

Czech Republic's AI Observatory and Forum: Expert Platform and Forum for Monitoring Legal and Ethical Rules for Artificial Intelligence

In the two recent years, the Czech Republic has devoted a significant attention to the topic of Artificial Intelligence. In 2018, the Government Office of the Czech Republic published an extensive study “Analysis of the Development Potential of Artificial Intelligence in the Czech Republic” that consists of three individual reports focusing on technology, socio-economic aspects, and law and ethics.¹ The report recommended to set up a centre that would continuously assess the impact of laws on the development and use of AI.²

This recommendation was later transformed into one of short-term objectives in the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Czech Republic. The Strategy presumes “Establishment of an expert platform and forum for continuous monitoring of legal and ethical rules and instruments at national and international level in light of current needs for research, development and use of AI organized in cooperation with the Institute of State and Law of the ASCR”.³

Subsequently, on 10 February 2020, the Czech Republic officially established its AI Observatory and Forum (AIO&F). The AIO&F brings together distinguished Czech experts and international observers to monitor developments in the international, European and Czech law that are either specific for AI or impact its development. The State Secretary for European Affairs, Milena Hrdinková, stated that “artificial intelligence is one of the priority topics of the new European Commission. Already in this month the Commission shall publish the first proposal that will present various options on how to approach this topic from the perspective of European law. I am, therefore, glad that we managed to put together an expert team with which we will consult the European activities.” The Czech Republic has already provided its position on the planned activities of the European Union at the end of 2019 when the CR published own non-paper and presented it to respective European commissioners.

The main objectives of the platform are identification of legal obstacles to research, development and utilization of artificial intelligence and formulating proposals on how to eliminate them. Moreover, the platform shall develop legal and ethical recommendations for practice, provide space for public debate and engage the Czech Republic in international discussions on regulation of artificial intelligence and data economy.⁴

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¹ The main findings of the study can be found in English in the Summary Report.

² For details see chapter 5.3.6 of FAĀUN, M. et al. Analysis of the Development Potential of Artificial Intelligence in the Czech Republic. Summary Report. In: *Office of the Government of the Czech Republic* [online]. 20. 12. 2018 [2020-02-11]. Available at: <<https://www.vlada.cz/assets/evropske-zalezitosti/aktualne/AI-Summary-Report.pdf>>.

³ National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Czech Republic. In: *Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic* [online]. 2019 [2020-02-11]. Available at: <https://www.mpo.cz/assets/en/guidepost/for-the-media/press-releases/2019/5/NAIS_eng_web.pdf>. See chapter 6.3.1.

⁴ Information about the AI Observatory and Forum, its activities and available documents can be found at www.observatory.ilaw.cas.cz.

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