

# Comprehensive European industrial policy on artificial intelligence and robotics

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted an own-initiative report by Ashley FOX (ECR, UK) on a comprehensive European industrial policy on artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.

AI is evolving rapidly and has been a part of everyday life for many years. AI and robotics drive innovation, leading to new business models and playing a key role in transforming societies and digitising economies in many sectors, such as industry, health care, construction and transport.

In light of this phenomenon, the report made a series of recommendations.

## *A society supported by artificial intelligence and robotics*

Automation combined with artificial intelligence will increase productivity and thus increase output. Some jobs will be replaced but new jobs will also be created. In this context, Members recommended that Member States, alongside private sector actors, identify the risks and develop strategies to ensure that relevant retraining and reskilling programmes are developed for workers in the industries most affected by the automation of tasks. Education curricula must also be adapted.

Expressing concern about the possible misuse of artificial intelligence at the expense of fundamental rights, the report advocated that AI research also focus on the detection of accidentally or maliciously corrupted AI and robotics.

## *The technological path towards artificial intelligence and robotics*

The report welcomed the Commission's proposal for the Digital Europe Program and the budget of EUR 2.5 billion pledged to Artificial Intelligence, as well as the increase in funding under the Horizon 2020 programme.

It emphasised that AI research must invest not only in technology and innovation, but also AI-related social, ethical and liability areas, and any AI model deployed should have ethics by design.

Members recommended greater investment in this field in order to remain competitive and facilitate access to credible information addressing the main concerns about AI and robotics such as privacy, safety and transparency in decision-making. They also underlined that a rapid, safe and secure development of 5G is essential to guarantee that the Union can reap the full benefits of AI and protect against cyber security threats.

## *Industrial policy*

Members recommended the use and promotion of public-private partnerships to explore solutions to key challenges while emphasising the need to standardize the design and use of AI systems.

The report stressed the importance of concentrating public support for AI on the strategic sectors in which European industry has the greatest opportunities to play a leading role at a global level and which have added value in the general public interest such as public sector, health, energy, transport, agriculture and the food chain, cybersecurity and SMEs.

## ***Legal framework***

In order to promote a regulatory environment conducive to the development of AI, Members asked the Commission to regularly re-evaluate existing legislation in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose with respect to AI while also respecting EU fundamental values

The report underlined the importance of the principle of mutual recognition in the cross-border use of smart goods, including robots and robotic systems and the need to integrate the security and privacy by design principles in their policies related to robotics and artificial intelligence. Any forthcoming Union regulatory framework on AI should respect the confidentiality of communications and the protection of personal data.

Members called for the creation of an ethical charter of best practice for AI and robotics that companies and experts should follow, stressing that ethical rules must be in place to ensure human-centric AI development, the accountability and transparency of algorithmic decision-making systems, clear liability rules and fairness.

## ***Governance***

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to consider the creation of a European regulatory agency for AI and algorithmic decision-making tasked with:

- establishing a risk assessment matrix for classifying algorithm types and application domains according to their potential for a significant negative impact on citizens;
- investigating the use of algorithmic systems where a case of infringement of human rights is suspected (with evidence provided by a whistle-blower, for example);
- advising other regulatory agencies about algorithmic systems falling within their remit;
- enhancing the effectiveness of the tort liability mechanism;
- auditing the AIAs of high-level impact systems to approve or reject the proposed uses of algorithmic decision-making in highly sensitive and/or safety-critical application domains (private health-care, for instance);
- investigating suspected cases of rights violations by algorithmic decision-making systems.