

TEXTE DE POLITIQUE GÉNÉRALE:

Country: Croatia

Commission: Artificial intelligence (AI)

Problem: How to regulate and appropriate the use of AI for a Europe that is both competitive and capable of protecting its citizens, businesses and interests.

Artificial intelligence (AI) regulation is seen as a major challenge for Europe's social and economic future by Croatia, a member of the European Union since 2013 and also a recent member of Schengen area and the euro zone. Led by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, the current government is committed to modernizing and promoting innovation in the Croatian economy while also maintaining a system of protection adequate for its citizens and different types of enterprises. Nowadays, it is impossible to escape digital transformation, is now an inevitable reality, and the development of artificial intelligence brings both opportunities and challenges. Regulation must be put in place that preserves Europe's competitiveness while respecting the fundamental values of security, transparency, and respect for fundamental rights.

In fact, AI profoundly changes economic and social structures, and its rapid development raises crucial questions. By 2030, artificial intelligence is expected to increase economic growth by several percentage points of **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, according to World Bank projections. However, **The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** warns against the impact on employment, pointing out that 14% of European positions could be automated in the next years. Since workers and production processes are immediately impacted, the issue is consequently both social and economic. Furthermore, if states do not adopt appropriate strategies and suitable measures, digital inequality may worsen, according to INED and other international databases. In light of these challenges, the European Union needs to adopt a well-rounded stance that ensures both a framework that encourages innovation and efficient safeguards against the abuses associated with AI use.

The European Parliament's 2023 legislation, which attempts to control the application of artificial intelligence based on its degree of risk, has fully support by Croatia. The European Commission proposed strict rules for high-risk AI, especially when it comes to facial recognition and automated judgements that affect humans. Croatia believes that this strategy is essential to maintain fair competition among member states and prevent regulatory fragmentation inside the Union. In order to guarantee autonomous and competitive technical development within the European market, it is also dedicated to encouraging investment in innovation, particularly for **Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SMEs)** and start-ups in the AI industry.

Croatia is proposing a number of efforts and several initiatives at the European level to strengthen this dynamic. The establishment of a European certification framework for artificial intelligence systems would ensure that the technologies developed comply with the security and ethical guidelines set by the European Union. Businesses and customers would be able to identify the most reliable and compliant solutions that meet regulatory requirements through this label, which would be awarded by an independent authority. In addition, Croatia supports the creation of a network of AI research laboratories that extends across the European Union (EU), fostering cooperation between universities, companies and public institutions to boost

innovation while maintaining a high level of control over technological progress. Furthermore, Croatia suggests the establishment of a specific European Continuing Education Program for AI specialists in order to standardise skills throughout member states and guarantee a uniform implementation of AI technologies in a range of industries. Additionally, the program would make it easier for AI specialists to move around the EU, increasing European competitiveness internationally.

In conclusion, Croatia strongly supports a europhile approach to artificial intelligence regulations that safeguard citizens without impeding innovation. According to its government, in order to make AI a driver of economic growth. The goal is clear : to build a transparent artificial intelligence in Europe that is in line with democratic values.