FNF20: Call for sessions

While this year’s FNF is limited by a shorter schedule duration and a lack of physical dimension, Freedom of Fear maintains its community-based nature. Do you want to know how you can contribute to the schedule? Read on!

In 2020, the community behind Freedom not Fear voted Biometric Mass Surveillance as the focus of its 10th edition.

**Biometric data** includes personal data about our body or behaviour and can range from fingerprint, palm veins, face recognition, DNA to palmprint, hand geometry, iris recognition, retina, typing rhythm, gait, and voice. On the other hand, **mass surveillance** is any monitoring, tracking, and otherwise processing of personal data of individuals in an incriminate or general manner, or of groups, that is not performed in a “targeted” way against a specific individual.

Research shows that these technologies amplify discrimination and are used to persecute people who are simply exercising their rights.

As of 2020, at least 15 European countries – and counting - have experimented with biometric surveillance technologies such as facial recognition in public spaces. In the same time, in the United States, 5 major cities have now banned the use of facial recognition.

In the European Union, the rushed introduction of expensive surveillance technologies that track our faces and bodies is being done without consideration for the harms it could cause to our societies. These systems violate people’s right to conduct their daily life in privacy and with due respect for their fundamental freedoms and dignity; have a chilling effect on their freedoms of expression and assembly; and put limits on their ability to participate in public, social or democratic activities.

Given the centrality of appearance to personal identity and the general uniqueness and immutability of bodily characteristics, the use of biometric surveillance systems in public spaces can enable unlawful permanent intrusion into our autonomy, freedom and privacy on a mass scale across time and place.

The European Commission is planning to release its strategy on AI at the beginning of 2021. As part of this work, the EU Commission has explained publicly that there are significant fundamental rights impacts that arise from remote biometric identification in public. This context represents a solid justification for EU-wide civil society action.
Participate!

We count on you to turn Freedom not Fear into an effervescent platform of discussion and action. For the 10th edition of our event, we invite submissions that (1) shed light over the deployment of biometric mass surveillance technologies across Europe, (2) develop the strategic role of civil society campaigning in bringing forward a EU - wide ban on biometric mass surveillance.

While not limited to, we invite proposals guided by the following questions:

- What is the EU doing about biometric mass surveillance?
- What is the role of local authorities (Mayors, Local council) in stopping the spread of biometric mass surveillance?
- How can we talk about biometrics mass surveillance beyond the digital rights bubble?
- What are the best tools activists can use to draw attention to and influence a local/EU ban on biometric mass surveillance?

Proposals should follow one of the following session types.

1. **Inform**
   
   **Format:** Panel / Presentation
   Speaker(s) present findings/ raise awareness around a topic of choice. Optional Q&A time allows audience to pose questions & speaker(s) to answer. (e.g. Overview of European Commission’s role in banning biometric mass surveillance? Summary of findings – research / report etc.)
   
   **Outcome:** Share skills and/or lessons learnt
   
   **Time:** 25/50 minutes, depending on submissions volume
   
   **Audience size:** no limit

2. **Organise**
   
   **Format:** Workshop
   Moderator presents 1 questions/issue and opens an interactive discussion to attendees for mapping out ways forward. (e.g. How can mayors help ban facial recognition in cities? What do you need in order to put your city on the “Ban biometrics surveillance” map? Etc.)
   
   **Outcome:** Map out solutions / Draft document
   
   **Time:** 25/50 minutes, depending on submissions volume
   
   **Audience size:** 8 people (registration beforehand)

3. **Act**
   
   **Format:** Strategic action room
   Organiser supports audience throughout executing strategic, coordinated action. (e.g. tweetstorm, freedom of information requests, data subject access requests, emails to national DPAs)
   
   **Outcome:** Coordinated direct action
   
   **Time:** 25/50 minutes, depending on submissions volume
   
   **Audience size:** 12 people (registration beforehand)

In order to submit a proposal, please use the dedicated framaform. The deadline to send in a session suggestion is 26 October.
Please note the form responses are open to respondents.

Every year, Freedom not Fear is organised and run by an active community, growing into an alliance of over 150 organisations. Our event brings together individuals united by the same idea for the digitised world: freedom of speech not censorship, privacy not surveillance, freedom not fear. In recent years, Freedom not Fear has been supported by a broad alliance including political parties, professional associations, trade unions and freedom activists.

Consider becoming a supporter of Freedom not Fear!

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