REMIT Horizon Europe Project

EC Grant Agreement No. 101094228

2nd Annual Conference

Regulating Strategic Technologies: Global Governance, Geopolitics, and Individual Rights

15–16 April 2026
Luiss Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

Conference Proceedings

Compiled April 2026

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About REMIT and the 2nd REMIT Conference

REMIT (Reignite Multilateralism via Technology) is a Horizon Europe–funded research project (Grant Agreement No. 101094228) that investigates how strategic technologies are governed at the intersection of global governance, geopolitics, and individual rights. The project brings together a consortium of European universities and research institutes to produce evidence-based policy recommendations on the regulation of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, biometrics, 5G/6G infrastructure, quantum computing, and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The 2nd Conference was held at Luiss Università di Roma on 15–16 April 2026. The conference explored how Europe can navigate the complex interplay between innovation pressure, geopolitical competition, and ethical and legal commitments in the digital age. This document provides a comprehensive record of the proceedings, synthesising the keynote lectures, roundtable discussions, panel presentations, and audience exchanges that took place over the two days.

REMIT's work is guided by the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and scenario-testing methodologies. The project has a particular focus on transparency, public engagement, and bridging the gap between academic research and science communication. Upcoming outputs include special-edition journal issues on genome editing, military AI, cybersecurity, and 5G, as well as a forthcoming book.

Programme Overview

Day 1 – Tuesday, 15 April 2026

Time	Session	Speakers / Chair
09:30–09:50	Opening Remarks	F. Lucenti, R. Haar
09:50–11:00	Keynote: Technological Power and the Transformation of European Security	P. Benanti (Chair: F. Lucenti)
11:00–11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30–13:00	Roundtable: Europe's Dilemma in Regulating Digital Technologies	P. Benanti, A. Haglund-Morrissey, G.F. Italiano (Chair: F. Lucenti)
13:00–14:30	Lunch	
14:30–16:00	Panel: The Geopolitics of Strategic Technology Governance	M. Onderco, C. Polito, V. Sinkkonen, S. Vanhoonacker (Chair: K. Creutz)

16:00–16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30–18:00	Keynote: Democracy and Technology	C. Weible (Chair: R. Haar)

Day 2 – Wednesday, 16 April 2026

Time	Session	Speakers / Chair
09:30–11:00	Panel: Human Rights and Digital Governance	M. Musiał-Karg, C. Padovani, D. Redeker, M. Santaniello (Chair: F. Lucenti)
11:00–11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15–12:45	Panel: Digital Autonomy and International Relations	M. Gala, M. Popa Fabre, J. Shires, C. Spiniello (Chair: J. Crompvoets)
12:45–13:00	Closing Remarks	F. Lucenti, R. Haar

Day 1 – Detailed Session Records

Opening Remarks (09:30–09:50)

Speakers: Flavia Lucenti (Luiss), Roberta Haar (Maastricht University)

The conference was opened by Flavia Lucenti, who welcomed participants to Luiss and underlined the university's commitment to research at the intersection of technology and governance. Roberta Haar provided a comprehensive overview of the REMIT project. This four-year, EU-funded Horizon Europe initiative launched in March 2023 and involves nine partners across Europe and the UK, coordinated by Maastricht University.

Professor Haar detailed the project's rigorous application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework to derive actionable policy interventions. A cornerstone of REMIT's methodology is its Scenario-Testing Workshops (STWs), developed with the European Commission's Competence Centre on Foresight. She highlighted past workshops on Military AI and Internet governance, noting that a previous session accurately predicted a massive DNS disruption. She also announced upcoming STWs: Cyber conflict in London, 9 June 2026 and Quantum technologies in Brussels, 19 June 2026.

Regarding project outputs, Professor Haar shared detailed on several major publications. First, a Special Issue in the journal *Politics*, featuring four articles on the ACF and the global governance of military AI, 5G, human germline genome editing, and cyber warfare. Second, a Special Issue in *Geopolitics*, which investigates Russia's cyber norms, U.S. policy pathways, and the geopoliticisation of international organizations. She also mentioned the forthcoming REMIT project book *Navigating the Geopolitics of Strategic Technology*, co-edited by Roberta Haar, Paul Timmers, and Raluca Moldovan, to be published by Routledge at the end of 2026 or early 2027. The opening concluded with a commitment to transparency through Town Hall meetings, podcasts, and a book launch celebration planned for Brussels in February 2027.

Keynote: Technological Power and the Transformation of European Security (09:50–11:00)

Speaker: Paolo Benanti (Luiss Università di Roma)
Chair: Flavia Lucenti (Luiss Università di Roma)

Technology as Displacement of Power

Benanti opened with the proposition that technology is fundamentally about the displacement and rearrangement of power. Society operates within a market-driven innovation paradigm in which computational capacity equates to power. The smartphone was cited as the emblematic device of this shift: computation has become portable, ubiquitous, and dominant. In this landscape, ownership has become illusory – users have the right to use software but rarely to profit from it or to own it outright, referencing the Roman legal concepts of *usus*, *fructus*, and *abusus*. Software is shifting the fundamentals of life.

He illustrated the implications by contrasting the role of traditional military hardware (tanks) with drones in the Ukraine war, arguing that digital revolutions are accelerating and that professionals today can expect to experience five to seven total technological shifts in their careers.

Capital as a Geopolitical Moat

Benanti described a world in which screens serve as attention magnets and the top four most valuable companies have collectively invested over $65 billion in digital infrastructure/the cloud. Because venture capital is needed in this forward movement—the gravity of capital—is intimately tied to cloud development. Since only the rich can enter this race, it means the death of the "garage myth", arguing that meaningful innovation now requires resources on the scale of power plants. This has given rise to what he termed the "tenant state": nations are increasingly becoming customers of technology companies rather than competitors, raising questions about sovereignty. If a state does not own the foundry, can it truly be free?

Is the Cloud Really Light? The AI Stack and the Thermal Tax

Benanti walked through the full AI stack—from hardware infrastructure (GPUs, TPUs, data centres, cloud systems, high-performance networks) through the data layer to AI models and applications. He emphasised that the communications infrastructure in Italy is legally defined as belonging to the public, raising questions about whether data centres should be treated as public infrastructure. Which part of the stack will the EU or Member States own? How can you talk about digital sovereignty in such an environment?

The "thermal tax" of AI was a central theme: nearly 40% of all energy consumed by data centres goes to cooling rather than computation. Plus, issues of water scarcity and climate paradoxes. A large data centre can consume as much water as a city of 30,000 people. When the electricity grid is strained, who receives priority: hospitals or GPU clusters? China can produce energy more cheaply, while Europe faces an unequal and highly fluctuating energy market. A Common Electric Grid in Europe would be a game-changer.

As a potential model, Benanti highlighted Microsoft's pledges: ensuring data centres do not increase residential electricity bills, funding new grid capacity (7.9 GW in the Midwest), aiming to be "water positive" by 2030, forgoing local property tax breaks, and investing in community AI training and labour partnerships.

The Sovereignty Mirage

Benanti characterised European digital sovereignty as a mirage, with Data Lords bringing a return to medieval times instead. Android and iOS hold 99.5% market share for mobile operating systems in Europe; Windows, macOS, and Chromebook account for 97% of computer operating systems; U.S. cloud providers command 75% of the European cloud market; and 86% of undersea cables are owned or funded by US Big Tech. This amounts to hard power disguised as soft services.

He posed the strategic question: should Europe pursue strategic autonomy (rebuilding the entire stack at a cost of trillions) or a strategic alliance (governed interdependence with hard rules preventing U.S. partners from weaponising infrastructure)? He suggested the latter may be more realistic and ethical. But, Europe needs a plan because at the moment EU money is paid to other actors who make all the rules.

AI Adoption: The Widening Gap

About one in six people worldwide use generative AI tools, but adoption is uneven. Global North AI usage stood at 24.7% of the working-age population compared to 14.1% in the Global South, with the gap widening. The US benefits from easier AI access, giving its firms productivity advantages while European firms struggle to compete – especially acute given Europe's ageing workforce. China is the only entity that is really regulating AI. Open Software could be an alternative model to EU Sovereignty against the Big Tech Model since Operating Systems are the weak (hard) link in the chain.

Roundtable: Europe's Dilemma in Regulating Digital Technologies (11:30–13:00)

Chair: Flavia Lucenti (Luiss)
Speakers: Anne Haglund-Morrissey (European Commission), Giuseppe Francesco Italiano (Luiss), Paolo Benanti (Luiss)

Anne Haglund-Morrissey – EU Research Support for Digital Democracy

Haglund-Morrissey framed a free and democratic Europe as a key pillar under threat. She outlined the European Democracy Shield initiative and mapped the challenging landscape: disinformation and algorithmic amplification, surveillance and privacy erosion, platform monopolies distorting democratic discourse, digital divides, the erosion of deliberative democracy, and authoritarian digital governance models. Against these threats, she identified opportunities through digital tools for civic participation, transparency, accountability, media literacy, decentralisation, AI for democratic innovation, electoral integrity, and global democratic solidarity. Horizon Europe can contribute through research on democratic resilience, ethical governance, enhancing citizen participation, and regulatory innovation.

One EU Horizon call that is interesting for REMIT is that Regulatory and policy innovation: examining the effectiveness of central protocols and non-regulatory measures.

Giuseppe Francesco Italiano – Europe's Design Problem

Italiano reframed the situation not as a dilemma but as a "design problem." Within the Stack, GPUs are designed by Nvidia and built by TSMC. While it is true that ASML has 90% of the machine market, China controls approximately 90% of the rare earth elements market.

He questioned whether Europe needs champions at every layer of the technology stack or whether cooperation is viable, pointing to ASML as a strategically important European player. Three pillars of action—innovation pressure, geopolitical competition, and ethical and legal commitments—make the EU the only actor addressing all three simultaneously.

Critical challenges include: technology companies with GDPs rivalling major nations yet operating without a social contract; AI development far outpacing the regulatory cycle; AI's impact on the labour market (just like typists went away, some jobs will go away); and digital systems hidden in critical infrastructure. Europe must move beyond regulation to governing socio-technical systems, questioning system architectures, and addressing accountability. Europeans need to think about the design space.

Paolo Benanti – Ethics by Design

Benanti argued that if ethics is not built into technology by design, it becomes too costly to apply retroactively. He distinguished standardisation (which promotes economic growth and in which the EU holds a significant advantage) from fragmentation (the US approach). Questioning technology is an ongoing process that nourishes democracy. He warned that defining a workable order of information also implies defining an order of free speech.

Panel Discussion

The discussion addressed misinformation (rooted in the tensions between free speech and manipulation, and the collapse of educational systems), the role of algorithms in promoting influencer culture over social responsibility, and whether the digital space is a private or public sphere. The consensus: ensuring the digital space functions as a public sphere is a core element of democratic health. The internet is a public space, but not yet a public sphere – and democracy needs a public sphere.

Panel: The Geopolitics of Strategic Technology Governance (14:30–16:00)

Chair: Katja Creutz (Finnish Institute of International Affairs)
Speakers: Michal Onderco, Carolina Polito, Ville Sinkkonen, Sophie Vanhoonacker

Sophie Vanhoonacker – Governance of Strategic Technologies

Vanhoonacker presented findings from a special issue on the governance of strategic technologies. The central question: whether and how actors seek to establish authority over strategic technologies beyond the nation state, covering civilian AI, digital services, quantum computing, 5G/6G, microchips, biometrics, cybersecurity, and lethal autonomous weapons.

Key process findings: governance in the US and EU is non-hierarchical, with civil society included (more so in the EU); the process is fragmented with multiple parallel governance processes; pace is a persistent challenge. Domestically, values play a key role (privacy/HR in

the EU; free speech in the US), with growing focus on technological sovereignty. Externally, actors exert power through regulation and coercion while pursuing level playing fields.

On outcomes: multilateralism is not dead but coexists with minilateral and sectoral initiatives. China also shapes norms. International organisations are increasingly instrumentalised and manipulated by actors. Implementation remains a fundamental challenge. EU integration is the only path to a meaningful global voice.

Ville Sinkkonen – Trump Administration and Transatlantic Relations

Sinkkonen characterised the Trump administration as operating through loyalists (who are not congressionally approved), obsessed with fealty and tribute (economic wins), and selectively interventionist (trigger-happy).

After the Russia–Ukraine war, asymmetric U.S. leverage over the EU increased, meaning that the potential costs of U.S. abandonment increased exponentially. Combine this with the current level of dependence on military hardware, with 50% of European military purchases coming from the U.S. (including key platforms and assets).

Unfortunately, the administration shows that it is increasingly willing to weaponize asymmetries. We see this in the push for asymmetric concessions on Greenland and the push to selectively target companies selling chips to China.

The final point relates to reframing transatlantic value, moving towards the MAGA agenda, and cultivating European far-right parties. Additionally, Big Tech's goals are injected into U.S. policy. It all comes down to what Stephen Walt recently called "Predatory Hegemon"—the current U.S. team will not pass up an opportunity to cause a transatlantic crisis.

A silver lining: US disengagement may create openings for the EU agency.

Michal Onderco – Coalition Politics in Military AI Governance

Onderco identified coalitions around military AI: a total ban coalition (civil society, some states, AI scientists) and a coalition arguing that benefits outweigh risks if done responsibly. The Trump administration did not actively kill international initiatives but let them die through neglect, while strongly embracing military AI applications. The US's ability to act without consequences demonstrates a growing gap in military operations. For Europeans, dependency on the US makes criticism difficult. The EU may be the only actor with sufficient regulatory power.

Carolina Polito – Biometric Technology Exports to Africa

Polito documented the large-scale adoption of biometric systems in Africa, driven by foreign vendors. Biometrics are commercialised as solutions to identification challenges despite a mismatch between promised and actual capabilities. Key vendors include France (25.67% state ownership of Thales makes the corporate-national link explicit), Germany, the U.S., Belgium, and China.

Vendors frame narrow problems (technical and security challenges) while ignoring social equity, actual efficacy, and regulatory oversight. Different countries frame biometrics differently: France emphasises privacy and security, the US security, China, sustainability, and democracy. Private vendors function as governance intermediaries of tech governance—shaping norms and behavior, while biometric exports serve as foreign policy instruments.

Panel Discussion: Common Themes

International law is under strain with a trend toward non-bindingness. On transatlantic relations, the EU must reduce US dependency (Vanhoonacker), achieve cohesion despite the pace of US change (Sinkkonen), and cope with standardisation bodies where EU standards are under pressure (Onderco). A tendency toward bilateralism does not end multilateralism, but nuance is needed: member states have very different ideas, and US party control of government matters enormously.

Keynote: Democracy and Technology – Coalitions, Beliefs, and Innovation (16:30–18:00)

Speaker: Christopher Weible (University of Colorado Denver)
Chair: Roberta Haar (Maastricht University)

Weible delivered the second keynote on coalition politics in transnational technology governance, grounded in the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF).

What Are Advocacy Coalitions?

Advocacy coalitions are networks of actors inside and outside government, coordinated around shared beliefs, seeking to shape policy through collective action. Coalition opportunity structures consist of decision venues, rules, and those who control access. The ACF has been applied in 71 distinct outlets as of 2025; 108 cases in 2025 (including transnational cases).

The Textbook Baseline and Beyond

The "textbook" ACF assumes a stable, bounded policy subsystem with competing belief-based coalitions in a democratic setting. The real value emerges when baseline assumptions are relaxed: belief variation (deep-core/identity-based coalitions, weak alignment), structural variation (weak/fragmented opportunity structures, authoritarian contexts), and strategic variation (venue-driven dynamics, material coalitions, state-centred competition). Transnational cases fall outside the textbook – and that is where the ACF becomes most useful.

Transnational Issues

1. Unsettled or weakly aligned beliefs
2. Weak/fragmented coalition opportunity structure, which makes collective decisions difficult.
3. In the multilevel, there is an absence of the hurting stalemate. This situation sustains drift.
4. Few credible venues for negotiation and agreement.
5. Change depends on shock.

Transnational Applications: Three Cases where these issues are brought out

1. Human heritable genome editing: coalitions have not consolidated; governance reflects fragmented opportunity structures; absence of a hurting stalemate sustains policy drift.

2. AI governance: strong coalitions face weak venues, leading to deadlock and escalation; state-centred “Pax Silica” alliances around chips, firms, and supply chains interact with US–China competition.
3. Cybersecurity: coalition politics shapes deep-core divides between authoritarian and democratic governance models; different venues host different interaction patterns.

Core conclusion: transnational policy is not the absence of coalitions; it is coalition politics under fragmentation, weak institutions, and competing logics of coordination. Change likely requires shocks or hurting stalemates.

Q&A

Weible was uncertain whether transnational technology subsystems can mature, given structural obstacles. He memorably described his approach: his ontological eyes are bigger than his methodological stomach, acknowledging the gap between what the ACF can conceptually identify and what it can rigorously measure transnationally.

Day 2 – Detailed Session Records

Panel: Human Rights and Digital Governance (09:30–11:00)

Chair: Flavia Lucenti (Luiss)
Speakers: Magdalena Musiał-Karg, Claudia Padovani, Dennis Redeker, Mauro Santaniello

Magdalena Musiał-Karg – AI, Democracy and Fundamental Rights

Musiał-Karg argued that AI has become a political actor reshaping democracy, fundamental rights, and political participation. AI functions as a political tool in electoral campaigns (micro-targeting, emotional manipulation), the information space (deepfakes, bots, disinformation), and international politics (hybrid warfare). AI is a component of hybrid warfare. The results are that its use erodes public trust, undermines democracy

EU democracy faces four pressures: electoral integrity weakened by AI manipulation, public trust eroded by synthetic reality, polarisation intensified by outrage-rewarding algorithms, and institutional paralysis from cyber and information attacks.

AI affects fundamental rights not by directly restricting them but by reshaping the environment in which they are exercised. Citizens are conditionally supportive of AI only if transparent, fair, and trustworthy. Her conclusion: the future of digital democracy depends on social trust. The challenge is transforming AI from a threat into a democratic ally through oversight, resilience-building, and education.

Dennis Redeker – Human Rights and the Global South

Redeker examined the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process through the three-worlds system framework. The GDC represents a renewed push for multilateralism in digital governance, shifting from multistakeholder internet governance toward UN-led processes. Through nine key-actor interviews, he identified four discourse coalitions: the Multistakeholder-Institutionalist Coalition (MIC), the Developmental Sovereignist Coalition (G77 + China), the Digital Rights and Justice Coalition (NGOs), and the State-Centric Coalition

(Russia, Cuba, Venezuela). Negotiation dynamics were shaped by AI urgency, Russian attempts to derail the process, and imperfect "black box" conditions. The Global South is pivotal but split; multistakeholderism persists but is contested.

Claudia Padovani – Gender Equality and Digital Governance

Padovani noted that women hold only 22% of AI positions and 14% of executive roles, even in countries closing gender gaps. AI reinforces gender stereotypes, and national AI strategies rarely mention gender. Moreover, gender mainstreaming is often mentioned but not applied.

She advocated for feminist AI perspectives and an ethics of care: care is not feminine but democratic, and technology should be used as a way to care better. An intersectoral approach is needed to examine biases and rethink who frames the problems that technology is designed to solve.

Mauro Santaniello – Digital Governance as a Constitutional Question

Santaniello argued that the first question is not how to regulate technology but what kind of human being technology assumes. Human rights are often an afterthought—after harm has been caused.

He identified three human-rights fault lines: surveillance and privacy (privacy as the condition for autonomy and democratic participation); equality and non-discrimination (digital systems formalise, scale, and hide bias); and democratic agency (governance negotiated by elites, rarely by those most affected).

He proposed a Rights by Design. To get there, he proposed five pillars for a rights-centred model that address these issues.

1. human dignity as a normative foundation,
2. democratic accountability,
3. substantive equality, nondiscriminatory that treats as human beings
4. transnational cooperation, and
5. effective remedy.

Core conclusion: human rights are not anti-technology; they are what make technology worth having. A society that embeds rights into digital infrastructure does not slow progress; it civilises it. AI Act did not go far enough. It doesn't advocate for human rights protection. The AI Acti was good at saying that some systems were dangerous, but only addresses Civilian AI.

Panel Discussion

Santaniello argued Trump's transatlantic disruption could be an opportunity for Europe to free its identity, but Europeans must align policies with rhetoric. Musiał-Karg pointed to Estonia as a resilience model. Padovani emphasised urgency and the need to go beyond established mechanisms. The AI Act was discussed: it does not go far enough on real-time biometric identification, and Europe's hypocrisy must not obstruct its international credibility.

Panel: Digital Autonomy and International Relations (11:15–12:45)

Chair: Joep Crompvoets (KU Leuven)
Speakers: Marilena Gala, Murielle Popa Fabre, James Shires, Chiara Spiniello

Crompvoets framed digital autonomy as a negotiated issue within interconnected structures. Digital technologies are embedded in complex networks and in multilateralism itself, making them a central arena of geopolitical competition.

Marilena Gala – Historical Roots of European Technology Cooperation

Gala traced European technology cooperation back to the 1980s European Strategic Research Programme in advanced microelectronics, software, and office systems. Especially the cross-border example of Esprit. The growing US–Europe gap motivated national investments and private-sector involvement through roundtable meetings with the European Commission. The first Framework Programme was successful, but the second was less so due to objections from Germany and the UK.

The problem is that Europe does not have an industrial policy. Thus, they tried to close the gap through national champions, with policy that addressed the national level. The Commission then provided finances directly to the companies for research. First Esprit has 19 projects. Cross-border cooperation did take place between companies related to tech development. In the 2nd Esprit, the Commission offered 1.5 billion.

Conclusion: cross-border cooperation was important and somewhat successful, but Europe is still far from the industrial vision needed to maintain strategic technological capability, because the balance between individual governments and the EU executive remains unresolved.

Murielle Popa Fabre – AI Resilience and Multilateralism

Popa Fabre argued Europeans must move from fear to decision, reconciling resilience with competitiveness. Her three-step approach:

1. understand dependency gaps (governments and investors have failed to map these);
2. prioritise which gaps to address/critical dependencies
3. once 1 & 2 are identified, find European solutions.

She identified ten dimensions of resilience spanning geopolitics, open source data, cybersecurity, governance, operational continuity, AI, software, knowledge, supply chains, and energy.

Technology is highly integrated--a single webpage can rely on many different companies, meaning dependency gaps are rarely singular. The problem is not the absence of solutions but the absence of integration. Interoperability is also a key issue.

Open source represents a fundamental resilience tool, though identifying whether contributors serve national interests remains difficult. She emphasised bridge powers between the US and China, and pointed to the Swiss Apertus sovereign AI initiative as a model for multilateral inference-facility building.

James Shires – Mythos, Marketing, and Malware

Shires examined Anthropic's "Mythos Preview" model and "Project Glasswing"—a collaboration between twelve U.S. big tech companies for AI-based vulnerability research.

Immediate context included Anthropic's disagreement with the U.S. Department of Defense, involvement in airstrikes, and a source code leak. Mythos identified 181 exploits in Firefox 147 with 89% expert-validated bug reports. But the market is flooded with poorly functioning AI cybersecurity products, and most incidents still exploit legacy technology.

Geopolitically, Mythos is expensive and gated, cementing dependency on U.S. big tech. Other actors (EU, UK) can still improve on defence, but this requires political will, funding, and organisational change. Offensively, the U.S. has a head start and subsequent measure are introduced to cement the U.S in the stack. China will develop its own capabilities. Tracking autonomous agents will be a long-term challenge.

There is also an element of marketing, with tech sowing FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) as ploys to generate interest.

Chira Spiniello

Spiniello spoke about the trend and trade-offs of strategic autonomy.

Panel Discussion

The difficulty of collaboration across fragmented European structures was a recurring theme. Popa Fabre's call to move from fear to decision resonated, as did the recognition that digital dependency is a deeply political issue requiring coordinated European action. Quantum was a theme in the Q&A, with the recognition that everyone is trying to get there first. Google intends to be post-quantum safe by 2029 and quantum will need to sit in the existing stack.

Closing Remarks (12:45–13:00)

Speakers: Flavia Lucenti (Luiss), Roberta Haar (Maastricht University)

In the closing remarks, Roberta Haar synthesized the conference themes, characterizing the current era as an "Oppenheimer moment" for the digital and geopolitical age—a time where technological advancement offers immense potential alongside significant risk.

Professor Haar recapped the conference journey, beginning with Paolo Benanti's keynote on technological power as a pillar of international security. She noted that the proceedings highlighted how technology is increasingly securitized and geopoliticised, leading major powers to prioritize innovation-first strategies over formal lawmaking. A recurring tension identified throughout the panels was the struggle between competing belief systems: the innovation-first agenda prevalent in the U.S. versus the precautionary attitudes often seen in the EU. While the EU acts as a guardian of citizen users, it faces an expectations-performance gap and must strive for greater strategic autonomy.

As the project enters its final months, Professor Haar drew inspiration from Finnish President Alexander Stubb and his "stay-calm plan" for the "shipwreck of the old order." She echoed his sentiment that while "hope is not a strategy," analytical and strategic resilience can help Europeans navigate the current geopolitical storms.

Haar conference closed with a call to ensure that a stronger, more united Europe helps reignite multilateralism via technology to reclaim a shared democratic future. She expressed a final thanks to the hosts at Luiss, the keynote speakers, and the audience for their vital contributions.

Cross-Cutting Themes and Key Takeaways

1. Sovereignty and Dependency

Europe's digital dependency on US (and to a lesser extent, Chinese) technology was the single most recurrent theme. Sovereignty is a full-stack problem requiring coordinated action across hardware, software, data, energy, and talent. The debate between strategic autonomy and governed interdependence remained unresolved but was treated with increasing nuance.

2. The EU as Regulatory Actor

The EU was identified as the only actor attempting to balance innovation, geopolitical competition, and ethical commitments simultaneously. Its regulatory strength (GDPR, AI Act, DSA) was acknowledged, but so were limitations: technological change outstrips the regulatory cycle, member states disagree, and implementation remains challenging.

3. Human Rights as the Foundation

The conference positioned human rights as the normative foundation for digital governance. Privacy, equality, non-discrimination, and democratic participation must be embedded by design into technological systems. As Santaniello put it, human rights are not anti-technology – they are what make technology worth having.

4. Coalition Politics and Fragmented Governance

Weible's ACF framework and Redeker's GDC analysis revealed that transnational technology governance is characterised by fragmented institutions, competing logics, and coalitions still forming. Change likely requires shocks or hurting stalemates.

5. Transatlantic Relations Under Strain

The Trump administration's selective interventionism, asymmetric demands, and cultivation of far-right links were identified as both a threat and a potential catalyst for European agency. US disengagement may create space for the EU, but only with internal cohesion.

6. The Global South as a Contested Arena

Both Polito's biometrics work and Redeker's GDC analysis highlighted the Global South as pivotal but divided, caught between great-power interests while seeking its own path on digital rights and development.

7. Gender, Inclusion, and Intersectionality

Gender remains marginalised in technology governance discourse. Padovani's call for a feminist AI approach and an ethics of care challenged the conference to think beyond procedural inclusion toward substantive transformation.

List of Speakers and Chairs

Name	Affiliation	Role
Paolo Benanti	Luiss Università di Roma	Keynote, Roundtable
Joep Crompvoets	KU Leuven	Panel Chair
Katja Creutz	Finnish Institute of International Affairs	Panel Chair
Marilena Gala	Roma Tre University	Panellist
Roberta Haar	Maastricht University	Chair, Closing
Anne Haglund-Morrissey	European Commission, DG R&I	Roundtable
Giuseppe F. Italiano	Luiss Università di Roma	Roundtable
Flavia Lucenti	Luiss Università di Roma	Organiser, Chair
Magdalena Musiał-Karg	Adam Mickiewicz Univ. Poznań	Panellist
Michal Onderco	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Panellist
Claudia Padovani	University of Padova	Panellist
Carolina Polito	Luiss Università di Roma	Panellist
Murielle Popa Fabre	INRIA / ENS-PSL	Panellist
Dennis Redeker	University of Bremen	Panellist
Mauro Santaniello	University of Salerno	Panellist
James Shires	Virtual Routes	Panellist
Ville Sinkkonen	Finnish Institute of International Affairs	Panellist
Chiara Spiniello	Univ. Salerno / Univ. Bremen	Panellist
Sophie Vanhoonacker	Maastricht University	Panellist
Christopher Weible	Univ. of Colorado Denver	Keynote

— End of Proceedings —