Artificial Intelligence: Europe should take the lead on trustworthy solutions

Brussels, 8 April 2019 – ETNO, the Association representing Europe's leading telecom operators, welcomed today the European High-Level Expert Group "Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI)" and called for supporting European solutions through sustained levels of investment and innovation.

Countries are today competing globally to become leaders in the delivery of AI-based products and services. In this context, it is crucial for the European Union to support industrial leadership in this field, so that citizens can also choose from solutions inspired by European values.

AI is central to the future of communications

The telecoms sector looks at AI as an enabler of dramatic improvements in communication technologies and services. Better customer service, smarter network deployment and incubation of start-ups to develop new services are just some of the ways in which telecom operators are deploying AI to improve their operations.

For this reason, ETNO has coordinated the telecoms input to the public consultation on the Guidelines and it has activated a taskforce on the issue. At the same time, our members have launched ethical principles, stakeholder dialogues and are embedding AI in their codes of conducts.

Ethics Guidelines provide a solid building block

The "Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI" provide a solid building block for defining Europe's policy framework on this crucial topic. ETNO supports the guiding principles and the seven key requirements of trustworthy AI. Many of them are already today built in telecoms services and operations.

ETNO and its members look forward to the next steps in the adoption and governance of the guidelines. We recognise that implementing and testing the assessment list will be a huge task, but we support a flexible approach built on regular feedback from adopting organisations to allow for adjustment of the guidelines.

Today's guidelines are an important contribution to the broader ethical debate that will keep developing over the coming years, in Europe and worldwide. Such a complex issue requires multi-stakeholder engagement with all interested parties, as done with the European High-Level Expert Group. The telecoms industry remains fully committed to an open, inclusive dialogue.

Lise Fuhr, ETNO Director General, said: "*Europe should take the lead in exporting trustworthy AI solutions. Building European industrial leadership in AI is a key tool to assert European values in the technology space*".

Ieva Martikenaite, Chair of the ETNO AI Taskforce and VP Innovation at Telenor, said: "*I am pleased that the Commission recognised the importance of the telecommunications industry in the ethical discussion for realising Europe's AI strategy. Trust in the design, deployment and use of AI is a must-win battle. We are happy for this first step and will continue contributing towards this vision*".