

EPR Online Conference 2020
**Embracing Digital Transformation: Inspiration
and Innovation for Quality Services**

29 – 30 September 2020
10:00 – 12:00 & 14.00-16.00 CET

Zoom

This report includes recommendations on policy implementation of EU initiatives and common interests identified for future collaborations.

Background

In 2019, EPR chose the theme of digital transformation as one of the core topics for the following two years; The impacts of COVID-19 and the changed ways of working brought on by it have further stressed the importance and pertinence of this theme.

As one of the key activities organized by EPR, The Annual Conference was planned to be hosted by Rehab Group in Dublin. Due to the COVID crisis, the event was forcibly shifted online.

29 September

First plenary session

In total, the conference had 21 speakers (15 in workshops and 7 in plenary sessions). In total, 90 people attended, of which about 36% did not belong to EPR members. The conference saw the participation of 22 countries, spread over 4 continents.

For the morning session, the welcoming words came from Laura Jones – Secretary-General of EPR, and Sabina Lobato Lobato - Directora de Formación, Empleo, Operaciones y



Transformación at Fundación ONCE and EPR Board member. Both introductions referred to Digital Transformation and the reasons why it was chosen as the main topic for the Conference.

What attracted you to this conference? Share a few words



Laura Jones welcomed participants and introduced EPR's main area of work, initiatives and activities, spotlighting what those related to the topic on Digital Transformation. She concluded providing an overall view of the Conference Program.

Werner Etzelstorfer (Transformation Coach and Trainer at Triangility)), acted as a

moderator for the morning session.

The first speaker was **Nuria Oliver** (Board member at ELLIS, The European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems) with her speech on The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Artificial Intelligence's role.

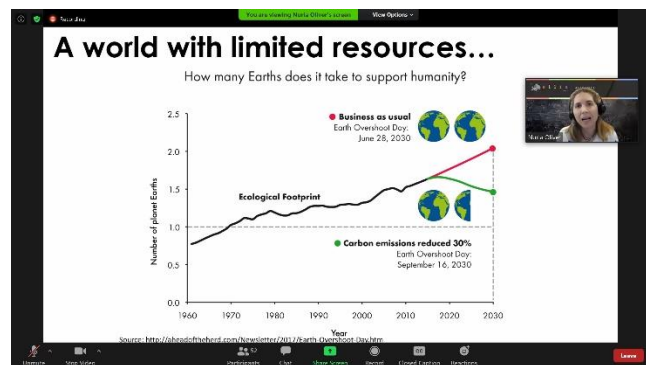
In her presentation, Ms Oliver introduced the development of AI and Technology in nowadays context. According to her, four elements represent key challenges in our society and are shaping our world: an ageing world population, the world limited natural resources, the uneven allocation of resources (i.e., the increasing gap between rich and poor population groups) and climate change.

In this context, technology represents an opportunity to tackle those issues. Examples of that are the mobile phone, 3D printer, wearable technology, social media, etc.

She also mentioned the work of Herb Simon, 1956, and the Moravec's paradox from 1980. She continued her presentation by discussing "The internet of things" and highlighted that 50 billion devices were connected in 2020. She drew attention to the fact that this activity is generating a huge amount of data. Thus, she pointed out that we are currently experiencing a "4th Industrial revolution.

Ms Oliver elaborated further the idea of Artificial Intelligence, mentioning three types of it:

- 1) Narrow or Weak AI: Example: Algorithm for playing chess;
- 2) General or Strong AI: Computer that exhibits intelligence on a broad range of tasks. She emphasized we (humanity) are far from it;
- 3) Super AI: we are very far from it!



Additionally, she also mentioned there are two different approaches to AI: Top-Down and Bottom-Up. AI is transversal, invisible and ubiquitous (AI is transforming our whole society) scalable, complex and updateable.



Ms Oliver concluded her presentation by reflecting that in the future, AI might contribute to the medical diagnosis of people or in judicial systems or helping in the staff selection process. Thus, she stressed that in the development of AI there are consequences that affect society and further analysis is needed: i.e., AI political issues, AI strategies, establishing legal, regulatory frameworks, ethic matters, education, social aspects, economic productivity, labour market.

Key points from the Q&A round:

MsOliver debated the urgency to educate all levels of society, particularly in terms of compulsory education, to introduce computational thinking, coding, hardware, algorithm solving, etc.

Additionally, critical thinking and social skills must be reinforced. In a professional level being able to open up to upskilling, reskilling, i.e., in the professional context, AI will enrich professions, and people will learn to redefine tasks.

In terms of society, she mentioned the case of Finland, who published an AI strategy (1). Also, was the importance of educating the political representatives on AI was debated.

Finally, the importance of making standardized data available to scientists and others to facilitate their work and contribution to solving problems societies was underlined.

The second speaker was **Robert Schaffner** (Director and Founder at Triangility), presenting Scouting emerging technologies learning from the best futurists.



Mr Schaffner spoke about the impossibility of keeping track of the latest technology developments, reinforcing the idea that technology is developing nowadays at a fast pace and that technology trends are impacting/changing society. “Change is coming, whether you like it or not.”, he emphasized.

He then introduced the idea of what he referred to as “Tech scouts – dreaming the future” and drew attention to how we acquire knowledge through three options: 1) by copying 2) by reflection 3) by experiencing.

He then brought attention to science fiction literature. He mentioned Jules Verne's book "Paris in the 20th Century". He gave examples of elements mentioned in the book that did not exist such as skyscrapers, elevators, mass transport systems, communication systems, and weapons of mass destruction.

As another example of science fiction literature imaging a future world, he referred to William Ford Gibson, and his book “Neuromancer”. He cited further examples of a vision of the future in Michio Kaku and Elon Musk's work, this latter as a visionary involved in AI projects and spacecraft.

¹In October 2017, the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment published a national AI strategy entitled [Finland's Age of Artificial Intelligence](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/ai-watch/finland-ai-strategy-report_en#:~:text=In%20October%202017%2C%20the%20Finnish,Intelligence%20(Finland%2C%202017).&text=Finland%20will%20adopt%20an%20open,a%20prosperous%20development%20of%20AI) (Finland, 2017). This report fits under the umbrella of a broader [Artificial Intelligence Programme](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/ai-watch/finland-ai-strategy-report_en#:~:text=In%20October%202017%2C%20the%20Finnish,Intelligence%20(Finland%2C%202017).&text=Finland%20will%20adopt%20an%20open,a%20prosperous%20development%20of%20AI) in Finland (also labelled as AI Finland) to establish artificial intelligence and robotics as the cornerstones of success for Finnish companies
Source: ([https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/ai-watch/finland-ai-strategy-report_en#:~:text=In%20October%202017%2C%20the%20Finnish,Intelligence%20\(Finland%2C%202017\).&text=Finland%20will%20adopt%20an%20open,a%20prosperous%20development%20of%20AI](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/ai-watch/finland-ai-strategy-report_en#:~:text=In%20October%202017%2C%20the%20Finnish,Intelligence%20(Finland%2C%202017).&text=Finland%20will%20adopt%20an%20open,a%20prosperous%20development%20of%20AI))



Mr Schaffner also gave examples of what he referred to as emerging technologies such as Liliun jet company (lilium.com), AI/ML, Autonomous cars, Virtual and Augmented reality, Robotics, 4 D printers, Tactile internet. ².

He concluded his intervention by quoting himself as follows: “Believing in the beauty of our dreams is the cornerstone of our futures” (Robert Schaffner, 2020).

The last speaker of the morning was **David Maguire** (Senior Analyst at The King’s Fund), *Digital Change in Health and Social Care – Experience from the UK*.

David introduced in his presentation elements based on what he referred to as "the English experience" in dealing with the introduction of digital change implementation in the UK's public health care system, particularly the NHS.

For instance, he mentioned that electronic patients' record was not often deployed, but that after the Pandemic, there was a new system in that regards being deployed. Other changes implemented throughout the Pandemic he referred to had to do with doctors being able to assist patients remotely, empowering change for clinicians (and patients), new ways to allow people to work from home give them flexibility, the use of e-copies /e-forms rather than paper. David also mentioned key points such as digital change happening now rapidly, the digital change in the context of health and social care provisions and how this is related to people's expectations and whether these expectations are met. He pointed out the opportunities for new partnerships and support and mentioned the integrated health care systems comprising health organizations, hospitals, primary care centres, etc. He emphasized the idea of the powerful role the volunteer sector plays in this context. Additionally, further key points were discussed in the Q&A:



- *We have a lot of technologies and data, still we can't find a solution about the coronavirus crisis. Why?*
- *How do you see the use of AI in the rehabilitation process? (Medical or vocational rehabilitation supporting people with disabilities).*
- *How have you solved problems to do with lack of (quality) connections and/or devices to make the remote service accessible? Do you have separate programs for updating ICT skills both in service providers and users?*
- *Digital service systems in public services require many skills from people trying to interact and understand what the services have to offer. How do we take care that the clients can get the help they need to operate in the digital platforms? What about Accessibility?*

² The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) defines the Tactile Internet as an internet network that combines ultralow latency with extremely high availability, reliability and security. It believes the Tactile Internet represents a “revolutionary level of development for society, economics and culture” Source: www.5g.co.uk.

The morning was closed in breakout sessions, where participants were asked to answer to and discuss on three questions:

- What was the most interesting thing you heard from one of the keynotes?
- What could be implications for your work or organisation from what you heard?
- What might you do or think differently?

The afternoon of the first day was dedicated to two parallel Workshops:

Workshop 1

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) - focus on training and employment

The first speaker was **Nick Rosa** (Global Head of Immersive Learning at Accenture). His presentation stressed the importance of immersive learning for upskilling people, for learning, training and education.

According to the Edgar Dale code of learning, a pyramid can be drawn showing a cone of experience: the percentage of learning and memory retention that any user has just from reading is extremely low. The ways of e-learning and video content improve this kind of retention. With immersive learning and virtual reality, the learning experience increases: create a real experience with the same kind of emotional engagement as in a real-life scenario. This technology enables to create digital reality and training possibilities that can be reset whenever the user wants.

By using muscle memory and using VR equipment, complex and dangerous processes can be practised. With immersive learning, we can develop collaborative skills and soft skills: creating the illusion of being with other humans or creating multi-user experiences in the same digital virtual room (digital classroom).

Besides, virtual devices are not expensive anymore, with a virtual headset costing around \$300.

Nick Rosa gave some examples of what Accenture delivered already with Virtual Reality:

- A simulation with muscle memory for a shipping company to arrive in different harbours.
- Application to train social workers in interviews with parents, suspected of not treating their children in a good way; an extremely delicate process. In this application, the same kind of emotional impact was re-created as if interviews were held in these families' environment.
- Internal application to train the employees of Accenture to learn compliance and everything related to the company's rules.
- In a program built for Save the Children, an immersive application was created that helped children around the world to understand what's their vocational job, understand what are the requirements of the market they are living in, and improve the skill needed to develop and secure their livelihoods in the country that they are living in. The application works with mobile phones and doesn't require a VR headset.



- For a call centre, an application was built to train people in the approach with dissatisfied customers. They are recording the user's experience, and then they replay the experience, putting the user in the shoe of the customer that is calling the call centre.
- Application for onboarding, training recruits how to do public speaking and how to do client interviews in Accenture.

The next step is the actual step of augmented reality, for example, in iPhones coming out this year with the possibility to create a 3D map of the world. You can deliver a huge amount of visual information using digital content imposed on top of your field of vision.

The second speaker was **Simon Uyterhoeven** (Business Project Leader at VDAB Belgium). VDAB, is the north part of Belgium's public employment service, as business project leader for all artificial intelligence projects. They consciously choose to put the online services as the first contact in their services.

Simon Uyterhoeven presented three cases of VDAB and lessons learned:

1. The first case explained showed proactive profiling. Every job seeker is unique and has a different need for support. A model was built, which predicts finding a job within six months, based on eight different drivers. With this model's output, a ranking is made for their contact centre which new job seekers to contact first to offer them support.
2. The second case is a matching engine based on job data labels and the job seeker's profile data, also, based on the clicks on the vacancy website.
3. The third case is the launch of two AI tools. Based on the previous jobs, a competency profile is built automatically to show which jobs they can apply, indicating potential competency development and showing training to be followed. The second tool gives the job seeker an orientation in which jobs are a good fit for their interests, based upon a questionnaire filled on the website.

VDAB has three ethical principles in building these programs: Trust, transparency and benefit.

- Trust that citizens have to feel good in a society that uses AI responsibly.
- Transparency means clear and transparent decision making of the tools, and always explaining the decisions of the used AI products and services.
- The benefit means that the output needs to be socially advantaged.

Artificial Intelligence is teamwork, with the collaboration of different departments and including the citizen (co-creation via pilots).

It's important to set the goal of the project and take into account the privacy and ethical aspects. The models try to filter out the bias because most of the time, historical data is used. This can be a time-consuming process.

The third and last speaker was **Rosa Almeida** (Project manager at Fundación Intrás) introducing the Workingage project (<https://www.workingage.eu/project>) project. The purpose of the project is to promote healthy habits in the working environment and daily living activities. The project targets people of 45 years and older to help them enjoy higher levels of well-being and safety at work. The focus is on three workplace types: manufacturing, office and teleworking.

The system will consider user activities and give personalised advice. The worker will have a series of tools available by using a mobile application. All data will be collected in the working-age tool, where the user will be guided through advice, quick exercises and other recommendations.

The main areas of action that the tool addresses are the workers' health, ergonomics and physical environment, cognitive and emotional factors, lifestyle – health habits and social behaviours.



The system collects the information, and it is used for the system's decision-making and assessment of the effects of stress, physical and psychological strain. Focus is on three types of strain: physical, mental and emotional strain.

Different sensors within the working-age system will measure different types of strain, and depending upon the measure of strain, the responding intervention from the system is suggested.

Data is collected from sensors regarding facial expression and gesture recognition, body pose estimation, voice analysis, noise analysis, activity tracker, ECG wristband, eye tracker, EEG headband, environmental sensor and body scale.

Most of the time, the users will need to use the base sensors: a wristband and the mobile phone. Besides, one or two sensors about the environment are used, and information is received from a digital questionnaire. The main interface will show advice, recommendations, and exercises by implementing data analytics and deep learning process.

There are three potential pilot companies to prepare the beginning of the in-company tests.

The expected outcome is increased knowledge of workers of 45 years and older in terms of stress and strain factors, and so to improve quality of life from system input.

After splitting up the participants in different workgroups to facilitate an in-depth discussion on the presentations” topics, plenary feedback was given:

A need was stressed for a project between Accenture, EPR and the members of EPR. AI could be an amazingly powerful tool for somebody with a disability trying to find the appropriate accommodation that they need.

AI technology becomes more democratised than it used to be. A few years ago it was just for a handful of companies, but it is becoming less expensive and affordable at the moment.

A major point of interest for EPR and the industry is bringing together the business and the industry, looking after projects to develop. “Suppose you think on the major risk of AI to provoke the discrimination in hiring or not hiring persons with disabilities because of the bias on the programming and the technology. In that case, the industry needs to be close to our users, to the collective of persons with disabilities” (Sabina Lobatao).

There could be a common ground where probably similar concepts, ideas, or other parts of the software might be used, targeted at someone with disabled functions or other people to experience how it would be to step into someone else's shoes.

Workshop 2: Crowdsourcing innovation through hackathons

The second workshop was moderated by **Colin Keogh**, co-founder of The Rapid Foundation Moderator.

The session was opened by the welcome words of Alicia Gomez Campos (Senior Public Affairs and Community Officer at EPR)

The first speaker was **David R. Pollard** (Innovation Manager at Rehab Group).



In his presentation about the Rehab Group diverse initiatives in Ireland, David discussed investing in people, engaging communities, changing perspectives. He shared with the audience his experience with hackathons. He emphasized that hackathons are social events that help connect people to put ideas together and create solutions. He then gave examples of collaboration and initiatives born through hackathons such as the OSV (Open Source Ventilator). He also emphasized that hackathons imply diversity. For hackathons to be successful, it is essential to be inclusive and bring in people from different communities and perspectives. The use of social media and platforms such as Twitter can help in the organizing stages of hackathons. He referred to the spirit of entrepreneurship and engagement and respect, as elements that play a role in hackathons. He drew attention to an entrepreneurship initiative dedicated to people with disabilities called StarAbility. He referred to the Dublin startup week 2019 that comprised 30 basecamps – 64 community events - 163 speakers & coaches and about 5000 attendees. He appointed the concept of "Ecosystem engagement" and used the term "Empower". He mentioned that when thinking of a hackathon, it was relevant to raise questions such as "What does it mean to create the solution to your challenge?" and "How can you help?".

The second speakers were **Frederic Payet** (Interregional Director at EPNAK).

Frederique and Sophie shared their experience in organizing a hackathon in France (Bretagne) in the field of digital solutions for medical organisations to develop digital tools for occupational integration. The Hackathon experience took place on the 27 and 28 September in 2019, in Rennes. As he discussed the aim was to develop digital tools for PWD employment, and it involved 14 participants. Frédérique pointed out that hackathons involve motivation, creativity, and innovation. Frederic shared that EPNAK made a national call for volunteers to participate in this hackathon initiative and that INSA (French School of engineer) participated.

He mentioned some key figures related to this particular hackathon that involved 24 hours non-stop/ 30 students, six teams, eight mentors, 80 EPNAK employees, 30 experts, a jury of 10 members, three prizes: "The Best Project", "the Pitch" and "the Best Atmosphere" (the hackathon budget at a total of 25.500 EUR). The winner idea of the hackathon organized by EPNAK was given to an initiative called "FLOWER", a mobile app that allows the personalized follow-up of the professional integration path, as he explained.

The third speaker was **Veronika Kaska** (Head of the Personnel and Administrative Department at Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre).

Veronika started her presentation by sharing the experience of Estonia incorporating digital initiatives. An example of this digitalization at a national level is, for instance, the introduction of the smart ID in Estonia. She then mentioned that entrepreneurship is strong in her country where there are over 1000 startups for a country of 1.3 million people. Other examples of digitalization she mentioned are "in e-state we trust": <https://e-estonia.com/>.

She argued that there is a need for investment in people's ICT skills and that particularly people in Social Services need training in ICT skills. It is also necessary to make available spaces where infrastructure is in place to start innovating. She then shared numerous hackathon experiences that were carried out in Estonia such as the digital state hackathon <https://hackathon.ee/>. She argued that a hackathon does not need to involve technology to be successful or bring about new ideas. She gave the example of a hackathon that developed on providing better service design



related to facilities solutions and how from this particular hackathon an idea targeting a parking permit for people with disabilities came to life.

Veronika also discussed the concept of what she called "thematic hackathons" and gave various examples of hackathons that have taken place in Estonia such as the Post Truth hackathons by the University of Tartu, Internal Security hackathon events in remote areas, incubators for new ideas that bring together expertise from different fields. She mentioned that Astangu has participated in a social hackathon trying to solve the problem of bettering jobs for people with special needs that correspond to their abilities. Furthermore, she highlighted the numerous hackathons that have been addressing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis such as "Hackathon: Let's hack the crisis!", and the several technical solutions that were born from this type of initiatives: a map to follow the spread of COVID-19 in Estonia, Chat app, Contact tracing app for COVID-19. Another example she shared of hackathon bringing people together in looking for solutions: Global hack-the crisis-community carried out in April 2020, which involved people from over 53 countries around the world.

The last speaker was the facilitator, Dr Colin Keogh, co-founder of The Rapid Foundation. Colin introduced the idea that technology is a tool. He emphasized that "technology won't lead the way, hardworking people will" from that perspective, he explained that as a tool technology has many uses and what it matters is how technology is being used. He gave examples of the use of technology, such as the case of mobile phones. He drew attention to mobile phones being used as part of stethoscopes or as scanner monitors and so forth in very-low resource settings such as in some African countries. He also shared the experience of using 3D printers in India in an orphan centre by creating low-cost prosthetics.

He then introduced the concept of "crowdsourcing" which he said implies a crowd of people to gather solutions, identify problems and create solutions. He emphasized that bringing people together and developing innovative ideas, engaging communities, has a significant impact.

Colin further developed on the idea of digitalization and the need for adaptability to changes brought about by digitalization. He then referred to hackathons and shared the example of the OSV (Open Source Ventilator) initiative. He mentioned some of the factors that can be addressed when looking for solutions in the context of a hackathon as follows: Moral- "Should you be solving these issues?", Legal- "You cannot copy IP", Regulation, Conflict, etc.

Some key points from the Q&A were:

Q: What are the biggest obstacles to have a successful hackathon?

A: If you don't engage a variety of different/diverse partners. If you don't engage people from the communities you are trying to bring/come up with solutions. PWD, minorities.

A: You need funding.

Q: Is the future of the hackathon a virtual hackathon?

A: If people are a part, it might be less effective. Social interaction is better.

A: It may be a hybrid formula.

Additionally, Colin shared on-screen different "canvasses" as he called them, to be used in implementing a hackathon:

- Empathy Map which identifies areas such as: "Pains", "gains"- think& feel- "see"- "say & do", "hear".



- Problem Solution Fit Canvas which identifies “Problem” – “Validation” “Value proposition” “unfair advantage”- “Solution”-“Barriers”. He said to contact him for sharing these canvasses if anyone was interested.
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30 September

The morning of the second day was dedicated to two parallel Workshops:

Workshop 3

The first speaker was **David Banés** (Director of David Banés Access and Inclusion Services) presenting trends in the delivery of Assistive technology (AT) services and products. He discussed understanding that the ecosystem supporting AT (policy, research, training, assessment) is ever-changing and trends in each area impact AT. He paid particular attention to the topics of:

1. The shifts in technology innovation.
2. The increasing number of People With Disabilities and economics in their influence on AT services. He brought attention to those essential technologies (drones, robots, virtual reality, blockchain) which was changing AT services and gave us some examples of how AI can predict communication to support someone with communication difficulties. He drew attention to a resource entitled GSMA, which helps teach people digital skills.

The second speaker was **Claudia Salatino** (Biomedical Engineer at Fondazione Don Gnocchi). She led participants through a presentation on the influence of the World Health Organisation’s GATE initiative which calls for quality and affordable AT for all and the link between the initiative and SIVA (assistive technology information and assessment service). The importance of measuring the impact of AT on the quality of life of PWD's was highlighted. She outlined a case study involving the provision of a prosthesis for a PWD and those employed to gain feedback on its influence on the person's life. She highlighted the biggest challenges faced by the SIVA platform is supporting the continued training/updating of staff to develop assessments.

The third speaker was **Raquel Losada** (Head of Research, Technological Developments and Innovation Department at INTRAS Foundation). She presented a virtual reality device known as Grador multisensorial. The tool is used when indicated to support neuro-psychological intervention by using a virtual headset, leap motion device and haptic gloves. Raquel presented a validation study of the device at a palliative care site. Outcomes included reduced pain medication use, increased mood and feelings of calmness.

Link to video of gradior multisensorial <https://vimeo.com/462946135>

Following the presentations, people discussed learning points.

Including:



1. The importance of building capacity of the support giver and PWD on developments in AT. Ensuring PWD can make informed choices on AT products.
2. The role of self-help forums for PWD in supporting the choice of AT products and an organisation's role such as EPR in sharing best practices and training resources. People highlighted the benefits of platforms such as Facebook where training resources/advice can be shared, but how these platforms are regulated was highlighted.
3. Other's expressed the difficulty in studying the effects of technologies and the need to explore outcome measures.

Second Plenary session

During the afternoon plenary session, four panel members were asked the question "How can we ensure an inclusive digital future?"

Panellists included Jutta Treviranus (Professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto, Canada, June Lowery (Head of Unit at the European Commission's DG CNECT), Lidia Best (Lidia Best is a vice-Chairman of ITU JCAAHF (International Telecommunication Union Joint Coordination Activities on Accessibility and Human Factors) and Jesús Hernández Galán (Director of Universal Accessibility and Innovation of Fundación ONCE).



inclusive teaching approach.

Jutta Treviranus highlighted concerns around handing over decision making to machines when using AI and encouraged participants to reflect on embracing diversity and work towards the concept of accessibility being integrated into technology rather than viewing it as a specialist realm. She feels we need to support a movement away from society's focus on competitiveness towards teamwork and an education system that promotes learners' diversity. She warns against "intelligent tutoring" that focuses on conformity rather than embracing a broader, more



June Lowery, from the EU commission, spoke of social exclusion and regional discrimination concerning increased reliance/use of digital platforms and the European parliament's role in voicing concerns about those with cognitive disabilities being left behind with the ever-increasing shift towards online life. She spoke of work being done to implement the European Accessibility Act and mentioned positive acts by companies on accessibility, including IBM's AI-based solution for cognitive disabilities. One of her key points was encouraging those with technical skills to take up posts, and she notes a bottleneck in this area.



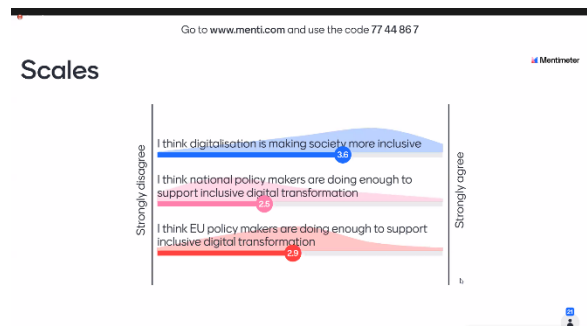
Link to EU accessibility projects: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/eu-funded-research-projects-technologies-accessibility>

Lidia Best made participants aware of work being done by ITU on promoting standards of accessibility of online platforms. She mentioned frustrations around the delayed consultations of PWD in the design of digital systems. Still, she was keen to emphasize certain platforms such as zoom that ensure accessibility features are integrated and beneficial. In line with Jutta's views, Lidia spoke of the need to correct AI bias. She emphasized how making systems homogeneous doesn't serve people who don't fit "the norm", but that the need for a more personalised approach and supporting "edge users" be recognised.

In his speech, **Jesús Hernández Galán** stressed the need to include the topic of accessibility in the education of engineers and within telecommunications. He spoke of the mental barriers within companies and the need to convince them that accessibility is important. He feels that we are in a "sweet moment" due to opportunities brought about in the digital world due to COVID 19. He feels now is the time to bring accessibility to the forefront of people's minds.

Take away points and follow up:

Participants feedback on the following topics as being important. 1. Education; 2. Training; 3. and 4. Evidencing and bench-marketing; 5. Implementation of standards; 6. Funding; 7. Accessibility for all; 8. The call for plurality versus a single solution in digital design;



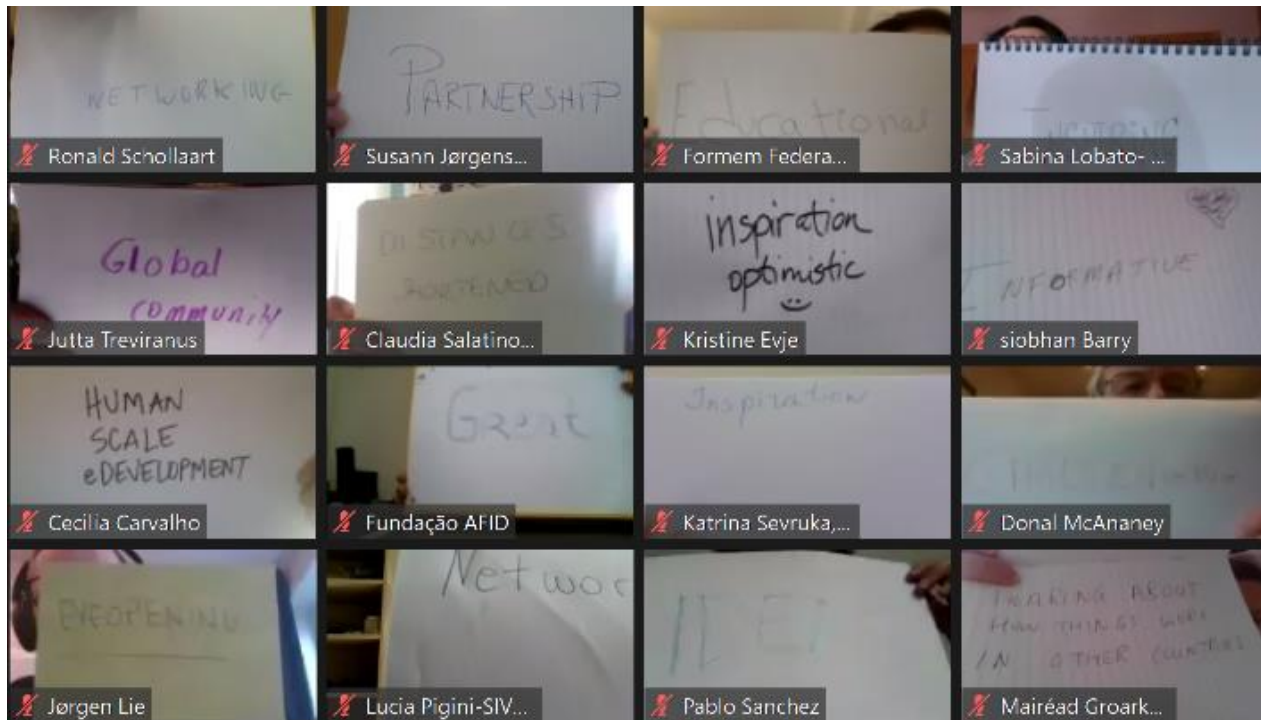
Recommendations on policy implementation of EU initiatives

- Artificial intelligence opens the door to an infinite potential for progress. At the same time, it is important that the use of A.I. is monitored and regulated. It is important to avoid that a highly functional tool is used for purposes other than improving people's lives.
- To positively use the huge amount of data available, further funds for analysis are needed. Specifically, to analyze AI political issues, AI strategies, establishing legal, regulatory frameworks, ethic matters, education, social aspects, economic productivity, labour market.
- To guarantee the diffusion and the access to AI all it's possible benefits, huge investment in education must be planned. Computational thinking, coding, hardware, algorithm solving, etc, should be included in compulsory education.
- Accessibility must be guaranteed to people with Disabilities. New technologies can be an extraordinary chance to fill the gap in society inclusion between people with disabilities and the mainstream, population. To do so, regulations must be established, especially now that the tech revolution is increasing in speed and magnitude.

Common interests identified for future collaborations

1. Development of a working party on the use of virtual reality to support the quality of life. Follow up to the presentation by Raquel Losada on Gradior multisensorial.
2. EPR needs to continue to gather resources on assistive technology to support learning for support providers and PWDs.
3. Review the idea of virtual visits to share good practices around AT between members of EPR.





Links:

Article on Microsoft's radical bet on a new type of design thinking
<https://www.fastcompany.com/3054927/microsofts-inspiring-bet-on-a-radical-new-type-of-design-thinking>

Adobe's Inclusive Design training program

<https://adobe.design/inclusive/>

Participants were asked to rate the overall event from 1 (poor quality) to 5 (excellent). The average rating of the event was **4.6 out of 5**.

