COUNCIL of EUROPE @ IGF 2020

Digital technologies can greatly facilitate the exercise and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, boost participatory and democratic processes and facilitate social and commercial activities. But also, they carry with them human rights challenges that require prompt and balanced solutions.

The Council of Europe engages in setting standards, promoting the rule of law and fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue to ensure a sustainable, people-centred and human rights-based approach to the challenges of the digital environment.

Brief overview:
Council of Europe participation in the
Internet Governance Forum 2020

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Council of Europe at IGF 2020

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation comprising 47 member states, including all countries of the European Union. Its statutory decision-making body - the Committee of Ministers – brings together the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of its member states. With over 200 international conventions, some open for accession by non-member states, the Organisation is the stronghold of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe and beyond. All Council of Europe member states are parties to the European Convention on Human Rights, with its implementation overseen by the European Court of Human Rights. The Court's case-law makes the Convention a powerful living instrument for addressing new challenges.

Pre-Event #30 From Principles to Practice: Artificial Intelligence and the Role of the Private Sector

Organised by ICC, supported by the Council of Europe and other IGOs
3 November, 16:50 to 18:50 UTC

This session aims to bring together a range of international and regional organisations as well as the technical community stakeholders that have recently developed/are developing AI guidelines to consider commonalities and differences of such guidelines, their impact, the role of the private sector in their development and how they can be translated into practice, specifically by the private sector. It will highlight best practices of private sector actors that have developed ethical principles for their companies in line with existing frameworks and standards. It will also aim to identify and discuss obstacles to the adoption of such guidelines, as well as potential incentives for wider adoption and/or unification. The Council of Europe will provide an update on the work of the Ad-hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) and will share experience of co-operation with the private sector through a partnership framework.

OF #20 Attention Economy and Free Expression?

Co-organised by the Council of Europe and Hamburg Media School
5 November, 07:30 to 08:30 UTC

Digital technologies have transformed the media environment. Once hailed as great promoters of freedom of expression, they are now seen to have contributed to the climate of 'information disorder'. The flow of online advertising revenue towards social media and search engines has compromised the economic situation of the media, also contributing to their monopolisation and fragmentation. Freedom of expression is increasingly shaped by technologies that rank speech for profit and alter the business model of news outlets away from reader trust and towards "clicks". In the light on the Committee of Ministers Declaration on the manipulative capabilities of algorithmic processes and Recommendation on the human rights impacts of algorithmic systems, the session will discuss how to protect freedom of expression and media freedom in the "attention economy", where the dominant business models reward engagement and noise over deliberation and facts. The outcomes of the session will inform the ongoing work of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Freedom of Expression and Digital Technologies.

OF #21 Strengthening Implementation Capacities for AI Ethics

Organised by UNESCO
5 November, 08:40 to 09:40 UTC

The Council of Europe will participate in the discussion of the work of the UNESCO Ad-hoc Expert Group on the Ethics of AI which is mandated to draft a recommendation and provide implementation guidelines. The session is intended to facilitate feedback on the standard-setting and capacity development process related to the future recommendation from a wide range of stakeholders engaged in AI governance, with a focus on data governance and inclusion. The Council of Europe will share insights from the work of the Ad-hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI).

Pre-Event #85 How to tackle discrimination by AI-enabled technologies? The potential of existing regulatory frameworks and AIAs

Co-organised by ePaństwo Foundation and the Council of Europe
5 November, 16:20 to 20:10 UTC

This pre-event focuses on one of the most detrimental to social trust effects of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled technologies - discrimination and the deepening of inequalities. It will discuss what legislative and policy tools and institutional mechanisms and structures can provide the most effective solution to breaches of the equality and non-discrimination principle in the context of AI-enabled technologies. The pre-event will feature thematic sessions on: 1. Review of application of European and national equality legal frameworks and other regulatory tools as solutions for AI-driven discrimination; 2. Algorithmic impact assessments (AIAs) and other tools for preventing violations of the equality and non-discrimination principle by AI systems. The Council of Europe will provide an update on its work on AI and discrimination in cooperation with national human rights Institutions, with other regulators and civil society organisations.

OF #30 Human rights and the use of AI in the field of health

Co-organised by FRA and the Council of Europe
5 November, 17:40 to 18:40 UTC

The area of health is considered an important field for use of AI, but it has also stirred many human rights discussions. Medical data and online apps can support improved health outcomes. But they might also exacerbate inequalities and erode privacy. Such concerns became more visible amidst discussions around the use of online data to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This session will discuss how AI can be best used in the area of health and how governments should respond to the challenges. The Council of Europe Committee on Bioethics (DH-BIO) will share insights from its related work.

WS #182&318 Discussion on the Protection of Personal Data and Privacy in the Prevention and Control of COVID-19

Co-organised by the Council of Europe, ISOC France, China Internet Development Foundation and CyberSecurity Association of China
9 November, 12:10 to 13:40 UTC

This session will focus on the protection of personal data and privacy in relation to the measures taken to curb the global pandemic crisis caused by COVID-19. Based on case studies, it will aim to highlight best practices that should provide inspiration for future models. It will address the questions: How can a digital environment guaranteeing protection of the right to privacy and to personal data even in situations of crisis, with the necessary safeguards and procedures in place, be created and managed? What roles can relevant stakeholders play in this process? What are the boundaries and exceptions to the collection and use of personal data? Which guidance is available from data protection authorities globally? The Council of Europe will raise awareness on standards provided by its instruments on the protection of privacy and personal data which are fully applicable even in times of crisis.

WS #59 Everything you wanted to ask about hate speech but didn't

Co-organised by CoE and FRA
10 November, 10:20 to 11:20 UTC

This session looks into European policy and practice initiatives combating hate speech launched in past years to address the risks hate speech online poses to human rights and societies. It focused on three areas: Prevention Measures; Protection: self & co-regulatory approaches; Prosecution: the use of national criminal and administrative legislation covering hate speech in the online environment. In breakout groups participants will discuss promising practices, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the human rights framework. The outcomes of the session will inform the ongoing work of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Combating Hate Speech.