AI Must Not Replace Humans in Project Management: Leading Ethics Researcher Calls for Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence at the 34th IPMA World Congress

Berlin, Germany – September 18, 2025 – Artificial intelligence is changing the world, and it is confronting society with profound ethical questions. At the 34th IPMA World Congress in Berlin, Prof. Dr. Alena Buyx, former Chair of the German Ethics Council and Professor of Medical Ethics at the Technical University of Munich, gave a keynote address warning strongly against delegating responsibility to machines. "AI must not replace humans. It must enhance human life, not restrict it," Buyx emphasized to more than 1,000 participants from over 70 countries.

AI Between Euphoria and Fear Scenarios

Since the release of ChatGPT at the end of 2022, the debate about the opportunities and risks of AI has been dominated by extremes, according to Buyx. While some warn of an "Oppenheimer moment" and paint scenarios of an uncontrollable superintelligence, others hope for a technological solution to all problems. Buyx put these positions into perspective: "It is neither the apocalypse nor the utopia. AI is a powerful tool—nothing more and nothing less."

Ethical Guardrails for the Use of AI

Of particular relevance for project managers, Buyx formulated a key rule of thumb: AI must never make important decisions on its own. "We cannot trust these technologies when it comes to responsibility," she explained. Artificial intelligence can calculate, simulate, and optimize—but it has no awareness of human values, no empathy, and no sense of accountability. Therefore, every use of AI must be transparent, controllable, and aimed at expanding the scope of human action.

European Digital Sovereignty as the Key

Another focus of Buyx's lecture was the geopolitical dimension. At present, almost all major language models are being developed in the United States or China. Europe must not allow itself to be left behind. "We need digital sovereignty. Otherwise, we will make ourselves dependent on technologies whose goals and values we cannot control," she said. As positive examples, Buyx cited the French start-up Mistral and the public interest–oriented language model from Switzerland. Europe has the expertise, but it must muster the political will and the necessary investment.

Opportunities and Risks in Everyday Life

Buyx warned against the uncritical use of AI in personal contexts. She noted that applications in the field of mental health are particularly problematic, with chatbots being used by young people as friends or advisors—with sometimes tragic consequences. "These systems are programmed to be empathetic, but they are not responsible," said Buyx. At the same time, she pointed to the enormous efficiency gains that responsibly applied AI can offer: In her own research group, the number of publications nearly doubled with AI support. In project management as well, schedules can be optimized, risks predicted more accurately, and resources deployed more efficiently.

A Call to Leadership

In conclusion, Buyx issued an appeal to the leaders present: "Use AI—but use it consciously. Develop clear guidelines for transparency and control. Support local solutions and give European developers a chance." She stressed that shaping the future is not the responsibility of politics alone, but also lies in the hands of every individual who carries responsibility within organizations. "AI can ease our workload, but it must not replace us. What matters most is that we maintain our human self-confidence and use technology in the service of humanity."

About GPM and IPMA

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