Use of artificial intelligence in prisons only while respecting personal rights

justice

The State Commissioner for Data Protection (LfD) Lower Saxony, Barbara Thiel, calls on the government factions in the Lower Saxony state parliament to design the planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) in prisons in a moderate manner and with strict consideration of the personal rights of those affected. It is responding to the motion "Use of artificial intelligence to prevent suicide and improve security in prisons in Lower Saxony", which was tabled in the state parliament on March 17 by the SPD and CDU parliamentary groups.

"The use of AI systems usually means a deep encroachment on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the persons concerned, since masses of data are often processed and automated decisions are made," says Thiel. It is therefore important to first create a legal basis for the use of these technologies in prisons.

"Any measure that can help prevent suicides in prisons is worth considering," says the state data protection officer. However, this should be limited to cells that are specially secured for those who are at risk of suicide. On the other hand, comprehensive monitoring of all cells and common areas by AI to prevent suicide or to increase security in general could hardly be justified. "If a large number of uninvolved detainees whose behavior gave no particular reason for observation is nevertheless subjected to permanent monitoring pressure, that would interfere with their fundamental rights in a disproportionate manner," says Thiel.

"I welcome the fact that there is obviously already a certain sensitivity for the data protection challenges of this project in the government factions," says the LfD Lower Saxony. "But this sensitivity must also be reflected in practical implementation. I therefore call on the state parliament and the Ministry of Justice to involve my authority in the further steps at an early stage."

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