

Regulating the Unknown at Mobility.Pioneers

Exclusive interviews with panellists on keeping up with innovation

Vienna, January 24th, 2018 - You can't tackle the future of mobility without considering how regulators might handle innovations such as flying cars! That's why we've lined up a panel discussion dedicated to the topic at Mobility.Pioneers. We talk to panellists Lucy Yu, former UK government new mobility services regulator and now Director of Public Policy at autonomous vehicle tech company FiveAI, and Juraj Vaculik, CEO and co-founder of flying car startup AeroMobil.

We're also pleased to announce that the winning startup in Munich will, in addition to being fast-tracked into the Top 50 at Pioneers'18, be invited to Brussels to meet with European Union Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič, as well as the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation to discuss key aspects of the regulatory framework around mobility innovation in the EU.

And they'll get plenty of ideas for discussion topics from Lucy and Juraj! Lucy is currently advising on public policy at FiveAI, a European leader building autonomous vehicle technology to deliver urban travel that's safe yet inexpensive. Vaculik is an old friend of Pioneers, after his brave crew gave the AeroMobil 3.0 flying car its world premiere at our flagship event in 2014. Last year the company unveiled its latest iteration, AeroMobil 4.0, and in 2018 will be working to achieve regulatory approval from authorities as it aims for a market launch in 2020.

A common theme that has emerged around the subject of regulation is the primacy of safety - a task neither of them pretends is an easy one.

"Safety standards are the most important thing - and they're usually underestimated by a lot of companies," says Juraj. "If there was a crash it could impact a lot of activities in this field, so it's safety, safety, safety!"

"Regulators can learn by looking at areas such as aviation and pharmaceuticals," adds Lucy. "These are areas where safety is of extreme importance."

There's a balance between ensuring safety and still allowing innovation to thrive. One route to that is close consultation with industry, while another is simply easing regulatory processes to make them a little more 'founder-friendly.'



“Usually regulation is seen as a kind of enemy,” Juraj says. “But we see regulators as partners. For the regulators it’s important that they recognise innovation can come from smaller companies. They don’t need to change the final result, just simplify how we can get there in terms of procedures, timings and requirements.”

Dialogue is important for regulators and startups hoping to play a part in shaping the future regulatory landscape alike. But keeping communication channels with authorities open is not always the case for mobility startup, says Lucy.

“A lot of disruptors coming into the market in our field are not necessarily pursuing models that are very collaborative with the city,” she says.

“In an ideal world regulation would follow innovation, but that would be naive because you need safety to be confirmed first,” concludes Juraj. “And that’s a good thing, because in the end it’s human beings in the vehicle.”

“We’re arriving at a turning point in the transport and energy systems transformation,” concludes Šefčovič. “Innovation will determine who stays ahead of the curve in the international leadership race, and who will be able to compete with new products and services for our modern, clean and social fair economies.”

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Note to the Editors

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About Pioneers:

Founded in 2009 in Vienna, Pioneers establishes and facilitates direct, meaningful business relationships between startups, corporate executives, and investors to foster growth and innovation. It is the ultimate One-Stop-Hub for global tech innovators to access high-value, curated and qualified data of early and Series A European startups. Pioneers offers various platforms to help redefine industries, develop future technologies and introduce cutting-edge solutions. Its flagship event takes place annually in the 500-year-old Hofburg Imperial Palace in Vienna and brings together a community of 2,500 founders, investors, executives and public sector representatives from over 100 nations. The 2017 edition was awarded with the bea World ‘Best Conference/Congress’ Award.

