

EU and UK approaches to AI: Latest developments

The EU and the United Kingdom (UK) have both been active in shaping the development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. They have each introduced measures to ensure that people and businesses can take advantage of the benefits of AI, while minimising its risks. However, there are also a number of differences in their approaches. The EU has adopted a comprehensive risk-based regulatory framework, whereas the UK has a more light-touch regulatory approach. So far, the UK has not adopted a horizontal law on AI, but the current government has indicated that it plans to regulate the most powerful AI models.

Background

The EU and the UK have set ambitious objectives for AI. For example, the EU's [aim](#) is, by 2030, for the majority (75 %) of its enterprises to be using AI. Although the EU has made some progress in this respect, it is still far from achieving this objective. In 2024, only [13.5 % of enterprises](#) in the EU used AI. The situation is similar in the UK. In 2023, about [16 % of businesses](#) responding to a government survey said they used AI. In the [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#), published in January 2025, the UK set the objective of training 'tens of thousands of additional AI professionals' and increasing its share of the world's top AI researchers. So far, the EU and the UK are far from the United States in terms of attracting and retaining AI talent. In 2023, [75 % of top AI researchers](#) (mostly of US or Chinese origin) were working in US universities and companies.

Latest developments in the UK

While the [previous](#) UK government argued against binding horizontal legislation on AI, the current UK government has indicated it [plans](#) to regulate the most powerful AI models. As a first step, the UK is expected to launch a [consultation process](#) on this law. In addition, in January 2025 the UK published the AI Opportunities Action Plan, which makes 50 recommendations on how the UK can best shape the future of AI. The action plan calls on the government to clarify how the most powerful AI models will be regulated. In December 2024, the UK government also published a [consultation paper](#) on AI and copyright.

Some [recent developments](#) indicate that the UK is positioning itself closer to the US and is narrowing its focus to AI security. In February 2025, the UK [announced](#) that its AI Safety Institute had become the AI Security Institute. This marks a shift in focus from risks related to bias and discrimination to risks with security implications, such as using AI for developing weapons. Similarly, US Vice President J. D. Vance [insisted](#) recently that 'AI must remain free from ideological bias' and 'never restrict our citizens' right to free speech'. However, this name change does not mean that AI can discriminate against citizens in the UK. The EU, the UK and the US have all signed the [Council of Europe Convention on AI](#) and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which specifically says that the activities within the lifecycle of AI should respect equality and prohibit discrimination. The word 'bias' is not mentioned in the convention.

Latest developments in the EU

Although the EU has paid a lot of attention to ensuring that AI systems are safe, its latest focus has been on supporting AI innovation. In its [2025 work programme](#), the European Commission announced that it is planning to publish an 'AI Continent Action Plan'. The plan is expected to cover both measures to increase the uptake of AI and initiatives that facilitate the development of AI, such as [AI factories](#). The EU is also planning to increase investment in AI; in February 2025, it launched an [InvestAI](#) initiative that aims to mobilise €200 billion of investment in AI.

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