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Just triple transition towards zero pollution – digital, social and green

29.11.2023 — Liisa Marttila



The world is in transition. This transformation concerns us globally in environmental, economic and social terms. We need both tools and determination to drive the transition towards just and responsible solutions across sectors and borders. However, reaching just transition is not easy since it means complex actions, whilst simplifying things often end up with insufficient or even wrong answers.

Recently, the European Commission (EC) has published policy papers regarding the Green Deal in general including, e.g., Zero Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil. The goal of obtaining zero pollution goals is ambitious and requires integrated cross-sectoral and transnational collaborative actions across space and time. Making zero pollution indeed ZERO pollution means that we are not aiming at a reduction by a specific amount or percentage, but the aim should be eliminating pollution in Europe by 2050.

The Flagship 7 of the Zero Pollution Action Plan highlight the role of Living Labs. European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), with TAMK as an effective member, has been one of the instances selected to drive the Action Plan into concrete implementation. Living Labs lead the way to reduce pollution in areas such as mobility, energy, waste management and human health.

Among practical examples collected by ENoLL in this process, a number of TAMK's actions are included, especially concerning hygiene and water contamination, circular economy in

building and infrastructure construction, and introduction of bio-based materials into manufacturing processes such as 3D printing.

Facing the just transition calls for immediate actions – from all of us

Zero pollution transition is here and now. We must accelerate our efforts to find appropriate solutions and to scale them up. Fear to change should not prevent us from taking the necessary actions. In doing so, we need to think outside of the box to find the answers and just solutions.

First and easy step would be to start to speak about the transition in positive terms instead of making fearful assumptions. For example, instead of talking about the digital divide, we can emphasise the tools for social and digital inclusion.

We are all in the same boat, bearing the responsibility of our own actions as individuals and institutions. TAMK wants to be among the active proactive ones to drive the change. In addition, we all as individuals and citizens should do our own bid for the benefit and wellbeing of us ourselves and the future generations.



Keynote speech on Zero pollution by Dr.

Toñi Caro from i2CAT in OLLD2023

Many of the thoughts cited in this blog are based on inspirational keynotes speeches from Toñi Caro (i2CAT), Liliana Arroyo Molinar (Government of Catalonia) and Valentino Piana (HESSO) held during the Open Living Lab days 2023.

Policy recommendation especially concerning role of Living Labs: [Living Labs at the heart of Zero Pollution Action Plan | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](#)

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Pictures: Jonne Renvall, TAU (main picture) and Hanna-Greta Puurtinen.