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NOTE

From:	Austrian, Czech and Slovak delegation
To:	Council
Subject:	High-level workshop on “Digital Humanism and Artificial Intelligence” Information from the Austrian, Czech and Slovak delegation

On 3 March 2022, a high-level workshop on “Digital Humanism and Artificial Intelligence”, jointly organized by the members of the Slavkov format – Austria, Czechia and Slovakia, and in cooperation with the Vienna Science and Technology Fund, took place in Brussels.

Following up on the “Poysdorf Declaration on Digital Humanism” concluded between the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Czechia and Slovakia, in June 2021, and the joint “Non-Paper on a Human Rights-Based Approach to New and Emerging Digital Technologies” by Austria, Czechia, Slovakia and Slovenia circulated in January 2022, the workshop aimed to set out a possible joint roadmap in the fields of research, politics and innovative technology. Against the backdrop of an ever-evolving technological and tech-business sector, it is high-time for the European Union to spell out how its values and fundamental rights should be applied in the digital environment. To achieve that, we need clear rules that promotes innovation and a human rights-based approach to the whole life cycle – i.e. the design, development, deployment and use – of new and emerging digital technologies.

The workshop brought together representatives from the business, research and politics sectors, including representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, highlighting the necessity of an inter-disciplinary approach in dealing with digital humanism. Participants engaged in two panels, dealing with current developments in politics as well as business/research (“Digital Humanism: Policy Challenges for Europe”; “Digital Humanism: Towards a Roadmap for European Research”).

All participants agreed on the importance of “Digital Humanism” in EU digital policies, not least with a view to international fora and negotiations on technical standards. The conclusion of participants was that human rights, as a core pillar of the digital transformation, are increasingly undermined and at risk. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to raise awareness and ensure up-to-date legislative framework that reflect a value-based and human-centric approach.

It became clear that a successful digital transformation must take on board concerns of citizens, and must equally promote a co-evolution of technology, innovation and society. Only by pursuing a predictable, future-oriented and strategic human rights-based approach, we will be able to tackle mistrust, counter disinformation and successfully master the digital transformation. In doing so, human and fundamental rights must be the guiding principle for our regulatory action.