

Press release – Artificial intelligence: EU must ensure a fair and safe use for consumers



Parliament's [Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee](#) approved on Thursday a resolution addressing several challenges arising from the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) and automated decision-making (ADM) technologies.

When consumers interact with an ADM system, they should be “properly informed about how it functions, about how to reach a human with decision-making powers, and about how the system’s decisions can be checked and corrected”, says the committee.

Those systems should only use high-quality and unbiased data sets and “explainable and unbiased algorithms” in order to boost consumer trust and acceptance, states the resolution. Review structures should be set up to remedy possible mistakes in automated decisions. It should also be possible for consumers to seek human review of, and redress for, automated decisions that are final and permanent.

“Humans must always be ultimately responsible for, and able to overrule, decisions” that are taken via ADM processes, especially in relation to the medical, legal and accounting professions and the banking sector, MEPs underline.

Adjust safety and liability rules to the new technologies

AI-enabled products may evolve and act in ways not envisaged when they were

first placed on the market. MEPs urge the Commission to table proposals adapting the EU's safety rules for products (e.g. directives on machinery and toy safety) to ensure that consumers are protected from harm, manufacturers are clear on their obligations and users are informed about how to use those products.

The Product Liability Directive, adopted over 30 years ago, would also need to be updated to adapt concepts such as 'product' 'damage' and 'defect' as well as rules governing the burden of proof, says the committee.

MEPs call for a risk-assessment scheme for AI and ADM and for a common EU approach to help secure the benefits of those processes and mitigate the risks across the EU.

Check differentiated pricing and discrimination

Under EU law, traders must inform consumers when the price of goods or services has been personalised on the basis of ADM, MEPs recall, asking the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of those rules. It must also check how the EU regulation banning unjustified geo-blocking is applied to ensure that ADM is not being used to discriminate against consumers based on their nationality, place of residence or temporary location.

Quote

[Petra De Sutter](#) (Greens/EFA, BE), Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, said: "Technology in the field of artificial intelligence and automated decision-making is advancing at a remarkable pace. The committee has today welcomed the potential of these advances, while at the same time highlighting three important issues that need to be addressed. We have to make sure that consumer protection and trust is ensured, that the EU's rules on safety and liability for products and services are fit for purpose in the digital age and that the data sets used in automated decision-making systems are of high-quality and are unbiased".

Next steps

The resolution, approved in committee by 39 votes in favour, none against and four abstentions, will be voted on by the full House in a forthcoming plenary session. It will further feed into Parliament's work on this topic.

After the vote in plenary, the resolution will be transmitted to the EU Council (member states) and the Commission, so that they take into account MEPs' views on AI and ADM. The [Commission announced](#) that it is due to present its plans for a European approach to AI on 19 February 2020.