European leaders in Artificial Intelligence meet in Barcelona to promote the use of this technology in the EU

The objective is to provide users with Artificial Intelligence resources that favour scientific research and technological innovation.

It is the starting point of the AI4EU project, which is financed with 20 million Euros by the European Commission and in which 79 partners from 21 countries participate, among them 60 leading research centres.

It also contemplates the creation of the AI4EU Ethics Observatory to guarantee a human-centred AI.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, January 9th, 10th and 11th, 79 European Union entities, including 60 leading research centers, gather at the Auditorium of the Vèrtex Building of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya · BarcelonaTech (UPC), to kick off the European project AI4EU, acronym that responds to the English expression of "Artificial Intelligence for the European Union".

The AI4EU project aims to mobilise European leaders in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make available to users resources based on this technology that facilitate scientific research and innovation, analyse the needs of future research in AI and create an observatory of ethics that promotes an Artificial Intelligence centred on the human being.
AI4UE is part of the action plan that the European Commission (EC) presented on December 7th to promote the use of AI in Europe, with a financing of 20M€ from the EC itself and coordinated by the French Thales Group. The meeting in Barcelona has been organised by the Barcelona Supercomputing Center and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya · BarcelonaTech (UPC), which are part of this project.

The members of the initiative have undertaken to create an IA platform on demand to provide users with knowledge, algorithms and tools for Artificial Intelligence and power of calculation. It is also planned to create the 'Ethics Observatory AI4EU', which will ensure respect for the human ethical and legal values, and the AI4UE Foundation, which must guarantee the long-term sustainability of the project. Besides, this project should serve to define the roadmap for research, development and innovation in the field of Artificial Intelligence in Europe for the next ten years.

On April 25th, 2018, the European Commission launched a Communication on Artificial Intelligence, preparing the path to the development of the IA platform à la carte. On December 7th, 2018, the European Commission presented the coordinated action plan to promote the development and use of AI in Europe, jointly prepared with the Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland, which signed the declaration of cooperation on Artificial Intelligence.

The Barcelona Supercomputing Center, which has more than 500 staff researchers, applies Artificial Intelligence in Life Sciences and Computer Sciences research and in applications for Personalised Medicine and innovation for both industry and companies. The Center also has a specific research group to exploit the enormous capacity of calculation of the supercomputers to take full advantage of the technologies based on AI. In June 2018, the MareNostrum CTE-Power 9 cluster was launched, which is the first supercomputer in Europe with Power 9-VoltaGPU plates, the latest technology that exists at this time to combine the power of supercomputing with the expectations offered by Artificial Intelligence.

The UPC has a long experience in training and research in Artificial Intelligence, especially concerning applications in robotics, image and speech processing, technology applied to people's health, urban mobility and self-employed vehicles. In addition to being part of the Barcelona Supercomputing Center, equipped with supercomputer MareNostrum IV, the UPC has two research centers related to the AI: the Intelligent Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Research Center (IDEAI-UPC) and the Institute of Robotics and Industrial Informatics (IRI), a joint research center with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). IDEAI has more than 50 full-time researchers and 150 doctoral students, while IRI has 35 full-time researchers, a research scholarship awarded by the European Research Council (ERC) and 45 doctoral students Scientific Excellence María de Maeztu (2017).

Among the 79 partners of the project are included, among others, the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (IIIA-CSIC), the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), the Atos Spain and SmartRural companies, and the Technology Center Foundation CARTIFF.