

## **Eurofedop Seminar**

### **The challenges of using AI in the public sector**

**19-20.04.2024  
Tallinn (Estonia)**

#### ***Short Report***



EUROFEDOP members from across Europe gathered in the historical Energy Discovery Centre in Tallinn, Estonia on 19 and 20 April. Discussions focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its consequences, opportunities, and threats for public services in Europe.

President of EUROFEDOP Norbert Schnedl opened the seminar and welcomed Kristjan Järvan, former Minister of IT and Economy in Estonia. Mr Järvan explained that while many politicians are still figuring out what the real implications are of AI, there are examples where AI can excel in public services, for instance in finding tax fraud.

Throughout the seminar, participants learnt a lot about e-Estonia and the many ways in which Estonia is ahead of other countries when it comes to digitalisation and e-services.

Dr. Klaus Schömann, researcher and consultant and former professor of Sociology at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany, discussed the potentials and risks of using AI in public services. Dr. Schömann also called upon the union representatives present in Tallinn to actively get involved in AI development, for instance when it comes to information and training, or tackling gender and diversity concerns.

Earlier this year, the European Parliament voted on the EU AI Act, and Member of European Parliament (MEP) Axel Voss (EPP, Germany) joined the seminar in Tallinn via a live video connection to talk about these AI regulations. As a shadow rapporteur from the Legal Committee, he focused on legal aspects as well as preserving human rights when legislating AI in Europe.

Further showcases of how far ahead Estonia is in terms of e-governance and e-services were presented by Ott Velsberg and Jana Paju-Hamburg. Mr. Velsberg is the Government Chief Data Officer at the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Estonia, and contributes to Estonia's digitalisation and future data governance. Ms Paju-Hamburg is an educator and consultant at SciStar Consulting, bringing a wealth of teaching experience in the field of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).



During the afternoon visit to the impressive e-Estonia Briefing Centre, participants received an engaging presentation by Erika Piirmets, Digital Transformation Adviser. It provided a lot of food for thought and discussion on the 'Estonian model', and to what extent elements of it are desirable and attainable for other countries. It also sparked some questions and concerns related to the impact on public service employees.

In the evening, EUROFEDOP participants were welcomed at the beautiful and historic Town Hall in the old centre of Tallinn for a tour and a reception.

On Saturday 20 April, Simon Taes, Postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Labour Law at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, talked members through the importance of using AI ethically and transparently. He also presented various options of workers' involvement on AI in the workplace, including in collective bargaining and social dialogue.

Mr Rainer Wendt, President of the European Police Union (EPU) addressed the participants with a passionate presentation on safety and security in our public spaces, the role AI can play in this, and the importance of human decisions.



After the President, Norbert Schnedl, formally closed the seminar, participants were invited to a lightning demonstration in the main hall of the science museum, and to enjoy other parts of this special venue at the Energy Discovery Centre.



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