

Protecting  
human rights,  
democracy and  
the rule of law  
in the digital  
environment

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

**DIGITAL AGENDA**

2022-2025



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## Accompanying digital transition

To ensure the full enjoyment of the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights also online, the Council of Europe has developed a **Digital Agenda 2022-2025**. The Digital Agenda was **adopted** by the Committee of Ministers on **4 May 2022** with **three main goals**:

- **Consolidating the existing digital regulation** by supporting the implementation of Council of Europe standards;
- **Responding to new challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities** provided by emerging digital technologies;
- **Accompanying member States for a digital transition** with European values based on Council of Europe standards.

## Council of Europe actions in the digital environment

The **Digital Agenda 2022-2025** has proven to be an **organic part of organisational activities, an instrument driving change, and an area of growing expertise**. The first two years of its implementation have already had an impact in multiple fields. Considering the results of the **mid-term review (2023)**, the Council of Europe has set the following **priorities for the second biennium of implementation of the Digital Agenda 2022-2025**:

### Early risk assessment of new technologies

New technologies (such as spyware, blockchain, cryptocurrencies, the metaverse, machine learning, generative AI, and many others to come) will continue to pose new risks to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The early assessment of these risks along with recommendations to mitigate them and seize the opportunities they bring must be pursued.

## Enhancing digitalisation of the judiciary in member states

Technological innovation brings with it challenges and opportunities which require a continuous pro-active, systematic approach to the design of legal frameworks, safeguards and remedies. The new HELP course on CEPEJ will be a valuable tool for professionals involved in the process of digitalisation of justice. The further implementation of digital technology systems for national court management should improve the efficiency of justice. These can include new AI tools for the translation of policy documents and decisions of the Council of Europe bodies into the relevant languages.

## Developing online training opportunities

The digital environment should be used to educate young people about democracy and democratic citizenship, and enable professionals and civil society to access information and follow e-training courses provided by the Council of Europe. Various educational and training resources are provided by the HELP programme, the Digital Citizenship Education programme, the e-learning platform of the Council of Europe Youth Department and the Learning Modules Online Platform for educational professionals.

## Harnessing transversality and sharing expertise

Cooperation with academic institutions and digital partners has proven useful: for this reason, such partnerships should be pursued and multiplied. Cooperation with the private sector will remain important and should be further strengthened to reap the full rewards of joint efforts in this area.

## Nurturing the global agenda

Active participation in global events dedicated to the promotion of open conventions should be extended, specifically

regarding “Convention 108+”, the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, the Lanzarote Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, and the new Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence. Moreover, cooperation with the United Nations should be further enhanced to ensure coherence and complementarity of the European and global instruments and standards, also with regard to the UN SDGs. Promotion of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025 also requires active participation and promotion of Council of Europe positions in global and regional fora, such as the IGF, ICANN and WSIS.

### Cooperating with the European Union (EU)

Cooperation with the EU will remain crucial both in policy making and development and for the implementation of standards. This synergy is particularly relevant in the fields of data protection, cybersecurity, new technologies and digitalisation, and should be strengthened.

### Supporting Ukraine

The war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has had a significant impact on Europe, including cyberattacks and other forms of cybercrime. The Council of Europe supported Ukraine in the adoption of legislative amendments to facilitate the collection and use of evidence in criminal proceedings and should continue to provide every necessary support. Moreover, many online HELP courses have been translated and adapted to the Ukrainian context.

### Adapting the organisational structure

The Organisation’s structure should evolve to reflect the importance given to both the sectoral and the transversal approaches of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025.

### Enhancing cooperation programmes

More progress will be made in gradually integrating the digital dimension in the Organisation’s cooperation programmes.

### Marking 2025 as the year of digital citizenship in Europe

The year 2025 was declared as the “European Year of Digital Citizenship Education” at the 26th Session of Standing Conference of Education Ministers on 29 September 2023, and should address the challenges and opportunities of the digital environment in education systems by empowering students to navigate this environment responsibly and ethically.

The “European Year of Digital Citizenship Education” will provide an excellent opportunity to highlight all Council of Europe instruments enhancing the protection of human rights in the digital environment and beyond, promote policies, disseminate research, deliver training courses and sum-up achievements.

### Learning from the past and preparing the future

During the first period of implementation of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025, overall progress has been registered in each of the planned actions. It will be continued in the next biennium of the Council of Europe Digital Agenda 2022-2025, to enhance a coordinated approach in developing human-rights compliant, democratic, and good governance-oriented responses to the challenges raised by new information technologies, including AI.

The coming period will equally serve to build focus on key strategic priorities, to share more good practices and to increase engagement between the Organisation and its member states. It will continue to involve multiple stakeholders, including academia, civil society and our business partners.

**The global digital transition is a reality** in all areas, simplifying our daily lives while addressing challenges and risks at the same time.

Owing to the potential threat the “digital environment” may bring, the need for a comprehensive regulation of the digital technologies is becoming increasingly pressing.

In order to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms in the new virtual ecosystems, the Council of Europe has delivered the Digital Agenda 2022-2025.

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