

Minutes of the plenary meeting of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies

Vienna, 17-18 September 2019

1. Approval of the agenda

2. Nature of the meeting: non-public

3. List of points discussed and conclusions

a. Dates of the EGE meetings 2019

Jim Dratwa conveyed the proposed dates of the EGE Plenary meetings in 2019, as follows:

16-17 January 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

19-20 February 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

19-20 March 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

10-11 April 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

22-23 May 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

27-28 June 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

11-12 Sept 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

16-17 Oct 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

5-6 Dec 2019 EGE Plenary Meeting in Brussels

With the usual caveats for the date and location of the NEC meeting tbc.

b. Participation of the EGE members in external events

Christiane Woopen informed that she participated in Roman forum 2018 on 1 September in Rome. She presented the work of the EGE, namely, the on the future of work. She met the President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani who expressed his interest in the upcoming Opinion.

She also took part in the Round Table Summit in San Francisco, US, where she explained the need to respect the ethical values in the context of GDPR.

Christiane Woopen will also participate in the event organised by the Royal Society on data enabled societies on November 2018.

Emmanuel Agius informed the Group that he will take part in COMESE meeting in February, to present the work of the EGE.

Laura Palazzani informed that she participated in UNESCO meeting devoted to public engagement and citizen participation organised in Paris earlier this month.

Jeroen van den Hoven updated the Group on the latest developments in the High level expert group on AI. He indicated that the Group is currently drafting a set of principles – core values that need to be respected while developing and applying AI. Jim Dratwa explained the timeline and process, with this set of Guidelines to be issued by December 2018 then March 2019. He specified that there are currently two working groups: one focusing on policy recommendations, one on the ethics guidelines. Another task of the HLEG refers to wider societal engagement and the platform.

Nils-Eric Sahlin informed that he is involved in three SAPEA meetings: 1) making sense of science; 2) elderly; 3) toxic waste. He also informed that the Technical Museum of Sweden will invest money in AI.

Julian Kinderlerer informed that he was invited to speak in AI in medicine.

Emmanuel Agius informed that he is invited to speak in an event organised by the Political Academy of Rome on robotics. As well, Christiane Woopen is expected to participate.

c. Work on the recommendations of the Opinion on the future of work

Christiane Woopen acknowledged that the Group have been very active recently by working on the draft Opinion on the future of work. She suggested turning directly to work on the recommendations.

As a first step, the Group engaged in a debate on whether the recommendations ought to be shortened. Some members suggested to remove some or reconsider some of the recommendations as some of them might be too vague or out of the remits of the Group. It was agreed that it is not essential how short or long the actual text of the recommendations is, but that it should convey the ideas set in the Opinion. A summary version of the recommendations might anyway be prepared at a later stage for communication purposes.

It was agreed that the recommendations need a prologue, explaining the main concepts and narratives, that will be prepared by Barbara Prainsack.

Recommendations set 1

It was agreed that part of the recommendations would be moved to the prologue. The first two recommendations would be moved as such, the next two integrated, and the last two left under heading 1.

The Group discussed the usefulness of a glossary, but agreed that it is not needed as the main concepts will be explained in the introduction and footnotes on first occurrence and prologue of the recommendations.

Then the Group engaged in a debate whether the Pillar of Social Rights should be supported or amended, and on what kind of policy areas the recommendations should be focused. It was agreed that the Pillar should be institutionally strengthened, the understanding of work should be broadened, and applied to most of (concrete) policy areas.

It was suggested that the first set of the recommendations shall include: the new EU labour authority, wider understanding of the Charter of Fundamental rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Recommendations set 2

It was agreed to combine the previous points 2 and 3.

The members engaged in a discussion around relations between competitive economy, advancement of technologies and ethical principles, including decent job, inclusiveness, and dignified life. It was agreed to refer to a concept of 'responsible innovation', by adding it in a footnote.

It was reminded that not only the workers but also the enterprises should be considered.

There can be two underlying ideas under this set of recommendations: 1) harnessing technologies to promote inclusive labour market, assisting enterprises, in line with European values; 2) providing decent work and working conditions.

Broad overarching frame should be: we should promote innovation and technology enabled labour market that does not erode human dignity. It should be in line with the European values and contribute to decent work and decent working conditions.

It was agreed that in the formulation of the recommendation set heading, the ethical aspects should come at the first place.

DAY 2 – 17 September

The Group continued to work on the Recommendations set 2.

The Group suggested that technologies could be used to include people in the workplace who have been previously left out or marginalised.

Flexibility and surveillance (in and out the workplace) are other aspects to be addressed. It was noted that surveillance is not necessarily only a bad thing.

This set of recommendations should also address selection and rating systems where AI are used. Meaningful human control is necessary. Selection, recruitment, performance measurement and transition to the next job must be addressed. The worker should be given control of his digital identity, including appropriate tools.

Recommendations set 3

It was noted that besides individual up-skilling, the societal up-skilling is needed. It was suggested to explain this in the preface of the recommendations set.

It was noted that the societal upskilling is a broader concept and includes unpaid employment as well. It is a collective responsibility.

New elements to be included in this set: updated curricula, appropriate skills, girls in STEM, apprenticeships, personal activity accounts, institutionalisation of life long learning, mechanisms that help the transition to a new employment.

Then the group discussed whether the recommendation on statistics would better fit in set 1 or set 3. It was noted that some economic calculation of the contribution of unpaid work is already happening. It was agreed that the EGE should recommend a systematic collection of data on unpaid work.

Recommendations set 4

The Group had a debate on whether they would recommend decoupling the social security from paid work. It was agreed that initial formulation pointing to a discussion / debate on decoupling would be the best approach. It was noted that even in the most positive scenario the decoupling will be needed, but it is outside the remit of the EGE to tell how it should be done.

EGE would welcome the broadening of the scene and broader societal debate on sustainability and robustness of social security systems.

Another recommendation should be added on the working poor – going beyond minimal wage.

It was suggested to modify the definition of ‘equity’ in the ethics chapter. A wider debate on the use of terms ‘(in)equity’ and ‘(in)equality’ raised. It should be explained on first occurrence in the text of the Opinion.

The Group reached a conceptual agreement of the recommendations, as the next step, an editing group should meet for 1-2 days within next month to fine-tune the recommendations. Later on, the text will be sent to the entire Group for final acceptance.

4. Next steps

Secretariat to send the list of dates of the meetings 2019 and to send the set of immediate next steps. (already done on 19 September)

Barbara Prainsack to draft a prologue for the recommendation section, including:

- a reference to the content of the grey boxes in the intro;
- an explanation on the wider understanding of work;
- instrumental/non-instrumental value of work;
- elements from the previous summary draft text;
- explain the wider understanding of 'technology';
- bullet points A-D from the previous recommendation 1.

It should be ~1-2 page, include the elements already indicated in the working draft under prologue, and it was suggested to draw on the structure of the presentation at the NEC forum.

Siobhan O'Sullivan to draft recommendations on:

1. Flexibility / Written policies for employees (e.g. restriction to write emails after certain hours)
2. Curricula Development / appropriate skills / gender in STEM
3. Apprenticeships
4. Assistance to SME's with upskilling and training / EU approach to support SMEs
5. Mechanisms (such as personal activity accounts) to facilitate individual upskilling/retraining
6. Working Poor
7. Gender, access to labour market and pay policies
8. Social security and decoupling from employment contributions
9. Supporting co-operatives
10. Collective Bargaining

Barbara Prainsack to add a preface to the recommendation 3 (emphasise the notion of 'societal upskilling').

Christiane Wopen to draft a recommendation on non-standard forms of employment (previously 4d).

Laura Palazzani to revise the definition of 'equity' in ethics chapter; crosscheck the use of 'equity' and 'equality' throughout the text.

Eugenijus Gefenas to draft a recommendation on intra-EU inequalities (potentially, under the 'societal upskilling' section).

Secretariat to send a new structure of the recommendations.

Set the meeting of the editorial group depending on availabilities.

5. Next meeting

7-8 November 2019, Brussels

6. List of participants

Day 1: Emmanuel Agius, Ana Sofia Carvalho, Eugenijus Gefenas, Julian Kinderlerer, Siobhán O'Sullivan, Laura Palazzani, Barbara Prainsack, Carlos Maria Romeo Casabona, Nils-Eric Sahlin, Marcel Jeroen Van den Hoven, Christiane Wopen, Jim Dratwa, Maija Locane

Day 2: Emmanuel Agius, Ana Sofia Carvalho, Eugenijus Gefenas, Andreas Kurtz, Siobhán O'Sullivan, Laura Palazzani, Barbara Prainsack, Carlos Maria Romeo Casabona, Nils-Eric Sahlin, Marcel Jeroen Van den Hoven, Christiane Wopen, Jim Dratwa, Maija Locane