Center for AI and
Digital Policy

CAIDP Update 2.14 (Apr. 5, 2021) - *New AI Research Center Launched, UNESCO Ethics Resolution Moves Forward*

UNESCO and the Slovenian government have launched the **International Research Center for Artificial Intelligence** (IRCAI). The objectives of the IRCAI include research, advocacy, capacity-building and dissemination of information about AI.

At an event this week, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, noted that UNESCO has established more than 100 centers of research, but the IRCAI is the first specifically devoted to Artificial Intelligence. She said, "The importance of IRCAI has become clear over the past six months, as the Centre has made decisive contributions to a new standard-setting instrument being prepared by UNESCO on the ethics of artificial intelligence. We have drafted a text underlining the need to develop AI in a way that respects our values and our rights. A text that addresses the social and gender biases sometimes embedded in algorithms."

Director General Azoulay said that member states are now reviewing the text. "If adopted at UNESCO's General Conference in November, this text will become the first global standard-setting instrument on the ethics of artificial intelligence."

She also highlighted opportunities in AI, including water management, journalism, and artistic creation, but also the need to address the female recruitment crisis in AI, "building on our priority for women in science."

The IRCAI has issued a call for collaboration. "IRCAI is actively working on 10 projects that will be implemented in 2021. These are all designed to scale and use AI to achieve the Global Challenges that the Center has pledged to tackle. We are looking for partnerships with Member States, companies, NGOs, universities and government bodies around the world for the implementation of these projects." Details here.

CAIDP highlighted the work of UNESCO in the CAIDP Update 1.4 (Aug. 10, 2020) and promoted the public consultation process. CAIDP also noted, "Key challenges ahead for UNESCO will include the need to address bias in AI-based systems. It has become increasingly difficult to determine how automated decisions about people are made. The practical consequence can be to reinforce systems of social bias and to create additional barriers to inclusion and diversity."

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