



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2019) 8201 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication on Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence {COM(2019) 168 final}.

This Communication accompanied the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence, published by the High-Level Expert Group in April 2019. The Guidelines define trustworthy artificial intelligence as artificial intelligence that is ethical, legal and robust. Based on the framework of fundamental rights, the Guidelines include seven key requirements that artificial intelligence systems should meet to be trustworthy, and an assessment list that helps organisations put these into practice. In the Communication, the Commission welcomed the Guidelines as a valuable input for its policy-making, expressed its support for the seven key requirements for trustworthy artificial intelligence and encouraged stakeholders to apply the requirements in practice.

Currently, organisations can test the assessment list included in the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence and give the Commission feedback online until 1 December 2019. In parallel, more in-depth interviews on implementing the Guidelines are conducted with a smaller number of organisations. A third channel for providing feedback on the assessment list is the European Artificial Intelligence Alliance. On the basis of the feedback received, the High-Level Expert Group will revise the assessment list further.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaților for the objectives and actions set out in this Communication.

The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaților that artificial intelligence is indeed a horizontal technology; therefore it will be an important part of Horizon Europe, with

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significant funding to be dedicated to it in that programme. It will mainly appear in the Digital and Industry part of Horizon Europe, but given its horizontal nature, artificial intelligence will also feature in other parts of Horizon Europe.

In line with the emphasis of the Camera Deputaţilor on the need to support dissemination related to artificial intelligence, the Commission considers it important to communicate factual information about artificial intelligence and to debate it broadly. Only this way can fact-based, informed opinions be formed. Such considerations also provided the rationale for setting up the European Artificial Intelligence Alliance, a broad multi-stakeholder forum for open discussions about artificial intelligence in its different aspects. It brings together different stakeholder groups and interested parties – researchers, developers, students, companies, civil society organisations and interested citizens – to exchange views and ideas about artificial intelligence. Moreover, owing to the possibility offered by this forum to express views and positions, the Alliance can also be used for consultation purposes. As stated above, it is currently a vehicle for providing feedback on the assessment list that forms part of the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence.

The Commission recognises the urgency and importance of addressing the economic, societal and environmental challenges in the EU agriculture sector and the potential of digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence, to help tackle such issues. For this reason, the Commission initiated the Declaration on a Smart and Sustainable Digital Future for European Agriculture and Rural Areas, which almost all the Member States, including Romania, have signed. In the Declaration, the Member States committed themselves to taking measures, in particular to strengthen support for research, to establish a Europe-wide innovation infrastructure for a smart European agriculture sector, to invest in upskilling, to increase broadband coverage and to create a European data space for smart agriculture applications data.

The Commission also considers pilot projects to be very important in paving the way for the deployment of artificial intelligence technology. Therefore, they have already featured in Horizon 2020 and will feature in the Horizon Europe programme as well. Importantly, the new Digital Europe programme will take this further by investing in world-class testing and experimentation facilities, which will take artificial intelligence closer to deployment and involve a broader range of stakeholders.

The Commission recognises the importance of involving the private sector in ensuring a human-centred use of artificial intelligence. Accordingly, the Commission encourages companies to implement the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence of the High-Level Expert Group in their operations.

As the Camera Deputaţilor highlighted, it is indeed very important for the regions to be involved in digital transformation and the take-up of artificial intelligence. The Commission has supported the setting up, strengthening and networking of Digital Innovation Hubs across the EU to facilitate the transfer of digital technology such as artificial intelligence to businesses, notably small and medium-sized enterprises, in regions.

Concerning the participation of third countries in European Union research and innovation programmes, the Commission would like to clarify that third countries can already participate in the Horizon 2020 framework programme, and many third countries are also eligible for funding from the programme.

As part of its objective to keep the EU at the forefront of artificial intelligence research, the Commission considers it essential to strengthen and network European artificial intelligence excellence centres. This is necessary to bring together the best scientists in Europe and to avoid fragmentation and overlaps in efforts. At the same time, this should not entail exclusivity. The excellence centres are also expected to reach out and spread excellence to other artificial intelligence centres.

The Commission agrees that it is necessary to ensure a sufficient level of artificial intelligence skills. The Commission has ongoing initiatives in this area, and skills were identified as one of the priority areas for action in the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence.¹ Moreover, skills are one of the components of the Digital Europe programme, with €700 million allocated in support of developing advanced digital skills, including in relation to machine learning.

The Commission hopes that the Camera Deputaților finds these responses and clarifications helpful and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Mariya Gabriel
Member of the Commission*

¹ COM(2018) 795 final