



Shaping Europe's digital future

AI Act

The AI Act is the first-ever legal framework on AI, which addresses the risks of AI and positions Europe to play a leading role globally.

The [AI Act](#) [↗] (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence) is the first-ever comprehensive legal framework on AI worldwide. The aim of the rules is to foster trustworthy AI in Europe. For any **questions on the AI Act**, check out the [AI Act Single Information platform](#).

The AI Act sets out a risk-based rules for AI developers and deployers regarding specific uses of AI. The AI Act is part of a wider package of policy measures to support the development of trustworthy AI, which also includes the [AI Continent Action Plan](#), the [AI Innovation Package](#) and the launch of [AI Factories](#). Together, these measures guarantee safety, fundamental rights and human-centric AI, and strengthen uptake, investment and innovation in AI across the EU.

To facilitate the transition to the new regulatory framework, the Commission has launched the [AI Pact](#), a voluntary initiative that seeks to support the future implementation, engage with stakeholders and invite AI providers and deployers from Europe and beyond to comply with the key obligations of the AI Act ahead of time. In parallel, the [AI Act Service Desk](#) is also providing information and support for a smooth and effective implementation of the AI Act across the EU.

Why do we need rules on AI?

The AI Act ensures that Europeans can trust what AI has to offer. While most AI systems pose limited to no risk and can contribute to solving many societal challenges, certain AI systems create risks that we must address to avoid undesirable outcomes.

For example, it is often not possible to find out why an AI system has made a decision or prediction and taken a particular action. So, it may become difficult to assess whether someone has been unfairly disadvantaged, such as in a hiring decision or in an application for a public benefit scheme.

Although existing legislation provides some protection, it is insufficient to address the specific challenges AI systems may bring.

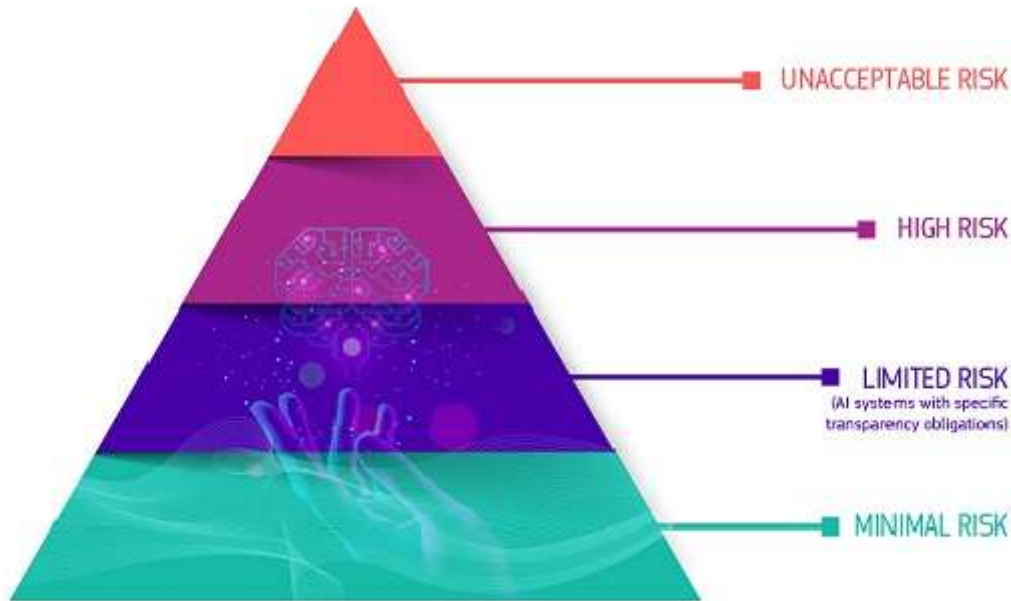
- [Risk-based Approach](#) ^(.)
- [Compliance and enforcement](#) ^(.)

- [Simplification Proposal](#) (2)



A Risk-based Approach

The AI Act defines 4 levels of risk for AI systems:



Unacceptable risk

All AI systems considered a clear threat to the safety, livelihoods and rights of people are banned. The **AI Act prohibits eight practices**, namely:

1. harmful AI-based manipulation and deception
2. harmful AI-based exploitation of vulnerabilities
3. social scoring
4. Individual criminal offence risk assessment or prediction
5. untargeted scraping of the internet or CCTV material to create or expand facial recognition databases
6. emotion recognition in workplaces and education institutions
7. biometric categorisation to deduce certain protected characteristics
8. real-time remote biometric identification for law enforcement purposes in publicly accessible spaces

The prohibitions became effective in February 2025. The Commission published two key documents to support the practical application of the prohibited practices:

- The [guidelines on prohibited AI practices under the AI Act](#), which offer legal explanations and practical examples to help stakeholders understand and comply with the prohibitions.
- The [guidelines on the AI system definition of the AI Act](#), to assist stakeholders in determining the scope of the AI Act

High risk

AI use cases that can pose serious risks to health, safety or fundamental rights are classified as high-risk. These **high-risk** use-cases include:

- AI safety components in critical infrastructures (e.g. transport), the failure of which could put the life and health of citizens at risk
- AI solutions used in education institutions, that may determine the access to education and course of someone's professional life (e.g. scoring of exams)
- AI-based safety components of products (e.g. AI application in robot-assisted surgery)
- AI tools for employment, management of workers and access to self-employment (e.g. CV-sorting software for recruitment)
- Certain AI use-cases utilised to give access to essential private and public services (e.g. credit scoring denying citizens opportunity to obtain a loan)
- AI systems used for remote biometric identification, emotion recognition and biometric categorisation (e.g. AI system to retroactively identify a shoplifter)
- AI use-cases in law enforcement that may interfere with people's fundamental rights (e.g. evaluation of the reliability of evidence)
- AI use-cases in migration, asylum and border control management (e.g. automated examination of visa applications)
- AI solutions used in the administration of justice and democratic processes (e.g. AI solutions to prepare court rulings)

High-risk AI systems are subject to **strict obligations** before they can be put on the market:

- adequate risk assessment and mitigation systems
- high-quality of the datasets feeding the system to minimise risks of discriminatory outcomes
- logging of activity to ensure traceability of results
- detailed documentation providing all information necessary on the system and its purpose for authorities to assess its compliance
- clear and adequate information to the deployer
- appropriate human oversight measures
- high level of robustness, cybersecurity and accuracy

The rules for high-risk AI will come into effect in August 2026 and August 2027.

Transparency risk

This refers to the risks associated with a need for transparency around the use of AI. The AI Act introduces specific disclosure obligations to ensure that humans are informed when necessary to preserve trust. For instance, when using AI systems such as chatbots, humans should be made aware that they are interacting with a machine so they can take an informed decision.

Moreover, providers of generative AI have to ensure that AI-generated content is identifiable. On top of that, certain AI-generated content should be clearly and visibly labelled, namely deep fakes and text published with the purpose to inform the public on matters of public interest.

The transparency rules of the AI Act will come into effect in August 2026.

Minimal or no risk

The AI Act does not introduce rules for AI that is deemed minimal or no risk. The vast majority of AI systems currently used in the EU fall into this category. This includes applications such as AI-enabled video games or spam filters.

How does it all work in practice for providers of high-risk AI systems?



Once an AI system is on the market, authorities are in charge of market surveillance, deployers ensure human oversight and monitoring, and providers have a post-market monitoring system in place. Providers and deployers will also report serious incidents and malfunctioning.

What are the rules for General-Purpose AI models?

General-purpose AI (GPAI) models can perform a wide range of tasks and are becoming the basis for many AI systems in the EU. Some of these models could carry systemic risks if they are very capable or widely used. To ensure safe and trustworthy AI, the AI Act puts in place rules for providers of such models. This includes transparency and copyright-related rules. For models that may carry systemic risks, providers should assess and mitigate these risks. The AI Act rules on GPAI became effective in August 2025.

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Quick links

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[Text of the AI Act in all EU official languages](#) ↗

[AI Pact \(/en/policies/ai-pact\)](/en/policies/ai-pact)

General-Purpose AI (GPAI) code of practice

Impact assessment of the regulation

Study supporting the impact assessment

FAQs: New rules for Artificial Intelligence

European AI Office

Governance and enforcement of the AI Act

Upcoming guidelines on the AI Act

Latest News

PRESS RELEASE | 17 December 2025

Commission publishes first draft of Code of Practice on marking and labelling of AI-generated content (</en/news/commission-publishes-first-draft-code-practice-marking-and-labelling-ai-generated-content>)



PRESS RELEASE | 04 December 2025

Commission and European Investment Bank Group team up to support AI Gigafactories (</en/news/commission-and-european-investment-bank-group-team-support-ai-gigafactories>)



DIGIBYTE | 27 November 2025

European Commission, Member States and Semiconductor Industry take stock of the innovation and advancement of the IPCEI in Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (</en/news/european-commission-member-states-and-semiconductor-industry-take-stock-innovation-and-advancement>)



PRESS RELEASE | 24 November 2025

Commission launches whistleblower tool for AI Act (</en/news/commission-launches-whistleblower-tool-ai-act>)



PRESS RELEASE | 19 November 2025



Simpler EU digital rules and new digital wallets to save billions for businesses and boost innovation (</en/news/simpler-eu-digital-rules-and-new-digital-wallets-save-billions-businesses-and-boost-innovation>).

PRESS RELEASE | 10 November 2025

Executive Vice-President Virkkunen discusses EU support for tech industry at Web Summit 2025 in Lisbon (</en/news/executive-vice-president-virkkunen-discusses-eu-support-tech-industry-web-summit-2025-lisbon>).



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

Policy and legislation

17-12-2025

First Draft Code of Practice on Transparency of AI-Generated Content (</en/library/first-draft-code-practice-transparency-ai-generated-content>).

04-12-2025

Memorandum of Understanding on AI Gigafactories (</en/library/memorandum-understanding-ai-gigafactories>).

19-11-2025

Digital Omnibus Regulation Proposal (</en/library/digital-omnibus-regulation-proposal>).

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Report / Study

01-12-2025

Study - the next data frontier: generative AI, regulatory compliance and international dimensions (</en/library/study-next-data-frontier-generative-ai-regulatory-compliance-and-international-dimensions>).

12-11-2025

Supporting the Apply AI strategy: AI Start up and investment activity across 10 key industrial sectors (</en/library/supporting-apply-ai-strategy-ai-start-and-investment-activity-across-10-key-industrial-sectors>).

28-10-2025

[Shaping and strengthening European AI talent](/en/library/shaping-and-strengthening-european-ai-talent) (</en/library/shaping-and-strengthening-european-ai-talent>).

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Factsheet / infographic

08-10-2025

[The Commission internal use of Artificial Intelligence](/en/library/commission-internal-use-artificial-intelligence) (</en/library/commission-internal-use-artificial-intelligence>).

05-06-2025

[Factsheet on the International Digital Strategy for the European Union](/en/library/factsheet-international-digital-strategy-european-union) (</en/library/factsheet-international-digital-strategy-european-union>).

05-04-2024

[Factsheet: EU-US Trade and Technology Council \(2021-2024\)](/en/library/factsheet-eu-us-trade-and-technology-council-2021-2024) (</en/library/factsheet-eu-us-trade-and-technology-council-2021-2024>).

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Brochure

22-12-2025

[The rise of the intelligent edge – Insights into MetaOS](/en/library/rise-intelligent-edge-insights-metaos) (</en/library/rise-intelligent-edge-insights-metaos>).

04-02-2025

[Living repository to foster learning and exchange on AI literacy](/en/library/living-repository-foster-learning-and-exchange-ai-literacy) (</en/library/living-repository-foster-learning-and-exchange-ai-literacy>).

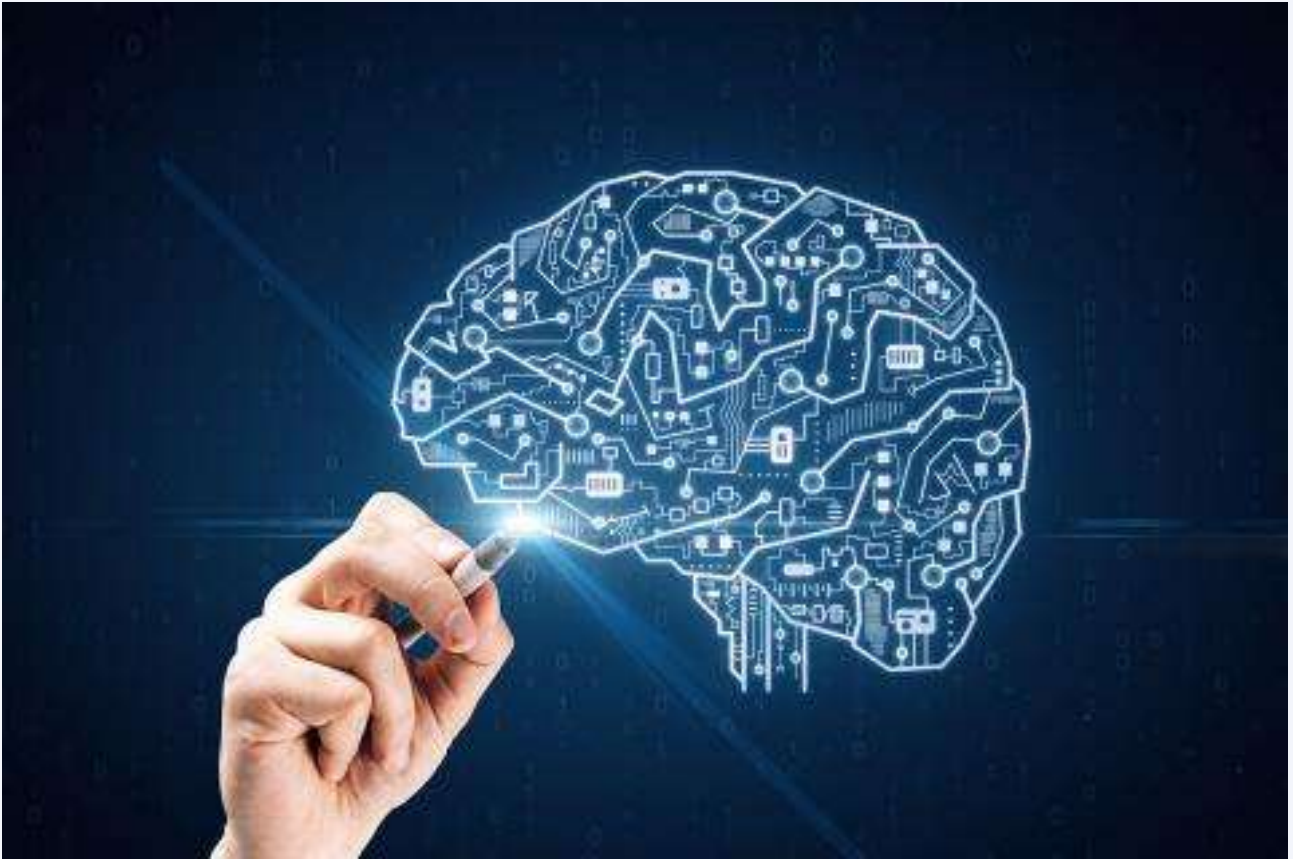
04-03-2024

[Horizon Europe: new projects in AI, Data and Robotics - 2024 Edition](/en/library/horizon-europe-new-projects-ai-data-and-robotics-2024-edition) (</en/library/horizon-europe-new-projects-ai-data-and-robotics-2024-edition>).

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Big Picture



[European approach to artificial intelligence](/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence) *(/en/policies/european-approach-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.

Dig deeper

[Governance and enforcement of the AI Act](/en/policies/ai-act-governance-and-enforcement) *(/en/policies/ai-act-governance-and-enforcement)*

The European AI Office and the national market surveillance authorities are responsible for...

[AI talent, skills and literacy](/en/policies/ai-talent-skills-and-literacy) *(/en/policies/ai-talent-skills-and-literacy)*

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