

Short report: Is there a future of investing in cryptocurrencies?

18st of April 2018, Poligon, Ljubljana, Slovenia

A workshop *“Blockchain and cryptocurrencies: Regulation or self-regulation?”* and a round table *“Is there a future of investing in cryptocurrencies?”* were held on 21st of April in Poligon, Ljubljana, Slovenia, jointly organised by European liberal forum (ELF), Zavod 14, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, Institute Novum and D66.

The event was focused to look for concrete solutions to questions about the future of investment in the field of information technology (IT). Are classic start-ups in decline; what is the role – if any – of business angels? Are cryptocurrencies an ultimate solution with public fundraising and the initial coin offerings (ICOs). What are the views from Slovenian and international representatives, regulatory institutions and the Ministry of Finance and Ministry for Economic Development and Technology on ICOs? Should the state step in and “stimulate” strengthen the “crypto economy”, or should it be cautious and set a clear legal framework and limit the growing business? What about self-regulation? Who protects investors when the “quick earning” option turns into a “nightmare”?

Blockchain and cryptocurrencies are developing much faster than legislation. They have the potential to reshape many business models and we notice a growing interest by companies in the technologies. Many applications are at an early stage, however, and we need already to identify areas where the impact may be most significant and discuss potential challenges with stakeholders. A Special focus should be given to regulation issues. If 2017 was the year of the ICO, it seems as if 2018 is destined to become the year of regulatory reckoning. The discussion at the event also focused on finding solutions to how to address the challenges that would enable further technological development while protecting all stakeholders involved in transactions. The term “smart regulation” has been mentioned several times, the result of a search for a right equilibrium between regulation, which establishes appropriate legal premises and self-regulation, which, in accordance with technology development, fills the content between legal premises.

The event was also attended by the Minister of Economic Development and Technology Zdravko Počivalšek, who pointed out in his address that blockchain is a technology of the future that opens new opportunities, and Slovenia is, because of blockchain, becoming a destination of modern technologies on a European and global scale.

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