

CITIES COALITION FOR DIGITAL RIGHTS

The Cities Coalition for Digital Rights (CCDR), launched by the Cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York in November 2018 and now with a membership of over 50 cities worldwide, is a network of cities helping each other in the field of digital rights based policy-making.

The Coalition is committed to promoting and defending digital rights in urban contexts through city action, to resolve common digital challenges and work towards legal, ethical and operational frameworks to advance human rights in digital environments.

With increasing reliance on the internet comes the need to protect and respect basic human rights for all in the digital realm, including people who do not have access to the internet, people whose rights are being violated due to their online activities or people whose personal data is being collected and used without their consent. Local governments have an important role in the development of policies to ensure that technology is used to increase both freedom and security, and that the benefits of digital technology are experienced by all.

The CCDR cooperates with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Eurocities, together advocating for **five key principles** as a backbone of digital transition:

1. Universal and equal access to the internet, and digital literacy
2. Privacy, data protection and security
3. Transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination of data, content and algorithms
4. Participatory Democracy, diversity and inclusion
5. Open and ethical digital service standards

The CCDR promotes the advance of digital rights at a global and local level through two ongoing flagship projects:

1. **Digital Rights Governance Project** which intends to expand cities capacity to be prepared and equipped to lead digital transformation strategies that are people-centred and support sustainable urbanisation towards the public good. The project comprises of:

- the **Digital Rights Governance Framework** - a normative yet pragmatic framework for the city-wide implementation of digital rights that includes the foundations, structures and tools necessary for developing a rights-based governance of the digitalisation of municipal services
- the **Digital Rights Helpdesk** - including digital rights technical advice, ad hoc support and advisory input focused on capacity building in the participating pilot-cities, via an online platform for cities.

2. **Global Observatory of Urban AI** is a joint project of CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs), and the cities of Barcelona, Amsterdam, and London with the support of UNHabitat. The observatory aims to contribute to the development of standards through the monitoring of AI initiatives and the research and reflection on key technological issues around AI. The goal is to promote ethical artificial intelligence systems in cities and ensure that algorithmic tools are sustainable, fair, aligned to democratic values, accountable, transparent, cyber secure, and that they safeguard people's digital rights.

Advice and tips for cities implementing their digital transition (by Paula Boet Serrano, project manager for CCDR):

- pay attention to the impacts that technologies have on citizens, in particular on their human rights
- try not to implement solutions solely because they are useful, but also look at how solutions fit the process, who they benefit, who they don't
- use technological solutions which benefit and advance inclusion or accessibility

Contact

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Weblinks for further information:

Cities Coalition for Digital Rights: <https://citiesfordigitalrights.org/home>

Digital Rights Governance Project: <https://citiesfordigitalrights.org/digitalrightsgovernance>

Global Observatory of Urban Artificial Intelligence: <https://gouai.cidob.org/>

