International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education
MCDSARE 2025 e-ISSN: 2601-8403 p-ISSN2601-839X
https://www.ifiasa.com/mcdsare

https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2025.9.63-74

MCDSARE: 2025
International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BETWEEN REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The extent of artificial intelligence (AI) influence on contemporary society is only now beginning to be understood in depth. Researchers, professionals, policymakers, and legislators are increasingly analyzing the implications of this technology in the legal sphere, particularly in relation to the protection and promotion of human rights. Over the past six decades, the development of artificial intelligence technologies and the evolution of the modern concept of human rights have unfolded in parallel, influencing each other in a complex process of co-evolution, in which technical progress and ethical-legal reflections are in constant dialogue. Artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping the way we understand and protect human rights, prompting a rethinking of the legal, ethical, and social foundations that underpin them. On the one hand, AI can become a tool for emancipation and sustainable development, capable of strengthening access to justice, education, health services, and information. On the other hand, the automation of decisions, the use of biometric data, and the algorithmization of social processes pose major risks to individual freedom, privacy, and equal treatment. In this new paradigm, human rights cannot be viewed as mere legal guarantees, but as dynamic principles that must be integrated into the very technological architecture of the digital society. Respect for human dignity, protection of diversity, and prevention of discrimination become not only moral objectives, but structural requirements of responsible AI governance.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; human rights; regulation; enforcement; personal data; algorithms; digitization;*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between artificial intelligence and human rights is not limited to a matter of technical regulation, but requires a conceptual reconstruction of the relationship between technology, humanity, and education. At the heart of this reconstruction must be the idea that technological progress has no value in itself except insofar as it serves the common good, freedom, and social justice.

Access to quality education and digital skills is now a fundamental human right. However, significant differences in the availability of technologies and levels of digital literacy can exacerbate existing inequalities, both at the individual level and between countries. In this context, ensuring equitable access to

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educational resources and digital skills becomes an essential condition for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights in the digitalised society. Maintaining a balance between security and surveillance requirements and respect for fundamental rights is a major challenge. The implementation of digital monitoring and surveillance technologies, including those based on artificial intelligence, by public authorities or private actors raises fundamental questions about the protection of individual freedoms and the right of individuals to live their private and social lives without arbitrary interference. Managing these tensions is essential for building a digital society that respects the fundamental values of democracy and human rights. (S. Sekalala et al, 2020).

In recent years, technological evolution has experienced unprecedented growth, and artificial intelligence (AI) systems have made spectacular progress in terms of processing capacity, adaptability, and applicability in various areas of social, economic, and cultural life. This accelerated development has been made possible by the exponential growth in the volume of available data, improvements in hardware infrastructure (Gaurav Batra et al, 2019), and continuous improvements in algorithmic architectures, which have enabled AI models to achieve levels of performance comparable, in some respects, to human cognitive abilities. (Veronika Samborska, 2025). A turning point was the emergence and spread of large language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, and Claude, which have significantly expanded the horizons of human-machine interaction (Bernd Carsten Stahl, Damian Eke, 2024). These models, capable of generating, interpreting, and analyzing complex texts in an apparently natural way, have sparked a broad public and academic dialogue on their ethical, legal, and social implications. The current debate focuses in particular on how AI affects fundamental concepts of autonomy, human dignity, and responsibility, as well as on the risks associated with data privacy, misinformation, algorithmic bias, and automated surveillance. (Sandra Wachter, 2021). In this context, protecting and promoting human rights becomes an ethical and normative imperative in the design, implementation, and regulation of artificial intelligence-based technologies. The article signed by Prof. Mircea Duțu, entitled “The law of artificial intelligence: the imperative of regulation and the stakes of a new scientific discipline” (Juridice.ro, 2024), highlights the increasingly obvious need to build an appropriate legal framework for the use and development of artificial intelligence. The author shows that the rapid expansion of this technology is profoundly transforming society and putting pressure on existing legal systems, which must continue to protect democracy, human rights, and the principles of the rule of law. AI regulation is thus becoming imperative, as self-regulation and the free market alone cannot guarantee fair and safe use. Three major areas of regulation (ethical, legal, and technical) are identified, highlighting the challenges they pose, such as the lack of transparency of algorithms, the difficulty of establishing legal liability, and the risk of discrimination. In the author's view, a new branch of law is gradually emerging, “artificial intelligence law”, which must be interdisciplinary, based on a balance between technological innovation, social responsibility, and the protection of fundamental human values.

Thus, artificial intelligence can no longer be viewed merely as a neutral technological tool, but as a factor with profound transformative potential, capable of redefining social relations, decision-making processes, and the very architecture of human values.

1. THE IMPACT OF AI ON SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) is already a factor of profound transformation and, at the same time, a source of major social disruption. The expansion of the use of these technologies significantly influences economic structures, the dynamics of human relations, and institutional decision-making mechanisms. Its impact is particularly visible in areas that are essential to the functioning of contemporary society, such as education, energy supply, public health systems, and mobility infrastructure (European Commission, 2020), where AI is reshaping learning, production, and administration processes.

At the same time, the use of artificial intelligence is increasingly penetrating the sphere of law enforcement and criminal justice, generating both opportunities for efficiency and prevention, as well as considerable ethical, legal, and social challenges. The automation of judicial decisions, predictive analysis of criminal behavior, and algorithm-based surveillance (Emma Fitzgerald, 2020) raise profound questions about fairness, transparency, and the protection of fundamental human rights.

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Artificial intelligence is increasingly present in the legal and judicial fields, where it contributes to streamlining professional activities and improving decision-making. The use of automated systems allows for faster analysis of case law, more accurate drafting of judgments, and optimization of repetitive activities in courts. However, the application of these technologies raises complex issues related to the transparency of algorithms, the quality and integrity of training data, and the maintenance of the independence of judges' decisions. A phased and carefully regulated implementation is therefore required, accompanied by adequate training for professionals in the field and clear legal safeguards to ensure human control, decision-making accountability, and respect for the fundamental principles of the rule of law.

In certain contexts, however, technologies based on artificial intelligence generate intense and often controversial debates, especially from the perspective of their ethical, legal, and social implications. Among the most discussed examples are the development and use of facial recognition programs, the implementation of automated lie detection systems, and the algorithmic analysis of personal data or sensitive health information. Although these technologies can offer benefits in terms of security, efficiency, and service personalization, they raise serious issues regarding privacy, informed consent, proportionality of data use, and the risk of algorithmic discrimination (Jo Ann Oravec, 2022). In particular, the application of facial recognition in public spaces or in institutional surveillance activities raises concerns about the possibility of constructing subtle forms of social control and diminishing individual freedoms (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights-FRA, 2020). Thus, the debate is not limited to the technical aspects of these tools, but extends to a broader reflection on the legitimate limits of the use of artificial intelligence in relation to human rights and dignity, emphasizing the need for rigorous ethical and legal governance of these innovations. International treaties dedicated to the protection of human rights require corporations and private organizations to reassess and adapt their internal processes to prevent and manage risks that could affect people's fundamental rights (Kate Jones, 2023). In this context, more and more companies are faced with the question of whether, and under what circumstances, the development and use of artificial intelligence technologies can generate such risks. The specific risks associated with implementing AI in the corporate environment are addressed in international and regional reference documents and regulations, such as the European Union's AI Act, the Council of Europe's proposed Convention on AI, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as in recent debates at the General Assembly of the United Nations. These frameworks provide guidance for preventing human rights violations, but also emphasize the responsibility of economic actors in assessing and managing the impact of emerging technologies.

However, addressing this issue requires a thorough understanding of the technological mechanisms involved and a careful examination of the general and sector-specific challenges posed by the implementation of AI. This includes identifying algorithmic vulnerabilities, assessing the risks of discrimination or systemic errors (Z. Chen, 2023), and integrating measures of transparency, accountability, and ethical oversight so that technological innovation is compatible with the protection of fundamental human rights (Emmanouil Papagiannidis, 2025). The implementation of artificial intelligence systems involves a wide range of fundamental rights, which must be respected regardless of the field of application or specific context. According to Article 51 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU), Member States are obliged to guarantee respect for all the rights enshrined in the Charter when applying EU law. The European Court of Justice has also ruled that the EU is obliged to ensure the effective application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of the application of EU law.

At the international level, existing standards, in particular the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (United Nations, 2011), stipulate that companies must implement a "human rights due diligence process" to identify, prevent, mitigate, and report on how their activities may affect the fundamental rights of individuals (principles 15 and 17).

This obligation applies regardless of the size of the company or the sector in which it operates and expressly includes companies that develop, implement, or use artificial intelligence technologies. In practice, this involves assessing algorithmic risks, monitoring the impact of AI on privacy, fairness, and non-discrimination (Paolo Ceravolo et al, 2025), and adopting transparent and accountable mechanisms to ensure respect for human rights at all stages of the technological innovation process.

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2. PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF AI

Since AI development affects almost every aspect of our lives and its influence will grow in the near future, member state of the European Union must take concrete measures to ensure that human rights are protected in the design, development, and implementation of AI systems.

In her report entitled "Human rights by design future-proofing human rights protection in the era of AI" (2023), Dunja Mijatović, European Commissioner for Human Rights from 2018 to 2024, highlights the main challenges facing Member States in protecting and promoting human rights in the context of the use of artificial intelligence, building on her initial practical guidelines from 2019. Essentially, the report stresses that the overall approach to human rights-centered AI implementation has not been consistent and that the regulation of AI systems in this regard is still insufficient.

Following consultations with national human rights structures, the Commissioner identifies three interdependent trends that limit the effective implementation of international human rights standards:

1. *The lack of comprehensive and human rights-based approaches* – Member states have too often adopted sector-specific approaches to the implementation of human rights standards and focused on subsets of rights only, such as privacy rights, rather than ensuring that existing guarantees are consistently applied to all relevant sectors that use AI. Legal frameworks, where they exist, have often not been effectively and promptly enforced, as infrastructure dependence on large platforms may hinder implementation and oversight remains fragmented.

2. *Insufficient transparency and information sharing* – Clear and updated information about AI and its potential impact on human rights remains scarce across Europe. Intellectual property protections constitute obstacles to the enforcement of information rights - including for the judiciary, national human rights structures, and regulatory authorities – hindering independent oversight.

3. *The lack of initiative on the part of member states to use AI to strengthen human rights* – As most AI development is driven by the private sector, public authorities have overall adopted a reactive rather than proactive approach. By delaying regulation that would prompt alternative innovation, member states risk missing the opportunities that AI capacities offer towards the implementation and strengthening of human rights protections and the fundamental principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Based on these findings, the Commissioner makes clear recommendations for governments and national human rights structures:

1. Assessing the risks and impact of AI on human rights before using technological systems, to prevent potential harm.

2. Strengthening transparency guarantees regarding the functioning and decision-making of AI systems, including by informing the public and promoting access to relevant data.

3. Ensuring independent oversight and effective remedies through specialized institutions that monitor respect for fundamental rights.

4. Proactively exploring AI's potential to support human rights, using technologies to reduce bias, stimulate public participation, and amplify marginalized voices.

5. Integrating a values-based perspective into AI design and development, prioritizing the elimination of discrimination, reduction of inequalities, and promotion of the protection and promotion of fundamental rights in all sectors of application.

The report thus highlights both the need for coherent regulation and active governance, and the opportunity to use AI as a positive tool for strengthening human rights in the digital society.

Artificial intelligence (AI) lies at the intersection of technology and law, playing a dual role in the legal context (Paul Dumouchel, 2023). On the one hand, AI is a subject of regulation, as the development and use of autonomous systems require the establishment of specific rules to prevent associated risks and ensure the protection of fundamental rights (D.J. Gervais, 2023). On the other hand, AI also functions as a tool in the process of applying and developing law (Finale Doshi-Velez, 2017), for example, through the use of algorithms in public administration, the judiciary, or legal advice, which raises new questions about transparency, accountability, and control of automated decisions.

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In this context, the European Union has adopted a proactive approach, seeking to establish a unified and innovative legislative framework. The AI Act, which came into force on August 1, 2024, is the first Western legislation explicitly dedicated to regulating artificial intelligence and is directly applicable in all member states, including Romania. The regulation introduces a hierarchical classification system for AI systems based on the level of risk they pose to fundamental rights and user safety. Thus, unacceptable risk systems are prohibited, high-risk systems are subject to strict requirements regarding transparency, conformity assessment, data management, and post-market monitoring, and systems with limited or minimal risk only require obligations to inform users, particularly regarding interaction with AI-generated content or chatbots, in order to prevent misinformation and ensure informed consent (Andrei Duțu-Buzura, 2025).

This differentiated classification reflects the EU's concern to protect fundamental rights, including the right to privacy, non-discrimination, access to justice, and consumer protection, while also allowing for the responsible development and use of AI technologies. By introducing requirements tailored to each level of risk, the legislation aims to balance the innovative potential of AI with the need for oversight, control, and accountability. At the same time, the AI Act emphasizes the importance of transparency and clarity in the use of autonomous systems, encouraging providers and users to adopt practices that facilitate the understanding of automated decisions and, where appropriate, their challenge.

The European Union is trying to establish a legal framework that is as clear, predictable, and effective as possible with regard to the use of AI, even attempting to define the concept of an AI system, in accordance with Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (AI Act) laying down harmonized rules on artificial intelligence: "The notion of 'AI system' in this Regulation should be clearly defined and should be closely aligned with the work of international organisations working on AI to ensure legal certainty, facilitate international convergence and wide acceptance, while providing the flexibility to accommodate the rapid technological developments in this field. Moreover, the definition should be based on key characteristics of AI systems that distinguish it from simpler traditional software systems or programming approaches and should not cover systems that are based on the rules defined solely by natural persons to automatically execute operations. A key characteristic of AI systems is their capability to infer. This capability to infer refers to the process of obtaining the outputs, such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions, which can influence physical and virtual environments, and to a capability of AI systems to derive models or algorithms, or both, from inputs or data. The techniques that enable inference while building an AI system include machine learning approaches that learn from data how to achieve certain objectives, and logic- and knowledge-based approaches that infer from encoded knowledge or symbolic representation of the task to be solved. The capacity of an AI system to infer transcends basic data processing by enabling learning, reasoning or modelling. The term 'machine-based' refers to the fact that AI systems run on machines. The reference to explicit or implicit objectives underscores that AI systems can operate according to explicit defined objectives or to implicit objectives. The objectives of the AI system may be different from the intended purpose of the AI system in a specific context. For the purposes of this Regulation, environments should be understood to be the contexts in which the AI systems operate, whereas outputs generated by the AI system reflect different functions performed by AI systems and include predictions, content, recommendations or decisions. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy, meaning that they have some degree of independence of actions from human involvement and of capabilities to operate without human intervention. The adaptiveness that an AI system could exhibit after deployment, refers to self-learning capabilities, allowing the system to change while in use. AI systems can be used on a stand-alone basis or as a component of a product, irrespective of whether the system is physically integrated into the product (embedded) or serves the functionality of the product without being integrated therein (non-embedded)".

The clear definition of "Artificial Intelligence System" proposed in the EU regulation is essential not only for legal certainty and international harmonization, but also for the protection of human rights, as the ability of AI systems to generate autonomous inferences, predictions, recommendations, or decisions can directly affect fundamental rights such as privacy, non-discrimination, freedom of expression, or access to justice. By differentiating AI systems from traditional software and recognizing their degree of autonomy,

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adaptability, and explicit or implicit objectives, the definition provides a framework for assessing risks to human rights and for implementing control mechanisms, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that AI technologies are developed and used in a manner consistent with international standards for the protection of fundamental rights.

At the same time, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU), which has the same legal value as EU treaties, sets out the binding framework for the respect of civil, political, economic, and social rights by the Union's institutions and Member States in the application of European law, including in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Recent research shows that AI systems, through their varying levels of automation and complexity, have the potential to affect a wide range of fundamental rights, from privacy and data protection, non-discrimination and access to justice, to broader rights such as human dignity, social security, good administration and consumer protection (Francesca Palmiotto, 2025). Observations by the FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights-FRA, 2021) indicate that, although discussions on AI often focus on narrow subsets of rights, the legal and ethical approach must be comprehensive and tailored to each context of use. In this regard, a clear definition of the "AI system", recognizing the autonomy, adaptability, and reasoning capabilities of these technologies, becomes essential for assessing risks to fundamental rights, ensuring transparency, accountability, and independent oversight, and guaranteeing compliance with international and European standards on the protection of human rights.

According to international and European human rights standards, such as Article 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU), states have an obligation to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, which implies the establishment of effective mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring legal compliance, including in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Recent studies and findings show that specialized bodies, such as banking, data protection, or sectoral (health, financial services) supervisory authorities, play a key role in verifying the use of AI and its impact on fundamental rights (Alessandro Mantelero, Maria Samantha Esposito, 2024).

However, the responsibilities of these bodies often remain unclear to public and private sector actors, highlighting the need to clarify mandates and develop transparent, inclusive, and consultative mechanisms capable of providing both oversight and specialized guidance on the legality and compliance of AI use.

Similarly, the European Commission (2020), with regard to the use of AI, identifies a number of risks to fundamental rights, including the protection of personal data, privacy, and discrimination:

1. *Breach of fundamental rights* – AI can affect freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, human dignity, data protection and privacy, non-discrimination and access to justice, as well as consumer protection. These risks may result from the design of systems or the use of biased data.

2. *Autonomous and non-transparent decisions* – AI systems can make decisions that directly impact individuals and organizations, but the complexity and "black box" nature of algorithms (Nicolae Sfetcu, 2024) make it difficult to understand, challenge, or verify these decisions.

3. *Surveillance risks and identity determination from anonymous data* – AI's ability to analyze large volumes of data can facilitate mass surveillance, employee monitoring, or the reconstruction of individuals' identities, even from seemingly anonymous data sets, posing serious threats to privacy.

4. *Discrimination and amplified bias* – Algorithms can reproduce or amplify existing biases, affecting large groups of people, especially when systems learn from incomplete or biased data, which can lead to unfair outcomes that are difficult to anticipate. Certain AI algorithms, when used to predict recidivism, may exhibit gender and racial biases, showing a different probability of recidivism for women versus men or for nationals versus foreigners (Songül Tolan, 2019). Certain AI programs for facial analysis exhibit gender and racial biases, demonstrating low errors in determining the sex of men with lighter skin, but high errors in determining the sex of women with darker skin.

5. *Physical safety risks* – AI technologies integrated into products and services, such as autonomous vehicles, can cause accidents or property damage if they malfunction due to identification errors or machine learning issues.

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6. *Legal uncertainty and accountability challenges* – The lack of clear rules on safety and liability, combined with the specific characteristics of AI (partial autonomy, unpredictability, complexity), complicates compliance verification and compensation for affected individuals, while also influencing the competitiveness of companies in the European market.

3. DATA PROTECTION AND REGULATION OF AI SYSTEMS

At the European Union level, there is a consolidated framework of independent bodies mandated to protect and promote fundamental rights, including data protection authorities, equality bodies, national human rights institutions, and ombudsman institutions. Recent research shows that users of AI systems frequently consult these bodies, in particular data protection authorities, to seek guidance, approval, or input in cases involving the processing of personal data (J. Tallberg et al, 2024).

With regard to privacy and the protection of personal data, the European Commission (2020) has a clear direction, based on respecting and guaranteeing the fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter: the collection and processing of biometric data for remote identification, through the implementation of facial recognition systems in public spaces, raises significant concerns regarding fundamental rights (Mais Qandeel, 2024). The impact on these rights, including privacy, personal data protection, and civil liberties, depends on the purpose, context, and scale of use of the technologies in question.

The use of artificial intelligence in direct customer interactions clearly raises challenges related to privacy and personal data protection. It is essential to clarify what information is collected, how it is stored, how it is processed, and whether it can be linked to other data sources. In the context of behavioral analytics and digital records, user-generated data, including chat messages and metadata, can be tracked and linked to other online information (Joshua Yeung, 2020). In these circumstances, transparency and accurate information for users about how their data is used become indispensable, both for compliance with the legal framework and for maintaining trust in the services offered. The challenges are not limited to compliance with legal norms. National and European legislation imposes strict restrictions on the collection, processing, and storage of sensitive personal data. At the same time, there is a relevant ethical dimension, which concerns respect for the privacy and fundamental rights of individuals.

In the European Union, privacy and data protection are two related but distinct concepts. Privacy refers to maintaining an individual's "personal space", while data protection establishes clear rules on the processing of information that allows a person to be identified. In practice, the two dimensions intersect: data protection has a narrower scope, applying exclusively to personal data, but it can also be broader, as it includes aspects that affect privacy, even when there is no direct violation of it (Juliane Kokott, Christoph Sobotta, 2013). This distinction highlights the complexity of the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with implementing AI in customer interactions and the need for a transparent, responsible approach based on respect for fundamental rights. European Union rules, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive, impose strict restrictions on the processing of biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, except in limited cases justified by overriding public interests or specific legal obligations. In such situations, any processing must comply with the principles of proportionality, be authorized under national or European law, and include adequate safeguards for the protection of fundamental rights (Gizem Gültekin-Várkonyi, 2024), in accordance with the CFREU.

Thus, the use of AI systems for remote biometric identification can only be considered acceptable if it is strictly necessary, justified, and accompanied by measures to prevent abuse or violations of fundamental rights (Calogero Pizzolo, 2025). European bodies can verify whether the use of facial recognition technologies or other biometric identification systems is strictly necessary, proportionate, and subject to adequate safeguards for the protection of fundamental rights. However, the expertise and resources of supervisory authorities are often limited, which can hinder effective monitoring of AI systems and their impact on fundamental rights. Experts stress the need to strengthen the capacity of existing supervisory bodies to cope with the complexity and rapid pace of developments in the field of AI. The role of civil society organizations specializing in technology, digital rights, and algorithms is also crucial for increasing accountability and transparency in the use of AI systems. In the context of debates on remote biometric

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identification in public spaces (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights-FRA, 2021), the involvement of these independent bodies and civic actors is essential to define the limits, safeguards, and conditions that protect fundamental rights and avoid the fragmentation of European society.

UNESCO (2021) has also developed a "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", which is based on the idea of developing and using artificial intelligence systems in a way that serves the good of humanity, while respecting human dignity, social values, and the balance of the natural environment. Its main purpose is to guide technological evolution towards collective and individual benefits, reducing the risks and potential harms that may arise from the inappropriate use of AI. At the same time, the document promotes the peaceful and ethical use of these technologies, in accordance with the principles of international law and sustainable development.

The UNESCO Recommendation sets out a set of values and guiding principles intended to guide all actors involved in the life cycle of artificial intelligence systems, from design and implementation to monitoring and regulation. These values, which must be translated into a coherent and enforceable regulatory framework, include: respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the dignity of every person; protecting the environment and ecosystems through an ecological and responsible approach to technological development; promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity by ensuring equitable access to the benefits of AI; strengthening peaceful, just, and interconnected societies based on cooperation, resilience, and global solidarity. (Yoko Mochizuki et al, 2025).

The Global Compact Network in Germany (2024) has compiled a guide with recommendations for companies, entitled "Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights: A Guide with Recommendations for Companies". The document takes a deep dive into the complex relationship between developing and using artificial intelligence and respecting basic human rights, from the perspective of corporate responsibilities and ethical and legal due diligence obligations. The paper is based on the principles of the UN Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, proposing the integration of AI-specific risks into corporate governance and sustainability processes.

AI is presented as a technological and social phenomenon with a transformative impact on the economy, justice, education, health, and security. The document emphasizes that, with the entry into force of the AI Act (August, 2024), the European Union has established the first unified legislative framework based on a hierarchical risk model, with the aim of preventing practices that may infringe on fundamental rights. Internationally, UN and OECD recommendations set out general principles of ethics, transparency, and accountability in the development and use of AI. A number of general risks of AI to human rights are identified, such as: algorithmic opacity ("black box effect"), which limits understanding of how AI reaches a decision, making it difficult to hold the actors involved accountable; data dependency, the massive collection and processing of personal, medical, or biometric data can lead to violations of the right to privacy and systemic discrimination; algorithmic bias, unbalanced data can generate discriminatory results, affecting vulnerable groups, women, or ethnic minorities; the partial autonomy of AI systems, which raises legal questions regarding human responsibility and control.

With regard to corporate due diligence and ethical governance obligations, companies must assess the risks of human rights violations throughout the entire life cycle of AI systems, from design to implementation. This involves regular assessments of the risk of abuse and discrimination, the integration of ethical and legal criteria into partner selection and development processes, independent and transparent audits of AI systems, the formation of interdisciplinary teams and the promotion of diversity in technological design, and public reporting on prevention measures and social impact, in accordance with the new European directives on sustainability reporting (Louise McCormack et al, 2025).

Finally, the European Union document advocates an integrated and human-centered approach to AI, based on respect for human dignity, fairness, non-discrimination, and data protection. In the authors' view, AI should become a tool for strengthening democracy and social justice, not a source of new forms of exclusion or control. Looking ahead, it recommends convergence between international human rights standards and AI-specific regulations, the development of an ethical organizational culture, and the adoption of adaptive governance that includes both public oversight and civil society involvement.

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In this context, the article signed by Marius Andreescu, "Man and his rights in the context of artificial intelligence. Theological and legal aspects" (2025), proposes a broad reflection on how the development of artificial intelligence affects the understanding of the person and fundamental rights. It starts from the idea that human dignity and freedom cannot find their full foundation only in legal norms, but in the spiritual dimension of the human being, created in the image and likeness of God. In this sense, AI must be seen as a tool at the service of man and not as a substitute for human intelligence or will.

Although technology can support the exercise of fundamental rights, such as access to information, education, or health, it also raises serious risks regarding the protection of privacy, safety, dignity, and personal freedom. The author warns against the danger of reducing man to a mere object of technological analysis or control, emphasizing that law, in order to remain faithful to its humanistic purpose, must be based on Christian anthropology and always maintain the priority of man over any artificial creation).

CONCLUSION

The rapid evolution of AI is not only a technological challenge, but above all a legal and axiological one. Human rights, originally designed to regulate relations between individuals and states, must be reinterpreted in light of algorithmic autonomy and automated decisions. European regulations, in particular the AI Act, mark a transition to a new stage of technological governance, in which the protection of human dignity becomes an essential condition for innovation.

AI is both the subject of regulation and a legal instrument. On the one hand, clear rules are needed to define limits, responsibilities, and control mechanisms; on the other hand, AI is becoming an active player in legal and administrative processes. This dual status requires operational ethics and adaptable governance capable of preventing technological tools from becoming vectors of exclusion or discrimination.

From design and programming to implementation and monitoring, AI systems must be designed in the spirit of human rights by design. This requires impact assessments, continuous human oversight, algorithmic auditing, and transparency in decision-making (Ben Chester Cheong, 2024). Applied ethics, supported by clear legal norms, is becoming indispensable to ensure the legitimacy of AI use in sensitive areas such as justice, education, health, and public safety.

The role of independent bodies is fundamental. Data protection authorities, national human rights institutions, the Ombudsman, equality bodies, and civic organizations all need to be strengthened institutionally and technically to be able to oversee the use of AI and prevent abuses. At the same time, civil society and academia have a duty to contribute to digital literacy and the cultivation of a culture of technological responsibility.

European public policies and regulations must strike a balance between promoting technological progress and guaranteeing fundamental rights. A “human-centered” model of AI development does not oppose innovation, but rather gives it moral meaning and sustainability. Only through ethical and transparent regulation can AI become a genuine tool for strengthening democracy and social justice.

Prof. Mircea Duțu, in his paper “The Right of Artificial Intelligence at the Hour of Fundamental Choices” (Juridice.ro, 2025), analyses the profound transformations that artificial intelligence brings about in legal and ethical terms, showing that its regulation cannot be reduced to a technical issue, but involves fundamental choices regarding the relationship between humans, technology and legal values. The author emphasizes that, in a context where AI systems are increasingly involved in decision-making processes that affect people's lives, it is essential for the law to reaffirm the primacy of human dignity and freedom over technological performance. In his view, regulating AI involves a choice of civilization, in the sense that either human control, transparency, and explainability of automated decisions are prioritized, or technological autonomy that is difficult to govern is gradually accepted. Artificial intelligence law is described as an emerging field, situated at the intersection of innovation and ethics, which requires an integrative legal, philosophical, and social approach to ensure a balance between technological progress and the protection of fundamental human values.

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International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education
MCDSARE 2025 e-ISSN: 2601-8403 p-ISSN2601-839X
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In an international context marked by digital interdependence, convergence between European legal standards and universal human rights principles is necessary. The future of artificial intelligence regulation will depend on how states, companies, and international organizations manage to build a framework for cooperation based on common values such as dignity, fairness, predictability, and responsibility. In this way, AI can become not only a challenge of the digital age, but also an opportunity to reconfigure justice in a global sense.

Thus, in the digital age, artificial intelligence and digitization are shaping a complex environment for the protection of human rights. Reaping the benefits of technology must be accompanied by vigilance in defending fundamental rights through robust laws on privacy, preventing algorithmic discrimination, and promoting digital literacy. Protecting human rights in the context of AI is a shared responsibility of governments, organizations, and individuals, reflecting society's commitment to maintaining fairness, justice, and inclusion in the face of technological progress.

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MCDSARE 2025 e-ISSN: 2601-8403 p-ISSN2601-839X
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MCDSARE 2025 e-ISSN: 2601-8403 p-ISSN2601-839X
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International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

MCDSARE- ISSN 2601-8403 |ISSN-L 2601-839X | https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare
Frequency: 1 issues/year, with possible supplementary issues. |

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