



# Shaping Europe's digital future

# European approach to artificial intelligence

The EU's approach to artificial intelligence promotes excellence and trust, by boosting research and industrial capacity while ensuring safety and fundamental rights.

The first [European AI Strategy](#) aimed at making the EU a world-class hub for AI and ensuring that AI is human-centric and trustworthy. Such an objective translates into the [European approach to excellence and trust](#) through concrete rules and actions. Many other initiatives followed, with the aim to boost the development and uptake of AI in Europe, strengthening competitiveness and technological sovereignty.

## AI Continent Action Plan and Apply AI Strategy

Strengthening previous initiatives, the April 2025 [AI Continent Action Plan](#) aims to make Europe a global leader in AI. [The Action Plan](#) focuses on developing trustworthy AI technologies to enhance Europe's competitiveness while safeguarding and advancing our democratic values. It aims to bring the benefits of AI to various sectors such as healthcare, education, industry, and environmental sustainability.

The plan includes actions to build large-scale AI data and computing infrastructures, increase access to high-quality data, foster AI adoption in strategic sectors, strengthen AI skills and talent, and facilitate the implementation of the [AI Act](#). Key components include:

- the establishment of [AI Factories and Gigafactories](#), the [InvestAI Facility](#) to stimulate private investment
- [AI Act Service Desk](#), to support a smooth and effective implementation of the AI Act across the EU
- the future launch of the AI Skills Academy

Launched in October 2025, the [Apply AI Strategy](#) complements the AI Continent Action Plan. It aims to harness AI's transformative potential by increasing AI adoption and integration across key industrial and public sectors, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and support their specific needs.

The Strategy will help **boost EU capabilities to unlock societal benefits**, from enabling more accurate healthcare diagnoses to enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of public services. It encourages an **AI first policy**, so more companies consider AI as a part of the solution to tackle challenges, while taking into careful consideration the benefits and the risks of the technology.

To coordinate AI-related policies and continue the dialogue on EU strategic sectors' needs, the Commission also launched the [\*\*Apply AI Alliance\*\*](#). This is coordination forum with AI providers, industry, public sector, academia, social partners and civil society organisations. Closely connected to the Alliance, an AI Observatory will track AI trends and assess impact of AI in specific sectors.

## **AI innovation package and GenAI4EU initiative**

Previously, in January 2024, the Commission launched the [\*\*AI innovation package to support Artificial Intelligence startups and SMEs\*\*](#). The package includes several measures to support European startups and SMEs in the development of trustworthy AI that respects EU values and rules.

One key element of this package is the [Communication on boosting startups and innovation in trustworthy artificial intelligence](#) that sets out a strategic investment framework in trustworthy AI. These will enable the EU to capitalize on its assets, in particular its world-leading supercomputing infrastructure, and to foster an innovative European AI ecosystem.

The initiative [\*\*GenAI4EU\*\*](#) is the main highlight of the Communication. It aims to stimulate the uptake of generative AI across key strategic EU industrial ecosystems. In turn that will encourage the development of large open innovation ecosystems that will foster collaboration between AI startups and deployers of AI in both industrial and public sectors.

## **A European approach to excellence in AI**

Fostering excellence in AI will strengthen Europe's potential to compete globally.

The EU will achieve this by:

1. [enabling the development and uptake of AI in the EU](#)
2. becoming the place where [AI thrives from the lab to the market](#)
3. [ensuring that AI works for people](#) and is a force for good in society
4. [building strategic leadership](#) in high-impact sectors

The Commission and Member States agreed to boost excellence in AI by joining forces on policy and investments. At EU level, both the [Horizon Europe](#) and [Digital Europe](#) programmes will invest €1 billion per year in AI. The Commission will also mobilize additional investments from the private sector and the Member States to reach an annual investment volume of €20 billion over the course of the digital decade.

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) makes €134 billion available for digital. This will be a game-changer, allowing Europe to amplify its ambitions and become a global leader in developing cutting-edge, trustworthy AI.

Access to high-quality data is an essential factor in building high-performance, robust AI systems. Initiatives such as the [EU Cybersecurity Strategy](#), the [Data](#)

[Union Strategy](#) provide the right infrastructure for building such systems.

## The AI Act

The [AI Act](#) introduces a clear, easy-to-understand approach, based on four different levels of risk, giving AI developers, deployers, and users clarity about how to address risks generated by specific AI uses. The act strikes the balance between promoting AI research and innovation while ensuring Europeans can benefit from safe and trustworthy AI.

The Commission is committed to a clear, simple and innovation-friendly implementation of the AI Act, as outlined in the AI Continent Action Plan and the Apply AI Strategy. On 19 November 2025, the European Commission proposed targeted amendments to the AI Act as part of the [Digital Simplification Package](#). These efforts complement the actions already underway by the Commission and its AI Office to provide clarity for businesses and national authorities — for example through guidelines, codes of practice and the [AI Act Service Desk](#).

## Important milestones

Find an overview of the [upcoming guidelines supporting the implementation of the AI Act](#).

- **19 November 2025**

[Digital Omnibus proposal, including AI Act simplification](#)

- **05 November 2025**

[Beginning of the drawing-up process of the Code of Practice on Code of Practice on marking and labelling of AI-generated content](#)

- **08 October 2025**

[Commission adopts Apply AI Strategy](#)

[Launch of AI Act Service Desk](#)

- **02 August 2025**

[AI Act obligations for providers of GPAI models enter into application](#)

- **18 July 2025**

[Commission publishes guidelines for providers of General-Purpose AI](#)

- **10 July 2025**

[Commission receives General-Purpose AI Code of Practice](#)

- **9 April 2025**

## AI Continent Action Plan

- **12 March 2025**

Six additional consortia selected to establish AI factories

- **11 February 2025**

Launch InvestAI at the AI Action Summit in Paris

- **6 February 2025**

Guidelines on AI system definition

- **4 February 2025**

Guidelines on prohibited AI practices

- **10 December 2025**

Seven consortia selected to establish AI factories which will boost AI innovation in the EU

- **September 2024**

Beginning of the drawing-up process of the Code of Practice for General-Purpose AI

Companies sign EU AI Pact pledges (Pillar II).

- **1 August 2024**

AI Act enters into force

- **June 2024**

Establishment of the European AI Office

- **January 2024**

AI innovation package to support Artificial Intelligence startups and SMEs

- **December 2023**

Political agreement on the AI Act reached by the co-legislators

- **April 2021**

Communication on Fostering a European approach to AI

[Proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised rules on AI](#)

[Updated coordinated plan on AI](#)

[Impact assessment of an AI regulation](#)

- **February 2020**

White paper on AI: a European approach to excellence and trust

- **April 2019**

Communication: Building trust in human-centric artificial intelligence

- **December 2018**

Coordinated plan on AI

Communication: AI made in Europe

- **June 2018**

Launch of the European AI alliance

Set up of the high-level expert group on AI

- **April 2018**

Communication: Artificial intelligence for Europe

Declaration of cooperation on artificial intelligence



## Quick links

Artificial Intelligence – Questions and Answers

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AI Act

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Support ecosystem for AI innovation in Europe

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AI Innovation Package

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Strategy on artificial intelligence ↗

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White paper on artificial intelligence ↗

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Communication on boosting startups and innovation in trustworthy AI

## Latest News

Press release | 21 January 2026

**EU supports digital connectivity with simpler and harmonised rules in Digital Networks Act** (</en/news/eu-supports-digital-connectivity-simpler-and-harmonised-rules-digital-networks-act>)



The European Commission proposed the Digital Networks Act (DNA) to modernise, simplify and harmonise EU rules on connectivity networks.

Digibyte | 19 January 2026

**EuroHPC Regulation amended to strengthen Europe's AI and quantum capabilities** (</en/news/eurohpc-regulation-amended-strengthen-europe-s-ai-and-quantum-capabilities>)



The European Union has formally adopted an amendment to the EuroHPC Regulation - support Europe's strategic autonomy and global competitiveness on high-performance computing, AI and quantum technologies.

Press release | 15 January 2026

## EU invests over €307 million into artificial intelligence and related technologies (</en/news/eu-invests-over-eu307-million-artificial-intelligence-and-related-technologies>)



The European Commission has launched two new calls under the 'Digital, Industry and Space' cluster of the Horizon Europe Work Programme, allocating €307.3 million to bolster Europe's digital innovation and competitiveness.

Digibyte | 12 January 2026

## Commission opens call for evidence on Open-Source Digital Ecosystems (</en/news/commission-opens-call-evidence-open-source-digital-ecosystems>)



The European Commission has launched a call for evidence on the upcoming European Open Digital Ecosystem Strategy - an initiative that will support EU ambitions to secure technological sovereignty.

[Browse Artificial intelligence >](#) (</en/related-content?topic=119>)

## Related Content

### Big Picture

# WHY IS AI IMPORTANT FOR YOU?



## Artificial Intelligence (</en/policies/artificial-intelligence>)

Europe is transforming into the AI continent by fostering the development and uptake of new AI applications while ensuring that AI remains safe and respect EU values.

## Dig deeper

### AI Act (</en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>)

The AI Act is the first-ever legal framework on AI, which addresses the risks of AI and positions...

### AI Pact (</en/policies/ai-pact>)

The AI Pact encourages and supports organisations to plan ahead for the implementation of AI Act...

### Guidelines for providers of purpose models (</en/policies/gpai-providers>)

The Commission guidelines of the operators of...

## Related Content



## European Data Governance Act [\(en/policies/data-governance-act\)](/en/policies/data-governance-act)

A European Data Governance Act, which is fully in line with EU values and principles, will bring...

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### Last update

5 December 2025

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