

**OPEN LETTER TO COUNCIL OF EUROPE AI CONVENTION NEGOTIATORS:
DO NOT WATER DOWN OUR RIGHTS**

We call on the State Parties and the EU negotiating the text of the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy to equally cover the public and private sectors and reject blanket exemptions regarding national security and defence.

The world has witnessed the way in which AI systems that are largely provided and often used by private companies affect people and societies. The Council of Europe is responding to the various calls for regulating AI – but it is about to agree on a Convention on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law that risks giving companies a free pass.

As the negotiation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law is entering its final phases – with the last plenary planned for mid-March –, the publicly available [Draft Convention](#) indicates that some negotiating states are seeking to weaken the Convention by enabling states to leave private companies, including Big Tech, out of scope. This would result in giving these companies a blank check rather than effectively protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

A hollowed-out Convention will provide little meaningful protection to individuals who are increasingly subject to powerful AI systems prone to bias, human manipulation, and the destabilisation of democratic institutions.

As for public activities, some states are also pushing for a blanket exemption with regard to national security and defence. Nothing justifies the unconditional waiving of the safeguards set in international, European and national law that usually apply in these fields.

Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens, members of civil society organisations, academic and research institutions, experts in artificial intelligence and digital technologies, **call on the EU and the State Parties negotiating the text of the Convention to give their unwavering support for the Convention**

- (i) to cover equally the public and private sectors**
- (ii) to unequivocally reject blanket exemptions regarding national security and defence.**

List of signatories:

Organisations

Access Now
AI Forensics
AI Procurement Lab
AI Sentinel Institute
AlgoRace
AlgorithmWatch
AlgorithmWatch CH

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Arci - Italy

ARTICLE 19

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Association of Civil Society Development Center (STGM)

Association of Women of Southern Europe (AFEM)

Asociatia pentru Tehnologie si Internet - ApTI

Avaaz Foundation

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)

Bits of Freedom

Campax

Center for AI & Digital Policy (CAIDP)

Center for Democracy and Rule of Law - Ukraine

Center for Inclusive Change

Child Rights International Network (CRIN)

Citizen D / Državljan D

Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)

Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe (CINGO)

Connect International

Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja / Today is a new day, Institute for other studies

Defend Democracy

Defend Digital Me

Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe (DARE network)

Demokratische Jurist*innen Schweiz

Deutsche Vereinigung für Datenschutz e.V. (DVD)

Dezentrum

digiQ

Digital Action

Digital Security Lab Ukraine

Digitale Gesellschaft Switzerland

Ekō

Eticas Foundation

European Broadcasting Union (EBU)

European Center for Not-for-profit Law Stichting (ECNL)

European Civic Forum

European Digital Rights (EDRi)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions (EUROMIL)

European Sex Worker Rights Alliance - ESWA

European Youth Forum (YFJ)

Fair Trials

Fair Vote UK

Féministes contre le cyberharcèlement

Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

Future Development Agency

Global Forum for Media Development

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Global Partners Digital
Gong
Greek Forum of Refugees (GFR)
Health Action International
Heartland Initiative
Homo Digitalis
humanrights.ch
Human Rights Cities Network (HRCN)
Hiperderecho (Peru)
Ict4peace Foundation
Institut Edgelands
Investor Alliance for Human Rights
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
#Jesuislà
Juristinnen Schweiz
Just Access
Laboratory of Public Police and Internet (LAPIN)
Legal Center for the Protection of Human Right and the Environment (PIC), Slovenia
Liberty UK
Lie Detectors
Ligue des droits de l'Homme
LOAD e.V.
LODelle
National Network for Civil Society Germany (BBE)
Opendata.ch
Open Rights Group
Panoptikon Foundation
Politiscope
Pour Demain
Public Eye
Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales - Mexico
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
SFLC.in - India
SHARE Foundation
SMEX - Lebanon
Statewatch
SUPERRR Lab - Germany
The Good Lobby
The Law Technologist
Volonteuropa
VoxPublic - France
University Women of Europe
WHAT TO FIX
Wikimedia CH
Wikimedia Deutschland e. V.
Women Lobby of Slovenia
World Student Christian Federation in Europe (WSCF - Europe)

Individuals

- Christoph Spreng, Vice-President of the Conference of INGOs
- Joanna Bryson, Professor of Ethics and Technology, Hertie School
- Philipp Hacker, Professor of Law and Ethics, European University Viadrina Frankfurt
- Natali Helberger, Professor in Law and Digital Technology, Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam
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- Jan-Hendrik Passoth, Professor of Sociology of Technology, European New School of Digital Studies
- Bettina Berendt, Professor for Internet and Society, TU Berlin, Weizenbaum Institute, and KU Leuven
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- Dirk Voorhoof, prof. em. Human Rights Centre Ghent University /Legal Human Academy
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- Marc Rotenberg, Founder, Center for AI and Digital Policy
- Merve Hickok, President, Center for AI & Digital Policy
- Sonja Lokar, President, Women Lobby of Slovenia
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- Alexander Dix, Vice-Chair, European Academy for Freedom of Information and Data Protection (EAID), Berlin
- Peter Schaar, Chairman, European Academy for Freedom of Information and Data Protection (EAID), Berlin
- Pamela Gupta, CEO, Trusted AI
- Husnia Khalid Mohamed, Director BAIT, Dubai
- Tarek Naguib, Coordinator NGO-Plattform Menschenrechte, Switzerland
- Nora Ni Loideain, Director of Information Law & Policy Centre, IALS, University of London
- Yves Daccord, Executive president, Institut Edgelands
- Daniel Stauffacher, Founder and President, Ict4peace Foundation
- Igor Arbatov, COO, Future Development Agency, Ukraine