sef: Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden
Development and Peace Foundation

Programme

sef: Policy Lunch

Writing the rules for a digital world: The EU AI Act and its global implications

12 November 2026
12:00 - 13:45 hrs (CET)

Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU
Rue Montoyer 47
Brussels, Belgium

supported by

The State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia

BACKGROUND

The European Union has positioned itself as an ambitious global actor in the governance of the digital economy. Through the Digital Services Act (DSA), the Digital Markets Act (DMA), and the AI Act, the EU is shaping the rules of the digital sphere while trying to balance several objectives: protecting users' rights and safety, ensuring fair competition, and enabling technological innovation and economic growth.

The DSA establishes new due-diligence rules for online platforms and search engines, while the DMA introduces rules of conduct for Big Tech, with the aim of reducing digital monopolies and ensuring fair access to digital markets. Building on these, the AI Act is the world's first comprehensive framework to regulate artificial intelligence, introducing risk-based standards for its development and deployment.

While these frameworks are designed for the European market, they will have a global impact. Big tech companies may apply European standards worldwide (as per the so-called "Brussels effect"), giving consumers, including those in the Global South, better protection and holding companies accountable. At the same time, European regulatory requirements may impose high compliance costs on emerging companies outside of Europe, making it even harder for them to compete with tech giants.

This raises several questions for policymakers and stakeholders inside and outside the EU, which we will discuss with international experts at this year's Policy Lunch:

- How will these regulatory frameworks strengthen Europe's digital sovereignty?
- How will they affect actors in the Global South and change the playing field for them?
- How can Europe work with global partners to foster innovation and inclusive development rather than fragmentation?

12:00 HRS REGISTRATION AND LIGHT LUNCH

12:30 HRS WELCOME

Rainer Steffens
Director, Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

Nora Witt
Executive Director, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

12:40 HRS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chair:
Dr Cornelia Ulbert
Executive Director, Institute for Development and Peace, University of Duisburg-Essen

Gilles D. Bana
Global Trends Analyst

Jeanne Christiansen Gozzer
Policy Officer, European AI Office, European Commission

Anna Ströbele Romero
Brussels correspondent, netzpolitik.org; Tagespiegel Background

followed by discussion with the audience

13.45 HRS END OF THE EVENT