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# **Early Compliance & Proactive Commitments: An introduction to the EU AI Pact**

**CEDPO AI and Data Working Group  
Micro-Insights Series  
November 2024**

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## About the Micro-Insights Series

The Micro-Insights Series is a publishing initiative by the CEDPO AI and Data Working Group. It will provide digestible, definitive, short-form papers on key areas of interest at the intersection between data and artificial intelligence. With a practical focus, keeping one eye on explaining complex topics and the other on implementation, it will outline the significance of key areas and advise practitioners on impact, and next steps. With the EU Artificial Intelligence Act (the 'AI Act') coming into law in 2024, the scene is now set for all practitioners, and it is possible to discuss the regulation of data and AI with much greater clarity.

The Micro-Insights Series will follow the evolution of AI and data over the coming years, and as the clock winds down on the crucial implementation period for the AI Act, and as AI technologies evolve in ever-more novel and unexpected ways, the Series will respond with up-to-date, authoritative guidance on the core areas of concern.

Amongst others, the series will include papers on:

- Regulation of General-Purpose Artificial Intelligence under the AI Act
- Explaining the AI Pact.
- Educating practitioners on how to conduct Fundamental Rights Impact Assessments under the AI Act.
- Outlining the role that data protection regulators will have in AI regulation.
- Examining whether or not the data protection officer is the right person to be the AI officer.
- The lawful basis for using training data in machine learning.
- Readiness toolkit for the AI Act.

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## 1. Context of the EU AI Pact

Although the EU AI Act entered into force in August 2024, a majority of its rules will only apply at the end of a lengthy transitional period. In the meantime, to close the compliance gap, the European Commission is promoting the AI Pact, a voluntary framework to help organizations anticipate obligations that will arise with the full implementation of the AI Act.

The Pact includes two pillars:

- Under Pillar I, organizations are invited to participate in a community where they interact together and with the EU AI Office to share experience and knowledge; for instance in workshops. More than 1000 organizations have joined Pillar I.
- Under Pillar II, organizations can make voluntary pledges to take concrete actions towards implementing key provisions of the AI Act before they become legally applicable (to them). In particular, companies providing or deploying AI systems are encouraged to adopt best practices regarding transparency and general compliance obligations for high-risk AI. As of the time of writing in November 2024, approximately 130 organizations have made pledges under Pillar II.

## 2. Pledges under Pillar II of the AI Pact

Pillar II of the AI Pact fosters early implementation of the AI Act.

Pledges require organisations to adhere to three core commitments, with an option to engage in additional pledges that aim to enhance transparency, risk management, and human oversight within AI systems.

The EU Commission launched Pillar II of the AI Pact in a September 2024 but this does not mark a cut-off date:

- Interested organizations may still adhere after Q4 2024 and at any stage until the AI Act fully applies;
- having pledged to the three core commitments, with or without optional commitments, organizations may later choose to augment the scope of their pledges and add any number of optional commitments.

While the commitments are not legally binding, they represent an opportunity for companies to gain visibility, demonstrate responsible AI practices, and prepare early for compliance with the AI Act.



In addition, by adhering to the AI Pact organizations contribute towards the wider movement of ethical and responsible AI in Europe.

## 2.1 AI Pact Core Commitments

Pillar II of the AI Pact comprises three core commitments that all signatories adopt:

### 1. AI Governance Strategy

**Adopt an AI governance strategy to foster the uptake of AI in the organisation, and work towards future compliance with the AI Act.**

This strategy serves as an internal framework for fostering the ethical use of AI within the organization and prepares organisations for compliance with the AI Act.

### 2. High-Risk AI Systems Mapping

**Carry out, to the extent feasible, a mapping of AI systems provided or deployed in areas that would be considered high-risk under the AI Act.**

This involves identifying areas where AI systems may have substantial impacts on safety, fundamental rights, or other critical aspects of human interaction.

### 3. AI Awareness and Literacy

**Promote awareness and AI literacy of their staff and other persons dealing with AI systems on their behalf, taking into account their technical knowledge, experience, education and training and the context the AI systems are to be used in, and considering the persons or groups of persons affected by the use of the AI systems.**

Appropriate awareness and literacy will mean that involved parties understand the systems they work with and their potential impact on groups and individuals.

These core commitments create a baseline for ethical and transparent AI practices, especially for companies that operate high-risk AI systems. The Pact thus provides a structured approach to addressing the ethical and societal challenges posed by AI.

## 2.2 AI Pact Optional Commitments

Beyond the core commitments, the AI Pact introduces optional commitments designed for companies that develop or deploy AI systems. These additional commitments are recommended for organizations that seek further alignment with the AI Act's requirements, enabling them to anticipate more aspects of their compliance with the legislation. At the time of the September 2024 launch event for the AI Pact, more than half of the signatories had committed to additional pledges.

## Optional commitments for providers of AI systems

Providers of AI systems are encouraged to adopt the following practices:

- **Risk Identification:** put in place processes to identify possible known and reasonably foreseeable risks to health, safety and fundamental rights that could follow from the use of relevant AI systems throughout their lifecycle.
- **Data Quality Policies:** develop policies to ensure high-quality training, validation and testing datasets for relevant AI systems.
- **Logging for Traceability:** when developing all or certain AI systems, implement logging features to allow traceability appropriate for the intended purpose of the system.
- **Deployer Guidance:** inform deployers about how to appropriately use relevant AI systems, their capabilities, limitations and potential risks.
- **Human Oversight:** implement concrete measures to ensure human oversight over the operation of high-risk AI systems as defined by the AI-Act.
- **Risk Mitigation:** implement policies and processes aimed at mitigating risks associated with the use of relevant AI systems, in line with the relevant obligations and requirements envisaged in the AI Act.
- **AI Interaction Awareness:** design AI systems, that are intended to directly interact with individuals, so that those individuals are informed and aware that they are interacting with an AI system.
- **Generative AI Content Labelling (content marking by design):** design generative AI systems so that AI-generated content is marked and detectable as artificially generated or manipulated through technical solutions, such as by watermarks and metadata identifiers.
- **Generative AI Content Labelling (means for deployer to mark content):** provide means for deployers to clearly and distinguishably label AI-generated content, including image, audio or video that may be deep fakes.
- **Generative AI Content Labelling (means for deployer to mark text):** provide means for deployers to clearly and distinguishably label AI-generated text unless the text has been subject to human review and a natural or legal person holds editorial responsibility for its publication.

## Optional commitments for deployers of AI systems

Organizations deploying AI systems may consider the following optional commitments:

- **Mapping Risk to Fundamental Rights:** carry out a mapping of known and reasonably foreseeable possible risks to fundamental rights of persons and groups of individuals that may be affected through the use of relevant AI systems.
- **Human Oversight:** implement concrete measures to ensure human oversight over the operation of high-risk AI systems as defined by the AI Act.
- **Generative AI Content Labelling:** clearly and distinguishably label AI generated content including image, audio or video that might constitute deep fakes.

- **Generative AI Content Labelling (mark text):** clearly and distinguishably label AI-generated text, unless the text has been subject to human review and a natural or legal person holds editorial responsibility for its publication.
- **AI Interaction Awareness:** ensure that individuals are informed, as appropriate, when they are directly interacting with an AI system.
- **Transparency of important decisions affecting individuals:** inform individuals with clear and meaningful explanations when a decision made about them is prepared, recommended or taken by relevant AI systems, and where there is an adverse risk to their health, safety or fundamental rights.
- **Transparency when using AI in the workplace:** when deploying relevant AI systems in the workplace, inform workers' representatives and affected workers.

These optional commitments enable companies to strengthen their approach to responsible AI across the AI lifecycle, providing a practical pathway to addressing emerging challenges in AI ethics, transparency, and accountability.

## 4. Visibility and Public Recognition for Signatories

The European Commission has established several mechanisms within the AI Pact to enhance visibility for participants. Organizations that sign the Pact benefit from:

- **Collaborative Exchange:** The AI Pact offers an opportunity to collaborate, share best practices, and address challenges related to AI ethics and compliance, particularly through the AI Alliance platform and various EU-hosted webinars or events.
- **Event Participation:** Signatories are invited to participate in high-profile EU-sponsored events.
- **Public Listing:** Organizations joining the Pact are publicly listed on the EU AI Pact website, improving their credibility as responsible AI practitioners and signalling a commitment to ethical AI development (see <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-pact>)

By joining the AI Pact, organizations may gain recognition as early adopters of ethical AI practices, which will reinforce their reputation and possibly even provide eventual competitive advantages, especially as the AI market moves toward mandatory ethical and compliance standards.

## 5. Reporting Requirements and Accountability

One of the essential elements of the AI Pact is the commitment to report on the progress made toward meeting pledges, in the form of a report to be submitted 12 months after joining the Pact. The report should cover:



- **Actions Taken:** An overview of the actions taken to fulfil the commitments.
- **Achievements and Success Stories:** Highlight any significant achievements or successful practices related to the AI Pact commitments.
- **Challenges and Lessons Learned:** Document challenges encountered in meeting the Pact's requirements and the lessons learned through overcoming these obstacles.
- **Future Plans:** Outline plans for continued progress in meeting and potentially expanding on the Pact's commitments.

Participants should be cognizant that when they join the AI Pact, they consent to the AI Office publicly sharing the commitments that the participant pledges to meet.

The AI Pact is designed as a voluntary commitment for anticipating compliance with the EU AI Act and there are no legal penalties for companies that do not meet their goals fully. Conversely, however, no presumption of conformity with future AI standards is granted to participants.

## 6. Conclusion and Future Outlook

With the AI Pact, organizations are given a structured pathway to ethical AI practices and early compliance with the AI Act. The Pact can be used as a catalyst to adopt best practices in AI governance, transparency, and risk management.

In addition, organizations can consider that the public nature of the commitments and the opportunities to showcase their work will help position themselves as early adopters of ethical AI.

## 7. Resources

1. AI Pact presentation from the EU Commission: [AI Pact](#)
2. Press release at the time of the launch event: [Over a hundred companies sign EU AI Pact pledges to drive trustworthy and safe AI development](#)
3. European AI Office, which oversees the AI Pact: [European AI Office](#)
4. To join Pillar I of the AI Pact: [EUSurvey](#)
5. To join Pillar II of the AI Pact: [EU-AI-PACT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EU-AI-PACT@ec.europa.eu).