



European approach to AI

ELA Conference 2026

*The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on
Vertical Mobility and Safety*

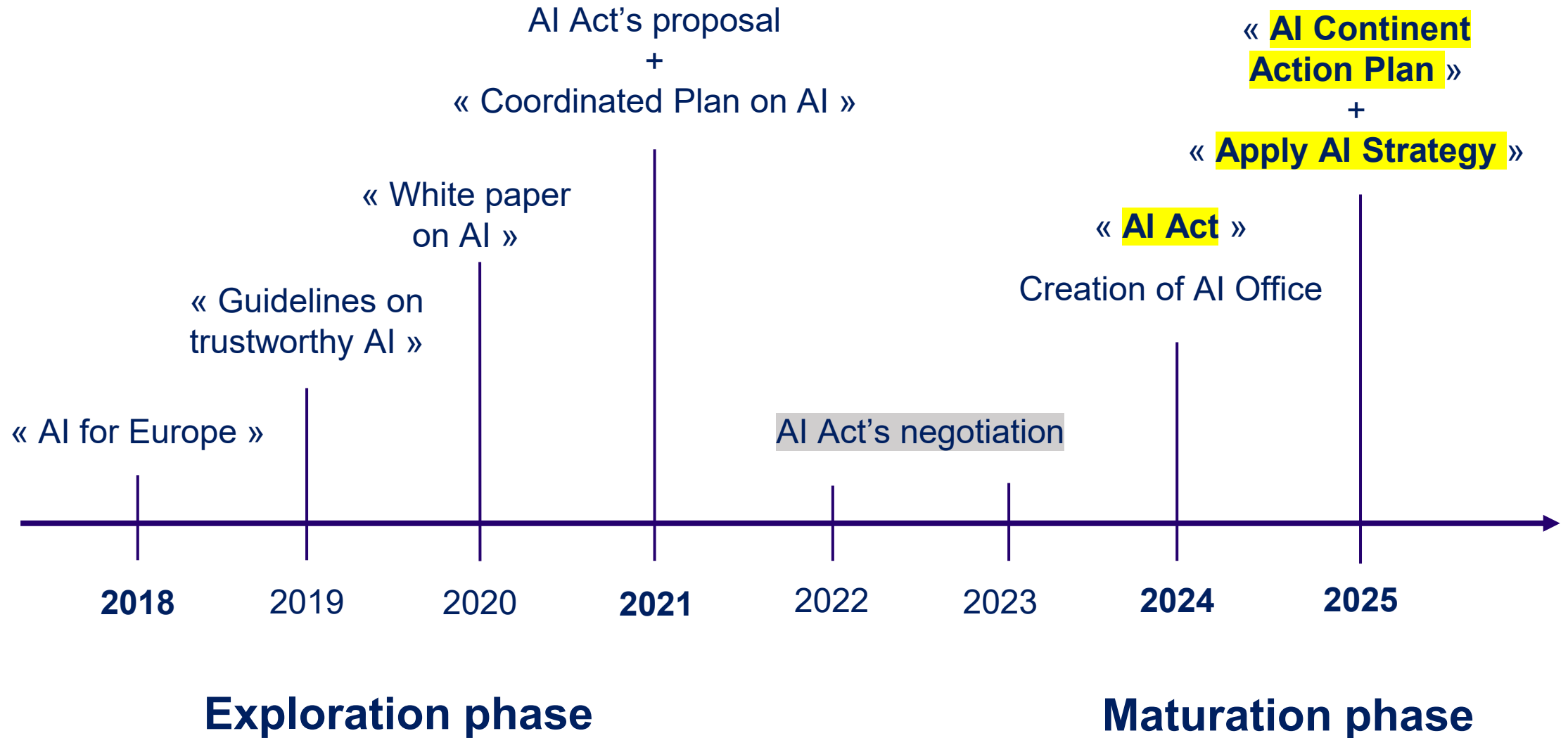
28-05-2026, Rotterdam

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EUROPEAN ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

European AI policy



Two sides of the same coin:

For AI to be adopted, we need to create both:



&



Start with trust: the AI Act

The EU approach is not “AI at any cost”. It is AI that people, companies and regulators can trust.



Risk-based rules

Different obligations according to the risk of the AI system - from minimal risk to prohibited uses.



Horizontal product safety legislation

- “Classic” internal market rules, Art. 114 TFEU
- Coherence with acquis on product safety

Safety & rights

The purpose is to address risks to health, safety and fundamental rights, while enabling innovation.



Technology neutral

- Focus on AI systems
- Regulation of use cases and risks, not of the technology

Practical support

Guidance, standards, the AI Act Service Desk, AI Pact, sandboxes and local support mechanisms.



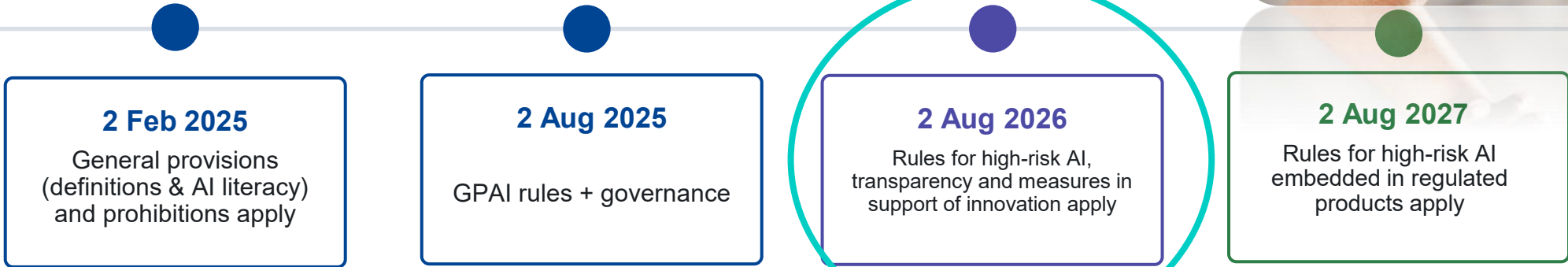
Risk-based approach

- Proportionate approach
- Covers risks to health, safety & fundamental rights

“AI Act” timeline:

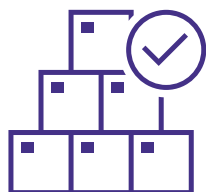


1 Aug. 2024
Entry into force



Message for industry: Map AI use cases early, clarify roles in the value chain, and follow emerging guidance and standards - especially where AI interacts with safety-related functions or regulated products.

DIGITAL OMNIBUS ON AI

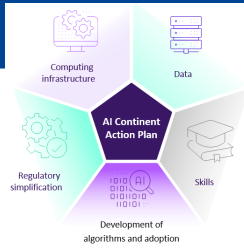


Simplification measures



In addition to existing support measures like Codes of practices, guidelines, stakeholder outreach & the [AI Act Service Desk](#)

- ▶ Alignment of the implementation timeline for high-risk rules
- ▶ Cutting compliance costs for companies
- ▶ Strengthening the governance system
- ▶ Expanding measures in support of innovation
- ▶ Improving procedures and operations



Then: AI Continent + Apply AI - from rules to adoption

Trust is the foundation for capability and uptake.

Infrastructure

AI Factories, cloud and computing capacity to help innovators develop and test AI.

Data

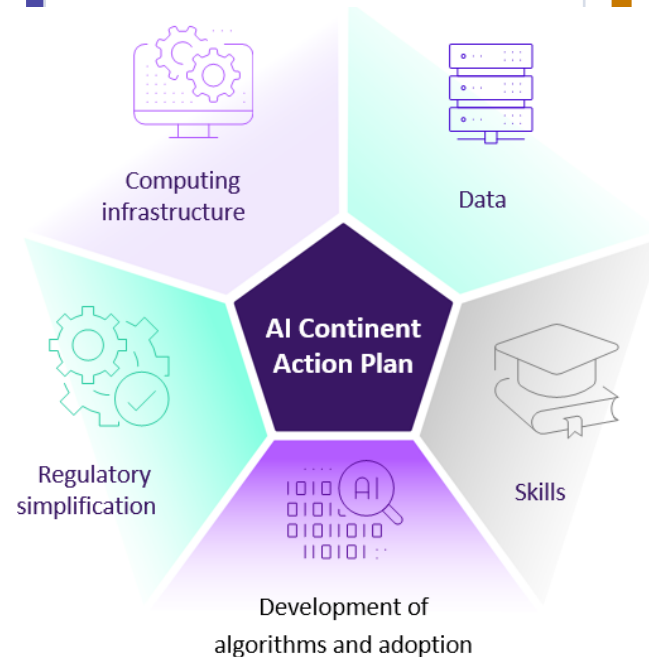
Better access to high-quality industrial data and more legal certainty.

Skills

AI literacy and sector-relevant training for workers, managers and experts.

Adoption

A sectoral Apply AI approach, focused on real use cases.

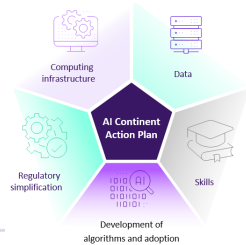


Supported by **InvestAI**, an initiative to mobilise **€200 billion** for investments in **AI**

€10 billion public investment in **19 AI Factories**

AI Continent Action Plan: where things stand now

From policy architecture to delivery, adoption and simplification



INFRA

[19 AI factories](#) are now in place and [13 AI Factory Antennas](#) extend regional access; AI Gigafactories (up to 5) are the next scale-up layer.

DATA

The [Data Union Strategy](#) now frames the data pillar around 3 priorities: more data for AI ([14 data spaces](#)), simpler rules ([Digital Omnibus](#)), and stronger EU position on international data flows ([data sovereignty](#)).

ADOPTION

[Apply AI](#) turns the plan into deployment: AI-first thinking, sector flagships (10 industrial critical sectors + public sector), stronger EDIHs as **AI Experience Centres**, and a stronger “buy European / open-source” signal in the public sector.

TALENT

The talent pillar is moving from concept to implementation through the [AI Skills Academy](#) workstream (recent ex: EU-India legal gateway office).

RULES

The story is no longer only “trustworthy AI”: [the AI Act](#) is now paired with AI/[Digital Omnibus](#) simplification proposals, support tools such as [Compliance checker](#) and code-based compliance pathways.

ADOPTION REALITY

20% of EU enterprises (SMEs and big companies combined) used AI in 2025. Growth is significant (cca 7% from 202 to 2025), but the scale-up gap remains large against the Digital Decade objective (of **75%**).

Top 2025 performers: Denmark 42.0%, Finland 37.8%, Sweden 35.0%

SIMPLIFICATION

AI Act timeline starts to be clearer: prohibited practices and AI literacy already apply; [GPAI \(General-Purpose AI\)](#) obligations applied from 2 Aug 2025; the Commission also proposes simplifying high-risk implementation and extending SME/SMC flexibilities.

Europe has moved from “set the rules” to “build the stack, simplify uptake, and channel demand toward European AI”.

Helpful Links and Information

[Digital Europe Programme](#)



[European Digital Innovation Hubs \(EDIHs\)](#)



[Apply AI Strategy](#)



[AI Continent](#)



[Apply AI Webinars](#)



[AI Literacy & Skills](#)



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