



Press Release

Luxembourg, 20 March 2023

Artificial intelligence on the European Court of Auditors' radar screen

- *Artificial intelligence (AI) is crucial to the future competitiveness of the economy*
- *The EU faces risk of falling behind in this key technological race*
- *Auditors will assess EU action planned for boosting the development of AI*

The European Court of Auditors is starting to assess EU action to support the development of artificial intelligence (AI). The auditors will examine whether the European Commission's plans and financial measures are conducive to positioning Europe as a global leader in AI.

Artificial intelligence is key to the EU's digital transition, its industrial policy and its strategic autonomy. The revolution is underway, but Europe is still lagging behind on key aspects such as financing. In the EU, the amount invested in AI is estimated to be half as much as the amount invested in the USA. Less than 1 in 10 businesses in the EU (8%) were using AI in 2021, with significant differences between EU countries. While almost 1 in every 4 businesses in Denmark (24%) used AI and over 15% in Portugal (17%) and Finland (16%), this proportion fell below 5% in the Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia and Lithuania (all 4%), in Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Hungary and Poland (all 3%), and in Romania (1%).

"Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly bring many considerable benefits in a wide range of sectors," said Mihails Kozlovs, the ECA member who will lead the audit, *"and the stakes for EU competitiveness are too high to get it wrong. Our audit will determine whether sufficient effort is being made to prevent Europe from missing the boat in this major technological revolution".*

To be able to compete in the race, the EU envisaged allocating nearly €10 billion from its budget between 2014 and 2027. In addition, at least 20 % of the €724 billion being made available under the pandemic recovery and resilience facility (RRF) will finance the EU's digital transition. Finally, the InvestEU Fund will mobilise public and private investment through an EU budget guarantee of €6.6 billion for research, innovation and digitisation. All in all, the objective is to gradually increase investments in AI to €20 billion per year in the course of this decade.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview, which is available at eca.europa.eu.

ECA Press

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi – L-1615 Luxembourg

E: press@eca.europa.eu @EUAuditors eca.europa.eu

The audit will check whether key conditions are in place in the EU to boost the development of AI. In particular, auditors will examine whether the European Commission ensures that EU money effectively supports the creation of a proper and competitive European artificial intelligence ecosystem, taking into account the strategic importance of AI and the potential risks to safety and security.

Background information

The European Commission adopted an EU-level coordinated plan on AI in 2018, with the overall goal of achieving leadership in developing and deploying cutting-edge AI, as well as ensuring ethical and secure AI products. It updated the plan in 2021.

Audit preview 02/2023, “*Artificial intelligence in the EU*”, is available in English on the [ECA website](#). Audit previews are based on preparatory work undertaken before the start of an audit. They should not be regarded as audit observations, conclusions or recommendations. The audit report is expected in about a year’s time.

Press contact

ECA press office: press@eca.europa.eu

- Vincent Bourgeois: vincent.bourgeois@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 691 551 502
- Damijan Fišer: damijan.fiser@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 621 552 224
- Claudia Spiti : claudia.spiti@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 691 553 547