



Shaping Europe's digital future: Commission presents strategies for data and Artificial Intelligence

Brussels, 19 February 2020

Today, the Commission unveils its [ideas and actions](#) for a digital transformation that works for all, reflecting the best of Europe: open, fair, diverse, democratic and confident. It presents a European society powered by digital solutions that put people first, opens up new opportunities for businesses, and boosts the development of **trustworthy technology** to foster an open and democratic society and a vibrant and sustainable economy. Digital is a key enabler to fighting climate change and achieving the green transition. The European [data strategy](#) and the policy options to ensure the **human-centric development of Artificial Intelligence** (AI) presented today are the first steps towards achieving these goals.

The President of the Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: " *Today we are [presenting our ambition to shape Europe's digital future](#). It covers everything from cybersecurity to critical infrastructures, digital education to skills, democracy to media. I want that digital Europe reflects the best of Europe – open, fair, diverse, democratic, and confident.*"

Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe **Vestager**, said: "We want every citizen, every employee, every business to stand a fair chance to reap the benefits of digitalisation. Whether that means driving more safely or polluting less thanks to connected cars; or even saving lives with AI-driven medical imagery that allows doctors to detect diseases earlier than ever before."

Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, said: "Our society is generating a huge wave of industrial and public data, which will transform the way we produce, consume and live. I want European businesses and our many SMEs to access this data and create value for Europeans – including by developing Artificial Intelligence applications. Europe has everything it takes to lead the 'big data' race, and preserve its technological sovereignty, industrial leadership and economic competitiveness to the benefit of European consumers."

Europe as a trusted digital leader

Digital technologies, if used with purpose, will benefit citizens and businesses in many ways. Over the next five years, the Commission will focus on three key objectives in digital:

- Technology that works for people;
- A fair and competitive economy; and
- An open, democratic and sustainable society.

Europe will build on its long history of technology, research, innovation and ingenuity, and on its strong protection of rights and fundamental values. New policies and frameworks will enable Europe to deploy cutting-edge digital technologies and strengthen its cybersecurity capacities. Europe will continue to preserve its open, democratic and sustainable society and digital tools can support these principles. It will develop and pursue its own path to become a globally competitive, value-based and inclusive digital economy and society, while continuing to be an open but rules-based market, and to work closely with its international partners.

Europe as a leader in trustworthy Artificial Intelligence

Europe has all it needs to become a world leader in Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems that can be safely used and applied. We have excellent research centres, secure digital systems and a robust position in robotics as well as competitive manufacturing and services sectors, spanning from automotive to energy, from healthcare to agriculture.

In its [White Paper](#) presented today, the Commission envisages a framework for trustworthy Artificial Intelligence, based on **excellence** and **trust**. In partnership with the private and the public sector, the aim is to mobilise resources along the entire value chain and to create the right incentives to

accelerate deployment of AI, including by smaller and medium-sized enterprises. This includes working with Member States and the research community, to attract and keep talent. As AI systems can be complex and bear significant risks in certain contexts, building trust is essential. Clear rules need to address high-risk AI systems without putting too much burden on less risky ones. Strict EU rules for consumer protection, to address unfair commercial practices and to protect personal data and privacy, continue to apply.

For high-risk cases, such as in health, policing, or transport, AI systems should be transparent, traceable and guarantee human oversight. Authorities should be able to test and certify the data used by algorithms as they check cosmetics, cars or toys. Unbiased data is needed to train high-risk systems to perform properly, and to ensure respect of fundamental rights, in particular non-discrimination. While today, the use of facial recognition for remote biometric identification is generally prohibited and can only be used in exceptional, duly justified and proportionate cases, subject to safeguards and based on EU or national law, the Commission wants to launch a broad debate about which circumstances, if any, might justify such exceptions.

For lower risk AI applications, the Commission envisages a voluntary labelling scheme if they apply higher standards.

All AI applications are welcome in the European market as long as they comply with EU rules.

Europe as a leader in the data economy

The amount of data generated by businesses and public bodies is constantly growing. The next wave of industrial data will deeply transform the way we produce, consume and live. But most of its potential remains unfulfilled. Europe has everything it takes to become a leader in this new data economy: the strongest industrial base of the world, with SMEs being a vital part of the industrial fabric; the technologies; the skills; and now also a clear vision.

The objective of the [European data strategy](#) is to make sure the EU becomes a role model and a leader for a society empowered by data. For this, it aims at setting up a true **European data space**, a single market for data, to unlock unused data, allowing it to flow freely within the European Union and across sectors for the benefit of businesses, researchers and public administrations. Citizens, businesses and organisations should be empowered to make better decisions based on insights gleaned from non-personal data. That data should be available to all, whether public or private, start-up or giant.

To achieve this, the Commission will first propose to establish the right regulatory framework regarding data governance, access and reuse between businesses, between businesses and government, and within administrations. This entails creating incentives for data sharing, establishing practical, fair and clear rules on data access and use, which comply with European values and rights such as personal data protection, consumer protection and competition rules. It also means to make public sector data more widely available by opening up high-value datasets across the EU and allowing their reuse to innovate on top.

Second, the Commission aims at supporting the development of the technological systems and the next generation of infrastructures, which will enable the EU and all the actors to grasp the opportunities of the data economy. It will contribute to investments in European High Impact projects on European data spaces and trustworthy and energy efficient cloud infrastructures.

Finally, it will launch sectoral specific actions, to build European data spaces in for instance industrial manufacturing, the green deal, mobility or health.

The Commission will also work to further narrow the digital skills gap among Europeans, and explore how to give citizens better control over who can access their machine-generated data.

Next Steps

As set out in the strategy presented today, the Commission will present later this year a Digital Services Act and a European Democracy Action Plan, propose a review of the eIDAS regulation, and strengthen cybersecurity by developing a Joint Cyber Unit. Europe will also continue to build alliances with global partners, leveraging its regulatory power, capacity building, diplomacy and finance to promote the European digitalisation model.

The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence is now open for [public consultation](#) until 31 May 2020*. The Commission is also gathering [feedback on its data strategy](#). In light of the input received, the Commission will take further action to support the development of trustworthy AI and the data economy

Background

Since 2014, the Commission has taken a number of steps to facilitate the development of a data-agile economy such as the Regulation on the [free flow of non-personal data](#), [the Cybersecurity Act](#), [the Open Data Directive](#) and the General Data Protection Regulation.

In 2018, the Commission presented for the first time an [AI strategy](#), and agreed a [coordinated plan](#) with Member States. The framework for AI presented today also builds on the work carried out by the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence, which presented their [Ethics Guidelines on trustworthy AI](#) in April 2019.

In her [Political Guidelines](#), Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed the need to lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world. In that context, she announced to kick-start the debate on human and ethical Artificial Intelligence and the use of big data to create wealth for societies and businesses during her first 100 days in office.

For More Information

[Shaping Europe's digital future – Questions and Answers](#)

Factsheets:

- [Shaping Europe's digital future](#)
- [Excellence and Trust in Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [The European data strategy](#)
- [What is in it for me?](#)
- [What is in it for businesses?](#)
- [Supporting the green transition](#)

[Communication: Shaping Europe's digital future](#)

[Communication: A European strategy for data](#)

[White Paper on Artificial Intelligence: a European approach to excellence and trust](#)

[B2G Expert Group Report: Towards a European strategy on business-to-government datasharing for the public interest](#)

[Commission Report on safety and liability implications of AI, the Internet of Things and Robotics](#)

[New video stockshots on Artificial Intelligence projects](#)

[Eurobarometer: Attitudes towards the impact of digitalisation on daily lives](#)

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