"NAVIGATING AI: SCIENCE, POLITICS, AND SOCIETAL CHALLENGES"

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Europe has a strong foundation in AI training and interdisciplinary research, supported by its extensive network of universities and high-quality training programmes. However, it faces considerable obstacles in AI development and commercialisation, in part due to restrictive copyright laws and fragmented regulations. Limited funding and high costs mean that many EU-based startups turn to international sources, especially in the US, to secure necessary capital. As a result, AI innovation in the EU lags behind other regions in AI innovation.

To harness the benefits of AI responsibly and effectively, Europe can build a robust infrastructure for data-sharing, streamline regulations to unify the digital single market, and foster trust-building efforts to support interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration. The EU also has an opportunity to develop an AI strategy that prioritises sectors where it has established strengths, such as sustainability, healthcare, and mobility. By developing a uniquely European model that emphasises innovation alongside responsible use, Europe can cultivate a competitive, socially-conscious AI ecosystem tailored to its strengths.

THE EXPERT PANEL ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING CALLS TO ACTION:
Streamline funding and capital access.
1 — Improve access to funding, including for growth-phase startups, to retain AI innovation within Europe.

Foster interdisciplinary collaboration.
2 — Promote collaboration between technical, social, and human sciences to address AI's societal impacts and ensure ethical and responsible use.

Encourage risk-taking in research.
3 — Support a culture that encourages experimentation and risk-taking in AI research.

This expert panel is supported by Volkswagen Foundation and assembled in the framework of the Falling Walls Science Summit 2024 in Berlin. The Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs. It commemorates the fall of the Berlin Wall and aims to promote dialogue between science and society.

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