



## REPORT

### **Meeting on the draft ethics guidelines for Artificial Intelligence with Article 17 dialogue partners**

Brussels, 9 January 2019

A meeting on the draft ethics guidelines for Artificial Intelligence (AI) was held on 9 January 2019 with a number of religious and non-confessional organisations (see participants' list attached), in the framework of the Article 17 dialogue with religious and non-confessional organisations. The aim of the meeting, chaired by [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), was to inform and gather the views of these organisations on the draft “Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI” issued on 18 December 2018 by the High Level Expert Group (HLG) on Artificial Intelligence (see text: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/draft-ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai>). This meeting followed the previous consultations with religious and non-confessional organisations held in the course of 2018 (see reports below).

In his introductory remarks, [REDACTED] explained the context of the draft ethics guidelines for Artificial Intelligence (the EU is in a position where it can take a leading role vis-à-vis China and the US on ethical issues) and invited those present to react to the guidelines as part of the consultation process on the draft (deadline: 18 January 2019). [REDACTED] ([REDACTED], DG CONNECT.A.1) explained the context of the AI HLG draft Ethics Guidelines. The Guidelines are the work of an independent expert group, the HLG, and not the Commission. It is based on the notion that AI should have an ethical purpose (in line with EU rights, laws and values). The solutions proposed should be technically robust. The guidelines have 4 dimensions: ethical purpose of AI, critical concerns and implementation requirements, assessment criteria for the implementation, discussion of use cases (the last being still unpublished work in progress). There is some international interest for the Guidelines, especially in Japan and Canada. Based on the comments received in January, a final version of AI Ethics Guidelines is due in March 2019.

Participants made a number of comments:

- For the Commission of the European Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE) [REDACTED] asked about the role of the EGE (European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies which has already produced in March 2018, a statement on Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and 'Autonomous' systems). Answer from [REDACTED]: the EGE's statement from March 2018 was one of the starting points for the HLG. A member of the EGE attended the HLG meetings.

- For the Conference of European Churches (CEC), [REDACTED] welcomed the draft guidelines and asked about the role of military interests in the EU approach to AI research. [REDACTED] also raised concerns on the vision of the human the draft guidelines (referring in particular to p. 9) which [REDACTED] described as too “anthropocentric” and individualistic – as well as a lack of concern for the environmental impact of AI (answer from [REDACTED]: EU has currently no army. European Defense Fund has a strict mandate, research funding is strictly civilian with special attention to dual-use cases, which get extra ethics scrutiny. On the environmental dimension, the positive role of AI to better manage resources and the environment should be underlined.
- The European Humanist Federation (EHF), represented by [REDACTED], asked about the follow-up to the ethics guidelines and whether the EU will develop specific tools (she mentioned for example an AI observatory to monitor the uses of AI). Answer: the guidelines are a first step, based on which a number of steps could be considered by the Commission.
- For the Dutch/Flemish Humanists Association (Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen - deMens.nu), [REDACTED] asked about (i) the enforcement of the guidelines (ii) the multilateral efforts to develop further the AI ethics (at UN level – COMECE added also a reference to the G 20). Answer: UN approach would be ideal, but a consensus might be difficult to reach – a more pragmatic approach might be to engage with countries that have an interest in developing a common approach on AI ethics. Work done by private companies might also be useful in this respect

As a conclusion, [REDACTED] mentioned the possibility of a conference on the ethics guidelines in April 2019 following their finalisation in March by the High-Level Group.