

Open letter to EU AI Act negotiators: Do not trade away our rights!

Friday 8 December 2023, Brussels

As the supposedly final negotiation on the EU's landmark Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act drags on, the undersigned civil society coalition calls on lawmakers to unequivocally reject attempts to legalise dangerous and discriminatory police AI.

EU lawmakers are being pressured by governments and security industry lobbyists to trade away our fundamental rights and freedoms. The Parliament's position on prohibitions is backed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Data Protection Supervisor and Board, networks of national human rights institutions and equality bodies, academics and other experts.

No AI Act deal can be worth legitimising digital tools of oppression. EU Member States are pushing extremist demands for police to be able to discriminate against the general public including on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, religion and political views through predictive policing and biometric categorisation systems. Not only is this a deeply dystopian premise, but we also know that these tools are ineffective at keeping us safe.

The same goes for emotion recognition technologies like AI 'lie-detectors', the use of which EU governments are trying to preserve for use in policing and migration contexts. These technologies are rooted in eugenic, racist and ableist premises, and have been widely discredited by academics.

EU Member States are also pushing to allow mass biometric surveillance in public spaces and most forms of predictive policing; to introduce dangerous loopholes such as blanket national security exemptions; to allow banned AI systems to be exported outside the EU; and to exempt police and migration uses of AI from transparency and accountability rules.

European and international human rights laws are clear that people must be able to live with freedom and dignity. The proposals from the Council would give police a green light to use AI tools that are inherently discriminatory, that enable mass surveillance and that undermine the core of our rights and the rule of law.

Signed,

70 civil society organisations:

- Access Now
- Advocacy for Principled Action in Government
- Algorights
- AlgorithmWatch
- Alternatif Bilisim (Alternative Informatics Association)
- Amnesty International
- anna elbe
- ARTICLE 19
- Artikel10 e.V.
- Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication
- Big Brother Watch
- Bits of Freedom
- Bündnis Hansaplatz
- Burgerrechtenvereniging Vrijbit-NL
- Center for AI and Digital Policy
- Centre for Democracy & Technology, Europe
- Chaos Computer Club
- Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
- Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja
- Data & Society
- Defend Digital Me
- Digitalcourage
- Digitale Gesellschaft
- Digital Rights Ireland
- The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
- Elektronisk Forpost Norge (EFN)
- EuroMed Rights
- European Center for Not-for-profit Law (ECNL)
- European Civic Forum (ECF)
- European Digital Rights (EDRi)
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- Electronic Frontier Finland
- Epicenter.works
- European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA)
- Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice
- Fair Trials
- Greek Forum of Refugees
- Hermes Center
- Homo Digitalis
- Human Rights Cities Network (HRCN)
- Human Rights Watch
- The Good Lobby Italia
- ILGA-Europe (the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association)
- info.nodes
- In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDEFEND.ph)

- Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
- IT-Political Association of Denmark (IT-Pol)
- Kamanau Foundation
- Kameras stoppen
- Lafede.cat
- La Strada International
- La Quadrature du Net (LQDN)
- Law and Public Policy Center
- Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH) France
- Ligues des droits humains (LDH) Belgium
- New Europeans
- Observatory for Ethics in AI of Catalonia
- Organization for Identity and Cultural Development (OICD.net)
- Panoptykon Foundation
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
- Politiscope
- Privacy International
- Privacy Network
- Racism and Technology Center
- REAL ML
- quintessenz
- SHARE Foundation
- Stop Wapenhandel
- Technopolice BXL
- Volonteuropa

34 expert individuals:

- Dr. Aida Ponce Del Castillo, Senior researcher on emerging technologies and foresight, European Trade Union Institute
- Prof. Dr. Gloria González Fuster, Research Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)
- Meredith Whittaker, President of Signal, Chief Advisor to the AI Now Institute
- Victoria McEvedy, Solicitor England & US Attorney (NY)
- Dr. Joy Buolamwini, founder of the Algorithmic Justice League and author of Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines
- Marietje Schaake, Stanford Institute for Human-Centred Artificial Intelligence
- Douwe Korff, Emeritus professor of international law
- Corentin Debailleul, researcher, LIEU, IGEAT, Université libre de Bruxelles
- Dr. Laurens Naudts; AI, Media & Democracy Lab, Institute for Information Law (University of Amsterdam)
- Merve Hickok, President Center for AI and Digital Policy, Founder of Alethicist.org
- Professor Peter Sommer, Birmingham City University, UK
- Dr. Plixavra Vogiatzoglou, KU Leuven, UvA
- Karine Caunes, Global Program Director, Center for AI & Digital Policy (CAIDP)
- Isabela Maria Rosal Santos, CiTiP-KUL
- Catherine Jasserand, researcher, Marie Curie fellow

- Dr. Elizabeth O'Neill, Assistant Professor, Philosophy & Ethics, Eindhoven University of Technology
- Paul Keller, Director of Policy, Open Future Foundation
- Jill Toh, University of Amsterdam
- Andrea Palumbo, researcher, KU Leuven
- Elora Fernandes, Doctoral Researcher
- Dr. Jef Ausloos, Assistant Professor, Institute for Information Law (IViR) / University of Amsterdam
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- Ariel Guersenzvaig, Senior Lecturer, ELISAVA Barcelona School of Design and Engineering, University of Vic-UCC, Spain
- Daniela Tafani, Researcher in Political philosophy at the University of Pisa
- Albert Sabater, Director of the Observatory for Ethics in AI of Catalonia, University of Girona
- Emilio José Gómez Ciriano, Associate Professor. Faculty of Social Work. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. Spain
- Nayyara Rahman, Policy Group Member, Center for AI and Digital Policy (CAIDP)
- Maria Chiara Pievatolo, professor of political philosophy, University of Pisa
- Dr. Asli Telli, Researcher, Wits University
- Dr. Ciro Cattuto, Scientific Director at ISI Foundation, Italy