



CSDT- Side Event

From data protection to data empowerment: good practices from around the world on data spaces, data commons and data governance

28 March 2023, 8:30 am (CET)

Context:

Data drives our societies, economies, information ecosystems and is the backbone of our democratic and rule of law institutions. The ability to access and commercialise vast amounts of data offers great competitive advantage in the digital economy. Data informs all decision-making processes, nationally or globally. The way that data is governed across the world will shape power relations, the course and dynamics of sustainable development, international trade and foreign policy in the decades to come.

At the same time, as the datafication of our societies and economies accelerate, there is less the sense of democratic self-determination of communities and individuals as to the use of the data they produce. The prevailing technological determinism contradicts the vision of a data based on human rights and self-determination as conceived in Digital Humanism.

As an alternative to the currently prevailing models, “data commons” is an approach that empowers communities and individuals to produce, archive, use and share their data. Today, this self-determined decision-making power has largely been lost, both in the case of private and “open” data. There are several models for data access from the model of private, closed data to freely available, open data in the sense of “open (government) data”, “open source”, “open access” or similar. But both models have their limitations, they are not suitable for all cases. Data Commons offer a third way of dealing with data that can balance out the power disequilibrium between data subjects and those who own and use the data. Data Commons goes beyond open data. The aim is to maximize the benefit to society as a whole, rather than maximizing the volume and intensity of data use. The potential of the data for innovative solutions can thus be fully tapped.

In the wake of this recognition, there are a number of initiatives, nationally and regionally, shifting the discourse from a negative obligation of governments to protect privacy and data protection to a positive vision of data empowering individuals and communities to take back control over the data they produce, the way and to what purpose they share data and how it is used for the common good. Pooling data and developing data commons from which individual and societal added-value can be produced is based on a holistic understanding of the importance of data for human rights, human security and human development.



Pooling data and harnessing the potential of data commons necessitates a data governance framework that is based on and supports the realization of individual and collective rights, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including the biosphere, climate change, and biodiversity.

All these initiatives, with a myriad of different approaches, taxonomies and terminologies, even if well suitable in their own merits, lack coherence and interoperability for global applicability conducive to promoting innovation for the global public good, in particular contributing to sustainable development, such as health, climate change, innovation, economic growth and jobs, as well as social justice, among nations and communities. The time has come to reflect on common principles and rules that aim at creating public value for the common good, for sustainable development, nationally, regionally and globally. These rules would govern the availability, usability, integrity and security of the data, on a national, regional and global scales with the view to achieving the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.

Aim of the breakfast meeting:

- Exchange on recent initiatives who have a broader understanding of data governance and sharing of good practices, in particular on data commons and data spaces.
- Launch of a dialogue on general principles and norms on data governance that boost the achievement of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development, nationally, regionally and globally.

PROGRAMME

Moderator: Prof. A Min Tjoa

Opening: Amb. Désirée Schweitzer, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva

Framing: Matthias Kettmann, University of Innsbruck, Department of Legal Theory and Future of Law

Discussants:

- **Carol Roach**, Under-Secretary of Economic Affairs, The Bahamas, Co-Chair of the IGF 2022 main event on data governance
- **Alison Gillwald**, Executive Director of Research ICT Africa / Prof. University of Cape Town Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance
- **Antonio BIASON**, Legal and Policy Officer, Data Policy and Innovation, European Commission
- **Marielza Oliveira**, Director for Digital Inclusion, Policies and Transformation, UNESCO
- **Torbjörn Fredriksson**, Head of E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD
- **Bertrand de La Chapelle**, Chief Vision Officer, Datasphere Initiative
- **Clara Neppel**, Senior Director, IEEE Europe
- **Amb. Thomas Schneider**, Vice-Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Communications