

Human right, democracy and digitalization in the European Union over the past five years

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Abstract

This research paper discusses the progress made in the frame of human rights and democracy (HR&D), the effects of digital technology development and challenges and the future of HR&D, in terms of digital technology, with the intent to clarify the stance whether digitalization is compliant with HR&D or HR&D is re-dimensioned under digitalization. It explores a range of publications regarding human right, democracy and digitalization, of the Thing Tank of the European Parliament in the last 5 years. The paper concludes that, the rate with which technology advances, is different from the rate with which a normative act is implemented, in terms of time, even when this concerns fundamental principles.

Keywords: Democracy, development, digital technology, human rights, technology.

Introduction

Exactly when it appeared that the world consolidated the belief that it had established its functions, a pandemic swept across the globe. But the approach towards a threat, especially a threat to life, brings the need to distinguish positions, of people, of government, of business, expressed in institutions, policies and practices. In doing so, the world proved that when the society stops its interpersonal activities, technology acts more intensively, sometimes turning invasive.

This paper is a secondary research reflecting on the latest publications provided in the field of HR&D and digitalization from the Thing Tank of the European Parliament, the platform that conducts dependable and objective research on behalf of European Parliament.

The first part provides a synoptic of the HR&D situation in the EU outlining the institutions and policies used to ensure that these fundamental rights are recognized and respected, accompanied by main normative and / or regulatory acts recently issued in the framework of the political activity for rights and democracy in the Union.

The second part treats the effects that digital technology developments have had in the framework of policies and instruments, giving some expressions of these effects in the activities that the Union has to act on.

The third part is a dialog of publications regarding social control, ethical norms, peace threats seen as challenges of HR&D in terms of digitalization and posits a perspective for the future considering technology and post covid resolution.

1. Standpoint of human right and democracy in the Union

The concepts of democracy and human rights, along with rule of law, came after World War II, initially to exhibit the willingness of consensus as a lesson learned from the war. This consensus, accompanied by the experience of two wars, contributed to form the concept of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, that had to guarantee commitment, trust and will. There is no order in terms of importance of these concepts and they are generally associated together in political and social rhetoric. Deriving from these concepts, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, comes as the first universally accepted document, agreed at the international level, which sets out all human rights and freedoms. The UDHR is accompanied by 2 covenants, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Also, there is an optional protocol to the ICCPR and ICESCR 'which establish complain and inquiry mechanisms.'¹

73 years after the UDHR and 55 years after the 2 covenants, the full guarantee of human rights and democracy remains a challenge for the world and for the European Union (EU) concretely, being the focus of this research paper. The financial crisis, the emigration crisis and the pandemic crisis are proof of this. Additionally, the development of new technologies has opened new avenues through which these rights [human rights] may be threatened, presenting challenges for data protection, but also for freedom of speech, with online hate speech and the spread of fake news requiring countermeasures to strike a balance between curbing these practices and protecting people's right to express themselves freely (Zamfir, Prpic, et al. 2019). In the 2020 European Strategy Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) Conference, where it was discussed the future of democracy after the global pandemic, it was concluded that, in order to prosper, democratic systems need greater tax equity, participatory democracy, laws against mis-information and more sub-national decision-making.²

The EU's efforts are therefore focused on policy-making and systems-building to prevent problems and improve the activity in the future, tracing responsibilities, anyhow in respect to the development of democracy at national level. All this, in parallel with giving an emergency solution to the situation in fulfillment of legal obligations and in an effort to preserve and add to its fundamental values, where the main ones are human rights and democracy. Further, the EU has been moving away from a classic donor-beneficiary relationship to one based on partnership and recognition of the ownership of partner countries, which are encouraged to identify opportunities for EU assistance in the area of democracy and human rights themselves (Zamfir 2018). To ensure the technical, tactical and practical implementation of human rights and democracy, not only in its domestic (internal) policy, but mainly in its foreign (external) policy, European Union has a broad administrative structure. In order to understand its functionality, it is important to recognize in advance the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Council and the European Union, as separate organizational and structural divisions. Besides the institutional division, there is the division that makes policies and normative acts. For instance, the Lisbon Treaty entered into force at the same time as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,

prevailing due to its constitutional character, but the EU's commitment to accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) is a separate procedure considering that the latter is part of the Council of Europe, along with the Court of Human Rights (CHR). The legal basis on which the EU exerts its activities, specifically in the context of human rights and democracy are: the Treaty on European Union (TEU), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR) and ECHR, all in line with UDHR.³ While many articles of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights recall similar articles in the Declaration, the EU Charter contains a number of additional rights and principles that reflect the EU's advances with regard to human rights (such as the prohibition of the death penalty), or its response to technological progress and new developments (such as the ban on cloning the human body; the right to personal data protection; and the principle of environmental protection) (Zamfir 2018).

In the frame of human right and democracy perspective, important policies include "The European Council's new 2019-2024 strategic agenda", "The European Commission's 2019- 2024 political guidelines", as well as "The joint communication of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, the European Council and the council: A new EU-US agenda for global change".⁴ The main development with this regard was the European Commission's "Action plan on human rights and democracy (2020-2024)". Issued in November 2020, it posits five lines of action to be implemented at three levels (country, regional and multilateral): "Protecting and empowering individuals; building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies; promoting a global system for human rights and democracy; new technologies: harnessing opportunities and addressing challenges; delivering by working together."⁵ The same document includes a list of all instruments to be used to achieve the objectives of every action, starting from political, human rights and sectoral policy dialogues with third countries and regional organizations, to public diplomacy and strategic communication activities and at last cooperation with multilateral human rights institutions and United Nations (UN) human rights treaty bodies and Special Procedures.⁶

Concerning the human right violations and abuses, a remarkable development in the pandemic year was the "EU Global Human Right Sanctions Regime" along with the Human Right Defenders Mechanism "ProtectDefenders.eu".⁷ As for the digital area, the most important developments include General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the new Digital Service Act and the legislation on Artificial Intelligence, notwithstanding the "Joint Communication of the EU Cybersecurity Strategy of the Commission and the High Representative", EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox and European Digital Strategy.⁸

Another important initiative is the potential legislation on Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) for business. A briefing of Prof. Dr. Markus Krajewski, Chair of Public Law and International Law, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany and Ms. Beata Faracik, President of the Board, Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business in Poland, published in June 2020 by the Policy Department for External Relations at the Directorate General for External Policies on the Union, entitled "Substantive elements of potential legislation on Human Rights Due Diligence",

concluded that: legally binding form of the provisions are better to ensure respect for human rights and a level playing field for companies in EU as well as provisions that require member states enforcement at a national level and mechanisms for remedy.

2. Effects of digital technology development: policies and instruments

Technology has revolutionized the way we today, live, get informed, make decisions, solve problems and form the persona we need to be and want to appear. The connection to all these processes is internet. In 2016 the UN General Assembly passed a non-binding resolution that “declared internet access a human right.” (Barry 2020). The phenomenon that occurs is that, while studying the cause of the consequences of technology, must be considered the field of action of people, businesses and governments, associated with their capacities, which translates into the assimilation of knowledge, eventually transmitted through the use of technology and via the Internet. To differentiate consequences from effects (hence what happens by chance and what happens on intention), that become the basis for judging whether digitalization is compliant with HR&D or vice versa, elements that serve as evaluation metrics are equality and engagement. An illustration of the above thought logic explanation are the tech giants, which are American companies, that operate in the worlds market and concretely in EU.⁹ Or the situation with the purchases of Instagram and WhatsApp from Facebook.¹⁰ In relation to this, US and EU, being the first line in implementing UDHR, have evidenced great commitment in regulating the digital sector so that it guarantees a solid ground for societies and economy to act. Proof of this are: Communications Decency Act, e-Commerce Directive, the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market and the Platform to Business Regulation, creation of a joint Trade and Technology Council (TTC) (2021) and the new the Digital Services Act (DSA) (which provides for a proportional increase of the regulations with the size of the platform), along with the Digital Markets Act (DMA) (which targets anti-competitive practices).¹¹ All in line with the 2020 European Democracy action plan. Still, the two main documents regulating digital technology in the union, as mentioned earlier in the paper, are: GDPR and the new DSA¹² (yet in proposal status). Several studies took place, with the purpose to ensure that the new proposed normative act (DSA) is a consolidation of experience, expertise and a welcoming as well as stimulative act (not only to member states), regarding the developments through digital technology in the Union, with a focus on human right and democracy. One of these studies is entitled “New developments in Digital Services”, requested by the

⁹ Bentzen, Naja, Mar Negroiro, Vincent Reillon, Nikolina Sajn, and Marcin Szczepański. 2018. “Adapting to new digital realities: Main issues and policy responses.” *Briefing* (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/61473_4/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)614734_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/61473_4/EPRS_BRI(2018)614734_EN.pdf).

¹⁰ Bentzen, Naja, and Tristan Krause. 2021. “Regulation of the digital sector.” *EU-US Explainer* (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2021/696179/EPRS_ATA\(2021\)696179_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2021/696179/EPRS_ATA(2021)696179_EN.pdf).

¹¹ Idem.

¹² EUR-LEX. 2020. Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on a Single Market For Digital Services (Digital Services Act) and amending Directive 2000/31/EC. 15 December. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0825>.

European Parliaments committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, performed by a group of researchers of a German innovation consultancy agency. It gives a short (2021), medium (2025) and long term (2030) perspective and implications for the DSA. The study identifies 3 trends that will effect development of digital services: seamlessness, hyper-Individualization, sustainability of digital services and concludes that 'Europe is 3-5 years behind the US and China on new technologies and digital services' and 'foreseeable developments in digital services require Europe to develop an appetite for digital leadership in the world'. Another study is the one performed by Dr. Melanie Smith, published in August 2020 from the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies at the Directorate General for Internal Policies of European Parliament, entitled "Enforcement and cooperation between Member States: E-Commerce and the future Digital Services Act", which identified the 20-year-old problems of the E-Commerce Directive, viz. self-regulation alongside a liability shield, to be corrected with the new DSA and laid down some barriers related to the enforcement of the DSA, which included externalities, unequal distribution of tech HQs, expertise, complexity, lack of transparency from platforms. As a 'key' to the successful implementation of the DSA, the study proposed the establishment of National Enforcement Bodies (NEB) with 'sanctioning power'.

Effects of digital technology developments are more evident in governance as it is the most linear confrontation that citizens have with their rights. Three trends to consider are: demographic patterns, urbanization and technological advancement.¹³ In the briefing entitled "Digital democracy: Is the future if civic engagement online?" of Prof. Gianluca Sgueo, published in early 2020, on behalf of European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), it was concluded that the evolvement of digital democracy is determined by privacy, equality (pushed from digital divide, exclusion and ignorance) and security. The explanation behind it was posited as follows:

Demographic patterns rank first. They show a world increasingly divided in two: one half is growing and is relatively young, whereas the other is shrinking in number and getting older. Governments reflect this. The second trend is urbanization. With a growing share of the world population living in cities, human interactions and governmental approaches are transforming rapidly. Technological advances, the third global trend to be examined in this briefing, are also impacting on social interactions. Constant digital connectedness is swaying human connections and governance.¹⁴

When it comes to democracy, digitalization takes on even greater importance, considering the progress it offers for e-participation, and further e-democracy, in citizens' approach to access information, get involved and weight in decision-making. In order for e-democracy to support public debate and have an impact on political decision making, experience with existing EU e-participation tools should be considered, like EU decisions, EU agenda, European Citizens Initiative (ECI), Youth Voice in Europe (YViE), European Parliament petition system, E-voting (system vulnerabilities).¹⁵

¹³ Sgueo, Gianluca. 2020. "Digital democracy: IS the future of civic engagement online?" Briefing. Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/646161/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)646161_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/646161/EPRS_BRI(2020)646161_EN.pdf).

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Korthagen, Iris, Ira Van Keulen, Leonhard Hennen, Gloria Rose, Georg Aichholzer, Ralf Lindner, Kerstin Goos, and Rasmus Øjvind Nielsen. 2018. "Prospects for e-democracy in Europe." In-Depth Analysis (European Parlia-

Only after identifying problems in the current situation using current instruments, can the path for improvement be laid. As long as each of the existing mechanisms and experiments remain stand-alone mechanisms with discrete functions and implementation programs, the EU will remain an opaque jungle to the average citizen (Korthagen, et al. 2018).

Speaking of the effects of digital technology developments, computational propaganda techniques cannot be left out, as the main threat to democratic processes. They are showing in the following forms: Algorithms on social media and search engines, Bots (automated accounts), Trolls (online bullies), Artificial intelligence, MADCOMs and deep fakes, Spear phishing, Distributed denial of service (DDoS), Brute force attacks on internet of things (IoT) devices.¹⁶

3. Challenges and the future of human right and democracy, in terms of digitalization

Identifying challenges and predicting the future for human rights and democracy, narrowed in a given territory, in this case Europe, is difficult, considering that research is in a good extent oriented toward past occurrences, meanwhile technology is constantly challenging the future. Therefore, this chapter is a dialog of publications and studies that have tried to provide a contribution and shed light to rights and democracy in society, under digitalization, initially as a mechanism to manage the uncertainty.

3.1. Challenges: social control, ethical norms, peace threats

Persistent conflicts, widespread societal violence, increasing restrictions on the work of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society are among the main obstacles slowing down or sometimes even reversing progress in Europe (Zamfir 2020). Throughout the course of this progression, the pandemic emphasized society's dependence on technology. It affirmed the extent of this dependence and from it, studies that would have followed a smoother course of development, came under pressure to produce concepts, theories and explanations of emerging trends and phenomena, to deal with the thirst for information in conditions of uncertainty, especially the uncertainty coming from isolation or exclusion. Thus, under the justification of digital right, the concepts of 'biometric/targeted surveillance', 'artificial intelligence (AI)', 'algorithmic decision-making/governance', 'technological solutionism' and 'digital authoritarianism' were unfolded, all in the form of social repression and control, especially under the political pressure and exposure of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.¹⁷

mentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. doi:10.2861/201697

¹⁶ Bentzen, Naja. 2018. "Computational propaganda techniques." (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed DEcember 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/AT/AG/2018/628284/EPRS_AT/TA\(2018\)628284_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/AT/AG/2018/628284/EPRS_AT/TA(2018)628284_EN.pdf).

¹⁷ Glowacka, Dorota, Richard Youngs, Adela Pinteá, and Ewelina Wołosik. 2021. "Digital technologies as a means of repression and social control." (Policy Department for External Relations, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union, EP). Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ST>

Treating the links between society and technology, Ms. Philip Boucher, a member of Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA) at EPRS-EP, in a study entitled “What if all technologies were inherently social?”, answered the philosophical question raised in the study on ‘what makes technology, technology’, arguing that, there is a constructive dialogue on the definitions of technology that recognizes its ability to carry valuable values that must be channeled into regulations.¹⁸ An example of these regulations is the one for targeted and behavioral advertising in digital services, where the user’s consent is necessary. The consent bears in itself the attitude that it has to ensure ‘fair and informed’ consent and good will (avoiding legal consequences that incite harm).¹⁹ Individual decisions to give permission or to agree on something reflect what is felt as right, accompanied by the pertaining obligation, and what is felt as ethical, accompanied by the pertaining moral values and principles. This exchange, happening through digital technology, introduces to *homo informaticus*. Thus, society placed this power over technology and it is only right for society to bear the risk of technology turning harmful. The risk of technology becoming harmful walks in between the spaces everyone, in their own right and ethics, approach as moral, here including all forms of moral (moral, unmoral, immoral, nonmoral, amoral). But, as Dr. Mihalis Kritikos, also a member of STOA at EPRS-EP, expresses in his article named “What if technologies had their own ethical standards”: “an algorithm is only as ethical as the data and goals fed into it.” The issue is that this ethical programming (algorithms, machine learning, artificial intelligence etc.) are moving to ethic decision making themselves.²⁰ This is a shift in human responsibility, which is the aftermath of human rights. The pressure of technology towards established ethical norms and structures, under the conditions of ‘value pluralism and moral uncertainty concerning emerging technologies’, can explode if ‘in the variety of ethical values, rights and principles’, is not identified ‘the dynamic character of morality’ along with ‘the dynamic and disruptive nature of technological developments’ (Kritikos 2018). All this burden on moral identity is happening in an environment where democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights are under the pressure of various threats, with the main one being peace. But democracy causes peace.²¹ Democracy, from the other side, is built on human rights fundamentals.²² Fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy need to be deployed together as they are in a triangular relationship,

[UD/2021/6536](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STU/2021/653636_EN.pdf) 36/EXPO_STU(2021)653636_EN.pdf.

¹⁸ Boucher, Philip. 2018. “What if all technologies were inherently social?” (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/A_TAG/2018/614552/EPRS_ATA\(2018\)614552_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/A_TAG/2018/614552/EPRS_ATA(2018)614552_EN.pdf).

¹⁹ Sartor, Giovanni, Francesca Lagioia, and Federico Galli. 2021. “Regulating targeted and behavioral advertising in digital services: How to ensure users informed consent.” Study (Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, EP). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/694680/IPOL_STU\(2021\)694680_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/694680/IPOL_STU(2021)694680_EN.pdf).

²⁰ Kritikos, Mihalis. 2018. “What if technologies had their own ethical standards?” (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/624247/EPRS_ATA\(2018\)624247_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/624247/EPRS_ATA(2018)624247_EN.pdf)

²¹ Reiter, Dan. 2017. “Is Democracy a Cause of Peace?” Oxford Research Encyclopedias. 25 January. Accessed December 1, 2021. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.287>.

²² Kirchsclaeger, Peter. 2014. “The relation between democracy and human rights.” Globalistics and Globalization Studies: Aspects & Dimensions of Global Views. Accessed December 1, 2021. https://www.sociostudies.org/alm/anac/articles/files/globalistics_and_globalization_3/112-125.pdf.

reinforcing each other and together safeguarding the constitutional core of the EU and its Member States (Van Ballegooy 2020). Europe, even in the wider foreign policy, has taken many measurements to rule democracy and fundamental rights violations. Some of this include visa bans, freezing assets of human right offenders, restriction for weapon trade, cutting development aid.²³ Yet, in the annual report to map threats to peace and democracy around the world, known as Normandy Index Report, published in July 2021, that ranks 137 entities according to the 11 identified worldwide threats, the world average is around 6, in a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 representing no risk, remaining at the same level as 2019 and 2020. The main threats identified worldwide are resilience to disinformation, energy security, democratic processes, cybersecurity and climate change. EU is threatened almost in the same level with the word in the area of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and terrorism. The report once again reasserts the 'correlation between weak democratic processes and threats to peace and security'.²⁴

3.2. Future: sustainable development through new technologies, post-Covid resolution

Sustainable development through new technologies can be achieved through the 3 action plans proposed in the study, mentioned earlier in the second chapter of this paper, entitled "New developments in Digital Services", which will put EU in a leadership position at the digital sphere. The posited action plans included: European Cloud / European Internet, Venture and Funding programme for e-Government and Visionary Communication Programme.

Regarding e-democracy, options to improve e-participation at EU level, include: "conduct experiments with participatory budgeting in relation to the structural funds, expand online engagement with MEPs beyond petitions, create a platform for monitoring Member State actions during Council decisions and explore the crowd-sourcing of policy ideas for the Commission."²⁵

In a briefing published by Ms. Philip Boucher, a member of STOA, on two previous studies of the Unit, regarding technology in production and consumption of news media and trends in political campaign and communication strategies, the proposed mitigating actions included: policy options targeting citizens' news consumption, policy options targeting digital divides, policy options targeting political communications, policy options targeting news producers and major platforms and policy options targeting governance institutions.

The report of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System on "Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe" posits a strategic foresight perspective

²³ Russell, Martin. 2019. "An EU human right sanction regime?" European Parliamentary Research Service, April. Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etude_s/ATAG/2019/637892/EPRS_ATA\(2019\)637892_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etude_s/ATAG/2019/637892/EPRS_ATA(2019)637892_EN.pdf).

²⁴ Lazarou, Elena, and Branislav Stanicek. 2021. Normandy Index 2021. European Parliamentary Research Service. Accessed December 1, 2021. https://normandiepourlapaix.fr/sites/default/files/2021-09/EPRS%20-%20Normandy%20Index%202021_0.pdf.

²⁵ Korthagen, Iris, Ira Van Keulen, Leonhard Hennen, Gloria Rose, Georg Aichholzer, Ralf Lindner, Kerstin Goos, and Rasmus Øjvind Nielsen. 2018. "Prospects for e-democracy in Europe." In-Depth Analysis (European Parliamentary Research Service). Accessed December 1, 2021. doi:10.2861/201697

on how technology can help to alleviate issues of 'aging, urbanization and climate change' and how 'high levels of education, connectivity and prosperity' can turn technology developments in advantages.

The future of Europe after the 2020 pandemic, is predicted through a model developed Ms. Damen Mario, published in October 2020, on behalf of Policy Department for External Relations of the General Directorate for External Policies of the Union at the European Parliament. The study entitled "Four EU scenarios for governance in post Covid-19 world", thoroughly explains all the possible combinations of government and markets, in terms of interests and values, also in a global perspective, as a way to ease the understanding on economic and political patterns that can determine the future of EU approach to the world but also serve as a tool to assess decisions taken in the future. These four scenarios are: 1-Bottom left: interest driven markets: competitive capitalism versus predator capitalism, 2-Bottom right: interest driven states: strategic autonomy versus imperialism; 3-Top right: value driven governance: cooperative governance versus oppressive surveillance; and 4- Top left: value driven markets: ethical capitalism versus corporate delusion.²⁶

Conclusion

Time is the continued sequence of existence and events that occurs in an apparently irreversible succession from the past, through the present, into the future (Wikipedia 2019). This 'transport', which takes several forms, from the personal ones (emotional, sentimental intellectual) to the social ones, constitutes our daily activity. The functionality of this network of 'transports' is guaranteed by human rights and democracy. Digital technology has intervened in this very important dimension by changing the management, of the 'network' and the time.

Thus, from this research, it can be concluded that, from one side the rate with which technology advances, is different from the rate with which a normative act is implemented, in terms of time, even when this concerns fundamental principles. On the other side, the effect of digitalization is faster with a long-term consequence while with a normative act is the opposite occurrence. Estimating this rate and the difference in movement of two actions can be part of another quantitative research.

Digital technology can turn from a socio-political benefit to a social-political harm, consequently a damage. Is very serious the tendency to give technology the ability to build its own morality because the information exchange happens that fast through technology that it is impossible for humans to process it with the same speed as a computer, this creates an asymmetry of information that is later used in the distort forms of social control.

Authoritarianism pressure (or whatever force moving against democracy) defines the movement of EU policies along binding and non-binding interval, a balance that sets the tones of politics, so important for guaranteeing the respect of human rights. There appears to be a change of EU politics approach, from digitalization to comply norma-

²⁶ Damen, Mario. 2020. "Four EU scenarios for governance in a post COVID-19 world." (Policy Department for External Relations). Accessed December 1, 2021. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/639317/EXPO_STU\(2020\)639317_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/639317/EXPO_STU(2020)639317_EN.pdf).

tive/regulatory acts to normative/regulatory acts that fulfill through digitalization the aim and mission of the EU.

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