

Event Report



# EIAS Morning Talk - Let's Talk AI with Ethan TU

EIAS Morning Talk  
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## Abstract

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*The 'EIAS Morning Talk - Let's Talk AI with Ethan TU', moderated by EIAS Programme Director Ms Lin Goethals, brought together a panel of distinguished guests on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The keynote presentation by Mr Ethan Tu - the founder of Taiwan AI Labs - focused on his company's use of sophisticated new AI systems and how they can address issues across civil society in Taiwan. EIAS also welcomed two experts from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology (DG Connect), Mr Eric Badiqué who is an Adviser for Artificial Intelligence, and Mr Pertti Jauhiainen, who is a Policy Officer for Future Connectivity Systems and 5G Deployment. Both offered an illuminating insight into the challenges and opportunities that Europe faces when it comes to AI and 5G progression. The future of AI is a challenging but exciting opportunity for the global system. With stronger frameworks and guidelines AI can have a hugely positive impact on all of our lives.*

Mr Tu launched the discussion with a brief overview of Taiwan's research climate in Artificial Intelligence. Noting the quality of healthcare, science education and press freedom as key indicators in his decision to establish the Taiwan AI Labs in 2017. The rapidly developing non-profit organization - currently at 120 members - has three key aims in its approach towards AI development, notably (1) innovation in Taiwan and the world, (2) bringing technology to meet nature and mankind, and (3) to create impacts and improvements for human beings. The work of the Taiwan AI labs evolves around three project areas, being (i) healthcare, (ii) Smart Cities, and (iii) Human Interaction.

In the field of healthcare, the main aim is to create digitalised hospitals, introduce bioinformatics and AI precision medicine. Examples of AI applications in the healthcare sector by the Taiwan AI labs are established through the streamlining of medical work by applying AI to analyse medical papers; helping the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) by improving malaria diagnostics; and the use of the human genome to predict the best marker for cancer treatment. Mr Tu expressed his hope that through the development of a comprehensive ecosystem of health insurers, hospitals and Taiwan AI Labs, AI can improve the healthcare system of Taiwan.

Mr Tu also outlined the potential effects of AI in creating a 'Smart City'. By predicting and controlling traffic, tackling environmental pressures and monitoring the streets from a 360° view, AI can be used to enhance the quality of everyday life in cities and beyond. Similarly, in the area of human interaction, AI can be used to distinguish fake news from real journalism. The creation of the AI reporter 'Copycat' is noted as a positive step towards this. In conclusion, Mr Tu addressed the ethical side of AI development, emphasising the importance of handling data with care, in particular in relation to privacy, integrity and humanity. He applauded the work of the EU in this field and welcomed closer integration and cooperation in all AI fields in the future.

In what followed, Mr Badiqué picked up on this thread. Complementing Mr Tu's work in the field, he went on to discuss the EU's role in AI development, with specific focus on the political and ethical angle. Acknowledging that AI has the potential to change all aspects of our life as we know it, Mr Badiqué set out the EU's three-pillared approach in dealing with AI progression, evolving around 1) Research and Development, 2) the Impact of AI, and 3) Ethical Issues.

In respect to research and development Mr Badiqué commended the EU in its investment into AI, but also recognised the technological race taking place across the developed world. In order for the EU to stay on top of research and development he expressed his hope for the new commission to approve a series of new projects, covering investment into AI infrastructure and offering increased support to experimentation.

Addressing the impact of AI, the need for educational funding at all levels of the EU institutions were highlighted as elements to ensure the consequences of AI to be fully understood. On ethical issues, the necessity for an integrated approach with Member States was underlined. In order to put into practice a coordinated plan to ensure that AI is not misused, state representatives should meet several times per year, aligning the EU and its Member States along similar lines of approach. Mr Badiqué concluded by drawing attention to the European Commission's effort, through an open election process, to bring together a panel of 52 high-level experts on AI and engage around 500 companies. He also encouraged Taiwan and other likeminded partners to further engage on this front, helping to establish closer links between researchers in AI across the globe.

Lastly, Mr Jauhiainen, highlighted the importance of 5G to the functioning of the global system and reiterated its cruciality to the digitalisation of society in the near future. He underlined the necessity of 5G in enhancing the use of mobile devices, industrial internet and providing the next steps in massive machine communication. While acting as a problem-solving instrument for society - like AI - 5G and consequently 6G will need ethical guidelines and data protection. The EU and Taiwan are already heavily connected in the area of 5G deployment, with issues over ethics currently being discussed.

Responding to a number of pertinent questions, the morning talk concluded with an interactive discussion between the speakers and the audience. For instance, the impact of AI on rural to urban migration processes was raised, arguing that given the current amount of available data, AI applications can be very beneficial to cities. However, in the future, once data become more widely accessible, the same models will become available for applications in rural areas, developing a new ecosystem that will create opportunities. People will ultimately be able to reap the benefits of AI, regardless of the locality. AI will open up opportunities for people to remain in the countryside, resulting in a whole generation of young people to stay in rural areas, creating a respectful environment, by successfully using data applications. Services that were once only available in cities will be opened up more widely through AI, as well as 5G, such as for instance medical services and information links. AI will offer an opportunity to maintain a rural-urban balance.

The projected impact of AI on the labour force - whether it be positive or negative, was also discussed. It should be clear that while AI is an exciting and important prospect, people will have to adapt to it. While it is difficult to predict what will happen in the future, the likelihood remains for people to be increasingly replaced by AI. However, with improved access to smarter data, new application systems will emerge, creating wealth. In conclusion, expressing his optimism about the possibility of the creation of new jobs from AI, Mr Tu made it clear that AI can only replace people's labour up to an extent, as humans, in lots of ways, remain difficult to replace.

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