

Jan Kleijssen



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Profile

Council of Europe's Director of Information Society and Action against Crime, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Jan Kleijssen, firmly believes in building a Europe without dividing lines, based on the shared values of Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy. He brings with him 37 years of accumulated institutional knowledge in all main sectors of the Council of Europe: Judicial, Parliamentary and Intergovernmental. Moreover, as Director of the Private Office, from 1999 until 2004, he was responsible for major reforms, political initiatives and crisis management.

Appointed in 2018 by the Secretary General, he led the work on proposals for the future of the Council of Europe following the Elsinore Ministerial Session. These served as a basis for decisions taken at the Ministerial Session in Helsinki in May 2019, celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Council of Europe.

His Directorate, with some 200 highly qualified and motivated staff, carries out standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation activities on a wide variety of issues, which include: *Freedom of Expression, Data Protection, Artificial Intelligence, Internet Governance, Cybercrime, Terrorism, Criminal Law, Prison Management, Fighting Corruption and Money Laundering.*

From 2015 to 2020 he was Chair of the Council of Europe's Disciplinary Board and Council of Europe Internet Governance coordinator since 2018. On his initiative, the Council of Europe gave a partnership status to a still growing number of major global and regional private companies and associations. The marketing software platform, Onalytica, included Jan among the 2019 Top 100 influencers on the regulation of new technologies.

In 2021 Jan was invited to be a member of the panel for the Mid-Term Review of the Advanced Masters programmes, Leiden Law School and the Msc International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs. He regularly presents his directorate's work to universities worldwide.

Throughout his career, Jan has been acknowledged for his ability to deal impartially with highly sensitive issues, and for clarity on procedural matters. He deviates from the trodden path to find creative and acceptable solutions and obtain concrete results. Equally, his colleagues recognise his capacity for change management and leadership based on motivational guidance, vision and dynamism.

Having obtained Master's Degrees in International Law (Utrecht) and in International Affairs (Ottawa) and performed military service as an officer in the Royal Netherlands Navy, Jan joined the Council of Europe in 1983 as a Lawyer with the European Commission of Human Rights. Subsequently he served for some 9 years as Secretary to the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, playing a major role in the accession procedure for new member states.

Fluency in English, French, German and Italian alongside his native Dutch, including the Low Saxon dialect of his birthplace, Almelo, near the German border, and marriage to Stefania from Rome reinforce Jan's multicultural outlook. A strong awareness of different cultures, their traditions, behaviour, values and beliefs has provided him with invaluable insights into the multiple layers of human identity, indispensable to skilled, empathic communication and worldwide networking.

As a keen marathon runner, Jan has a strong grasp of the power of preparation, resilience, commitment and endurance in achieving success. Mental fortitude, mind-set and fitness have boosted his ability to lead teams, and modernise working methods towards more and much needed transversality in an ever-

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changing global environment. He is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and improving visibility, also through social media.

Selected publications

- [‘Justice and Beyond: Council of Europe working on setting global benchmarks on artificial intelligence’](#) . Justice Trends, June 2021
- Technologies numériques, intelligence artificielle et lutte contre la COVID-19 : la contribution du Conseil de l’Europe, L’Observateur de Bruxelles, n°121, Juin 2020
- [‘Conseil de l’Europe et intelligence artificielle. Les droits de l’homme, l’Etat de droit et la démocratie face aux défis du développement et de l’utilisation de l’intelligence artificielle’](#), L’Observateur de Bruxelles n°115, February 2019
- ‘Mensenrechtenmens. In gesprek met Jan Kleijssen’, NJCM-Bulletin, Jaargang 43; nummer 4, 2018
- ‘Cybercrime, evidence and territoriality: issues and options’, the Netherlands Yearbook of International Law, 2017
- ‘Freedom of expression – does it need to be defined?’, Halsbury’s Law Exchange, November 2015
- [‘Una Internet Centrada en los Derechos Humanos y en las Personas – La perspectiva del Consejo de Europa’](#) Nueva Revista N° 145, November 2013
- ‘Protecting Internet freedom – A pressing challenge’ in ‘Synergy Magazine’ of the European Law Students’ Association, n° 52 II-2012
- ‘Council of Europe standard-setting in the human rights field’, Netherlands Magazine for Human Rights/NJCM Bulletin, November/December 2010

Recent interviews

- [Biography of Jan Kleijssen on the Council of Europe’s website](#)
- [Europarådet utarbetar internationell konvention om artificiell intelligens , Forum for Dataskydd, 1 July 2022](#)
- [The Rightful AI, Tech for Good, March 2022](#)
- [Justice and beyond: Council of Europe working on setting global benchmarks on artificial intelligence – JUSTICE TRENDS Magazine \(justice-trends.press\)](#)
- [M. Ermert, Künstliche Intelligenz 2020: Ethik für KI ist gut, Gesetze zur KI-Regulierung sind besser?, Heise online, 26 December 2019](#)
- [Moreaux, L’Europe en ordre de marche contre la cybercriminalité, Affiches parisiennes, 21 November 2019](#)
- [ALLAI, Responsible AI Conference, 7 October 2019](#)
- [Journalism Definition Extends in Web for Pluralism, EuroFora, 20 March 2019](#)
- [Cadeaus, declaraties, bijbanen: 'Kamerleden van buitenaf controleren', NOS, 17 December 2018](#)
- [El ciberterrorismo puede ser más demoledor que el que se ejerce con armas, SUR, 21 September 2017](#)
- [Le trafic d’organes en plein essor, Arte, 13 October 2015](#)
- [M. Verdier, En Europe, la traque internationale contre le trafic d’organes s’organise, La Croix, 31 March 2015](#)