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*Comitato Unitario Permanente  
degli Ordini e Collegi Professionali*

# Ethical Rules for Liberal Professions “*How they can tackle AI challenges*”

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# The Ethics



- Ethics is the philosophical discipline that directs human behaviour toward good, guiding it in the pursuit of values, in the observance of principles, and consequently, in what we can do and what we must always and in every case avoid.
- The term 'ethics' is commonly used in everyday language, especially in professions and behaviours that involve others, as ethics is a 'cross-cutting' discipline that is increasingly being addressed and studied.
- Every action of a free and responsible individual—one who is capable of choosing and willing—always has an ethical dimension. This is why all areas of human activity are subject to specific ethical paths.

# Liberal Profession



Liberal professions are guardians of human values in the digital age.

Ethical rules provide a stable framework amid disruptive AI changes.

This presentation explores how ethical principles help manage AI challenges.

## Ethical Foundations of Liberal Professions

Professional ethics concerns the moral principles and rules of conduct that guide the behaviour of professionals in the workplace. It is crucial because it affects the trust, reputation and integrity of the organisations and individuals involved.

The ethical Foundations of Liberal Professions are:

- ✓ Integrity, confidentiality, transparency, competence, respect for human dignity
- ✓ Codified in national and European codes of conduct
- ✓ A living culture, not just written norms

# Professional Ethics and Professional Deontology



However, in the context of professions, ethics does not necessarily coincide with a deontological duty and is therefore not automatically punishable in the event of violation.

There are therefore ethical duties that have no deontological implications.

However, this should not exempt the trader from full compliance.

## A.I. and its implications



The development of new AI systems has already led to a significant transformation of the labour market.

A survey conducted in 2023 by Goldman Sachs experts on the impact of AI on the labour market, analysing data on professional tasks in both the United States and Europe, came to the conclusion that:

- around two-thirds of current jobs are exposed to some degree of automation due to AI
- that AI could replace up to a quarter of current work
- globally, generative AI could expose 300 million jobs to automation.

Historically, however, job losses due to automation have been offset by the creation of new jobs and new professions.

The combination of significant savings on labour costs and the creation of new figures in any case increases productivity which in turn stimulates economic growth.

# AI and its implications



## AI and its implications



Ultimately, the study conducted estimates that AI could increase annual growth in labour productivity.

The increase in global labour productivity could also be significant from an economic point of view with an estimated annual global GDP growth of 7%.

Considering it plausible that all this will occur, it is already necessary to examine, study and regulate all the implications that will derive from the use of AI systems in the profession.

And professional ethics are certainly among these aspects.

# The AI Challenge



Bias, lack of transparency, over-reliance on automation.

The risk of deskilling and undermining trust.

The central questions are: Who is responsible? Can we audit decisions?

Human oversight is essential.

## Case Study: AI in Legal and IP Services



AI tools used for contract review, patent searches, risk assessment.

Risks: flawed decisions, data protection breaches.

Ethical safeguards: validation by qualified professionals, client information, liability policies.

# Professional Ethics and AI systems



We might ask ourselves then if artificial intelligence can be ethical?

In general terms, there are different types of ethics in relation to the situation to which it refers: for example, we talk about professional ethics, health ethics, work ethics and even Artificial Intelligence ethics.

However, let's remember that ethics is an aspect that pertains by its very nature to humankind, so it is more correct to speak of **ethical principles that inspire man in the use of AI systems** rather than ethics in AI.

We are aware that AI is strongly changing our work and the intellectual professions have been studying and trying to provide answers to questions relating to the ethical use of AI systems for professionals for years.

## Professional Ethics and AI systems

As early as 2017, the EESC, in its 'Manifesto of the Liberal Professions', identified the following areas for future action:

- **professional ethics**
- **and digitalisation**

With the task of "verifying the (possible) consequences of digitalisation on all liberal professions and their types of services and areas of activity, as well as on the special relationship of trust with clients, customers or patients."

What we find ourselves discussing here today are the ethical profiles of the liberal professions and the implications of Artificial Intelligence.

# Professional Ethics and AI systems



The considerations outlined above are further supported by the document "*Ethical Guidelines for Trustworthy AI*", published on April 8, 2018, by the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence, composed of 52 members and established by the European Commission.

The document is structured in three chapters:

- **Identifies a set of ethical principles**, grounded in fundamental rights and defined as ethical imperatives, which should guide the development and deployment of AI systems: respect for human autonomy, prevention of harm, fairness and explicability.
- **Provides recommendations** for the development and implementation of trustworthy AI, in accordance with these principles, while underscoring the critical role of research and education in the field of AI ethics.
- **Proposes a comprehensive checklist** aimed at assessing the trustworthiness of AI systems, serving as a practical tool for stakeholders involved in the design, development and governance of AI technologies.

# The Role of Professional Bodies

- ✓ Monitor ethical compliance in AI-enhanced services
- ✓ Facilitate dialogue between professions and tech developers
- ✓ Represent liberal professions in EU AI governance and standard-setting



## The Role of Professional Bodies



In conclusion, ethical principles should not be seen as limitations but rather as essential enablers for the responsible and sustainable use of Artificial Intelligence.

They provide the foundation for systems that respect human dignity, foster trust, and align technological progress with societal values.

Liberal professions, by virtue of their autonomy and public responsibility, are called to lead by example—demonstrating how ethical commitment can guide innovation without compromising integrity or human rights.

Ultimately, our dedication to ethics is not a constraint but a strategic asset—our strength in the digital transition - ensuring that technological advancement serves the common good.



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***Thank you!***