

**Opening Speech of Marta Cienkowska, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of  
Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland  
at the Conference organized by Press Database and Licensing Network (PDLN)  
“Application of Intelligence”**

**26th May 2025, Warsaw**

Ladies and Gentleman,

Welcome, and thank you for inviting me to speak at this important event.

Before I continue, I'd like to congratulate the authors of the conference's title “The Application of Intelligence”, which opens up a number of possible interpretations.

On the one hand, it may be understood as an obvious reference to artificial intelligence, which is nowadays being discussed from every angle. But if we dig a little deeper, it could be also asking us how we apply human intelligence, wisdom, judgement and ethical considerations in the times of rapid technological changes.

Perhaps it's also a reminder that intelligence, whether human or artificial, is only as valuable as the way it is applied.

In any case, it invites to a meaningful conversation and I'm grateful for the opportunity to engage in it with you today.

Independent journalism is a foundation of our democracy. It informs the public, holds power accountable, challenges lies and manipulation. Needless to say, traditional business models in this industry have been long under pressure. But now, new technologies are fundamentally reshaping the media ecosystem. The rise of AI-powered tools, such as search overviews or automated summaries not only changes the way we consume information, but brings serious questions about who gives permission, who gets credit, who is responsible, and who gets paid. In many cases, the original sources coming from professional journalists are hidden behind algorithms. This can damage trust in the content itself or become a powerful instrument of disinformation. In turn, fundamental relationship we have with information and people who create is becoming more and more fragile.

This brings me to a quote I have always found striking. As the Polish writer and playwright Witold Gombrowicz once wrote:

***“And so, within himself, fussing with paper and thought, he was becoming increasingly intelligent about being intelligent, and this intelligence of his, multiplied by itself, sat astride itself and became so intelligent that.. Jesus Mary!”***

*[„I tak w sobie papirem i myślą kaprysząc się, coraz inteligentniej był inteligentnym i ta inteligencja jego, sama sobą pomnożona i sama na sobie okraciem tak już Inteligentna stawiała się, że Jezus Maria!”]*

Witold Gombrowicz, *Trans-Atlantyk*

It's a funny but also a cautionary tale. It warns us that intelligence may become so self-referential, self-consuming and disconnected from reality and meaning that it is no longer enlightening but rather confusing, or even grotesque.

And isn't it a risk we face today? We are frequently offered blurry summaries produced by tools like news overview, which are supposed to replace a number of carefully written articles, but all they really do is mislead the reader. We follow more advanced systems, more intelligent tools without asking whom they are serving.

I strongly believe that we can't afford to rely on such solutions, without asking inconvenient questions: Who benefits? Who is left behind? What are the implications for the creative and culture sectors? Who is the author? In other words, intelligence cannot be applied without critical thinking.

That's why we need to be honest about the sufficiency of current mechanisms in place such as opt-outs or voluntary code of practice for General Purpose AI providers, which should protect rights holders.

At the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland we treat these questions seriously. That's why we have already taken concrete actions to support creators, journalists and publishers in the times of technological shift.

We have implemented the Directive (EU) 2019/790 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market, in a way that ensures strengthened protection of journalists and press publishers with the press publishers' right. Polish legislator introduced, additionally, a mediation mechanism before the President of the Electronic Communications Office, a solution to make negotiations fairer and more effective by setting payments for digital platforms that use online press content.

Under the Polish Presidency of the EU Council we have initiated an EU-wide discussion and data gathering on the challenges facing collective management organizations of copyright and related rights, including those posed by AI technologies and digital platforms. The final policy paper will be published in June and constitute a basis for informed decisions at the EU level. A month ago, we organized international, high-level conference on the impact of AI on the copyright, culture and creative sectors to provide a space for debate on the possible actions to be taken on national and EU level with regards to disinformation, digital literacy, enforcement of IP rights and many more.

Moreover, we organize Copyright Law Forum, a regular initiative dedicated to creative milieus in Poland and all those who wish to express their proposals and concerns regarding the current copyright legal framework. The last two meetings of the Forum were mostly dedicated to the challenges of artificial intelligence and discussing possible ways forward.

Recently, also an anti-piracy taskforce was re-launched at the Ministry, with active participation of national stakeholders. The taskforce is currently working on the issue of online piracy of live content.

We are in addition closely monitoring the development of General Purpose AI code of practice, while listening to the critical voices of the creative communities across the EU. Minister of Culture shared the concerns in this regard, with the Minister of Digital Affairs, who is leading

this part of the work, as well as the Prime Minister, to ensure that perspective of rights holders is recognized and taken into account in the implementation of AI Act.

Having said that, I believe that a joint effort and shared responsibility of governments, creators, rights holders and platforms is necessary to ensure that technology serves everyone, not just the stronger ones.

Ladies and Gentleman, Gombrowicz saw the risk of intelligence disconnected, intelligence which ultimately forgets what it's for. We have the responsibility not to let this happen. We need to ***apply intelligence*** with purpose and critical thinking.

If we do this well, we can build a future where technology empowers creators, strengthens the voice of independent journalism and media, supports democracy and earns the public's trust.

That is what this moment asks of us.

Thank you.