receiving a huge amount of data and/or information at any given time of the day. With digital technologies came many discussions about »who is actually leading the world« , »who is creating our future«, »do we still have free will«, and above all, "who owns the data".

The citizens are trapped between 3 polarizing global models: "all data are owned by a state", "all data are owned by a corporation" and the EU model that deals with data from a perspective of the "users' rights". Yet, the citizens are left out in the open without definition of accountability and stewardship over assets for the next generation. On top of democratic digital architectures like the internet and blockchains, new global monopolies are being built, pushing towards a technology-

-based world. Ideas like transhumanism, singularity and surveillance capitalism are used as a new global framework to control and manipulate without democratic governance in the interest of users and citizens. One very negative consequence of such a tendency has already been seen in a growing digital poverty emerging around the world.

Will the new civilization be driven by technological improvements, like our Western civilization currently is? Or will technology be just one of the enablers of value creation and something new will emerge in the future as the dominant one? Within the Ecocivilisaton movement we are

tapping into different leverage points, trying to observe how the humanity is evolving, how the holistic development of individuals is evolving, and then try to see, what will be the next new enabler of this spiral evolution where the spin is all but linear. One thing we know for sure, we have to keep the on/off switch handy.

We are only a year and a half into the process. Our goals are set for 30 years, and it's very encouraging how the whole world is responding. We have now our nodes in 20+ countries. We want to set up our points of presence in 100 countries, in order to really get a good information flow on the perception, awareness and consciousness globally.

SPACE

Space seems to be a new "wild west" territory, where billions of taxpayers and private money is being engaged with any global regulator overlooking the actions and negative externalities. As a consequence, space debris is rapidly becoming a serious problem, entrepreneurs and individual countries are passing laws to allow companies registered in their countries to mine asteroids and possibly planets in our galaxy. Nobody is monitoring what is happening to our stratosphere.

In spite of the good intentions of space dreamers in the 20thcentury, countries have not signed a common declaration for space exploration and rather moved the competition model to the Space, as well. The focus is on business, exploitation, territorial possessions, but nothing about the socialization and democratization of space, shared vision, common action plan.

I dare to speculate, that the technology as we know it today will not get us to other planets, nor will it make us immortal. Within the Ecocivilisation community we sense that we are yet to discover a law of physics to be able to get beyond rockets when travelling through the Space, to be able to see the unseen. We are also looking into how to address space imperialism versus space democracy .

We can say that people on Earth have already benefited largely from the knowledge and technologies being developed for the space explorations: medicine, sensors, filters, food packaging, new materials, kitchen cloths, etc. The EU is finally repositioning itself in the space ecosystem. Our space agency along with a very strong entrepreneurial base has a capacity to influence the global space game, focusing on space explorations with intelligent instruments, strong data mining capacities and AI based simulation systems. Maybe the EU is the one who will show a completely new way of travelling through the Universe. Another opportunity for a stronger autonomy yet integrated in a large **open space** with a strong global governing body that the EU can infuse.

PANDEMICS

We cannot overlook pandemics, which is, along with the climate change, the most common reason for all civilization to fall. Our responses to pandemic situations are very much defined by our capacity to reinvent ourse lves in the future. We've failed quite a lot in a sense of political leadership and of self-organization and trust on a community level.

Giving up on democracy and using totalitarian tools to impose public health is proving one more time how weak as a conscious species we actually are.

On the other hand, there is a positive spin to it, as well. It showed a strength and capacity to deliver on the global science community when focused on a common goal.

Yet, it also showed how vulnerable multilateral global agreements and collaborations are in the face of immediate threat or provoked fear. The pandemic has revealed a dark side of many leaders, lacking the capacity to engage with citizens and respond to crises collectively, based on trust, transparency and overall well-being. The EU got trapped in a panic and fear at the beginning of crises, forgetting about the basic democratic principles in many member states, giving up on freedom of speech, the right for a second opinion. The EU is now in a unique position to take a holistic approach to pandemic management and build a **resilient public health system** which includes citizens in problem solving and effective response.

During the pandemic we could also see **health and digitalization** merging under this new push for digitalization of public health systems. Over 60% of all diseases that humans have are a product of socio-economic conditions, which you can never see if you check your blood and pulse. You can only understand the reasons for a high pressure if you see a human being in its economic and social framework. This is a big battle now, and the proposal for the **European Health Union**,

is very much focusing on this human centric public health system approach. AI and digital avatars are becoming a great tool, yet, successful diagnosis consists of more than just organic data, it is contextual, and relationship based for which the medical personnel that cares is essential. Lessons are still coming, but one thing is already known and is also the basis of Ecocivilisation debates on public health, we need flexible human-centric public health systems based on care and solidarity.

REGULATION

We need to understand the nature of different systems. The nature of a company is to grow and deliver profit for its stakeholders, but the nature of a state is to take care of people and deliver for them a decent quality of life. For these two completely different motivations to coexist, regulation is needed to keep both in the balance and bring transparency and predictability to the core of their cooperation. In many cases, especially on a global level, we have no regulators and that's why the high-tech companies have unlimited power and do whatever they want to do. Nobody regulates them.

Why don't we have something like the International Civil Aviation (ICAO) or the International Maritime (IMO) Organizations for space, or for digital technology? We lack

the decision making and must develop the awareness of the challenge.

I tried, for example, to stimulate the establishment of a global Space agency. If we want to have at least some decent sort of relationship in the Space, we need and should join forces to share the innovation and technologies, and then act together. Humankind is curious, but regulators should set rules. For example, the owners of satellites or other space equipment have no obligation to bring the devices back to Earth when they no longer serve the purpose. So, the level of space debris is growing by the day and nobody is taking the responsibility for it.

Within the Ecocivilisation movement we are looking at different net-based solutions that would support global regulation without the need for a global government.

An encouraging future!

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PARTICIPATORY MODELS

Before I entered the European politics, I was very much engaged in working with local communities and companies. One of my key tools for successful leadership and collaboration were participatory models and participatory engagements. I am more and more convinced that the parliamentary democracy, where parties have such a big power, is no longer working for an open and inclusive society.

Democracy needs to be re-invented, refreshed. Politics needs to be re-invented. Democracy and politics need innovation. The Ecocivilisation movement is exploring this topic, bringing together different best practices from all over the world to use them as a starting point for a possible fresh view about the future organization on a local and global level, in politics and democratic structures. We're building a network of nodes, where we are bringing together people from Europe, India, Africa, Australia, moderating dialogs and building a fresh knowledge base.

Ecocivilisation movement is not seeking a revolution, but evolutionary changes in order to readjust for modern demands. People are awakening. Millions and millions of people are being awakened, connected, activated, demanding different structures in order to

engage. So, we are testing all kinds of participatory frameworks. We try to bring young people on board and see what they think and support them.

Certainly, if we want to sustain as a society, or even bigger, as a civilization, we will have to reinvent ourselves. Otherwise, we will just disappear like many other civilizations over the last 50,000 years. We will be the next dinosaurs of the future if there will be any skeletons left at all.

Participatory budgeting I believe in the concept of participatory budgeting that emerged from local communities. We have more and more municipalities in Slovenia, who are practicing participatory budgeting. And I was so happy when I've heard that Portugal announced at the end of the presidency, as the first country in the world, a participatory budgeting on a national level. This is a way forward!

Citizen Parliaments In Belgium, they are experimenting with a Citizens' Parliament, activating citizens for a limited period of time in the decision-making processes on political level. The results are positive. This could potentially replace the lower Houses of Parliament, bringing more dynamics and fluidity into the system, while giving all the citizens a chance to rise their awareness

about what it means to lead the state, to curate democracy and moderate a collective effort for a better life. This could rise the level of political competences and weaken the influence of political elite, looking these days more and more like monarchies.

Knowledge as universal good Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about knowledge as universal good. When I look at the relationship of a modern society and accumulated knowledge, I feel that something is just not right. I ask myself how anybody can claim ownership over knowledge?! Knowledge is not invented but uncovered, accumulated, recognized. Everybody is just using it, uncovering it, connecting loose ends. Ecocivilisation lives by the rule "knowledge is a universal good". Intellectual ownership law needs to be revised to be fairer, to give to the guardians of the knowledge and wisdom a place in the society that they deserve.

The awakening of people We have so many extreme positions these days. This means that the system is challenged, that it is trying to defend itself, that their end is coming, that the change is under way. In Slovenia, the government tried to pass the law on water, where they would have much more influence on the privatization of the shores and water sources. Slovenians are not really interested

in politics and our turnout on any kind of referendum or even elections are low. This time, it was amazing how many people voted, although it was a holiday time. People preregistered, voted by post, and the young people finally understood what it means to have a voting right. Exciting to see. The youth has been awakened. They started to come forward, and we are all feeling the strength that they have. They are our fuel and hope!

Slovenia is leading the way In Slovenia, climate change and this sort of green agenda is very close to our hearts. We are very much connected with our land. 50% of people still live in the countryside. So it should come by no surprise that the concept of a "smart village" was born based on the experience of smart communities as part of the Heart of Slovenia partnership network. We are the second largest country in Europe covered with forests, rivers and lakes. Our capital city of Ljubljana has just been voted as the greenest capital city in the EU. We are the guardians of the oldest wheel in the world, the oldest flute. We are the only country that has in its name the word "love" (Slovenia). We are the only country that has never attacked anyone in its entire history and is proudly listed among the top sport countries in the world.

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The connection to BIN@ Pillars

I come initially from a corporate world. After several years in Silicon Valley I came forward to Europe which I recognize as my home with all its diversity, unpredictability and complexity. As an entrepreneur I always felt a special passion for innovation, receiving many national rewards for business and social innovation myself. So, BIN@ is very much related to my personal interest in the functioning of global communities, without losing authenticity of a local community, small businesses or individuals. There are some very encouraging models already emerging, especially those based on circular economy. Ecocivilisation is hosting many global network-based leaders, the connectors for the nets of the nets. When you look deeper into their way of working three basic characteristics emerged.

100% transparency. They engage in a completely transparent way with everyone on the local level, with connectors, and those that coordinate the whole corporation. They call it actually a network, they don't call it a company anymore.

Trust. They don't work with people they don't trust. No mercy. In classical corporations, if you don't generate profit, they cut you off. Here if you're not delivering trust or supporting trust, you are out.

You do what it feels right. It's very powerful rule. It empowers your personal responsibility; you do what you believe is right because that's the most you can do. That is the intuitive level, which is the only information that one can comprehend in a clearest form. ■

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Circular Change Ladeja Godina Košir – Circular Change
Future Proof Present Beatriz Luz – E4C Brazil

Building blocks for the future
BIN@Porto – Business and Innovation Network
25-27 October 2021   Porto – Portugal

Co-production: BIN@Porto and Everythink
Production team: Pedro Coelho, Carlos Oliveira,
Júlio Martins, João Petiz