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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit (Paris): Global AI Governance at a Crossroads

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The AI Action Summit held in Paris, France (February 10-11, 2025) marked a pivotal moment in international AI governance, launching a €150 billion AI Champions Initiative and establishing a \$400 million foundation for public interest. Building on the previous summits held in Bletchley Park, UK (2023) and Seoul, South Korea (2024), the Paris summit expanded beyond safety concerns to address economic opportunities and public applications, drawing participation from over 60 nations.

Main action themes:

The summit introduced five key action themes:

1. **Public Interest AI**, focusing on societal benefits and equal access to technology in areas such as healthcare, education, and public services;
2. **Future of Work**, addressing labor market transformation and emphasizing worker protection and skills development;
3. **Innovation and Culture**, balancing technological advancement with cultural preservation and intellectual property rights;
4. **Trust in AI**, emphasizing safety, security, and ethical considerations in AI development; and
5. **Global Governance**, aimed at establishing unified frameworks for international collaboration.

Geopolitical developments and the contradictions:

The summit revealed significant geopolitical differences among Western allies. While France led an international agreement promoting ethical AI development, the US and UK's notable abstention created unexpected alignments, with China and India supporting France's regulatory vision. The US prioritized

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economic growth over regulatory safeguards, contrasting sharply with France's push for stronger oversight. The UK's position proved particularly contradictory—its refusal to sign, while claiming leadership in ethical AI development, potentially undermined its credibility in this space. The UK government cited concerns about national security and "global governance" clarity as reasons for its abstention.

Implications:

These divergent positions have created a complex landscape affecting all action areas. The absence of US and UK participation may lead to fragmented initiatives in public interest AI and worker protection. Innovation may face challenges from competing standards and intellectual property frameworks, while trust-building efforts may get complicated by varying safety requirements across jurisdictions. The situation may be further complicated by broader trade tensions between the US and Europe, particularly regarding steel and aluminum tariffs.

The summit's outcomes highlight a fundamental challenge in global AI governance: balancing innovation and economic growth with safety and ethical considerations. The division among traditional allies raises concerns about the effectiveness of future international cooperation in AI governance. While the agreement promotes transparency, safety, and accessibility in AI development, the absence of key players could impact its practical implementation.

Future directions:

Looking ahead, the success of evolving robust governance frameworks, moderating AI's impact on global labor markets, and implementing public interest initiatives will depend heavily on bridging these divergent national interests. The summit's achievements in establishing new funding mechanisms and frameworks for public interest AI mark important progress, but the path forward will require greater coordination among major powers to ensure effective global standards and consistent implementation across regions.

Please [click here](#) for more details about the AI Action Summit.

Please contact the author of this Client Alert or your Butzel attorney for more information.

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