EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | DISCUSSION DRAFT | 4 NOVEMBER 2026

THE HUMAN AUTHORITY TREATY (H.A.T.)

A proposed international framework for human authority in the age of autonomous intelligence

One Humanity. Many Sovereign Nations. One Shared Boundary.

As autonomous systems gain the capacity to make decisions, execute actions, and operate across national borders, the international community faces a foundational question: Who retains the authority to determine whether such systems may continue to operate? The Human Authority Treaty (H.A.T.) proposes a common starting point for answering that question—without requiring nations to agree on every aspect of artificial intelligence or surrender control over their own laws and institutions.

The proposed foundational principle

> No consequential autonomous system shall possess unilateral authority to authorize, extend, restore, or enlarge its own operation.

Machines may exercise delegated operational authority, but that authority must be established independently of the system being governed, bounded in time and scope, verifiable, and subject to revocation. This is a proposed governance obligation—not a claim that every needed enforcement technology or verification method is already proven.

Sovereignty without fragmentation

H.A.T. does not prescribe a single political system, AI model, industrial standard, or national policy. Each participating state would determine its domestic legal implementation and its substantive rules for deployment. The proposed shared boundary concerns the source and continuity of authority, not a transfer of sovereignty to a particular technology provider or international authority. Portable records of identity or compliance would not themselves confer permission to operate in another jurisdiction; applicable authority would be reassessed where it is exercised.

The international civil aviation analogy

International aviation does not depend on a single global cockpit, licensing authority, validation network, or kill switch. Each nation retains sovereign responsibility for registering aircraft, issuing or recognizing certificates, maintaining its own trust infrastructure, controlling its airspace, and deciding what may enter. International operation becomes possible because states recognize shared minimum standards and can evaluate credentials issued under another sovereign system.

Like international civil aviation, the objective is mutual safety verification, not a global controller, centralized validation network, or universal kill switch.

Why act together

Autonomous systems and their consequences do not always remain within national borders. Incompatible approaches to authorization, verification, and accountability could weaken public trust and complicate legitimate innovation. A common framework for delegated authority could help governments, industry, researchers, insurers, and civil society assess what a system was authorized to do, for how long, by whom, and under which conditions. These outcomes remain objectives for collective design and testing, not established results.

Equal standing for every nation

Every nation—small or large, technologically advanced or still building capacity—should have a meaningful voice in shaping the principles that govern consequential autonomous systems. The framework is offered for open examination, revision, and negotiation. Its legitimacy would come from inclusive international deliberation and sovereign consent, not from acceptance of its originating text as final.

A practical invitation to international consideration

Interested Member States and relevant international institutions are invited to place this proposed principle on an appropriate agenda; convene an inclusive multidisciplinary discussion; examine definitions, legal safeguards, and technical feasibility; evaluate voluntary pilots and methods of independent verification; and consider whether a negotiated international instrument is warranted. The objective is to give the international community a concrete basis for debate and a pathway toward possible adoption—not to suggest that any treaty has already been agreed or endorsed.

A responsibility across generations

We do not ask the nations of the world to surrender their sovereignty. We invite them to exercise it together. The decisions of this generation will affect those who inherit the systems we create. We invite the international community to examine this proposal, improve it, and, should agreement emerge, make its foundational principle their own.

For our children, and for theirs, that boundary has to be set now, while we still can.

Our ancestors would expect nothing less.