



# European approach to artificial intelligence

The way we approach Artificial Intelligence (AI) will define the world we live in the future. To help build a resilient [Europe for the Digital Decade](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade>), people and businesses should be able to enjoy the benefits of AI while feeling safe and protected.

The [European AI Strategy](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A237%3AFIN) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A237%3AFIN>) aims 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](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust_en) ([https://commission.europa.eu/publications/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust_en)) through concrete rules and actions.

In April 2021, the Commission presented its AI package, including:

- its [Communication on fostering a European approach to AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-fostering-european-approach-artificial-intelligence) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-fostering-european-approach-artificial-intelligence>);
- a [review of the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/plan-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/plan-ai>) (with EU Member States);
- its [Regulatory framework proposal on artificial intelligence](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>) and [relevant Impact assessment](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/impact-assessment-regulation-artificial-intelligence) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/impact-assessment-regulation-artificial-intelligence>).

In January 2024, the Commission launched the [AI innovation package to support Artificial Intelligence startups and SMEs](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-ai-innovation-package-support-artificial-intelligence-startups-and-smes) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-ai-innovation-package-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](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-boosting-startups-and-innovation-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-boosting-startups-and-innovation-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence>) that sets out a strategic investment framework in trustworthy AI for the Union to capitalize on its assets, in particular its world-leading supercomputing infrastructure, and to foster an innovative European AI ecosystem.

The main landmark initiative of the Communication is “GenAI4EU” to stimulate the uptake of generative AI across the Union’s key strategic industrial ecosystems and that will encourage the development of large open innovation ecosystems that will foster collaboration between AI startups and deployers of AI in industry as well as the public sector.

## 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](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/enabling-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/enabling-ai>)
2. becoming the place where [AI thrives from the lab to the market](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-lab-market) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-lab-market>)
3. [ensuring that AI works for people](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-people) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-people>) and is a force for good in society
4. [building strategic leadership](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/build-leadership-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/build-leadership-ai>) in high-impact sectors

The Commission and Member States agreed to boost excellence in AI by joining forces on policy and investments. The [2021 review of the Coordinated Plan on AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/plan-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/plan-ai>) outlines a vision to accelerate, act, and align priorities with the current European and global AI landscape and bring AI strategy into action.

Maximizing resources and coordinating investments is a critical component of AI excellence. Both the [Horizon Europe](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en) ([https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)) and [Digital Europe](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>) programmes will invest €1 billion per year in AI. The Commission will also mobilize additional investments from the private sector and the Member States in order to reach an annual investment volume of €20 billion over the course of the digital decade.

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en)

([https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en)) 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](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cybersecurity-strategy) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cybersecurity-strategy>), the [Data Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-act) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-act>), and the [Data Governance Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-governance) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-governance>) provide the right infrastructure for building such systems.

## A European approach to trust in AI

Building trustworthy AI will create a safe and innovation-friendly environment for users, developers, and deployers.

The Commission has proposed 3 inter-related legal initiatives that will contribute to building trustworthy AI:

1. a [European legal framework for AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>) that upholds fundamental rights and addresses safety risks specific to the AI systems;
2. a [civil liability framework - adapting liability rules to the digital age and AI](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12979-Civil-liability-adapting-liability-rules-to-the-digital-age-and-artificial-intelligence_en) ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12979-Civil-liability-adapting-liability-rules-to-the-digital-age-and-artificial-intelligence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12979-Civil-liability-adapting-liability-rules-to-the-digital-age-and-artificial-intelligence_en));
3. a revision of sectoral safety legislation (e.g. [Machinery Regulation](https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/45508) (<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/45508>), [General Product Safety Directive](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0346) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0346>)).

## A European legal framework on AI

The Commission aims to address the risks generated by specific uses of AI through a set of complementary, proportionate, and flexible rules. These rules also provide Europe with a leading role in setting the global gold standard.

This framework gives AI developers, deployers, and users the clarity they need by intervening only in those cases that existing national and EU legislations do not cover. The [AI Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>) has a clear, easy-to-understand approach, based on four different levels of risk: minimal risk, high risk, unacceptable risk, and specific transparency risk. It also introduces dedicated rules for general-purpose AI models.

## Important milestones

1. September 2024  
[Beginning of the drawing-up process of the Code of Practice for General-Purpose AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-code-practice) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-code-practice>)  
  
[Companies sign EU AI Pact pledges \(Pillar II\)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/over-hundred-companies-sign-eu-ai-pact-pledges-drive-trustworthy-and-safe-ai-development) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/over-hundred-companies-sign-eu-ai-pact-pledges-drive-trustworthy-and-safe-ai-development>)
2. 1 August 2024  
[AI Act enters into force](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>)
3. February 2024  
[European AI Office](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office>)
4. January 2024  
[AI innovation package to support Artificial Intelligence startups and SMEs](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-ai-innovation-package-support-artificial-intelligence-startups-and-smes) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-launches-ai-innovation-package-support-artificial-intelligence-startups-and-smes>)
5. December 2023  
[Political agreement on the AI Act reached by the co-legislators](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6473) ([https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_6473](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6473))
6. June 2023

[European Parliament's negotiating position on AI Act](#)

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230609IPR96212/meps-ready-to-negotiate-first-ever-rules-for-safe-and-transparent-ai>

7. December 2022

[General approach of the Council on AI Act](#)

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/06/artificial-intelligence-act-council-calls-for-promoting-safe-ai-that-respects-fundamental-rights/>

8. September 2022

[Proposal for an AI liability directive](#)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/contract-rules/digital-contracts/liability-rules-artificial-intelligence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/contract-rules/digital-contracts/liability-rules-artificial-intelligence_en)

9. June 2022

[Launch of first AI regulatory sandbox in Spain: Bringing the AI Regulation forward](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/launch-event-spanish-regulatory-sandbox-artificial-intelligence>

10. December 2021

[Committee of the Regions, Opinion on the AI Act](#)

<https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-2682-2021>

[European Central Bank, Opinion on the AI Act \(.PDF\)](#)

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52021AB0040>

11. November 2021

[Council of the EU: SI Presidency compromise text on the AI Act \(.PDF\)](#)

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14278-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

[High-Level Conference on AI: From Ambition to Action \(3d European AI Alliance Assembly\)](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/high-level-conference-on-ai-from-ambition-to-action>

[European Economic and Social Committee, Opinion on the AI Act](#)

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/regulation-artificial-intelligence>

12. June 2021

[Public consultation on Civil liability – adapting liability rules to the digital age and artificial intelligence](#)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12979-Civil-liability-adapting-liability-rules-to-the-digital-age-and-artificial-intelligence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12979-Civil-liability-adapting-liability-rules-to-the-digital-age-and-artificial-intelligence_en)

[European Commission: Proposal for a Regulation on Product Safety](#)

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0346&qid=1628522210573>

13. April 2021

[European Commission: Communication on Fostering a European approach to AI](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-fostering-european-approach-artificial-intelligence>

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

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/proposal-regulation-laying-down-harmonised-rules-artificial-intelligence>

[European Commission: updated coordinated plan on AI](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/coordinated-plan-artificial-intelligence-2021-review>

[European Commission: Impact assessment of an AI regulation](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/impact-assessment-regulation-artificial-intelligence>

14. October 2020  
[2nd European AI Alliance Assembly](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/second-european-ai-alliance-assembly)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/second-european-ai-alliance-assembly>)
15. July 2020  
[Inception impact assessment: Ethical and legal requirements on AI](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12527-Artificial-intelligence-ethical-and-legal-requirements_en)  
([https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12527-Artificial-intelligence-ethical-and-legal-requirements\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12527-Artificial-intelligence-ethical-and-legal-requirements_en))  
  
[High-Level Expert Group on AI: Final assessment list on trustworthy AI \(ALTAI\)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/assessment-list-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence-altai-self-assessment)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/assessment-list-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence-altai-self-assessment>)  
  
[High-Level Expert Group on AI: Sectorial recommendations of trustworthy AI](https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/european-ai-alliance/blog/sectorial-considerations-trustworthy-ai-taking-ais-context-specificity-account)  
(<https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/european-ai-alliance/blog/sectorial-considerations-trustworthy-ai-taking-ais-context-specificity-account>)
16. February 2020  
[European Commission: White paper on AI: a European approach to excellence and trust](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust_en)  
([https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust_en))  
  
[Public consultation on a European approach to excellence and trust in AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-public-consultation-towards-european-approach-excellence-and)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-public-consultation-towards-european-approach-excellence-and>)
17. December 2019  
[High-Level Expert Group on AI: Piloting of assessment list of trustworthy AI](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai/pilot-assessment-list-ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai.html)  
(<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai/pilot-assessment-list-ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai.html>)
18. June 2019  
[First European AI Alliance Assembly](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/first-european-ai-alliance-assembly)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/first-european-ai-alliance-assembly>)  
  
[High-Level Expert Group on AI: Policy and investment recommendations of AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/policy-and-investment-recommendations-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/policy-and-investment-recommendations-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence>)
19. April 2019  
[European Commission Communication: Building trust in human-centric artificial intelligence](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-building-trust-human-centric-artificial-intelligence)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-building-trust-human-centric-artificial-intelligence>)  
  
[High-Level expert group on AI: Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai)  
(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai>)
20. December 2018  
[European Commission: Coordinated plan on AI](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=56017) ([https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc\\_id=56017](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=56017))  
  
[European Commission \(Press release\): AI made in Europe](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_6689)  
([https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_18\\_6689](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_6689))  
  
[European Commission Communication: AI made in Europe](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=56018)  
([https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc\\_id=56018](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=56018))  
  
[Stakeholder consultation on draft ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai/stakeholder-consultation-guidelines-first-draft.html)  
(<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai/stakeholder-consultation-guidelines-first-draft.html>)
21. June 2018  
[Launch of the European AI alliance](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-ai-alliance) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-ai-alliance>)

[Set up of the high-level expert group on AI](#)

(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-appoints-expert-group-ai-and-launches-european-ai-alliance>)

22. April 2018

[Press release: Artificial intelligence for Europe \(https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_18\\_3362\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_3362)

[Communication: Artificial intelligence for Europe](#)

(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-artificial-intelligence-europe>)

[Staff working document: Liability for emerging digital technologies](#)

(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/european-commission-staff-working-document-liability-emerging-digital-technologies>)

[Declaration of cooperation on artificial intelligence](#)

(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/eu-member-states-sign-cooperate-artificial-intelligence>)

23. March 2018

[Press release: AI expert group and European AI alliance \(https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-1381\\_en.htm\)](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-1381_en.htm)

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