



The AI Act

Building Trust in EU Innovation

10 October 2023 15:30 – 17:30 CET
European Parliament & virtual

Organised by
CECIMO, COCIR, DIGITALEUROPE, MedTech Europe

KEY TAKEAWAYS

During “**The AI Act: Building trust in EU innovation**” conference, a collaboration between CECIMO, COCIR, DIGITALEUROPE and MedTech Europe and graciously hosted by four Members of the European Parliament, CECIMO took the lead in organising a panel dedicated to Artificial Intelligence and advanced manufacturing.

The panel discussion, moderated by our Policy Officer Gabriele Favarò, delved deeply into the realms of AI and manufacturing technologies. The discussion focused on the intersection of AI and manufacturing, offering insights into policy considerations, technical advancements, and ethical dimensions. The discussion aimed to explore how AI is enhancing collaboration between machines, robots, and humans in the industry, while also addressing the challenges. The balance between fostering innovation and safeguarding individual and collective rights was emphasised as a key concern for policymakers.

During the panel, **Paul Ribus, CEO of FANUC Benelux**, highlighted the key role of AI as a versatile tool that brings significant benefits to both machine builders and operators. He highlighted how AI plays an important role in promoting sustainability, especially in the context of managing critical variables like temperature within production processes. Mr Ribus also underlined AI’s contribution to automation, particularly in tasks such as product quality inspection, where it greatly improves efficiency. He also addressed the topic of low-risk AI systems, emphasising the supportive role of AI in reducing development time, increasing safety standards and optimising workspace utilisation. His discussion focused on how AI technologies contribute to sustainability efforts in these contexts.

Daniel Leufer, Senior Policy Analyst at Access Now, brought an important perspective to the conference, highlighting the importance of distinguishing between different types of innovation. He cautioned against encouraging surveillance and spyware startups and emphasised the need for ethical considerations. Mr Leufer expressed specific concerns regarding worker surveillance and the potential for misuse, citing industries such as Amazon’s warehouses as potential areas of concern. He also mentioned the essential role of collaboration between civil society organisations and the industry. He advocated for diverse perspectives and working together to ensure the right safeguards for technology that benefits people.

Offering us insights from the European Commission side, **Tatjana Evas, Legal and Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology**, stressed that the innovation versus regulation concept is outdated. She underscored the importance of shifting the conversation towards effectively communicating the benefits of AI regulation, highlighting the EU's leadership in this area. Ms Evas noted that the EU should focus on trust and excellence in its approach, leveraging existing product safety legislation for manufacturing and medical devices.

This approach can help ensure that AI technologies in these sectors are not only innovative but also adherent to the highest standards of safety and quality. Moreover, she highlighted the AI Act's benefits in terms of efficiency and safeguarding rights in the manufacturing industry. She emphasised the Act's incorporation of existing procedures, risk assessments, and fundamental rights protection as valuable elements that play a pivotal role in striking a crucial balance between trust and security within the industry.

In conclusion, the panel provided a comprehensive exploration of the complex dynamics surrounding AI in manufacturing, where the benefits and ethical considerations are undeniably intertwined. This insightful conversation served as a reminder of the need for a balanced and thoughtful approach to harnessing the full potential of AI in this ever-evolving industrial landscape.