

The Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence AI-2-TRACE-CRIME, hosted by Neapolis University Pafos, is an interdisciplinary hub focused on advancing the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in asset recovery, anti-money laundering (AML), and crime prevention. Led by Dr. Georgios Pavlidis, the Centre brings together experts from law, computer science, and international studies, supported by an Advisory Board of external experts.

This EU-funded initiative operates through three thematic streams. The first explores the development of legal frameworks for ethical and transparent AI use in AML and crime prevention, focusing on human rights, accountability, and data protection. The second investigates AI's technical dimensions, such as machine learning and natural language processing, to enhance tools for tracing illicit assets and detecting suspicious financial patterns. The third addresses AI's role in security, examining risks like AI-assisted cyberattacks and proposing strategies to counteract criminal misuse.



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The AI Continent Action Plan: EU's Recent Ambitious Initiative

On April 9, 2025, the European Commission unveiled the AI Continent Action Plan, aiming to position Europe as a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI). This comprehensive strategy focuses on five key pillars:

- Large-scale AI Infrastructure: The plan introduces AI Factories, with 13 already being deployed alongside Europe's supercomputers, to support AI startups, industry, and researchers. Additionally, AI Gigafactories equipped with approximately 100,000 state-of-the-art AI chips are proposed to advance complex AI models, requiring public and private investments. The InvestAI initiative aims to mobilize €20 billion for up to five AI Gigafactories across the EU
- Access to High-Quality Data: To enhance AI innovation, Data Labs will be established within AI Factories to curate large volumes of high-quality data. A Data Union Strategy, launching in 2025, seeks to create a unified internal market for data to scale AI solutions
- AI Adoption in Strategic Sectors: With only 13.5% of EU companies having adopted AI, the forthcoming Apply AI Strategy aims to develop tailored AI solutions and boost their industrial use in strategic public and private sectors (including AI Factories and European Digital Innovation Hubs)

- Strengthening AI Skills and Talent: To meet the growing demand for AI expertise, the Commission plans to facilitate international recruitment of highly skilled AI professionals through initiatives like the Talent Pool and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action 'MSCA Choose Europe'. The upcoming AI Skills Academy will offer fellowships and develop educational programs on AI and Generative AI, supporting the upskilling and reskilling of workers
- Regulatory Simplification: The AI Act aims to build public trust in technology and provide legal certainty for investors and entrepreneurs. The Commission will launch the AI Act Service Desk to assist businesses in complying with the AI Act, serving as a central hub for information and guidance.

To further shape these initiatives, the Commission has opened two public consultations running until June 4, 2025: one on the Cloud and AI Development Act and another on the Apply AI Strategy. A third consultation on the Data Union Strategy will commence in May. Additionally, dialogues with industry representatives and the public sector will be organized to identify challenges and opportunities in adopting AI technologies across various sectors.



UN warns of widening digital divide

The Technology and Innovation Report 2025, released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), highlights significant disparities in the global artificial intelligence (AI) landscape. The report reveals that a mere 100 companies, predominantly based in the United States and China, account for 40% of the world's private investment in research and development, indicating a pronounced concentration of AI capabilities and resources. Furthermore, it points out that 118 countries, mainly from the Global South, are entirely absent from international AI governance discussions. The report outlines a strategic roadmap aimed at enabling nations to harness AI's potential, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies and international cooperation to bridge the existing divides.



On April 9, 2025, the European Commission's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Office initiated a public consultation and call for evidence regarding the forthcoming 'Apply AI Strategy', which aims to position Europe as a global leader in AI innovation.

Objectives of the Strategy:

- Facilitate European enterprises to become global frontrunners in AI.
- Improve the quality of services within the public sector through AI
- Foster the integration of AI technologies into strategic sectors, which include: advanced manufacturing; aerospace; security and defence; agri-food; energy; environment and climate; mobility and automotive; pharmaceutical; biotechnology; robotics; communications; advanced material design; and cultural and creative industries.

The strategy will also align with the European Strategy for AI in Science, with specific consultation activities for the latter commencing on April 10, 2025

Stakeholder Engagement:

The AI Office invites input from various stakeholders, including industry representatives, civil society, and public authorities. The consultation seeks to identify priorities, challenges in AI adoption within specific sectors, and potential solutions and policy approaches. It also addresses challenges related to the implementation of the AI Act and explores how the Commission and Member States can better support stakeholders in this process.

EU's new public consultation on 'Apply AI Strategy'

The Artificial Intelligence Office initiated a public consultation and call for evidence on forthcoming 'Apply AI Strategy'

In addition to the public consultation, the European AI Office will conduct structured dialogues with industry representatives and gather insights from Member States. The consultation is open for eight weeks, from April 9 until June 4, 2025.

This initiative underscores the European Commission's commitment to fostering AI innovation and integration across strategic sectors, aiming to enhance Europe's competitiveness in the global AI landscape.



Report Highlights Intensifying Global Competition

The 2025 Artificial Intelligence Index Report, released by Stanford University's Institute for Human-Centered AI, indicates a tightening competition in the AI sector, particularly between the United States and China. The performance gap between top AI models has narrowed significantly; in early 2024, the leading model outperformed the tenth-ranked by approximately 12%, but this margin decreased to 5% by early 2025. This trend underscores a highly competitive and crowded field.

Notably, while many generative AI models have grown in complexity, 2024 marked a breakthrough for smaller, more efficient models. Advancements in algorithms have enabled these compact models to achieve performance levels comparable to much larger models from two years prior. This development has democratized AI innovation, allowing smaller teams to make significant contributions.

The report also highlights a shift in AI development dynamics.

Industry entities now dominate the creation of notable AI models, producing nearly 90% in 2024, up from 60% in 2023. This marks a reversal from the early 2000s when academia led in AI model development. Geographically, the U.S. released 40 significant models in 2024, while China produced 15 and Europe 3. However, China's models have rapidly advanced in quality, closing the performance gap with U.S. models from nearly 20 percentage points in 2023 to just 0.3 percentage points by the end of 2024.

EYE ON AI

Bank of England: Artificial intelligence in the financial system

The Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee (FPC) is evaluating the macroprudential implications of the expanding use of artificial intelligence (AI) within the financial system, focusing on potential risks to financial stability..

More information [here](#)

AI Developments Our Picks

The European Union (EU) has unveiled plans to establish AI Gigafactories—large-scale facilities each equipped with approximately 100,000 advanced AI chips, quadrupling the capacity of current AI factories. These Gigafactories aim to integrate substantial computing power and data centers to train and develop complex AI models on an unprecedented scale, bolstering the EU's strategic autonomy in critical industrial sectors and scientific research. To support this initiative, the InvestAI program will mobilize €20 billion in public and private investments to fund up to five AI Gigafactories across the Union.

Q&A Energy demands from AI datacentres

Q: How will energy demands from AI datacentres evolve?

A recent report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts that global electricity demand from data centers will more than double by 2030, with AI-specific data centers alone expected to quadruple their consumption. In the U.S., energy used for AI processing could surpass that of traditional energy-intensive industries like steel and cement manufacturing.

AI could enhance energy efficiency by optimizing systems like electricity grids and transportation. However, only about half of AI's energy needs may be met with renewables. Critics warn that unchecked AI growth could negate energy efficiency gains and increase reliance on polluting energy sources like coal. Data centers' water usage raises environmental concerns too.



Other Initiatives

EU Commission's European Digital Education Hub

The EU AI Pact is a voluntary initiative. The European Digital Education Hub (EDEH), an initiative by the European Commission, has released an AI Report focusing on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into education. This report serves as a practical, strategic, and policy-oriented document, offering competence frameworks for teachers, implementation guidelines, and real-world use cases of AI in educational settings. It emphasizes areas such as teacher training, institutional support, risk categorization, and ethical deployment of AI technologies.

For more information, click [here](#)

Activities of our Center

- **Webinar (2025 Edition) organized by our Center in collaboration with Universidad Carlos III de Madrid**

The Jean Monnet Center of Excellence AI-2-TRACE-CRIME at Neapolis University Pafos, Cyprus, and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain have organized the webinar 'Digital Rights in the Era of Artificial Intelligence'. The high-quality presentations and the lively exchange of ideas reaffirmed our Center's role as a key forum for critical dialogue on ethics, digital tools, and interdisciplinary approaches in research.

- **Doctoral and Postgraduate Workshop (2025 Edition)**

On Wednesday 14 May 2025, the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence AI-2-TRACE-CRIME at Neapolis University Pafos successfully hosted its annual Doctoral and Postgraduate Workshop, under the title "The Researcher in the Era of New Technologies and AI." Held online via Microsoft Teams, the event brought together early-career researchers, postgraduate students and PhD candidates from across disciplines.

- **Executive Training Event (2025 Edition)**

On Wednesday 7 May 2025, the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence AI-2-TRACE-CRIME at Neapolis University Pafos hosted the 2025 edition of its Executive Training Event under the theme "Justice and the Legal Profession in the Era of New Technologies and AI." The event brought together legal professionals, academics, and policy experts for a forward-looking exchange on how emerging technologies are reshaping the administration of justice and the legal profession.

- **Strategic Partnership with University of Reading**

With great success, the official Press Conference announcing the strategic partnership between Neapolis University Pafos and the internationally renowned University of Reading—ranked 172nd globally according to the QS World University Rankings 2025—took place on Monday, 7 April 2025, at the "Kyrenia" Amphitheatre of Neapolis University Pafos. This partnership marks a new era for higher legal education in Cyprus, as of the academic year 2025–2026, two innovative, English-taught Law programmes will be offered. The collaboration also opens up promising prospects for future academic and research synergies, including potential joint initiatives with the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence AI-2-TRACE-CRIME, hosted at NUP.

