



Launch of the European Maker week: Re-thinking the open industry of tomorrow

European Parliament, 18th October 2017 - Hosted by Mr. Telicka VP and Mr. Pirinski MEP

On the 18th of October, Mr. Telicka VP and Mr. Pirinski MEP hosted the Launch event of the [European Maker Week](#), a breakfast meeting organised by the EU-funded project [OpenMaker](#) and [PlusValue](#). The objective of the event was threefold: raise awareness about the maker movement, whilst showcasing successful maker-manufacturing partnerships and conveying policy messages collected during the informal, public launch session of the European Maker Week, held by OpenMaker the evening before.

“Makers and entrepreneurs need the support of policy makers, and institutions need to provide the ideal conditions for makers. It is crucial to bridge the gap between the two, simply to make makers more aware of different tools such as the EFSI that can provide them with the resources to develop their projects”. Pavel Telicka, Vice President of the European Parliament

The main recommendations for the European Institutions are the following:

- a. To support makers in connecting with manufacturers, artists, researchers and policymakers through the establishment of a network that could not only increase awareness about the movement but also facilitate connections and “dispense opportunities” through networking events, online platforms, workshops, discussion fora and workspaces. The network would gather existing local hubs and build on existing connections, whilst being open to new ones. The network would also include private investors and connect stakeholders globally.
- b. To make EU funding more accessible for makers and manufacturers both at EU and national level by simplifying the EU Financial Regulation for grants and tender, public procurement rules and terms of reference for existing programmes (i.e. SMEs instrument), especially for those innovations with a strong social impact. Not only smaller and more flexible grants are needed for the prototyping phase but there is also a need to develop an “orientation tool” to help them finding their way through all the EU funding possibilities.
- c. To initiate dedicated initiatives for makers - not simply mention the movement in policy proposals – aiming to encourage the development of new ideas and equally supporting those that have already developed a prototype and need start the commercialisation phase.

- d. Encourage creativity and entrepreneurship for young people, through formal and informal education, including dedicated programmes for rough neighbourhoods or targeting vulnerable groups

"The Makers are becoming real game-changers by reconnecting the young with the material world and its inexhaustible wonders and by rebuilding human contacts as the indispensable ingredient for a cohesive society of freedom in solidarity. Their European movement merits every possible support, so let's help make it an overwhelming success!", Georgi Pirinski Member of the European Parliament

The Maker movement is an emerging and dynamic social technology-based movement, embracing the 'Open Manufacturing' paradigm, re-imaging product, processes and governance systems and bringing them closer to people and local communities. In 2013, USA Today stated that Makers contribute approximately EUR 26 billion to the world economy annually¹ and the figure is growing. In 2015, the Atmel Corporation, a worldwide leader in the design and manufacture of microcontrollers, has calculated that there are approximately [135 million adult Makers in the United States](#). This is over half (57 percent) the American population 18+ and does not include the millions of children and teenagers who are active in STEM projects through science fairs, robotics teams and tinkering in their basements. Maker Faire celebrated 150 Faires in 2015 alone and has reached over 1,5 million attendees globally since it launched in California in 2006². In Europe, last year only there were more than 500 events that took place during the European Maker Week and more than 100,000 visitors attended Maker Faire Rome, the maker world's largest exhibition outside the US.

The movement keeps on growing and understanding how the collaborative processes pioneered by the Maker movement could be relevant for the manufacturing industry is fundamental if we want to make Europe more innovative and competitive than ever, as stated by President Juncker in his annual [State of the Union address](#). Furthermore, the fusion of Open Manufacturing with social innovation - bringing together the open source principles with democratic and civic engagement - has the potential to provide innovative solutions to address the societal challenges Europe faces.

Yet, makers still face several barriers, such as lack of understanding of the maker culture, lack of support in accessing funding and little connection with manufacturers, private investors and institutions. This has emerged during the discussion following the presentation of four cases:

a) LiMix and Talking Hands, the device that translates sign language into voice

LIMIX Srl is a spin-off of the Camerino University, founded in March 2015 by Francesco Pezzuoli and Dario Corona. LIMIX works in technological research, with attention to Gesture Recognition. The flagship product is Talking Hands, a wearable device that enables the translation of the sign language into voice, thanks to a system of sensors connected to a Bluetooth.

b) BluRhapsody, Barilla and the 3-D printed pasta

BluRhapsody is a spin-off project of Barilla, founded in 2017 by Antonio Gagliardi and developed to explore food 3D printing for pasta. Currently in its start-up process, is serving Michelin's starred chefs and high-level caterings to augment the gastronomical experience making it available for customisation of ingredients and shapes. The project will also have a revolutionary impact for

¹ USA Today. 2013. Martha Stewart: Meet USA's new entrepreneurs. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/10/14/martha-stewart-column-meet-the-makers/2980701/>.

² <http://www.makerfairerome.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Press-Release-MFR2016EN-1.pdf>

those with intolerances, issues in swallowing (for instance children and elderly people) or that need to follow a specific diet.

c) Opening virtual reality to the web, a tool to learn and discover

The open web brings new opportunity and challenges. Bringing virtual and augmented reality to the web means one can instantly share immersive content via a simple link. This seemingly simple action is opening tremendous possibility for collaboration not only to share content but also to make content. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality then become tools to learn about the world around us and efficiently play with information, for work, art and just for the fun of it. The objective of the Opening Virtual Reality project, as intended by Fabien Bentou, is making VR and AR understandable and modifiable for all, from 3D professionals to kids.

d) Project GENERATION Z, Hacktivating the City - a collaboration between GLUON, BOZAR and Ehb (Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels)

Generation Z is a project in which young people, artists and technologists set off on an interdisciplinary quest for solutions to big city challenges. The young 'urban activists' draw their inspiration from the city and use new digital technologies to come up with ideas, tools and prototypes for a more sustainable Brussels. Gluon challenges (general, technical and visual arts) secondary school pupils (especially those coming from disadvantage background) to get thinking about mobility, ecology, health, energy and new media.

"The maker movement is not only about technological innovation. It is about how we create value, distribute and decentralise it in our society in a way that enables democracy. It is about empowering individuals to be creative and re-imagine products, processes and governance systems in a way that we have never seen before and has the potential to change our society from within." Luisa De Amicis, OpenMaker Project Coordinator

The [European Maker Week](#), an initiative of the [European Commission](#), implemented by [Maker Faire Rome](#), [Startup Europe](#), the EU-funded project [OpenMaker](#) and [PlusValue](#), under the High Patronage of the European Parliament. Last year more than 500 events were organised across 28 Member States during the week. Makers are one of the new frontiers of entrepreneurship balancing profits and positive impact. PlusValue works with makers as creators of value - both public and private - in new ecosystem for prosperity.

OpenMaker is an EU funded project that offers a unique opportunity for manufacturers and makers to test and scale new partnerships as part of its aim to seed and accelerate the 4th Industrial Revolution. It seeks to catalyse the ideation, discovery, design & prototyping of business models, production processes, products, and governance systems — driving the radical distribution, decentralization and mass collaboration between manufacturers and makers. More on www.openmaker.eu