Gender equality and artificial intelligence at the Council of Europe

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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**: e.g., 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
- Breach of privacy
- (gender-based) discrimination

**Democracy**
- Manipulation
- Governance by algorithms
- Loss of autonomy of decision

**Rule of Law**
- Weakening the primacy of law
- and many more...

HUMAN RIGHTS

DEMOCRACY

RULE OF LAW
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

Council of Europe and Artificial Intelligence

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

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ALGORITHMS

View all news

www.coe.int/ai
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
Sexism: See it. Name it. Stop it.

#StopSexism
#MeToo

https://www.coe.int/stopsexism