



Internationalization vs. Sovereignty in AI Governance

Findings from the CAIDP AI Index 2026

PRESENTED BY

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EVENT DETAILS

**AI Governance: New Tradeoffs for Sovereignty, Trust
and Sustainability**

Ivey Business School, Toronto
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CAIDP: The World's Leading Independent AI Policy Research Organization

The Center for AI and Digital Policy (CAIDP) is an independent, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to ensuring that AI development aligns with democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law.

Founded in 2020, CAIDP has become the global reference point for AI for AI governance assessment, publishing the most comprehensive annual comprehensive annual review of AI policies and practices worldwide.

worldwide.

"The CAIDP AI and Democratic Values report is a trusted trusted global reference."

— ALAIN BERSET, SECRETARY GENERAL, COUNCIL OF EUROPE

- Trains future AI policy leaders
- Research Network spanning 120+ countries countries with 2,000 participants
- Publishes ***AI and Democratic Values*** report (***CAIDP AI Index***) and ***AI Policy Sourcebook***
- AI policy advice for the Council of Europe, EU, Europe, EU, OECD, UNESCO, and national national governments





The CAIDP AI Index 2026 Is A Comprehensive Review Of AI Policies and Practices Worldwide

The sixth edition of the *CAIDP AI Index* represents an unprecedented global effort to assess, compare, and rank national AI policies against a rigorous set of democratic values metrics.

EDITION 6th Annual	COUNTRIES ASSESSED 90	TOTAL PAGES 1,739
FOOTNOTES / CITATIONS 8,546	CONTRIBUTORS 1,483	COUNTRIES REPRESENTED 120+

The *CAIDP AI Index* has grown from 30 countries in 2021 to 90 countries in 2026, reflecting the rapid globalization of AI governance as a policy as a policy priority.



The Defining Tension of AI Governance: Global Rules vs. National Control



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CAIDP AI Index 2026 highlights a central and growing tension: internationalization versus sovereignty in AI governance.



INTERNATIONALIZATION

Council of Europe AI Treaty

UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendation

UN AI Scientific Panel

OECD AI Principles

G7 Hiroshima AI Process



SOVEREIGNTY

National AI laws (China, US, Korea)

Data localization requirements

Export controls on AI chips

AI as strategic national asset

Geopolitical AI competition

The CAIDP Index 2026 finds that **global progress is real but fragile** — and the US retreat from international leadership creates a dangerous vacuum.

Global Progress Is Real: Near-Universal Consensus on AI and Democratic Values



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Despite geopolitical tensions, the CAIDP AI Index 2026 documents remarkable global convergence on the principles that should govern AI development. This consensus is grounded in landmark international frameworks.

1 The Council of Europe AI Treaty (2024)

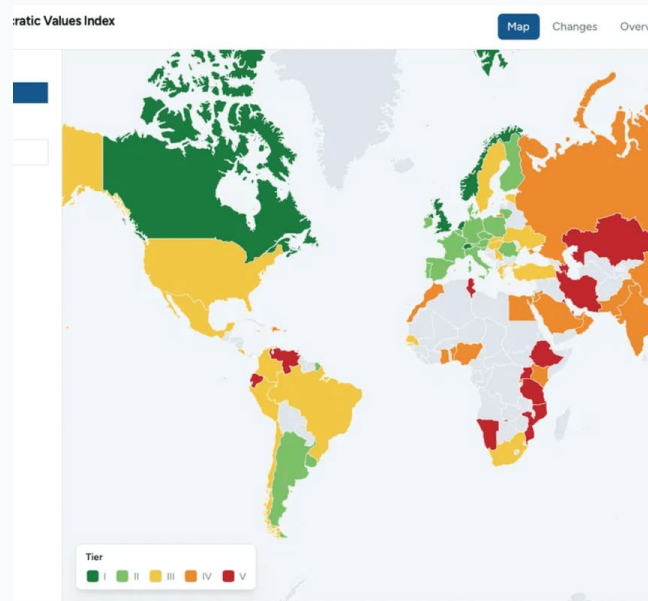
The first legally binding international treaty on AI. As of 2026, 45 countries have signed or ratified the treaty, including the US, UK, EU member states, Japan, and Canada.

2 The UN AI Scientific Panel

Established in 2025 with global participation, providing independent scientific advice on AI risks and opportunities to all UN member states.

3 UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendation

Implemented by an increasing number of countries through the the Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM), with new completions across Latin America, MENA, and Africa.





The *CAIDP AI Index 2026* World Map: Top Countries Lead, US Falls Behind

The *CAIDP AI Index 2026* rates 90 countries across five tiers based on 12 metrics measuring alignment with democratic values in AI governance.

Tier I (Dark Green): Highest alignment

Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Tier II (Light Green): Strong alignment

France, Germany, and other leading European European democracies

Tier III (Yellow): Moderate alignment

United States (downgraded), many Latin American and African nations

Tier IV (Orange): Limited alignment

Russia, China, India, many Middle East countries

Tier V (Red): Lowest alignment

THE US DECLINE

The United States has fallen to Tier III — a significant downgrade reflecting the Trump administration's withdrawal from international AI commitments, rollback of the Biden AI Executive Order, and retreat from global AI leadership.

CANADA'S LEADERSHIP

Canada ranks in Tier I — the top tier — reflecting its AI strategy, data protection framework, and active engagement with international AI governance.

Tier I Leaders Demonstrate That Democratic AI Governance Is Achievable



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COUNTRY	KEY AI GOVERNANCE STRENGTHS
Canada	National AI Strategy, AIDA (in progress), CoE Treaty signatory, signatory, strong privacy law
Japan	AI Strategy 2022, Hiroshima AI Process leadership, CoE Treaty Treaty signatory
Netherlands	EU AI Act implementation, GDPR enforcement, strong civil
Norway	Data protection leadership, CoE Treaty, Nordic AI cooperation
Switzerland	Neutrality + multilateralism, CoE Treaty, Geneva AI governance
United Kingdom	AI Safety Institute, global AI safety summit host, CoE Treaty signatory

The Tier I countries in the *CAIDP AI AI Index 2026* show that robust governance and innovation can coexist. They have enacted comprehensive AI policies and strong strong data protection frameworks.



Committed to **human rights-based AI governance**, transparency, accountability, and international cooperation.

The United States Has Withdrawn from Global AI Leadership — With Serious Consequences



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WHAT CHANGED UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ADMINISTRATION (2025–2026)

- ↓ Revocation of the Biden Executive Order on AI (January 2025)
- ↓ Withdrawal from 66 international organizations, including key AI governance bodies
- ↓ Replacement of democratic values framework with "AI dominance" and deregulation agenda
- ↓ Elimination of AI safety research programs at federal agencies
- ↓ Rollback of algorithmic accountability and transparency requirements
- ↓ Withdrawal from Council of Europe AI Treaty engagement

THE CAIDP ASSESSMENT

The US has moved from a position of international AI leadership to one of unilateral competition, prioritizing commercial dominance over democratic values. This creates a dangerous vacuum in global AI governance that other nations — and international bodies — must fill.

The Irony

The US signed the **OECD AI Principles** (2019) under Trump and the **Council of Europe AI Treaty** (2024) under Biden, but the Trump administration has effectively abandoned its commitments, leaving allies uncertain about American reliability as a partner in AI governance.

A Global Wave of AI Legislation Signals That Governance Is Now a Priority Worldwide



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The *CAIDP AI Index 2026* documents a significant acceleration in national AI legislation, with major new laws enacted in five countries in the past year alone.

COUNTRY	LEGISLATION	KEY PROVISIONS
China	AI Governance Regulation 2025 2025	State control, content moderation, algorithmic transparency (limited)
Japan	AI Promotion and Safety Act	Risk-based framework, human human oversight, CoE Treaty
Peru	AI Ethics and Governance Law Law	Human rights focus, UNESCO RAM RAM implementation
South Korea	Korean AI Framework Act (Jan. 2025)	High-impact sector obligations obligations (healthcare), risk
Vietnam	AI Development and Management Decree	State-directed AI, safety requirements

THE EU AI ACT

Continues to be the global benchmark, with enforcement of key provisions beginning in August 2025. EU member states are actively naming oversight authorities and implementing the Codes of Practice.

CANADA'S AIDA

Canada's Artificial Intelligence and Data Act (AIDA) failed to pass Parliament in 2024 but remains a priority for AI governance advocates. Canada's Tier I ranking reflects existing strengths rather than comprehensive AI-specific legislation.

The Council of Europe AI Treaty: The World's First Legally Binding Binding AI Governance Framework

The Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law the Rule of Law represents the most significant milestone in international AI governance since the OECD AI Principles of 2019.

Principles of 2019.

WHY THIS TREATY MATTERS

- **Legally binding** — unlike soft-law frameworks such as the UNESCO Recommendation or OECD Principles
- **Open to all countries** — not just Council of Europe member state may sign and ratify
- **Human rights-centered** — requires parties to ensure AI systems are consistent with human rights, democracy, and the rule of law
- **Accountability mechanisms** — parties must establish and remedies for AI harms
- **45 signatories** as of 2026, including the US (signed 2024), UK, EU EU member states, Japan, Canada, Israel, and others



THE SOVEREIGNTY QUESTION

The Treaty explicitly preserves national sovereignty in AI policy while establishing minimum international standards — a carefully negotiated balance between internationalization and national autonomy.

CAIDP'S ROLE

CAIDP has been a leading civil society advocate for the AI Treaty, contributing to the drafting process and mobilizing global support through the AI-Treaty-Now campaign.



Sovereignty in AI Is Not Always Wrong — But It Must Be Grounded in Democratic Values

The CAIDP AI Index 2026 does not treat sovereignty as inherently problematic. National AI governance can be legitimate and valuable when it reflects democratic accountability, protects citizens' rights, and contributes to global governance norms.

LEGITIMATE GROUNDS FOR AI SOVEREIGNTY

- ✓ **Security:** Protecting critical infrastructure from foreign AI systems
- ✓ **Cultural identity:** Ensuring AI reflects local values, and norms
- ✓ **Economic development:** Building domestic AI capacity in the Global South
- ✓ **Democratic accountability:** Ensuring AI decisions can be contested in national courts
- ✓ **Data protection:** Preventing cross-border data flows that undermine privacy rights

WHEN SOVEREIGNTY BECOMES A PROBLEM

- ✗ When used to shield authoritarian AI systems from international scrutiny
- ✗ When invoked to block legitimate international oversight mechanisms
- ✗ When it fragments global standards in ways that harm users and innovation
- ✗ When it enables AI-powered surveillance and repression

THE CAIDP FRAMEWORK

The Index measures whether national AI policies align with

Case Study: Canada's Tier I Leadership in AI Governance



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WHY CANADA RANKS IN TIER I

- ✓ **International Engagement:** Signed the Council of Europe AI Treaty and Treaty and actively participates in the G7 Hiroshima AI Process.
- ✓ **Domestic Legislation:** Advanced the Artificial Intelligence and Act (AIDA) to establish a risk-based regulatory framework.
- ✓ **Data Protection:** Maintains strong privacy laws (PIPEDA) and an active active Privacy Commissioner who has investigated AI companies (e.g., companies (e.g., Clearview AI, OpenAI).
- ✓ **Public Sector Rules:** Implemented the Directive on Automated Making to ensure transparency and accountability in
- ✓ **Civil Society:** Fosters a robust ecosystem of academic and civil society society organizations engaged in AI policy.



THE CAIDP RECOMMENDATION

While Canada is a Tier I leader, CAIDP recommends that Canada (1) finalize and enact AIDA, (2) ensure independent oversight of AI systems, (3) ratify the AI Treaty and (4) continue to champion human rights

How CAIDP Measures AI Governance: The 12 Metrics



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THE 12 EVALUATION METRICS

1 Endorsed OECD AI Principles	7 Independent AI agency
2 Implemented OECD AI Principles	8 Public Participation in AI Policy
3 Endorsed UDHR	9 Algorithmic Transparency
4 Implemented UDHR	10 Endorsed the AI Treaty
5 Public Participation in AI policy	11 Implementing UNESCO Rec.
6 AI Policy Materials Accessible	12 Endorsed AI Privacy Guidance

THE METHODOLOGY

The CAIDP Index relies on objective, verifiable actions by national governments. Each metric is scored based on primary source documentation, legal texts, and official government actions, ensuring a rigorous and comparative global assessment.

Rank	Country	Tier	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	2026	2025	Var. 2025-2026
1	Canada	Tier I	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	11	11.5	-0.5
2	Japan	Tier I	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	11	11.5	-0.5
3	Netherlands	Tier I	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10.5	10.5	0
4	Norway	Tier I	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10.5	9.5	+1
5	Switzerland	Tier I	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10.5	9	+1.5
6	United Kingdom	Tier I	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10.5	10.5	0
7	France	Tier II	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	10	9.5	+0.5
8	Italy	Tier II	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10	10	0
9	South Korea	Tier II	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	10	10.5	-0.5
10	Spain	Tier II	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	10	10	0
11	Germany	Tier II	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	10	9.5	+0.5

The Global South Is Finding Its Voice in AI Governance



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Historically, AI governance has been dominated by the US, EU, and China. The *CAIDP AI Index 2026* highlights a crucial shift: countries in the Global South are increasingly asserting their sovereignty and demanding a seat at the table.

- **African Union AI Strategy:** Adopted in 2025, focusing on capacity building, data sovereignty, and preserving African cultural heritage in AI models.
- **Latin American Coordination:** The Santiago Declaration on AI Ethics (2025) established a regional framework based on the UNESCO Recommendation.
- **UN AI Scientific Panel:** Developing nations successfully lobbied for equitable representation on the new UN panel, ensuring their perspectives shape global risk assessments.
- **Data Sovereignty Laws:** New legislation in India, Brazil, and South Africa explicitly restricts the extraction of citizen data to train



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A NECESSARY CORRECTION

The assertion of AI sovereignty by the Global South is a necessary correction to "digital colonialism." True internationalization requires inclusive frameworks, not just rules written in Brussels or Washington.

Civil Society Is the Bridge Between International Norms and National Implementation



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THE IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

- **Drafting Treaties:** NGOs successfully fought to keep private sector AI systems within the scope of the Council of Europe Treaty.
- **Enforcing Laws:** Civil society complaints have triggered investigations by data protection authorities globally.
- **Tracking Progress:** Initiatives like the CAIDP AI Index provide the independent data necessary to hold governments accountable.
- **Building Capacity:** Training the next generation of AI leaders to navigate complex technical and legal

THE CAIDP AI POLICY CLINIC

The CAIDP AI Index 2026 is the result of work by over 1,400 researchers from 120+ countries, trained through the CAIDP AI Policy Clinic. This global network is actively shaping AI policy in their home countries.

A Critical Metric

Metric 5 of the *CAIDP AI Index* specifically assesses whether a country provides meaningful opportunities for public participation in AI policy development. Countries that exclude civil society cannot achieve Tier I status.

Looking Ahead: The Path to 2027



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KEY TRENDS TO WATCH

- **Treaty Ratification:** Will enough countries ratify the Council of Europe of Europe AI Treaty to bring it into force globally?
- **The US Trajectory:** Will the US continue its retreat, or will step in to establish baseline AI safeguards?
- **EU AI Act Enforcement:** How effectively will the EU enforce its new its new rules against major tech companies?
- **Global South Influence:** Will new frameworks from Latin Middle East, and Africa successfully challenge the Northern models?

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

Can the international community maintain a unified commitment to democratic values in AI governance, or will national sovereignty and geopolitical competition fracture the global consensus?



Conclusion: The Future of AI Governance

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Global Consensus Exists:** The Council of Europe Treaty and UNESCO Recommendation prove that international agreement on AI values is possible.
- 2 Leadership is Shifting:** As the US retreats, countries like Canada, Japan, and the EU are setting the global
- 3 Sovereignty Must Be Democratic:** National AI policies are legitimate only when they uphold human rights and accountability.
- 4 Civil Society is Essential:** Independent oversight and participation are the bedrock of trustworthy AI.

THE CHOICE

We are at a crossroads. We can build an international AI ecosystem grounded in democratic values, or we can fracture into competing sovereign blocs driven by technological dominance. The CAIDP AI Index 2026 shows that the democratic path is not only possible — it is already being built.



Join the CAIDP AI Policy Clinic



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AI POLICY CLINIC

APPLICATIONS OPEN!

- Fall 2026
- Enhance your AI policy research, analysis, writing, and presentation skills

Application deadline: May 15, 2026

Learn more and apply:

<https://www.caidp.org/global-academic-network/ai-policy-clinic/>

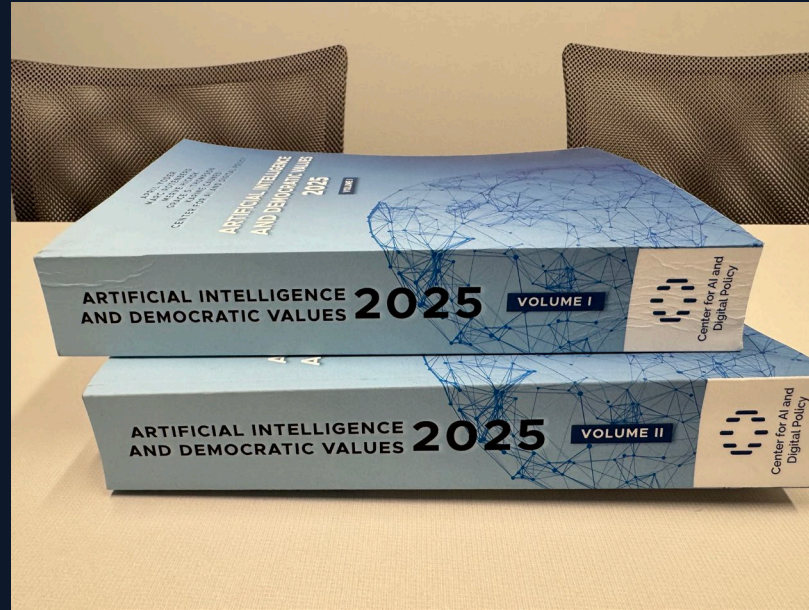


Now in its fifth year and tenth semester, the CAIDP AI Policy Clinic has become the leading global program for AI policy and governance education. We have graduated more than 1,400 professionals from 130 countries, with 62 percent from the Global Majority and 60 percent women.



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Thank You



Read the full report at caidp.org/reports/caidp-index-2026