HEALTHY ONLINE INFORMATION SPACES: FROM POLICY GUIDANCE TO PATHWAYS FORWARD

CONFERENCE INFORMATION PACKAGE

It is our pleasure to provide further information on the "**Healthy Online Information Spaces: From Policy Guidance to Pathways Forward**" Conference that the RFoM is organizing on **Wednesday, 22 October 2025** at the **Hofburg,** and to which you have been cordially invited (FOM.GAL/5/25). The event will serve as an **interactive forum for in-depth discussion** on the pressing challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies for freedom of expression and media freedom. It will bring together OSCE participating States and stakeholders ranging from civil society and academia to OSCE executive structures.

A series of workshop sessions will be held throughout the morning, offering participants the opportunity to engage in an informal setting on issues shaping media freedom in the digital age. The afternoon will be dedicated to the launch of the **Policy Manual on "Safeguarding Media Freedom in the Age of Big Tech Platforms and AI"**. A high-level panel will present and discuss the Manual's key recommendations, designed to support OSCE participating States in ensuring the availability and accessibility of public interest journalism and reliable information online. The conference will conclude with a **networking reception at Haus der Musik** for continued conversations on the intersection of technology and human rights.

In the attachment you can find a draft agenda with session descriptions, guiding questions, as well as confirmed speakers and contributing experts. **Please also extend the invitation to experts, policymakers, and interested colleagues in your capital.** While the interactive sessions in the morning will be in-person only, the launch will be livestreamed on the event webpage. **Kindly note that registration is required**: RFoM Healthy Online Information Spaces Conference Registration. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please direct them to Julia.Haas@osce.org and/or Claire.Haering@osce.org.

DRAFT CONFERENCE AGENDA

9.– 9.30	Welcoming Coffee	5th floor

9.30-9.45	**Opening Session**	533

Welcoming remarks
- **Jan Braathu**, *OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media*

Session Overview and Guidance: brief orientation on the day's program, format, and key themes
- **Julia Haas**, *Adviser, OSCE RFoM*
- **Claire Haering**, *Project Assistant, OSCE RFoM*

PARALLEL MORNING SESSIONS

9.45- 10.45	Session I **Digital Authoritarianism and Media Freedom**	533

Session Description

Digital authoritarianism is increasingly shaping the information landscape, as States and non-State actors exploit digital tools for censorship, surveillance, and repression. From internet shutdowns to spyware and misuse of AI and platform infrastructure, these practices threaten freedom of expression, media freedom, democratic participation, and journalists' safety. Journalists and exiled media face mounting pressure, communities are disproportionately affected, and problematic legislation and institutional practices further undermine trust in the media and increase threats.

This session will explore how international, regional, and local actors can respond collectively and collaboratively. It seeks to explore potential avenues for joint action in defense of media freedom and information integrity, aiming to produce a coherent set of recommendations to inform the OSCE RFoM's future work on this emerging trend.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the main trends in digital authoritarianism, cross-border restrictions on information flows and platform complicity, and how do they impact media freedom, free expression, information integrity, and safety of journalists?
2. What responsibilities do different stakeholders, particularly States and technology companies, have in responding to the rise of digital authoritarianism?
3. How can collaboration across different actors be strengthened to build resilience and address existing digital authoritarianism challenges?

Contributing experts

- **Bojana Kostic**, *Human Rights Expert* – session moderator
- **Amy Brouillette**, *Advocacy Director, IPI (Steering Committee Member of the OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
- **Begaim Usenova**, *Director at Media Policy Institute, Kyrgyzstan (Steering Committee Member of the OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
- **Arzu Geybulla**, *Journalist, Author of the OSCE Report "Enhancing Protection of Journalists under Severe Political Pressure"*
- **Courtney Radsch**, *Director of the Center for Journalism and Liberty, Open Market Institute*
- **Tanja Fachathaler**, *epicenter.works*

Session II
Digital Humanism: The Role of Public Interest Media

Session Description

This session explores how the principles of *digital humanism* can be applied to strengthen media freedom, support public interest media, and safeguard free expression in the digital age – while also considering how public interest media can, in turn, advance digital humanism. The session will discuss ways to apply *digital humanism* to foster independent media, build digital public spaces, and leverage the unique role of public service broadcasting in an AI- and platform-dominated information environment. Local and regional initiatives will be highlighted to show how humanistic technology can reinforce the mission of public interest media.

The discussion will reflect on what a resilient digital public space and news infrastructure could look like, how to engage younger audiences, and how States, media, and civil society can work together to uphold information integrity. The session

aims to conclude with recommendations for OSCE participating States and the OSCE RFoM on integrating *digital humanism* principles to foster a healthier and more democratic online information ecosystem.

Guiding Questions
1. How can the principles of *digital humanism* be applied to media freedom in the digital age?
2. What are the main objectives for public interest media in an information era dominated by big tech platforms and AI? How can technology support public interest objectives?
3. What could a digital public space look like and how can it be developed? What should be the role of States, the media, and civil society in this regard?
4. How can a democratic digital open space with public value standards be designed? What examples exist and could be scaled?

Contributing experts
- ***Erich Prem***, *Philosopher of Technology, Computer Scientist and International Technology Consultant* – session moderator
- ***Amy Mitchell***, *Executive Director, Center for News, Technology & Innovation*
- ***Florian Novak***, *Editor-in-Chief, JETZT*
- ***Irene Jay Liu***, *Director of AI, Emerging Tech & Regulation at International Fund for Public Interest Media*
- ***Klaus Unterberger***, *Head of the Public Value Department, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF)*
- ***Paula Miraglia***, *Founder and CEO of Momentum – Journalism & Tech Task Force*
- ***Sophia Wistehube***, *Senior Legal Counsel, EBU*

| 10.45- | Session III | 533 |
| 11.45 | **Human Rights-Based Digital Rules** | |

Session Description

As governments and regional actors develop strategies and rules to regulate digital platforms, their effects reach far beyond national borders. Also human rights-based regulatory frameworks designed in one part of the world influence societies with different levels of rule of law, institutional capacity, and democratic safeguards. While such regulation can create opportunities for strengthening freedom of expression and media freedom, it can also pose risks if copied or implemented without a strong human rights basis.

This session will explore how to ensure that both the design and implementation of platform regulation is grounded in human rights. It will consider how to mitigate adverse spillover effects, how to embed global perspectives into policymaking, and how to leverage existing initiatives such as the DSA Human Rights Alliance. It aims at identifying recommendations for multi-stakeholder approaches and cross-regional collaboration to contribute to global digital governance that prioritizes media freedom, freedom of expression, and information integrity.

Guiding Questions
1. How can a human rights-based approach to digital regulation be ensured across different jurisdictions and contexts?
2. What steps are needed to foster multi-stakeholder approaches for human rights-based digital governance (both in the design and enforcement of rules)?
3. How can cross-regional collaboration be strengthened towards global digital governance, accountability and knowledge-sharing?
4. What role can civil society and international alliances play in shaping digital governance that safeguards information integrity, inclusivity, and democratic debate?

Contributing experts
- *Eliska Pirkova, Senior Policy Analyst and Global Freedom of Expression Lead, Access Now* – session moderator
- *Christoph Schmon, International Policy Director, Electronic Frontier Foundation*
- *Bojana Kostic, Human Rights Expert (Rapporteur, OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
- *Elodie Vialle, Journalist, Tech Policy Advisor*
- *Kristina Rud, Digital Transformation Strategist, IMS*
- *Maksym Dvorovyi, Senior Legal Counsel, Digital Security Lab Ukraine*
- *Nino Macharashvili, Co-Founder and Director, ForShe*

Session IV
Think for Yourself: Human Autonomy and AI

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Session Description
The fast-paced development, deployment and use of AI-based new technologies, and the nature of the ecosystem in which they are employed, raise unprecedented challenges to human rights and the democratic fabric of our societies. Two rights

that enjoy absolute protection (meaning no restriction is permissible) and underpin human dignity and autonomy are at particular risk: the right to freedom of thought and to freedom of opinion. Based on their respective work, this session jointly organized by the OSCE RFoM and ODIHR will outline some of the existing and emerging challenges.

The session will also explore avenues and possible State action for an AI future where such challenges are met and risks to human rights and democratic processes mitigated. Furthermore, the session will explore paradigms where such technologies enhance the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights, while strengthening democracy.

Guiding questions
1. Why and how is freedom of thought relevant in the AI conversation? How is freedom of opinion affected in algorithm-driven information environments?
2. Is human autonomy at risk, and if so, in what ways?
3. Which regulatory, policy or oversight mechanisms should States prioritise to prevent AI-related infringements on human rights and democratic functioning?
4. What action is needed to ensure that AI technologies actively support human rights and strengthen democracy?

Contributing experts
- **Susan Kerr**, *Senior Adviser on Freedom of Religion or Belief, OSCE ODIHR* – session moderator
- **Patricia Shaw**, *CEO and Founder Beyond Reach, Co-Rapporteur at the Council of Europe Expert Committee on GenAI and Freedom of Expression, Expert Advisor to AI & Faith at the UK's AI Faith and Civil Society Commission* – session rapporteur
- **Ahmed Shaheed**, *Professor of International Human Rights Law, University of Essex, former UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (online)*
- **Delia Nita**, *Associate Officer on Freedom of Religion or Belief, OSCE ODIHR*
- **Julia Haas**, *Adviser, OSCE RFoM*
- **Peter Kirchschläger**, *Professor of Theological Ethics and Director of the Institute of Social Ethics, University of Luzern*

11.45-12.15	Coffee break	5th floor

12.15-
13.30

Session V

PeaceTech: What it Means for Media Freedom

Session Description

This session will explore how *PeaceTech* – the use of technology to support peacebuilding and conflict transformation – intersects with media freedom and information integrity. It will examine how *PeaceTech* can contribute to a pluralistic and democratic digital public sphere that enabled conflict prevention and reconciliation. From crowd-sourced reporting tools to creative uses of gaming platforms and digital art, *PeaceTech* initiatives have already shown how technology can circumvent censorship, expose corruption, and amplify diverse voices. Yet, these tools also raise critical questions about security, accessibility, and the risk of co-optation in fragile or authoritarian contexts, not least as dominant technologies are marked by power concentration and a troubling record of undermining human rights.

Through expert inputs and interactive group discussions, participants will reflect on how *PeaceTech* can protect journalists, strengthen independent media, and foster open, trustworthy information ecosystems. The session aims at looking ahead to identify what alliances, tech innovations, and safeguards are needed to ensure that technology supports media freedom, accountability, and peace – rather than undermining them.

Guiding Questions

1. How can the concept of *PeaceTech* foster media freedom and healthier online information spaces?
2. What *PeaceTech* tools or initiatives already support journalists, independent media, conflict-sensitive reporting and reconciliation efforts? How can existing digital tools be better used for public interest information?
3. Is available technology conducive to peace efforts? What is needed to ensure dominant technology and big tech services are fostering media freedom, accountability, security, and peace?
4. What should be the role of States in supporting *PeaceTech*? How to ensure tech is not co-opted for digital authoritarianism or information control?

Contributing experts

-   **Nathan Coyle**, *Co-founder and Coordinator of the PeaceTech Alliance* – session moderator
-   **Astrid Holzinger**, *Senior Project Manager, Austrian Center for Peace* – session co-moderator
-   **Amy Mitchell**, *Executive Director, Center for News, Technology & Innovation*
-   **Elodie Vialle**, *Journalist, Tech Policy Advisor*

- *Maksym Dvorovyi, Senior Legal Counsel, Digital Security Lab Ukraine*
- *Sally Broughton Micova, Associate Professor in Communications, Policy & Politics, University of East Anglia*

Session VI

Platforms, Networks, and Freedom: Securing Public Interest Infrastructure for Media Freedom

Session Description

Media ecosystems increasingly rely on complex infrastructures that extend beyond traditional platforms, including digital networks, cloud-based services, software tools, and social networks that serve as vital hubs for information exchange and solidarity. Yet, these infrastructures are widely dominated by a handful of tech companies, creating dependencies that expose media to corporate gatekeeping, to opaque platform logics that undermine their visibility, viability, and vigilance (safety), and even to State pressure.

This session aims to collectively examine how media functions as critical public infrastructure and explore ways to create alternative digital and social infrastructures. The discussion will consider how States, media, and civil society can invest in public interest infrastructure that is built on open source, interoperability, inclusivity, transparency and accountability. The session will conclude with recommendations on how to invest in infrastructures that is community- rather than profit-driven and that protects media freedom from both undue political interference and corporate control, while fostering trust, resilience, and access for all.

Guiding Questions

1. How do digital networks, cloud-based services, and software tools currently shape media production, distribution, and consumption? What are the risks and opportunities associated with relying on these infrastructures, especially in terms of media independence and pluralism?
2. What practical steps are needed to reduce dependencies on dominant tech companies and to ensure that technological advancements uphold democratic values and human rights?
3. What infrastructure investments or policy measures are essential to sustain independent journalism in the digital age?
4. How do social networks function as hubs for journalistic exchange and solidarity, particularly for journalists in exile or under threat? What measures can strengthen these networks while preventing misuse or censorship?

Contributing experts

- ***Deniz Wagner***, *Adviser, OSCE RFoM – session moderator*
- ***Max van Drunen***, *Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam (Rapporteur, OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
  – session rapporteur
- ***Felix Hlatky***, *Chief Financial Officer, Mastodon*
- ***Gülsin Harman***, *Journalist*
- ***Kristina Rud***, *Digital Transformation Strategist, IMS*
- ***Tom Law***, *Deputy Director, Global Forum for Media Development*
- ***Zako Sapey-Triomphe***, *Data Scientist and Innovation Strategy Advisor, Libération*

13.30-15.00	Lunch break	2nd floor

15.00-17.00	**High-Level Launch of the Policy Manual** **"Safeguarding Media Freedom in the Age of Big Tech Platforms and AI"**	Neuer Saal, 2nd floor

Speakers

- ***Jan Braathu***, *OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media*
- ***Anya Schiffrin***, *Director of the Technology and Media Specialization, Columbia University (Co-Chair of the Media & Big Tech initiative)*
- ***Natali Helberger***, *Professor for Law & Digital Technology, University of Amsterdam, Co-Director of the AI, Media & Democracy Lab (Co-Chair of the Media & Big Tech initiative)*
- ***Katharina Zügel***, *Policy Manager, Forum on Information and Democracy (Implementing Partner of the Media & Big Tech initiative)*
- *Moderation:* ***Julia Haas***, *Adviser, OSCE RFoM*

Floor Discussion

- Introductory remarks by
- ***Katja Pehrman***, *Ambassador for Human Rights of Finland*

- **Raphael Nägeli**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE*
- **Fatène Benhabylès-Foeth**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the OSCE*
- **Rasa Ostrauskaite**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OSCE*
- **Anna Herold**, *Head of Unit, Audiovisual and Media Policy, European Commission – TBC*
- **Neil Holland**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the OSCE – TBC*
- **Ali-Abbas Ali**, *Director of Broadcasting Competition, Ofcom*
- Statement by Delegations
- Q&A

17.00-17.30	**Closing Session**	Neuer Saal

Key Outcomes: Bringing together main takeaways from the interactive morning sessions

- *Session I:* **Bojana Kostic**, *Human Rights Expert (Rapporteur, OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
- *Session II:* **Erich Prem**, *Philosopher of Technology, Computer Scientist and International Technology Consultant*
- *Session III:* **Eliska Pirkova**, *Senior Policy Analyst and Global Freedom of Expression Lead, Access Now*
- *Session IV:* **Patricia Shaw**, *CEO and Founder Beyond Reach*
- *Session V:* **Nathan Coyle**, *Co-founder and Coordinator of the PeaceTech Alliance*
- *Session VI:* **Max van Drunen**, *Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam (Rapporteur, OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*

Wrap-Up

- Linking session outcomes to Policy Manual guidance
- **Damian Tambini**, *Distinguished Policy Fellow and Associate Professor at LSE (Steering Committee Member of the OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*
- **Hanna Möllers**, *General Counsel of the German Federation of Journalists (DJV) (Steering Committee Member of the OSCE Media & Big Tech Initiative)*

- Closing remarks by **Barbara Trionfi**, Acting Principal Adviser, OSCE RFoM

18.00	**Reception**	Haus der
	House of Music (Seilerstätte 30, 1010 Vienna, www.hdm.at)	Musik

The Conference will conclude with a **networking reception**, designed to provide a space for reflections, exchanges and engaging conversations in an informal setting. The reception will feature additional **food-for-thought through interactive discussions** and **exhibition elements**, presenting posters on **role models in the technology field** and the **Helsinki Final Act**.

The reception will provide a **preview of the upcoming Joint Declaration on AI, Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom** by the special mandates on freedom of expression of the UN, OSCE, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

This will feature **Pedro Vaca Villarreal**, the IACHR Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

The reception will also serve as a bridge to the **IPI World Congress** starting on the following day. In partnership with IPI, the reception will mark the special synergy between two milestones: the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act – which affirmed media freedom as a cornerstone of democracy – and the 75th anniversary of IPI, founded to defend press freedom as a pillar of free and informed societies.

Each participant will receive an **entrance ticket** (valid for one year) to the interactive *House of Music* museum that showcases how technology can make music accessible while respecting copyright and the sustainability of the music industry. It offers an immersive experience with four floors of exhibits on sound, hearing, and musical history.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION NOTE

Venue
The Conference takes place at **Hofburg**, Heldenplatz, 1010 Vienna. The reception takes place at **Haus der Musik**, Seilerstätte 30, 1010 Vienna (www.hdm.at) which is an approx. 10-15 min walk from the conference venue.

Event webpage
The agenda and all relevant information will be regularly updated on the event webpage: Healthy Online Information Spaces: From Policy Guidance to Pathways Forward | OSCE. The livestream of the launch of the Policy Manual will be embedded into that webpage.

Participants will be invited to complete a short **questionnaire** before and after the Conference to help assess the knowledge exchange and what they have gained from the discussions. This questionnaire will be shared in due course.

Registration Information
All participants, even those accredited to the OSCE, are kindly requested to register via https://events.osce.org/2025-rfom-healthy-online-information-spaces/registration. Kindly note that **external participants need visitor conference badges to enter the OSCE premises** (and go through security). Please enter the OSCE Hofburg premises via the main entrance (Heldenplatz). On the right-hand side, there is a security checkpoint where you can pick up your badge. In case of need, the security container outside of the OSCE venue will be used. All persons have to **show a valid ID and go through security**, so please arrange for sufficient time upon arrival. The conference will start at 09:30, a welcoming coffee will be provided as of 09:00.

On the registration website, it is possible for one person to register more participants using the same account. If you wish to register one or more persons with your account, please tick "**group registration**" and then continue to avoid overtyping your own account.

If **you login for the first time** with this OSCE online events tool, you need to create an account with a password and then return to the registration site using the link or QR code as indicated here. If you logged in before for any other OSCE event, you can **use your existing account and provide your name and password**.

Once participants are registered, they will receive a confirmation email. After the list of participants has been reviewed, all registered participants will receive an email with technical information, the Zoom link and joining details for participants attending the launch session remotely.