MINUTES

Meeting
of the European Group on Ethics
in Science and New Technologies (EGE)

Brussels, 20-21 September 2017

Present: *Prof. Emmanuel Agius, Dr. Anne Cambon-Thomsen, Prof. Ana Sofia Carvalho, Prof. Eugenijus Gefenas, Prof. Julian Kinderlerer, Prof. Andreas Kurtz, Prof. Jonathan Montgomery, Prof. Herman Nys, Prof. Laura Palazzani, Prof. Carlos Maria Romeo Casabona, Prof. Nils-Eric Sahlin, Prof. Marcel Jeroen van den Hoven, Prof. Christiane Woopen*
Excused: *Dr. Siobhán O'Sullivan, Prof. Barbara Prainsack*
Commission: *Jim Dratwa, Rasida El-Haouzi, Joanna Parkin*

Nature of meeting: *Non-public*

Wednesday 20 September 2017

Morning session: **(BERLAYMONT building, room S3)**

Introduction and updates

Christiane Woopen and Jim Dratwa welcomed the members and introduced the meeting. The agenda and minutes of the previous EGE meeting were approved. Johannes Klumpers congratulated the group on a productive start to their work and informed the EGE of the latest developments regarding the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM). He welcomed the good collaboration between the EGE and the SAM, noting that Christiane Woopen is scheduled to participate in the SAM Group meeting on 29-30 November.

Christiane Woopen then provided several updates, including her invitation to participate in a meeting of the European Parliament's EPP Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity on 7th November and her participation with Laura Palazzani and Jim Dratwa in the meetings of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) on the previous week in Paris.

Jim Dratwa then informed of a number of policy developments within the Commission (e.g. artificial intelligence, connected automated driving) that have been signalled as requiring ethical reflection and input. A discussion followed on the value the EGE can contribute to such initiatives and how to prioritise specific requests.

Julian Kinderlerer informed of his participation as keynote speaker in the Final Conference of the SARTORI project on an Ethics Assessment Framework and his forthcoming participation in the DG SANTE conference on Modern Biotechnologies in Agriculture on 28 September.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics

Jeroen van den Hoven introduced the latest draft of the statement circulated in advance of the meeting. He presented the notion of meaningful human control as an overarching framework, noting that this concept may be broken down into various dimensions. A discussion followed in which members raised several points, including the need to clarify the scope and purpose of the statement and, relatedly, the need to bring forward a clear set of recommendations or principles by which to guide further action. Members highlighted the need to develop reflection surrounding concepts of 'autonomy/intentionality' and 'responsibility' (e.g. chain responsibility,

traceability and the link between accountability and responsibility) and the need to provide additional explanation/clarity on the concept of meaningful human control in this context.

Jeroen van den Hoven agreed to develop the draft statement in view of the comments received during the meeting and to circulate a revised version to the group before the October meeting in Strasbourg.

Discussion on the topic of the first Opinion (focus on Chapter 3: Ethical considerations)

Laura Palazzani introduced the draft chapter, explaining the logic and structure of the text, including the use of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights as a reference framework. A discussion followed during which the following points were raised:

- The need to give 'work as a value' additional prominence within the text (e.g. as a standalone section quite at the beginning – to be coordinated with the concept chapter).
- The multiple dimensions of work as a value, e.g. human flourishing, quality of life and wellbeing as well as contributing to the wider societal good. Why do we work? Without work, what systems, structures replace these functions?
- The need to give due prominence to the social dimension which sits at the core of the opinion.
- The tension inherent to work as empowerment vs exploitation/subjugation and the corresponding need to nuance 'the value of work' (e.g. pose the question rather than a statement).
- The need to distinguish and further develop key concepts (e.g. liberty and autonomy; solidarity and justice).
- The value of including references to additional phenomena/examples which may affect the future of work (e.g. human enhancement, use of algorithms for recruitment purposes, the attempt to digitise all human activity and contributions – to be coordinated with the trends chapter).
- The importance of applying a coherent logic to distinguish which Charter rights to include in Chapter 3 (ethics) and which to address in Chapter 4 (governance).
- The need to highlight the positive impacts of certain trends (e.g. the flexibility, autonomy and access granted by the growth in non-standard forms of employment, referring to the trends chapter).

Afternoon session: **(BERLAYMONT building, room S3)**

Expert Hearings

Christiane Woopen and Jim Dratwa welcomed the visiting experts.

Dr. Roubini Gropas
Team Leader – Social Team, European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

Roubini Gropas began by outlining the broader political context, including the challenges Europe faces in preparing for a changing future of work. These include the challenge of ensuring convergence between EU member states, ageing and projected labour gaps, as well as global economic and technological developments. She highlighted that existing research and debate on the future of work is dominated by certain sectors or framed by certain outlooks and that there is the scope and necessity to develop a European narrative on the future of work.

She outlined the main trends changing the world of work as well as the 'known unknowns' and uncertainties that policymakers must contend with. She also noted continuities, including the dominant aspiration among young people ('Generation Z') for stability and security (OECD longitudinal study).

Dr Gropas then set out the EU's toolbox for enacting policy change, including legislative and non-legislative instruments such as funding, cooperation and policy guidance (best practices etc). She concluded by highlighting potential areas that may warrant a regulatory re-think e.g. definitions of work, worker and employee; defining what counts as value creation and property and intellectual rights.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the following questions/points were raised:

- The new environment in which policy/decision-making takes place in a context of rapid evolution of multiple, complex challenges and the subsequent primacy placed on tracking and identifying trends
- Inclusiveness and vulnerability: young, low skilled, third country nationals remain the most precarious groups (e.g. prevalence of unstable contracts, difficulties transitioning into employment, high rates of unemployment). In terms of gender: the number of girls entering STEM subjects has been decreasing at undergraduate level potentially signalling future gender pay disparities. Women dominate flexible, part-time work. This coupled with more and more single households and single parent households imply gender disadvantages in terms of in-work poverty, and lower accrued rights, including pensions.
- Value conflicts: potential tensions between the objectives of economic sustainability and employment creation pursued by policymakers and the security and stability sought by generation Z.
- Importance of teaming investments in training and re-skilling with foresight and strategic knowledge about employment creation. The important role for regions here, as well as non-state actors such as universities and private corporations.

Professor Phillippe van Parijs
Université catholique de Louvain

Professor van Parijs began by linking the changes driving the future of work to debates surrounding the Basic Income concept (a regular social security payment that all citizens or residents of a country would receive independent of any other income). He noted that technological development, together with globalisation trends, are leading to a gradual but powerful polarisation in earning, with the resulting societal problems, unrest etc.

According to Professor van Parijs, the Basic Income would replace the 'safety net' model currently offered by social welfare systems with that of a 'floor', offering a basic foundation for everyone. He contended the potential benefits of such as scheme could include enabling overworked individuals to decrease their hours, increasing work-sharing, as well as subsidising low paid work.

He proposed that dispensing with the legal obligation to work would not prevent people from seeking meaningful employment or alternative ways of contributing to society, noting that currently income is not proportionate to people's contributions to society.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the following questions/points were raised:

- The means of funding a Basic Income scheme, consequences for public finances and taxation arrangements.
- Potential impacts on inequality.
- The link between the Basic Income concept and ideals of justice, freedom, agency and increasing human capabilities.
- Practical application of such schemes (e.g. none as such but practices in Alaska, Macau and Finnish experiments come closest) and feasibility questions.
- The metaphorical distinction between the floor and the net (e.g. poverty trap effects, including intra-household poverty dependency trap)

Professor Judy Wajcman
London School of Economics

Professor Wajcman began with a critique of the current debates around the future of work and technological change, highlighting the uncertainties surrounding much of the projected changes and contesting the notion of a paradigm shift. She contended that machine learning remains in its infancy and a large proportion of human skills and contributions in the workplace will not be easily replaced by robots (e.g. care of a Doctor in a healthcare setting). She also argued that hypes around job losses and proliferation of debates on topics such as the universal basic income, serve to distract from the central challenge which is that a large proportion of the jobs being created (including but not limited to the gig and collaborative economies) are poorly paid and insecure.

Turning to new forms of non-standard work (gig economy etc.) Professor Wajcman called for increased regulation in these sectors, pointing to recent legal action against companies such as Uber and drawing attention

to the work of the Oxford Internet Institute ('Towards a Fairer Gig Economy'). She argued that current policy debates – such as those that focus on re-training – are based on assumptions that the nature and pace of change are inevitable and called instead for a more proactive approach to the kind of work and jobs we wish to create.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the following questions/points were raised:

- The role of corporations and the importance of responsible innovation, with greater engagement of designers and developers and overall more transparency and participation build into the development process.
- Digital technologies and the impact on overall skills development
- The need to focus on the changing nature of employment relationships within the Opinion (and ability of workers to negotiate better pay, working conditions etc.)
- The need to look beneath the 'myth' of non-standard work and the supposed autonomy, flexibility that it generates. For instance, many workers in the gig economy are constantly competing for the next contract or task, are expected to be available for work at any time and therefore have little 'free' time.
- The need to consider ageing, and longer working lives.
- Comparisons between the way developments are configured in Europe and the US, e.g. with regard to regulation and tax arrangements, on citizen participation and responsible innovation, the latter being more advanced in Europe.

Thursday 21 September 2017

Morning session: **(BERLAYMONT building, room S3)**

Discussion on the topic of the first Opinion (focus on Chapter 1: Concepts)

The Chair welcomed Barbara Prainsack to the meeting via video-conference. Barbara Prainsack, as Section Rapporteur, introduced the draft Chapter on concepts and notions, explaining her approach and highlighting the key ideas structuring the draft (e.g. explaining the wider role of employment, distinguishing work and labour, differentiating information technologies from automation technologies and their impacts.)

The discussion that followed covered the following points:

- What does this Chapter seek to do? To enable us to ask the right questions but not to commit us to the answers. To serve as a touchstone for the rest of the Opinion, starting from the underpinning questions (what is work for? What is the good life? What are the underlying power structures at play?
- Definitional questions: e.g. what do we mean by 'technology'? How can terms such as digitalisation, automation, informationisation or 'work', 'tasks' and 'employment' be defined?
- The scope of the Opinion: how to bring to the fore the technological drivers while keeping a systems, societal perspective.
- How to use theory and cite authors such as Marx, Arendt etc. Importance of giving a flavour of relevant thought while not pinning the Opinion to particular authors or relying too heavily on specific theoretical frameworks.

The discussion highlighted the need to re-visit and amend/update the section as concepts emerge and take shape during the development of the rest of the Opinion. It was therefore agreed that an in-depth integration of comments would be done only after the presentation of Chapters 2, 3 (revised) and 4 in October.

Updates and developments

The Chair updated the Group on her preceding meeting with Clara de la Torre, Director heading the transport research department in the European Commission's DG RTD, on the subject of connected autonomous driving. The meeting included discussion of the forthcoming Commission communication on connected autonomous driving (due 2018) and the potential for current EGE reflection on artificial intelligence to provide a steer to the ethical considerations of that work.

She then introduced a discussion on the recent initiative organised by INSERM to found an expert group (European Steering Committee) to assess the potential benefits and draw-backs of genome editing. Ana Sofia Carvalho, as a member of this initiative, explained its origins and purpose. The EGE members emphasised the importance of following its work closely.

Working lunch with Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation (Salon 2, 13th Floor)

During the working lunch, the Group provided an update on the progress of the scoping work undertaken by the EGE on the Opinion on the future of work and on the preliminary work on the EGE's own-initiative statement on artificial intelligence and robotics. An in-depth discussion took place on the ethical, legal and regulatory implications of artificial intelligence and the consequent challenges facing policymakers, with the Statement under preparation seen as a perfect means for the EGE to set out the principles for the ethics of AI. An exchange was also held on the EGE's future work programme, including the growing importance of certain key topics in the international domain such as the ethical and societal implications of gene editing.

Afternoon session: **(BERLAYMONT building, room S3)**

Discussion on conclusion and next steps

Jim Dratwa provided further information concerning forthcoming EGE meetings in 2017, including the joint meeting between the EGE and the Council of Europe's DH-BIO on 26 October in Strasbourg. He also informed of the planned exchange with the European Data Protection Supervisor during the EGE plenary meeting in Brussels on 13-14 December (dedicated session foreseen on 14 December 14:00-17:00). A discussion followed concerning the planning of expert hearings. The meeting concluded with a short discussion on working methods. It was agreed to schedule a brief tutorial on Google Drive for the EGE meeting in December.

15H30   **End of the meeting**

Action Points

- Jim and Joanna to follow-up with Commission services regarding on-going AI-related policy initiatives.
- EGE members to register for the Council of Europe 20th anniversary of Oviedo conference directly on the CoE conference website.
- Jeroen van den Hoven to develop the draft statement on AI in view of the comments received during the meeting and to circulate a revised version to the group before the October meeting in Strasbourg.
- Jonathan Montgomery to develop an elaborated draft structure of Chapter 4 (for circulation to the working group by 10 October and to rest of the EGE by 17 October).

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