Technology rights proof

by CRISTINA BARBETTA

International high level speakers have discussed AI and human rights in a round table in the context of the third edition of the conference of the Global State of Human Rights, organized in Venice by the Global Campus of Human Rights and Right Livelihood

What is being done and what has been done so far in the field of artificial intelligence? What is the role of institutions? What are the threats and possibilities of AI, and what is its impact on rights and fundamental freedom? A round table on artificial intelligence and human rights has discussed this, in the framework of the third edition of the High level conference on the Global State of Human Rights, organised in Venice by **Global Campus of Human Rights**, a network of more than 100 universities around the globe, offering training on human rights and democracy, together with **Right Livelihood.** This conference marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 40th Anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights, organised in Vienna in 1993 by the United Nations.

"The European Union", said **George Ulrich,** academic director of Global Campus of Human Rights, opening the round table, "is about to adopt a legislation on artificial intelligence, as well as the White House, just to mention a few examples." (..) "Artificial intelligence is worrying many institutions," he said during the event. "It is necessary to examine what are the threats and possibilities of AI, what legislation can be adopted and the steps that can be taken."

Round table on artificial intelligence and human rights. At the centre, from left to right: : Łukasz Szoszkiewicz, Michael O'Flaherty, George Ulrich and Thérèse Murphy

Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, has declared: **"**We still have a long road ahead to have legislation and industrial standards on artificial intelligence respectful of human rights." The Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights also stressed how there are very low levels of awareness of human rights in the tech community in the United States. "I recall an online conversation that I had with tech giants in Silicon Valley," he explained. "I have found people of good will and a good business sense,

but an extraordinary ignorance as regards the structure of human rights."What can be done? "The role of civil society is always crucial, but it is particularly necessary and decisive in the relation between technology and human rights," Michael O' Flaherty said. In this area "civil society has played a fundamental role, generating ideas, models and attention. And, more than in any other sector, it has managed to put together two worlds that are so different from one another: technology and human rights."

In June this year the European Parliament approved the **first legislation in the world to regulate the use of artificial intelligence**. The European norm aims at ensuring an ethical and human centered approach towards AI in Europe, with new transparency and risk management rules for artificial intelligence systems.

"What has been approved is not a recommendation. Is it a regulation, therefore it is a law. This means that, once it is approved, it is legally binding in the same way all over Europe. The regulation will have a significant impact also on government debate on artificial intelligence on a global level." This is what **Brando Benifei**, member of the European Parliament and main rapporteur of the regulation, said during the event.

From left to right: Brando Benifei and Manfred Nowak

"With this legislation we give responsibility to those who are effectively developing the system, but we also want users to have some responsibility in the chain of mitigation of risks," explained **Brando Benifei,** who continued : "With the AI regulation we establish frameworks, systems, codes of conduct, to mitigate the risks for fundamental rights as well." As for responsibilities "the legislation is focused on responsibilities of developers, providers, artificial intelligence systems, trying to avoid what could happen if everything were left to the market,"Benifei explained. "Of course existing norms will be applied. For instance, if you look at the European scenario, there is GDPR, which is applied everywhere."

"This is the objective of the regulation; mitigating, as much as possible, the risks for fundamental rights, not eliminating them completely, which would probably be too difficult. The regulation is a serious attempt to protect human rights in their final stage, when artificial intelligence reaches the user,"**Benifei** said. "We have proposed a very strong limitation of biometric recognition by police forces in public spaces, bans on predictive policing systems and on emotional recognition in schools and in the workplace. Migration is a fundamental and very crucial right." Brando Benifei said that it will be necessary to discuss with the government to prohibit emotional recognition at the borders, and that this technology has been used to violate fundamental human rights.

From left to right: Neshan Gunasekera, Visiting Researcher at the Raul Wallenberg Institute at Lund University, Lotte Leicht, Chair of Board of the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, e Ole von Uexküll, Executive Director of Right Livelihood

Thérèse Murphy, Professor at Queen's University Belfast and Visiting Chair at Lund University, underlined: "What I find is an astonishing low level of what I would describe as human rights literacy in ethical advisory groups, whether they're dealing with AI or some other aspects of science, technology, medicine or health."

Frans Viljoen, Director of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Pretoria and Member of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, stressed how in Africa there is less work on artificial intelligence. "There is a lack of investment in the African continent, and a fragile regulation, due to lack of resources." Viljoen also expressed concern as regards the use of new emerging technologies in the military field. "We need guardrails and accountability measures to be put into place."

"We must reflect on the role of AI in education systems, and integrate applications and artificial intelligence frameworks in formal education," said **Łukasz Szoszkiewicz**, Assistant Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan.

On education and human rights **Manfred Nowak**, Secretary general of Global Campus of Human Rights, closing the conference, said that it is necessary to make human rights popular. "Human rights education is necessary, and it should be compulsory in schools". Manfred Nowak, Human Rights Professor at the University of Vienna, concluded: "We have to include children in decision-making processes, like, for example, in the area of mitigating climate change and in artificial intelligence."

Opening picture: Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights, opens the conference on the Global State of Human Rights. At the centre of the table: Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights.
The pictures of the article are of Global Campus of Human Rights