



Lectio Magistralis  
**Bertil Cottier**

**From Challenging New  
Technologies to Desperate  
Lawmakers:  
Is It Still Possible to Regulate  
Cyberspace and AI?**

# From Challenging New Technologies to Desperate Lawmakers: Is It Still Possible to Regulate Cyberspace and AI?

New technologies for collecting, analysing and communicating data are evolving at breakneck speed. For good, but also for ill. Disinformation, discrimination, violation of privacy, and attacks against human dignity are multiplying. Overwhelmed by an evolution whose ins and outs they struggle to understand, lawmakers are no longer able to counter these threats, in time and adequately. Either they keep silent or they leave others to do the job, by way of symbolic legislation, blank delegations of powers or experimental regulations to name but a few of their most controversial responses to an ever-changing digital world. This talk aims to take stock of these legislative hesitations and bricolages, which undermine democracy and legal security.

## Biography

Bertil Cottier is Professor emeritus, USI (Faculty of Communication Culture and Society; Law Institute-IDUSI) and University of Lausanne (Faculty of Law). Prior to his academic career, he worked as court reporter for several newspapers, then as expert for the Media law department of the Ministry of Justice, and finally as deputy director of the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law. Currently he is the chairman of the European Commission against racism and intolerance (Council of Europe) as well as the Swiss section of Reporters without Borders. He also was a consultant on issues of freedom of expression, privacy, and access to information, in particular for the Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Swiss Confederation. As such he participated to the elaboration of several legal instruments dealing with new technologies, among others the 2020 Swiss Data Protection Act and the 2024 Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

**Lectio Magistralis**  
**Bertil Cottier**  
Professor emeritus, USI



**11 December**  
**2024**  
**18.00**

Auditorium  
Main Building  
West Campus  
Lugano

Università  
della  
Svizzera  
italiana

Faculty  
of  
Communication,  
Culture  
and Society