

Politiscope - Annual Report of Activities 2023.

Politiscope is a privacy watchdog dedicated to defending personal data and ensuring the full enforcement of the GDPR as a foundation for transforming the digital public sphere.

In 2023, while maintaining extensive media work and watchdog activities in area of data protection, Politiscope significantly increased its focus on **AI governance and legislation**, advocating for artificial intelligence systems that respect fundamental rights. This shift was primarily achieved through our ongoing projects and European-level advocacy efforts as a newly elected associate member of the European Digital Rights (EDRI) initiative.

Politiscope regularly provides free legal aid to citizens in area of data protection, as well as free GDPR consultancy services to NGOs looking to strengthen their data protection practices.

Data Protection

Politiscope team members delivered an [online lecture on GDPR](#) to over 50 NGO representatives during the 5th semi-annual meeting of Active Citizens Fund beneficiaries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), organized by the Solidarna and Slagalica foundations.

Politiscope carried out extensive media work to raise public awareness about GDPR violations committed by debt collection agencies ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)). This issue was also featured in the public broadcaster's TV show Consumer Code ([4](#)).

In mid-2023 Politiscope was accepted to European Digital Rights initiative as an affiliate member and engaged in several EU level advocacy efforts in areas of data protection and artificial intelligence. In 2023, Politiscope was a signatory of the following open letters and press releases:

- Open letter to Members of the European Parliament calling for the absolute [prohibition of spyware against journalists](#)
- Open letter: EU countries should [say no to the CSAR mass surveillance](#) proposal – 81 NGO call on the Council of the EU Members States to reject draft EU Child Sex Abuse (CSA) Regulation

Politiscope is a partner organization on the DATA ROL project led by Sarajevo Open Centre. “Data Protection and the Rule of Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina” is focused on building capacities of the Initiative for Monitoring the European Integrations of Bosnia and Herzegovina in data protection and influencing candidate country's legal framework using the leverage of EU negotiations. In 2024, Politiscope team will conduct two training sessions and hold a mentorship process for members of the initiative, which will result in the creation of policy briefs aimed at establishing an effective and efficient data protection system in Bosnia.



Artificial Intelligence

Politiscope team members co-authored the global study [Beyond the Face: Biometrics and Society](#), which examines the societal impacts of facial recognition technology. Part of the ongoing MASA (Monitoring AI-backed Surveillance Architectures) project, led by the SHARE Foundation, the book details biometric surveillance technologies and compares regulations in the US, EU, and several countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The study also covers practical cases from Myanmar, the UK, New York, and Belgrade, illustrating how these systems are used for border control, public space monitoring, and suppression of opposition. It highlights the tension between human rights and profit-driven biometric surveillance.

Politiscope co-hosted the [SEEDIG8 conference](#) in Zagreb, annual summit of the South East Europe Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG), held under the auspices of the United Nations' Internet Governance Forum. At the event, Politiscope also organized a panel discussion titled [The Interplay of GDPR and the AI Act](#), featuring panellists from the Data Protection Agency and two prominent Croatian tech companies, Rimac and Infobip.

Duje Prkut, Executive Director of Politiscope, was contracted as the country researcher for Croatia for the Global Index for Responsible (GIRAI). Prkut mapped all AI-related activities of state administration, public bodies, academia, civil sector and the private sector, covering a span of two years. Croatia scored among the lowest in EU, indicating that an extremely low number of stakeholders engage with activities aimed at responsible development and deployment of AI systems.

Public reactions and open letters:

- Global statement: [Stop facial recognition surveillance now!](#) – 128 NGOs call on state authorities and private companies to immediately stop using facial recognition for the surveillance of publicly-accessible spaces and for the surveillance of people in migration or asylum contexts.
- [EU policymakers: regulate police technology!](#) Civil society calls on the EU to draw limits on surveillance technology in the Artificial Intelligence Act – 116 NGOs call on the EU to draw limits on surveillance technology in the Artificial Intelligence Act In late 2023.
- [Council risks failing human rights in the AI Act](#) – open letter to the Council of the EU Member States
- [Statement to EU countries: Do not agree to mass surveillance proposal](#) – open letter on the draft of CSAR (Child Sex Abuse Regulation), aka “chat control”
- Open letter to EU AI Act negotiators: [Do not trade away our rights!](#)
- [Europe's \(digital\) borders must fall!](#) - civil society urges the EU to stop expanding EURODAC, warning it risks becoming a surveillance tool that collects children's data and enables racial profiling.
- [80+ civil society and journalists' associations urged a full spyware ban](#) to protect journalists, saying current EU safeguards remain too weak to prevent abuse.

Projects and Donors

- **LIT DATA** – Strategic Litigation in Data Protection (2023-); Digital Democracy Fund
- **MASA** - Monitoring AI-backed Surveillance Architecture (2022-); European AI and Social Fund
- *Privacy Defenders* (2022); Active Citizens Fund
- *Privacy in the time of Corona* (2021); Active Citizens Fund