



Gender equality and artificial intelligence at the Council of Europe

Cécile Gréboval, Programme Manager, Gender Mainstreaming
17th Gender Summit, Amsterdam 03.10.2019

INTRODUCTION

Established on 5 May 1949 by 10 states



Comprises 47 member states today

Based in Strasbourg (France)

Intergovernmental political Organisation,
founded on three main values:
human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Gender equality at the Council of Europe

- ✓ Equality between women and men: an **important area** for the CoE for a long time
- ✓ **Legal status** of women in Europe has greatly **improved**, but **no de facto equality** between women and men



Policy framework

✓ **Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023:**

1. Combating **gender stereotypes and sexism**;
2. Preventing and combating **violence against women**;
3. Guaranteeing women's **equal access to justice**;
4. Balanced **participation in decision-making**;
5. Protect the rights of **migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls**
6. Achieve **gender mainstreaming**

✓ **Conventions:** on human rights, violence against women, trafficking

Artificial intelligence at the Council of Europe

- ✓ **Different sectors** of the CoE working on AI from different perspectives: media and information society sector, anti-discrimination, legal sector, data protection, democracy
- ✓ Looking at **opportunities** : ex preventing electoral fraud, detecting inadequate content, new online public services
- ✓ Primary objective = Looking at the **human rights' impacts of AI**

Artificial Intelligence: challenges identified by the Council of Europe



HUMAN RIGHTS

Profiling

Manipulation

Breach of privacy

(gender-based)
discrimination



DEMOCRACY

Governance by
algorithms

Loss of autonomy of
decision



RULE OF LAW

Weakening the primacy
of law

and many more...

Action by the Council of Europe

- ✓ Issue addressed by the **Committee of Ministers**
- ✓ Work of the **Commissioner on Human Rights**
- ✓ **Ethical charter** of the Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
- ✓ **Knowledge building** & work with different Member States and different stakeholders : studies, events
- ✓ Looking at feasibility of a **new legal framework**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Artificial Intelligence

Home What's AI Work in progress National initiatives Useful resources

You are here: Artificial Intelligence



Council of Europe and Artificial Intelligence

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ALGORITHMS

Have your say on the draft recommendation on the human rights impacts of algorithmic systems!

STRASBOURG | 01/08/2019

The Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) invites comments from the public...

[View all news](#)

Personaliser...

The Council of Europe's



OUR RIGHTS

EXPLORE THE COUNCIL

Gender equality-related challenges

AI is **not made by women** – designed at 85% by white men who are mostly from the same mould:

- ✓ Women make up **13% of the graduates in ICT-related** fields working in digital jobs (EU, 2016)
- ✓ 18% women as authors at leading AI conferences
- ✓ 12% women in companies of the digital sector in France
- ✓ Figures show a **decrease in the last years**

Gender equality-related challenges

Due to:

- ✓ **Gender stereotypes**: Geek culture, childhood and education
- ✓ Gender biases and sexism in the **workplace** in the ICT sector

Consequences:

- ✓ Women left out from **powerful sector** and **well-paying jobs**
- ✓ **Loss of diversity** / talents

Gender equality-related challenges

Algorithms can be biased:

- ✓ **Data collection**: some groups are under or over-represented in some data sources
- ✓ **Sexism & stereotypes** are transmitted to machines and sometimes amplified: gender marketing, job profiling, image searching
- ✓ **Historical inequality** is reflected in data: gender socio-economic bias reflected in data

Way forward?

- ✓ Integrate a **gender equality perspective** in all policies, programmes and research related to AI
- ✓ Examine how artificial intelligence could help to **close gender gaps** and eliminate sexism
- ✓ Measures to **increase the participation of women and girls** in the information and technology area as students, professionals and decision makers
- ✓ **Take into account gender-based dynamics** in data-driven instruments and algorithms

Way forward?

- ✓ Improve **transparency**
- ✓ Use **existing legislation** to mitigate potential discriminatory biases: non discrimination and data protection legislation
- ✓ Explore & build **knowledge**
- ✓ **Monitor the impact of AI** to ensure human right development, design and deployment of AI
- ✓ **Certification** and labels
- ✓ Monitor and regulate



<https://www.coe.int/stopsexism>