



Media, research and entrepreneurship in the digital era: technology excellence and innovation in difficult times

Highlights from the EIF Study Visit to Pavia and Milan (Italy)

16-17 October 2014

A delegation of 5 Members of the European Parliament (Lambert van Nistelrooij, Michal Boni, Brando Benifei, Michela Giuffrida and Luigi Morgano) participated in an EIF Study Visit to Pavia and Milan between 16 and 17 October 2014. Within the context of the Italian Presidency of the EU, the programme of the visit was aimed at offering policy-makers a real hands-on experience of technology excellence and innovation in various sectors (including media, R&D and digital entrepreneurship), in a country that since [Olivetti's](#) demise cannot boast a high digital reputation (see [Digital Agenda scoreboard results](#)).

'Digital Pavia': FacilityLive, Polo Tecnologico, University of Pavia

The programme was kicked off by participating in the '[Digital Pavia](#)' initiative, conceived and produced by the Italian start-up [FacilityLive](#) in collaboration with local authorities to promote and disseminate the value of digital skills and foster employment and business opportunities.

The delegation visited FacilityLive's "factory" at the '[Polo Tecnologico](#)', an innovative start-up incubator, born from the conversion of part of the former industrial area of Pavia, and the University of Pavia, one of the oldest and most prestigious in Italy. FacilityLive is a software company that raised 12mln Euros from private investors in Italy and has already obtained patents in 42 countries (including the US) for its innovative 'true semantic' technology: a new generation of search engine. Rather than moving to Silicon Valley, FacilityLive has decided to remain in Europe (Pavia, Brussels and London) and is now the most staffed startup at Polo Tecnologico. MEPs met and exchanged views with – among others – FacilityLive's CEO Gianpiero Lotito and the founder of Polo Tecnologico Tommaso Mazzocchi.

The visit continued with the presentation of an EU Search Engine for coding developed by FacilityLive as part of the European Commission's [EU Code Week](#), following a call to action for an inclusive EU platform made by Neelie Kroes, European Commission VP responsible for the Digital Agenda. After an introduction by Ryan Heath, Spokesperson of Neelie Kroes, Fabrizio Porrino, VP, Global Public Affairs at FacilityLive, presented this very innovative search engine that aims to offer easier access to knowledge for all the citizens looking to learn coding.

The delegation was then warmly welcomed by Prof. Fabio Ruge, Dean of the University of Pavia and was accompanied for a tour of the campus and to the university history museum.

An EIF Dinner at the University, with many prominent guests who took part in 'Digital Pavia', concluded the first part of the EIF Study Visit.

[Huawei Global Microwave R&D Center, Milan](#)

The second part of the programme was entirely located in Milan. It started off with a visit to [Huawei's Global Microwave R&D Center](#), where the company works on microwave wireless technologies such as IP transformation, improvement of the spectrum efficiency and the exploitation of the new spectrum at millimeter wave frequency ranges, meeting the growing demand for capacity and other important requirements imposed by 4G. Huawei is a Chinese leading ICT solutions provider serving 170 countries around the world, with 70% of its revenues are outside China. As Huawei VP Tony Graziano and VP European Research Center Renato Lombardi explained, they employ 70.000+ people in R&D, with 16 R&D Centers in 31 locations worldwide, of which 2 in Europe spread over 17 sites located in 8 European countries (Milan, Paris, Dublin, Brussels etc.), with each a technological specialization. Innovation (i.e. R&D) is key to competitiveness.

Available presentations (pdf download):

[EIF Study Visit Milan: Huawei overview](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: Huawei Innovation Day](#)

[Sky Italia's HQ and studios, Milan](#)

The delegation moved then to the facilities of Sky Italia's HQ, where their broadcast department and some of their TV studios are located, and met with executives, including Eric Gerritsen, Executive Vice President Communication and Public Affairs and Mario Filipponi, Head of European and International Affairs.

Sky's broadcast department is responsible for the airing of all Sky channels' programs. The department follows the entire process of content broadcasting through the coordination of the various areas: from programs acquisition to the development of the programming schedule, from the archive to the quality control, from the management of the various media to feeds coordination. It also deals with the planning and maintenance of the TV technical areas and of the studios.

The delegation could experience the many technologies applied, from the creative room to the shooting in the studios (including augmented reality) to the final broadcasting.

[Italian Publishers Association \(AIE\), Milan](#)

During their meeting at the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) - representing 90% of the Italian book market - MEPs listened to concerns from the sector and to the presentation of several innovative projects and initiatives from publishers (Mauro Zerbini, IBS.it, Michele Casalini, Casalini Libri and Cristina Mussinelli, Fondazione LIA). It was stressed that while the digital publishing market continues to grow, with 1,9 million ebook readers only in Italy in 2013, the tax discrimination between books (taxed with 4% VAT) and ebooks (taxed with 22% VAT) is an inhibitor for the potential of the digital publishing, as Piero Attanasio, Italian Publishers Association, stressed.

The application of digital technologies to the publishing sector has also brought an advantage to blind readers, who can now access readings more easily. The LIA project is aimed at increasing the titles that are accessible and promote a new industry culture that take into account accessibility during the ebook production and distribution phases.

Available presentations (pdf download):

[EIF Study Visit Milan: Fondazione LIA](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: Michele Casalini presentation](#)

BT Italia's operational centre, Milan

The next appointment was at BT's operational centre, where the company provides B2B services, including a 24/7 customer service centre and a data centre. The delegation visited their premises and spoke with Luca Bruschi, Head of IT MS Europe, BTGS, who explained what BT does for Italian business clients including Fiat, Mediaset, leading fashion companies and the Italian Stock exchange. Carlo Ridolfi, Head of Marketing and Communications for BT in Italy led the way inside BT's impressive modern design data centre, build on a natural water source which is also used for cooling.

Available presentations (pdf download):

[EIF Study Visit Milan: BT presentation](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: BT Cloud Services](#)

Eutelsat, Expo2015, La Triennale, Milan

The EIF delegation concluded their programme in the beautiful venue of La Triennale in Milan, with a meeting with Eutelsat representatives (Stefano Agnelli - Director of European Institutional Affairs, Stefano Zara - Expo Milano 2015 Project Coordinator and Luisella Ciani Public Policy - Eutelsat Consultant). Eutelsat, a worldwide leading satellite operator, is also an official partner and official supplier of satellite services for Expo Milano 2015. MEPs had the opportunity to see a live satellite 4K broadcasting (18 Mbps) and broadband connectivity (22Mbps/6Mbps) with equipment installed for the event. Moreover MEPs exchange of views about current and future activities in the domain of satellite broadcast and of broadband, to bridge the digital divide. The conversation continued on the role of Satcoms in general and Eutelsat in particular on yesterday, today and tomorrow EU policies and regulations, especially those related to Space and Telecoms.

Available presentations (pdf download):

[EIF Study Visit Milan: EUTELSAT in a nutshell](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: EUTELSAT in the broadcast services](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: EUTELSAT Satellite Broadband](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: EUTELSAT EXPO 2015](#)

[EIF Study Visit Milan: Satcom](#)



From left to right:
Lambert van Nistelrooij
MEP, Brando Benifei
MEP, Michela Giuffrida
MEP and Fabrizio
Porrino at FacilityLive.



From left to right:
Michal Boni MEP,
Huawei VP Tony
Graziano, Head of
Huawei R&D Center
Head Renato Lombardi,
Michela Giuffrida MEP,
Lambert van Nistelrooij
MEP, Brando Benifei
MEP, EIF Director Maria
Rosa Gibellini and A.
Turco, assistant to MEP
Benifei.



From left to right: Lambert van Nistelrooij MEP, Brando Benifei MEP, Michela Giuffrida MEP and Michal Boni MEP at Sky Italia's studios.



From left to right: Stefano Zara, Eutelsat, Luisella Ciani, Eutelsat, Michal Boni MEP, Lambert van Nistelrooij MEP and Stefano Agnelli, Eutelsat.