European Economic and Social Committee

European Committee of the Regions

Key takeaways from the Workshop on Exploring Artificial Intelligence in R&D held on 14 May 2024

Competitiveness:

- **Focus on EU´s Comparative Advantages:** Focus on EU´s comparative advantage such as in robotics or supercomputing while also venturing into fields with promising potential like health sector.
- **Benefit from Opportunities Across the Whole Value Chain:** Promote activities along AI value chain where EU has promising potential, such as development of services based on AI.
- **Ensure Investment in Europe:** Increase investments in EU AI initiatives and ensure funding reaches local companies.
- **Support Innovation through AI:** Encourage the use of AI to enhance businesses and stimulate innovation.

Ecosystem:

- **Establish Dynamic European AI Ecosystem:** Promote creation of a lively AI scene in the EU to retain and attract talent.
- **Combine AI Skills with Industry Needs:** Integrate promotion of AI skills that reflect specific needs of various industries to strengthen the whole ecosystem.
- **Promote AI Innovation Hubs:** Establish and further promote AI specialised hubs to attract talent, foster collaboration and drive AI innovation by providing targeted resources and support.

SMEs:

- **Support SMEs:** Recognise SMEs as the backbone of European competitiveness and support their adoption of AI.
- **Facilitate Access to AI for SMEs:** Provide small businesses with means and computing power to access AI and ensure their involvement in the digital transition.

Governance:

- **Appoint AI Specialists in Public Administration:** Appoint at least one AI specialist in each public administration body to promote compliance with AI related rules.
- **Ensure Resources for EU and Member States AI Offices:** EU AI Office as well as national AI bodies need to be adequately funded in order to function properly.
- **Provide Guidance to Comply with Rules and Promote AI Uptake:** EU AI Office should urgently provide targeted guidance to public as well as private operators to support effective implementation of AI rules that does not hinder innovation.
- **Minimise Fragmentation within the EU Research Community:** Enhance efforts at the EU and Member States levels to promote coordination and cooperation across academia and research community.

Human Factor:

- **Place the Human Factor at the Centre:** Ensure the human factor is central during all stages of AI development.
- **Raise Awareness:** Enhance efforts to empower citizens to understand how AI works by involving them when a new AI application is used and has an impact on them.
- **Attract and Develop Talent:** Strengthen universities and private research to attract and develop AI talent in the EU.
- **Educate Against Misinformation:** Reinforce education to combat misinformation, especially that generated by AI.
- **Promote AI as a Tool to Reinforce Cooperation:** AI can facilitate collaboration at national and international levels but also in cities and regions.