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IoT Innovation and Networking Days: Sustainability of Production, Products and Services

The third IoT Innovation and Networking Days were held in Torino on 21 and 22 November 2018. Some 80 participants from European research and industry discussed how information and communication technology may enhance the sustainability of production processes, products and services. While the first two events in the series had been organized by Fraunhofer FIT in Sankt Augustin in 2013 and 2017, the LINKS Foundation hosted this year's event, with Fraunhofer FIT as co-organizer.

The event focused on the topic Circular Economy and the role of research in reaching social goals like sustainable ("cradle-to-cradle") product lifecycles. Creating a circular economy requires rethinking on many levels. On the one hand, the technological capabilities to close product cycles must be developed. On the other hand, the political and legal framework must evolve to enforce sustainable product responsibility and allow for new business models that incorporate also non-monetary objectives. Closing the lifecycle of products, building a circular economy will not only protect the environment but may also create new jobs in industrialized countries.

Fraunhofer FIT has been involved in international R&D; in this field for some time, e.g. as a partner in the German-Colombian Joint Research Platform SPIRIT. Here FIT investigates how information and communication technologies can support the efficient and environmentally friendly use of plastics.

Stakeholders and experts from international industry and research presented a total of sixteen keynote speeches to stimulate and focus the work during the third IoT Innovation and Networking Days. These keynotes provided information on current development trends and ongoing projects in industry and applied research. The specific mix of participants and catalysts from industry and research, combined with the World Café methodology, generated lively and very productive discussions. Here novel ideas were developed on topics such as intelligent mobility and logistics, citizen participation for smart cities, circular economy and sustainability as well as the digitalization of manufacturing and production systems. Several of these ideas will be taken up in future joint projects. At the evening networking buffet, these discussions were continued in a more relaxed atmosphere, existing contacts were intensified and new ones added.

Fraunhofer FIT had used this specific workshop format already in the two previous IoT Innovation and Networking Days. It was again very well received by the participants in the Torino event. This encourages us to continue and further internationalize the IoT Innovation and Networking Days. Fraunhofer FIT intends to host this event again in 2019.

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IoT Innovation and Networking Days, Turin
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