

Artificial Intelligence: Commission discusses ethical and social impact with philosophical and non-confessional organisations

Today, the European Commission hosted a high-level meeting with 12 representatives from philosophical and non-confessional organisations from across Europe, as part of the regular dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations foreseen by Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty. This ninth annual high-level meeting discussed the topic ***“Artificial Intelligence: addressing ethical and social challenges”***. Today’s meeting was chaired by Vice-President Andrus Ansip.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, responsible for the Article 17 Dialogue said: *“Our societies are in the midst of an unprecedented digital revolution which will impact every person living on the planet. This revolution brings new promises, and new risks of disruption. We have seen recently that the digital world moved faster than the ethical discussion about what could and should be allowed online. We cannot risk the same thing happening with Artificial Intelligence and automatization. We need to be in control of this transformation, and make sure that it is used to foster our values and defend our social model”*.

Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, said: *“From better healthcare to safer transport, the benefits of artificial intelligence are many and Europe should grab them. Along with increased investments, we are developing ethical guidelines for the development of AI for good and for all. This requires an open discussion on key issues such as the importance of diversity and gender balance in AI to avoid biased decisions. Today’s meeting and the recent set up of the European AI Alliance contribute to this broad debate.”*

Today’s high-level meeting provided an occasion to address two important issues related to artificial intelligence (AI). First, the meeting looked at the potential impact of AI on fundamental rights, in particular when it comes to privacy, dignity, consumer protection and non-discrimination. Second, the social dimension of AI was addressed looking in particular at the impact of AI on social inclusion and on the future of work.

Vice-President **Ansip** encouraged the participants to continue their engagement on this topic by contributing to the ongoing initiatives of the Commission on AI, in particular through the [European AI Alliance](#) that was launched last week. The AI Alliance is a community of stakeholders brought together through an online forum to engage in a broad and open discussion of all aspects of artificial intelligence development and its impacts.

Facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue on how to advance AI innovation to

increase trust and adoption, and to inform future policy discussions, is a commitment made as part of the recent [G7's Charlevoix Common Vision for the Future of Artificial Intelligence](#). It is also a key element of the [European approach on AI](#) and the [Declaration of Cooperation on AI](#) signed by 28 European countries.

Background

Today's high level meeting with representatives of philosophical and non-confessional organisation is the ninth in the series of meetings launched by the Commission in 2009 when the dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations was enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Art 17 TFEU). The dialogue is under the responsibility of First Vice-President Timmermans. Each year, these meetings are dedicated to different topical matters. In previous years, First Vice-President Timmermans has invited participants for valuable discussions on ['Living together and disagreeing well'](#) in 2015, ['Migration, integration and European values'](#) in 2016, and ['The Future of Europe'](#) in 2017.

On 25 April 2018, the European Commission launched a European initiative on artificial intelligence (AI). The Commission is proposing a three-pronged approach to increase public and private investment in AI, prepare for socio-economic changes, and ensure an appropriate ethical and legal framework. The Commission is in particular concerned that no one is left behind in the digital transformation and that these new technologies are based on values. As with any transformative technology, some AI applications may raise new ethical and legal questions.

As part of this initiative, ethical guidelines on AI will be developed by the end of 2018, based on the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, taking into account principles such as data protection and transparency, and building on the work of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies.

To help develop these guidelines and provide recommendations, the Commission has appointed an expert group on AI.

More information

The Communication "Artificial Intelligence for Europe" can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/factsheet-artificial-in-telligence-europe>

To join the European AI Alliance:
<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/european-ai-alliance>

European Commission' dialogue with churches, religious communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations on DG Justice home page on fundamental rights:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/dialogue/index_en.htm

List of Meeting Participants

- Mr Henri BARTHOLOMEEUSEN, President of the Centre d'Action Laïque (CAL)
- Mr Michael BAUER, Vice-President of the European Humanist Federation, Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands Bayern (CEO)
- Mr Max BOJARSKI, Grand Orient of Poland, Vice-President of the Congress of Laicity
- Ms Martine CERF, Secretary General of Egalité Laïcité Europe (EGALE)
- Ms Raluca CIOCIAN-ARDELEANU, Vice-President, Romanian Secular-Humanist Association
- Jean DE BRUEKER, President of the Contribution des Obédiences Maçonniques Adogmatiques et Libérales à la Construction Européenne (COMALACE)
- Mr Giulio ERCOLESSI, President of the European Humanist Federation (EHF)
- Ms Marie-Claude KERVELLA-BOUX, President Institut Maçonnique Européen, Grand Master of the Women's Grand Lodge of France
- Mr Marc MENSCHAERT, President of the European Masonic Alliance (Alliance Maçonnique Européenne – AME)
- Pr. Laszlo NEMES, Hungarian Humanist Association, Professor at Eszterházy Károly University, Eger (Hungary)
- Mr Keith Porteous WOOD, Executive Director of the (UK) National Secular Society
- Mr Claude WACHTELAER, President of the European Association for Free Thought (AEPL)

[EU and Australia launch talks for a broad trade agreement](#)

The aim of the negotiations is to remove barriers to trade in goods and services, create opportunities for small and large companies, as well as setting ambitious rules in line with other trade agreements of the EU, contributing to shape global trade.

The opening of talks with Australia is part of the EU agenda for open and fair trade. It follows the conclusion of negotiations with Japan last year and Mexico this past spring, as well the entry into force of the EU-Canada trade agreement in September of last year. The future agreement between the EU and Australia will further consolidate the EU's engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"I look forward to adding Australia to our ever-expanding circle of like-minded trade partners. In challenging times, it is heartening to see that Australia shares our commitment to a positive trade agenda, and to the idea that good trade agreements are a win for both sides. The result of our negotiations will be an agreement that offers clear benefits for both the EU and Australia. It*

will boost economic opportunity for businesses, both big and small, and create jobs.

Following today's announcement, the first formal round of talks between the respective sides' teams of negotiators will take place in Brussels from 2 to 6 July.

Australia is one of the world's fastest-growing developed economies. It recently negotiated the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) with 10 other countries in the Pacific region. The future EU-Australia agreement will let European companies compete on a level playing-field with businesses from those countries with which Australia already has trade agreements.

The EU is already Australia's second biggest trade partner. Bilateral trade in goods between the EU and Australia has risen steadily in recent years, reaching almost €48 billion last year. The sectors which make up the bulk of EU exports to Australia are transport equipment, machinery and appliances, chemicals, food, and services. Bilateral trade in services is around €28 billion. The agreement could increase trade in goods between the two partners by over a third. Information about the negotiations, including factsheet, examples of small exporters, statistics and other material, is available [online](#).

Commissioner Malmström's visit to Australia

Whilst in Australia, the Commissioner is also meeting Governor General of Australia Peter Cosgrove; Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop; Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud; as well as members of the opposition. Today, she is also holding the 2018 Schuman Lecture at Australian National University, under the headline *EU-Australia: A Global Alliance for Trade*.

Commissioner **Malmström** participates in a roundtable with Australian businesses and meets European businesses active in Australia. Alongside EU Ambassador Michael Pulch, the Commissioner will also have the opportunity to meet with Australian civil society members, including representatives from climate and human rights organisations, trade unions, and academia.

Whilst in Sydney on Tuesday, she will visit the headquarters of Cicada Innovations, a hi-tech start-up incubator, where she will meet start-ups involved in fields like robotics, next-generation Wi-Fi technology, and medical supplies.

After her visit to Australia, Commissioner **Malmström** will go to Wellington, where she is launching the trade negotiations between the EU and New Zealand on Thursday of this week (21 June).

Background

On 22 May, the Council of the European Union adopted the decision authorising the opening of negotiations for a trade agreement between the EU and Australia.

So far the EU and Australia have been conducting their trade and economic relations under the 2008 EU-Australia Partnership Framework.

For More Information

[Video and photos](#) from the visit, including press conference, meetings & company visits

[The EU-Australia trade negotiations](#) – Dedicated website

[Factsheet](#)

[Exporters' stories](#)

EIOPA publishes its Annual Report 2017

Today, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published its Annual Report 2017.

The Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of the Authority's activities in 2017. During this year, the focus of the Authority's work was strengthening supervisory convergence, enhancing consumer protection and maintaining financial stability.

EIOPA is committed to building a common supervisory culture and, in 2017, continued its work with national supervisory authorities to set out the key characteristics of high-quality and effective supervision that underpin this culture.

In 2017, EIOPA also took steps to address perceived weaknesses in cross-border business supervision, for example, through setting up platforms to facilitate cooperation between national supervisory authorities, enabling a more timely identification and assessment of risks.

To promote a consistent approach to consumer protection, EIOPA provided advice to the European Commission related to the Insurance Distribution Directive covering issues such as conflicts of interest in selling practices and technical standards on the insurance product information document.

In addition, EIOPA completed the first part of the first review of the Solvency II regime, advising the European Commission to adopt simplified calculations of the solvency capital requirement (SCR) standard formula. EIOPA also published an opinion calling for a minimum harmonisation of a

recovery and resolution framework for the insurance sector and carried out a Europe-wide stress test on the occupational pensions sector.

Looking ahead to 2018, EIOPA will give particular focus to issues related to digitalisation and InsurTech, as well as sustainable finance. The Authority will also continue to support the European Commission's actions in the European financial services agenda, including the Capital Markets Union. Working with a wide range of stakeholders, EIOPA aims to build a strong European supervisory culture for the benefit of European consumers.

The full text of the Annual Report is available [here](#).

Weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk

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Main topics and media events 18 June – 1 July 2018

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Monday 18 June 2018

The Council will have an exchange of views on the EMFF, fisheries controls and the fishing opportunities for 2019. It will also discuss the post 2020 CAP reform package and the agricultural market situation.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Employment and Social Policy), Thursday 21 June 2018

Employment and social policy ministers will discuss several legislative proposals, including the coordination of social security systems, work-life balance and transparent and predictable working conditions. They will also hold a debate on the employment and social policy aspects of the 2018 European Semester exercise.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Health), Friday 22 June 2018

Health ministers will hold a debate on the proposed regulation on health technology assessment. They will also discuss the future of health in the EU.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Friday 22 June 2018

The Council is due to close the excessive deficit procedure for France, and to approve country-specific recommendations under the 2018 'European Semester'. It will discuss VAT, a proposed European deposit insurance scheme and fulfilment of the eurozone convergence criteria.

Foreign Affairs Council, Monday 25 June 2018

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a joint session between foreign affairs ministers and defence ministers. They will discuss and adopt conclusions on EU cooperation in **security and defence**, and will hold a session on **EU-NATO cooperation** together with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. Over lunch, foreign ministers will discuss **Yemen** with UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. The Council will adopt conclusions.

Foreign ministers will have a discussion on the implementation of the **EU Global Strategy**, the **Horn of Africa and the Red Sea** (with Council conclusions), and **Jordan**.

Environment Council, Monday 25 June 2018

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on delivering the EU action plan for the circular economy. Environment ministers will hold policy debates on the regulation on CO2 standards for cars and vans as well as on the directive on drinking water.

General Affairs Council, Tuesday 26 June 2018

The Council will discuss draft conclusions of the June European Council and hold a first hearing on the rule of law in Poland. It is expected to adopt conclusions on enlargement and the Stabilisation and Association Process.

General Affairs Council (Art.50), Tuesday 26 June 2018

EU27 ministers will prepare the European Council (Article 50) by discussing the state of play of Brexit negotiations and the conclusions to be adopted by the leaders.

European Council, European Council (Art.50) and Euro summit, Thursday – Friday 28 – 29 June 2018

The June European Council will focus on migration, security and defence as well as economic and financial affairs. It will be followed by a Brexit European Council (art 50) to discuss progress in the talks with the UK and a Euro summit in inclusive format to discuss the reform of the European Monetary Union.

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