EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR

Market surveillance authority
for EUIs' AI systems

EDPS

*Towards trustworthy AI in the EU
public administration:*

The EDPS Compass for its new role under
the AI Act

2026–2027

Foreword

Under Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (the AI Act or the Regulation)[1], the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) has been designated as a market surveillance authority (MSA) for AI systems put into service or used by European Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies (EUIs). The AI Act also designates the EDPS as a notified body for conformity assessments of certain high-risk AI systems.

The EDPS has already undertaken organisational and procedural preparations to start building the foundations for these tasks. As a first step, in May 2024, the EDPS announced its AI Preparedness Strategy.[2] This was followed by the establishment of the Artificial Intelligence Unit in October 2024 with the task of operationalising the powers attributed by the AI Act in an independent manner.

This document builds on these previous efforts and defines further how the EDPS will supervise EUIs and enforce the AI Act to ensure the safe, compliant and human-centric development and use of AI systems. Specifically, this document presents:

- an overview of the EDPS's new tasks in light of its expanded mandate under the AI Act, along with the guiding strategic vision and values;

- the operational context in which the EDPS exercises its supervisory powers under the AI Act;

- the four strategic pillars guiding the EDPS's action in its new role as MSA and notified body, along with their synergies and the key initiatives underpinning each pillar.

Grounded in a commitment to impartiality, integrity, transparency, pragmatism and responsible innovation, the EDPS intends to further reinforce its institutional capacity to properly fulfil its new role under the AI Act. This will allow it to enhance legal and procedural clarity in the implementation of the AI Act through a cooperative approach with EUIs, and ensure it can fully discharge its renewed mission with authority and foresight in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

This document identifies priority actions to be pursued over the next two years (2026–2027). This timeframe has been determined in light of two factors: first, the evolving nature of the AI Act, which will be further complemented by harmonised standards and European Commission's guidelines in the coming years; second, the possible changes to the AI Act envisaged in the 2025 Digital Omnibus legislative proposal[3] which may require corresponding adjustments to the current setup in the near future.
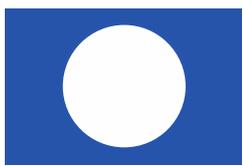
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[1] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj)

[2] Navas, L., C., 'It's hatched: Our plan for artificial intelligence in the EU institutions', Blogpost, EDPS website, 22 May 2024, https://www.edps.europa.eu/press-publications/press-news/blog/its-hatched-our-plan-artificial-intelligence-eu-institutions_en.

[3] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) 2024/1689 and (EU) 2018/1139 as regards the simplification of the implementation of harmonised rules on artificial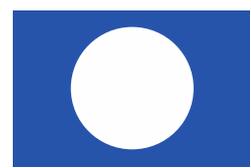 intelligence (Digital Omnibus on AI) COM(2025) 836 final. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0836
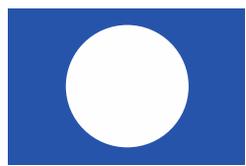
This document is published by the EDPS in its role as MSA under the AI Act and not in its role as data protection authority.

Contents

1. The EDPS expanded mandate under the AI Act: vision and core values

The EDPS, in its role as data protection authority, has stood for the last 20 years at the forefront of ensuring the protection of personal data and privacy within the around 80 European Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies (EUIs). Since 2024, the EDPS has also been entrusted with a new, additional mandate stemming from the Artificial Intelligence Act (the AI Act or the Regulation), which designates the EDPS as a market surveillance authority (MSA) for AI systems put into service or used by EUIs. The AI Act also designates the EDPS as a notified body for conformity assessments of certain high-risk AI systems intended to be put into service by EUIs.

This implies that, with regard to the AI systems under its competence, the EDPS will be involved in both the conformity assessment procedures and the market surveillance activities presented in further detail in the following section 3.1.

The new tasks attributed by the AI Act require that the EDPS expands its expertise beyond its well-established role in data protection to include product safety and compliance activities for AI systems.

Acknowledging that these systems can have harmful effects and an adverse impact on fundamental rights, the EU has adopted the AI Act with the objective to:

> "improve the functioning of the internal market and promote the uptake of human-centric and trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI), while ensuring a high level of protection of health, safety, fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter, including democracy, the rule of law and environmental protection, against the harmful effects of AI systems in the Union and supporting innovation".[4]

The AI Act seeks to strike a balance between two key objectives: stimulating AI innovation and uptake, thus contributing to the functioning of the internal market, while at the same time ensuring that AI systems respect health, safety and fundamental rights.

The Regulation follows a risk-based approach: all AI systems must be classified according to a specific risk level, which should correspond to a defined subset of rules. The type and content of the rules are tailored to the intensity and scope of the risks that AI systems can pose to fundamental rights and EU values. On this basis, the AI Act introduced a prohibition of certain unacceptable AI practices, established specific requirements for high-risk AI systems and put in place transparency obligations for certain AI systems.[5]

Against this background, the establishment of the EDPS as supervisory authority for AI systems, entrusted with supervising compliance with the requirements and obligations of the AI Act in EUIs, is key to ensuring that EUIs can lead by example in implementing responsible and trustworthy innovation in the EU.

In addition to functioning as MSA, the AI Act assigns to the EDPS the role of notified body for certain high-risk AI systems. The fact that this task is assigned to an authority also designated as

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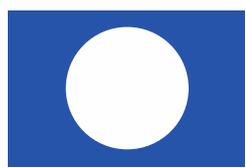
MSA poses additional challenges. The EDPS is committed to make sure that the necessary independence measures are introduced to guarantee that impartiality and integrity requirements are met, as established by the applicable legislation and guidelines[6].

The EDPS initially embraced the above challenges focusing its plan for AI on three pillars, namely governance, risk management and supervision.[7] In particular, preceding the full entry into application of the AI Act, the EDPS put significant emphasis on a collaborative interinstitutional approach that already led to important results in 2024 and 2025: the creation of the AI Act Correspondents Network[8] and the mapping of high-risk AI systems in EUIs[9] being two of the main achievements.

Looking ahead, the EDPS, conscious of the importance of AI as a global driver of technological and societal change, and of the complexity of its role under the AI Act, will perform its new mandate inspired by the following guiding principles:

- operationalising its tasks both as MSA and as notified body, and exercising its assigned powers in line with the relevant legal framework and with the necessary transparency, independence and impartiality, to ensure full compliance with the AI Act in the EUIs;

- as their MSA, maintaining an open dialogue with EUIs, fostering the exchange of best practices in AI governance and providing relevant guidance where necessary, while promoting innovative, yet human-centric AI across the EU public administration;

- cooperating with all relevant stakeholders, the AI Board, the AI Office and Member States' competent authorities;

- closely following the evolution of AI technology and enriching EDPS supervisory practices accordingly to ensure an efficient and up-to-date supervision.

1.1. Our vision

In view of its duties envisaged by the AI Act, the EDPS interprets its new mandate as follows:

The EDPS will serve as an independent guardian of trustworthy AI in the EU public administration, enabling European institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to develop and use compliant and human-centric AI solutions in line with the AI Act. The EDPS will exercise

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[6] Article 31 of the AI Act; Commission notice – The 'Blue Guide' on the implementation of EU product rules 2022 (OJ C 247, 29.6.2022, pp. 1–152), para 5.2.2.

[7] Navas, L., C., 'It's hatched: Our plan for artificial intelligence in the EU institutions', Blogpost, EDPS website, 22 May 2024, https://www.edps.europa.eu/press-publications/press-news/blog/its-hatched-our-plan-artificial-intelligence-eu-institutions_en.

[8] Navas, L., C., '1st meeting of AI Correspondents Network: community, compliance and collaboration', Blogpost, EDPS website, 27 January 2025, https://www.edps.europa.eu/press-publications/press-news/blog/1st-meeting-ai-correspondents-network-community-compliance-and-collaboration_en; Wiewiórowski, W., 'Building on Collaboration: Second Meeting of the AI Act Correspondents Network', Blogpost, EDPS website, 17 October 2025, https://www.edps.europa.eu/press-publications/press-news/blog/building-collaboration-second-meeting-ai-act-correspondents-network_en; Wiewiórowski, W., 'Advancing into Practice: Third Meeting of the AI Act Correspondents Network', Blogpost, EDPS website, 18 February 2026, https://www.edps.europa.eu/press-publications/press-news/blog/advancing-practice-third-meeting-ai-act-correspondents-network_en.

[9] EDPS, 'Getting Ready – Preparing the EU Public Administration for the AI Act', High-risk AI systems mapping report in European Institutions, Agencies and Bodies (EUIs), 4 December 2025, https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/ai-act/2025-12-04-high-risk-ai-systems-mapping-report-european-institutions-agencies-and-bodies_en.
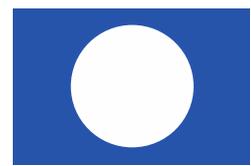
its supervisory mandate with integrity, agility, and long-term impact in the evolving AI landscape.

1.2. Our core values

The EDPS has always operated according to the following core values:

- Impartiality: working within the legislative and policy framework given to us, being independent and objective, finding the right balance between the interests at stake.

- Integrity: upholding the highest standards of behaviour and always do what is right.

- Transparency: explaining what we are doing and why, in clear language that is accessible to all.

- Pragmatism: understanding our stakeholders' needs and seeking solutions that work in a practical way.

These values will remain the guiding inspiration for EDPS's actions throughout the expanded mandate.

In addition to the above, the EDPS firmly believes that ensuring full compliance with the AI Act is crucial, especially today, at a time when technological progress undoubtedly brings great opportunities but also implies significant and sometimes unpredictable risks.

Innovation and EU values must go hand in hand. They are not and must not be considered conflicting principles. A human-centric AI is a competitive advantage.
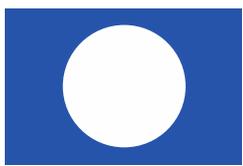
2. Current context and state of AI technology in the EU public administration

In recent years, EUIs have increasingly adopted AI tools to be more efficient and deliver better services to European citizens.

In 2025, the EDPS conducted an initial voluntary mapping exercise[10] of the potential high-risk AI systems provided and deployed across the EUIs. The mapping exercise offered a preliminary overview of the AI landscape within EUIs, helping to identify priority areas for supervision, as well as informing both the technical capacity and required allocation of resources essential to fulfil the EDPS's tasks under the AI Act.

The exercise identified more than one hundred AI systems currently deployed or under development across EUIs. The highest concentration of high-risk use cases was found in the Area of Freedom Security and Justice (AFSJ), and employment and recruitment. More generally, this exercise also revealed that the AI tools used by EUIs form a highly heterogeneous AI ecosystem with system techniques ranging from computer vision to natural language processing (NLP). Systems based on generative AI have emerged as a dominant AI technology.

Subsequent to this exercise, more recent exchanges with EUIs suggest that agentic AI is also being explored and is likely to emerge in the short term, with potential implications for future supervisory work of the EDPS.

The hosting environments of EUIs' AI systems also vary: some applications run on premises, others rely on public or private cloud infrastructure, and many use hybrid setups combining both environments. Moreover, some AI tools are developed in-house while others are off-the-shelf commercial solutions integrated into existing workflows.

Apart from a diverse AI landscape, consultations with EUIs revealed another layer of complexity unique to the supervisory tasks of the EDPS, as some high-risk AI systems represent 'hybrid' cases. These are systems simultaneously involving EUIs and EU Member States. They can include applications, where, for example, system inputs are provided by the Member States, while the system itself is run by an EUI. Apart from having complex technical architectures, these AI systems are situated at the intersection of multiple EU and national legal frameworks. These cases will require legal clarifications which in turn will shape the EDPS's supervisory work.

Additionally, supervision of the high-risk AI systems will require consideration of their usage context. Hence, the EDPS will approach its supervisory role in a tailored manner, taking into account the specifics of each AI system and the concrete risks it poses.

As the EDPS transitions into its expanded role as MSA and notified body for EUIs' AI systems, it will face, inter alia, the following challenges:

- **Rapid technological evolution:** AI architectures, capabilities and deployment models evolve quickly, requiring continuous technical monitoring, updated assessment

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[10] EDPS, 'Getting Ready – Preparing the EU Public Administration for the AI Act', High-risk AI systems mapping report in European Institutions, Agencies and Bodies (EUIs), 4 December 2025, https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/ai-act/2025-12-04-high-risk-ai-systems-mapping-report-european-institutions-agencies-and-bodies_en.
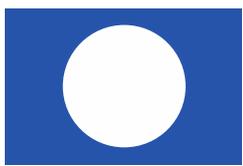
methodologies and regulatory agility. This also has major implications for the need for specialised and technical capabilities to support effective supervision, aligned with the latest technological developments.

- **A constantly changing regulatory landscape:** The complexities of the implementation of the AI Act, coupled with the continuous evolution of the legislation and guidance from the European Commission, will require agile responses to maintain compliance.

- **Challenges ensuring adequate resource allocation:** The scale and complexity of the supervisory task – covering hundreds of AI systems across approximately 80 EUIs – demands dedicated staffing, technical infrastructure and budgetary resources commensurate with the EDPS's expanded mandate. Securing and efficiently allocating these resources will be a prerequisite for the effective discharge of all supervisory responsibilities.
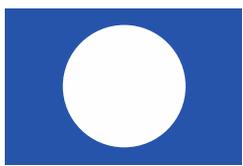
3. The four pillars of the EDPS Compass for its new role under the AI Act

The EDPS Compass for its new role under the AI Act for 2026–2027 is built upon four mutually reinforcing pillars:

(1) Supervision of EUIs' AI systems

(2) EDPS's contribution to the AI Act governance and regulatory coordination

(3) Institutional empowerment for trustworthy AI

(4) International engagement and exchange of best practices

Interconnected in a continuous feedback cycle, these pillars equip the EDPS to remain an agile and effective supervisory authority in an era characterised by swift and continuous technological change.

Among the four pillars, the first – supervision of EUIs' AI systems – is the central strategic objective for the EDPS in its new role under the AI Act. In line with the provisions of the Regulation, the EDPS is gearing up to act in the key roles of MSA and notified body for EUIs.

Through proactive and continuous oversight, the EDPS will gain early insights into how the AI systems of EUIs perform, how risks manifest, and where further guidance is required to address novel scenarios.

The second strategic priority for the EDPS is to contribute to the AI Act governance and regulatory coordination. The EDPS, in its role as observer on the AI Board,[11] actively participates in many of the AI Board's sub-groups on specific AI-related issues. This allows the EDPS to provide its contribution with the aim of ensuring the consistent implementation and application of the AI Act across the Union, and at the level of EUIs.

In addition, to effectively fulfil its roles as MSA, notified body, and observer on the AI Board, the EDPS conducts extensive legal analysis on areas central to its responsibilities under the AI Act.

The institutional empowerment for trustworthy AI pillar translates the intention of the EDPS, as a sui generis supervisor of a very specific category of AI systems (those of the EUIs), to adopt an open, cooperative and pro-innovation approach with the supervised entities. It aims at ensuring that the EUIs have the skills, structures and tools to confidently govern AI systems in a highly dynamic technological ecosystem.

International engagement and exchange of best practices – the last pillar and strategic objective of the EDPS in its role under the AI Act – aims at further strengthening the EDPS's supervisory capabilities and expertise. Constant engagement with academia, civil society, and other international stakeholders, allows the EDPS to benefit from knowledge exchange and continued oversight over emerging AI trends.

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[11] *Article 65(2) of the AI Act.*
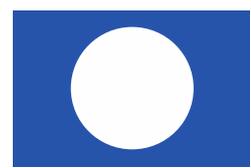
The actions under the different pillars will be accompanied by dedicated communication initiatives to raise awareness of the EDPS's AI Act mandate, role and responsibilities.

In the sections that follow, each pillar is examined in detail, along with the actions it drives.

3.1. Supervision of EUIs' AI systems

The AI Act builds upon the existing EU product safety legal framework: the harmonised rules of the AI Act are laid down consistently with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008[12], Decision No 768/2008/EC[13] and Regulation (EU) 2019/1020[14] (Market Surveillance Regulation), cumulatively referred to as the 'New Legislative Framework'. In this context, AI systems are considered 'products'[15].

The AI Act sets-up a two-tiered market supervision and enforcement system, consisting of (1) ex ante supervision of high-risk AI systems via conformity assessment activities, including testing, certification and inspection by notified bodies, and (2) ex post supervision and enforcement by MSAs.

3.1.1. Ex ante supervision – notified (conformity assessment) body

A conformity assessment body performs third-party conformity assessment activities, including testing, certification and inspection for certain high-risk AI systems.[16] Notified bodies must operate in a competent, non-discriminatory, transparent, neutral, independent and impartial manner.

Article 43(1) of the AI Act designates the EDPS as a notified body in charge of conformity assessment for high-risk AI systems of EUIs in the areas of remote biometric identification, biometric categorisation and emotion recognition (Annex III (1) of the AI Act).[17]

In preparation for assuming its responsibilities as a notified body, the EDPS will:

- introduce internal safeguards and adjustments to the organisational structure that would assure non-discriminatory, transparent, neutral, independent and impartial operationalisation of this new role;

- carry out technical and procedural preparatory steps, by investing in technical and human expertise (engaging in continuous professional training to ensure that the EDPS keeps pace with evolving AI standards and testing methodologies);

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[12] *Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 339/93 (OJ L 218, 13.8.2008, pp. 30–47, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/765/oj).*

[13] *Decision No 768/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on a common framework for the marketing of products, and repealing Council Decision 93/465/EEC (OJ L 218,13.8.2008 pp. 82–128, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2008/768(1)/oj)*

[14] *Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on market surveillance and compliance of products and amending Directive 2004/42/EC and Regulations (EC) No 765/2008 and (EU) No 305/2011 (OJ L 169, 25.6.2019, pp. 1–44, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1020/oj)*

[15] *Article 74(1)(b) of the AI Act.*

[16] *Articles 3(20) and (21) of the AI Act.*

[17] *Except for the cases whereby the EUIs decide to rely on internal control procedures when they have such a possibility under Article 43(1) of the AI Act.*
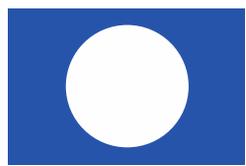
- develop operational procedures for the conformity assessment activities, also establishing a transparent procedure for decision-making and appeals, to ensure accountability and transparency of certification activities;

- develop the mechanisms for cooperation with other notified bodies, enabling the exchange of best practices and consistent application of conformity assessment criteria across the Union.

## 3.1.2. Ex post supervision – market surveillance authority

According to the Market Surveillance Regulation, MSAs are conferred a broad range of investigatory and enforcement powers, such as: the power to request relevant documents and data, to carry out unannounced on-site inspections and physical checks, to enter premises, to start investigations in order to identify non-compliance, to prohibit or restrict the making available of AI systems on the market or to order the withdrawal or recall of AI systems, to impose penalties.[18]

To fulfil its new mandate as the MSA for AI systems put into service or used by EUIs, in 2026–2027 the EDPS will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- Consolidating its organisational structure and introducing relevant procedures, with a view to preparing for the efficient use of MSA powers, including the activities and measures pursuant to the Market Surveillance Regulation. This will, amongst other actions, involve the following:

    o Establishing enforcement procedures, including those on handling complaints and applying administrative fines, to guarantee the exercise of MSA's activities and tasks in an independent, impartial and non-biased manner, as specified in Article 70 of the AI Act and in accordance with Article 100 of the AI Act.

    o Implementing the cooperation mechanisms with fundamental rights authorities set out in Article 77 of the AI Act.

    o Establishing the procedures and, when required, functional separation between the EDPS's responsibilities as an MSA and as a notified body, particularly with respect to oversight, coordination and information exchange. Such clarification is essential for preventing overlaps and conflicts of interest, ensuring legal certainty and creating a coherent supervisory framework for AI systems deployed by the EU public administration.

    o Establishing procedures for AI audits, defining criteria for inspections, streamlining incident reporting and response mechanisms.

    o Developing procedures for approving and monitoring real-life testing of certain EUIs' AI systems.

- Continuing to build dedicated institutional capacity in AI technologies, data and data computing, personal data protection, cybersecurity, fundamental rights, health and safety

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[18] *Art. 14(4) of the Market Surveillance Regulation.*
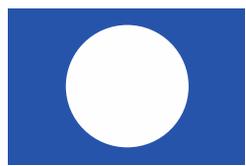
risks and knowledge of existing standards and legal requirements, as per Article 70(3) of the AI Act.

- Cooperating with national MSAs and exchanging best practices, in particular through the participation as full member in the standing sub-group for market surveillance of the AI Board. This sub-group acts as the administrative cooperation group (ADCO) for the AI Act, within the meaning of Article 30 of the Market Surveillance Regulation.[19]

- Participating in events organised by networks working on AI matters.

3.2. EDPS contribution to the AI Act governance and regulatory coordination

3.2.1. Role of the EDPS in the AI Board

In addition to the role as MSA – and, as such, full member of the ADCO – and notified body, the AI Act assigns to the EDPS another important task in the context of the AI governance framework: participating as observer on the AI Board.[20]

In this role, the EDPS actively attends the meetings of the AI Board and of several sub-groups established by the AI Board for the purpose of examining specific AI-related issues (e.g. the subgroups on standards, on high-risk annex III AI systems, on prohibitions, and on law enforcement).[21]

In both of the above-mentioned roles, the EDPS considers it an important priority to actively engage with the AI Board and its subgroups by submitting comments and observations on the subject matters discussed.

This activity has a twofold objective: (i) to highlight within the AI Board the specificities of the EDPS's role in the context of the AI governance structure set out by the AI Act; (ii) to consequently share the knowledge acquired in the AI Board meetings with the EUIs so to facilitate timely compliance with the AI Act.

Moreover, in order to properly perform its role under the AI Act, the EDPS carries out extensive legal and technical analysis on various areas critical to the EDPS's responsibilities. The outcome of this analysis is fed through the AI Board sub-groups and as a contribution to the European Commission's public surveys.

This highlights the EDPS's proactive approach to being at the core of the discussions about the AI Act's implementation, with the aim of providing an expert perspective to ensure effective governance of AI systems and coherent enforcement of the AI Act at the EUI's level.

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[19] *Administrative cooperation groups (ADCOs) bring together representatives of market surveillance authorities and the European Commission and are established for the uniform application of Union harmonisation legislation within their area of competence. ADCOs role and tasks are established under Article 32 of the Market Surveillance Regulation. Article 65(6) of the AI Act establishes that the standing sub-group for market surveillance, established by the AI Board, should act as the ADCO for the AI Act. The EDPS, as market surveillance authority for EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, is a member of the ADCO for the AI Act.*
[20] *Article 65(2) of the AI Act.*
[21] *Article 65(6) of the AI Act.*
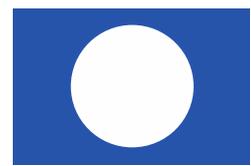
3.3. Institutional empowerment for trustworthy AI

The EDPS occupies a sui generis position under the AI Act, acting as an MSA and notified body with a mandate unlike any other. Its supervisory landscape is equally distinctive: rather than overseeing profit driven market operators, the EDPS monitors EUIs whose primary obligation is to serve the public interest and uphold the rights of EU citizens.

As the AI domain quickly evolves, EUIs must stay compliant by constantly reviewing and taking into account new emerging risks, system design and regulatory expectations.

Being the independent supervisory authority on trustworthy AI governance within the EU public administration, the EDPS plays a crucial role in enabling EUIs to meet their obligations in this highly dynamic technological landscape.

In light of this unique context, the EDPS has chosen to adopt a collaborative approach aimed at empowering EUIs toward a shared objective: to encourage strong governance within each EUI that ensures that they can develop, procure and deploy AI systems that fully comply with the AI Act. Hence, beyond the supervision, the EDPS will also work on the sharing of knowledge and best practices to promote lawful and human-centric AI across the EU public administration.

Following this approach, in order to foster interinstitutional knowledge exchange, the EDPS: (i) created a network of correspondents from EUIs; (ii) launched a sandbox pilot project; (iii) has set the aim of becoming a centre of excellence for trustworthy AI for EUIs.

3.3.1. Interinstitutional knowledge exchange

3.3.1.1. AI Act Correspondents Network

Inspired by international governance structures and building on the successful experience with the DPO network, in 2024, the EDPS established the AI Act Correspondents Network (AIACN). Each EUI has voluntarily appointed representatives with different backgrounds and expertise (technical, legal, etc.) to participate in the meetings and activities of the AIACN organised by the EDPS in its new role under the AI Act.

The network serves as a hub for compliance support, capacity-building and knowledge exchange on AI governance. In particular, the AIACN meetings provide AI correspondents with a valuable opportunity to explore synergies, pool cross-institutional AI systems expertise and share best practices. Meetings of the AIACN are also an opportunity for the EDPS to update the network on the most recent policy and legislative developments in relation to AI systems, including the activities of the European Commission's AI Office and the AI Board.

Finally, the AIACN also serves as an early warning and feedback mechanism on emerging challenges, risks or technological trends affecting the compliance of AI systems.

In the coming years, strengthening and advancing the vision and activities of the network will remain a key priority for the EDPS, helping to ensure that it continues to provide EUIs with the necessary guidance, tools and support.
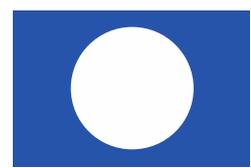
3.3.1.2. Complementarity with the activities of the AI Office

The EDPS will carry out its capacity-building activities taking into due consideration the initiatives of the European Commission's AI Office.

In its role as MSA, the EDPS is entitled to provide guidance and advice on the implementation of the Regulation taking into account the guidance and advice of the AI Board and the Commission, as appropriate.[22]

While the EDPS and the Commission share a common objective – namely ensuring the effective and harmonised implementation of the AI Act – their mandates, target audiences and operational focuses remain distinct, and due consideration must be given to the independence of the EDPS. This independence extends, in particular, to the supervision of AI systems put into service or used by the Commission itself.

To ensure coherence and avoid duplication of efforts, regular coordination and information exchange will be maintained between the EDPS and the AI Office.

3.3.1.3. EDPS Sandbox

Under the AI Act, the EDPS may establish an AI regulatory sandbox for EUIs.[23]

The possibility to establish sandboxes under the AI Act is aimed at facilitating the development and testing of innovative AI systems under strict regulatory oversight before these systems are placed on the market or otherwise put into service. The regulatory sandboxes make responsible innovation possible through the integration of appropriate safeguards and risk mitigation measures at an early stage, thanks to a safe and controlled space for experimentation.

The EDPS may establish and coordinate AI regulatory sandboxes in the future. These sandboxes will provide a controlled environment for the training, validation and testing of AI systems developed and/or deployed by EUIs, and will allow them to experiment with AI systems under the direct regulatory guidance of the EDPS.

In preparation for this task, in 2025, the EDPS launched the EDPS AI Sandbox pilot project, initiating a preliminary phase to test sandbox procedures and gather practical experience. This will help the EDPS decide whether it is in a position to offer a regulatory sandbox stricto sensu under Article 57 of the AI Act. This project is intended to support EUIs in navigating the AI Act's requirements through a first collaborative experience on regulatory supervision and AI Act guidance.
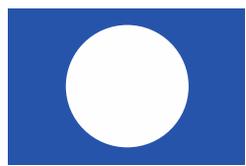
The EDPS will offer its pilot project for an AI regulatory sandbox for selected use cases taking into consideration, inter alia, the following aspects:

- Institutional preferences and needs – EUIs will be invited to propose use cases for inclusion in the sandbox cycle.

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[22] Article 70(8) of the AI Act.
[23] Article 57(3) of the AI Act.

- Prevalence and relevance – priority will be given to use cases that are widespread or strategically significant across multiple EUIs.

- Risk and novelty – AI systems that raise higher risks and novel or complex compliance questions will be prioritised.

- Potential for replicability – priority will be given to the use cases whose lessons and solutions can benefit the broader EU institutional community.

3.3.2. Trustworthy AI Centre of Excellence

The EDPS will assign responsibilities to part of its staff to carry out research activities aimed at monitoring the most recent AI technological trends and developing state of the art technical expertise. These activities will be carried out under the 'Centre of Excellence' concept.

The Centre of Excellence will aim to ensure that the EDPS can credibly assess, supervise and guide AI systems of EUIs, not just at a theoretical level, but technically and operationally. In particular, the Centre of Excellence will aim at:

- actively following AI-related research and innovation, to ensure that EDPS remains at the forefront of technological and regulatory development in AI, grounding its opinions, guidance and capacity building work in continuous technical observations;

- investigating and synthesising the AI Regulatory Sandbox results and transforming empirical observations into reusable guidance for all EUIs, to ensure that operational learning becomes institutional learning (the sandbox cycle will produce a wealth of practical knowledge on technical configurations' risk management methods, governance models and compliance by design approaches);

- disseminating good practices among EUIs through specific virtual spaces;

- embedding lessons learned into EDPS AI auditing practices;

- exploring AI-specific auditing tools to facilitate compliance monitoring of the AI systems of EUIs.

## 3.4. International engagement and exchange of best practices

As mentioned before, the EDPS simultaneously has the role of observer in the AI Board and full member in the ADCO. It has also the role of notified body for certain high-risk AI systems under Article 43(1) of the Regulation.

The AI Act establishes that the AI Board (hence its members) may "contribute to effective cooperation with the competent authorities of third countries and with international organisations"[24] and "advise the Commission in relation to international matters on AI"[25].

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[24] *Article 66(i) of the AI Act.*
[25] *Article 66(m) of the AI Act.*
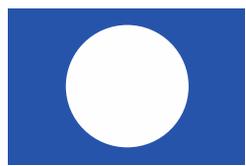
In addition, under Article 31(12) of the AI Act notified bodies shall "take part directly, or be represented in, European standardisation organisations, or ensure that they are aware and up to date in respect of relevant standards".

Against this legal background, in a field defined by rapid innovation and global interdependence, the EDPS considers that international engagement is not optional; being exposed to emerging technologies, evolving safety practices and early signals of legal or ethical challenges that may soon impact the AI market is central to proactive oversight and fundamental for supervisory readiness.

Therefore, the EDPS in its role as MSA and notified body will strive to ensure its presence in international networks and collaborate with international organisations working on AI matters, to contribute with its expertise and know-how and to share best practices.

In this context, the EDPS, in its role under the AI Act, will continue to:

- participate in international networks and gather with relevant stakeholders outside of the EU/EEA, inter alia, contributing to the work of:

    o the Global Network of AI Supervisory Authorities (GNAIS), led by UNESCO (more specifically, the EDPS, as a full member will work together with other supervisors on useful assessment frameworks, methodologies and supervisory tools);

    o the Council of Europe, including on the development of the methodology for the risk and impact assessment of artificial intelligence systems from the point of view of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (HUDERIA methodology);

    o the activities and meetings organised by the OECD.AI Policy Observatory and in the context of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI);

- share expertise through active engagement as a speaker at international events;

- strengthen collaborations on AI matters with independent technical experts and academia.
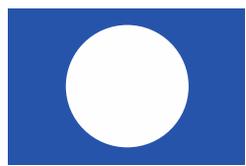
4. Conclusion

The EDPS Compass outlines the four strategic priorities of action to operationalise the mandate for the organisation's new role under the AI Act, and the enhanced responsibilities arising from the AI Act. Together, they form a robust and coherent strategic vision for the years 2026–2027.

Building on this foundation, the EDPS will assume primary responsibility for ensuring that AI systems deployed by EUIs fully comply with the AI Act, strengthen public trust, and contribute to a responsible and rights based digital transformation in the EU public administration.