

CAIDP Update 2.38 (Oct. 13, 2021) – US Secretary Blinken at OECD on AI and Democratic Values

On October 6, 2021, U.S. Secretary Blinken [delivered keynote remarks](#) to the OECD on the shared values that have inspired the international organization for the 60 years since its founding. Blinken called attention to the need to align AI policy with democratic values. (See CAIDP Update 1.2, ([OECD’s Gurria Underscores AI Fairness at G-20](#)”))

Blinken declared, “We believe that our economic health is rooted in democracy, the rule of law, human rights, a commitment to open and transparent market economies.” Blinken described new challenges for the OECD, including, “the challenge of shaping the rules for new and emerging technologies. We must ensure that advances in technology are used to lift people up and advance human freedom – not suppress dissent, further entrench inequities, or target minority communities.” Blinken continued, “we’ve seen the way predictive algorithms from policing to prison sentencing to parole can reinforce bias against black people in the United States.”

Blinken said that the values of democratic nations must shape the digital rules of the road. “Our joint support for the OECD’s Principles on AI back in 2019 – the first set of intergovernmental principles on the topic – and the launch of the Global Partnership on AI in 2020, laid a foundation for the world to build on.” Blinken also called attention to the recent Joint Statement on AI of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, “firmly rooted in the OECD’s 2019 recommendation, underscoring the importance of trustworthy AI that respects human rights and democratic values.” (See CAIDP 2.36, ([EU-US Trade Council Advances AI Policy](#)”))

Blinken warned that the OECD nations were at an inflection point. “The principles at the heart of this organization and our democracies are being challenged by authoritarian governments that argue that their model is better at meeting people’s basic needs. . . . The stakes simply could not be higher.”

In the 2020 report [Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values](#), a survey of AI policies and practices in thirty countries, the CAIDP acknowledged the leading role of the United States in the development and adoption of the OECD AI Principles, as well as the coordinating role of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. “But the overall US policy-making process has been opaque,” CAIDP wrote. “The National Security Commission on AI has resisted public participation, and the Federal Trade Commission has failed to act on several pending complaints concerning the deployment of AI techniques in the commercial sector. Concerns have been raised about the export of facial surveillance technology by such US companies as Clearview AI. The absence of a legal framework to implement AI safeguards and a federal agency to safeguard privacy also raises concerns about the ability of the US to monitor AI practices.”

Earlier this year CAIDP made several commendations to the US Congress to advance US AI policy. (See [CAIDP Statement](#) to House Armed Services Committee regarding US AI Policy))