
EU Commission: launch of new strategy for digital future. Von der Leyen, “Artificial Intelligence must serve people”

(Brussels) “Artificial Intelligence is a huge opportunity for Europe. We do have a lot, but we have to unleash its potential; we want innovation, we want to encourage our businesses and researchers to develop it. And we want to encourage our citizens to feel confident to use it”. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said this to mark the launch of a second action plan following the European Green Deal today: “Shaping Europe's Digital Future” is the name given to the package that includes a number of different elements. Von der Leyen briefed journalists about the benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI): it improves our daily lives and is “key to achieving climate neutrality”. And Europe has a pole position in this sector since it is in Europe that “we produce 25% of all industrial robots”. Since this is a “fast-growing” sector, the European Commission wants to “boost” European AI by attracting more than €20 billion per year, for the next decade”. Data are of key importance: “The more data we have, the smarter our algorithms”, the president said, explaining why efforts are being made to improve access to the data collected. “Europe has a good advantage” for “we have a broad economic diversity” and the data collected are “very diverse and rich”; there is, however, a need for spaces “where you can not only store your data, but also share it with others” to the benefit of researchers, governments, businesses. We need to create “data spaces and cloud infrastructure” for the EU. For this, we need to “trigger investments of €4 to 6 billion”. The value of the data economy today is “2.4% of the GDP”, and in five years’ time, it is expected to be “three times as much”. This means we will need skills to fill the jobs. According to von der Leyen, it is crucial, however, that “citizens trust the new technology”. This is why the Commission wants the application of these new technologies to deserve the trust of citizens and is committed to “promoting a responsible, human-centric approach to AI”; we will be “particularly careful with sectors where essential human interests and rights are at stake”, for “AI must serve people”.

Sarah Numico