

Report **EuroDIG**

Lithuania, June 17th to 19th 2024



BALANCING INNOVATION AND REGULATION

The city of Vilnius, Lithuania, hosted the 2024 edition of EuroDIG, which took place between June 17 and 19. EuroDIG is a pan-European multistakeholder forum focused on Internet Governance (IG), whose main objective is to promote the participation of Europeans in the dialogue on this issue, bringing together the perspectives of different stakeholders, facilitating debate and enabling decisions to be made regarding the Internet. This forum has several very important institutional partners (e.g. European Commission; UNESCO; ICANN; RIPE; Internet Society, etc.) and several donors, including the European ccTLDs of reference, such as .eu, .de, .nl, .at, and, also, .pt. As a regional initiative of the [Internet Governance Forum](#) (IGF), the "Messages" resulting from each edition of EuroDIG are presented at the IGF's annual conference.

It should be noted that in this edition .PT financially supported the travel and accommodation of a young engineering student, of the Lisbon University - Higher Technical Institute to the event, where he actively participated with the youthDIG community¹.

The motto of this year's edition was "Balancing innovation and regulation", a current and central topic in the international debate on Internet Governance, but also very much brought about by the recent publication of the AI Act. Over the course of three days, the more than 50 EuroDIG sessions, which took place at the same time as the annual "Baltic Domain Days", tackled subjects - mostly from a legal and public policy perspective - as relevant as the defense of human rights online, Artificial Intelligence (AI), interoperability, data governance, the processes underway at the United Nations with regard to Internet Governance, namely GDC and WSIS+20, digital skills, among others.

Since it is impossible to summarize here all the interesting discussions that took place during EuroDIG, we will try to present a brief summary of the main ideas that we took away from the sessions that captured our attention the most, first and foremost because of their intersection with .PT's institutional scope of action.

NRI ASSEMBLY

Key participants:

- Ireland - Declan McDermott, Policy & Compliance Officer, CIPP/E; CIPM (.ie);
- Czech Republic - Natalie Tercova, Chair of IGF Czechia and YouthDIG fellow 2023;
- Nigel Hickson, Head Internet Governance Policy; Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation, UK;
- Carol Roach, IGF MAG Chair and Under Secretary, Cabinet Office, Government of The Bahamas (online);
- Chengetai Masango, United Nations Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Programme and Technology Manager;
- Intervention of Marta Moreira Dias, Member of the Board at .PT.

¹ YouthDIG messages available at: https://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/YOuthDIG_2024

Even before the official opening of this year's EuroDIG, the NRI² Assembly took place, focusing on the establishment of new national and regional NRIs, the involvement of governments in these processes and the role that NRIs play in the IGF ecosystem and its future. During this session, .PT had the opportunity to share its experience in co-organizing the [Portuguese Initiative of the Internet Governance Forum](#), for more than 10 years, and to share tips and suggestions with .ie and .cz, which are now preparing their first editions.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY NIS2 DIRECTIVE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO THE FIGHT AGAINST ONLINE HARMS

Key participants:

- Regina Filipová Fuchsová, EURid (Moderator);
- Georgia Osborn, DNSRF;
- Prudence Malinki, Markmonitor;
- Katrina Sataki, .lv and ICANN Board;
- Intervention of Marta Moreira Dias, Member of the Board .PT.

[NIS 2 Directive](#) related to measures to ensure a high common level of cybersecurity across the European Union (EU), brings new cybersecurity and data processing obligations for registries and registrars, but also for resellers, hosting service providers, cloud services, among others, and is an important piece of legislation for the technical community in Europe (and beyond).

This session sought to uncover the level of cross-sector collaboration implicit in the Directive and how stakeholders in the DNS value chain can be expected to collaborate. In this regard, the [NIS2 Article 28 Tracker](#) was presented, a collaborative tool developed by the DNS Research Federation, which monitors the state of transposition of Article 28 of the NIS2 Directive, related to domain registration databases, in the legal systems of each Member State. One of the problems we raised, and which was confirmed, was the difficulty of having up-to-date information on this platform, which in itself generates limited confidence in accessing it.

One of the ideas that became very clear during this session was the difficulty that "small" ccTLD's³ have in keeping up with the evolution and constant changes in the applicable legal requirements, and still having the resources and "energy" to be innovative and competitive. At the same time, in addition to the interpretative difficulty and technicality of many of the applicable provisions, there are the costs of implementation and subsequent compliance action. Even for registrars, larger registries are more appealing and when it comes to ensuring compliance with the applicable legislation, registrars will start their compliance processes considering the reality of larger registries. It is therefore important for small registries to collaborate with larger registries that are better able to keep up with this legislative evolution and think about the best compliance solutions, which are highly resource intensive.

² National Regional Initiatives;

³ Country-code Top Level Domains.

UPDATE AND REPORTING ON GLOBAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE PROCESSES (GDC, WSIS+20, NETMUNDIAL+10)

Key participants:

- Ana Cristina Amoroso das Neves, Vice Chair of the 28th Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) of the United Nations;
- Mark Carvell, Independent IG Consultant and EuroDIG Associate Member Concettina Cassa, Agency for Digital Italy (AgID);
- Thomas Schneider, Ambassador, Switzerland; President, EuroDIG Support Association;
- European Commission Representative;
- Izaan Khan, YouthDIG 2023 fellow.

The next 18 months will be a crucial period for global Internet governance, as the framework established by WSIS in 2003-05 approaches its 20th anniversary in 2025, when the UN General Assembly will conduct a comprehensive review of the WSIS process and decide on the future of the IGF's mandate. In this EuroDIG session, were given updates on the global processes taking place in relation to the WSIS+20 review.

The session addressed the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and, in this regard, the importance of defending the multistakeholder model of Internet governance and the continuity of the IGF and its role. The main results of NETmundial+10 were addressed, along with the ["NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement: Strengthening Internet governance and digital policy processes"](#). Finally, it was discussed the importance of widen the partners of the ["Declaration for the Future of Internet"](#), which already has a total of 70 signatories (e.g. EU; USA; Albania; UK; Iceland).

EUROPEAN POLICIES AND STRATEGIES: KEYNOTE: RASMA RAMOSKAITE AND IRENA GUIDIKOVA

Key participants:

- Rasma Ramoskaite, Director at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania;
- Irena Guidikova, Head of Democratic Institutions and Freedoms Department, Council of Europe.

In this session, the Keynotes introduced the main theme of a series of sessions: "European policies and strategies".

Although human rights are the foundational basis for the creation of the European project and are therefore also enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Fundamental Laws of all Member States, digital human rights are still being shaped. With the "Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade", the European Union (EU) presents its commitment to a secure and sustainable digital transformation that puts people at the center, in line with the EU's fundamental values and rights.

But the question arises as to whether this European approach is effectively keeping pace with the pace of addressing gaps in the protection of vulnerable groups, including children and young people, in the light of rapid technological evolution. The latest data published by the UN shows that young

people aged 16 and over are the most affected by cyberbullying and harassment, particularly young people belonging to vulnerable groups (e.g. the LGBTQIA+ community).

The metaverse itself, while presenting countless opportunities to improve the lives of citizens and businesses, and increasing the possibilities for governments to better serve their populations, also brings a huge potential for perversity, the so-called "metaverse harm".

We can see that the logic initially adopted of "self-regulation" is not working, and we are moving towards a logic of co-regulation, visible, for example, in the multilateral agreements that have been concluded, for example, on AI, cybersecurity and the protection of children online.

Today, online harm is at the heart of the discussions on Internet Governance. Instruments such as the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) already make it possible to combat online harm, but their implementation needs to be constantly monitored and materialized in concrete measures to be implemented and applied by each of the adhering states.

There is a growing tension between the crucial need to tackle evolving cyber threats and the duty to defend fundamental human rights online – e.g. privacy vs security vs freedom of expression – and only multidisciplinary approaches and multistakeholder dialogue can help strike the right balance.

EUROPEAN POLICIES AND STRATEGIES | HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: EUROPE'S ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS ONLINE

Key participants:

- Vessela Karloukovska, Policy Officer of the Internet Governance Team in DG-CNECT;
- Ana Cristina Amoroso das Neves, Head of the Internet Governance Office, PT Foundation for Science and Technology | Vice-Chair of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development | Chair of the DNS.PT Advisory Board;
- Dennis Redeker, Founding member of the interdisciplinary Digital Constitutionalism Network and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Internet Rights and Principles Coalition;
- Paolo Grassia, Senior Director of Public Policy at ETNO;
- Lucien Castex, Representative for public policy of AFNIC and associate researcher at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle;
- Isabel María Álvaro Alonso, Member of IGF Youth Spain and Junior Manager of Digital Public Policy at Telefónica.

According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer, only 57% of respondents were aware that human rights must also be respected online. Similarly, one in three respondents believe that the EU does not adequately protect their rights in the digital environment. Regarding the areas they consider a priority for EU and Member States action, respondents highlighted: protecting users from cyberattacks (30%), protecting against disinformation and illegal content (26%) and supporting digital skills training programs (17%). Included in these fundamental rights are freedom of expression, the right to privacy and protection of personal data, the right to reputation and good name, the right to education, and others.

Ensuring respect for human rights online faces a number of challenges, including the rise in cyberattacks in Europe, which increased by 57% from 2022 to 2023, generating insecurity among users about their online protection, the increase in the number of fake news and hate speech online, and the lack of basic digital skills among a large part of the European population.

However, the EU has tried to respond to these challenges, by developing binding legal instruments that regulate the protection of human rights in the digital space. Examples include the [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#), the [Declaration for the Future of Internet](#), and the recent [Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence](#), approved in May 2024. These are instruments that have adopted a "human-centered approach" and are not merely declaratory, but shape European and Member States policies.

The German Charter of Fundamental Digital Rights, translated into 13 languages, the Portuguese Charter of Human Rights in the Digital Age, also mentioned during the session, the Spanish Charter of Digital Rights, among others, are examples of how Europe has sought to strengthen the formal seat of human rights and their dignity. The private sector itself has also been developing internal regulations that deal with this issue, for example, some companies have their own "charters" to internally regulate issues related to the use of technology and respect for human rights (e.g. regarding net neutrality; privacy and confidentiality; use of AI).

EUROPEAN POLICIES AND STRATEGIES | YOU ON SIGNAL AND ME ON TELEGRAM – MESSENGER INTEROPERABILITY BY EU REGULATION

Key participants:

- Alena Muravska, Programme Manager, RIPE NCC (Moderator);
- Irma Urmonaitė, the Deputy Chairwoman of the Competition Council of Lithuania;
- Riccardo Nanni, Researcher in data governance, Fondazione Bruno Kessler;
- Vittorio Bertola, Head of Policy, Open-Xchange.

There is a group of friends. They all use WhatsApp, except for one of them. That person always needs to be informed separately. This will change with the Digital Markets Act (DMA). The DMA establishes the obligation for interoperability of messaging services when provided by companies qualified by the European Commission (EC) as gatekeepers (e.g. Messenger; WhatsApp). Messaging service providers met in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) to develop an interoperability standard which, in the end, could positively affect us all.

Given the EU's commitment to promoting innovation, competition and consumer well-being, it is essential to understand how standardization and competition law interact in shaping the sector under analysis and market dynamics, as well as the importance of recognizing that only a global multistakeholder process can support the advancement of the Internet infrastructure and the need for new global standards to ensure its interoperability.

The application of this measure (Article 7 of the DMA) is expected to have an impact on increasing the competitiveness of the market, even though the gatekeepers targeted already have between 80% and 90% of the market and their services are already largely interoperable. However, from the point of view of consumers, it is expected that the usability of these services will be facilitated and that, eventually, there will be an increase in the number of providers.

From the suppliers' point of view, the necessary technical developments are being made operational, the security and data protection issues associated with this interoperability obligation are being assessed, and whether the application of this measure should be restricted to European users/in the European area or extended to all users (e.g. META has expressed its desire for the impact of this obligation on the messaging services to be restricted to European users/in the European area). A final note to highlight the importance of balancing here too. The EU must not create such restrictions that large operators give up on this vast market. Europe, in keeping pace with the digital revolution, is opening opportunities for people, companies and organizations, but it cannot follow a path that drives away the big international players in digital.

GOVTECH – PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST IN DIGITALIZING PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE USE OF DATA | EUROPEAN APPROACH ON DATA GOVERNANCE

Key participants:

- Moritz Taylor, Data Protection Unit, Council of Europe (Moderator);
- Mirja Vujeda, Croatian Data Protection Authority;
- Darius Amilevičius, Information Society Development Committee of the Lithuanian Government and University Researcher;
- Aurélie Merquiol, Data Protection Officer of the French Institute for Research on Sustainable Development.

In the field of what are the major trends in terms of e-GOV actions, the following were pointed out: open data; digital skills and security. Data protection, protection of the rights of data subjects, digital rights, privacy, access to data, ownership of data, open data, free flow of data. What do these keywords mean – or should mean – in the context of research? What are the relevant definitions and regulations that can have a positive impact on the way we use data for research? This session aimed to reflect on the European perspective on data governance, how to meet the different needs and ensure that the right policies are in place.

At the moment, in the EU, we have a lot of legislation (e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation; the Open Data Directive; the Data Act; the Data Governance Act) that complicates the understanding of these matters by the legal operators themselves, but also by those targeted (all of us). Regulatory intentions are good, important and useful, but monitoring their application and agile mechanisms to guarantee their implementation are essential. Once again, the emphasis was on the importance of compliance in organizations, companies and the state, and of enforcement.

To put it simply, the distinction between the Data Governance Act and the Data Act is based on the following:

- **Data Governance Act:** neutrality + trust + data altruism. It establishes the basic rules for secure, interoperable and transparent data sharing within the Union. It introduces the legal framework to strengthen trust in voluntary data sharing for the benefit of businesses and citizens. "Data altruism = voluntary secure data sharing.
- **Data Act:** establishes a proportional approach between the sharing of data and the legitimate interests of those who share it. It also establishes a framework for access to private data by the public sector. It imposes rules to enable data transfer and interoperability.

While the Data Governance Act establishes the processes and structures that facilitate the voluntary sharing of data, the Data Act clarifies who can create value from that data and under what conditions, i.e. who has the legitimacy to access the shared data and under what circumstances. Data spaces are already being created in many sectors (e.g. tourism; health: infrastructures), they are a valuable contribution to technological development and innovation (e.g. AI), but also to the social and economic life of the EU itself.

GOVTECH – PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST IN DIGITALIZING PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE USE OF DATA | EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCESS TO SERVICES

Key participants:

- Artūras Piliponis, Partner at EY Advisory Services Practice (Moderator);
- Ieva Žilionienė, leads the consulting branch of NRD Companies;
- Valentina Stadnic, serves as Programme Officer in the ITU Office for Europe;
- Manuel Costa Cabral, Senior Consultant at the Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações (ANACOM);
- Lasse Heidemann, the Senior Director for Outreach at DIGITALEUROPE.

Although Europe can be considered the champion of internet access, stable connectivity and the ability to access online services can be a challenge for some communities, especially in remote or war zones. The digital divide results in a social divide, leaving many citizens outside the opportunities of modern society. This session aimed to discuss technical and strategic solutions and the role of different stakeholders in tackling the digital divide that affects citizens in Europe and beyond.

Different approaches have been applied to mitigate digital divides, which have evolved from a focus on access to infrastructure to a focus on digital skills, usage gaps and raising society's awareness of Internet use.

Entities such as the UN and the EU have been developing numerous initiatives for digital empowerment and inclusion, but private entities can and should also play an important role here, developing initiatives with their communities such as Space X's Starlink, which seeks to extend broadband to remote areas, or Google's Next Billion Users, which creates useful and innovative digital products based on user studies.

REIGNITE MULTILATERALISM VIA TECHNOLOGY (REMIT) – RESEARCH RESULTS

Key participants:

- Isabel Álvaro Alonso, Youth IGF Spain (Moderator);
- Dennis Redeker, Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research (ZeMKI), University of Bremen;
- Jakob Bund, European Cyber Conflict Research Initiative (ECCRI);
- Ana Cristina Amoroso das Neves, Vice Chair of the 28th Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) of the United Nations;

- Sophie Tvalavadze, Deputy Head of Department, Communications, Information and Modern Technologies Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia;
- Pilar Rodriguez, YOUThDIG Org Team/YOUThDIG 2023/Youth IGF Spain.

This session presented [REMIT](#) - "Reignite Multilateralism via Technology" - a large-scale research project under the Horizon Europe on global technological governance. This project represents a multi-year effort to understand the legislative and normative development, the geopolitics of technology and the economic and social aspects of technological governance, in particular Internet Governance.

REMIT addresses global problems in four areas of technology: digital, biohealth, security and defense, and finance. By focusing on these technology areas, the project provides very relevant information to support the EU in policymaking. The four technology areas are also key to find solutions to many of today's important challenges, including climate change, rising inequalities, migration issues, health pandemics and clutter of information.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | INNOVATION AND ETHICAL IMPLICATION

Key participants:

- Prof. Dr. Paulius Pakutinskas, UNESCO Chair on AI, Emerging Technologies and Innovations for Society (Moderator);
- Vanja Skoric, Program Director at ECNL | European Center for Not-For-Profit Law Stichting;
- Nicola Palladino, Assistant Professor of Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence, University of Salerno, Founder Member of the Digital Constitutionalism Network (Center for Advanced Internet Studies, Bochum, DE), Expert Member of the ISO JTC 42 on Artificial Intelligence;
- Marine Rabeyrin, EMEA Education Segment Director;
- Thomas Schneider, Ambassador, Chair of the CAI, Vice-Director, Swiss Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM), Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC).

As the EU adopts more solutions based on AI and other emerging technologies, ethical considerations become increasingly crucial. This session sought to analyze the ethical implications of AI, machine learning and related technologies, exploring issues such as algorithm bias, privacy concerns and their impact on human rights.

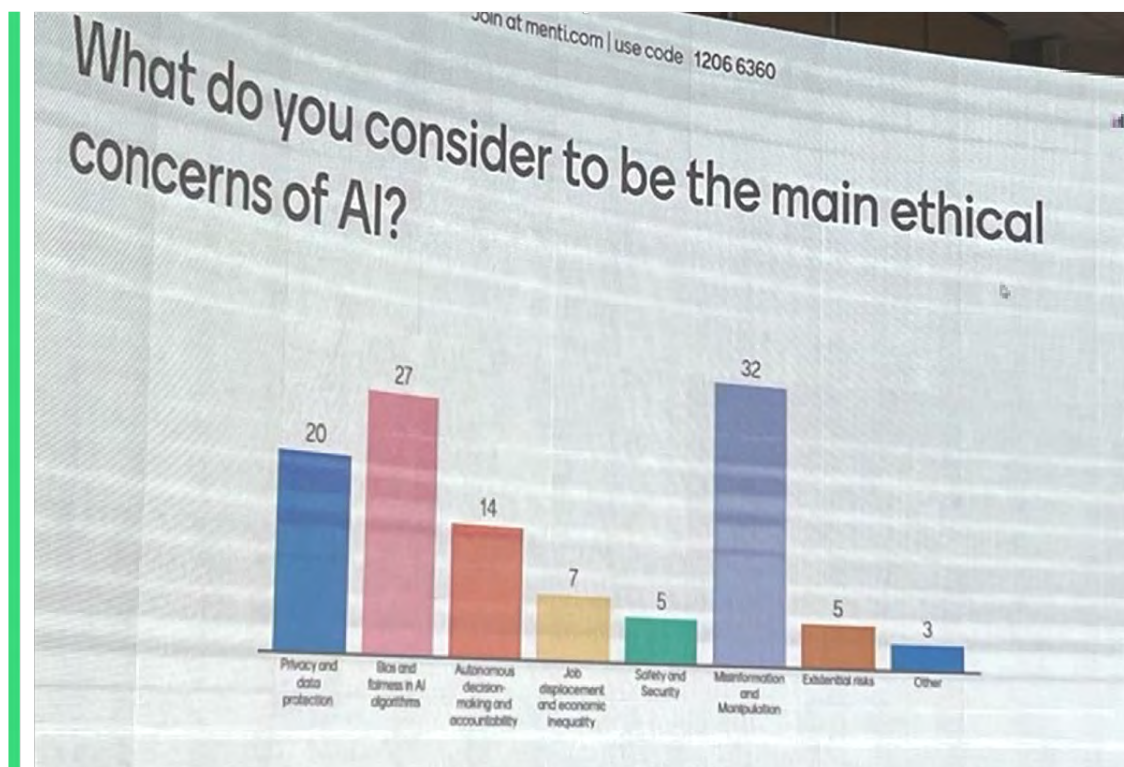


Fig.1 – Mentimeter performed during the session

The results of KPMG's Global study on "[Trust Artificial Intelligence](#)" reveal that people trust AI systems more when there is legislation and regulation that imposes rules on their use, which reinforces the need to regulate the use of AI. This study is very relevant because it illustrates the potential of AI and how we can "trust" in the development and use of this technology.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a good yardstick for AI developments around the world and their compatibility with ethics and human rights. However, it is not possible to regulate the risks and challenges related to AI in a uniform way for the whole world, since the way we deal with, and face risk depends on the culture and history of each society. Ethics is intrinsically connected to human rights, and views on ethics differ from society to society.

In the case of the EU, the EC could only have regulated AI in the Digital Services Act in the way it did, i.e. from the point of view of protecting and harmonizing the internal market, because this is its area of competence. Anything related to national defense (e.g. use of AI in the context of war) is the exclusive competence of each Member State.

Thinking about the ethical challenges and risks that AI holds should not mean forgetting its benefits and potential, including in the defense of human rights and a more inclusive and egalitarian world. It is therefore necessary to regulate AI and its use, through soft and hard law instruments, and it is also necessary to train the entire population in the benefits and challenges of this technology, so that innovation can take place in a reliable and secure environment. AI must be looked at holistically, but it must not be forgotten that the different Member States have socio-economic and cultural structures that give them their own identity, which lead them to deal and manage risk differently. This is crucial if we want to see instruments such as the AI Act applied consistently across the Union.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON AI AND HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

Key participants:

- Thomas Schneider - Ambassador, Chair of the CAI, Vice-Director, Swiss Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM), Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC);
- David Fairchild - First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada to the Office of the United Nations, Head of Delegation of Canada to the CAI;
- Laura Galindo - AI and Privacy Policy Manager, META;
- Mario Hernández Ramos - Constitutional Law Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Head of Delegation of Spain to the CAI;
- David Marti - Founder, AI Programme Lead, Pour Demain (online).

The Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, approved on May 17, 2024 by the Council of Europe and due to be signed during a conference of justice ministers to be held on September 5 (precisely) in Vilnius (Lithuania), is the first binding international legal instrument to regulate the use of AI.

The Convention's negotiations involved 46 Council of Europe member states, the EU and 11 non-member states (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Santa Fe, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Peru, the United States of America and Uruguay), as well as representatives from the private sector, civil society and academia, who participated as observers.

During the negotiations of the Convention, the intention that it should be an instrument that accommodates different jurisdictions, especially outside the EU, was always very present. The Convention (Articles 1 and 7) is based on respect for human self-determination and recognition of the individuality of each person, but it was not easy to regulate matters related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law through a binding, international legal instrument.

In Europe, the Convention is complementary to the IA Act. They are two legal instruments that must be understood (and applied) together.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE | IDENTIFICATION OF AI GENERATED CONTENT

Key participants:

- Aldan Creo, Technology Research Specialist - Accenture (Moderator);
- Laurens Naudts, Doctoral Researcher at the KU Leuven Centre for IT & IP Law;
- Mykolas Katkus, Partner Fabula Rud Pedersen, Co-Founder Reepsens;
- Paulius Pakutinskas, Professor at Mykolas Romeris University.

AI can prove beneficial in generating content. However, AI-generated content can also be used to replace content that should be generated by humans (such as school exams) or to imitate authentic content (deep fakes). Although deep fakes can be used for artistic and satirical purposes, they can also contribute to disinformation and defamation.

However, the main alternatives proposed so far to meet these challenges appear to be insufficient:

- The detection of AI-generated texts is unreliable, as it can be easily bypassed by paraphrasing (e.g. it identified Martin Luther King's best-known speech as having been made via AI);
- Applying cryptographic signatures to content to verify its authenticity would be complicated and would not guarantee that the content was not generated by AI. For example, if a person took a photo of a deepfake, the cryptographic signature would still verify the authenticity of the content;
- Placing a watermark on content with a warning that it was generated by AI can be bypassed, even if the watermark is not directly visible;

What might make more sense in the future is to understand and accept that the paradigm has shifted, and that it will be necessary for everyone, as a global community, to adapt to the new realities (opportunities and challenges) brought by AI. For example, in the context of the education system, it will make sense to recognize that young people will use AI to do assignments/tests, and therefore the way of teaching and assessing must adapt to a reality in which content created by the human mind (students) mixes with that created by AI.

At a time when Europe is struggling with growing economic and social instability because of well-known constraints, the importance of efficiency has often been raised. In this field, determining factors have been identified such as cooperation, consensus, setting tangible objectives, ethics, trust and, above all, the common starting and finishing point: the human being and the rights that shape the uniqueness of each person.

The last session of EuroDIG 2024 consisted of consolidating the Messages that will be taken to the IGF in December and which embody the main conclusions of the discussions that took place in Vilnius. The Messages will be published at www.eurodig.org, and the Messages on global Internet Governance processes is already available for [consultation](#).