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EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR

The EU's independent data
protection authority

“The World Is Watching - CPDP Conferences - Closing Remarks”

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear CPDP.ai guests survivors,

It is my pleasure, once again, to conclude the CPDP.ai 2025 conference.

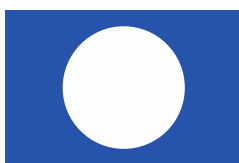
The Conference remains one of the most important international platform dedicated to privacy, personal data protection and how to regulate technologies the digital age. This year's edition titled: '*The World is Watching*' – apart from data protection, privacy and – AI also focused on neurotechnology and neuroscience.

All panels stressed the need for an interdisciplinary approach to AI and cooperation between public institutions, academia, industry and civil society.

On Wednesday, I was delighted to start my participation in this year's CPDP with a panel organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, about **the implementation of existing laws in the field of AI and how to ensure that the EU's fundamental rights are upheld in the realm of - of technological and societal developments.**

Discussions were fruitful; and I take this opportunity to salute the That was during the panel organised by our colleagues from the EU EDPS and FRA have a longstanding and close cooperation that the EDPS and FRA cultivate together. Our partners at the panel were also AI Office of the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Coming back to the broader goal of the Conference.



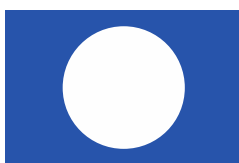
A big part of our discussion at CPDP was devoted to the implementation of new legal instruments in the area of AI, and their respective requirements, when the development or deployment of an AI system impacts personal data processing.

I think it was stressed enough in these 3 days that the AI Act does not replace existing EU regulations and laws but constitutes additional safeguards to those stemming from the data protection frameworks. These frameworks already exist at the level of the EU with the GDPR, LED and the EUDPR (Regulation 2018/1725), and at the level of the Council of Europe with the Conventions 108 and 108+.

In other words, the requirements and safeguards established under data protection law, as well as under the sectoral law applicable to AI system deployed (e.g., labour law, consumer protection law), must continue be respected.

Against this background, both the AI Act and the Council of Europe Convention on AI should be welcomed as **efforts to strengthen the rights of individuals** subject to AI systems, but for this to happen, they must be considered as **part of a broader legal framework that remains fully applicable**.

I would want to repeat the message I conveyed a year ago – concluding CPDP.AI 2024 - **Data protection has not turned into ‘everything AI’**. Respect of data protection and privacy is the essential prerequisite to put people at the centre *and ahead* of technology. We must defend the identity of data protection in order to protect humanity. Data protection is a compass for the development of digital humanism, allowing for a smoother digital transformation that actually serves the interests of humankind. It should guide all of us in the digital age, or more precisely in the ‘info sphere’, described by Luciano Floridi as a special space “*that is seamlessly analogue and digital, offline and online*”.



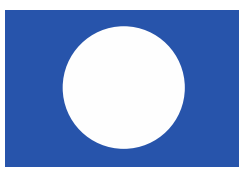
Cooperation is the key word. The multiplication of regulatory frameworks is a response to the development of new technologies, which have profound implications on our societies, for better or for worse. Their effective implementation requires a close and strong cooperation among all stakeholders. At EU level, we have launched the **Digital Clearinghouse 2.0 (DCH 2.0)** to foster collaboration among competent authorities. The DCH 2.0 aims to provide authorities with a forum to exchange and coordinate on issues of common interest and foster proactive and collaborative efforts to ensure a holistic application of EU law.

The EDPS has also launched in 2024 a key initiative under the name of the “**AI Act Correspondents Network**”, in order to facilitate AI governance in public administrations. Even though the AI Act does not mention or require an AI correspondent, each EU institution has recognised the value of such a network and has voluntarily assigned one.

More than ever, the data protection community from all over the world has a crucial role to play in the context of the implementation of AI: as long as personal data is used to fuel the development, training, and testing of AI systems, the data protection framework is often the *‘first line of defense for other fundamental rights’*.

It does not mean that it will be an easy task, especially in situations where individuals face threats to their lives and this is the work of humanitarian organisations and their data protection specialists, whom I would want to greet in special way. In such extreme situations, the asymmetry of powers between those who are in need of protection and those who can give them such a support - either humanitarian organisations or other public or private entities - may lead them to renounce to the enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

Moreover, the magnitude of digital problems on the horizon means that regulators from different fields and perspectives will have to work together to effectively prevent harm generated or amplified by AI. Synergies between consumer, privacy, competition, AI governance, sectoral laws, and digital services regulations will need to be explored, if we are to rein in on the most troublesome use cases of AI.



1. Concluding the CPDP conference this year I cannot forget about the sad anniversary we will observe this summer. **In memory of Caspar Bowden, ten years after his passing**, we honour a visionary advocate for privacy and digital rights. His unwavering dedication to transparency, accountability, and the defence of individual freedoms shaped global debates on surveillance and technology. Caspar – one of the founding fathers of CPDP – foresaw the risks of unchecked power in the digital age and stood firmly—even when it was inconvenient—against mass surveillance and for stronger privacy protections. His legacy lives on in the work of countless activists, scholars, and policymakers inspired by his courage and intellect. We remember him not only for his insight, but for his integrity.

2. Thank you, Caspar.

Thank you to all participants of CPDP for your courage and intellect.

See you next year

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