



The Munich Conference Series on Ethics in Innovation

26 - 27 June 2017



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- Press release -

Redefining the place for ethics in the 4.0 era

The World Forum for Ethics in Business and the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition teamed up for a conference series to facilitate the urgent need for a multi-stakeholder debate on ethics in innovation. The first conference of this kind was held from 26-27 June 2017 in Munich

Brussels, 6 July 2017 - A call for ensuring a human face in the era of artificial intelligence marked the inaugural series of the first "Ethics in Innovation Conference – Innovation 4.0" that took place from 26-27 June 2017 at the German Patent and Trademark Office in Munich, Germany.

A joint initiative of the World Forum for Ethics in Business, the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition and the Peter Löscher Chair for Business Ethics at the Technical University of Munich, the conference brought together multiple stakeholders to seek answers to ethical questions in innovation. More than 300 global thinkers and leading experts from academics, business, politics and NGOs deliberated on critical concerns about the new era of the fourth industrial revolution the humanity is set to enter.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Founder of the World Forum for Ethics in Business along with Jaan Tallinn, co-founder of Skype, and Bishop Dr. Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo addressed the audience in the opening keynote panel. Citing examples of misuse of innovation for commercial purposes even at the cost of putting millions of lives at risk, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar emphasized the importance of ethics in innovation. "Deliberately withholding information for commercial interests is very unethical. When we've made a discovery that is useful for mankind, then it should be made available to everybody," he said, adding that the ultimate purpose of any innovation is to bring happiness at the individual level.

Jaan Tallinn cautioned the gathering of the risks that artificial intelligence brings with it and emphasized that there should be more funding for AI-risk related research.

He also urged the audience that "Human brains have a massive impact on the planet. We have to make sure things will end up well, and there are so many organizations that are taking care of that."

Bishop Dr. Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in the Vatican, implored the gathering to build a connection with nature, adding that in order to be creative, we merely need to develop the potential that's already present in nature.

The conference witnessed deliberations by an impressive list of speakers including Prof. Dr. Ferdi Schüth, the Vice President of the Max Planck Society; Mr. Jo Leinen, Member of European Parliament; Mrs. Yvonne Feri, National Councillor for Switzerland; Dr. Ashok Jhunjhunwala, Advisor to the Indian Government, business representatives and several professors from world renowned universities.

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At a time when the world is on the verge moving into the era of Artificial Intelligence, the conference explored answers to important questions, such as, “Should growth be the main guiding principle for the 4th industrial revolution?”, “How do we make it more humane?”, “What type of leadership do we need to create to deal with this novel situation?” and “What type of education do we need in order to cater to the needs of the changing society?”.

The “Ethics in Innovation Conference 2017” also saw 54 selected students and young professionals from 27 countries leading a session on ‘Call of the Youth’ and voicing their message to today’s decision makers. The participating youth leaders had the opportunity to undergo holistic leadership training and prepare their intervention along with interactions with global leaders three days prior to the conference at the “World Youth Forum on Ethics in Innovation”. Over 350 youth leaders from more than 30 countries have already participated in the World Youth Forums in the past few years.

WFEB’s next conference will take place on 16th October in San Francisco, USA, and is set to focus on ethics in innovation and science.

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The World Forum for Ethics in Business is a registered public interest foundation based in Belgium (N° 822.216.342). The mandate of the Forum includes all manners of pursuing and establishing the indispensable ethical foundations of business in a globalized world. Providing a platform for the promotion and defense of ethical approaches to business enterprise and corporate governance and facilitating global dialogue and fostering cooperation among the private sector, the academic world, government agencies, international organizations, the media, spiritual as well as secular communities and all other stakeholders are among the organization’s main objectives. The World Forum for Ethics in Business is governed by its President Rajita Kulkarni and its Board Members Abha Joshi-Ghani, Vice-President, Leadership, Learning and Innovation, The World Bank; Jo Leinen, Member of European Parliament, Nirj Deva, Member of European Parliament; Madhu Rao, CEO Shangri-La Hotels; Roland Glaser, Former CEO Minerva Schools and Ram Lakhina, Chairman of The Netherlands India Chamber of Commerce and Trade. For further information visit www.wfeb.org.

The central focus of research at the **Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition** is on examining processes of innovation and competition and on developing proposals for designing framework conditions for these processes. The research questions are examined by a law department and an economics department. The Institute was founded in 1966 as the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Patent, Copyright and Competition Law. In 2013, after the establishment of a new economics department, its name was changed to Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition. The Institute is one of 83 institutes of the Max Planck Society, one of Germany’s leading research organizations. In choosing and executing their research tasks, the Max Planck Institutes are free and independent; thus, each has its own internally administered budget, which can be augmented project-wise by external funding. The research at the Institute must meet the criteria for scientific excellence of the Max Planck Society, which is ensured by regular audits. For further information visit www.ip.mpg.de/en

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