

Policy Brief 1

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the World of Work

Context: Discussions on the *future of work* have been ongoing for many decades, but this debate is now dominated by the recent introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies into workplaces across the EU. AI is not just another technological revolution – it is a force that will transform the world of work like no other before it. AI will change our very idea of time and space.

The consequences of its development still seem unclear, not just on labour markets, but life in general. We do not know when, or if, it will stop. We do not know the intensity it will reach. We do not know the parameters of AI. We do not know most things about the future with AI, but we know that many changes are on the way!

Key questions for societies are:

- What does this mean for workers?
- How will professions, skills and other qualifications change?
- How will we protect workers' rights in the rapidly changing world of AI?
- Will the burden for employers grow?

Analysis: These questions underscore the need for a careful and responsible approach to AI as these new technologies have the potential to transform our societies, but without appropriate regulations and ethical standards, they can lead to unpredictable and even dangerous consequences. To address these issues, a number of recent key European and international events have been held in recent months, for example:

- Conference on AI hosted by the French President Macron (10-11 February, 2025) ¹
- Council of Europe *Framework Convention on AI and Human Rights, Democracy and The Rule of Law* signed in Vilnius, September 2024 ²
- OECD *Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence* ³

All these events highlighted the importance of international cooperation and coordination in the development of standards and regulations for the use of AI. Only through joint efforts can the EU ensure that it serves the good of all, without creating new divisions or risks.

¹ At this conference French President Emmanuel Macron said that Europe needs to make a “*European leap*” in AI, while developing a strategy for action

See: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2025/02/11/statement-on-inclusive-and-sustainable-artificial-intelligence-for-people-and-the-planet>

² See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/the-framework-convention-on-artificial-intelligence>

³ See: <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/global-partnership-on-artificial-intelligence.html>

This means investing in AI, but also, in parallel, introducing regulations that ensure that algorithmic systems for managing workplace tasks are used ethically and transparently, with the participation of the social partners.

An important challenge for the EU is that the US has a different perspective on the way forward, with minimal regulation and technologies free from 'ideological bias'. These different, and challenging, perspectives remind us that the EU must be strong and cohesive, promoting collective bargaining as a tool to achieve a balance between economic performance and social imbalances. Collective Labour Agreements can serve as a flexible mechanism to adapt working conditions in line with technological change, protecting workers' rights while supporting innovation.

From a business perspective, the rise of AI is not only a workforce challenge but also a growth opportunity. Such growth underscores the increasing importance of AI technologies in modernising business operations. This transformation demands thoughtful strategies around re-skilling, ethical deployment, and infrastructure investment.

AI is already transforming how companies operate - reshaping supply chains, HR management, R&D, and customer service. These developments highlight the significant opportunities for business growth. Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a transformative opportunity for businesses, enabling substantial advancements in process automation, predictive analytics, personalised customer experiences, and accelerated innovation.

However, with these opportunities come significant responsibilities. Companies must now prepare to navigate evolving regulatory frameworks such as the OECD AI Principles, the EU AI Act, and other EU-level directives addressing data governance, algorithmic transparency, and ethical use. Key compliance areas include the deployment of explainable, fair and auditable AI systems, the implementation of robust AI governance models and ensuring alignment with standards for high-risk AI applications in recruitment, finance, healthcare and customer profiling.

Conclusions: The failure of enterprises to adapt could lead, not only to loss of market competitiveness, but also to regulatory penalties, reputational damage and reduced stakeholder trust. Proactive alignment with ethical and legal standards, paired with investment in AI talent and responsible innovation, is essential for businesses aiming to thrive in this rapidly evolving digital economy.

Failing to ensure a collaborative approach that supports trustworthy AI systems can lead to disagreements among social partners, which adversely impacts the EU's economic resilience

and competitiveness. Any discussions around regulations concerning AI must involve all partners to ensure respect for workers' dignity while also maintaining economic competitiveness. Although well-considered regulations and legislation are essential, trust in AI can be fostered through discussions among relevant stakeholders.

As part of the TransFormWork 2 European Commission funded project, two consecutive Policy Briefs will review global and European measures to regulate AI, which will lay the foundations for modern company policies and transform working conditions.

Policy Brief 1/ International Initiatives:

Example of measure:

- OECD first global framework for companies to report on their efforts to promote safe, secure, and trustworthy AI: <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2025/02/oecd-launches-global-framework-to-monitor-application-of-g7-hiroshima-ai-code-of-conduct.html>
- Council of Europe *Framework Convention on AI and Human Rights, Democracy and The Rule of Law*
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/the-framework-convention-on-artificial-intelligence>
- UNESCO *Recommendation on Ethics of AI*,
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137>

Policy Brief 2 will present information on ongoing EU level initiatives, such as:

- AI Act Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689)
- Platform Work Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/2831)
- General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)
- Data Act Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2023/2854)
- Digital Services Act (DSA) (Regulation (EU) 2022/2065)
- Digital Markets Act (DMA) (Regulation (EU) 2022/1925)
- Data Governance Act (DGA) (Regulation (EU) 2022/868)
- Network and Information System 2 (NIS2) Directive (Directive (EU) 2022/2555)