# Safeguarding human rights by balancing regulation and innovation
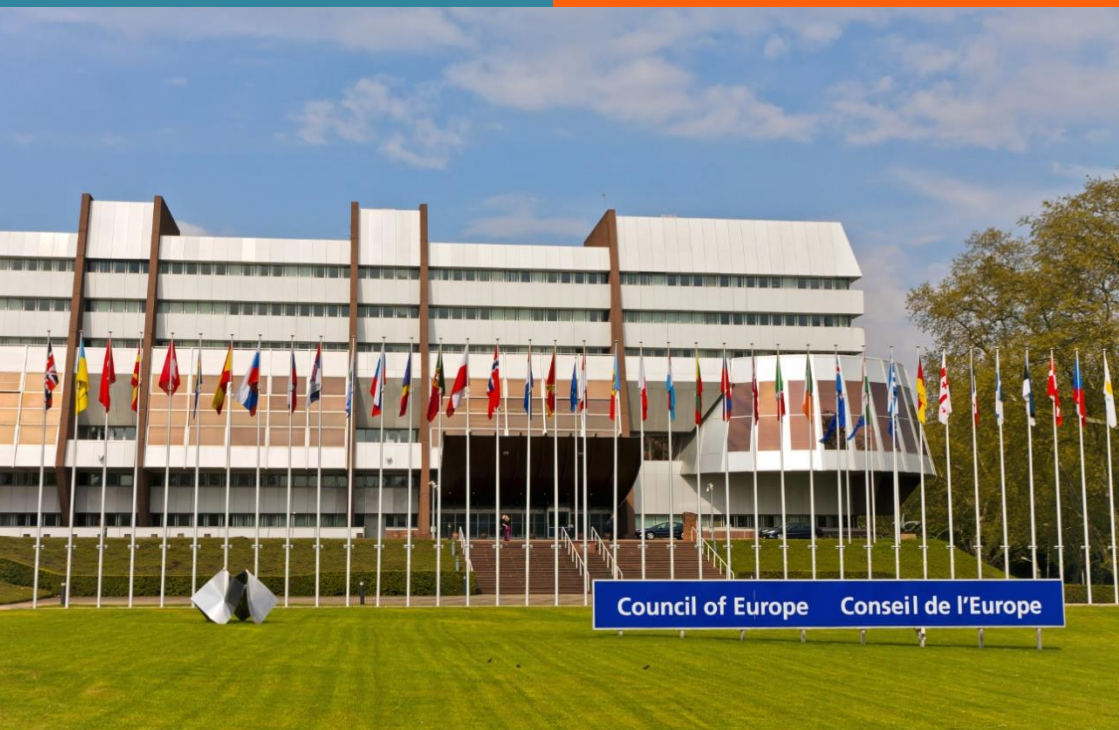
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

# @ **EURODIG**
## Strasbourg
# **2025**



**Council of Europe    Conseil de l'Europe**

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**12 May 15:00 - 16:00 CEST | Hemicycle**

Palais de l'Europe



Opening address
by **Alain Berset,
Secretary General
of the Council of Europe**



Keynote speech
by **Michael O'Flaherty,
Council of Europe
Commissioner for
Human Rights**

**12 May 16:00 - 17:15 CEST | Hemicycle**

## Opening Plenary: Working Together for a Human-Centred Digital Future – Parliamentary Cooperation for Democratic Digital Governance

As digital technologies increasingly shape our democracies, economies and societies, parliaments and parliamentarians are central to ensuring that this transformation reflects shared values. This session brings together elected representatives from across the world to exchange experiences and explore how to shape digital governance that upholds human dignity, enables innovation and supports inclusive development. It will highlight the role of parliaments in translating international standards, such as those of the Council of Europe, the EU, OECD and the United Nations, into national policies that both manage risks and harness opportunities offered by artificial intelligence (AI) and internet technologies. Rather than focusing solely on challenges, the event and ensuing exchange aim to explore how digital tools, when guided by clear democratic principles, can help advance transparency, scientific progress, participatory governance and the protection of human rights.

Key topics:

- Parliamentary oversight and ethical frameworks
- Securing democratic participation - Digital resilience and inclusive online engagement
- Regulating without censoring: Rights-based approaches to content and data governance
- Aligning with international standards: translating multilateral treaties, conventions, standards into national laws
- Unlocking opportunity: digital tools for innovation, accessibility and service delivery

**Moderator:** Miapetra KUMPULA-NATRI, Finland, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

**12 May 09:00 - 10:15 CEST | Room 10**

## Pre-session: The Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI and the Guidance for the Risk and Impact Assessment of AI Systems on Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law (HUDERIA)

The Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law is a groundbreaking initiative, addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by AI in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It requires all activities within the AI lifecycle to align with fundamental principles that support human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This session will delve into how the Framework Convention was crafted to complement existing international human rights standards, bridge legal gaps arising from rapid technological advances and strengthen democracy and the rule of law.

**Organiser**: Albina OVCEARENCO, Head of Digital Development Unit, Council of Europe

**12 May 11:00 - 12:15 CEST | Room 10**

## Pre-session: Countering Disinformation and Harmful Content Online

According to Principle 7 of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy**,** disinformation or misinformation posing a threat to democracy and peace [[will]] must? be countered, in a manner compatible with international law, including the right to freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy and certain forms of disinformation and harmful content pose serious threats to public health, public order and safety, and even national security – undermining the very fabric of democratic societies.

**Organiser:** Alina TATARENKO, Head of Division for Cooperation on Freedom of Expression, Council of Europe

**13 May 09:30 - 10:30 CEST | Room 10**

## Workshop: AI & non-discrimination in digital spaces from prevention to redress

The impact of AI on human rights, particularly regarding its potential and the risks it may pose to equality and non-discrimination, is a critical concern of our times. In Europe, newly adopted legal frameworks – such as the Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI and the European Union's AI Act – provide a framework for substantive and procedural rights, safeguards and remedies. However, strict enforcement and a prioritised concern are needed to ensure that AI systems not only do not undermine the enjoyment of human rights, but also contribute positively to the promotion of equality and offer robust protection to vulnerable groups from algorithmic discrimination. The session aims to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of AI's influence on equality and non-discrimination through an interactive format. Among the speakers and contributors from the floor are representatives of academia, industry and civil society, particularly those most directly affected by discriminatory risks of use of AI systems.

**Organiser:** Menno ETTEMA, Head of the Hate Crime and Artificial Intelligence Unit, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Programmes Division, Council of Europe

**13 May 11:00 - 12:30 CEST | Hemicycle**

## Main topic: Neurotechnology and privacy: Navigating human rights and regulatory challenges in the age of neural data

From brain-computer interfaces to emotion-tracking wearables, we are entering an era where technology can monitor, decode and alter brain activity. But as neuroscience converges with AI and data-driven systems, urgent questions arise: What counts as "mental data"? How should we regulate access to the human mind? Do existing data protection laws go far enough?

This panel explores the emerging concepts of mental and neural data, and the implications of decoding or influencing the brain through

technology. With a keynote address from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy, followed by a debate led by two expert speakers, the session dives into the legal, ethical and human rights challenges of protecting mental privacy in an era of brain-machine interfaces and cognitive surveillance. Audience participation will be central to shaping this critical conversation at the crossroads of tech, law and humanity.

**Organiser**: Moritz TAYLOR, Data Protection Unit, Council of Europe

**13 May 14:30 - 15:30 CEST | Room 10**

Workshop: **Perception of AI Tools in Business Operations - Building Trustworthy and Rights-Respecting Technologies**

In an era of rapid advancement in AI technologies, an increasing number of businesses are considering the integration of AI tools into their daily operations. However, the perception of these solutions - both by management and employees - plays a crucial role in enabling effective and responsible digital transformation. The session will offer a space for collective reflection on the role of AI within the business ecosystem and the challenges that arise at the intersection of technology and human rights. It will serve as an opportunity to consider how to create an environment where AI empowers rather than replaces people, and where innovation goes hand in hand with responsibility.

**Organiser**: Biljana NIKOLIC, Innovative Solutions for Human Rights and Justice Unit, Council of Europe

**13 May 14:30 - 15:30 CEST | Room 8**

Workshop: **Generative AI and Freedom of Expression: mutual reinforcement or forced exclusion?**

The rapid evolution of AI systems presents unprecedented opportunities for societal progress, inclusivity and innovation. Amongst these, Generative AI (GenAI) stands out as for its widespread and diverse use, capable of creating content across various formats. This technology's ability to produce and disseminate new forms of expression has significant implications for the right to freedom of expression, a cornerstone of democratic societies. Alongside its potential to enrich public debate, enable artistic creativity, and foster knowledge sharing, GenAI raises critical concerns about the quality, accuracy and fairness of its outputs, which can shape public perceptions and discourse. Considering GenAI's profound impact, stakeholders – including policymakers, the private sector, civil society, and individuals – must thoroughly navigate its potential opportunities and risks. The session will investigate such GenAI potentials, including by further building on the work of the Council of Europe Expert Committee on GenAI implications for Freedom of Expression (MSI-AI) and by encouraging collaborative and informed approaches.

**Organiser**: Giulia LUCCHESE, Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division, Council of Europe

**13 May 11:30 - 11:55 CEST | Room 7**

## Flash: Examination of the concept of non-consensual dissemination of intimate images

Non-consensual dissemination of intimate images is a growing cybercrime phenomenon that requires, inter alia, criminal justice action. For example, Article 16 of the United Nations Convention on Cybercrime defines this as "[…] when committed intentionally and without right, the selling, distributing, transmitting, publishing or otherwise making available of an intimate image of a person by means of an information and communications technology system, without the consent of the person depicted in the image." The scope of criminalisation, freedom of expression, protection of privacy, dignity, and freedom from violence, rights of victims, responsibilities of service providers and intermediaries is a non-exhaustive list of issues that come into play. Such non-consensual dissemination of intimate images is a policy and regulatory matter that requires collaboration between the government, private sector and civil society.

**Organiser:** Giorgi JOKHADZE, Cybercrime Programme Office (C-PROC), Council of Europe

**13 May 14:30 - 14:55 CEST | Room 7**

## Flash: Youth Perspective on Internet Governance

This session gives a youth perspective to Internet Governance. You will hear from the Advisory Council on Youth, a youth advisory body in the Council on Europe, on the most urgent priorities regarding the internet and artificial intelligence. The Youth Department will also present some practical tools on how to safeguard young people's rights online.

**Organisers**:
Zia PERKO ROGELJ, Member of the Advisory Council on Youth in the Council of Europe - Connect International
Ida KREUTZMAN, Educational Advisor, Youth Department, Council of Europe

**13 May 2025 | 16:30 - 16:55 CEST | Room 7**

## Flash: Fostering Innovation for Justice: Showcasing the Digital Future of Justice Hackathon

The Council of Europe is committed to promoting technology-driven solutions that strengthen human rights and increase awareness of the European Convention on Human Rights among legal professionals. As part of this effort, the Council of Europe has hosted two hackathons, inviting students and researchers to develop innovative tools for the justice sector. This session will present the key outcomes of the annual Digital Future of Justice Hackathons, with a focus on the winning project - Justice Indexers. It will explore the tool's main features, development process, and potential applications within the justice system, while also highlighting the value of hackathons as a platform for cross-disciplinary collaboration and innovation.

**Organiser**: Biljana NIKOLIC, Innovative Solutions for Human Rights and Justice Unit, Council of Europe

# The internet

provides a space of freedom, facilitating the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights, participatory and democratic processes, and social and commercial activities.

In order to ensure a sustainable, people-centred and rights-based approach to the internet, the Council of Europe has engaged in setting and promoting standards, building partnerships and fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue.

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## @ DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

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

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