



An Comhchoiste um Thurasóireacht, Cultúr, Ealaíona, Spórt agus Meáin

**Tuarascáil Taistil, Comhdháil Idirpharlaiminteach ar
Intleacht Shaorga agus ar na hÚsáidí a Bhainfear aisti
sa Todhchaí, an Bhruséil, Eanáir 2024**

Meán Fómhair 2024

Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media

**Travel Report, Interparliamentary Conference on
Artificial Intelligence and its Future Uses, Brussels,
January 2024**

September 2024

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Related information

Publications

All publications for this committee are available on the [Oireachtas website](#).

Committee videos

Footage of Committee proceedings can be found on the [Committee videos page](#).

Contact details

The contact details for the Committee can be found on the [Committee page](#).

Terms of reference

Read the [terms of reference](#) for the Committee.

Membership

Cathaoirleach

[Niamh Smyth TD](#), Fianna Fáil

Leas-Chathaoirleach

[Senator Malcolm Byrne](#), Fianna Fáil

Members

[Chris Andrews TD](#), Sinn Féin

[Ciaran Cannon TD](#), Fine Gael

[Peter Fitzpatrick TD](#), Independent

[Brendan Griffin TD](#), Fine Gael

[Mattie McGrath TD](#), Independent

[Imelda Munster TD](#), Sinn Féin

[Christopher O'Sullivan TD](#), Fianna Fáil

[Michael Ring TD](#), Fine Gael

[Senator Micheál Carrigy](#), Fine Gael

[Senator Shane Cassells](#), Fianna Fáil

[Senator Annie Hoey](#), Labour Party

[Senator Fintan Warfield](#), Sinn Féin

Introduction

The Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, in its 2024 work programme, has identified as a key policy priority for examination the State's response to online disinformation and media/digital literacy, including social media and fake news.

In this regard, the Committee decided to accept an invitation to attend the interparliamentary conference on artificial intelligence and its future uses on behalf of the Houses of the Oireachtas. The conference was organised as part of the parliamentary dimension of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It was hosted jointly by the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region, the Parliament of Wallonia, and the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Members in attendance

Niamh Smyth TD (Cathaoirleach)
Senator Malcolm Byrne
Senator Shane Cassells

Secretariat in attendance

Darren Kelly, Policy Advisor

Programme of events

Official dinner

The delegation attended an official dinner at the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region. Delegates were welcomed by the President of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region Mr Rachid Madrane and the President of the Parliament of Wallonia, Mr André Frédéric. Mr Madrane and Mr Frédéric made speeches on the importance of European cooperation in dealing with the opportunities and challenges presented by AI.

Session one – the creative and cultural industries faced with artificial intelligence and its impacts on the daily lives of European citizens

The speakers for this session were Mr Thierry Dutoit, President of the Numédiart Institute at the University of Mons, Ms Marie Du Chastel, Artistic Director of KIKK and curator specializing in digital art and new media, and Mr Antonin Descampe, professor at the Louvain School of Journalism and researcher at the Media Innovation and Intelligibility Lab.

The discussion covered themes such as the current limits of AI, future of models of AI-assisted art and journalism, difficulties in determining the veracity of AI-generated content, the level of threat posed to creative jobs by AI, and potential solutions to threats against intellectual property posed by AI.

Senator Shane Cassells raised concerns relating to news ownership and the implications of AI on diminishing trust in news. Mr Descampe noted in response that issues of media transparency and independence must be dealt with in the European AI Act, and noted that public interest journalism is more important than ever.

Session two – teaching in the age of artificial intelligence: issues and impacts

The speakers for this session were Mr Nathanaël Ackerman, Director General of the AI4Belgium Coalition, Ms Karen Boers, Managing Director of the AI for the Common Good Institute, and Mr Bruno De Lievre, Professor at the University of Mons and advisor to the rector on digital strategies for education.

The discussion covered themes such as the importance of developing digital skills, the importance of developing critical thinking skills, training and transition supports as new jobs emerge and others disappear, the challenges involved in using AI to enhance learning, the risk of societal bias being reinforced by AI, and the use of AI as a classroom tool.

Senator Malcolm Byrne outlined that students must be given guidance on ethical issues and when it is appropriate to use AI. Senator Byrne also outlined issues around AI and curriculum design, calling for student voices to be included. In response, Mr Ekermann outlined the importance of lifelong learning and the involvement of young people in decision making, and Ms De Lievre outlined that there should be a delineation between the teaching of AI as an abstract ethical issue and skills-based training on how to apply AI in the workplace.

Session three – the healthcare sector faced with artificial intelligence: prospects and challenges

The speakers for this session were Ms Christie Morreale, Vice-President of the Government of Wallonia, Mr Giovanni Briganti, Chair in Artificial Intelligence and Digital Medicine at University of Mons, and Mr Stéphane Lefebvre, CEO of ZORGI.

The discussion covered themes such as existing uses and applications of AI in healthcare settings such as imagery and illness detection as validated by a human doctor, challenges such as data protection and cyber security, the role of humans in oversight and trust of AI-delivered services in healthcare settings, and how to regulate the interactions between AI-delivered healthcare services and the insurance sector.

Senator Byrne outlined the potential positive impacts for the use of AI as an assistive tool on the basis of a co-pilot model, and canvassed the room for opinions on the level of trust delegates would have with an AI surgeon compared to a human surgeon. Senator Byrne further outlined that AI should build trust and there should be appropriate criteria for controlling the use by AI of medical data.

Session four – the challenges of artificial intelligence for public governance

The session opened with remarks by the Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region for Digital Transition, Mr Bernard Clerfayt. The speakers for the session were Ms Lucie Cluzel-Métayer, Professor of Public Digital Law at the University of Paris-Nanterre, Mr Hugues Bersini, co-director of the IRIDIA laboratory at Université Libre de Bruxelles, and Ms Lucia Russo, representative of the OECD's Global Parliamentary Network on Artificial Intelligence.

The discussion covered themes such as the need for informed public decisions on use of AI, the importance of transparent AI algorithms managed fairly and with citizen participation, successful models of AI governance in the public sector such as the rollout of smart water and electricity meters in consultation with a citizens assembly in Brussels, the potential for AI to support smart and sustainable cities, the risks of utilising AI in public administration such as excessive data collection and biased processing, and the need for controls to manage these risks.