European Commission

JRC Conference and Workshop Report

AI Watch
Artificial Intelligence for the public sector

Report of the "3rd Peer Learning Workshop on the use and impact of AI in public services", 24 June 2021

Joint Research Centre

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Foreword

This report is published in the context of AI Watch, the European Commission knowledge service to monitor the development, uptake and impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Europe, launched in December 2018.

AI has become an area of strategic importance with potential to be a key driver of economic development. AI also has a wide range of potential social implications. As part of its Digital Single Market Strategy, the European Commission put forward in April 2018 a European strategy on AI in its Communication "Artificial Intelligence for Europe". The aims of the European AI strategy announced in the communication are:

- To boost the EU's technological and industrial capacity and AI uptake across the economy, both by the private and public sectors
- To prepare for socio-economic changes brought about by AI
- To ensure an appropriate ethical and legal framework.

In December 2018, the European Commission and the Member States published a "Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence", on the development of AI in the EU. The Coordinated Plan mentions the role of AI Watch to monitor its implementation.

Subsequently, in February 2020, the Commission unveiled its vision for a digital transformation that works for everyone. The Commission presented a White Paper proposing a framework for trustworthy AI based on excellence and trust.

Furthermore, in April 2021 the European Commission proposed a set of actions to boost excellence in AI, and rules to ensure that the technology is trustworthy. The proposed Regulation on a European Approach for Artificial Intelligence and the update of the Coordinated Plan on AI aim to guarantee the safety and fundamental rights of people and businesses, while strengthening investment and innovation across EU countries. The 2021 review of the Coordinated Plan on AI refers to AI Watch reports and confirms the role of AI Watch to support implementation and monitoring of the Coordinated Plan.

AI Watch monitors European Union's industrial, technological and research capacity in AI; AI-related policy initiatives in the Member States; uptake and technical developments of AI; and AI impact. AI Watch has a European focus within the global landscape. In the context of AI Watch, the Commission works in coordination with Member States. AI Watch results and analyses are published on the AI Watch Portal (https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/ai-watch_en).

From AI Watch in-depth analyses we will be able to understand better European Union's areas of strength and areas where investment is needed. AI Watch will provide an independent assessment of the impacts and benefits of AI on growth, jobs, education, and society.

AI Watch is developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT).

This report addresses the following objective of AI Watch: it presents a summary of the proceedings of the workshop of the 3rd AI WATCH Peer Learning Workshop on AI use & impact in public services, which took place virtually on 24 June 2021 and was attended by almost 80 participants, including representatives of Government from about 20 MSs, colleagues of various Commission's Services and experts from academia and research centres, Non-Governmental organisations and industry. The Workshop was an important opportunity to engage with relevant stakeholders to better understand the potential use and impact of AI for the public sector and fostering the peer-learning process among Member States.

Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by the JRC in collaboration with some of the external experts that contributed to facilitate the workshop. However, the main actors in the workshop process were the participants. Thus we would like to thank all the participants, including representatives of Government from MSs and colleagues of various Commission's Services and experts from academia, research centres Non-Governmental Organisations and industry who actively engaged in discussions and provided input, enriching the findings under validation and giving guidance on the way forward. We gratefully thank the representatives from the MSs who prepared a presentation about the use of AI in their government as part of the workshop. A special thanks also goes to colleagues of DG CNECT and DIGIT who chaired and moderated panel sessions and roundtables, as well as the keynote speakers invited to ignite the debate with their knowledge.

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1 Executive Summary

The '3rd AI WATCH Peer Learning Workshop on the use and impact of AI in Public Services', organized by the JRC jointly with DG CNECT, aims at expanding the foregoing knowledge on the endeavours undertaken by Member States with regards to the use of AI in the Public Sector. The 3rd workshop was envisaged with several objectives:

1. Facilitate peer-learning and information-gathering on guidelines about AI, continuing the Peer Learning activities, where EU Member States (hereinafter MSs) could share their insights about the use of AI within Public Services and their results
2. Allow EU MSs and other stakeholders to present the preliminary results from the analysis of the National Strategies on AI in the Public Sector
3. Kicking-off the co-creation work to sketch the "Road to better use of AI by and for the Public Sector"
4. Explain the ongoing activities for collecting and publishing AI cases in the Public Sector

The Workshop was divided into 5 sections.

In the introductory session, after the kick-off made by CNECT, the **Adopt AI Programme** of the European Commission, has been presented. The programme is an important step forward for supporting public procurement of AI systems and helping the transformation of public procurement processes. The second presentation in this section was dedicated to offering an overview the work that has been conducted within the **AI Watch for the public sector**. In particular, AI Watch is focusing on (i) promoting the use of human-centric AI, (i) identifying and overcoming barriers for adoption and implementation, and (iii) exchange good practices and success stories through peer learning exercises.

After, the "Share & Validate" session started. In this session, first the joint publication between JRC and OECD on **AI National Strategies** has been presented. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the AI National strategies for the Public Sector has been conduced. The positive message is that around 90% of the National strategies includes action specifically related to the public sector, even though there seems to be an apparent gap between the number of actions aimed at improving the private sector use of AI, and those of the public sector. After this presentation, **Spain, Poland and Norway** illustrated their initiatives on AI in the public sector. Spain and Norway presented their national strategies on AI, while Poland presented how AI is being integrated within the Polish Electronic Documentation Management System (EZD). At the end of the session, a short discussion has been made to help gather the immediate feedback of high-level representatives of EU MSs and other stakeholders.

The Workshop continued with the "Looking into the Future" session about the challenges and the opportunities ahead, focusing in particular on the **risks factors and mitigation measures** for AI use in and by the Public Sector: criteria for the correct use and role of algorithms in Public Sector. First, a theoretical overview of the possible risks on AI adoption has been reported. Second, a concrete tool has been presented: the **Impact assessment tool for algorithmic decision-making systems (ADMs)** in the public sector, developed within the AlgorithWatch.

The Workshop then went through the "Collaborate" session focused on presenting what has been made **by AI Watch for the Public Sector**, ongoing activities and the activity planning forward in the next period. In particular, the preliminary findings of ongoing work towards the **"Road to better use of AI by and for the Public Sector"** are now available. Those results are expected to be refined and integrated and the final draft is expected in December 2021. Moreover, in the JRC data catalogue several use cases have been published in **Open Data** reporting examples of public administrations adopting AI.

This third Peer-learning Workshop concluded with an intervention from MEP Maria Manuel Leitão Marques claiming the strong commitment of the **European Parliament** in addressing AI challenges and the need of **joining forces on AI for the Public Sector**. To conclude the next **4th AI Watch Peer Learning workshop** has been announced and it will take place in autumn.

2 Introduction

On 21st April 2021, the European Commission published the AI package with a proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act) and the 2021 update of the Coordinated Plan with MSs.

The European level aims to become the most conveinient administrative level where, thanks to the cooperation among the European Commission and MSs, AI thrives from the lab to the market and to strive for strategic leadership in high-impact sectors. While enabling the development and uptake of AI in the public sector, it will also ensure that AI works for people and is a force for good in society.

As mentioned in the EU coordinated plan, for deeper and wider AI uptake to become a reality, Europe's public sector should have access to adequate funding and be equipped, skilled and empowered to conduct strategic and sustainable purchasing and to properly adopt AI-based systems. MSs are already aware of these needs and they often included in their national AI strategies actions to stimulate the use of AI in public services.

With the **3rd Peer-Learning Workshop on the use and impact of AI in the public sector**, the Commission continued to facilitate MSs peer-learning and information-gathering on guidelines, best practices and the analysis of the-use potential of AI-based systems and solutions, as pledged in the coordinated Plan. In the sessions, EU MSs and other stakeholders presented the preliminary results from the analysis of the National Strategies on AI in the Public Sector and kicked-off the co-creation work on a collaborative effort to sketch the **"Road to better use of AI by and for the Public Sector"**, to collect and publish **AI cases in the Public Sector** and to validate an **impact assessment methodology**.

3 Workshop development

The workshop has been articulated in several sessions and speakers. Hereafter a brief description of them. The detailed workshop agenda is available in the ANNEX at the end of the report.

3.1 AI uptake and use for and by the Public Sector

Chair: Gudrun Stock, Deputy Head of the eGovernment and Trust Unit, CNECT/H4 - European Commission

The workshop was kicked off by Ms. Gudron Stock on behalf of DG CNECT, who highlighted the importance of the continuation of the Peer Learning Workshops. The 3rd Peer Learning Workshop on the use of AI in the public sector continues the previous two Peer Learning Workshops. The Peer Learning Workshops have been excellent venues to exchange best practices, share new insights and discuss ongoing developments on the use of AI within the pubic sector.

3.2 Keynote: Adopt AI

Kilian Gross, Head of Artificial Intelligence Policy Development and Coordination Unit, CNECT/A2 – European Commission

Mr. Gross presented the upcoming **Adopt AI Programme** of the European Commission, which is a new programme to reinforce the uptake of AI in the public sector. The Programme was announced in February 2020 as one of the actions (action 6) in the White Paper on AI. The goal of the Programme is to support public procurement of AI systems and help to transform public procurement processes themselves. The Programme aims to help the public sector to maximise benefits and European synergies from the deployment of trustworthy, human-centric and sustainable AI. The programme is closely connected and complementary to the activities of the AI Watch. Whilst the AI Watch goes from monitoring to problem definition, the programme goes from problem definition to formulating possible solutions.

In doing so, the design of the programme will start with and rely on a dialogue with relevant sectors for tailoring the programme on the basis of their needs.

The call for the study underliying the programme has been launched recently.

In general, there will be 4 main research tasks:

- State of Play: a review of public procurement of AI technologies in the EU
- Assessment of key sectors for the public procurement of AI
- Consultation of the main stakeholders through open and transparent social dialogues
- Assessment of practical suggestions, alternative options, and decisions to be made by the Commission.

3.3 Framing the context AI uptake and use for and by the Public Sector

Carlos Torrecilla Salinas, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission

Artificial Intelligence is one of the most relevant technologies that the Digital Economy Unit of the Joint-Research Centre is researching, as it combines uniquely three main characteristics: it is pervasive, it is spreading quickly and it has a enormous disruptive power. The combination of these three elements boosts the potential of the technology. The AI Watch project has been running since 2018 and has been supporting DG CNECT on monitoring the uptake of AI in Europe. As part of the AI Watch project, a task focuses in particular on the uptake of AI within the public sector. Complementary to AI Watch, the Joint Research Centre is working on a feasibility study for an Observatory to research and monitor the adoption of new, cutting-edge technologies for the deployment of innovative public services.

However, as Mr. Torrecilla Salinas highlighted, AI has not seen such a wide adoption, attention or interest in the public sector as in the private sector. The public sector has been seen more in the role of a regulator or a facilator rather than the one of an adopter. Only recently there has been growning recognition about the potential value of AI in the public sector, even though the adoption and development of AI in the public sector faces many challenges, some of them different from the ones the private sector faces. In addition, there are many ethical risks when public sector deploys AI technologies, such as the potential of increased discrimination, or privacy issues and other legal challenges.

At the moment, research on the use of AI is still relatively scarce, which continues to limit our understanding on how this technology could improve public services, and how positive results could be replicated in other contexts. This workshop and following meetings play a crucial role in advancing our understanding of the AI use within public service, and create new opportunities for sharing insights.

There are numerous areas where AI could benefit governments, such as policy making, internal management and improving public service delivery.

To capitalise on the benefits for AI in the public sector, AI Watch is continuing work on:

- Promoting the use of human-centric AI in the public sector, through structured mapping and surveying of AI initiatives in public administrations, the development of a methodological approach to assess the impacts of AI, the conduction of case studies of AI used in government and more.
- Identifying and overcoming barriers for adoption and implementation, through proposing a roadmap to advance the use of AI in the EU, analyse policy initiatives and actions to overcome the barriers.
- Exchange good practices and success stories through peer learning exercises, in workshops similar to this one.

4 Session 1 – "Share & Validate": Use of AI by Member States for the Public Sector and exchange on preliminary results from the analysis of the National Strategies

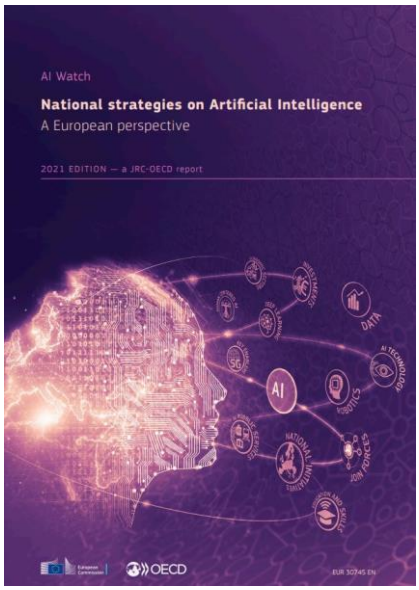
Moderator: Dietmar Gattwinkel, Policy Officer - eGovernment and Trust Unit, CNECT/H4 - European Commission

This session has focused on the use of AI by MSs, and the analysis of the national strategies. Learning from the practices and activities which are ongoing in the European MSs is one of the key activities for sharing insights and experiences of AI in government, and for having an overview of the scene on the ground.

4.1 AI National Strategies: preliminary results overview

Vincent Van Roy, Scientific Project Officer, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission

Mr. Van Roy presented the recently published report on National Strategies on AI. As part of the AI Watch activities, national AI policies are gathered and analysed to provide an overview of the various initiatives MSs are taking to improve the uptake of AI in their society. This is an ongoing work, which is done together with the OECD. Both institutions joined forces to ensure that the information supplied by AI Watch and the OECD AI Policy Observatory is harmonised, consistent and up to date.



The recent AI Watch report[1] on National AI Strategies offers an overview of national AI policy initiatives in the EU and Associated Countries to compare MSs' strategies with peers. The AI Watch Report is validated by MSs' representatives. In the 2nd edition of the report Norway and Switzerland have been included in addition to EU MSs. Moreover it is complemented with a dedicated section on AI policies to tackle societal challenges on sustainable climate and environment, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The overview of currently published National AI Strategies shows that in 2020-2021 new AI strategies have been published (i.e. Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Spain)[2] and that some countries have already updated a previously published strategy.

The report provides an extenstive overview of all the AI policies and initiatives in the EU and Associated Countries. It provides a useful resource to help policy makers compare their AI strategies and identify possible collaborations, and also supports - at the EU level - the monitoring and implementation of the Coordinated Plan on AI.

The analysis of the various strategies published by MSs and Associated Coutries shows that they have ambitious plans with regards to AI. In particular the following common traits can be resumed from the strategies:

- Improving human capital on AI, by reforming education systems, lifelong learning and upskilling of the workforce to provide AI-related skills in their society.
- Spurring research and innovation to drive AI development, products and services - from the lab to the market - such as investment programmes.
- Introducing a regulation framework to address ethical and legal issues. Setting up ethical AI oversight bodies to ensure AI is being developed in an ethical way and to provide assistance in implementing ethical guides. Setting up regulatory sandboxes is also seen as a promising way to facilitate testing of new AI technologies.
- Promoting data access and data sharing, through setting up public repositories, open data platforms and others to further encourage data exchange and re-use. Similarly, there are new initiatives to improve the ICT infrastructure, such as high-performance computing centres or high-speed networks.
- Identifying activities on how to improve the use of AI in manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, transport and energy.

[1] The 2021 edition of the report on national strategies on Artificial Intelligence is available here: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/ai-watch/national-strategies-artificial-intelligence_en

[2] Ireland released its national AI strategy on the 8th of July 2021, after publication of the AI Watch report. For more information, see https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/National-AI-Strategy.html.

- Recent strategies also often include AI policies to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

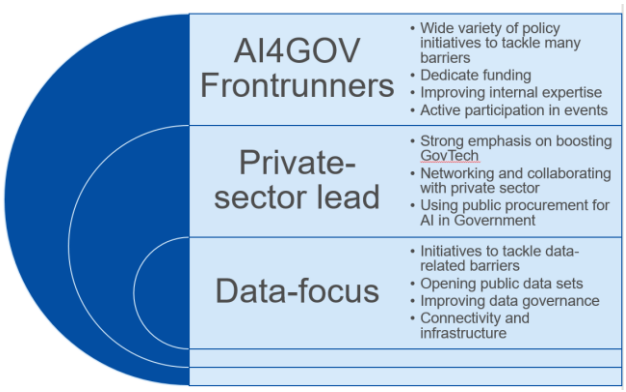
4.2 Analysis of the National Strategies on AI in the Public Sector (statistics, main features and preliminary conclusions)

Colin van Noordt, PhD Researcher at Tallinn University of Technology – AI Watch Expert

There is a growing interest in introducing AI in the public sector, which is also a strategic goal for the EC. Despite the big interest for AI within governments, there are many challenges that are limiting the potential of AI of government. These barriers are technological (data barriers, poor data quality, etc) legal barriers (privacy regulation, procurement regulation, etc.) ethical barriers (socially justifiable development and use) societal barriers (for example trust in AI).

Mr. van Noordt presented an analysis of national strategies on AI in the Public Sector. This analysis specifically focuses on which actions, initiatives, suggests for stimulating or reinforcing AI development in the public sector are described in the national AI strategies. This was done by identifiying specific passages within the 21 published AI strategies which refer to the use and development of AI for use by public administrations themselves. The analysis complements the one presented by Mr. van Roy in the previous session.

This analysis finds that the potential of AI in the public sector is often acknowleged – but the extent and scope of actions described in the strategies to facilitate AI in the public sector varies. On average, 9% of the strategy document text describe actions related to public sector AI, but there are differences between the countries. In addition, it is not always clear whether these strategies describe active implementation measures or 'wishes' by the MSs, hence it is not always easy to understand which of the described activities are actually ongoing.



The study also identifies that the ambitions of these strategies can be grouped among the following categories:

- Data-focus (mostly only include initiatives to tackle data-related barriers, such as open data, data governance and connectivity)
- Private sector led (further includes emphasises on boosting GovTech, networking, collaborating with private sector and using procurement for AI).
- AI4GOV Frontrunners (strategies with a wide variety of initiatives, including funding, improving of internal expertise and active participation in events).

Most of the activities described in the strategies to improve AI uptake and development in the government relate to:

- Stimulating awareness and knowledge sharing (awareness campaigns, participating and promoting events)
- Strengthening data management for AI (enhancing data quality and quantity)
- Improving accessibility to public data, access to private sector data
- Building internal capacity (generalising AI training, specialising AI training…)
- Learning by doing (pilots experiments and flagship projects, regulatory sandboxes for AI)
- Ethical and legal framework
- Funding and procurement
- Other (reusable AI solutions and platforms), improving IT infrastructure, changing project work practices.

However, the ongoing analysis also pointed out that many of the strategies focus very strongly on overcoming data-related challenges, but this may risk that other barriers (e.g. organisational factors and resources needed for AI) may be overlooked, limiting successful use and adoption. Similiarly, there seems to be an apparent gap between the actions aimed at improving the private sector use of AI, and those of the public sector.

In general, there are many more actions and initiatives proposed to facilitate the uptake and development of AI within the private sector compared to the public sector – even when similar initiatives could benefit both sectors.

Moreover, many of the strategies aim to improve the public procurement of AI, which is a promising development – although it may not be sufficient since public procurement of AI still requires enough internal expertise and awareness of what to purchase, and how. In that respect, clearly more funding for AI in the public sector is needed, even though this aspect is not often mentioned in the strategies. This funding should go beyond just funding R&D of AI, but should also include adequate funding for piloting and for introducing organisational changes to implement and use AI technologies.

Lastly, Mr. van Noordt recommended that public administrations should go beyond existing ethical and legal standards, and should improve the availability, awareness and application of guidelines specifically tailored to avoid common risks and mistakes in the design, development and deployment of AI systems used in the government.

4.3 Learning from the Member States representative: key issues, determining factors and lessons from strategies

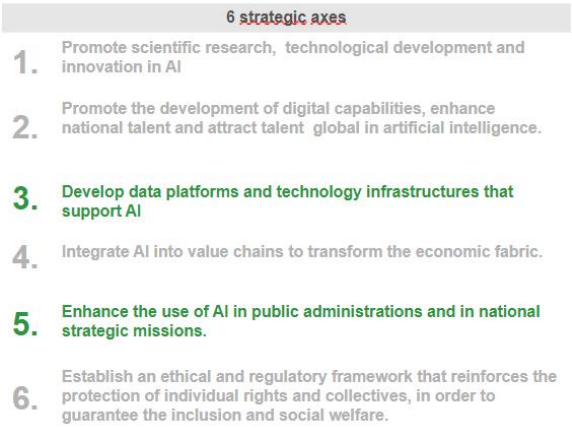
Artificial Intelligence tools in the Spanish Public Administration

Salvador Estevan, Head of Unit for Planning and Governance of Digital Administration, Spain

Mr. Estevan introduced some of the strategies and initiatives the Spanish government is taking to improve the use of Artificial Intelligence in the public sector.

España Puede[3] is a new strategy which focuses on improving the Digital transformation of Spain. One of the key componnents of this strategy is the digitisation of administrative processes. Another strategic plan of the Spanish government is España Digital 2025, which is an update of a previous strategic plan. Within this strategy, there are several strategic axes which are related to the public sector. One of the focus of the strategies is AI. In fact, AI is part of the technologies that has been recognised with a great potential for pursuing a digital transformation process, and great attention is thus given on incorporating AI technologies as part of the digital transformation of Spanish administrations.

In this respect, two strategic axes (axis 3 and axis 5) focus on stimulating and facilitating AI in the public sector, which are to develop data platforms and technology infrastructure that support AI and to enhance the use of AI in public administrations and in national strategic missions.



[3] More information regarding España Puede and its components can be found here (in Spanish): https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/presidente/actividades/Paginas/2020/espana-puede.aspx

5 measures will be implement to develop the data platforms (axis 3):

- The creation of a National Data Office with a Chief Data Officer
- Creation of shared data spaces, decentralized and accessible
- Boosting the National Plan for Language Technologies
- Strengthening the super-computation strategic capacities
- Launching the project Data for the Social Good.

With regard to stimulating the use of AI in public administrations (axis 5), 5 measures will be implement to assist the achievement of the goals:

- Introduction of AI in the public sector to improve efficiency
- Creation of an innovation laboratory for new AI services and applications in the public sector, a GovTechLab
- Promotion of AI capacities in all levels of the Spanish public administration
- AI for a data-based public management
- Promotion of AI-based national strategic missions in the public sector, with a specific focus on services with a high impact.

The Plan for the Digitalisation of Spain's PA 2021-2025 describes the goals of the digital transformation and modernisation of public administration within the Espana Puede and Digitalise Spain 2025 Strategy. Among the main measures of this plan, there is a specific focus on Robotic Process Automation and AI tools. AI solutions will be used to promote: rationalisation and sharing of information, interoperability and mobility, accessibility and electronic achieving, open government and cybersecurity.

Some of the use cases that the Spanish government is currently working on:

- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) for the national public service of employment. Spain aims to use RPA to automatize and improve efficiency of the processes ongoing for the assessment of the employment subsidies.
- Improvement of national public serviced of employment core processes: Business Process Network technologies and AI-based solutions will be used to improve and reformulate employment processes in the public sector thanks to the exploitation of data, allowing cross-checking and in-depth analyses.
- Improvement of the citizen experience through the 060-call service: use Natural Language Processing to improve citizen interaction with public administrations.
- Improvement of e-Procurement services: have a common workflow to track different stages that e-procurement has and use AI to improve the connection between systems in use and analyse procurement data to make better decisions in awarding contracts.
- Improvement in e-Grants: AI-solutions are planned for collecting the information in the simplest way possible, automating the processes, reducing response time, optimising the management of examination of the fulfilment of the planned objectives.

How to empower digital services transformation with the use of AI: a case study of Poland

Ilona Urbaniak, PhD, Head of Artificial Intelligence Department, National Research Institute (NASK), Poland

Antoni Rytel, Deputy Director of the GovTech Programme at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland

In this session, Ms. Urbaniak described the experience of Poland on how existing digital services are being transformed through the use of AI. Digitalisation of public administrations and the use of AI to digitalise public services are a priority for Poland. During the presentation, a case study on use of AI in the Uniform electronic document management system was shown.

The Polish Electronic Documentation Management System (EZD) supports 700 authorities already within the Polish administration. The system handles many of the documentation regarding the life of Polish citizens. The system has been developed for and by administrators, and is free of charge entirely. Experiences so far have shown that it provides easier access to public services for citizens, as it supports paper-less administration, time reduction, cost reductions, high volumes, standardisation and offers one system for public administration to facilitate day-to-day operation: receiving, storing and achieving electronic correspondences. EZD also enables more effective use of human resources. There are about 1,9 mln public sector employees (including education and healthcare) which are all capable of using the EZD system.

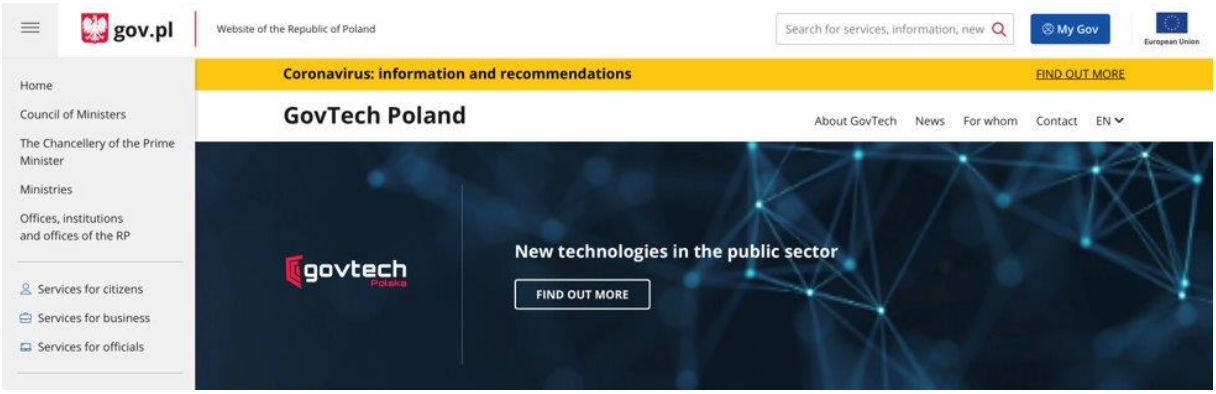
In it understood that AI technologies can improve this system greatly. At the moment, there are already two existing AI components of this system:

- Automatic division of correspondence based on existing signatures. Here AI used for extracting information from a document, with an accuracy around 90%.
- Automation of document anonymization before sharing. This ensures that the privacy is strengthened, by anonymization sensitive data within documents before sharing. There are a lot of research issues about anonymizing documents. There are still gaps on how to move forward.

A variety of future foreseen AI features will be included within the new version(s) of the EZD system, which highlights the potential benefits that AI can provide to public administrations:

- Identification of sensitive data
- Detection of non-typical user's actions or anomalies in the usage of documents
- Verification of identical signatures
- Automatic metadata insertion
- Grouping of similar issues
- Summarising documents.

Mr. Rytel continued the presentation, focusing on the gov.pl portal, which is a single gateway regarding Polish public services and information. It is a directory for all government services, placing all the government needs into one spot. The portal has been developed in order to harmonise the ways Polish government interacts with citizens and is currently acccessed by tens of millions of users each month as a primary source of information about key government-related issues. The portal is also provided centrally for over 1300 public institutions, ensuring better security and lower costs. Artificial Intelligence could play a crucial role when placing both the Gov.PL portal with the EZD system and other elements of the wider Polish GovTech ecosystem.. AI could assist administrations to better understand the status and processes of citizens and their webiste, and thus improve the quality of public services.



The Norwegian AI Strategy – what's next?

Christine Hafskjold, Senior ICT Policy Adviser, The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway

Ms. Hakfskjold presented the Norwegian AI Strategy[4], as the strategy covers many initiatives on advancing on AI for the public sector. During the drafting of the strategy, meetings with relevant stakeholders often highlighted 3 common challenges which are limiting the uptake of AI within the public sector, and consequently, these challenges are aimed to be tackled through the strategy. These challenges include:

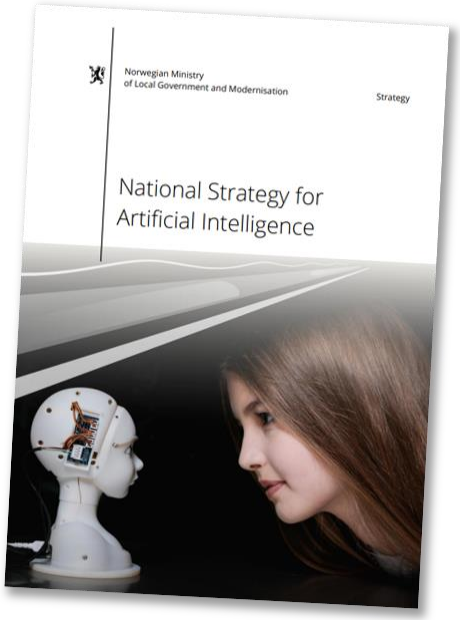
- How to get access to enough data of good quality for AI
- How to get funding for AI projects
- ICT specialists and data scientists' recruitment.

[4] The Norwegian AI Strategy can be read here: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/nasjonal-strategi-for-kunstig-intelligens/id2685594/?ch=1 . An overview is also available on the AI Watch portal: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/ai-watch/norway-ai-strategy-report_en

Even before the AI strategy was published, data was already an important topic. A white paper to Parliament on 'Data as a resource' was presented in April 2021[5]. GDPR is the regulation most stakeholders point to as a challenge for the use of AI. Although there are high-quality data among public sector institutions, often civil servants are not sure - or not allowed - to use the data for AI purposes. In fact, when data is collected in government for a specific purpose, it cannot be re-used elsewhere. While GDPR is a good regulation for privacy protection, the principle of purpose limitation makes it difficult for the public sector to take advandage of the rich data sources it holds for AI or data analytics.

Most businesses can go around various limitations of the GPDR through asking for the consent of their customers to improve their services. However, for governmental organizations, the collection and use of (personal) data is done for specific purposes based on legal mandates. As a result, limitations occur to share and combine data for improving public services or to gain new insights into the collected data, even within each separate organisation.

One of the initiatives taken to by the Norwegian government to facilitate responsible AI innovation is the introduction of regulatory sandboxes. Regulatory sandboxes allow for a testbed for new technologies and/or business models. An important and, arguably very useful example is the regulatory sandbox within the Norwegian Data Protection Authority (DPA).[6] This sandbox allows the public sector and businesses to test AI services, under the guidance of the DPA.



Another initiative is the development of the Health Data Platform[7], which allows the aggregation of health data used for statistics, analysis and emergency preparedness, while keeping in mind data protection services of the patients.

Some of the next activities in Norway are: to gain experience from the sandboxes, to continue to review sector regulation and to provide guidance for the public sector with regards privacy and ethics. In particular, there is a strong request for preparing guidance for civil servants to assist them in understanding when AI is the right tool to deploy in their organisation, especially taking into consideration privacy and ethical concerns.

Lastly, while there is a lot of focus on facilitating research networks, there is also a strong need to cultivate networks of AI practitioners in the public sector, such as the data scientists that develop and design AI solutions. Facilitating such a network of AI practicioners, where they meet regularly and present and discuss on-going projects, could probably be useful for other MSs as well.

4.4 Discussion and validation by Member States of the preliminary Results from National Strategies

The discussion among the panel members focused on what kind of activities could be conducted at the European level, to further facilitate MSs to use AI technologies. From this, a variety of activities where the European Commission could provide additional value emerged:

- European Digital Innovation Hubs and Large-Scale Testing facilities are important initiatives, and more is needed to harness their potential, experiences, and knowledge between the different hubs across the European Union.
- The European Commission can contribute to providing guidance on how to work responsibly with data needed for AI, such as on how to connect data in compliance with the GDPR. In addition, the European Commission can aid on what AI-tools can or cannot do in a public sector setting.
- Establishment and rolling out of AI reference architectures to facilitate the sharing of AI solutions.
- Supporting research and development for key AI components, which can be used on a European scale, such as language technologies.

[5] Meld. St. 22 (2020–2021) - regjeringen.no (in Norwegian, but will be available in English shortly)
[6] https://www.datatilsynet.no/en/regulations-and-tools/sandbox-for-artificial-intelligence/
[7] https://helsedata.no/en/

- Stronger monitoring of AI development and the sharing of best practices (and bad practices) of AI in government. This can be done starting from the work already ongoing at the JRC with the AI Watch.
- Providing support and education regarding the upcoming AI Act, as the support given for applying it will be crucial for its success.
- Ensuring that all the European MSs have a high focus on digitalisation and AI in their reform programmes.

5 Session 2 - "Looking into the Future": The challenges & opportunities ahead

Moderator: Marina Manzoni, Project Officer - Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission

5.1 Brain teaser - Risks factors and mitigation measures for AI use in and by the Public Sector: criteria for the correct use and role of Algorithm in Public Sector

Paul Waller, Researcher & Independent Advisor – University of Bradford

Mr. Waller begins his presentation stating that assessing and assuring AI systems is of utmost importance in the public sector context. Most of the decisions made by the public sector are highly sensitive, and, as a public administration, there is accountability for how decisions are made. This requires careful handling of AI. In particular, assessing the effects of using recommendations of AI systems in social services is hard but extremely important.

Mr. Waller explains that, in the UK, there have been a number of newspaper headlines already regarding the use of AI in the government – often negative. The lack of transparent and controllable use of AI in the government sector has already lead to government scandals and the misuse of public funds. These negative examples show that using AI for the public sector is very risky, especially when done through obscure calculations of obscure algorithms. The accumulation of these risks may lead to significant problems at the moment that an algorithmic output affects an administrative decision.

Mr. Waller explains that there are several legal risks to take into consideration when using AI in the public sector, which go beyond just the GDPR. In fact, there are several legal documents, such as Human Rights, Fundamental Rights Charter, Data Protection, Administrative Law and European Code for Good Administrative Behaviour which are to be taken into account. The European Code for Good Administrative Behaviour already includes more or less all the standards which are discussed in the debate on public sector AI ethics. Also, this document shows that the Commission is dedicated to the values of public service: independence, responsibility, accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

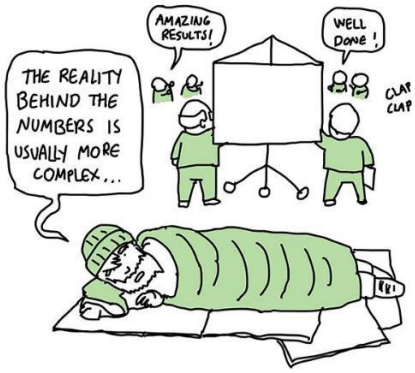


Image from Made to Measure, by Toby Lowe.

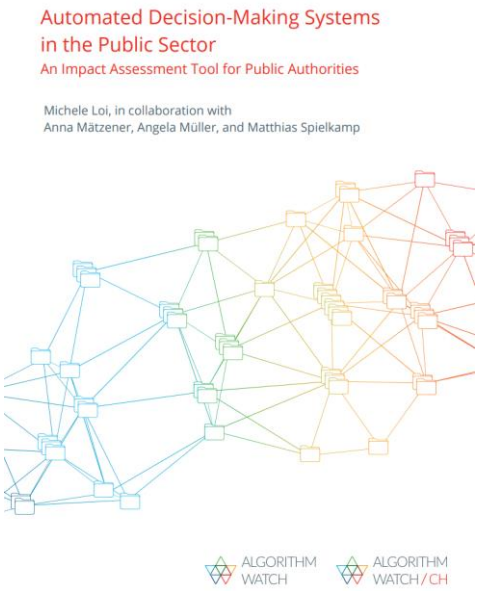
While there are several legal risks, the use of AI brings other, distinct categories of risk:

- Data risks: such as bias, unrepresentativeness of the data, poor data quality, flawed data pre-processing or coding and invalid statistical assumptions. These data risks are all based on human decisions and are not machine-made. One of the fundamental risks is that when you are trying to measure aspects of human life, and then do sums with the measurements, things get messy. Real life tends to be chaotic and not follow nice mathematical formulae. So, prediction in social care & health contexts is very suspect and needs great caution.
- Design risks: such as, the choice of the algorithmic model relative to the stated problem and available data, the specification of model and optimisation parameters, parameter initialisation, inadequate testing, and incomprehensible complexity.
- Implementation risks: poor operational testing, inadequate security, poor contract management, inadequate processing design, inadequate training. When AI tools come into active use, Mr. Waller compares their implementation to developing a new aircraft – you test it extensively because lives depend upon how well you do it. Therefore, AI requires a lot of testing and understanding the effects of deployment. Research has shown that many problems cannot be identified at the initiation or the design phase and will emerge during real-life deployment.
- Use risks: these are risks when the AI tools meets real-life public-sector use, such as, inaccuracy, lack of understanding of probabilistic measures, ranges or the weighting of consequences, automation bias or aversion, obscure workings and outcomes or the abuse of privacy and other human rights. Important issues emerge here such as the extent to which users trust the system. AI tools tend not to work very well in real life or do not connect adequately with the real-life context in which decisions are made. A vendor will often state fairly that the overall accuracy of a system is high, however the probability of a specific prediction being correct can be much lower due to the way conditional probabilities work.

5.2 Challenges in mitigation measures for AI use in and by the Public Sector

Angela Müller, Team Lead Policy & Advocacy – AlgorithmWatch

Ms. Muller's presentation was about the Impact assessment tool for algorithmic decision-making systems (ADMs) in the public sector, which AlgorithWatch has developed[8]. The public sector is operating in a unique environment, due to being a unique provider of services, being monopolisitic, having unique legal requirements and needing to set an example to gain credibility for controlling private actors.



The impact assessment tool is based on an ethical framework, its operationalisation, and a checklist. It was developed since many of the existing guidelines for impact assessment of AI and ADMs often operate on subjective assessments or vague criteria while trying to quantify the risks, take only a snapshot of the situation with AI, or are complex and difficult to implement by the public sector.

The ethical framework focuses on seven principles— four ethical principles, namely respect for human autonomy, prevention of harm, justice, or impartiality [fairness], and beneficence — and three instrumental principles, namely control, transparency, and accountability, summarising technical, organisational, and prudential requirements.

The questions which flow from the principles are developed into two separate checklists. The triage checklist for ADMs (checklist 1) helps to determine which ethical transparency issues need to be addressed and documented prior to and during the implementation of the ADM project. Following this assessment, it suggests the adoption of proportionate procedures that allow for generating the data needed to fill the report with informative content. This should be done for all public sector sector applications of ADM systems.

The second checklist (transparency report checklist) serves as a guide to writing a highly detailed transparency report (in what follows "transparency report"). The transparency report can only be completed at the end of the development and implementation of an ADMS, hereafter referred to as the "project" (including the interaction of the socio-technical system with the target public in cases where the assessment of ethical issues requires such monitoring).

The aim of this impact assessment is not to provide a quantitative risk assessment, but rather to offer a tool to react to risk signals on a case-by-case basis of ADM being used in the public sector, accompanying the system over its entire life cycle. This is highly required, as only taking a look at the system and the context per case will help to determine the actual risks and requirements for each specific system.

The impact assessment at the first stage is a low-threshold tool, and not too bureaucratic or demanding – but should be done for all ADM systems deployed by public authorities. The more risk signals detected, the more comprehensive the transparency requirements and the more demanding it will become for the public administration to conduct the impact assessment and to control their ADM system. Transparency does not by itself ensure conformity with ethical requirements, but it is a necessary condition for achieving such conformity.

Ms. Müller provided some specific policy recommendations for governments to consider. She recommended that authorities should be obligated to systematically evaluate and make transparent the potential risk of use of ADMs in the public sector. These risks should not – and cannot - be determined in a generalised manner but only through a case-by-case analysis, as the impact assessment suggests. Thus, it should be mandatory for public authorities to conduct an impact assessment prior to and during the deployment of any ADM system, with adequate follow-up measures taken.

In addition, it is suggested to have a public register for all ADMs deployed in the public sector. Such a register should contain information regarding its purpose, the underlying model, the developers and deployers of the system and the results of the impact assessment—if applicable, the transparency report. In cases where there

[8] The Impact Assessment Tool by AlgorithmWatch is available at: https://algorithmwatch.org/en/adms-impact-assessment-public-sector-algorithmwatch/

are legitimate reasons for restricting access to the transparency report, information should be provided on the fora to which it is disclosed.

5.3 Open floor: Emerging challenges and opportunities for follow up at European level

From the discussions, several key take aways emerged which should be kept in mind:

- Risk depends on the context, and not all risks from AI-systems can be predetermined in advance. If on the one hand having predefined risk categories can ease the risk assessment process, on the other hand it can have side-effects, as for example loopholes by contractors for avoiding the problem (like not labelling the solution as AI-based). Public administrations should look at AI with a case-by-case approach and leverage on strong transparency requirements. The burden depends on the characteristic of each system. For example, for AI systems which are low risk, the bureaucratic risks and burden are also lower. However, if more risks are likely to occur, the bureaucratic burden increases.
- While there can be critical remarks regarding the accuracy of AI systems -as often the accuracy is quite low in real life contexts – it is often not known how accurate humans' accuracy would be in a similar situation. This is meaning that, even when the accuracy of AI systems is low, it could potential still be better than a human assessment. A combination of AI systems with professional expertise would, however, possibly provide better results than solely AI or solely human-guessed. Nevertheless, there is a serious risk that AI systems provide a false sense of security, especially to civil servants. Civil servants should be aware that accuracy numbers can be inflated significantly since it means the correct identification of all predictions – not just the ones which are being targeted.
- Any form of risk assessment or analysis on the use of AI systems should not just investigate the system itself, but look at the totality of the context in which the system operates in. It should take into consideration elements like the policy in which it is deployed, and the development of it over time. Reality is not static, and AI systems (risks and impacts) develop overtime. It is not a one-off exercise that can be done only once but requires to take into account the whole lifecycle of AI systems.

6 Session 3 - "Collaborate": AI Watch for the public sector, ongoing activities and the way forward.

Moderator: Francesco Pignatelli, Project Manager - Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission

In this session, the ongoing work of the AI Watch in the public sector was presented.

6.1 Ongoing work towards the "Road to better use of AI by and for the Public Sector"

Marina Manzoni, Project Officer, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission

The ongoing work to the Roadmap for the use of AI by the public sector was presented by Ms. Manzoni. In order to build this roadmap, there are a number research activities ongoing to build the state of the art regarding AI in public sector. These include the analysis of MSs approaches to AI in the public sector, and to outline priorities, needs and opportunities as identified by the MSs and to map them towards relevant AI policies and guidelines in support, as well as ongoing work on an Impact Assessment Framework.

These findings and recommendations will come together in the Roadmap, which will include actionable guidance for stakeholders at all administrative levels. The roadmap will have 4 main sections:

- An overview of AI cases, initiatives, and practices by EU MSs for the public Sector
- An analysis of the main features of European National strategies on AI addressing the public sector
- An example of a possible Impact Assessment Framework in support to the MSs
- A set of recommendations and related actions which are suggested to benefit policy makers, public administrations, and practitioners.

These recommendations of the Roadmap will come together in 4 areas of intervention:

- Promote value oriented and human-centric AI in the public sector. These recommendations help to ensure that AI used in the public sector is aligned and compliant with human-centric principles and ethics.
- Enhance governance and capacity building, to strengthen the role of the governance of and with AI by public services
- Build a dedicated AI digital ecosystem for the public sector
- Take stock of knowledge gains and propose a value-oriented AI impact assessment methodology.

The Roadmap will be done in a collaborative approach, together with the relevant stakeholders. A first draft will be available in August-September 2021, and with the experts participating in the workshop through a workshop planned in Autumn 2021. The final draft of the Roadmap is expected in December 2021.

6.2 Ongoing collection and publication of AI cases in the Public Sector

Lorenzino Vaccari, Ph.D. External Consultant, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission

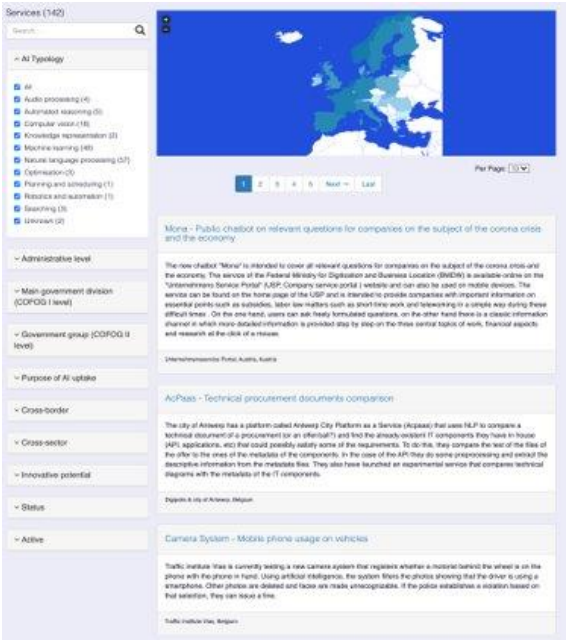
In his presentation, Mr. Vaccari shared the preliminary analysis of a survey, launched by the AI Watch to assist in the research on the impact assessment methodology and the collection of AI cases within the public sector. At the time of presenting, the survey was filled in by 58 contributors, with most of them coming from Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. Of the 58 submitted cases, 24 were deployed and in use by the end-users, while 28 are still in developed or are in a pilot.

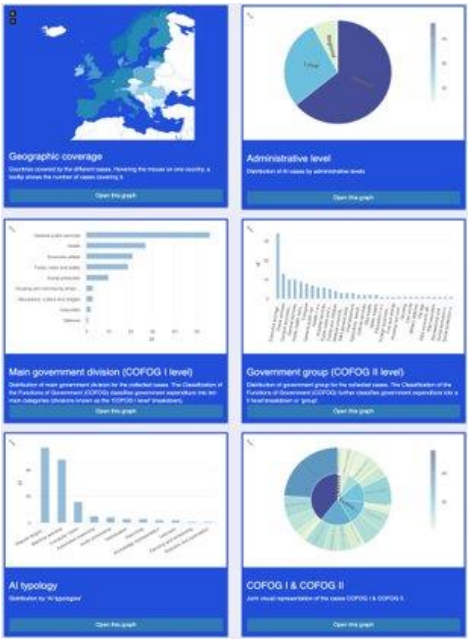
The most commonly used AI techniques are Machine Learning or Deep Learning, and/or Natural Language Processing-based applications. With regards to the level of automation of the AI systems, it was clear that most (40) of the AI collected through the survey gave advice only – AI systems that act completely autonomous are rare, with only 3 cases being reported of acting autonomously.

The survey shows a variety of different enablers assisting in the development and implementation of AI technologies in the public sector which are regarded as important, such as adequate resources (especially IT and in-house knowledge), and the support from stakeholders such as an 'AI-Champion' and management. The effects experienced from the use of AI highlight that the use of AI particulary improves the internal operations of government, by improving the speed of service delivery and responsiveness of services. What the findings also highlight is that the use of AI is seen to improve the fairness of public services – rather than decreasing

fairness as the debate on AI often highlights. The effects of AI on the openness of the government however, is less compared to the other effects.

The AI cases have been already, and will be incrementally published on the JRC Data Catalogue[9], making them available in open data to enabling the reuse. Now, there are already 142 cases taken from the various activities undertaken in the last year available online. This is not a fully list of cases, as the AI Watch investigation is not to make a full inventory of all AI cases in MSS.





[9] The JRC Data Catalogue and the AI cases can be found on: https://data.jrc.ec.europa.eu/dataset/7342ea15-fd4f-4184-9603-98bd87d8239a. More cases are welcome, please feel free to contact us.

7 Close: Conclusions and next steps

Chair: Carlos Torrecilla Salinas, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission

7.1 Contribution from the European Parliament on joining forces on AI for the Public Sector

MEP Maria Manuel Leitão Marques, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection – European Parliament

In her presentation, MEP Maria Manuel Leitão Marques presented some of the ongoing initiatives taking place in Portugal to move forward in the use of AI in government. A programme in Portugal was launched to promote the use of AI in public services, based on the data the public sector produces every day. In addition, research funds have been available to launch projects and foster collaborations between the public sector and researchers. In these collaborations, the public sector highlights the problems they are facing and, consequently, researchers come up with solutions. There are now 70 projects (in prototype) which use AI in the public sector, ranging from a wide variety of different sectors, such as education, transport, consumer protection, market surveilliance and more.

One of the prototype project is to identify students which require support, and to provide policymakers with the tools to assist these students. It aims to create a permament observatory for early school leaving and use AI to predict the main factors which are causing these early leaves.

Another prototype project is presented within the Authority for Economic and Food Safety. This AI system aims to assess which kinds of establishments shoud be inspected based on various criteria. It allows the Agency to prioritise and better allocate their resources, and to reduce bureaucracy for companies which are performing well.

Despite the potential of AI, there is still a need to invest in digital skills, and AI skills, among all members of the government as well as users of the public services. Having adequate knowledge of AI among the users of AI systems is very important in ensuring trust in public services which will be modernised with AI. Similiarly, establishing Labs and conducting experimentations are of utmost importance, and hence this is why it is so important to promote partnerships and regulatory sandboxes for AI.

On the European level, and across MSs, there is a need to better exchange practices and experiences. This will allow us to make the most out of the potential of AI in public services, and to promote Europe's wellbeing. In doing so, there should be more incentives and partnerships that promote regulatory toolboxes to test AI. They allow to transfer knowledge between stakeholders and to better design and develop AI-based solutions.

MEP Maria Manuel Leitão Marques concludes stating that if the European Union will manage do so, most can be taken out of the opportunities that AI offers and Europe will become more sustainable and more digital.

7.2 AI Watch for the public sector: conclusions and announcements

Carlos Torrecilla Salinas, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission

In his closing remarks, Mr. Torrecilla Salinas expressed that the main positive message emerged from the workshop is that AI can be used as a force for good and can make the life of citizens better. However, it also brings risks that need to be properly addressed. It is key to acknowledge that the public sector should not only act as a regulator to address AI challenges and become an active adopter.

Whilst regulation is important, the public sector needs to go beyond that and lead by example: by purchasing, developing and deploying successful, trustworthy and transaparent AI cases together with showing how AI can make public services more innovative, while always respecting EU values and fundamental rights.

To do so, it is a must to share best practices, and to overcome the lack of experience and research on the use of AI in government. This workshop was seen as a great example on how to do so.

A succesful deployment of AI in the public sector requires joint forces between governments, private actors and academia, coordinated at the European and the national level, aligned with EU principles and values.

The next peer learning exercise will take place in autumn, and Mr. Torrecilla Salinas hopes the workshop will be such a great succes as today.

Annex

Workshop Agenda

09:30 – 10:00	*Connecting to the system, testing the connection, video and sound*	
10:00 – 10:25	**Intro: AI uptake and use for and by the Public Sector** ***Chair: Gudrun Stock,*** Deputy Head of the eGovernment and Trust Unit, CNECT/H4 - European Commission	
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome from the hosts. Objectives and agenda	***Gudrun Stock,*** Deputy Head of the eGovernment and Trust Unit, CNECT/H4 - European Commission
10:05 – 10:15	Keynote: *Adopt AI*	***Kilian Gross***, Head of Artificial Intelligence Policy Development and Coordination Unit, CNECT/A2 – European Commission
10:15 – 10:25	Framing the context AI uptake and use for and by the Public Sector	***Carlos Torrecilla Salinas***, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission
10:25 – 11:45	**Session 1 - "Share & Validate":** **Use of AI by MSs for the Public Sector and exchange on preliminary results from the National Strategies** ***Moderator: Dietmar Gattwinkel****, Policy Officer - eGovernment and Trust Unit, CNECT/H4 - European Commission*	
10:25 – 10:35	AI National Strategies: preliminary results overview	***Vincent Van Roy***, Scientific Project Officer, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission
10:35 – 10:45	Analysis of the National Strategies on AI in the Public Sector (statistics, main features and preliminary conclusions)	***Colin van Noordt***, PhD Researcher at Tallinn University of Technology – AI Watch Expert
10:45 – 11:15	Learning from the Member States representative: key issues, determining factors and lessons from strategies	
	• "AI in Spanish Public Administration"	***Salvador Estevan***, Head of Unit for Planning and Governance of Digital Administration, Spain
	• "How to empower digital services transformation with the use of AI: a case study of Poland"	***Antoni Rytel***, Deputy Director of the GovTech Programme at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and ***Ilona Anna Urbaniak***, PhD, Head of Artificial Intelligence Department, National Research Institute (NASK), Poland
	• "The Norwegian AI strategy – what's next?"	***Christine Hafskjold***, Senior ICT Policy Adviser, The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway
11:15 – 11:45	Discussion and validation by Member States of the preliminary Results from National Strategies	
11:45 – 12:00	**Short break**	
12:00 – 12:30	**Session 2 - "Looking into the Future": The challenges & opportunities ahead** ***Moderator: Marina Manzoni****, Project Officer - Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission*	
12:00 – 12:10	Brain teaser - Risks factors and mitigation measures for AI use in and by the Public Sector: criteria for the correct use and role of Algorithm in Public Sector	***Paul Waller***, Researcher & Independent Advisor – University of Bradford
12:10 – 12:20	Challenges in mitigation measures for AI use in and by the Public Sector	***Angela Müller***, Team Lead Policy & Advocacy – AlgorithmWatch
12:20 – 12:45	Open floor: Emerging challenges and opportunities for follow up at European level	
12:45 – 13:10	**Session 3 - "Collaborate": AI Watch for the public sector, ongoing activities and the way forward.** ***Moderator: Francesco Pignatelli****, Project Manager - Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission*	
12:45 – 12:55	Ongoing work towards the "Road to better use of AI by and for the Public Sector"	***Marina Manzoni***, Project Officer, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission
12:55 – 13:10	Ongoing collection and publication of AI cases in the Public Sector	***Lorenzino Vaccari***, Ph.D. External Consultant, Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission
13:10 – 13:30	**Close: Conclusions and next steps** ***Chair: Carlos Torrecilla Salinas****, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 - European Commission*	
13:10 – 13:20	Contribution from the European Parliament on joining forces on AI for the Public Sector	MEP ***Maria Manuel Leitão Marques***, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection – European Parliament
13:20 – 13:30	AI Watch for the public sector: conclusions and announcements	***Carlos Torrecilla Salinas***, Head of the Digital Economy Unit, JRC/B6 – European Commission
13:30	*End of online workshop*	

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