Deliverable 104

8.3A THINK TANK ANNUAL REPORT

Réf :

DEL. REL. NO : D 8.5
WP 8

DESCRIPTION: ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARIZING THE CONSORTIUM ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

COMMENTS:

Livrable 104

8.3a Rapport annuel du Think Tank

Réf :

Del. Rel. No : D 8.5
WP 8

Description: Rapport annuel sur les activites et les progres du consortium

Commentaires:

1. Summary

The EUt+ Think Tank "Technology and society" is positioned as a federative structure between the EUt+ foundation and our innovative common laboratories, centred around "Pedagogical research and student-centered learning" (*ELaRA*), "European culture and technology" (*ECT Lab+*) and to a lesser extent: *Sustainability Lab*, the European University of Technology Institute of Nanomaterials and Nanotechnologies (**EUTINN**) and **Data Science Lab**. It is also developed in parallel with the Horizon 2020 SwafS project EUt+ EXTRAS Work Package 2 which is planning the back office of the 'Think Tank' in relation to the pan European research institutes in the EUt+ initiative (cf. The Memorandun of Agreement for the creation of European Research Institutes, the Related EUt+ Graduate Research School and Supporting Research Office, signed in November 2021).

As stated in Task 8.5. "Planning dissemination" and the Annual Dissemination Plan, the Think Tank is the interface between EUt+ and a wider range of stakeholders, thus its task is to provide the means to disseminate research results to a wider audience. It is a key element of the initiative, as it leverages the insights of ECT Lab+ to advocate for key policy recommendations in line with the developed human-centered European vision of technology.

During the following years of its operation the Think Tank will continue to be a platform of reflection and exchange between academia and society as it will communicate about international initiatives through a series of **case studies** and will propose **roundtables, seminars, talks, think ins'** and advise scholars **elaborating projects** that foster the EUt+ model for Technological Education. This will be extended to a **networking activity** going beyond the initiative's members.

The Think Tank aims to influence external and internal policy through multi-format events focusing on different topics, including but not limited to different aspects of innovation (responsible innovation, ethical, social, economic aspects of innovation, etc.), responsible inventions, future research areas and applications (e.g. social robotics, green AI, critical software studies, digital studies), future of work, and others.

The Think Tank will **provide material** that is suitable and helpful to each type of audience: industry or civil society, citizens, researchers and engineers, students, policy and decision makers, and so on. For this it will closely collaborate with the Communication Central to identify content that is particularly suited for strategic dissemination. It will also issue **recommendations** to external and internal audiences including EUt+ governance. Dissemination is planned to take place via the aforementioned multiformat events. The Think Tank also plans to establish a YouTube channel to make the material produced more accessible to different target groups and make it more user-friendly.

The present deliverable summarizes the activities of the Think Tank during the first year of EUt+ initiative implemented in close connection with the ELaRA, the ECT Lab+ and the Sustainability Lab, as well as outlines the activities planned for 2022.

1. En quelques mots

Le Think Tank EUt+ " Technologie et société " se positionne comme une structure fédératrice entre la fondation EUt+ et ses laboratoires communs innovants, centrés autour de la " Recherche pédagogique et apprentissage centré sur l'étudiant " (ELaRA), de la " Culture européenne et technologie " (ECT Lab+) et dans une moindre mesure : Sustainability Lab, l'Institut universitaire européen de technologie des nanomatériaux et des nanotechnologies (EUTINN) et Data Science Lab. Il est également développé en parallèle avec le projet Horizon 2020 SwafS EUt+ EXTRAS Work Package 2 qui planifie le back-office du " Think Tank " en relation avec les instituts de recherche paneuropéens de l'initiative EUt+ (cf. Le protocole d'accord pour la création d'instituts de recherche européens, l'école doctorale de recherche connexe EUt+ et le bureau de recherche de soutien, signé en novembre 2021).

Comme indiqué dans la tâche 8.5. "Planifier la diffusion" et le plan annuel de diffusion, le Think Tank est l'interface entre EUt+ et un plus large éventail de parties prenantes, sa tâche est donc de fournir les moyens de diffuser les résultats de la recherche à un public plus large. Il s'agit d'un élément clé de l'initiative, car il exploite les connaissances d'ECT Lab+ pour défendre des recommandations politiques clés conformes à la vision européenne de la technologie centrée sur l'homme.

Au cours des prochaines années, le Think Tank continuera à être une plateforme de réflexion et d'échange entre le monde universitaire et la société. Il communiquera sur les initiatives internationales par le biais d'une série d'études de cas et proposera des tables rondes, des séminaires, des discussions, des "think ins" et conseillera les universitaires qui élaborent des projets favorisant le modèle EUt+ pour l'enseignement technologique. Cette activité sera étendue à une activité de mise en réseau allant au-delà des membres de l'initiative.

Le Think Tank a pour objectif d'influencer la politique externe et interne par le biais d'événements multiformats axés sur différents sujets, y compris, mais sans s'y limiter, les différents aspects de l'innovation (innovation responsable, aspects éthiques, sociaux et économiques de l'innovation, etc.), les inventions responsables, les futurs domaines de recherche et applications (par exemple, la robotique sociale, l'IA verte, les études critiques sur les logiciels, les études numériques), l'avenir du travail, etc.

Le Think Tank fournira du matériel adapté et utile à chaque type de public : industrie ou société civile, citoyens, chercheurs et ingénieurs, étudiants, responsables politiques et décideurs, etc. Pour cela, il collaborera étroitement avec le Centre de communication afin d'identifier les contenus particulièrement adaptés à une diffusion stratégique. Il émettra également des recommandations à l'intention des publics externes et internes, y compris la gouvernance d'EUt+. La diffusion devrait se faire par le biais des événements multiformes susmentionnés. Le Think Tank prévoit également de créer une chaîne YouTube afin de rendre le matériel produit plus accessible aux différents groupes cibles et de le rendre plus convivial.

Le présent document résume les activités du Think Tank au cours de la première année de l'initiative EUt+, sa mise en œuvre en étroite collaboration avec ELaRA, ECT Lab+ et Sustainability Lab, et présente les activités prévues pour 2022.

2. European Culture and Technology Lab (*ECT Lab+*) and Pedagogical research and student-centered learning Lab (*ELaRA*)

As planned in the EUt+ project proposal, the Think Tank has been established and is closely connected with the European Culture and Technology Lab (**ECT Lab+**) under WP4, Task 4.3. In the unfolding of the project, the interest of associating closely also ELaRA emerged strongly, being given the link of this research with and for society. The aim of the Think Tank is to act as a tool for informing politicians on all political levels and stakeholders about technological developments and how to intentionally positively shape technologies and technological practices - respecting the SDGs and the socio-technical issues surrounding technological development for society.

2.1. ECT Lab+ Seminar series «Thinking Human First »

During the first year of EUt+ operation five seminars were organized within the framework of the ECT Lab+ and the EUt+ Think Tank. The aim of the seminars series was to take a critical look at the EUt+ initial motto to "think human first" and discuss different topics connected to it. The seminars were hosted online using Zoom and Webex platforms. Overall, five seminars on different topics around the notion of thinking human first were organized in 2021, attracting participants from within the EUt+ alliance as well as beyond.

- **Seminar No.1** – 29th of April, 2021

The roundtable discussion of the first seminar focused on the question of 'Thinking' in the statement 'Think Human First'. The question of what does it mean to think (human first) has become urgent with the growth of AI and social networking platforms and the immanent nature of climate change. There is an inherent tension within the statement to "think human first", which on the one hand implies re-centering technological development on human(ity), such as ethical and societal implications of technology, on the other it implies that privileging the human (anthropocentrism) has led to the climate disaster (Anthropocene). The panel was set out to pose the question of 'thinking' in the 21st Century.

Hosted by: *Technological University Dublin* (TU Dublin)

- **Seminar No.2** – 27th of May, 2021

The discussion of the second seminar within the ECT Lab+ 'Thinking Human First' seminar series focused on interpersonal relationships and communication in the context of social media. The patterns of behavior projected in cyberspace and the "colonization" of the human cognitive world with other content, manipulation, idealization and /or omnipresent commercial messages are important factors in this context. To what extent, despite the advantages of digital communication, does it reproduce the preconditions for emotional alienation and difficulties in maintaining full value relationships was the main question of the discussion – an attempt to clarify the benefits and harms of online communication and to explore new forms and ways of emotional experience of the technologically engaged individual in order to offer opportunities for prevention of counterproductive influences.

Hosted by: *Technical University Sofia (TUS)*

- **Seminar No.3** – 23rd of June, 2021

"Human First… and humans in the end" was the slogan of the third ECT Lab+ seminar. First: Human First. Technology devoted to help people with visual and hearing impairment, specifically in a learning context. BeMyVega aims at a more inclusive education, and this intervention will move beyond technical details to discuss researchers' motivation and rewards, social impact and feedback from final users. Second: the negative impact for the environment that we may represent. From the use of light as a language tool for plant-human communication in the fight against global warming, to the local recovery of our Mar Menor coastal saltwater lagoon, remarkable contributions by UPCT researchers through nature-based solutions was displayed. As a dessert, the UPCT-Bloopbusters team presented their experience teaching Physics for engineers, while making the most of their passion for the Seventh Art. Scientific mistakes in films and hands-on experiments are used to help our students with complex aspects of their courses, develop critical thinking and raise awareness of their responsibility towards global challenges for their future professional career.

Hosted by: *Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena* (UPCT)

- **Seminar No.4** - Thursday the 30th of September, 2021

Media Arts & Design Research Lab (MADLab – Department of Multimedia & Graphic Arts) and the Department of Fine Arts, Cyprus University of Technology organized a round-table discussion on the topic "Creative machines: Thinking about creative agents and artistic values". The roundtable discussion focused on critical philosophical questions of computational creativity, creative software agents and their aesthetic/artistic values. In particular, the focus was on computational processes such as artificial intelligence and machine learning and their aesthetic/artistic values. Looking at creativity through a critical lens, can we assume that a computer exhibits creativity independently of a human creator or is agency a necessary part of a creative process? Among the guest speakers Prof. Katherine Hayles (UCLA & Duke University, USA) and Prof. Michael Wheeler (University of Stirling, UK) were present.

Hosted by: *Cyprus University of Technology* (CUT)

- **Seminar No.5** – Friday the 26th of November, 2021

The fifth seminar within the ECT Lab+ 'Thinking Human First' seminar series was a round table of discussion focusing on questions about how culture, education and the advances in technology has influenced our history and how they will impact the future of humankind. "Humanity in the day beyond tomorrow" ("Umanitatea în ziua de dincolo de mâine" in Romanian) was the title of the discussion and it gathered participants from within the EUt+ consortium as well as beyond. The introduction was given by EUt+ representatives Prof. Cristina Campian (TUCN) and Prof. Noel Fitzpatrick (TU Dublin), whereas among the guest speakers Prof. Giordano Altarozzi (UMFST - George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of Targu Mures, Romania) and Prof. Alexandru Mironov (Știință & Tehnică, Romania) were present.

Hosted by: *Technical University of Cluj-Napoca* (TUCN)

The seminar series of 2021 will finish with the first annual ECT Lab+ conference that will take place on the 9th and 10th December 2021 in TU Dublin (online). The conference will bring together experts from Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Technology discussing on the idea of 'Thinking Human First'. The 32 papers accepted for the conference and the 3 keynotes address selected areas that focus on the relation between technology (technē logos) and the (Neg) Anthropocene with topics including Noodiversity - diversity of forms of thinking (noetic), Fourth Industrial Revolution, Ethical and Green AI, Speculative Fabulations and Future Technological Imaginaries, European Green Deal and technological development and others.

It is planned to continue the seminar series in 2022, with seminars organized by Riga Technical University (RTU), University of Technology of Troyes (UTT) and Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences (h_da) to ensure that the entire EUt+ consortium is actively involved in the activities of the ECT Lab+ and the EUt+ Think Tank.

2.2.   ELaRA Online Symposium: Post-pandemic pedagogies

As mentioned before, the Think Tank will be closely connected to the ECT Lab+ as well as European Laboratory for Pedagogical Action - Research And Student-Centred Learning or ELaRA, which is organizing an online symposium at the end of Year 1 of the EUt+ initiative. The theme of this two-day event is "Post-pandemic pedagogies, looking to the past and preparing the future in light of the COVID-19 crisis". Teachers and students from the Alliance will share their experiences on subjects related to online teaching, learning, and assessments. Members of ELaRA will also give lectures related to their research and projects. With this conference, ELaRA aims to create a space for sharing experiences and ideas for the improvement of pedagogical practices on a European scale.

## 2.3.	Technological Foresight and Responsible Innovation

The ECT Lab+ is also developing a permanent instrument, a "technology radar", to engage in technological foresight. In the first seminar, the Lab has focused on developing a possible methodology for technological radar but rather than acting simply as predicative model for technological innovation, the ECT Lab+ will influence the innovation process itself. In order to do that the ECT Lab+ is exploring the development of methodologies for ethically responsible technological innovation, this is done through the movement away from ontological and ontic questions of what is Technology or technology understood as forms of mediation in the word, hermeneutic processes in interpretation as technology understood as technological practices in the world. It is planned that in 2022 that the "Think Tank on Technology and Society" will take as its thematic for the year the question of Ethical Responsible Innovation.

## 3.	Horizon 2020 SwafS – Science with and for society

The future activities of the EUt+ Think Tank will be closely connected to the Horizon 2020 SwafS project EUt+ *EXTRAS - Experimentation to Transform Research Activities and Steering*, which was kicked off in October 2021. EUt+ EXTRAS is meant to support the emergence of intercampus "knowledge-creating teams" across our institutions, across disciplines, and across types of activities, towards a new approach of the environment and of steering and execution of research. It aims to build a test bed and establish a common roadmap for research and innovation at the EUt+ level by 2030.

WP2 of the SwafS project will focus on the following tasks:

- Setting up the EUt+ Think Tank back office
- Building an outreach strategy to promote and communicate around European research results, in particular results obtained at EUt+
- Applying ECT Lab+ results and analyses to concretely change the collective and individual practices of researchers in all laboratories

The connection between the EUt+ Think Tank, ECT Lab+, ELaRA and EUt+ EXTRAS will help EUt+ move forward defining **what the new model of University should be**, build the **capacity of the EUt+ alliance to act as a role model** and **ensure the EUt+ is secured on the map of higher education in Europe** by enabling future human first.

## 4.	EUt+ Think Tank Plan for 2022

It is planned that in 2022 the Think Tank will strengthen its position as an **interface between EUt+ and a wider range of stakeholders** and it will provide the means to disseminate research results to a wider audience. It will continue working according to its five main missions:

Mission No.	Description	Supporting activities
Mission 1	Inform governance; develop and deepen the EUt+ model	- Meet with the policy planning stakeholders; - liaison and communicate with other EU alliances about policy issues; - planning and strategies, open source EUt+ approaches to other universities and alliances (global outreach approach, Cluster/ERI models, humanities aspects); - exchange best practices and import knowledge from other alliances into the EUt+.
Mission 2	Be an international center for reflection and a platform of action on the topic of technology and society	- Actively support the activities of the ECT Lab+ and ELaRA, as well as the 3 other ERIs; - continue the "Thinking human first" seminar series (3 more seminars planned); - combine research results with the topics of potential dialogue and initiated discussion (via events, social media or publications); - host an international 'Think Tank' on Ethical Responsible Innovation.
Mission 3	Engage in networking with different groups of stakeholders	- Connect with EUt+ *Task 8.1. Projects to support and grow EUt+* (e.g. EthiCo strategic partnership project has an IO dedicated to attracting stakeholders and emphasizing the role of ethics in technological education); - incentivise and involve active society members (experts by use and

		experience), CSO organizations, NGO's, professional associations, accelerators, incubators.
Mission 4	Provide material to the relevant stakeholder groups	- Create a YouTube channel where stakeholders can freely access seminar recordings, - follow the open science agenda – open source research findings that could support next level innovations, expanded dialogue on the technology, new inventions and knowledge.
Mission 5	Advise authorities concerning the evolution of European Universities	- Promote the ECT Lab+ and ELaRA events on a national and European level; - publicly discuss the key issues of the evolution of EUt+ - finances, legislation, nationalities, culture, human resources, equipment, assets.