artificial intelligence, artificial security

digital technologies and authoritarian politics

Romain Lanneau (Researcher)
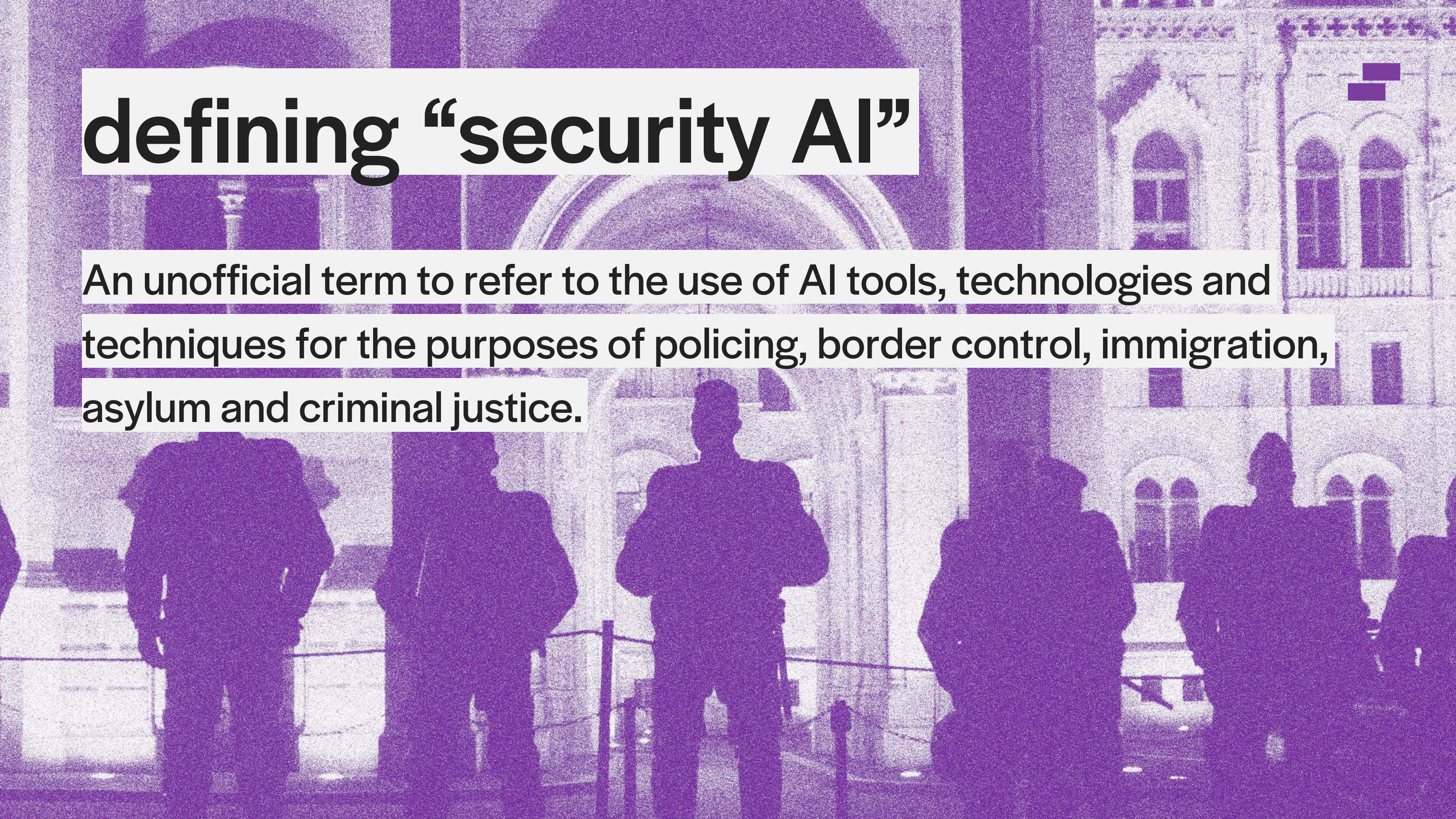*Chris Jones (Director)*

June 2025

contents

There are no smoking guns or big "reveals."
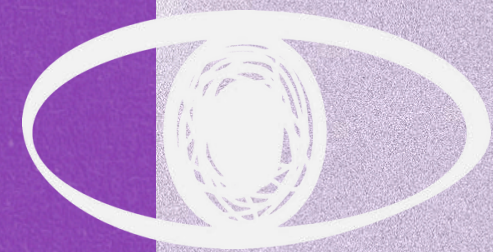
This is not that kind of story.

defining "security AI"

An unofficial term to refer to the use of AI tools, technologies and techniques for the purposes of policing, border control, immigration, asylum and criminal justice.

the AI Act

introduction

the AI Act's purpose

- address the risks of AI by developing the first regulation in the world

adoption of the Act

- adopted in 2024; this year ban on AI causing unacceptable risk
- EU Commission does not rule out postponing enforcement

security AI in the Act

- increased development and use of security AI systems
- limited accountability, oversight and transparency measures

" the level of secrecy it permits is particularly problematic.

loopholes and exceptions

limited scope

- geographical limitations :
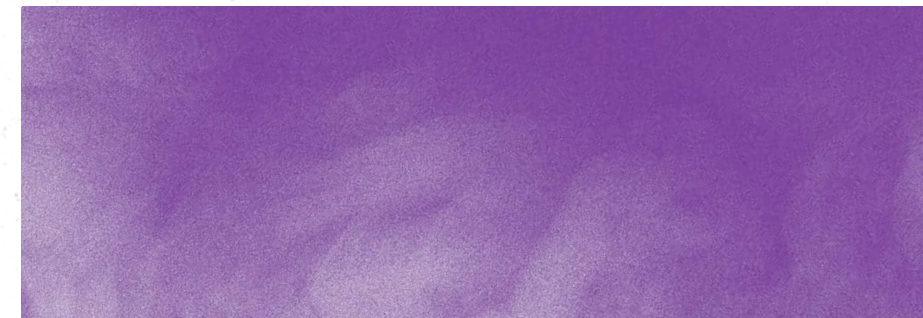- research exception
- temporary exclusion of EU databases

(un)prohibited practices
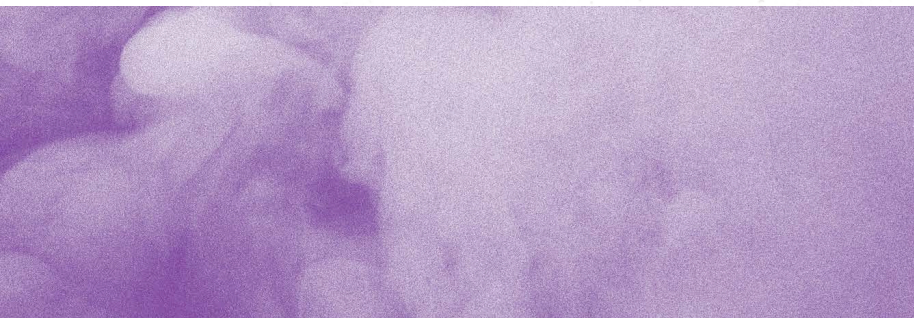
- profiling
- emotion recognition

risk and impact assessments

- self-assessment
- self-exemption

a "silicon curtain" of secrecy

- secret listing of high-risk AI systems
- rights to information and explanation curtailed

oversight?

data protection authorities

- underfunded and understaffed
- limited access to police files
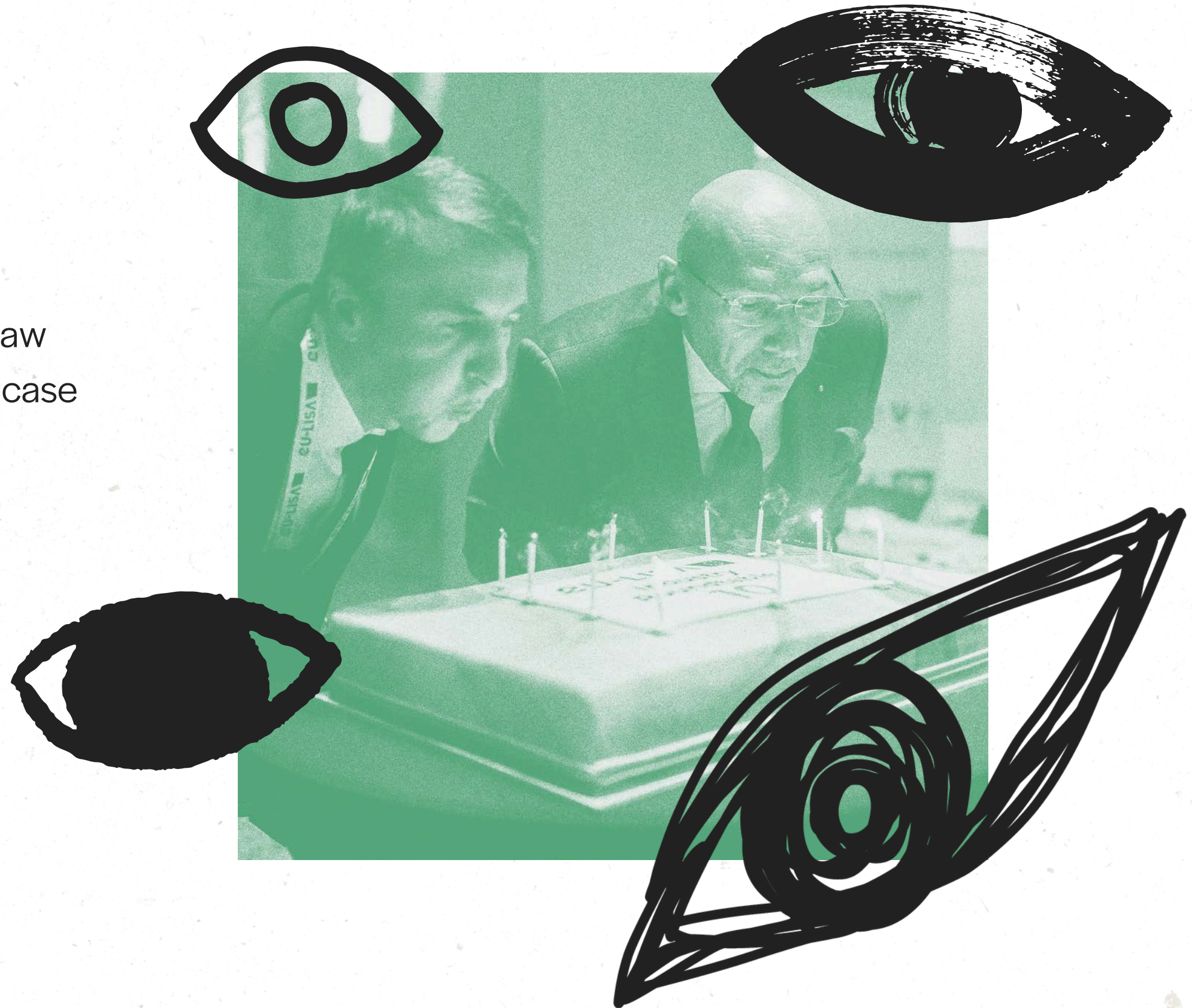- AI Act may limit ability to exchange information

implementation

what should we be looking at?

- deregulation: proposed suspension of enforcement
- US pressure on the EU to deregulate
- potential conflicts between AI Act and data protection law
- Hungary's deployment of AI-powered surveillance: test case
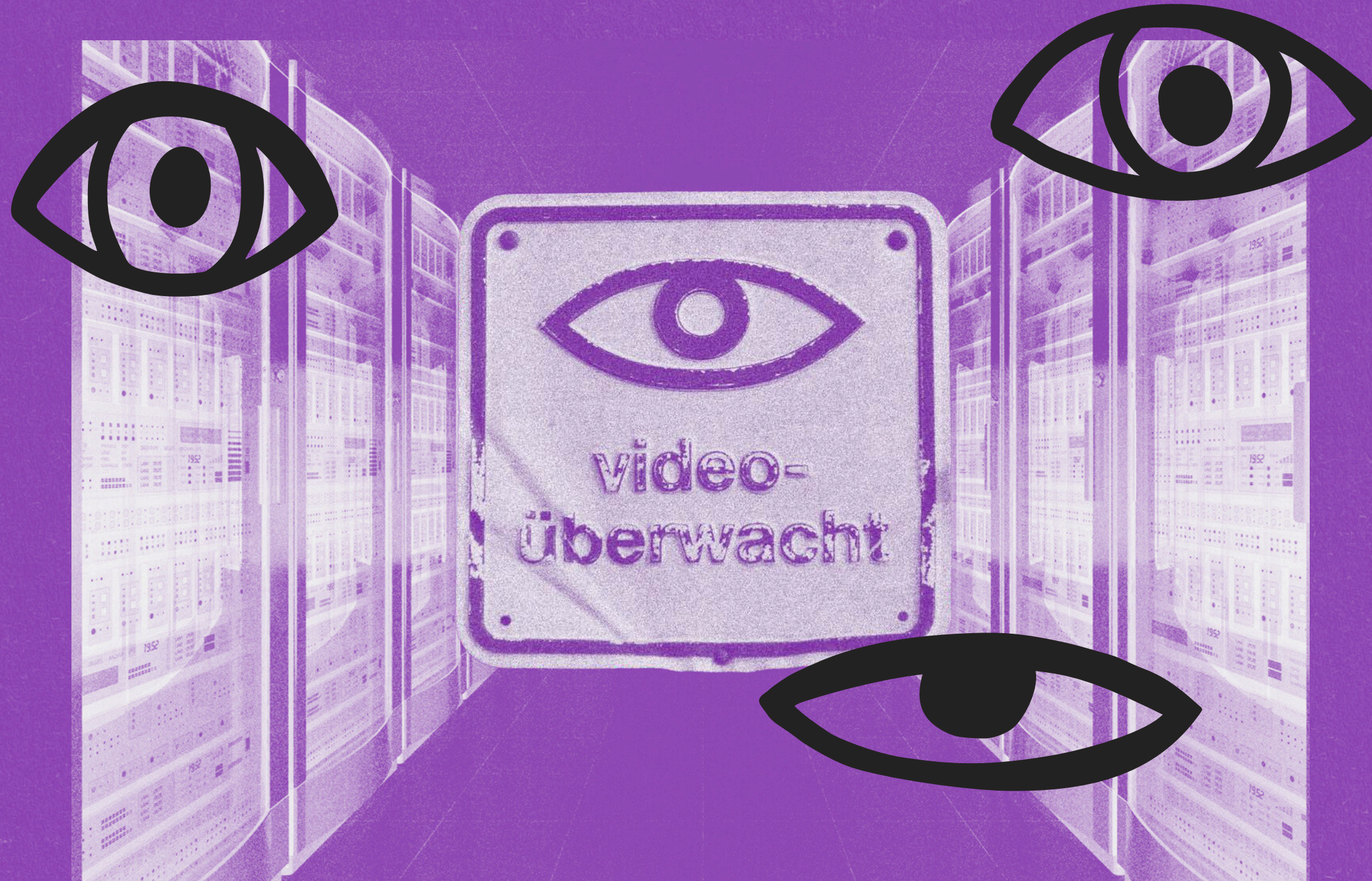
questions?

If you have any questions so far or throughout the presentation, please enter them in the chat or raise your hand.

security AI

hopes and dreams >

what's in the works? >

security AI infrastructure >

security AI: hopes and dreams

travel surveillance

- identifying "irregular travelling patterns"
- automatic alert detection: cameras connected to databases

border control

- deciding who needs a visa or travel authorisation
- assigning people to specific detention centres
- "AI to flag risk indicators" at border checks

assessment

- facial recognition for family reunification
- "vulnerability assessment" of people seeking asylum
- assessing individual levels of "integration"

...and much more

ongoing projects

eu-LISA

- algorithmic profiling of travellers
- AI in the shared Biometric Matching System (sBMS)
- "visa chatbot"

Europol

- big data: legalising the illegal
- machine learning
- facial recognition

Frontex, EU Asylum Agency

- 'AI in the maritime domain' (Frontex)
- automated dialect recognition for asylum seekers (EUAA)

Eurojust

- AI in the Joint Investigation Teams platform
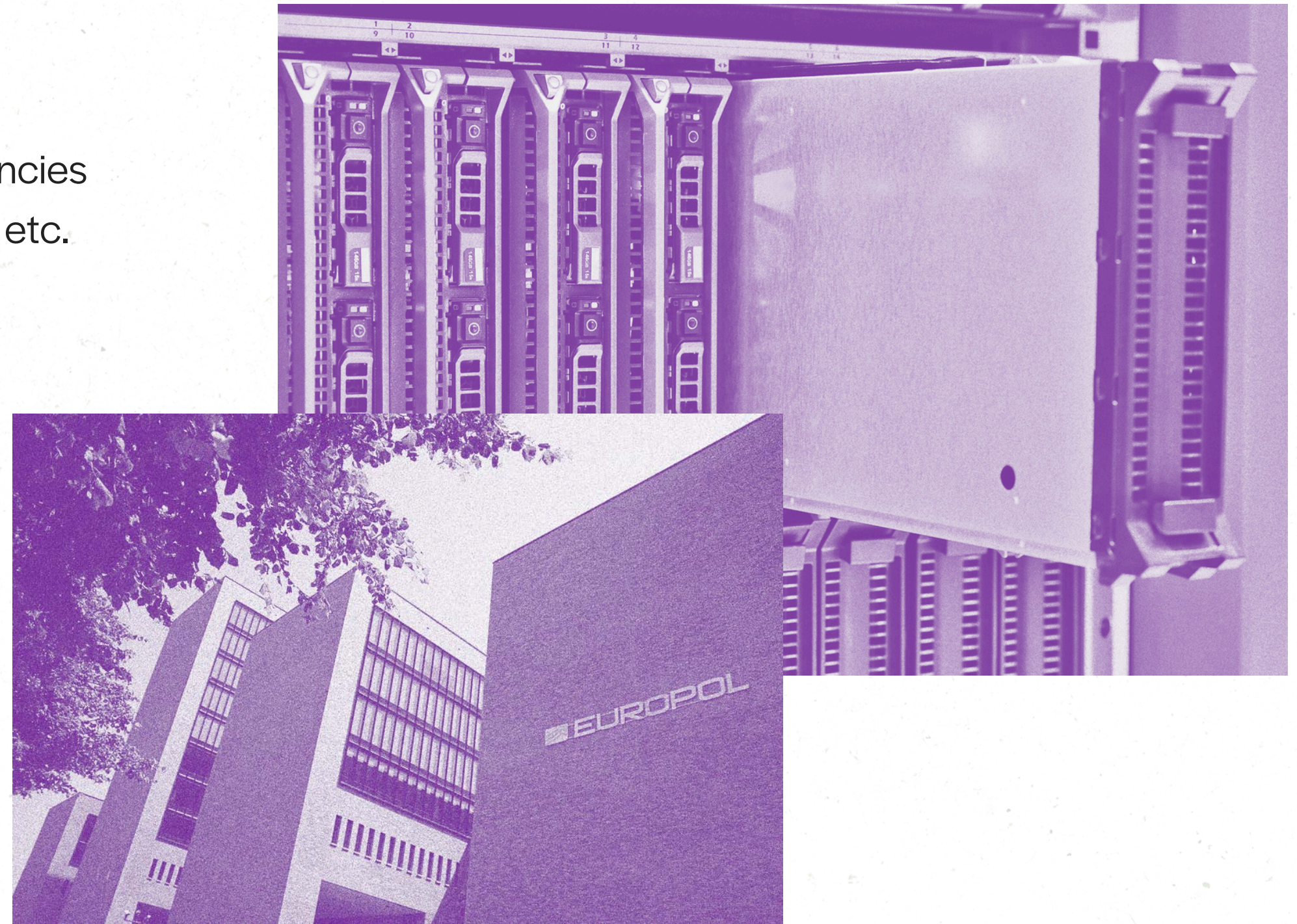
building security AI

institutional infrastructure

- sometimes infrastructure already exists e.g. EU agencies
- sometimes created specifically for a project, policy, etc.
- working groups, task forces, project consortia

technical infrastructure

- data, data, data
- "data spaces"

data sources

databases

- interoperability project
- biometric and biographic data
- interconnected records
- expansion of systems

travel data

- Passenger Name Record
- Advance Passenger Information
- development of a "travel intelligence system"

what else...?

- telecoms data (new data retention law incoming)
- "going dark" proposals
- financial data, health data, criminal justice data...

data spaces

digital strategy

- "Europe fit for the digital age"
- Data Strategy, 2020
- creation of data spaces to train AI: health, energy, transport
- no consideration of material and human impacts

space for security

- 2021, security data space announced
- €8m offered but no takers
- study concludes:
  - law enforcement AI not "high priority" for states
  - limited uptake or use of "AI-based solutions and data spaces"

doing it anyway

- workshop in March 2023 organised by Commission
- Security Data Space for Innovation (SDSI) a "sine qua non" for:
  - developing AI
  - increasing data access
- two initiatives ongoing: TESSERA, Europol sandbox

current landscape

limits of (current) legislation

- data protection safeguards do not work in practice
- if they do, authorities change the law
- lack of compliance with inspections, inquiries, supervision
- AI Act offers some, but not many opportunities

opportunities for action

- uncover and circulate information
- get organised, speak out, take action
- donate to organisations working to make change — like *Statewatch*

support our work.

donate today.

questions?

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FILM THE POLICE

NO RACIAL PROFILING

the end.