

BUILDING DEMOCRATIC AI FOR THE EU: POTENTIAL, TOOLS, CHALLENGES

EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY: THE REQUIRED INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

BUILDING DEMOCRATIC AI FOR THE EU: POTENTIAL, TOOLS, CHALLENGES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been widely described as a lethal threat to liberal democracy. It can erode accountability mechanisms and provide autocrats with formidable tools to monitor citizens and steer their preferences. Yet, AI is no longer a distant future scenario: it is already here, and it is here to stay. This policy brief endorses a normative approach to the use of AI, which can turn an enemy into an ally in the EU's effort to uphold democratic values and institutions across the bloc. Drawing on cutting-edge expert research, the report demonstrates how AI technologies can help EU policymakers in three vital areas: assessing member states' violations of the rule of law; fostering civic engagement and democratic participation; and protecting media freedom and pluralism.

Social Media summary

AI can be a strong tool to defend liberal democracy: EU policymakers should seize that opportunity!

Keywords

#AI, #EU, #democracy, #autocratization, #media

Short bio

After graduating at the College of Europe in 2017, Simone Benazzo has worked as a freelance journalist and policy analyst for four years, mainly covering the Western Balkans and the Visegrad Countries. In October 2021 he started his PhD in political science at the ULB. His research revolves around the role of independent journalism in resisting autocratization in Central-Eastern Europe. Currently, he is also running a project on media in exile, supported by the Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC). Besides researching media pluralism, he hikes, improvises and plays football.

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1) INTRODUCTION

‘The world of the future will be an ever more demanding struggle against the limitation of our intelligence, not a comfortable hammock in which we can lie down to be waited upon by our robot slaves.’
(Norbert Wiener, *God and Golem*, 1964)

"(..) the action of the scientists, since it acts into nature from the standpoint of the universe and not into the web of human relationships, lacks the revelatory character of action as well as the ability to produce stories and become historical, which together form the very source from which meaningfulness springs into and illuminates human existence"
(Hannah Arendt, *The human condition*, 1958).

While I was drafting this essay in mid-August 2023, I stumbled upon an interview the American film director Christopher Nolan gave to Wired about his latest movie, *Oppenheimer*. Asked about the parallelism between nuclear weapons and AI, the filmmaker replied: “If we endorse this view that AI is all-powerful, we are endorsing the view that it can alleviate people of responsibility for their actions – militarily, socio-economically, whatever. The biggest danger of AI is that we attribute these God-like characteristics to it and therefore let ourselves off the hook (..) I identify the danger as the abdication of responsibility” (Nolan, quoted in Streshinsky 2023).

The present report agrees wholeheartedly with this stance, and argues that responsibility must be the guiding principle for any public intervention on AI.

Recognizing this basic feature of this urgent discussion implies giving up on any technocratic approach, which is inclined to presenting AI-related issues as mere technical matters. As predicted in the most dystopian scenarios, AI technologies may acquire the capabilities to replace humans in the near future but, for now, they are simply tools that some humans can use to rule with, over or against other humans.

European citizens, and voters, should therefore not solely focus their attention on the technological capabilities of AI, but instead on the intentions of those political actors that will attempt to use it. In other words, it is not AI that jeopardises the solidity of European democratic regimes; it is the actors who want to jeopardise the solidity of such regimes – labelled as ‘autocratizers’ herein - that can use AI to pursue their objectives.

Most social scientists who have considered the impact of AI on democracy have embraced a 'techno-pessimist' attitude. Such a stance implicitly overshadows human responsibility and agency in the development and application of these ground-breaking technologies. Similar to Adam Smith's 'invisible hand', there is a latent risk of naturalising - and neutralising - AI and treating it as if it were a natural phenomenon, which may only be countered by a fatalistically defensive reaction.

In my eyes, AI is far from a natural phenomenon. It's a political phenomenon.

Taking stock of the most advanced and thought-provoking reflections on the relationship between AI and democracy, the next two sections corroborate this position. The report then briefly summarises the key moves EU institutions have taken in their efforts to counteract autocratization, which highlights how the role of AI in this space is yet to be considered. The last part outlines five specific measures that EU policymakers could introduce to reap the benefits of AI to defend liberal democracy across the bloc.

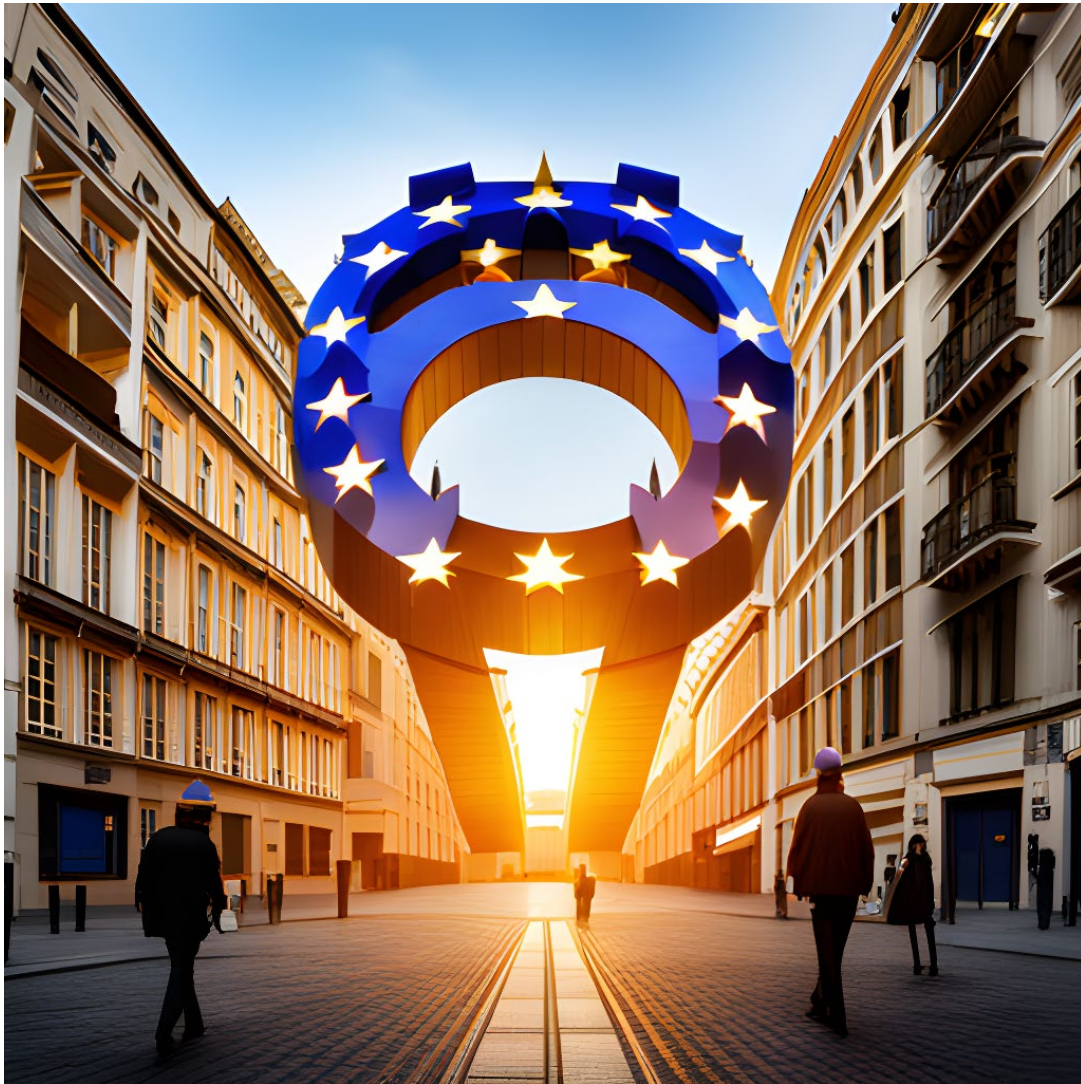


Figure 1- Decorative image generated automatically through Freepik.

2) POLITICS AS USUAL: EMBRACING A NORMATIVE APPROACH TO THE DEBATE ON AI

The many ways AI can undermine democratic regimes, while providing autocracies with formidable tools to consolidate their power, have been pointed out by a plethora of pundits.

In a widely circulated report, Brundage and colleagues (2018) wrote extensively about the multiple threats AI poses to the security of individuals in three different spheres: digital, physical and political. Feldstein (2019) argued that AI can be a boon for authoritarian leaders, as it decreases the cost of practising digital repression and enables them to monitor citizens' behaviour more systematically. Along the same lines, Harari (2018) warned that AI can turn one of the major handicaps of 20th century dictatorships, namely the hyper-concentration of information about the population in one single place, into an asset, since autocracies can gather and process a comparatively higher amount of sensitive personal data than privacy-preserving democratic regimes.

Even if all these analyses have partially suggested that it's ultimately up to human beings to decide how to use AI, it is noteworthy that most of them have approached AI first and foremost as a technology, devoting little space to the very human motivations behind its use.

In a nutshell, much has been written about how AI can empower non-democratic actors, but few authors seem to have addressed the question: how can democratic actors make use of AI to support democratic regimes and fight back against autocratisation?

As this report attempts to offer a robust answer to this question, it is crucial to remember that the pernicious consequences that the application of AI might have on democracies are not new challenges in and of themselves.

They are merely a more technologically-advanced version of challenges that liberal democracy has faced since its emergence, and with renewed intensity over the past two decades. They are “already-existing deficiencies of democratic politics in a setting characterized by an incomplete realization of the ideal of a free society” (König and Wenzelburger 2020: 8).

From a political science perspective, the challenges posed by the fast-growing proliferation of AI technologies can therefore be framed as a manifestation of the classical principal-agent problem: how to ensure that elected officials (the *agent*) act in accordance with the will and interests of citizens (their *principal*)?

This report aims to tackle the question by exploring ways of “shifting the focus away from what AI can do to what AI *should* do” (Broussard et al. 2019: 675, emphasis original). It is informed by the conviction that public authorities in the EU and Member States are expected to regulate AI to ensure that this epoch-defining technology can become a pillar of the political regime they represent and are expected to defend: liberal democracy.

The prerequisite for engaging in this endeavour is the recognition that government regulation, or any form of regulation designed by public bodies that are accountable to society as a whole, is more likely to be effective than corporate self-regulation, given the magnitude of the disruption that AI technologies bring to the way human societies have opted to organise themselves to date (Ferretti 2022).

Therefore, besides the policy recommendations outlined below, the main contribution this paper aims to achieve is to bring AI back into the realm of politics.



Figure 2 – Decorative image generated automatically through Freepik.

3) Which ‘fundamental values’ to preserve? Dissecting the nexus between the future of AI and the future of liberal democracy in the EU and beyond

Even if this element is only seldom spelled out explicitly, the European debate about AI is quintessentially a debate about values, where different visions of the future of society – and, therefore, different political regimes – are promoted and compete against one other.

Helberger and colleagues observed, for instance, that “the development and implementation of digital solutions must be guided by *a vision of the values and fundamental freedoms we, as a society, want to see realized*” (2022: 1605, emphasis added). This view is also embraced by experts committees at the Council of Europe, which define AI as “a broad range of sophisticated technologies that operate in human contexts, designed to fulfil human-defined goals”, thus noting that “AI technologies can be said to *reflect the values and choices of the people who build and use them*” (Leslie et al. 2021: 14, emphasis added).

Although this remark on the variety of political regimes may seem trivial in academic circles, it seems that most of the European debate on AI, and the related EU legal texts, tend to take the idea of ‘democracy’ for granted.

Restructuring this policy debate around values would imply recognising that there are different understandings of democracy, both within the EU and within Member States, and that these models prescribe different relationships between people and rulers, as well as different accountability mechanisms and general goals that a given political community is expected to pursue.

To put it simply, which democracy does the AI Act defend, when it states that “Certain AI systems (...) should be classified as high-risk, considering their potentially significant impact on democracy,”?

At first glance, this question might seem to be the exclusive domain of political philosophers. On the contrary, it would be a mistake for policymakers to disregard it.

First, the very definitions of fundamental values such as justice and equality vary significantly across different models of democracy, all of which could be considered legitimate by large strata of European citizens, based on their ideological allegiances. Beretta and colleagues (2019) argued that “meanings of fairness, underlying to

statistical constraints, and the democratic values are strictly connected; (..) the spread of one fairness definition instead of another is highly justified by the ideas of justice and democracy shared among the society in which the above-mentioned fairness criterion is selected” (2019: 248). According to the authors, competitive democracy, egalitarian democracy and liberal democracy understand and uphold nominally equal values in very different, and sometimes even conflicting, ways. Machine learning models that are devised to help decision-makers carry out effective policies will therefore reproduce the biases and human prejudices their creators might have.

Second, moving closer to the heart of this work, there are currently political actors in the EU that support and, when in power, carry out alternative (read: illiberal) forms of democracy, such as “plebiscitary leader democracy” (Körösényi, Illés and Gyulai 2020) or “majoritarian democracy” (Sadurski 2019). These actors are unlikely to align with the majority of MEPs on their understanding of fundamental values, and the policies they support will conform to their own set of values, favouring, for instance, the enactment of the will of the majority over respect for minority rights, which is at odds with what is customary in standard liberal democracies.

The views shared in this paper are rooted in the assumption that, amongst the political regimes that currently exist around the globe, liberal democracy is still the best-equipped to ensure AI is used for the benefit of society at large. More precisely, it follows König and Wenzelburger, when they claim that this political regime “offers fundamental solutions to the long-standing problem of organizing politics in a way that holds public power in check and operates in the service of those affected by it” (2020: 9).

Indeed, liberal democracy has so far proved the most capable, and arguably the most committed, to ensuring that elected officials and civil servants respond to the public that they are supposed to serve. It has sought to do so through the introduction of a constantly evolving set of checks and balances designed to limit the power of political actors by making them accountable and transparent. It is precisely these rule of law mechanisms that autocratizers have been dismantling piece by piece over the past decade.

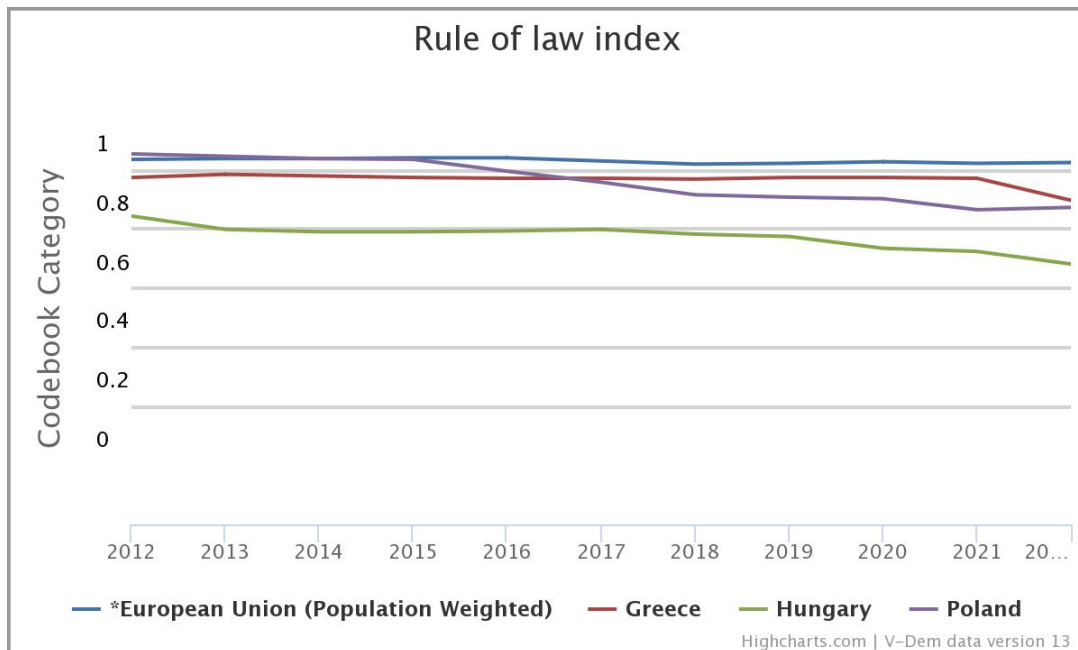


Figure 3 - Rule of law index in the EU and autocratizing Member States

Source: the V-Dem Dataset 2023

EU policymakers should therefore be mindful of the fact that the efforts to regulate AI are also a crucial stress-test that will reveal how far liberal democracy can live up to present-day challenges. To put it bluntly: AI will be there in the future, what about liberal democracy?

Although this paper focuses exclusively on the fight against autocratization within the EU, it would be short-sighted not to touch upon the current geopolitical chessboard that the bloc must navigate, which is likely to make the legislation EU policymakers will introduce reverberate across the globe.

Accordingly, singling out liberal democracy as the best suited political regime to reap the benefits of AI also implies recognizing the existence of a ‘scramble for AI,’ as defined by the title of the latest issue of *Foreign Policy*.

Among the most acclaimed political philosophers that have led the reflection on the relationship between AI and democracy, Risse has most effectively described the link between the regulation of AI technologies and the unfolding ideological conflict around the declining hegemony of Western-style liberal democracy. In his words, AI “can greatly strengthen democracy, but only with the right efforts. Understanding “the politics of AI” is crucial since Xi Jinping’s China loudly champions one-party rule as a better fit for our digital century. AI is a key component in the contest between authoritarian and democratic rule” (Risse 2022: 1).

As Russian president Vladimir Putin famously stated back in 2017, whichever country becomes the leader in AI “will become the ruler of the world,” a sentence that effectively captures what is at stake in this scramble.

In conclusion, exploiting AI to preserve liberal democracy is also a way for the EU to show the world, and in particular its strategic rivals, that this long vilified political regime may no longer be the only one, but it remains the pick of the bunch.

4) EU MEASURES AGAINST AUTOCRATIZATION: NO COUNTRY FOR AI

The latest report released by V-Dem (Papada et al. 2023) pointed out that, despite a small improvement in 2023 in comparison to 2022 which ensured Europe kept its crown as the world's most democratic region by far, autocratization has continued to spread across the bloc. Only 16 out of 27 Member States are still classified as 'liberal democracies.' Three of them - Hungary, Poland and Greece - have been ranked among the world's top autocratizers.

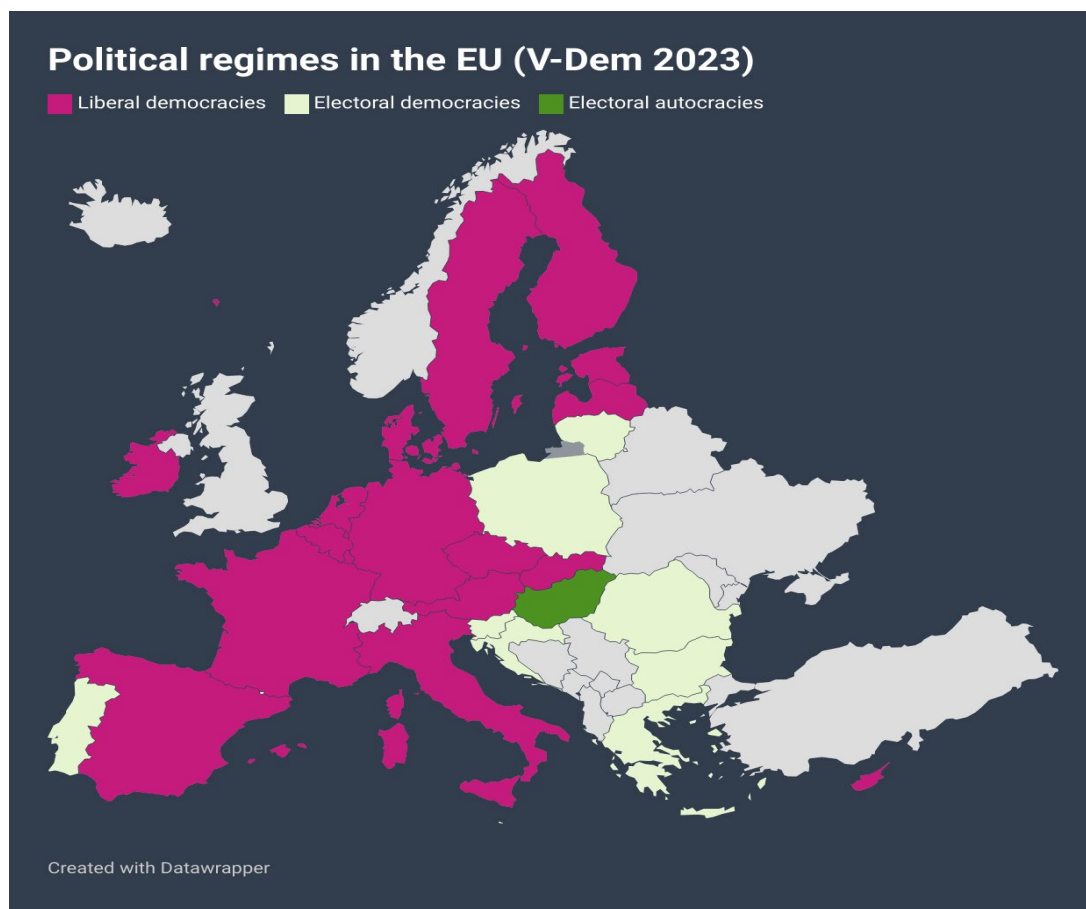


Figure 4 -. Political regimes in the EU

Source: Papada E et al. (2023) *Defiance in the face of autocratization*. Democracy Gothenburg. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem Institute). Elaboration by the author.

This alarming trend, which now spans over a decade in the Hungarian case (Tavares 2013), has prompted the European Commission to resort to an increasingly tougher approach in its effort to rein in deviations from the liberal democratic standard that have proliferated in many Member States.

Three recent EU initiatives can be considered the flagship actions that were launched to stem the spread of autocratization:

- the [European Democracy Action Plan](#) (European Commission 2020), presented on 3rd December 2020, was published in response to the deterioration of liberal democratic standards across the bloc and advanced proposals to strengthen the democratic resilience of EU institutions, national governments and parliaments. The main purpose of the plan is to ensure that national elections in the EU are free and fair. It is particularly telling that, after some shorter sections on transparency, infra-EU cooperation, democratic engagement and active participation, the bulk of the text focuses on the role of the media, and the challenges they face. The fact that Chapters 2 (Strengthening Media Freedom and Pluralism) and 3 (Countering Disinformation) jointly take up almost half of the text seem to suggest that the Commission has identified the quality of information accessible to citizens and voters as the main challenge to European democracy.
- the [Regulation on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget](#), which came into force on 1st January 2021. As stated in the Guidelines, this regulation allows the Commission to interrupt or suspend payments of “all EU funds” to Member States concerned, once “relevant breaches of the principles of the rule of law” are detected (article 2.1). This regulation is widely understood to be a tool to force national governments to refrain from implementing illiberal measures by hitting them where it hurts the most. Its application depends on the findings of the annual country Rule of Law Reports, which are qualitative assessments carried out by the Commission on four key areas: the justice system, the anti-corruption framework, media pluralism and freedom, and other institutional issues related to checks and balances. Notably, in December 2022, the Commission froze €22 billion of funds earmarked for Hungary, and, at the time of writing, €36 billion of post-pandemic recovery funds earmarked for Poland are yet to be released because of the Polish government’s failure to address the “serious concerns” about the independence of the Polish judiciary that were highlighted in the latest country report.
- the [European Media Freedom Act](#) (European Commission 2022), published by the Commission on 16th September 2022 as part of the Democracy Action Plan, and currently being negotiated across EU institutions. This ambitious proposal touches upon many dimensions of media freedom, including: safeguards against political interference in editorial decisions and against surveillance; the independence and stable funding of public service media; transparency of media ownership and of the allocation of state advertising; measures to protect independence of

editors and disclose conflicts of interest; media conglomerates. Although the text doesn't explicitly single out any specific Member State, it has been perceived to be a reaction to the phenomenon of media capture that has been observed in many EU Member States, as more exhaustively detailed by a previous IED report (Benazzo 2022: 8-12).

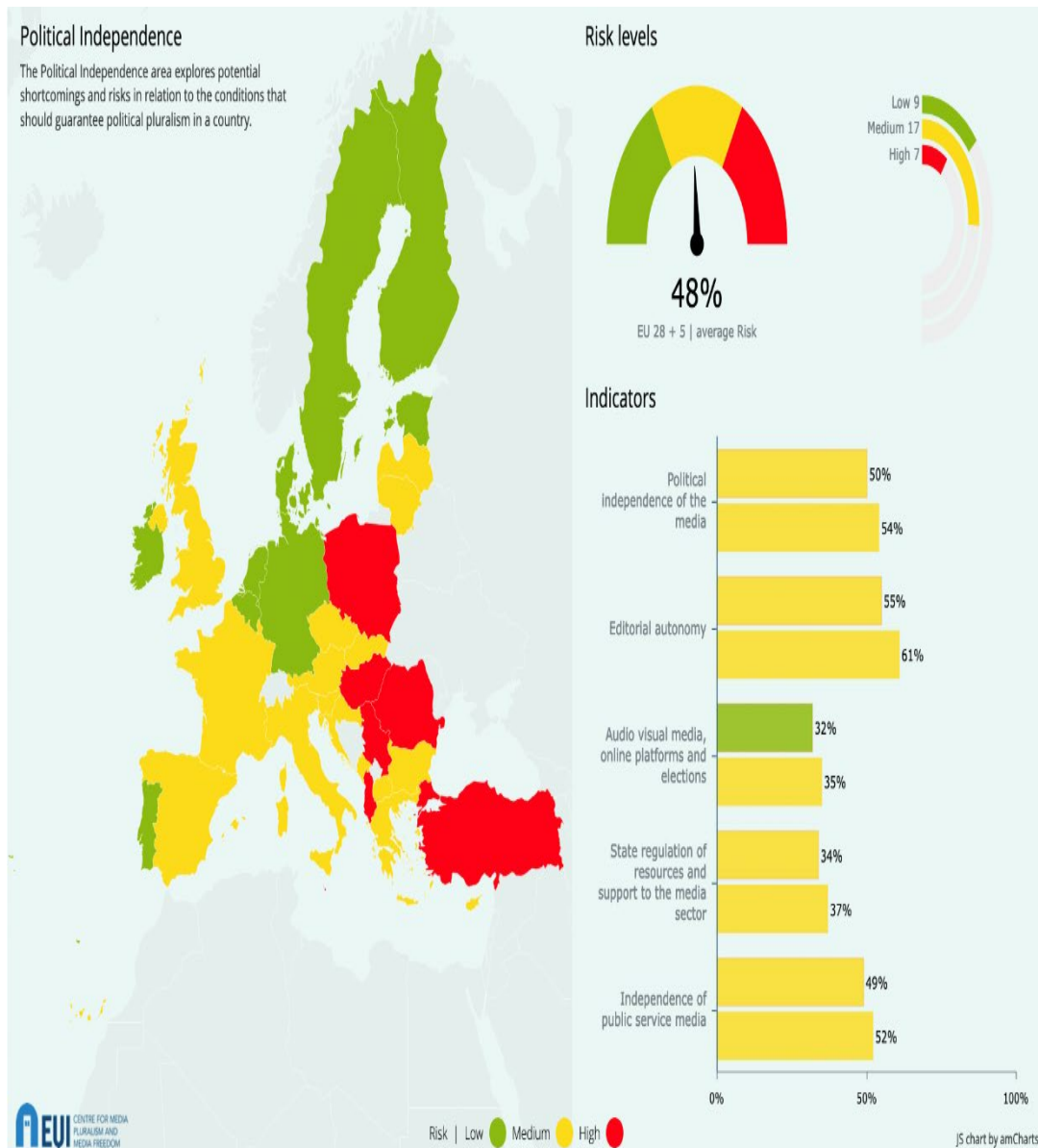


Figure 5 – Map showing the level of political independence of media landscapes in EU Member States and candidate countries

Source: Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (2023), Media Pluralism Monitor.

While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of each of these instruments and proposals, there is one critical omission which unites the three: none of them lists AI technologies among the tools that could be mobilised.

CONCLUSION

As the EU texts on the fight against autocratization make no reference to AI, none of the provisions in the innovative AI Act that is now being debated across EU institutions hint at any role AI could possibly play in shoring up liberal democracy, nor to any of its potential effects on “media” and “journalism” (Porlezza 2023).

Therefore, it seems legitimate to conclude that there is limited awareness among EU institutions about the positive uses of AI as a weapon to fight autocratization. Its potential in this regard is yet to be acknowledged, let alone exploited, by the EU.

Referring directly to some of the provisions of the three texts listed above, five policy recommendations are put forward in the next section to foster a more fertile dialogue between EU policymakers working on the different dossiers that ultimately converge towards the same purpose: building democratic AI for the EU.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Employing AI to standardise the evaluation procedures of annual country reports on the rule of law

The annual country reports are valuable tools for monitoring violations of the rule of law in EU Member States. They are currently qualitative assessments carried out by the same institution that is then expected to take action against the Member States concerned, namely the European Commission. They therefore risk being viewed as politically motivated, biased, and, overall, inaccurate.

These reports could be improved by the adoption of a standardisation procedure powered by AI technologies. Once the EU institutions have collectively identified the key indicators and criteria to be assessed, namely the ‘fundamental values’ to protect, a large part of the assessment process could become automated to provide a more objective basis for asserting that the rule of law has deteriorated in a given Member State. As AI allows for the processing of large data sets, the spectrum of data to be analysed could be so varied as to include items such as each candidate's airtime during the pre-election period, the number of attacks on LGBTQ+ people, and the ownership of companies that won public contracts, to name but a few. These technologies learn by doing, so the more data they collect, the more accurate their assessments are going to become.

Although some qualitative elements in the assessment process must be retained, and the final decision to freeze the delivery of funds should remain in the hands of EU officials, the whole process is likely to benefit from a process of automation. AI has already started to be implemented for standardising assessment in the education sector, and there is a fairly extensive specialised literature (Aloisi 2023; Cope, Kalantzis and Sears-Smith 2021) that could guide EU policymakers in designing better instruments to contrast autocratizers' projects.

b) Launching AI-powered platforms to foster civil society participation in policymaking processes

According to data collected by IDEA, voter turnout has declined in 19 out of 27 Member States since 2000, and, despite a partial bounce back at the latest polls (2019), only around half of those eligible cast a vote at the European elections (European Parliament 2019). At the same time, autocratizers in Poland and Hungary have discovered Eurosceptic populism to be a powerful mobilisation tool (Csehi and Zgut 2021).

As stated in the Action Plan for Democracy, promoting the active involvement of citizens and fostering a more inclusive, transparent and accountable decision-making process have emerged as top priorities for the EU.

Artificial intelligence has many promising applications to boost political participation beyond elections.

Savaget and colleagues have, for instance, argued that “the emerging context of governmental open-data and online open-source repositories for coding projects are likely suited to enable the proliferation of AI-based technologies for political empowerment,” (2019: 378). The authors have listed six focal areas where activists could benefit from the use of AI technologies: funding, governance, human resources, operations public relations and scaling-up. Civil society groups could thus streamline their activities, amplifying their reach and maximising their impact.

Also, as shown in a recent study (Arana-Catania et al. 2021), natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning could promote mass digital participation by providing tools for citizens to share their proposals on a wide range of policy areas, while containing the risk of 'information overload' by systematising data in a user-friendly fashion. AI tools could make it simple for citizens to follow and understand complex policy and regulatory processes, thus fostering informed engagement with the democratic process.

Following the path inaugurated by the Conference on the Future of Europe, EU policymakers should act to seize on these AI-powered opportunities by incorporating forms of participatory democracy in their decision-making process through the launch of dedicated platforms.

c) Promoting media freedom and pluralism

Media freedom and pluralism are both multidimensional and vast concepts. This subsection therefore advances three specific recommendations focusing on these areas.

- Adopting AI-enabled tools to tackle disinformation

The EU has long identified countering disinformation as a key pillar of its efforts to defend democracy across the bloc, targeting specifically those disinformation campaigns that are initiated by external autocratic actors, notably Russia.

Clearly, AI tools such as machine learning and deep learning have a pivotal role to play in this fight: a recent systematic literature review on the use of AI against fake news concluded that machine learning algorithms and neural networks grant an accuracy of 99% when employed to detect fake news, according to most peer-reviewed studies on the subject (Al-Asadi and Tasdemir 2022).

Among other things, AI technologies can facilitate the detection of fake- or bot-accounts spreading disinformation, and automatically detect videos, texts, images that have been already flagged as containing mis- or disinformation (Lange, quoted in EUvsDISINFO 2023). They can also automatically fact-check statements reported in interviews, not just by rectifying wrong or imprecise figures and data, but also contextualising them to make sure users get a comprehensive yet digestible overview of the topic.

However, as it gets increasingly automated, the fight against disinformation must be conducted in a way that respects the pluralism of viewpoints. AI can help also in this regard. According to Colin Porlezza, Senior Assistant Professor in Digital Journalism at the Institute of Media and Journalism at the Università della Svizzera italiana

(USI), “Automated news recommendations and targeted content based on algorithms are not inherently bad. If used transparently, AI technologies can be adopted to personalize the content users are exposed to in a way that makes it easier for them to interact with viewpoints different from their own”.¹

It is crucial, therefore, that EU policymakers regulate the adoption of AI-technologies to serve this gatekeeping function of filtering information in a way that safeguards balance and pluralism, and facilitating the “cross-cutting exposure of participants with views that disagree with or had not been previously considered” (König and Wenzelburger 2020: 9).

- **Untapping the potential of AI to revitalise local journalism**

Emerging “news deserts,” defined as geographic or administrative areas, or a social communities, “where it is difficult or impossible to access sufficient, reliable, diverse and independent local, regional and community media and information” (Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom 2023: 27), are an alarming reality in the EU. Often producing journalism outside big cities is no longer profitable, and understaffed newsrooms struggle to cater to the informational needs of their fellow citizens. Nowadays, there are communities in EU countries that are almost exclusively covered by government-controlled channels of information, a situation that has been defined “quite problematic”, especially in Southeastern and Central-Eastern Europe (Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, 2023: 23). As the only narrative local communities are left with is the one sponsored by the public authorities, ruling actors acquire a competitive advantage on their political opponents. Hyperlocal media sources have mushroomed to try to fill this informational void (Conte 2022; Radcliffe 2012); however, these grassroots forms of citizen journalism rarely manage to evolve into long-term and sustainable projects.

AI could offer much needed community media tools that produce engaging and accurate content at a faster pace and lower cost. According to Charlie Beckett, LSE professor in charge of the Polis [JournalismAI](#) project, generative AI has the potential to be a real boon for local news outlets, as it can automate the production of much of the routine content, therefore freeing up time and resources for reporters to focus on stories that matter to their neighbours (quoted in Radcliffe 2023). This could help preserve media pluralism even in marginal areas, thus ensuring citizens are exposed to more viewpoints than just the government’s.

According to Porlezza, a key step towards achieving this goal would be to ensure that the EU promotes the creation and dissemination of open source tools, so that even smaller editorial offices can use them free of charge. Also, as the level of AI literacy is usually rather low among journalists working at the local level EU-funded ad hoc trainings would be needed to raise their expertise and make sure these tools are employed to their full potential.²

Globally, bottom-up, affordable, accessible, and easy to use AI-solutions are likely to be the last possible lifeline for local journalism (Borchardt 2022). EU institutions should therefore incorporate them in their effort to repopulate news desert, following the path they inaugurated with the “Local Media for Democracy” initiative, launched in February 2023.

¹ Colin Porlezza, personal communication, 5 September 2023.

² Colin Porlezza, personal communication, 5 September 2023.

- Empowering the AI toolkit of investigative journalism

As argued in a previous IED report (Benazzo 2022), investigative journalism is a critical instrument to keep autocratizing actors in check and hold them to account to both their fellow citizens and external bodies, such as the EU institutions. While most investigative newsrooms are still debating how to fully capitalise on the opportunities of AI, some authors have identified key promising applications.

First, two highly time-consuming and repetitive activities such as data cleaning and wrangling could be better conducted through AI, thus freeing up time for reporters to focus on more qualitative aspects of their work (Stray 2021). Second, AI could enable journalists to extract patterns and trends from vast and complex data sets (“pattern recognition”), for instance when investigating transnational financial crimes (Marconi 2020). Third, artificial intelligence-based software systems could help editors to sort through data to identify topics and stories that would appeal to their public, tailoring their reporting to the interests of the audience they aim to reach (Broussard 2015).

Therefore, by making some AI technologies available for free, supporting the launch of professional training opportunities and facilitating the transnational transmission of best practices, the EU could facilitate the work of those under-resourced investigative outlets that often represent the last source of reliable information on the conduct of undemocratic actors.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: A brief exchange with Chat-GPT on how the EU could employ AI to fight autocratization

Simoone Benazzo: Hello, how can the EU use artificial intelligence to fight against autocratization?

ChatGPT: Artificial intelligence (AI) can indeed play a role in the fight against autocratization for the European Union (EU). Here are a few ways in which AI can be utilized:

1. Early Warning Systems: AI-powered algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, such as social media posts, news articles, and public sentiment, to detect early signs of autocratization. These systems can help identify countries or regions where democratic institutions are under threat, allowing the EU to take preventive action.

2. Disinformation Detection: AI can assist in identifying and combating disinformation campaigns that are often used to manipulate public opinion. By analyzing patterns, sources, and the spread of fake news, AI algorithms can help identify and neutralize such campaigns, thereby safeguarding democratic processes.

3. Election Integrity: AI can be used to enhance the integrity of elections by detecting and preventing electoral fraud. For instance, AI algorithms can analyze voting patterns, identify anomalies, and flag potential irregularities, ensuring fair and transparent elections.

4. Human Rights Monitoring: AI can aid in monitoring human rights violations by analyzing large amounts of data, including satellite imagery, social media posts, and news articles. This can help identify and document instances of repression, censorship, or discrimination, enabling the EU to take appropriate actions.

5. Policy Development: AI can assist policymakers in understanding and predicting the impact of their decisions on democracy and human rights. By analyzing historical data and simulating various scenarios, AI algorithms can provide valuable insights to guide policy formulation and decision-making processes.

It's important to note that while AI has great potential, it should be used ethically and in accordance with privacy and human rights standards. The EU should prioritize transparency, accountability, and responsible AI governance to ensure the technology is used for the benefit of democracy and the protection of human rights.

SB: But how can it be weaponized against autocratizing governments, such as those in Greece, Hungary and Poland?

ChatGPT: While AI can be a powerful tool in the fight against autocratization, it is important to highlight that its impact may be limited when it comes to directly challenging or overthrowing governments. However, AI can still play a role in supporting democracy and human rights in autocratizing countries like Greece, Hungary and Poland. Here are a few ways AI can be used:

1. Information Accessibility: AI-powered tools can help ensure information accessibility in autocratizing countries. This can be achieved through the development of platforms or applications that provide uncensored and reliable information to citizens, allowing them to make informed decisions and stay updated on political developments.

2. Digital Activism: AI can support digital activism efforts by providing tools and platforms that enable citizens to organize, coordinate, and mobilize. AI algorithms can help identify and connect like-minded individuals, facilitate secure communication, and amplify their voices through social media and other digital channels.

3. Surveillance Detection: AI can help individuals and organizations detect and protect against government surveillance. AI algorithms can analyze network traffic, identify suspicious patterns, and alert users to potential privacy breaches. This can help activists and journalists maintain their privacy and security while operating within autocratic regimes.

4. Support for Civil Society: AI can assist civil society organizations in their efforts to promote democracy and human rights. For example, AI algorithms can help analyze and visualize data related to government policies, human rights violations, or corruption, providing evidence and insights to support advocacy and lobbying efforts.

5. International Pressure: AI-powered analysis can provide evidence and insights into the erosion of democratic institutions and human rights in autocratizing countries. This information can be used to build international pressure, raise awareness, and mobilize diplomatic efforts to address the situation.

It's important to note that the impact of AI in such contexts will depend on various factors, including the political landscape, local conditions, and the willingness of international actors to engage. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that combines AI with other strategies, such as diplomatic efforts, international cooperation, and support to civil society, is crucial in effectively countering autocratization.