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Seminar
**Artificial Intelligence:
How can youth take part?**

online

23 - 27 November 2020

**Declaration on Youth Participation in AI
Governance**

This declaration is the outcome of the work done by the young people, participants of the seminar *Artificial Intelligence: How Can Youth Take part?* organised by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, between 23 and 27 November 2020. It is positioned within the wider framework of the Council of Europe's youth policy and initiatives that link Artificial Intelligence (AI) and democratic citizenship. The declaration explores issues, challenges and roles that stakeholders can play to secure and enable the participation of young people in AI governance processes at all levels.

Considering the impact of AI systems on everyday life, in addition to the accelerated trends and risks due to COVID19, the present Declaration highlights:

- a) **The exclusionary consequences of the fast-paced development** of AI technologies driven by the private sector that leave many stakeholders, especially youth actors and human rights activists, but also policy makers, behind, and result in normatively questionable and ineffective self-regulation in the private sector
- b) **The need to develop and ensure legal safeguards** both by international organisations through existing or new legal instruments and by national governments responsible for securing and implementing them at national level
- c) **The absence of youth in the emerging AI governance processes** as a denial of the right to participation in democratic processes which impedes a whole sector from co-shaping the discourse about development, assessment, implementation and regulation of AI technologies
- d) **The imperative to respect ethical principles** which must be at the core of all AI developments and deployment (transparency, justice and fairness, responsibility, safety and security, privacy)
- e) **The need to assess the value of AI technologies** on the impact of their consequences and benefits on individuals and society. Not all social and economic problems need to be anchored in technological solutions.

Based on these elements and the full set of conclusions that resulted from the seminar, the declaration invites the existing youth structures to engage actively in AI governance and calls on the Council of Europe, its member states, national, regional and local authorities to take action upon the following priorities:

1. **Youth Participation** - Safeguard and promote quality and meaningful youth participation in all AI Governance processes, recognise and position young people as rightful stakeholders that stand on the same level as AI experts and private representatives, and other groups, by

- ensuring access to AI governance processes at all levels, local, regional, national and European
- including young people in existing structures such as digital transformation councils, smart city strategies and councils, multidisciplinary advisory boards dealing with the development and deployment of AI-technologies, etc.
- supporting the establishment of new forms of youth participation – such as Youth Labs, Open Creative Spaces – in cooperation with various stakeholders, within schools, academia, and technology companies.

2. **AI Literacy and Education** - Support the democratisation of AI as a complementary approach to all AI governance processes. First, this includes demystifying the complexity of issues and making algorithms understandable and interpretable, breaking the culture of AI “impenetrability”. Second, it means ensuring equal access of young people to AI-related value-based knowledge, skills and competences needed to participate in and co-shape the AI discourse, by

- increasing awareness on the use of AI while focusing on understanding the impact of AI systems on human rights, including social rights, and on the well-being and dignity of young people
- supporting the skills development of young people, thereby facilitating the transition to an increasingly automated society
- supporting educators and teachers in advancing their digital skills needed to empower young people in dealing with AI technology
- enabling a “maker culture” and empowering young people to engage in identifying and developing solutions based on AI technologies that can further improve their quality of life
- educating engineers and technical experts on human rights-based approaches to technology development and on democratic governance
- anchoring AI literacy in formal education, in order to reach young people from an early age. For this, an international or European AI curriculum for teacher training and school education should be developed
- ensuring AI literacy initiatives are affordable and accessible to all young people, from all socio-economic backgrounds, to avoid furthering existing digital gaps.

3. **AI Governance** - there is a need to put the respect for human rights and democracy at the centre of AI policies and to safeguard principles of social inclusion and diversity, by:

- ensuring that the language used in these processes is accessible and clear for all citizens, including those with no technical background

- proposing evidence-based policies that consider young people as a specific category and mandating intersectional audits on the possible impacts of specific policies on different groups, before a policy is adopted.
- including specifically the youth sector in public consultations on AI use and regulation

4. **Creating Synergies** - Foster cross-sectoral and multi stakeholder cooperation between AI, educational and youth stakeholders among others, by
- ensuring that cooperation between youth and stakeholders in AI Governance is the rule rather than the exception
 - harmonising AI and youth policies, by creating links between AI and youth priorities, in all processes.