

# Opportunities and challenges presented by a comprehensive artificial intelligence strategy for EU trade

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The European Parliament adopted by 527 votes to 62, with 59 abstentions, a resolution on opportunities and challenges presented by a comprehensive artificial intelligence strategy for EU trade.

## *AI for trade facilitation and regulatory enforcement*

Parliament recognised that AI can accelerate EU exports and imports, especially for SMEs, by reducing market-entry barriers and compliance costs. It can help cut delays and costs in EU supply chains. Furthermore, it can play a role in strengthening customs controls amid market overcapacity and the limitations of human inspections in the face of the challenges posed by the influx of goods, in particular small parcels coming from China.

The Commission is invited to:

- integrate trustworthy **AI advisory services** into the Access2Markets portal and the Single-Entry Point to navigate tariffs, rules of origin and regulatory requirements;
- **prioritise SME-friendly AI tools** and ensure that digital compliance solutions remain simple, affordable and accessible;
- make **paperless trade the norm** and promote the sharing of reliable information between operators and authorities;
- incentivise **open-source AI solutions**, which contribute to reducing the dependence from non-EU providers;
- investigate the potential of AI to **uphold compliance of imported goods** with EU law, enhance real-time traceability and customs control of imported products and market surveillance.

## *AI and structural changes in goods and services trade, and trade and sustainable development*

Parliament acknowledged that Europe's competitiveness in goods trade will increasingly depend on AI-enabled productivity and quality gains in strategic industrial value chains, including manufacturing, automotive, pharmaceutical and energy technologies. The Commission is urged to reflect these interests systematically in trade negotiations by securing effective market access, robust disciplines on non-tariff barriers, and enforceable provisions that maintain a level playing field by preventing unfair competition and technology-related distortions, while recognising the EU's right to regulate.

Given AI's potential to **reshape work and labour markets** globally, Parliament warned of the risks of displacement associated with automation and stressed the urgent need to adopt strategies to anticipate these changes and adapt the workforce accordingly. The Commission is invited to analyse, within the impact assessments of free trade agreements, which sectors are likely to be affected by AI and to assess the impact of AI use on workers' rights and the environment.

Parliament warns that the digital divide risks excluding partners in the **Global South** from AI driven growth opportunities, increasing dependency on imported models. It stressed that cooperation supporting AI tool use in developing countries should strengthen the multilateral trading system and be promoted through the WTO framework.

### *Digital trade governance, regulatory cooperation and multilateral rules*

Parliament highlighted the strategic role of digital partnerships and trade and technology councils with like-minded partners, which share democratic values, high standards of governance and a commitment to open and rules-based trade in projecting the EU's value-driven, human-centric and risk-based approach to AI.

Members called for Parliament to be more involved in the trade and technology councils and invited the Commission to implement the international digital strategy through **coordinated positions** within the G7, G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations, as well as through structured cooperation between regulators to drive global convergence on high standards of AI safety and fundamental rights protection.

The resolution stressed the need to defend and promote, particularly in multilateral forums, **the EU's human-centric AI model** as an international standard and the regulation on artificial intelligence as a benchmark to help harmonise transparency and safety standards while keeping trade open and predictable. The Commission is called upon to work towards establishing a **global minimum floor of protections** against the most serious risks as a basis for interoperable and trustworthy governance, notably through international initiatives.

Members also reiterated that the EU's digital trade agreements must comply with the Commission's horizontal provisions on cross-border data flows and the protection of personal data and privacy. They advocated for the creation of a **WTO working group** on artificial intelligence and called on the Commission to ensure that any WTO text on electronic commerce ensures policy space for democratic AI governance, including enforceable safeguards for workers and consumers.

### *Economic security and strategic dependencies in the AI value chain*

Stressing that secure **access to advanced semiconductors** and affordable computing power is fundamental to the EU's technological sovereignty and competitiveness, Members called on the Commission to accelerate their implementation, to pursue its raw-material diplomacy and to leverage trade agreements, framework and partnership agreements with trusted partners to diversify supply chains and reduce strategic dependencies.

Faced with the concentration of **cloud infrastructure** in non-EU countries, Members called on the Commission to establish, through the proposed Cloud and AI Development Act and Industrial Accelerator Act, to establish graduated sovereignty frameworks prioritising EU-based providers for critical services through public procurement, while ensuring open strategic autonomy.