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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.11.2024)

Fostering innovation and adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in the EU is a strategic priority of the Commission. The Commission has launched several initiatives to support research, innovation and deployment of trustworthy AI in the EU through funding programs such as Horizon Europe¹ and the Digital Europe Programme (DEP)². Early 2024, the Commission published the AI innovation package³, focussing on measures in support of generative AI. The President of the Commission announced⁴ the roll-out of the AI Factories initiative in the first 100 days of the new Commission and an Apply AI Strategy to boost new industrial uses.

An important building block to enable the uptake and innovation of AI is the AI Act⁵. It aims at creating an internal market for AI and increased trust, fostering uptake by citizens and businesses and stimulating innovation. It follows a risk-based approach and focuses on high-risk contexts. The Commission is working to ensure an efficient and predictable implementation of the AI Act. As regards AI innovation, it should be noted that research activities are not in the scope of the AI Act.

The AI Act is innovation-friendly and takes into account the needs of European companies. Since it applies to any AI systems in the EU regardless of its origin, it creates a regulatory level playing field with developers from outside the EU. The AI Act provides for measures to support compliance of European innovators, for example AI regulatory sandboxes⁶. The Commission is providing additional support for compliance for small and medium sized enterprises (e.g. the EU AI Innovation Accelerator action under the DEP⁷).

The statement to which the Honourable Member refers represents only personal views and does not reflect the Commission's position.

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_383

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act), OJ L, 2024/1689.

⁶ Article 57 of the AI Act.

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2024-ai-act-06-innov>