# Adrien Abecassis

Adrien Abecassis is a French diplomat and policy strategist known for integrating technology governance into the realm of international affairs. A career diplomat by training, Abecassis served as a European Advisor and senior political aide to the President of France – shaping policies on European relations and providing strategic briefs at the highest level of government[[1]](https://fas.org/expert/adrien-abecassis/#:~:text=Adrien%20Abecassis%C2%A0is%20a%20career%20diplomat,21). His extensive background in diplomacy and policy planning laid the groundwork for his later leadership in global digital governance. Abecassis also distinguished himself in academia, holding research fellowships at Harvard University and the University of California, Los Angeles, and was a 2020–21 fellow at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs[[2]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=France%2C%20where%20he%20played%20a,21). This blend of high-level government experience and scholarly work set the stage for his contributions to international technology strategy.

## Early Career and Strategic Diplomacy

In the early phase of his career, Abecassis built a reputation as a talented policy planner and advisor in the French government. As European Advisor to the President, he coordinated bilateral European affairs across the French government, advising on EU relations and international strategy[[1]](https://fas.org/expert/adrien-abecassis/#:~:text=Adrien%20Abecassis%C2%A0is%20a%20career%20diplomat,21). He simultaneously served as a Senior Political Advisor in the Elysée, where he provided policy briefs and coordinated long-term planning for the presidency[[1]](https://fas.org/expert/adrien-abecassis/#:~:text=Adrien%20Abecassis%C2%A0is%20a%20career%20diplomat,21). This period honed his skills in navigating complex geopolitical issues and multilateral diplomacy. Following his public service in France, Abecassis engaged with the academic and think-tank world to broaden his perspective. He was awarded prestigious fellowships – including time at Harvard University and UCLA – focusing on international affairs research[[2]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=France%2C%20where%20he%20played%20a,21). Notably, during 2020–2021 he joined Harvard’s Belfer Center as a Fellow, examining challenges at the intersection of democracy, technology, and global governance. This scholarly work, alongside his practical diplomatic experience, later informed his approach to emerging issues like digital governance and artificial intelligence on the world stage.

## Global Digital Governance Initiatives

Building on his diplomatic insight, Adrien Abecassis has been at the forefront of global digital governance efforts, ensuring that technological change is met with inclusive policy dialogue. In 2020, he co-founded the **Frontiers of Tech Governance Initiative**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to fostering civil society dialogue on digital governance with stakeholders worldwide[[3]](https://goodpods.com/podcasts/the-recovery-project-38836#:~:text=Listen%20to%20a%20conversation%20featuring,and%20Founder%20of%20Global%20Progress). Serving as President of its Board, Abecassis helped launch the initiative’s flagship program *Initiate: Digital Rights in Society* – an informed international discussion aimed at reimagining our common technological future and charting new governance pathways. This program established a global multi-stakeholder process to address the challenges of algorithmic governance, engaging policymakers, tech experts, and civil society leaders from across Europe, North America and, crucially, the Global South[[4]](https://parispeaceforum.org/app/uploads/2022/04/en-beyond-the-north-south-fork-on-the-road-to-ai-governance.pdf#:~:text=Initiate%3A%20Digital%20Rights%20in%20Society,approaches%20that%20strengthen%20collective%20rights). Under Abecassis’s co-leadership, *Initiate: Digital Rights in Society* convened diverse experts to **simulate future AI governance scenarios and explore digital rights frameworks**, ensuring voices from emerging economies were prominently included. The organization worked to “chart possible pathways toward an international digital rights framework,” empowering civil society to help determine the trajectory of automated technologies and develop regulatory approaches that strengthen collective rights worldwide[[4]](https://parispeaceforum.org/app/uploads/2022/04/en-beyond-the-north-south-fork-on-the-road-to-ai-governance.pdf#:~:text=Initiate%3A%20Digital%20Rights%20in%20Society,approaches%20that%20strengthen%20collective%20rights). Incubated by the Paris Peace Forum and backed by philanthropic support, the Frontiers of Tech Governance Initiative through *Initiate* produced early, influential outputs that highlighted the need for global cooperation on AI and digital policy.

One groundbreaking outcome of these efforts was a 2022 report titled *“Beyond the North-South Fork on the Road to AI Governance: An Action Plan for Democratic & Distributive Integrity.”* Abecassis was instrumental in this project, which for the first time gathered a working group of experts with strong Global South representation under the joint auspices of *Initiate: Digital Rights in Society* and the Paris Peace Forum[[5]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=Informed%20by%20discussions%20within%20a%C2%A0multidisciplinary,concerns%20of%20Global%20South%20countries)[[6]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=For%20the%20first%20time%2C%20the,Its%20members%20include). This group’s report broke new ground by prioritizing the concerns and interests of citizens in developing countries in the debate on AI governance. It introduced the concept of an “**AI constitutionalism**” – treating AI and big data as fundamental resources in the modern economy that require a rights-based governance approach[[7]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=what%20we%20define%20as%20an,resources%20within%20the%20modern%20economy). The report urged that any emerging global framework must incorporate equitable perspectives from outside the usual power centers, recommending *four key actions* to move toward a less fragmented AI policy landscape that includes the Global South[[5]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=Informed%20by%20discussions%20within%20a%C2%A0multidisciplinary,concerns%20of%20Global%20South%20countries). By advocating concrete steps such as international protocols and conventions grounded in digital rights, Abecassis and his colleagues charted an early roadmap for aligning AI’s development with democratic values and social equity. This thought leadership reflected Abecassis’s hallmark approach: leveraging broad coalition-building and forward-looking scenario planning to address the societal impacts of new technology.

## Paris Peace Forum and Technology Strategy

Abecassis’s role in digital governance became even more prominent through his leadership at the **Paris Peace Forum**, a major international platform for innovative governance solutions. He joined the Forum’s executive team and currently serves as its Chief Policy Officer (Director of Policy)[[1]](https://fas.org/expert/adrien-abecassis/#:~:text=Adrien%20Abecassis%C2%A0is%20a%20career%20diplomat,21), where he oversees a portfolio of initiatives to improve global governance in areas ranging from climate and public health to cyberspace and artificial intelligence[[8]](https://parispeaceforum.org/app/uploads/2022/04/en-beyond-the-north-south-fork-on-the-road-to-ai-governance.pdf#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Peace%20Forum%20is,solutions%20for%20better%20global%20governance). In this capacity, Abecassis has made technology governance a centerpiece of the Forum’s agenda. Working closely with Paris Peace Forum President Pascal Lamy and other global figures, he has steered high-level discussions on digital cooperation, data governance, and AI ethics at the Forum’s annual summits. Abecassis ensures that **digital issues are integrated into broader peace and governance dialogues**, reflecting the Forum’s mission to strengthen global commons in the digital realm alongside traditional domains[[8]](https://parispeaceforum.org/app/uploads/2022/04/en-beyond-the-north-south-fork-on-the-road-to-ai-governance.pdf#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Peace%20Forum%20is,solutions%20for%20better%20global%20governance).

One of Abecassis’s signature contributions at the Paris Peace Forum has been to bridge the Forum’s convening power with the work of initiatives like *Digitalrights.ai*. He was a driving force in the Forum’s partnership with *Initiate: Digital Rights in Society* (accessible via Digitalrights.ai), aligning the civil society-driven dialogue with the Forum’s multilateral platform. This collaboration yielded the 2022 AI governance action plan, and Abecassis helped amplify its findings to international policymakers. At the 2022 Paris Peace Forum, for example, he highlighted the report’s call for a rights-based *“AI constitutionalism”* as a basis for global protocols, emphasizing that societies in the Global South deserve **equitable AI benefits and protections** on par with the Global North[[9]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=Artificial%20intelligence%20,powered%20systems%20worldwide)[[10]](https://parispeaceforum.org/news/the-paris-peace-forum-and-initiate-release-a-report-on-ai-governance/#:~:text=Informed%20by%20discussions%20within%20a%C2%A0multidisciplinary,fragmented%20AI%20policy%20landscape%C2%A0that%20incorporates). He has moderated and spoken on panels about AI safety, digital inclusion, and cyber governance, consistently advocating for **inclusive international cooperation in technology governance**. Through these efforts, Abecassis has positioned the Paris Peace Forum as a hub for pioneering ideas on tech governance – from early collaborative simulations of AI futures to actionable proposals like an international *Digital Stability Board* (a concept akin to a G20 body for digital oversight). His work at the Forum showcases a blend of diplomacy and innovation, as he leverages his government experience to convene tech companies, NGOs, and governments in pursuit of shared rules for the digital age.

## Publications and Thought Leadership in AI Governance

Beyond his programmatic work, Adrien Abecassis has substantively contributed to the policy discourse on AI and digital governance through influential publications. He has authored and co-authored several high-profile reports that link technology strategy with international cooperation. In 2024, Abecassis wrote the issue paper *“Global Governance of Digital Economy: Artificial Intelligence”* for the Centre on Regulation in Europe (CERRE) – a key output of CERRE’s Global Governance for Digital Ecosystems (GGDE) project[[11]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=The%20development%20of%20comprehensive%2C%20technology,goal%20is%20to%20provide%20a)[[12]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=In%20Global%20Governance%20of%20Digital,and%20safety%20and%20risk%20mitigation). In this report, he examines the *fragmentation of AI regulation* across different nations and proposes ways to design a more coherent international regime. Abecassis analyzes how technological idiosyncrasies and geopolitical rivalries are leading to regulatory divergence, and he argues for counteracting these trends with a coordinated global approach[[12]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=In%20Global%20Governance%20of%20Digital,and%20safety%20and%20risk%20mitigation). Significantly, the paper identifies **three critical functions** essential for effective AI governance worldwide: a *shared international assessment of AI risks and advancements*, *equitable access to AI’s benefits across societies*, and robust *safety and risk mitigation mechanisms* for AI deployment[[12]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=In%20Global%20Governance%20of%20Digital,and%20safety%20and%20risk%20mitigation). By focusing on a balance of ethical integrity and innovation, Abecassis’s CERRE paper lays out concrete recommendations—such as establishing common evaluation standards and ensuring inclusivity in AI benefits—to guide policymakers. These recommendations were tailored for forums like the G7, G20, and the broader “Hiroshima AI Process,” offering a pathway for world leaders to converge on AI governance norms[[13]](https://cerre.eu/publications/global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/#:~:text=three%20reports%20outlining%20the%20challenges,based%20policy). The CERRE report, part of a series co-led by Pascal Lamy, underscores Abecassis’s stature as a thought leader linking academic insight with real-world policy frameworks.

Abecassis’s thought leadership extends to transatlantic and multilateral policy venues as well. In 2021, he co-authored a policy memo for the Federation of American Scientists’ Day One Project titled *“Enabling Responsible U.S. Leadership on Global AI Regulation.”* In that memo, Abecassis and his co-authors urged the United States to **champion a collective digital rights agenda** on the world stage, integrating digital governance into its foreign policy[[14]](https://fas.org/publication/enabling-responsible-u-s-leadership-on-global-ai-regulation/#:~:text=Algorithmic%20governance%20concerns%20are%20critical,American%20citizens%20and%20technology%20consumers). They argued that algorithmic governance is a critical facet of 21st-century international relations, one that demands U.S. engagement not just in Washington and Silicon Valley but also in collaboration with partners across the Global South[[14]](https://fas.org/publication/enabling-responsible-u-s-leadership-on-global-ai-regulation/#:~:text=Algorithmic%20governance%20concerns%20are%20critical,American%20citizens%20and%20technology%20consumers). This call for inclusive leadership echoed Abecassis’s recurring emphasis on bridging geopolitical divides in tech policy. He has consistently highlighted the risk of a fragmented “splinternet” and the need for *common rules and norms* to preserve an open, secure, and fair digital ecosystem globally[[15]](https://fas.org/publication/enabling-responsible-u-s-leadership-on-global-ai-regulation/#:~:text=United%20States%20is%20to%20develop,coherent%20approach%20to%20AI%20regulation).

From academic papers and simulations to official policy reports, Abecassis’s contributions share a unifying theme: leveraging diplomacy and diverse stakeholder input to govern technology for the common good. His work on digital governance and AI policy **complements his broader diplomatic and strategic background**, as he applies the consensus-building skills of a seasoned diplomat to one of the defining governance challenges of our time. By co-founding international initiatives and authoring blueprints for global AI cooperation, Adrien Abecassis has helped elevate digital governance from a niche issue to a central element of global policy discourse. His career trajectory – from advising a head of state in Paris to guiding multilateral dialogues on AI – exemplifies a new breed of policy leadership that bridges traditional international affairs with the frontier issues of technology. In doing so, Abecassis continues to advance a vision of technological progress that is managed through foresight, inclusivity, and a commitment to the public interest on a global scale.

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