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EU AI Act

European AI Office

Overview of Regulator for Trustworthy AI

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AI & Partners

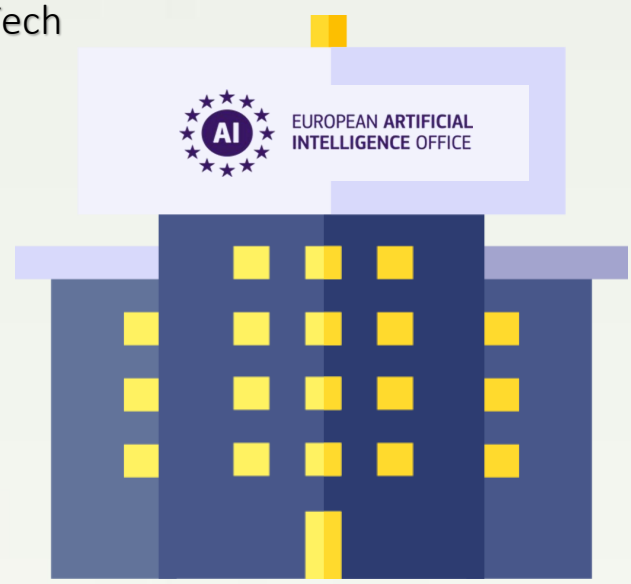
Sean Musch, AI & Partners

Michael Borrelli, AI & Partners

Charles Kerrigan, CMS UK

Daria Rudnik, aidra.ai – AI Coach for Leaders in Tech

Dr. Martha Boeckenfeld, marthaverse



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AI & Partners defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots professional services, regulatory interventions, and participating in industry groups such as AI Commons, we fight for fundamental rights in the artificial intelligence age.

This report was prepared by Sean Donald John Musch and Michael Charles Borrelli. For more information visit https://www.ai-and-partners.com/.

Contact: Michael Charles Borrelli | Director | m.borrelli@ai-and-partners.com.

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Who Are We

AI That You Can Trust

Why Us?

Stay on the right side of history. At AI & Partners, we believe AI should unlock potential—not cause harm. We've seen the fear and fallout when teams lose control of AI, but also the trust and innovation that follow when it's handled responsibly. That's why we exist: to help you build AI you can trust and stand behind—for the long run.

80%

of AI systems are unknown

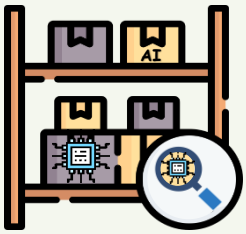
What Do We Do?

We enable safe AI usage—for your organization and your clients. Unknown AI adoption leads to confusion, risk, and reputational damage. We help you take control with tools to identify, monitor, and govern all AI systems—so you're not reacting to AI, you're leading it.

How Do We Do It?

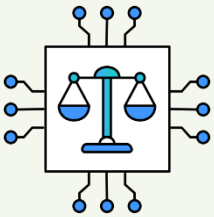
Do you know what AI systems you have? Identify all known and unknown AI systems (algorithms, LLMs, prompts, and models) from all internal and external AI vendors, automated by generating your inventory. Overall, 80% of AI inventory is unknown to our clients.

How do you guarantee ongoing safe AI use? Continuously monitor deployed AI systems for performance drift, anomalies or failures, real-world impacts, and emerging risks (e.g. data poisoning). Any malfunction of an AI system has severe implications for organisations (e.g. inability to assess online misinformation that leads to widespread public mistrust), so monitoring becomes a matter of urgency.



AI Discovery & AI Inventory

Automatically detect all AI systems, including models, algorithms, and prompts, and maintain a live, always-updated register for full visibility and compliance.



Responsible AI

Embed fairness, transparency, and control into every stage of AI use—aligning with the EU AI Act and building 'Trustworthy-by-Design'.

Model Monitoring

Continuously track your AI models after deployment to detect drift, bias, or failure—so you stay in control and prevent harm before it happens.

EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

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Introduction

As the EU Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) moves toward implementation, the European AI Office (AIO) has emerged as a cornerstone institution for ensuring the Act's effective, consistent, and rights-respecting application across the Union. Anchored in principles of legal clarity, transparency, and innovation stewardship, the AIO plays a central role in translating regulatory mandates into practical, harmonized enforcement and guidance—particularly for high-risk and general-purpose AI systems.

This report provides a strategic roadmap for Member States, regulators, and AI ecosystem stakeholders seeking to engage with the evolving role of the AIO. Drawing from the Office's foundational responsibilities—ranging from cross-border coordination and GPAI oversight to stakeholder engagement and model evaluation—it identifies key functions, institutional mechanisms, and cross-sector partnerships critical to successful implementation of the AI Act.

Through in-depth analysis of AIO initiatives such as joint investigations, regulatory interpretation, and technical standardization support, the report outlines how the Office operationalizes accountability and fosters a coherent digital governance framework. Core themes include science-based supervision, enforcement consistency, support for SMEs, and the role of expert panels and advisory forums in shaping responsive and inclusive regulation.

Whether you are a national regulator implementing the AI Act, a technology provider navigating compliance, or a policy advocate promoting democratic oversight, this report offers actionable insights into how the EU AI Office can be leveraged as a trusted anchor for lawful, responsible, and forward-looking AI governance across Europe.

Best regards,

Sean Musch

Founder/CEO

AI & Partners

Key questions being asked about the European AI Office

1. What is the role of the AI Office in implementing the EU AI Act?

The AI Office coordinates and monitors the implementation of the EU AI Act, ensuring compliance across Member States. It oversees GPAI models and systems, manages cross-sector communication, and works closely with national and EU authorities. The Office also prepares governance frameworks, ensuring alignment with other digital regulations like the DSA and DMA. Additionally, it supports advisory groups and scientific panels, playing a key role in the effective enforcement of the AI Act, thereby ensuring consistent application and helping create a safe, accountable AI ecosystem within the EU.

2. How does the AI Office support AI regulation across EU Member States?

The AI Office plays a crucial role in ensuring consistent implementation of AI regulations across the EU. It coordinates enforcement actions, monitors compliance, and helps Member States enforce the AI Act's provisions. The Office provides technical tools, guidance, and facilitates communication between national regulators. It also supports the creation of harmonized procurement practices and assists SMEs in understanding their obligations. Through collaboration with the AI Board, the Office promotes a unified regulatory approach that strengthens AI governance, reduces risks, and ensures that AI systems comply with the legal and ethical standards of the EU.

3. What is the purpose of the AI Office's collaboration with international partners?

The AI Office collaborates with EU bodies, Member States, and international partners to foster responsible AI governance. This collaboration helps align regulatory frameworks, ensures the effective oversight of AI systems, and enhances the EU's influence in global AI policy discussions. By working with entities like EuroHPC JU, the Office facilitates research and innovation in AI while also contributing to the EU's representation in international forums. This collaboration strengthens innovation, aligns regulatory efforts across borders, and ensures that the EU plays a central role in shaping global AI standards and ethical considerations.

4. How does the AI Office support SMEs in complying with the AI Act?

The AI Office assists SMEs by creating an accessible, centralized platform that explains the AI Act in clear, practical terms. It helps smaller businesses understand their legal obligations and navigate regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Office runs communication campaigns to raise awareness and ensure SMEs can meet compliance standards. By offering these resources, the Office reduces the burden on SMEs, encourages innovation, and supports their competitiveness in the AI ecosystem. This approach helps ensure that SMEs can safely leverage AI technologies while adhering to EU regulatory standards, fostering growth and innovation in the sector.

5. What are regulatory sandboxes, and how does the AI Office support them?

Regulatory sandboxes allow AI systems to be tested under supervision before market entry. The AI Office supports the development of these sandboxes by providing technical tools, frameworks, and guidance to Member States. Sandboxes enable AI developers, especially SMEs, to innovate while reducing risks and ensuring legal compliance. The Office facilitates controlled testing, fostering a safe environment for experimentation. Annual reports from sandbox activities inform the AI Office and the AI Board, ensuring continuous improvement in regulatory oversight and promoting the safe development of new AI technologies across the EU's digital landscape.

6. How does the AI Office evaluate the risks of GPAI models?

The AI Office evaluates the risks and capabilities of GPAI models through technical benchmarks, expert input, and structured tools. These evaluations help identify potential harms, systemic risks, and safety concerns associated with AI systems. The Office may investigate serious incidents, collect relevant documentation, and request internal safeguards from providers. If a model is found to pose significant risks, the AI Office can require mitigation actions or, in extreme cases, restrict or remove the model. Evaluations may include API access or source code inspection, ensuring that AI systems comply with the AI Act and do not pose unaddressed dangers.

7. What is the role of the Scientific Panel of Independent Experts?

The Scientific Panel of Independent Experts, appointed by the European Commission, provides crucial advice to the AI Office on assessing risks, developing evaluation tools, and classifying systemically risky AI models. This panel, composed of independent experts with proven AI knowledge, helps ensure that decisions related to AI governance are informed by scientific evidence and technical expertise. It also issues alerts in cases of serious EU-level risks and supports the AI Office in making science-based regulatory decisions. Their guidance strengthens the transparency and credibility of the EU's AI governance and regulatory processes.

8. How does the AI Office ensure consistent enforcement of the AI Act?

The AI Office supports the consistent enforcement of the AI Act by helping the European Commission draft legal decisions, delegated acts, and implementing regulations. It also develops practical guidance, best practices, and manages standardisation requests, ensuring that GPAI models and systems are regulated with legal clarity and technical precision. The Office collaborates with national authorities, promoting a unified approach to enforcement across the EU. By providing tools and support, the Office ensures that AI systems meet regulatory requirements, fostering accountability and consistency in the implementation of the AI Act throughout the EU Member States.

9. How will the AI Office be reviewed in 2026?

By June 2026, the European Commission will conduct a review to assess whether the AI Office has the necessary authority, capacity, and resources to fulfill its role effectively. The review will evaluate how well the Office handles governance, enforcement, coordination, and support functions within the EU's evolving AI regulatory framework. If gaps are identified, the Commission may propose expanded powers or additional resources to strengthen the Office's role. This process ensures that the AI Office remains adaptable and equipped to oversee AI development, addressing any emerging challenges in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

10. What is the AI Office's role in fostering AI innovation?

The AI Office fosters AI innovation by supporting regulatory sandboxes, providing guidance to SMEs, and promoting harmonised procurement practices across the EU. These efforts enable AI developers to test new models in controlled environments, reducing compliance risks while encouraging experimentation and technological advancement. By ensuring that the AI Act provides clarity and flexibility, the Office helps create a regulatory environment conducive to innovation. Collaboration with international and EU research bodies, like EuroHPC JU, also drives AI research and infrastructure

development, ensuring the EU remains at the forefront of AI innovation while safeguarding safety, ethics, and fundamental rights.

Understanding the European AI Office

1. Central Coordinating and Monitoring Mechanism

What does this involve?

The Central Coordinating and Monitoring Mechanism involves the AI Office taking a lead role in overseeing the EU AI Act's implementation. This includes monitoring compliance of general-purpose AI (GPAI) models and systems, coordinating enforcement across EU Member States, and ensuring consistent application of the law. The office also acts as a communication hub, connecting national authorities, EU institutions, and expert groups. It develops governance frameworks, ensures regulatory consistency with laws like the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), and provides administrative support to scientific and advisory committees within the AI regulatory ecosystem.

Why is it necessary?

This mechanism is necessary to ensure cohesive, effective, and uniform enforcement of the EU AI Act across all Member States. Given the cross-border nature of AI technologies and the complexity of digital regulation, a centralized body ensures that national efforts align with EU-wide standards. Without it, fragmented or inconsistent interpretations could arise, weakening the law's effectiveness and potentially harming innovation, trust, and safety. The mechanism also ensures that AI regulation is not siloed but harmonized with related digital laws like the DSA and DMA, creating a comprehensive and responsive regulatory landscape for AI in Europe.

How does it work?

The mechanism works by placing the AI Office at the center of coordination, monitoring, and communication. It collects and analyzes data on the compliance of GPAI systems, provides guidance to national enforcement bodies, and facilitates regular collaboration between EU and national authorities. The office establishes frameworks for governance, shares best practices, and supports research through scientific and advisory groups. It also ensures that AI-related policies are aligned with the broader digital regulatory environment. Through these tasks, the AI Office enables transparent oversight, encourages regulatory consistency, and fosters a cooperative approach to implementing the AI Act across the EU.

2. AI Board

What does this involve?

The AI Board is made up of one representative from each EU Member State and plays a key role in ensuring the consistent and coordinated application of the AI Act across Europe. It serves as a forum for collaboration, helping align national approaches and interpretations of the legislation. The Board also focuses on fostering cooperation around innovation-friendly tools, particularly regulatory sandboxes that allow for controlled testing of AI systems. Its activities are supported by the AI Office, which handles logistics such as organizing meetings, drafting agendas, and providing ongoing administrative and strategic assistance.

Why is it necessary?

The AI Board is necessary to prevent regulatory fragmentation across the EU and to ensure that Member States implement the AI Act in a harmonized manner. Since AI technologies often operate across borders, coordinated oversight helps maintain legal clarity and efficiency, both for developers and the public. The Board also enhances collaboration between national authorities, especially in sharing experiences, best practices, and interpretations. By promoting the use of regulatory sandboxes, the Board supports innovation while ensuring safeguards. Its existence strengthens the EU's unified stance on trustworthy AI and helps adapt enforcement to evolving technological and societal contexts.

How does it work?

The AI Board functions through regular collaboration among national representatives, with each Member State contributing to discussions and decision-making. The AI Office serves as the Secretariat, organizing meetings, managing agendas, and facilitating communication. The Board encourages the development and harmonized application of regulatory sandboxes, enabling controlled environments where AI systems can be tested under supervision. It also supports alignment on compliance practices and interpretation of legal obligations. Through these mechanisms, the Board ensures that national authorities stay coordinated, share insights, and apply the AI Act in a way that supports both innovation and consistent enforcement across the EU.

3. Joint Investigation

What does this involve?

Joint investigations involve coordinated enforcement actions when high-risk AI systems pose significant threats that extend across national borders. Led by national market surveillance authorities, these investigations are supported and facilitated by the AI Office. The Office ensures smooth cooperation among Member States by managing logistics, streamlining information-sharing, and providing strategic support. This process enables rapid and unified responses to serious risks or suspected non-compliance with the AI Act. It also helps identify systemic issues, enhances transparency, and ensures that appropriate measures are taken to protect users, uphold legal standards, and maintain public trust in AI systems.

Why is it necessary?

Joint investigations are necessary to address serious risks posed by high-risk AI systems that may impact multiple countries simultaneously. Without coordinated action, enforcement efforts could be fragmented, delayed, or inconsistent, reducing their effectiveness. A cross-border threat—such as biased algorithms in healthcare or flawed AI in critical infrastructure—requires a unified response to prevent harm. Joint investigations ensure consistent enforcement of the AI Act, strengthen trust in regulatory institutions, and enable a more robust response to emerging issues. They also reinforce the EU's commitment to safety, accountability, and the responsible use of AI across all Member States.

How does it work?

When a serious cross-border risk from a high-risk AI system is identified, national market surveillance authorities initiate a joint investigation, coordinated by the AI Office. The Office facilitates the process by organizing communication among authorities, ensuring timely and secure information exchange, and offering logistical and administrative support. It helps align procedures and timelines across jurisdictions and may provide technical or regulatory guidance. This collaborative model ensures consistency in enforcement actions and promotes transparency. The findings of joint investigations may lead to corrective measures, regulatory adjustments, or further monitoring, contributing to a safer and more accountable AI ecosystem in the EU.

4.Enforcement

What does this involve?

Enforcement support by the AI Office includes helping the European Commission develop legal tools such as implementing acts, delegated acts, and formal decisions necessary for applying the AI Act. It also produces practical guidance and best practice documents to help stakeholders understand and comply with the rules. The Office manages standardisation requests to ensure technical criteria are aligned with legal requirements. These activities aim to translate the AI Act into clear, actionable steps, ensuring that general-purpose AI (GPAI) models and systems are consistently regulated across Member States with both legal clarity and technical accuracy.

Why is it necessary?

This enforcement support is essential to ensure the AI Act is applied effectively and uniformly across the EU. AI technologies are complex and rapidly evolving, so consistent interpretation and technically sound implementation are crucial. Without clear guidance, standardisation, and legal precision, enforcement could vary by country, undermining trust and legal certainty. The AI Office's role ensures that GPAI systems meet shared expectations, aligning technical standards with regulatory goals. It also empowers Member States, developers, and users with the tools they need to understand and fulfill their obligations, reinforcing accountability, legal compliance, and innovation-friendly governance.

How does it work?

The AI Office works alongside the European Commission by helping to draft legal instruments such as delegated and implementing acts, which clarify and specify obligations under the AI Act. It also issues practical guidance to help stakeholders interpret the rules and apply them correctly. Additionally, it coordinates with standardisation bodies to align legal requirements with technical benchmarks, facilitating uniform compliance across the EU. Through these efforts, the AI Office acts as a bridge between legal policy and real-world application, ensuring that enforcement is not only legally robust but also practical, adaptable, and consistent across different sectors and jurisdictions.

5. Codes of Practice

What does this involve?

The development of Codes of Practice involves the AI Office, in collaboration with the AI Board, facilitating the creation, evaluation, and potential adoption of voluntary guidelines that address key compliance aspects of general-purpose AI (GPAI) models—particularly around transparency measures like watermarking. These codes will include measurable objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress. The AI Office will engage with stakeholders, organize best-practice exchanges, and support implementation. If needed, it may coordinate with the European Commission to formalize the codes through implementing acts, especially during the interim period before binding technical standards are fully established.

Why is it necessary?

Codes of Practice are necessary to provide immediate, practical guidance on GPAI compliance before official standards are finalized. They help foster transparency, accountability, and responsible AI use, especially in sensitive areas like watermarking of generated content. These voluntary frameworks promote industry engagement and allow stakeholders to adapt to expectations gradually. They also provide a testbed for future regulatory or standardisation measures. The measurable objectives and KPIs included in the codes ensure progress can be tracked and evaluated. Overall, they support early alignment with the AI Act, bridging the gap between legislation and implementation during the transitional phase.

How does it work?

The AI Office, working with the AI Board, oversees the creation and rollout of voluntary Codes of Practice. It consults industry players, civil society, and technical experts to ensure the codes are practical and impactful. These codes focus on specific areas like watermarking and compliance for GPAI models and include KPIs to assess effectiveness. The Office hosts forums to share best practices and track uptake. If the codes prove effective, the Office may coordinate with the European Commission to adopt them formally via implementing acts. This flexible mechanism supports early alignment and prepares the ground for future enforceable standards.

6. Model Evaluations: Capabilities and Risks

What does this involve?

Model evaluations involve the AI Office assessing the capabilities and risks of general-purpose AI (GPAI) models through structured tools, technical benchmarks, and expert consultation. These evaluations are designed to identify potential harms, including systemic risks, safety concerns, and misuse vulnerabilities. The Office may examine documentation, internal safeguards, or performance data, and engage directly with providers through structured dialogues. In serious cases, evaluations may include access to APIs or even source code. Where risks are substantiated, the Office can require mitigation measures—or in extreme cases—restrict or remove a model from the market to protect users and uphold the AI Act.

Why is it necessary?

Model evaluations are essential to identify and manage the risks posed by powerful GPAI systems, which can impact fundamental rights, public safety, or democratic processes. As AI capabilities rapidly evolve, thorough assessments ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with the AI Act's safety requirements. Without proactive evaluation, dangerous or flawed models could be deployed without adequate safeguards. These processes also encourage developers to build responsibly and maintain internal risk-management practices. By intervening when systemic risk is detected, the AI Office helps prevent widespread harm, fosters trust in AI technologies, and supports a safe and rights-respecting digital environment across the EU.

How does it work?

The AI Office conducts model evaluations using technical benchmarks, expert analysis, and structured oversight mechanisms. Providers may be required to supply documentation, describe internal safeguards, or provide access to APIs and source code for closer inspection. If a serious incident or risk emerges, the Office can investigate further and request mitigation actions. Evaluations are collaborative but firm—often involving structured dialogue with providers to assess compliance and risk posture. If systemic risks are found and not addressed, the Office can impose restrictions or mandate model removal. This process ensures GPAI systems are safe, transparent, and aligned with EU legal and ethical standards.

7. Data Governance

What does this involve?

Data governance under the AI Office's role requires GPAI model providers to publish training data summaries that are informative yet broad. These summaries must outline the key categories and sources of data—such as public records, web content, or proprietary datasets—and include contextual narratives explaining the rationale behind dataset choices. The goal is not to reveal sensitive or proprietary details but to provide meaningful insights into how the model was trained. This transparency measure allows regulators, researchers, and the public to better understand potential biases, content origins, and ethical considerations in model development and deployment.

Why is it necessary?

This requirement is necessary to improve transparency and accountability in AI development, especially for general-purpose models that influence many sectors. Training data plays a crucial role in shaping how AI systems behave, including how they reflect biases, uphold fairness, or respect privacy. By mandating providers to disclose summaries of their data sources, the AI Office empowers stakeholders to assess the ethical and legal implications of model training. It also supports individuals' rights—like the right to contest harmful outputs—and enhances trust in AI systems by shedding light on their foundations. Clear data governance is essential for responsible and rights-respecting AI.

How does it work?

The AI Office enforces this data governance requirement by instructing GPAI providers to create training data summaries that meet specific transparency criteria. These summaries must identify the types of datasets used (e.g., academic databases, public websites, commercial sources) and explain their relevance in narrative form. The information should be accessible and meaningful to non-experts while preserving sensitive business details. The Office reviews these disclosures to ensure compliance and may issue guidance on format or content. This structured approach supports informed public scrutiny, regulatory oversight, and future accountability measures, helping align AI training practices with EU transparency standards.

8. Scientific Panel of Independent Experts

What does this involve?

The Scientific Panel of Independent Experts is a group appointed by the European Commission to advise the AI Office on technical, scientific, and risk-related matters concerning general-purpose AI (GPAI). Composed of individuals with proven AI expertise and impartiality, the panel supports the development of evaluation tools, helps assess emerging risks, and advises on whether a model should be designated as systemically risky. The panel can also issue early warnings when serious EU-wide threats are identified. Their role ensures that regulatory decisions are grounded in sound science, technical understanding, and objective expert judgment.

Why is it necessary?

This panel is necessary to ensure that AI oversight is guided by deep technical expertise, not just legal or political considerations. GPAI systems can pose complex and evolving risks—such as misinformation, systemic bias, or misuse—which require nuanced, science-based analysis. Independent experts provide a reliable foundation for assessing these challenges and making informed, evidence-based regulatory decisions. Their advice helps the AI Office remain adaptive, rigorous, and proactive. By ensuring decisions like systemic model classification are technically sound, the panel supports responsible innovation while protecting fundamental rights, public safety, and democratic integrity across the EU.

How does it work?

The Commission selects members of the panel based on their independence and recognized AI expertise. Once formed, the panel works alongside the AI Office, offering guidance on risk assessments, evaluation methodologies, and the designation of systemically risky GPAI models. It can propose alerts in response to serious EU-level threats and contributes to the design of tools used in technical model evaluations. The AI Office integrates this expert advice into its regulatory decisions and enforcement strategies. This collaborative model ensures that oversight is informed by cutting-edge knowledge, making the EU's AI governance both credible and scientifically robust.

9. Collaboration

What does this involve?

Collaboration by the AI Office involves working closely with EU institutions, Member States, and international stakeholders to ensure cohesive, responsible AI governance. This includes engaging with the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) on AI research and computing infrastructure, promoting harmonised AI procurement practices across the Union, and contributing to the EU's presence in global AI policy forums. The Office serves as a bridge between policy, research, and implementation. Through these partnerships, it supports the development, deployment, and oversight of general-purpose AI (GPAI) systems in a way that is consistent, forward-looking, and aligned with EU values and standards.

Why is it necessary?

Collaboration is essential because AI systems and their impacts cross borders, sectors, and disciplines. Without coordination, regulatory approaches risk becoming fragmented or outdated. By partnering with EU bodies, national governments, and international allies, the AI Office helps ensure alignment in policies, fosters trust, and avoids duplication. Collaboration with EuroHPC JU supports AI research and infrastructure, while harmonised procurement prevents inconsistent application of rules. On the global stage, joint engagement strengthens the EU's influence in shaping international AI norms. These partnerships enable effective oversight, support innovation, and help position the EU as a leader in trustworthy and secure AI development.

How does it work?

The AI Office fosters collaboration through structured partnerships, shared initiatives, and continuous dialogue with EU institutions, Member States, and global actors. It engages with EuroHPC JU to align research and computing resources with regulatory goals. It supports harmonised procurement by offering guidance and facilitating alignment across national practices. On the international level, the Office contributes to multilateral forums and helps shape global norms for responsible AI. These efforts are coordinated through meetings, working groups, and strategic planning. This collaborative ecosystem enhances regulatory coherence, supports cutting-edge research, and ensures AI is developed and deployed safely across jurisdictions.

10. AI Regulatory Sandboxes

What does this involve?

The AI Office supports the creation and operation of regulatory sandboxes, which are controlled environments where AI systems can be tested under supervision before they enter the market. In collaboration with Member States, the Office provides technical tools, guidance, and frameworks to help ensure that testing is both safe and legally compliant. Sandboxes allow for experimentation with AI innovations—particularly benefiting SMEs—by offering legal clarity and reducing regulatory risks. The outcomes and insights gained from sandbox testing are reported annually, with findings being shared with the AI Board to inform regulatory decisions and continuous improvement.

Why is it necessary?

Regulatory sandboxes are necessary to balance innovation with accountability in the rapidly evolving AI landscape. They provide a safe space for AI systems to be tested under real-world conditions before they are deployed, helping to identify potential risks, flaws, or ethical concerns early. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), sandboxes reduce barriers to market entry by providing a controlled environment where they can experiment without the full weight of complex regulatory compliance. By reducing uncertainty, sandboxes encourage innovation while ensuring that AI systems are safe, transparent, and aligned with EU regulations before they reach consumers.

How does it work?

The AI Office collaborates with Member States to set up and manage regulatory sandboxes. It provides technical support, guidance, and frameworks to ensure that AI systems are tested effectively under supervision. Sandboxes allow developers, particularly SMEs, to test their models in a controlled, compliant environment, helping identify potential risks and gain legal clarity before market entry. Annual reports from sandbox projects inform the AI Office and the AI Board about trends, challenges, and insights gained from testing. This feedback loop helps refine both the regulatory approach and the development of AI systems to ensure safer, more innovative solutions.

11. Supporting SMEs

What does this involve?

The AI Office will support SMEs by creating a centralized, user-friendly platform that explains the AI Act in clear, practical terms. This platform will provide essential information to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) understand their legal obligations and navigate regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Office will run targeted communication campaigns to raise awareness, ensuring that smaller operators know how to comply with the AI Act. These efforts are designed to reduce the regulatory burden on SMEs, fostering innovation, and improving their competitiveness within the EU's AI ecosystem.

Why is it necessary?

Supporting SMEs is crucial because smaller businesses often lack the resources or expertise to navigate complex regulations like the AI Act. Without assistance, SMEs might struggle to comply with the requirements, potentially hindering their ability to innovate or remain competitive. By providing clear, accessible guidance and raising awareness through communication campaigns, the AI Office ensures that these businesses can meet their obligations without overwhelming compliance costs. This support empowers SMEs to leverage AI technologies safely and effectively, promoting innovation while ensuring they remain aligned with EU regulations and contributing to a dynamic AI ecosystem.

How does it work?

The AI Office will develop an accessible, centralized platform that simplifies the AI Act for SMEs, providing step-by-step guidance on compliance. This platform will include FAQs, practical examples, and tools to help businesses understand and meet their obligations. The Office will also launch communication campaigns to reach SMEs across the EU, informing them about the AI Act's requirements and offering resources for compliance. By streamlining the regulatory process and offering direct support, these efforts will help reduce the burden on SMEs, promote their innovation, and ensure they remain competitive in the evolving AI landscape.

12. Review

What does this involve?

By June 2026, the European Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the AI Office to assess whether it has the necessary authority, capacity, and resources to effectively carry out its mission. The review will examine the Office's ability to handle its governance, enforcement, coordination, and support functions under the evolving EU AI regulatory framework. If any gaps or limitations are identified, the review may recommend expanding the Office's powers or increasing its resources. This ensures that the AI Office remains well-equipped to manage the complexities of AI regulation as the sector develops.

Why is it necessary?

The review is necessary to ensure that the AI Office can effectively adapt to the growing challenges and responsibilities in AI governance. As AI technologies evolve rapidly, the regulatory framework must remain robust and flexible. Regular assessments help determine whether the Office has the authority and resources required to oversee emerging AI risks, enforce compliance, and coordinate across Member States. If deficiencies are found, adjustments can be made to strengthen its capacity, ensuring that the Office remains an effective body for ensuring safe, responsible AI development and deployment across the EU in the future.

How does it work?

The review process involves a thorough assessment of the AI Office's existing resources, powers, and operational effectiveness by June 2026. The Commission will evaluate whether the Office can meet its responsibilities in governance, enforcement, coordination, and support functions within the framework of the EU's AI regulation. If gaps are identified—whether in authority, capacity, or funding—the Commission may propose measures to address these shortcomings, such as expanding the Office's powers or allocating additional resources. The review process is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the AI Office remains capable of overseeing the rapidly evolving AI landscape.

Mapping European AI Office to Ecosystem Actors

EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

AI Board
Coordinates harmonised AI regulation enforcement.

Scientific Panel of Experts
Provides alerts, insights on general-purpose AI models.

Advisory Forum
Channels stakeholder input into regulation.

EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

European AI Office
Governance Body for EU AI Act

National Competent Authorities
Enforce EU AI Act within EU Member States.

Notified Bodies
Conduct conformity assessments for compliance.

AI Firm
Develops, deploys compliant AI systems.

EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

European AI Office		Actor					
Section	Description	AI Board	Scientifc Panel of Experts	Advisory Forum	National Competent Authorities	Notified Bodies	AI Firm
Central Coordinating and Monitoring Mechanism	The AI Office coordinates and monitors the EU AI Act's implementation by overseeing compliance of GPAI models and systems, supporting enforcement across Member States, liaising with national and EU authorities, and managing cross-sector communication. It also prepares governance frameworks, ensures alignment with other digital regulations like the DSA and DMA, and supports advisory and scientific groups.	"The AI Office plays a pivotal role in supporting the European Artificial Intelligence Board (AI Board), acting as its secretariat. In this capacity, it is responsible for the logistical and administrative functions that allow the Board to operate effectively. This includes convening regular meetings, preparing detailed agendas, ensuring the timely circulation of relevant documents, and facilitating the smooth functioning of deliberations among Board members. The Board is composed of representatives from national	The AI Office collaborates closely with the Scientific Panel of Experts to address the evolving challenges presented by general-purpose AI (GPAI) models. These models, due to their versatility and scale, pose complex and potentially systemic risks that extend across sectors and applications. The Scientific Panel is a multidisciplinary body composed of independent experts who monitor the development and deployment of GPAI models across the EU. Their role is to provide technical and scientific insight that informs risk assessment and regulatory oversight under the AI Act. One of the core responsibilities of this collaboration is the	The Advisory Forum serves as a vital mechanism through which the AI Office engages with a broad spectrum of stakeholders across the AI ecosystem. This includes representatives from industry, civil society, academia, SMEs, and standardization bodies. The Forum acts as a consultative body, offering the AI Office, the European Artificial Intelligence Board, and the European Commission timely input on the practical and technical aspects of AI development and deployment. The AI Office benefits from the diversity of expertise and perspectives within the Advisory Forum, which helps to shape policies and implementation	National competent authorities (NCAs) are the primary enforcement bodies responsible for implementing the AI Act within their respective Member States. The AI Office plays a critical supporting role in enabling these authorities to perform their functions effectively and consistently across the Union. This is achieved through a combination of coordination, capacity building, and facilitation of information sharing. The AI Office serves as a central node in the EU's AI regulatory framework, helping to harmonize enforcement actions and	Under the AI Act, certain AI systems—particularly those classified as high-risk—must undergo a conformity assessment before being placed on the EU market. This process is conducted by notified bodies, which are independent organizations designated by national authorities to evaluate whether AI systems meet the legal and technical requirements set out in the Act. The AI Office plays an essential role in coordinating and supporting these notified bodies to ensure consistency and quality across assessments conducted throughout the EU.	Under the AI Act, AI firms—especially those developing or deploying high-risk AI systems—are subject to strict legal obligations before their products can be placed on the EU market. The EU AI Office plays a pivotal role in supporting these firms by providing clarity, guidance, and a structured regulatory environment that facilitates compliance and innovation. The AI Office serves as a central hub for interpreting the AI Act's provisions, issuing guidance documents, and offering explanatory materials that help AI firms understand their
AI Board	The AI Board comprises one representative from each Member State and aims to ensure consistent and coordinated implementation of the AI Act across the EU. It is supported administratively by the AI Office, which organizes meetings, prepares agendas, and acts as Secretariat. The Board also fosters cooperation, particularly around the development and implementation of regulatory sandboxes.						
Joint Investigation	The AI Office coordinates joint investigations when						

	high-risk AI systems pose serious, cross-border threats. These investigations are led by market surveillance authorities, with the Office facilitating cooperation, information-sharing, and logistical support to ensure potential non-compliance is effectively identified and addressed. This approach strengthens consistency and collaboration across Member States in enforcing AI safety and accountability measures.	competent authorities across the EU and is tasked with ensuring a uniform and harmonized application of the AI Act across all Member States. By acting as the secretariat, the AI Office ensures that the Board has the operational support it needs to fulfill its advisory responsibilities. These include issuing opinions, recommendations, and guidelines that support the coherent interpretation and implementation of the AI Act. Through its coordination work, the AI Office helps prevent regulatory fragmentation and conflicting interpretations among Member States, particularly in areas related to	receipt and analysis of qualified alerts. These alerts are notifications submitted by the Scientific Panel when they identify evidence of potential systemic risks arising from specific GPAI models or patterns in their deployment. A qualified alert can include risks related to societal harm, misinformation, bias, environmental impacts, or instability in foundational systems. Upon receiving such alerts, the AI Office is empowered to take decisive follow-up actions. These include initiating investigations into the AI model in question and requesting detailed documentation and evidence from the provider responsible. This investigatory power ensures that the AI Office can act proactively before harm escalates, supporting a	strategies that are both effective and inclusive. For instance, stakeholders can highlight practical implementation challenges, gaps in current regulatory guidance, or emerging market trends that may influence risk categorization or conformity assessments. The Forum plays a key role in surfacing these insights, enabling the AI Office to adapt its guidance and support tools accordingly. One of the Advisory Forum's core contributions is its ability to advise the AI Board and Commission on how the AI Act is playing out on the ground. It can provide feedback on the operationalization of requirements like transparency obligations, data governance, and	interpretations of the AI Act. It facilitates regular communication among NCAs, enabling them to exchange information about emerging compliance challenges, enforcement decisions, and best practices. This coordination helps prevent regulatory fragmentation and ensures that businesses operating across multiple Member States face consistent expectations. In addition to fostering collaboration, the AI Office provides practical support to NCAs. This includes the development of interpretative guidance, technical documentation, and templates for conformity assessment. These tools are particularly	The AI Office helps maintain a harmonized approach by facilitating regular communication and knowledge-sharing among notified bodies. This includes organizing workshops, issuing common guidance documents, and providing access to emerging regulatory interpretations. By promoting best practices and addressing divergences in assessment approaches, the AI Office contributes to regulatory predictability and fairness for AI providers across Member States. Moreover, the AI Office acts as a central repository for relevant findings and trends identified through conformity assessments. This enables it to	responsibilities. By translating complex legal and technical requirements into actionable steps, the Office reduces uncertainty and supports firms in designing compliant AI systems from the outset, thereby minimizing costly delays and rework during the conformity assessment process. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as public consultations, technical roundtables, and advisory forums, the AI Office ensures that AI firms have a voice in shaping the practical application of the Act. These interactions help the Office tailor its guidance to real-world challenges, aligning regulatory implementation with the
Enforcement	To support enforcement of the AI Act, the AI Office helps the Commission draft legal decisions, implementing acts, and delegated acts. It prepares practical guidance, develops best practices, and manages standardisation requests. These measures ensure that GPAI models and systems are regulated with clarity, technical precision, and a consistent application of the law across the EU.						
Codes of Practice	The AI Office, alongside the AI Board, will facilitate and evaluate voluntary codes of practice by mid-2025, addressing GPAI model compliance and watermarking. These codes will include measurable						

	objectives and KPIs. The Office will consult stakeholders, host best-practice forums, and may coordinate with the Commission to adopt these codes through implementing acts, especially before standards are finalized.	the classification of high-risk systems, enforcement actions, and technical standards. In practical terms, the AI Office also gathers insights from the Advisory Forum and Scientific Panel of Experts to inform the Board's deliberations. This enables the Board to act as a central platform where technical expertise, regulatory oversight, and stakeholder perspectives converge. The AI Office's secretarial role ensures the Board remains agile and responsive in a rapidly evolving AI landscape. Furthermore, the AI Office supports the Board's ability to facilitate cross-border	preventive and risk-based approach to AI regulation. The partnership between the AI Office and the Scientific Panel ensures that regulatory decisions are grounded in cutting-edge technical knowledge and independent scientific judgment. It enables the AI Office to make informed, evidence-based decisions when determining whether additional compliance measures are needed. Moreover, the AI Office may use findings from the Scientific Panel to inform broader policy actions, updates to regulatory guidance, or to trigger coordination with national competent authorities. This setup creates a feedback loop between science and regulation, ensuring that the AI Act remains adaptable to technological change while prioritizing	human oversight, especially for high-risk AI systems. This feedback helps to calibrate enforcement and ensure that the regulation supports innovation while upholding EU values. In addition, the Forum helps to align the AI Office's activities with broader policy goals, including competitiveness, digital sovereignty, and human-centric AI development. By fostering structured dialogue with a wide array of stakeholders, the Advisory Forum helps democratize the regulatory process and ensures the inclusion of marginalized or underrepresented voices. The AI Office relies on this channel not only to validate its approaches but also to anticipate unintended	important for authorities dealing with resource constraints or limited technical expertise in the complex and fast-evolving field of AI. One of the AI Office's key functions is to assist in the establishment and operation of AI regulatory sandboxes—controlled environments where AI developers and authorities can test innovative systems in a safe and supervised setting. The AI Office helps NCAs design these sandboxes, offering guidance on how to ensure that such initiatives support both innovation and compliance with the AI Act. The AI Office may also facilitate training programs, expert exchanges, and joint	monitor systemic issues, assess whether certain types of AI systems are repeatedly failing to meet compliance standards, and determine if updates to technical norms or regulatory requirements are warranted. In supporting the work of notified bodies, the AI Office also collaborates with European standardization organizations. This helps ensure that the standards used in conformity assessments are robust, up to date, and aligned with the evolving state of the art. These efforts are critical in maintaining the integrity of the high-risk AI regulatory framework. The AI Office may also play a role in	operational realities of AI development. In addition, the AI Office facilitates access to up-to-date standards and best practices, often in collaboration with European standardization bodies. By keeping AI firms informed about the latest developments in technical benchmarks and risk mitigation strategies, the Office enables firms to anticipate and meet evolving compliance expectations. The Office also plays an important role in identifying and disseminating information on emerging regulatory trends and systemic issues uncovered through conformity assessments. This feedback loop allows AI firms to proactively address
Model evaluations: Capabilities and risks	The AI Office will evaluate GPAI models for risks and capabilities using benchmarks, tools, and expert input. It may investigate serious incidents, collect documentation, and request internal safeguards. In case of systemic risk, it can require mitigation, and if necessary, restrict or remove models. Evaluations may involve API access, source code, or structured provider dialogues.						
Data Governance	To increase transparency, the AI Office will require GPAI providers to publish training data summaries that are broad but informative. These must identify key data sources, such as public or private databases, and provide contextual narratives. The summaries aim to help stakeholders understand how AI models are trained, supporting rights claims and enabling informed public and regulatory scrutiny.						

Scientific panel of independent experts	The Commission will appoint a panel of experts with proven independence and AI knowledge to advise the AI Office. The panel helps assess GPAI risks, develop evaluation tools, classify systemic models, and issue alerts when serious EU-level risks arise. Their guidance supports science-based oversight and informs the Office's actions, including designating models as systemically risky.	cooperation on enforcement, share emerging risks, and propose improvements to the regulatory framework. In doing so, it helps advance the overarching goal of the AI Act: to ensure that AI systems placed on the EU market are safe, lawful, and aligned with fundamental rights."	public interest and systemic safety.	consequences, promote regulatory clarity, and build trust among stakeholders. In this way, the Advisory Forum enhances the legitimacy, responsiveness, and foresight of the AI Act's implementation.	investigations among Member States. These initiatives strengthen institutional capacity and promote a shared understanding of AI risks, classifications, and mitigation strategies. Overall, the relationship between the AI Office and national competent authorities is foundational to the effective implementation of the AI Act. Through its support and coordination role, the AI Office ensures that national regulators are not operating in silos but are instead part of a coherent, Union-wide system for trustworthy AI governance.	reviewing and updating the criteria by which notified bodies are designated, ensuring they possess the necessary expertise, impartiality, and procedural safeguards. This oversight function helps maintain trust in the conformity assessment process, which is central to the AI Act's market access regime. By fostering coordination, consistency, and high standards among notified bodies, the AI Office strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's AI regulatory system—ensuring that high-risk AI systems meet essential requirements before reaching users.	potential compliance gaps and refine their internal governance structures, such as risk management and data quality assurance processes. Furthermore, the AI Office contributes to a fair and competitive AI ecosystem by promoting consistent regulatory enforcement across Member States. By coordinating with national authorities and notified bodies, the Office helps ensure that AI firms are assessed under uniform standards regardless of their country of origin, fostering trust and a level playing field within the internal market. Ultimately, the AI Office supports AI firms not just as a regulatory overseer, but as a partner in
Collaboration	The AI Office will collaborate with EU bodies, Member States, and international partners to support responsible AI governance. It will engage with EuroHPC JU on AI research, promote harmonised procurement practices, and contribute to EU representation in global AI policy discussions. Collaboration strengthens innovation, regulatory alignment, and effective oversight of GPAI development and deployment across the Union.						
AI Regulatory Sandboxes	The AI Office will support the development of regulatory sandboxes that allow AI systems to be tested under supervision before market entry. Working with Member States, the Office provides						

	technical tools and guidance. Sandboxes aim to foster innovation—especially for SMEs—by offering legal clarity and reducing risk. Annual sandbox reports will inform the Office and AI Board.						responsible innovation. Its work helps firms navigate the regulatory landscape with confidence, enabling them to bring trustworthy, high-quality AI systems to market in line with the EU's values and legal framework.
Supporting SMEs	The AI Office will assist SMEs by developing an accessible, centralized information platform that explains the AI Act in practical terms. It will also run communication campaigns to raise awareness and ensure smaller operators understand and can meet their obligations. These efforts aim to reduce compliance burdens, encourage innovation, and support SME competitiveness in the AI ecosystem.						
Review	By June 2026, the Commission will assess whether the AI Office has adequate authority, capacity, and resources to fulfill its mission. If gaps are identified, the review may propose expanded powers or increased resourcing to strengthen the Office's role in governance, enforcement, coordination, and support functions under the evolving EU AI regulatory framework.						

Calls to action

EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

Establish AI Compliance Liaison

Designate an internal liaison to coordinate with the AI Office, ensuring alignment with the EU AI Act. This role supports compliance monitoring, facilitates communication with regulatory bodies, and integrates governance frameworks across departments to meet evolving obligations under the AI Act, DSA, and DMA.

Align with Evolving Enforcement Guidance

Monitor AI Office updates on legal decisions, guidance, and best practices. Adapt internal policies to reflect new implementing and delegated acts, ensuring your AI systems remain compliant. Staying informed enables timely adjustments and supports consistent, lawful deployment of GPAI models across the EU.

Support Proactive Model Evaluations

Prepare for AI Office evaluations by documenting model capabilities, risks, and safeguards. Ensure readiness to provide API access, technical details, and engage in structured dialogues. Proactive transparency helps demonstrate compliance, address systemic risks early, & maintain user trust.

Publish Transparent Data Summaries

Create and maintain clear, contextual summaries of training data sources for GPAI models. Identify key datasets and provide narrative explanations to meet transparency requirements. This fosters trust, supports regulatory compliance, and enables stakeholders to better understand AI models.

Conclusion

The establishment of the European AI Office under the EU Artificial Intelligence Act marks a foundational shift in how high-risk and general-purpose AI systems are governed—signaling a move toward coordinated, transparent, and evidence-based oversight at the Union level. As a central authority, the AI Office bridges the gap between legislative intent and operational enforcement, enabling consistent implementation of the AI Act across diverse regulatory, sectoral, and national contexts.

As outlined throughout this report, the AI Office plays a pivotal role in aligning technical oversight, policy development, and stakeholder engagement. It ensures that regulatory actions are informed by scientific expertise, grounded in legal clarity, and responsive to emerging risks. In coordinating with Member States, convening expert panels, and supporting harmonized practices, the Office strengthens institutional capacity and builds public trust in AI governance.

Yet, establishing such a centralized mechanism is only part of the challenge. To deliver on its mandate, the AI Office must be equipped with the authority, resources, and technical infrastructure needed to evaluate complex systems, coordinate cross-border enforcement, and support actors ranging from SMEs to standardization bodies. Clear processes for model evaluations, data transparency, and codes of practice are essential for the Office to function as an effective steward of the AI ecosystem.

Despite these operational demands, early developments are promising. The AI Office is already demonstrating its value by guiding implementation frameworks, managing high-risk incident responses, and shaping proactive compliance cultures across the EU. As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into public and private systems, the AI Office stands as a critical institution for ensuring that innovation proceeds in a lawful, ethical, and socially aligned manner throughout the European digital landscape.

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