

Democracy and the rule of law during the digital revolution

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Athens, Greece, on 24-26 October 2019:

Is convinced that:

- the current technological transformation has implications in every aspect of society especially for fundamental rights such as liberty of expression, data protection and privacy;
- open and free public debate is a pillar of liberal democracy and it risks faltering when political opinion and participation is manipulated;
- social media, online platforms and any digital tools used for political purposes must ensure transparency, GDPR [1] compliance and the full respect of democracy;
- safeguarding human rights, democracy and rule of law is crucial while embracing the digital revolution.

Notes that:

- social media platforms can be misused to go against the regulations on political communication, including and especially during electoral campaigns;
- the European Union model for protection of personal data competes with the American personal data market and the Chinese social and state surveillance through personal data. Despite GDPR being recognised worldwide as a standard model of protection of users' digital rights, the European Union lags behind and is unprepared to play a role in the global market dominated by the competition between the American and Chinese technological innovation;
- the data economy is foreseen to grow exponentially in the following years thanks to the support of increasingly sophisticated algorithmic techniques. They will be arguably able to foresee users' future behaviours, address their habits and customs and build public opinion on the basis of audience profiling and targeting;
- online technology users are often unaware of the exploitation, market and surveillance of their personal data, which is managed by few multinational companies in a monopoly regime;
- according to the position paper "Geopolitics of Digital", data market current worth is €60 billion in the European Union, which is predicted to grow between €80 and €110 billion by 2020; [2].

Resolution:

Democracy and the rule of law during the digital revolution

Year and Congress:

Athens, Greece, 2019

Category:

EU Democracy

Page:

1

Keeps in mind that:

- the Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal revealed how democratic electoral processes can be conditioned and it raised serious ethical concerns. It showed how the misuse of Artificial Intelligence can impact on almost every aspect of people’s lives and society at large;
- some EU Member States have enacted regulations providing for an obligation of social networks and internet platforms to delete hate speech within the 24 hours, by that, increasing the risk for free of speech and information through overblocking.

Calls on all member parties of ALDE Party, Renew Europe Group members of the European Parliament and Commissioners, and liberal members of national governments to promote and support norms and policies on:

- ensuring transparency of the sponsors of political advertisement;
- challenging disinformation campaigns and preventing manipulations of the political opinions by foreign states and stakeholders;
- increased digital literacy ensuring that sources and information can be evaluated critically;
- for the development of challengeability of AI when used for administrative decisions;
- ensuring that the Member States enforce the GDPR with regard to data-brokerage and individual profiling in the context of political communication, in the private and public sector;
- enforcing the law in the digital age by improving technical and personnel resources instead of creating legal incentives for over-compulsory censorship ("overblocking").

Sources:

[1] EU General Data Protection Regulation no. 2016/679

[2] Studio Ambrosetti, “Geopolitica del Digitale”, November 2018. https://www.ambrosetti.eu/wp-content/uploads/ELTitaliano_rev.pdf

Resolution:

Democracy and the rule of law during the digital revolution

Year and Congress:

Athens, Greece, 2019

Category:

EU Democracy

Page:

2