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Press Release by the European AI Forum:

EAIF welcomes EU AI investments but calls for stronger focus on startups and innovation

The European AI Forum (EAIF) welcomes President Macron's announcement of €109 billion in private sector AI investments for France, including significant commitments from Brookfield (€20 billion) and the UAE (up to €50 billion). Similarly, we appreciate the European Commission's ambitious InvestAI initiative, which aims to mobilize €200 billion for AI development across Europe. These commitments demonstrate Europe's recognition of AI's strategic importance in the global technology landscape.

However, while the scale of these investments is promising, their success will depend heavily on implementation and reaching the right recipients. The European Commission's plan to combine €50 billion in public funds with €150 billion from private investors requires careful scrutiny. Past experience has shown that large-scale funding programs often favor established corporations over innovative startups and scaleups, which are the true drivers of AI innovation in Europe.

The announced €20 billion for AI gigafactories raises particular questions. While we support investments in critical infrastructure, we must ensure these facilities serve Europe's complete AI ecosystem, not just major incumbents. The history of European industrial policy shows that concentrating resources among established players often fails to generate the breakthrough innovations needed to compete globally.

Europe has the talent and innovative potential to be a global AI leader. However, this potential can only be realized if these significant investments reach the right recipients and truly foster innovation. The current global AI race, exemplified by recent U.S. initiatives like Project STARGATE and new AI chip policies, requires Europe to not just match investments but to deploy them more effectively.

The coming months will be crucial for Europe's AI ambitions. As other global powers accelerate their AI capabilities through focused, agile programs, Europe must move beyond traditional funding mechanisms and embrace more dynamic, startup-friendly approaches. The EAIF remains committed to supporting this transformation, but time is of the essence. Our competitiveness in the global AI landscape will be determined both by the scale of our investments and by our ability to deploy them swiftly and strategically where they can make the most impact.

EAIF Key Recommendations

Our recommendations aim to rectify the current investment landscape by adopting a model similar to France's Tibi Initiative, with a specific focus on AI. This approach would involve mobilizing capital through partnerships with big companies and institutional investors such as Limited Partners (LPs) in Venture Capital (VC) and Private Equity (PE) to support AI innovation. Additionally, we emphasize the need for transparency in high-performance computing (HPC) usage and the importance of Data Spaces to bolster the AI ecosystem with necessary data resources.

For these investments to effectively strengthen Europe's AI competitiveness, EAIF recommends:

- Establishing clear allocation quotas ensuring at least 50% of funds reach AI startups and scaleups
- Implementing transparent reporting on fund distribution and innovation outcomes
- Ensuring AI gigafactories operate on open, accessible models benefiting the ecosystem
- Setting clear performance metrics for fund recipients to demonstrate innovation impact
- Creating dedicated fast-track funding mechanisms for AI startups with high growth potential
- Enabling short period programs to receive funding within 6 months
- Mobilizing investments through an EU-wide initiative similar to the French Tibi Initiative
- Developing strategic investments to maintain Europe's technological sovereignty
- Mandating transparency in HPC usage through annual public reports
- Implementing merit-based procedures for GPU access
- Accelerating the creation of European Data Spaces
- Streamlining bureaucracy in AI investment frameworks
- Supporting startups with capital, mentorship, and market opportunities
- Introducing performance tracking for AI investments

We also call for greater clarity on several key aspects of the InvestAI initiative:

- Specific sources and allocation mechanisms for the €50 billion in public funds
- Concrete plans for attracting and structuring the €150 billion in private investment
- Safeguards to ensure equitable access for companies of all sizes
- Measures to prevent market concentration and foster genuine competition



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About the European AI Forum

The European AI Forum (EAIF) connects the most innovative AI and Deep Tech companies across Europe with established industry and policymakers, representing over 2,000 AI entrepreneurs through our 10 member organisations to form Europe's largest AI network. The members of the European AI Forum are committed to ensuring that AI technology is applied in accordance with European and democratic values, helping Europe achieve digital sovereignty. To achieve this, the European Union must become an attractive AI location for entrepreneurs, where risk-taking is valued and innovative spirit meets the best conditions.

Member organisations

CroAI (Croatia), Hub France IA (France), KI Bundesverband (Germany), AI Cluster Bulgaria (Bulgaria), NL AI Coalitie (Netherlands), Digitalpoland foundation (Poland), Artificial Intelligence Association of Lithuania (Lithuania), Česká asociace umělé inteligence (Czech Republic), AI4SI (Slovenia), AI Austria (Austria).