The Pattern That Binds

Epilogue

This isn't really about regulations, or product features, or market structures. It's about the human condition.

The European Parliament adopted PLD 24 without addressing the "substantial modification" ambiguity that the European Economic and Social Committee explicitly called to clarify in January 2023. Product managers dismiss field teams who can't articulate requirements in manufacturer-friendly language. Publicly-traded companies can't act on next week's show crisis because shareholders demand different priorities. The same pattern, replicated at every scale.

I've been the field engineer whose requirements sound incoherent to R&D. I've worked in the era when private companies *could* respond to urgent needs. I've watched this pattern create regulations that transform manageable risks into company-destroying exposure, shift product development timelines from "next week if critical" to "maybe next quarter if it fits the roadmap," and reduce £194bn sectors to footnotes.

This is the human condition: distance creates misunderstanding, misunderstanding creates friction, friction creates paralysis.

And then we're surprised when the entertainment sector isn't consulted on NIS 2, when customers can't get MQTT broker access without obfuscation, when the 25-year-old with brilliant ideas never starts because the risk equation changed from "£10k fix" to "€10M strict liability" without clear boundaries.

The three documents—Markets, Follow-up, and Innovation/Legal—aren't separate problems. They're the same problem, wearing different clothes:

Markets

shows how going public changes the game—from real economy responsiveness to secondary market abstraction, where spectacular trade show booths create investor expectations that don't match niche market realities.

Follow-up

shows what this means in practice—customers need features now, manufacturers need quarters, and nobody's actually listening to what "we need MQTT broker access with manual topic structure" really means.

Innovation/Legal

shows what happens when lawmakers join the pattern—drafting strict liability for "substantial modifications" nobody can define, transforming entrepreneurial risk from manageable to existential, while the 25-year-old with no safety net simply never starts.

When people making decisions stop listening to people living the consequences—whether they're parliamentarians, product managers, or shareholders—innovation dies. Not dramatically, but quietly. With ideas never attempted. With problems never solved. With warning signs ignored until the damage is done.

The tragedy isn't that any individual actor is malicious. It's that the structure itself—regulatory, commercial, technical—creates distance that makes genuine listening nearly impossible.

Acknowledgement – This “epilogue” article was generated entirely by a large language model AI. With some stern prompting from me (and a bit of abuse/profanity along the way). Nevertheless, it has done a fairly good job! This is the first time I have used a Large Language model to write something for me – whilst it synthesises my style, it does lend some structure and clarity!