

Club de Madrid and Boston Global Forum push for an international accord that protects fundamental rights in artificial intelligence and digital governance

Both organisations organised a Policy Lab from 7-9 September aimed at building consensus around a rights-based agenda for the global governance of artificial intelligence and digital societies

Madrid, September 10, 2021. With social norms potentially compromised by the velocity of digitalization, artificial intelligence (AI) and social media, policymakers from around the world and at all levels of government, are becoming increasingly convinced of the need to ensure that digital technologies serve the people and not the other way around. The international community, however, has so far failed to adopt a common governance model for these technologies. Club de Madrid, the largest forum of former Presidents and Prime Ministers, and the Boston Global Forum have partnered to narrow the gap between the digital and the policy world, organising the Policy Lab 'Fundamental Rights in AI and Digital Societies - Towards an International Accord' between 7-9 September, aimed at building consensus around a rights-based agenda for the global governance of artificial intelligence and digital societies.

"The preservation of privacy will be as important as the preservation of civil liberties and civil rights today"— Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia (1999-2007) and Member of Club de Madrid.

Club de Madrid Members, Boston Global Forum thinkers and representatives of governments, academic institutions and think tanks, tech companies, and civil society gathered to reflect upon the intersections between digital technologies, fundamental rights and global governance. To ensure we manage digitalization before it manages us, they analysed the challenges and opportunities to bring our global community to agree on a basic set of principles to protect and promote fundamental rights in AI and digital societies.¹

"A strict definition of #AI would immediately be outdated"— "@Karine Caunes, Global Program Director, Center for AI and Digital Policy.

The digitalization process is rapidly altering the panorama for fundamental rights around the world. While digital technologies and AI create new opportunities for the enjoyment of human rights, they are also threats to our protection and bring about new concepts of rights and duties, directly arising from the relationship between citizens and technology.

"We need to clarify the values nations have in common and then shape the rules of global cooperation. If we are not able to do so, we will not solve AI"— Sean Cleary, Executive Vice-Chair of the Future World Foundation and Advisor of Club de Madrid.

¹These included Paul Nemitz, Principal Advisor in the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission; Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO; Danilo Türk, President of Club de Madrid and President of Slovenia (2007-2012); Alex 'Sandy' Pentland, Director of the MIT Connection Science; Aminata Touré, Member of Club de Madrid and Prime Minister of Senegal (2013-2014); Michael Dukakis, former Governor of Massachusetts; Paul Twomey, Distinguished fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation; Eva Kaili, Member of EU Parliament; and Cameron Kerry, former general counsel of the U.S. Department of Commerce, amongst others.

The anchor of the discussions was a vision for a human-centred digital age, albeit with different colours and shapes. Having a shared language and a shared understanding of the complexity we face is key to continue working to articulate a global consensus-building around a rights-based agenda for the governance of digital societies. Common values such as democracy, respect and promotion of human rights, and the rule of law are crucial to underpinning digital policy as an essential starting point to move towards that agreement.

"If you regulate land, you need ways to know who owns the land. You need an audit. It's the same with data. You need an audit so that courts can examine it, should they need to"— Alex 'Sandy' Pentland, Director of the MIT Connection Science.

In a field where so much is yet to come, different frameworks that have been put forward by different institutions at the national and multilateral level, considering different regional perspectives on digital governance, were assessed to explore if they could serve as the basis for a global agreement in this field. International cooperation for AI and digital technologies is an opportunity to write the rules together.

Moreover, a potential Global Alliance for Digital Governance that includes relevant stakeholders -governments, private sector, academia, civil society, international organizations- to try to reduce the development gaps in the digital field and bring communities back together was seriously discussed.

"It's very difficult to create regulation or rules for something that it is coming. We need to first use the technologies and then understand the ecosystems they require"— Esko Aho, Prime Minister of Finland (1991-1995) and Member of Club de Madrid.

Club de Madrid and the Boston Global Forum will share the proposals of the Policy Lab, aimed at spearheading an international accord that protects human rights. Recommendations will also turn attention to the key roles played by multiple stakeholders, ranging from national governments and multilateral organisations to NGOs and others.

This initiative is the starting point of a five-year initiative in which Club de Madrid and the Boston Global Forum propose to steer global conversations on fundamental rights in digital societies, to build bridges between countries, regions and communities of practices, and identify a path to consensus around a rights-based agenda for the governance of AI and digital technologies.

For further information:

- Policy Lab Platform: www.aidigitalrights.com
- Media Kit: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/D7iXVELcDWiQQ/>
- Media contact: Alejandro Hita, Communications Manager -> ahita@clubmadrid.org / +34 607 69 43 54
- Hashtag: #aidigitalrights

About Club de Madrid

Club de Madrid (CdM) is the world's largest forum of democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers, who leverage their individual and collective leadership experience and global reach to strengthen inclusive democratic practice and improve the well-being of people around the world. As a non-partisan and international non-profit organisation, it counts on the hands-on governance experience of more than 100

Members from over 70 countries, along with a global network of advisers and partners across all sectors of society. This unique alliance stimulates dialogue, builds bridges and engages in advocacy efforts to strengthen public policies and effective leadership through recommendations that tackle challenges such as, inclusion, sustainable development and peace at the national and multilateral level.

About Boston Global Forum

Boston Global Forum (BGF), in collaboration with the United Nations Centennial Initiative, released a major work entitled *Remaking the World – Toward an Age of Global Enlightenment*. More than twenty distinguished leaders, scholars, analysts, and thinkers put forth unprecedented approaches to the challenges before us. These include President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, Governor Michael Dukakis, Father of Internet Vint Cerf, Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Harvard University Professors Joseph Nye and Thomas Patterson, MIT Professors Nazli Choucri and Alex ‘Sandy’ Pentland, and European Parliament Member Eva Kaili. The BGF introduced core concepts shaping path breaking international initiatives, notably, the Social Contract for the AI Age, an AI International Accord, the Global Alliance for Digital Governance, the AI World Society (AIWS) Ecosystem, and AIWS City.