

Regulation EU 2024/1689

EU AI Act Summary

The Complete Guide for 2025–2026

Risk classification · Prohibited practices · High-risk obligations · GPAI models · Timeline · Penalties · Key articles



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458

Articles in the Regulation

4

Risk Tiers

8

Prohibited AI Practices

Aug 2026

Primary Deadline

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SECTION 1

What Is the EU AI Act?

The EU AI Act (Regulation EU 2024/1689) is the world's first comprehensive legal framework governing artificial intelligence. Formally adopted on **13 March 2024** and entering into force on **1 August 2024**, it establishes binding obligations for AI providers, deployers, and importers operating in or affecting the European Union market.

The Act takes a **risk-based approach**: the stricter the potential harm an AI system could cause, the heavier its regulatory requirements. It does not regulate AI as a technology in the abstract — it regulates specific *applications* and *use cases* based on context. Crucially, it is a **product safety regulation**, not a data protection law, and operates alongside GDPR — not instead of it.

Key fact: The EU AI Act applies extraterritorially. Any company worldwide placing AI systems on the EU market, or whose AI outputs are used within the EU, is subject to its obligations regardless of where they are headquartered.

SECTION 2

Who Does the EU AI Act Apply To?

The Act applies to organisations that:

- Place AI systems on the EU market or put them into service in the EU — regardless of where they are established
- Use AI systems within the EU in a professional context (deployers)
- Are importers or distributors of AI systems in the EU
- Are located outside the EU, but whose AI system's output is used within the EU

Exempt: AI used exclusively for military/national security purposes; AI in scientific R&D; before market entry; AI used by individuals for purely personal non-professional use.

SECTION 3

Risk Classification System

The Act uses a four-tier risk pyramid. Obligations scale with risk level:

UNACCEPTABLE RISK — PROHIBITED

Article 5 · Banned from 2 February 2025 · ~1% of AI systems

HIGH RISK — STRICT OBLIGATIONS

Annex III systems · Deadline 2 August 2026 · ~8–10% of AI systems

LIMITED RISK — TRANSPARENCY

Article 50 · Chatbots, deepfakes, AI content · Deadline 2 Aug 2026

MINIMAL RISK — LARGELY UNREGULATED

No mandatory requirements · ~70% of AI systems

SECTION 4

Prohibited AI Practices (Article 5)

These eight practices are banned outright — effective **2 February 2025**. There is no conformity pathway. Organisations still operating any of these systems are already in violation and face the maximum penalty tier.

#	Prohibited Practice	Key Detail
1	Subliminal Manipulation	Techniques beyond conscious perception to materially distort behaviour causing harm
2	Exploitation of Vulnerabilities	Exploiting age, disability or socioeconomic situation to distort behaviour harmfully
3	Social Scoring by Public Bodies	Classifying people based on social behaviour leading to unjustified detrimental treatment
4	Real-Time Remote Biometric ID	In publicly accessible spaces; narrow law-enforcement exceptions with judicial authorisation
5	Untargeted Facial Image Scraping	Building facial recognition databases from internet or CCTV without targeted purpose
6	Emotion Inference at Work/School	Inferring emotions from biometric data in workplace or educational contexts
7	Biometric Categorisation (Sensitive)	Deducing race, political views, religion, sexual orientation from biometric data
8	Predictive Policing from Profiling	Assessing risk of future crimes based solely on profiling without prior criminal act

■ **Warning:** These bans have been in force since 2 February 2025. Continued operation of prohibited AI systems exposes your organisation to fines of up to €35M or 7% of global annual turnover — whichever is higher.

SECTION 5

High-Risk AI System Obligations

High-risk AI systems face the most comprehensive requirements. Two routes to classification: **Annex III** (standalone high-risk use cases) or being a safety component in an **Annex I** regulated product. All obligations below must be fulfilled *before* placing the system on the EU market.

Obligation	Article	Requirement Summary	Actor
Risk Management System	Art. 9	Continuous risk identification and mitigation throughout AI lifecycle	Provider
Data Governance	Art. 10	Training data quality criteria; bias detection and correction required	Provider
Technical Documentation	Art. 11	Full pre-market documentation maintained for entire lifecycle	Provider
Record-Keeping / Logging	Art. 12	Automatic operation logging to enable post-incident analysis	Provider
Transparency & Instructions	Art. 13	Clear instructions enabling deployers to understand and operate the system	Provider
Human Oversight	Art. 14	Design must enable monitoring, intervention, override and halt by humans	Provider + Deployer
Accuracy & Robustness	Art. 15	Appropriate accuracy levels; resilience to errors and adversarial attacks	Provider
Quality Management System	Art. 17	Documented QMS covering full development and deployment lifecycle	Provider
Conformity Assessment	Art. 43	Self-assessment (most systems) or third-party Notified Body assessment	Provider
EU Database Registration	Art. 49	Register before market placement; publicly accessible registry	Provider + some Deployers
Post-Market Monitoring	Art. 72	Active performance monitoring; 15-day serious incident reporting	Provider
Fundamental Rights IA	Art. 27	Pre-deployment assessment for deployers in regulated public-service sectors	Deployer

SECTION 6

General Purpose AI (GPAI) Models

Chapter V creates a separate framework for **GPAI models** (large foundation models such as GPT, Gemini, Claude, Llama). Obligations applied from **2 August 2025**.

All GPAI Providers Must	Systemic Risk Models Also Require
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• Technical documentation of training • Information to downstream deployers • EU copyright law compliance (Art. 53) • Training data content summary • IP policy implementation	• Adversarial testing (red-teaming) • Serious incident reporting to AI Office • Cybersecurity protection measures • Energy efficiency reporting • Ongoing model evaluations <i>Applies to models trained with $>10^{25}$ FLOPs</i>
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SECTION 7

Transparency & Labeling Requirements

Article 50 creates transparency obligations applying even to AI systems that are *not* high-risk — effective **2 August 2026**.

Obligation	Who Must Comply	Requirement
Chatbot Disclosure	Providers/Deployers of conversational AI	Inform users they are interacting with AI, not a human
Deepfake Labeling	Any provider generating synthetic audio/video/image	Machine-readable disclosure that content is AI-generated
AI Text Disclosure	Publishers of AI-generated text on public-interest topics	Disclose AI-generated nature clearly to audience
Emotion Recognition	Deployers of emotion-inference AI	Notify individuals that emotion recognition is operating

SECTION 8

EU AI Act Timeline and Key Deadlines

The Act uses a phased implementation approach. The table below shows every milestone from entry into force through to the final 2027 deadline.

Date	Milestone	Who Is Affected	Status
1 Aug 2024	Act Enters Into Force	All organisations	PASSED
2 Feb 2025	Prohibited AI Practices Banned (Art. 5)	All organisations	PASSED
2 Feb 2025	AI Literacy Obligations Begin (Art. 4)	All providers & deployers	PASSED
2 Aug 2025	GPAI Model Obligations Apply (Chapter V)	GPAI model providers	PASSED
2 Aug 2026	HIGH-RISK AI FULLY COMPLIANT · Article 50 Live	All Annex III providers & deployers; AI content producers	PRIMARY
2 Aug 2027	Legacy Product AI Must Comply (Annex I products)	Manufacturers of regulated products with AI safety components	UPCOMING

Action required now: As of March 2026, organisations have approximately 5 months until the August 2026 primary deadline. Conformity assessments for complex high-risk systems can take 4–12 months. Begin your gap analysis immediately.

SECTION 9

Penalties and Enforcement

Fines are calculated as the **higher** of a fixed maximum or a percentage of global annual turnover — ensuring proportionality for organisations of all sizes.

Violation Type	Maximum Fine	Turno ver Cap	vs GDPR
Prohibited AI Practices (Article 5)	€35,000,000	7%	2× GDPR maximum
High-Risk AI / GPAI Obligations	€15,000,000	3%	≈ GDPR mid-tier
Misleading Authorities	€7,500,000	1.5%	Lower tier

Beyond financial penalties, authorities can order **market withdrawal** of non-compliant AI systems, impose **temporary or permanent bans**, and require **public disclosure** of violations. For non-EU providers, this can mean total loss of EU market access.

SECTION 10

Quick Reference: Key Articles

Use this table to locate specific provisions in the regulation text quickly.

Article	Topic	Key Provision
Art. 3	Definitions	48 defined terms including AI system, provider, deployer, GPAI model
Art. 5	Prohibited Practices	8 banned AI uses; effective 2 February 2025
Art. 6	High-Risk Classification	Rules for classifying AI as high-risk; references Annex I and III
Art. 9	Risk Management	Mandatory iterative risk management for high-risk AI lifecycle
Art. 10	Data Governance	Training data quality; bias detection and correction required
Art. 11	Technical Documentation	Documentation requirements; Annex IV specifies content
Art. 13	Transparency	Clear instructions for use; information to deployers
Art. 14	Human Oversight	Design requirements enabling human monitoring and override
Art. 17	Quality Management System	QMS requirements covering full development and deployment lifecycle
Art. 25	Deployer Reclassification	Conditions under which deployer becomes provider (substantial modification)
Art. 43	Conformity Assessment	Self-assessment vs third-party Notified Body assessment rules
Art. 49	EU Database Registration	Mandatory registration before market placement; public database
Art. 50	Transparency Obligations	Chatbot disclosure, deepfake labeling, AI-generated content rules
Art. 53	GPAI Provider Obligations	Documentation, copyright compliance, downstream transparency
Art. 72	Incident Reporting	Serious incident reporting; 15-day notification window

Authoritative Sources & Further Reading

- EUR-Lex — Official Regulation Text: eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1689
- European Commission AI Policy: digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai
- EU AI Office: digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office
- EU AI Act Reference Site: artificialintelligenceact.eu
- European Parliament Explainer: europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230601STO93804
- OECD AI Principles: oecd.ai/en/ai-principles
- IAPP EU AI Act Resource Centre: iapp.org/resources/article/eu-ai-act-resource-center
- NIST AI Risk Management Framework: nist.gov/artificial-intelligence
- EDPB — GDPR & AI Intersection Guidance: edpb.europa.eu
- IBM EU AI Act Overview: ibm.com/think/topics/eu-ai-act



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