

AI Act: countdown starts

18 July 2024

Last week the long-awaited AI Act was published in the EU's Official Journal on 12 July, becoming Regulation (EU) 2024/1689. Once it enters into force on 1 August 2024, 20 days after its publication, the countdown to the various provisions of the AI Act becoming applicable will begin.

The AI Act is an essential part of the EU's extensive digital strategy, which aims to establish a thorough regulatory framework that tackles the diverse challenges and opportunities of the digital economy. For an overview of the new responsibilities of businesses in relation to the use and development of AI, read our article [here](#).

1 Timeline for application

The main milestones for the application of the AI Act are the following:

12 July 2024	Publication of the AI Act in the Official Journal of the European Union
1 August 2024	Entry into force of the AI Act
2 February 2025	The ban on AI systems identified as representing an unacceptable risk will become applicable six months after the AI Act's entry into force.

This prohibition will include AI systems which:

- deploy subliminal, manipulative or deceptive techniques affecting individuals making informed decisions;
- use social scoring systems leading to detrimental or unfavourable treatment;
- use untargeted scraping of facial images from the internet or CCTV footage for facial recognition;
- use emotion recognition systems in the areas of workplace and education institutions;
- include certain biometric categorisation systems;
- include certain real-time remote biometric identification systems.

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2 May 2025	Codes of conduct become applicable
2 August 2025	The following provisions become applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The obligations related to notifying authorities and notified bodies (member states must have appointed their notifying authorities);• The obligations of providers of general-purpose AI (for AI systems placed on the market after that date); and• The provisions related to penalties (except for the fines for providers of General-Purpose AI).
2 August 2026	Every rule (with some exceptions) in the AI Act will become applicable, including the obligations for high-risk systems listed in Annex III.
2 August 2027	High-risk systems defined in Annex I will have more time to comply with the requirements as the obligations concerning them will become applicable 36 months after the Act's entry into force.

It is worth noting that the EU Commission plans to launch an AI Pact. The pact involves securing commitments from AI developers, on a voluntary basis, to implement key obligations of the AI Act prior to its application.

Furthermore, the European AI Office, established in February 2024 within the Commission, will oversee the AI Act's enforcement and implementation across member states. The AI Office will also lead the EU in terms of international cooperation on AI and strengthen bonds between the European Commission and the scientific community, including the forthcoming scientific panel of independent experts.

2 Preparing for the AI Act

It is a certainty that the EU AI Act will significantly impact certain organisations in particular, as these organisations will need to adjust their products and introduce procedures and policies to comply with the Act's requirements. However, there is still ample time to prepare and align AI systems with the law.

It is likely that the same chaos and uncertainty seen when GDPR became applicable will be experienced once again, given how many organisations tend to leave these kinds of preparations to the last minute.

Therefore, it is crucial to begin preparations as soon as possible, in order to ensure that current and developing AI systems are compliant when the EU AI Act becomes mandatory. Otherwise, systems may need to be taken offline or garner substantial fines.

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