



Press release

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Page 1 of 2

Doing AI the European way: Protecting fundamental rights in an era of artificial intelligence

High-level online conference hosted by the German EU Council Presidency and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Today, leading experts from politics, business, academia and civil society came together for an online conference with more than 800 participants to discuss the protection of fundamental rights in an era of artificial intelligence (AI). The event was hosted by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. The discussions focused on how legally binding fundamental rights standards can shape the development of AI laws and policies. The European Commission intends to present its proposal for an EU legal framework for AI in the first quarter of 2021.

Christine Lambrecht, German Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer

Protection: *“We urgently need a body of rules, under EU law, for AI systems. AI can protect human lives and help us to develop coronavirus vaccines. But AI also carries significant risks. We are not at the mercy of technology. It is decisions by companies or authorities that are ultimately behind AI and its use. We must determine who is liable and responsible for these decisions. Transparency and comprehensibility are the key. We must be able to reliably assess and independently verify the risks involved in advance “*

Didier Reynders, EU Commissioner for Justice: *“The European Commission made it a priority to develop a coordinated European approach on the human*

**Press Division,
Federal Ministry of Justice
and Consumer Protection**
Mohrenstraße 37
10117 Berlin

Tel. +49 30 18 580 9090
presse@bmjv.bund.de
www.bmjv.de

Responsible for content:
Rüdiger Petz
Dr Stephanie Krüger

Editorial staff:
Rabea Bönnighausen
Maximilian Kall
Dr Ariane Keitel
Dr Marius Leber
Stefan Zimmermann

and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence. This means that when developing and using AI in the EU, complying with fundamental rights must be at the core of this approach, which we call the human-centric approach.”

Michael O’Flaherty, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights:

“AI is here and it is not going anywhere. It can be a force for good. But it needs to be watched carefully to ensure it respects our human and fundamental rights. The Agency for Fundamental Rights is deeply committed to this work. Our ambition is not just to ensure that AI respects our fundamental rights, but that it also promotes and protects them.”

Speakers were, among others, **Touria Meliani**, Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam, responsible for the Digital City, **Dragoş Tudorache**, Chair of the European Parliament’s Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence, and **Philip Alston**, Professor of Law at New York University and UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights from 2014 to 2020.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already present in many areas of our daily lives. Public authorities may use it when handling social welfare applications or to support the work of the police. Private companies use it for developing tools to support health services or when placing adverts online.

Discussions about the fundamental rights implications of AI often lack concrete examples and experiences from the ground. The [report ‘Getting the Future right – Artificial Intelligence and Fundamental Rights’](#) from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has been launched and debated during the conference. The report provides an analysis of fundamental rights implications based on examples of actual use of AI and related technologies by businesses and public administration in the EU (*see additional press release of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency attached*).