

Report on Hitachi – CEPS European Social Innovation Forum 2018 “How to improve citizens’ quality of life in complex urban spaces?”



On 6 March 2018, Hitachi and Brussels-based think tank CEPS held their second joint European Social Innovation Forum on the theme [“How to improve citizens’ quality of life in complex urban spaces”](#). The aim of the event was to look at the challenges faced by urban spaces, in increasing the livability as well as the resilience of its infrastructure and spaces with new technologies, whilst at the same time responding to citizens’ concerns about data privacy and security. The importance of putting citizens at the centre of the decision- making process and adopting a **bottom-up** approach in implementing new ICT technologies were therefore at the heart of the discussions.

Hitachi, in line with its Social Innovation Business strategy, promoted the organization of the event, in collaboration with CEPS, with a view to obtain a clearer perspective of the opportunities and challenges posed by the deployment of cutting edge technologies in urban environments across Europe. **Hitachi is also putting the [UN’s Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) at the heart of the development of its social innovation business.**

Kicking-off the event, Yukiko Araki (Executive GM of the CSR and Environmental Strategy Division, Hitachi, Ltd.) stressed the importance of strengthening public-private cooperation, both to accomplish the SDGs, as well as to mitigate the potential negative impact of introducing digital technologies in our daily lives.

The European Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, Mariya Gabriel, then delivered a video message highlighting **both the opportunities and risks (especially in terms of privacy and security) that the roll out of new technologies presents in complex urban ecosystems**. She notably stressed that as the society moves towards a future including Big Data and Artificial Intelligence and Smart Systems like connected cars, the possibilities of cyber-attacks and other illegal activities disrupting our



ICT systems simply becomes more numerous. She concluded that *for this reason, the European Commission is putting data security and e-privacy at the heart of its Smart Cities policy development.*

Hitachi then presented the concept of Social Innovation Business and in particular its [Smart Spaces and Video Intelligence Business](#). *Patrik Sjöstedt, CCO Hitachi Social Innovation Business Division, EMEA-CIS at Hitachi Europe, Ltd explained that Hitachi has been active in co-innovation projects in many of the 17 SDG areas including smart cities.* Matthew Caine, Sales Director EMEA - Smart Spaces and Video Intelligence, Hitachi Vantara, then presented Hitachi Video Intelligence and Analytics solutions for smart spaces, as well as compelling use cases drawing from these technologies. For instance, as part of the current co-creation projects that Hitachi Vantara has engaged in, one can find the City of Venice, where sensors are deployed throughout the city to make tourists' flows more efficient and less damaging for the city. In addition, Matthew presented some projects with airports in Europe, aimed to improve the security of passengers and to facilitate parking, as well as initiatives undertaken in campuses, in order to make the lives of professors and students easier.



Following the presentations, Andrea Renda, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Regulatory Policy at CEPS introduced the topic of the panel discussion and left the floor to *representatives of the European Commission (DG HOME & DG CONNECT), Eurocities and Patrik Sjöstedt*, during which the opportunities and challenges of using digital technologies in urban spaces were discussed at length.

Radoslaw Olszewski, DG HOME, European Commission presented the Commission's [Counter-Terrorism Package](#) released in October 2017. The package includes amongst other measures; an action plan to support the safety of public spaces, an action plan to enhance the preparedness against chemical, biological and nuclear security risks and measures to combat radicalisation inside the EU. One of the key aims of the EU Commission is also to help facilitate and improve the cooperation between local actors and industry within the security area. In this respect, the Package

foresees EU funding for various actions including €18.5 million for transnational projects improving the protection of public spaces and €100 million to support cities to investing in security solutions.

Silvia Ganzerla, Policy Director at EUROCITIES focused on the partnerships that her organisations have put in place in order to unleash the potential of new technologies in cities. As it involves 140 of Europe's largest cities and over 45 partner cities, EUROCITIES has been particularly well positioned to help citizens and local governments to better understand the benefits and challenges of digitalization and to deploy it in various use cases within their urban environments.

Ms. Ganzerla also talked about EUROCITIES' [green digital charter](#), an initiative promoting the use of ICT solutions to reduce cities' emissions and help cities become smarter. [The charter currently has 53 signatory cities.](#) Lastly, she mentioned that Eurocities is currently [leading an EU cluster](#) on business models, financing and procurement for smart cities within the EIP for Smart Cities and Communities.

Loretta Anania, from DG CONNECT, at the European Commission then explained about the projects within the [Digital Welfare Platforms that she is leading.](#) ***With such platforms, based on a bottom-up approach, the Commission aims to empower communities to interact with content, share data and other resources and to build new digital services. Block-chain technology is embedded in all these platforms which focus on creating user-centric value chains.***

Lastly, Patrik Sjöstedt, from Hitachi, underlined that the use of big data in cities has so far had mixed results across the world. Some cities have been more successful than others in integrating data into their every-day operations. The reason for these divergences is complicated but ***privacy and security concerns regarding the use of data remains a big challenge, which needs to be tackled in order to obtain the buy-in from users and citizens across the world.***



Following the panelists' interventions, a number of questions came from the audience as well as from the moderator Andrea Renda. They focused on how Hitachi and others are ensuring compliance with legal obligations pertaining to privacy and security as well as on technical means to ensure that data processing systems used in urban environments are interoperable to maximize the possibilities of partnerships.

The panelists explained the difficulty of providing a complete answer in such a short timeframe, given the complexity of issues at stake, and they stressed the need to continue to address those questions in a public-private partnership format. They also repeatedly highlighted the importance of ensuring the quality of the data of keeping citizens and humans in general in control of both the data and its usage, especially to counter some drawbacks like the propagation of fake news or the development of biased algorithms.

It proved challenging to discuss such a wide issue within this short time-frame. However, Hitachi deems it valuable to continue its multi-stakeholder engagement considering the wide-ranging societal impact of our business activities. We have been organizing this multi-stakeholder forum for 20 years in Europe, and we will continue to do so.



About the Forum

The European Social Innovation Forum provides a platform for discussion on the impact of new technologies on the European society. By engaging with stakeholders such as decision makers, academia, business partners, public society and opinion leaders, Hitachi is proud to contribute to the shaping of public policies and the solving of societal challenges, with an aim to ensure a better quality of life for European citizens. Since 1998, the Hitachi Corporate Office, Europe has organized in different European capitals, the EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum, a tradition which the Hitachi Brussels Forum now follows. Past topics related to the impact on European Society of new technologies and their application covered ICT, Energy, Transportation, Urbanization, Environment, Water, Healthcare and Life Sciences, amongst others. For more information: <http://www.hitachi.eu/en/hitachi-brussels-forum>