



Submission to Call for Evidence on the Digital Omnibus (Digital Package on Simplification)

SUBMITTED ON: 14 October, 2025

This present submission aims to provide input to the call for evidence on the Digital Omnibus (Digital Package on Simplification), issued by the European Commission on September 16th, 2025. WITNESS would like to share the following points with the European Commission for further consideration:

1. Ensure a thorough and consistent implementation process for the AI Act and the digital Package

Witness carefully advises against any simplifications to the AI Act that might incur in new delays to the implementation process. Over the last months we saw major developments such as the consultation and drafting processes of the first GPAI Code of Practice and the start of the drafting efforts regarding the transparency Code of Practice, among other efforts. These initiatives demonstrate the importance of responsibilities and commitments on issues such as safety and transparency for major developers and deployers of AI systems.

While it is legitimate to consider constructive criticism of regulations during their implementation process, the current framing of the "simplification" process risks validating or re-opening debates about the long-term value of key rights protections (like those in the AI Act). At the same time, proper implementation requires clear division of responsibilities between the EU and member states for better coordination among oversight bodies.

In this sense, we would like to recommend that the Simplification efforts are shifted towards stronger commitments from EU institutions and Member-states regarding the approval of their implementation acts, and kickstart of the implementation timeline. We should not allow for examples such as the experienced delays in the awaited CEN-CENELEC technical standards, to be read as lack of institutional clarity and lead to enforcement deficits.

Lastly, when implementing the AI Act, it is essential to ensure that the transparency obligations are appropriate, effective, and enforceable. This means that the requirements for disclosing information about AI systems—such as their purpose, capabilities, limitations, and the data they rely on—must be proportionate to the risks associated with their use, clearly defined to avoid ambiguity, and supported by mechanisms that guarantee compliance. By doing so, the AI Act can promote accountability, build public trust, and ensure that users and regulators have sufficient insight into how AI systems operate in practice.

In this sense, we fully support the [calls issued by EDRi and other European networks](#) that *oppose any attempt to delay or re-open the AI Act, particularly in light of the growing trend of deregulation of fundamental rights and environmental protection, which risks undermining key accountability mechanisms and hard-won rights enshrined in EU law across a wide range of protections, including for people, the planet, justice and democracy.*

2. Balance accountability, innovation and users' rights

We understand the need for the implementation process of the AI act to take into account developers and deployers concerns, as the main stakeholders within the broader compliance



efforts. However, clear enforceable safeguards create trust and legal certainty, which are essential to sustain innovation in the long term.

The EU Commission must ensure that the consumers/users' needs are not left behind and that the simplification process is not used to relitigate or evade stronger protections for fundamental rights that are enshrined in the text. Harmonising how these regulations are applied across the EU must not weaken the need for stronger private sector commitments to address the risks and harms related to AI.

3. Ensure fundamental rights are not negatively affected in the Digital Omnibus process

Simplification must not mean weaker enforcement. The existing regulations already have weak frameworks for protecting the fundamental rights of vulnerable communities. Eroding existing fundamental rights frameworks would be of grave concern if they take place throughout this process. In its current form, the AI Act still enables a consistent and relevant framework for mitigating harm, promoting transparency and accountability in AI Systems and addressing incoming threats in a proportional way.

At WITNESS, we are deeply concerned with how AI makes it easier to dismiss real footage as fake or harm communities fighting for human rights. Our work focuses on mitigating potential harm where AI-generated content could fuel violence, disinformation or threats to democracy while upholding the public's right to reliable information. Any further delays in the implementation process of the AI Act would worsen the already existing inconsistencies and post-pone a much needed coordinated response to deceptive and harmful uses of Altechnologies.

Effective enforcement also requires the operational capacity to verify compliance in practice. Through initiatives such as the [C2PA standard-setting process](#), the [TRIED Benchmark](#) and the [Deepfake Rapid Response Force](#), WITNESS has contributed to developing privacy-preserving transparency, detection and coordination mechanisms that translate regulatory goals into practical tools. Incorporating such public-interest expertise into EU enforcement processes could strengthen institutional coherence and ensure that transparency and accountability obligations under the AI Act are implementable and verifiable.

Instead of dismantling existing frameworks, efforts should focus on strengthening compliance mechanisms by providing supervisory authorities with greater support and resources. Simplification should aim to enhance access to rights and justice—particularly for marginalized communities—rather than eliminating essential safeguards.

4. Transparency, accountability and Multistakeholder participation as guiding principles to the Digital Omnibus

With regards to the upcoming steps in the Digital Omnibus, we trust that transparency, accountability and multistakeholder participation should serve as guiding principles.

We strongly recommend that the EU Commission adopts a strategy of proactive communication through the next steps in the Digital Omnibus. That means the need for more context and information about incoming decisions, publication of a full list of consensus points of concern regarding the implementation of the subject regulations, as well as more concrete mappings



about the inconsistencies identified within each of these legal texts and areas for improving collaboration or regulatory interplay.

In order to ensure this process is a consistent and legitimate one, we must make sure that concrete timelines and consultation points are established and communicated, and that they also take into account the views and concerns of stakeholders such as civil society and academia, as well as frontline defenders, and not just the private sector. Such structured collaboration can help identify real-world implementation problems early on and support the creation of coherent, enforceable, and future-proof digital governance.

Last but not least, full stakeholder participation is essential to ensure that the evaluation and implementation of regulation such as the AI Act are both transparent and effective. Civil society organizations, academic experts, and independent oversight bodies must be systematically involved in the assessment process from an early stage. Their participation should not be symbolic but structured and timely, allowing for meaningful contributions that reflect diverse perspectives and public interests. This inclusive approach helps strengthen accountability and ensures that the AI Act remains responsive to societal needs and ethical standards.

In short, as it was highlighted in the [Bündnis F5 submission](#), *evaluation processes such as this current digital Omnibus should promote a sustainable, legally clear and fundamental rights-compliant digital system rather than seeking short-term relief at the expense of fundamental rights.*

About WITNESS

[WITNESS](#) is a global human rights organization that empowers people to use video and emerging technology to defend and protect human rights. Working across five regions—Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the United States—we collaborate with those most excluded or at risk, identifying gaps, designing solutions, and co-developing strategies to hold the powerful accountable and drive lasting change. We respond to critical situations by equipping affected communities with essential skills in audiovisual AI and video production, safe and ethical filming techniques, and advocacy strategies.

This submission was prepared by the [Technology Threats and Opportunities \(TTO\) program](#), which scales our global community work at a systems level—sharing insights across regions, collaborating with diverse stakeholders with both lived experience and professional expertise, connecting communities facing similar challenges, and advocating for grassroots perspectives in technology and policy spaces. The program proactively engages with emerging technologies that shape trust in audiovisual content, ensuring they are developed and deployed in ways that protect, rather than undermine, human rights.