

European Chambers welcome Commission's proposals on Artificial Intelligence and will play a key role in bringing AI to businesses

EUROCHAMBRES, the European Association of Chambers of Commerce & Industry representing 20 million businesses, welcomes the strategies on Artificial Intelligence and data published by the European Commission today. They address key issues around dissemination, skills and reveal a coherent approach to strengthening the EU's position on future key technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

"Europe is lagging behind China and the USA on Artificial Intelligence. We need a clear strategy from the new European Commission to catch up and to ensure that the EU is a key player on this decisive technology of the future, not a spectator", commented Christoph Leidl, President of EUROCHAMBRES.

Chambers underline the key role that they can play via their extensive European network in ensuring businesses' accessibility to AI, notably through outreach to the broad business community and support in tackling digital skills shortages.

Digital Innovation Hubs have been identified by the European Commission as decisive for company accessibility to AI. These hubs, often initiated by local Chambers, already play a critical role in innovating and testing new technologies, especially for smaller companies that do not have the means to finance their own research labs. EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the commitment of the European Commission to support Digital Innovation Hubs so that they can disseminate new technologies such as AI among all companies – big or small, advanced or traditional.

The European Commission strategy on a European digital society highlights that 500.000 digital specialists are needed to reduce the current skills gap on the labour market. Chambers, as leading providers of vocational education and training, are ideally positioned to help people acquire the skills that our businesses require to drive the digital transformation of the European economy.

EUROCHAMBRES regrets that many legal acts already adopted, such as the General Data Protection Regulation, have led to additional administrative burdens for businesses while falling short on their original objective of creating more trust in the internet. *"We see European businesses bearing high compliance costs while their competitors from outside Europe often do not respect these rules at all. We need a digital level playing field!"* added President Leidl.

EUROCHAMBRES thus calls for legislation enabling companies to innovate, as only strong and competitive digital companies in Europe can facilitate European digital sovereignty.

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