

Article

19-06-2024 - 15:01
20230601STO93804



EU Artificial Intelligence Act: first regulation on artificial intelligence



The use of artificial intelligence in the EU will be regulated by the AI Act, the world's first comprehensive law on artificial intelligence. Find out more about how it will work here.

As part of its digital strategy, the EU wants to regulate artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure better conditions for the development and use of this innovative technology. AI can bring many benefits, such as better healthcare, more efficient transport, safe and clean industrial production, and cheaper, more sustainable energy.

In April 2021, the Commission proposed the EU's first regulatory framework for AI. It proposes that AI systems that can be used in different applications be analyzed and classified according to the risk they pose to users. Different levels of danger will entail more or less regulation.

Learn more about what artificial intelligence is and how it is used.

What Parliament believes AI legislation must include

Parliament's priority is to ensure that AI systems used in the EU are safe, transparent, traceable, non-discriminatory and environmentally friendly. AI systems should be overseen by people, rather than by automation, to prevent harmful outcomes.

Parliament also wants to establish a uniform, technology-neutral definition of AI that can be applied to future AI systems.

Learn more about Parliament's work on AI and its vision for the future of AI.

AI Act: different rules for different levels of risk

The new regulation sets obligations for providers and users according to the level of risk posed by AI.

Although many AI systems pose minimal risk, all systems need to be assessed.

Unacceptable risk

AI systems posing an unacceptable risk are those considered a threat to people and will be banned. They include:

- cognitive behavioral manipulation of specific individuals or vulnerable groups (for example, voice-activated toys that encourage dangerous behavior in children)
- Social scoring: classifying people based on their behavior, socioeconomic status or personal characteristics.
- real-time and remote biometric identification systems, such as facial recognition.

However, there are some exceptions to this condition. For example, "post-event" remote biometric identification systems, where identification occurs after a significant delay, will be allowed for the prosecution of serious crimes and only with prior judicial approval.

High risk

AI systems that negatively affect safety or fundamental rights will be considered high risk and divided into two categories.

1. AI systems used in products subject to EU product safety legislation. This includes toys, aviation, cars,

medical devices and elevators.

2. AI systems in eight specific areas that will have to be registered in an EU database:

- Biometric identification and categorization of natural persons
- management and operation of critical infrastructure
- education and vocational training
- employment, worker management and access to self-employment
- access to and enjoyment of essential private services and public services and benefits
- law enforcement
- Migration, asylum and border control management.
- assistance in legal interpretation and application of the law.

All high-risk AI systems will be assessed before being placed on the market and throughout their life cycle. Citizens will have the right to submit complaints about AI systems to the relevant national authorities.

Transparency requirements

Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is not considered high risk, but will have to comply with transparency requirements and EU copyright law:

- disclosing that the content has been generated by AI
- Designing the model to prevent it from generating illegal content.
- publishing summaries of copyrighted data used for training

General-purpose AI models with a high impact and which could pose a systemic risk, such as the most advanced AI model, GPT-4, will have to undergo thorough evaluations and report any serious incidents to the Commission.

Content generated or modified with the help of AI, such as images, audio or videos (for example, “deepfakes”), will have to be clearly labeled as such.

Boosting innovation

The legislation provides for SMEs and start-ups to have access to testing spaces and controlled trials in real-world conditions at national level so that they can develop and train innovative AI before it is placed on the market.

Next steps

Parliament adopted the AI Act in March 2024 and the Council followed with its approval in May 2024.

It will become fully applicable 24 months after its entry into force, but some parts will apply earlier:

- The ban on AI systems posing unacceptable risks will apply six months after its entry into force.
- Codes of practice will apply nine months after its entry into force.
- Rules on general-purpose AI systems that must meet transparency requirements will apply 12 months after its entry into force.
- High-risk systems will have more time to comply with the requirements, as the obligations concerning them will apply 36 months after its entry into force.

Learn more about the EU's digital action:

- Dangers of cryptocurrencies and benefits of EU legislation
- Fighting cybercrime: new cybersecurity laws explained by the EU
- Boosting data sharing in the EU: what are the benefits?
- The EU Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act
- Five ways the European Parliament wants to protect online gamers

More information

Report: Artificial Intelligence Act

European Commission: Artificial intelligence: questions and answers