

# STARTS Talk on ‘Human Touch AI’

IoT Week – Aarhus, Denmark, 19th June 2019

*“A differentiating factor for AI ‘made in Europe’ will be its human touch: a focus on the human dimension, an insistence that AI serves human needs. AI must enhance human capacity, not replace humans”<sup>1</sup>*

AI with a human touch is a new approach towards Artificial Intelligence from a societal and artistic perspective. It focuses less on functionality and efficiency but more on a shared system concept where humans co-operate and co-exist with smart machines.

The STARTS Talk comprised two consecutive panels with a wide set of participants from business, research, art and design, namely Peter Beyls (artist and researcher, University College Ghent), Thomas Bjørnsten (researcher, Aarhus University), Luis Miguel Girao (CEO, Artshare), Bjørn Karmann (artist and designer, Tellart), Tore Knudsen (artist and designer, Topp Design & Innovation), Mads Rydahl (CPO, UNSILO.ai), Berit Skjernaas (researcher, Alexandra Instituttet), Michael Smyth (artist and researcher, Edinburgh Napier University), and Dimitra Stefanatou (lawyer, Arthur’s Legal).

The participants expressed a positive opinion for Artificial Intelligence for advancing human capabilities. Fears about domination of machines over humans were discussed but considered as not realistic. The potential of AI technologies emphasizing the digital divide was concluded as being unlikely. AI should be developed from a pragmatic perspective and be driven by its usefulness while keeping the human aspects in mind with a view that AI and humans will enter into a coexistence.

Important principles, such as non-discrimination of users, preservation of privacy or further recommendations from the AI Ethical Guidelines<sup>2</sup> should be built in from the beginning.

As of today, too many systems are labelled as ‘AI’, although their current capabilities are far from being ‘intelligent’, and could be at best considered as ‘smart’. Nevertheless, already now a wide-spread availability of software and computational resources empowers all kinds of developers to play and create with AI. In a wider perspective, more ‘education’ both for the public and AI-experts was considered being crucial for a better awareness about the possibilities and for adopting a more critical design attitude.

The STARTS model of involving alternative complimentary views for construction of a EU AI policy approach distinguishing it from other global players was considered important. For example, the creation of digital artefacts including AI as self-standing

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto Viola, Director General, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG CONNECT

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai>

entities was contested when not being brought back into the analogue world and allowing a bodily/physical experience and a test from a societal perspective.

Art and the implication of artists for future foresight, the design process, for creating a culture at a very early stage, and as a communication and exploration method was considered being very valuable. Not to forget an aesthetic introspection into the future of consciousness and the creation of new cultures.

Peter Friess  
European Commission  
[peter.friess@ec.europa.eu](mailto:peter.friess@ec.europa.eu)