

## **Portugal**

### **EU AI Council and AI commission**

**Topic: “How can we frame the development and use (of artificial intelligence) in the European Union, in order to maximize economic and social benefits while guaranteeing the respect for fundamental rights, the safety of all citizens and full transparency of these new Artificial Intelligences?”**

Portugal, a country situated on the westernmost edge of mainland Europe, is bordered by Spain to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. With a total population of approximately 10.3 million inhabitants, Portugal benefits from a strategic geographical position, encouraging strong maritime trade and global connectivity. The capital, Lisbon, serves as a major economic and technological hub, leading initiatives in digital transformation. The current government, led by Prime Minister Antonio Costa of the Social Party, prioritizes digital transformation and AI innovation while ensuring ethical regulations and inclusivity.

Indeed, as Artificial intelligence continues to emerge as a transformative tool, this technological force presents both opportunities and challenges for our country. Moreover, as the country strives to modernize its economy, it must balance innovation with data privacy and ethical concerns. The key question is how Portugal can harness AI to drive growth while safeguarding societal values.

The rapid adoption of AI in Portugal impacts multiple sectors, from healthcare and education to finance and public administration. While AI has the potential to effectively encourage productivity, this technological advancement raises concerns about job displacement, data privacy and the digital divide between those who possess devices such as computers or smartphones and those who don't. Our country's workforce, particularly in traditional industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, faces the risk of automation. Furthermore, AI's role in decision-making processes poses many ethical dilemmas. Issues like algorithmic bias, misinformation, and the concentration of technological power requires vigorous regulations in order to prevent social inequalities and reinforce democratic values which include fairness, respect and most importantly equality.

Portugal has actively participated in European and international discussions on AI governance. As a member of the European Union, our country has had the opportunity to engage with the other members of the EU on this critical quandary. Additionally, Portugal supports the OECD principles meaning the rights and equitable treatment of shareholders and key ownership functions, advocating for sustainable and inclusive technological progress.

The government has recently launched the National Digital Skills Initiative to strengthen AI education and workforce adaptation. The latter aims to stimulate and ensure the development of digital skills as a tool for preparing a society oriented to the future and to the new opportunities arising from the accelerated adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Moreover, Portugal has embraced AI in public administration through initiatives such as The Artificial Intelligence & Data Science for Public Administration Portugal Innovation Hub (AI4PA). This initiative aims to support the digital transition of public administration by introducing Artificial Intelligence and other technologies to increase the effectiveness of public policies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that offer digital solutions suited to the needs of the State.

As expected, our country has implemented measures that foster responsible AI innovation. The AI Portugal 2030 strategy, developed in collaboration with academia and industry, aims to position the country as a competitive player in AI research and development. Investments in AI-driven startups, notably in Lisbon's growing tech ecosystem, highlight Portugal's commitment to becoming a leading AI hub in Southern Europe.

To address AI-related risks, Portugal proposes an independent AI Ethics Committee to ensure fairness and accountability. Increased funding for AI literacy programs will help citizens adapt to automation.

In conclusion, Portugal positions itself as an active player in the development of artificial intelligence (AI), supporting European initiatives to foster innovation while ensuring an ethical and responsible approach. As a member of the European Union, our country continues to embrace the vision of a united and competitive Europe in the technological field, with sustained investments in research, education, and digital infrastructure. This political trend, focused on European cooperation and the integration of new technologies, translates into a commitment to make Portugal a leader in the AI domain, while ensuring its social and economic impacts are positive and equitable for all citizens.