

AI Laws – The Year in Review

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Almost synonymous with 2023 is the term Artificial Intelligence (AI) and on a global basis, this year has seen significant debate on and development in the area of regulation of AI. This is against AI's increased accessibility and the unprecedented speed of AI development with the emergence of new use cases such as generative AI and multiple applications in almost every industry and sector.

Regulation has become a global concern where the need for ethical and responsible AI is critical. As a result, many regional developments have occurred. As far back as 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's ("OECD") issued AI Principles (2019) with recommendations for member states' policy to include in their national AI policies. In November 2023, in Africa, the African Union is developing a Conceptual Framework of the Continental Strategy on Artificial Intelligence to address principles and strategic objectives for the responsible and safe use of AI. The Bletchley Declaration on AI was signed by 27 countries in attendance at the recent AI Safety Summit acknowledging global opportunities and risks of AI.

While the debate on if and how to regulate AI continues, many countries are in the process of developing or implementing laws and regulations to govern the use and impact of AI. Different approaches to regulation have emerged where some regulation takes the form of formal legislation – regulating what AI may be developed and how and providing for sanctions for offenders. An example is the EU, where the three branches of the EU government – the European Parliament, Council and Commission – recently announced their provisional agreement on the Draft EU AI Act, bringing us one step closer to the adoption of the world's first comprehensive AI law. Some countries have adopted a more flexible, innovation friendly soft law approach of providing for AI ethical use frameworks and/or sector specific guidelines, such as in the UK. Some regulators/governments, such as the United Arab Emirates, have taken a phased approach of interim soft law options while they navigate the many legal and regulatory unknowns accompanying AI, favouring an approach where formal legislation may be enacted further down the line.

This AI Global Snapshot provides a high-level overview of AI laws, regulations and guidelines and frameworks which have emerged in the past year.



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