

Danuta Hübner
Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament

Concluding remarks at the K4I Dinner debate on "What "Digital"/ What "Smart" for advanced manufacturing?"

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Our debate makes it obvious that there are many factors behind the change today. In particular the home-grown innovation requires an adequate state of our minds, we need happy people with curiosity, with adequate skills, teachers capable of training also the elderly to keep them in manufacturing, skills matching the needs of manufacturing, openness to public private partnership, funding vehicles and regulatory environment not only aiming at reducing red tapes but strongly promoting the change.

We talked about shared innovation. That reminds me a meeting ten years ago in Philips run industrial park where cafeteria was considered the most important place in the park where minds were meeting, exchanges and sharing took place. This capacity to network and share seems to be again on the top of what is needed to use innovation as a game changer.

A lot was said about ICT and how it could boost and be combined with manufacturing contributing to industrial renaissance. For years we have been saying that industry in Europe had been left declining. Now, as Europe needs growth and sustainable competitiveness it is manufacturing where we are first of all look for the strongest potentials. Manufacturing is in close interaction with other sectors of the economy. Once we make manufacturing smart, positive effects on a wider scale can occur.

A lot of information has been presented here on how the new digital economy can make Europe fit for the future. It has been a very topical issue since a week ago the European Commission unveiled 16 initiatives aimed at making Europe a single digital market. In view of challenges we face it is legitimate to expect that the action will be fast enough to harness the digital power to generate manufacturing of XXI century. I agree with the Commission that there is no time to lose.

As K4I we have flourished on the assumption that manufacturing goes hand in hand with innovation. I am therefore worried as far too often a lack of innovation is being identified as key problem holding back European economies today. It is the narrowing of European innovation that has led to a productivity slowdown which in turn resulted in lower growth and job creation. The 2015 European Commission scoreboard reveals that in terms of innovation the EU lags behind not only the US and Japan but also South Korea.

The financing side of the challenge has been mentioned. The good news here is that many promising ideas and actions concerning the financing side are currently under consideration. The negotiations on the so-called Juncker Plan and its funding between the Council and the European Parliament are ongoing. Once in motion, it

will support innovative projects, SMEs and public private partnership, attracting private capital to invest in Europe. The initiative is not only about funding, as we know it is not the liquidity that lacks, it is about bringing back investors' confidence and fine tuning the legal environment to the investors ' basic needs. Good quality regulatory framework is a must to fully exploit the potential of smart and innovative investment. The new structure of the European Commission allows us to move away from sectorial silos type of approach to growth and innovation. In the digital agenda we need a good regulatory framework, Better regulation does not equal less regulation. It should mean less administrative burden. Creating environment where people can experiment and innovate requires an unprecedented effort of cooperation between public and private, science and economy, it requires an unprecedented effort toward sharing and networking and an unprecedented effort of cooperation between all European institutions. There is no reason not to make it work.