

European Artificial Intelligence & Society Fund

Annual report 2025

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Who we are

The European AI & Society Fund is a pooled fund that mobilises a powerful public interest community in Europe to fight for Artificial Intelligence that serves people, society and planet

Artificial Intelligence should benefit everyone, not just the powerful few. But we live in a world where the direction of AI has been captured by a small number of tech giants, set on amassing vast wealth and entrenching their power.

The work of the European AI & Society Fund is to break that stranglehold and reclaim the direction of AI so that it serves people, society and planet.

Since 2020, we have distributed over €13.6 million to public interest organisations across 27 countries. In 2025, we had 17 funding partners combining resources to award grants, build the field, fundraise and forge collective strategies through the Fund.



Who we supported in 2025

1. Access Now, Belgium/Europe
2. Ada Lovelace Institute, UK/Europe
3. AI Forensics, France/Europe
4. AI Now Institute, USA/Europe
5. AlgoRace, Spain
6. Algorithm Audit, Netherlands
7. AlgorithmWatch, Germany
8. Amnesty International, UK/Denmark/Netherlands/
Serbia/Western Balkans
9. ANEC – European Consumer Voice
Standardisation, Belgium/Europe
10. AIAL – Artificial Intelligence Accountability Lab,
Ireland/Europe
11. BLAM UK – Black Learning Achievement and
Mental Health, UK
12. Border Violence Monitoring Network, Germany
13. BEUC – Bureau Européen des Unions de
Consommateurs, Belgium/Europe
14. CDT Europe – Centre for Democracy &
Technology, Belgium/Europe
15. CECU – Federación de Consumidores y Usuarios,
Spain
16. Center for Legal Aid, Bulgaria
17. Citizens' Network Watchdog Poland (Siec
Obywatelska), Poland
18. Civio – Fundación Ciudadana Civio, Spain
19. Collective Aid, Serbia/Bosnia & Herzegovina/
Greece
20. Danes je nov dan (Today is a new day), Slovenia
21. DIHR – Danish Institute for Human Rights,
Denmark
22. ECNL – European Center for Not-for-Profit Law,
Netherlands/Europe
23. Epicenter.works, Austria
24. Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice, Belgium/
Europe
25. EuroMed Rights, Denmark/Europe
26. EUCAP – European Council of Autistic People,
Czech Republic/Europe
27. EDRi – European Digital Rights, Belgium/Europe
28. EDF – European Disability Forum, Belgium/
Europe
29. ENAR – European Network Against Racism,
Belgium/Europe
30. ESWA – European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance,
Netherlands/Europe
31. FEMYSO – Forum of European Muslim Youth and
Student Organisations, Belgium/Europe
32. Foxglove, UK
33. Friends of the Earth Ireland, Ireland
34. GFF – Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte, Germany
35. Glitch, UK
36. Greek Forum of Migrants, Greece
37. HAI – Health Action International, Netherlands
38. Hermes Center (Associazione Hermes), Italy
39. Homo Digitalis, Greece
40. ICCL Enforce – Irish Council for Civil Liberties,
Ireland
41. I Have Rights, Greece
42. INTERET A AGIR, France
43. International Women* Space, Germany/Europe
44. K-Monitor Association, Hungary
45. Lafede, Spain
46. Lighthouse Reports, Netherlands/Europe
47. Observatorio TAS – Observatorio de Trabajo,
Algoritmo y Sociedad, Spain
48. Open Future Foundation, Netherlands/Europe
49. Panoptikon Foundation, Poland
50. PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation
on Undocumented Migrants, Belgium/Europe
51. Politiscope, Croatia
52. Privacy Network, Italy
53. Reversing.works, Italy/Spain/Germany/Austria
54. SHARE Foundation, Serbia
55. StraLi, Italy
56. Statewatch, UK
57. TASC – Think Tank for Action on Social Change,
Ireland
58. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, UK
59. The Good Lobby Italy, Italy
60. Weaving Liberation, Netherlands/Europe

Who we supported in 2025

AI & Market Power Fellowships

Louis Boyd-Madsen, Gabriele Di Donfrancesco and Clément Pouré
'Mapping the uptake and effects of algorithmic trading in Europe's energy market', Europe

David Gray Widder
'Forecasting Cloud Capture: Tracking Cloud Giant "Investment" in AI Startups', USA

Isha Suri, Shyam Krishnakumar
and Titiksha Vashist
'Democratising AI Infrastructure with Open Cloud Compute', India

Jim Thomas
'The 'Generative Biology' Grab: Tech Titans Takeover the Bioeconomy', Canada and USA

Margarida Silva
'Value chain of genAI startups', Belgium and the Netherlands

Friso Bostoen and Giorgio Monti
'Fair and Inclusive Markets for AI Training Data', Netherlands

Nicolas Eschenbaum
'Market Power and dependencies in the Market for Foundation Models: an Empirical Investigation', Switzerland

Yung Au and Srujana Katta
'The political economy of military general-purpose AI systems', UK

→ **Find out more about who we support.**

| Co-Directors' reflections

2025 was a hostile context for our community, fighting for AI that works for people, society and planet. But working across 27 countries, our 60 grantees and 14 fellows rallied to meet the AI challenge.

Last year, AI became high politics as Europe faced an aggressive America-first approach to technology, growing national security fears and a rise of right-wing populism. Meanwhile, a few tech companies ballooned on a wave of AI investments, reaching trillion-dollar valuations and capturing even greater control over the technology and our futures.

In response, our public interest community pivoted their strategies and secured some significant wins.

They stood up for hard-won legal protections that safeguard people from discrimination, social scoring and biometric surveillance. They exposed how Big Tech exerts its vice-like grip on AI. They secured new safety measures for children faced with harmful AI chatbots. They put a brake on mushrooming data centres that suck up resources and send communities' electricity bills sky high. And they fought for – and won – the right to see what's behind AI systems that control our public services.

Last year, the European AI & Society Fund nurtured and sustained this work, with a balance of flexible and targeted funding totalling more than €3.9m, as well as tailored capacity building and learning. This holistic and flexible approach is essential to support our community through these times of turmoil.

No one can face today's challenges alone – for both our funders and grantees the need to work in partnership is more urgent than ever. In 2025 we brought together 100 members of our community at events to strategise and learn from each other. Cultivating this collective strength is at the heart of the work of the European AI & Society Fund. Supported by our 17 funding partners, we are able to galvanise a diverse philanthropic and civil society community to work towards a common mission.

The European AI & Society Fund enables those committed to a future where AI serves the public interest to join forces. Together we can face the headwinds of today, and work towards a future where Artificial Intelligence benefits everyone, and not just the powerful few.

Evelyne Paradis & Catherine Miller

Co-Directors, European AI & Society Fund



| 2025 in numbers

Supported 60 organisations and 14 Fellows

to work towards AI that serves people, society and planet

Awarded €3.5m in grants

to projects across 27 countries

Gathered 100 members

of our community to strategise, connect and renew their collective power

Received over €4.7m

from our 17 funding partners to enable our work

Hosted 4 funders' briefings and 2 funders' events

to share insight and spark collaboration across causes, countries and continents.



| Our grantees' impact

In 2025 we supported 60 organisations and 14 fellows across 27 countries to shift the direction of AI. From strategic litigation cases to practical toolkits for policymakers, from exposing Big Tech's grip on the AI market to calling out harms against marginalised communities, here are some of the ways their work had impact:

1. Standing up for fundamental rights

In 2025 Europe's technology rulebook came under attack. Our community has spent years fighting for regulation, so that the use of AI technologies doesn't trample on people's rights. But in "the most extraordinary reversal of digital rights in a generation", the European Commission's Digital Omnibus initiative proposed sweeping changes to rewrite these freshly passed laws. Our grantees are doing critical work on behalf of the public to stand up for democratic accountability in the face of intense political pressure and vast industry lobbying.

Together our grantees held European institutions to account for weakening safeguards. They publicly rejected any reopening of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); urged the Commission and Member States to ensure the AI Act is applied on schedule; and critiqued the EU's deregulation efforts which renege on digital and human rights safeguards.

In addition, Statewatch exposed how the EU is creating new infrastructure to allow the swift development and deployment of "security AI", away from the public eye; while ICCL Enforce called out the President of the European Commission for regurgitating tech CEO arguments to promote generative AI use.

2. Making regulation work for people and society

Despite these attempts to unpick Europe's regulation, the implementation of the laws has continued. Our grantees have been scoring victories in getting the rules to work for the public – by testing transparency measures, setting best practice and shaping technical standards.

Europe's Digital Services Act (DSA) has the potential to hold big platforms accountable by forcing transparency about their practices. **Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte e.V (GFF)** won a strategic case on access for researchers, setting a potential precedent for lawsuits in other countries. GFF supported a researcher to take the social media platform X to court for not granting them access to posts to analyse disinformation ahead of the German elections. The court agreed with GFF that the relevant jurisdiction was Germany – not Ireland where X is headquartered. GFF also created a web tool for researchers to more easily request data access from tech platforms through the GDPR's Article 40.

"Thanks to the ongoing support of the European AI & Society Fund, GFF's Center for User Rights assisted organisations and individuals affected by discriminatory or arbitrary measures, collected evidence on systemic discrimination, and addressed gaps in legal protection enforcement."



Davy Wang
Lawyer and Case
Coordinator, Gesellschaft
für Freiheitsrechte e.V.

Technical standards are an important but complex part of how AI regulation is implemented. The committees that develop standards are usually dominated by industry, but our longstanding grantee **ANEC** set up an AI and consumers Task Force. They trained nine consumer experts from eight countries (Austria, Germany, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Greece, Spain and Italy) on AI standardisation to shape the technical rules that underpin the European AI Act. The Task Force has improved coordination across countries, supported informed national voting and commenting on draft standards, and enabled consumer perspectives to be reflected in the standardisation processes.

"The European AI & Society Fund has fostered an ecosystem focused on AI, digital technologies, and society that enables meaningful collaboration across organisations. ANEC has been able to amplify its voice and contribute more effectively to collective advocacy efforts."



Chiara Giovannini
Deputy-Director General,
ANEC

The **Danish Institute for Human Rights** and the **European Center for Not-for-Profit Law** have been working together to close loopholes in the European AI Act. Their Guide to Fundamental Rights Impact Assessment (FRIA) offers best practice for AI providers and deployers on how to ensure the requirement to assess the impacts of high-risk AI systems goes beyond a tick-box exercise and properly upholds the human rights of the people affected by the technology.

3. Protecting those most affected by AI's harms

The negative impacts of AI are often felt most acutely by the young and by marginalised communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and injustice. An important part of our grantees' work is to expose these harms and demand change.

In October The Bureau of Investigative Journalism found that Character.AI's chatbots were pushing users, including children, to commit crimes or harm themselves. Within a month the Google-linked platform announced new safety measures, banning under-18s from chatting to AI characters based on paedophiles, extremists and school shooters, as well as "doctors" offering unqualified medical advice. The company said it would introduce a new "age assurance functionality" tool instead of relying on the previous industry standard of self-reported age.

As anti-migrant rhetoric rises across Europe, AI is being deployed in punitive ways against people on the move. In Germany, International Women's Space (IWS) has been mobilising communities and advocating for asylum seekers to be allocated "real money" as opposed to government issued payment cards where their spending is tracked. They also formed a new coalition with the **Greek Forum of Migrants** – known as the Migrant Justice Community of Practice – to understand the AI-triggered data protection issues faced by asylum seekers.

Greece, as an external EU border country, has long been used as a testing ground for AI-automated surveillance to monitor its citizens, control asylum seekers, and turn away migrants at its borders. In December 2025, Homo Digitalis won a six-year long case against a €4 million new "Smart Policing" system. The Hellenic Data Protection Authority declared the Smart Policing programme, which was 75% financed through EU funds, unlawful. The 1,000 "smart" police devices enabling facial recognition, fingerprint recognition, scanning of documents and vehicle licence plates – can no longer be used.

"Ongoing support from the European AI & Society Fund has been truly transformative for Homo Digitalis. We've evolved from a volunteer-driven collective into a strategic organisation. This growth has strengthened our watchdog role, and expanded our research, litigation and advocacy capacities. And we've built meaningful alliances with grassroots movements and academics."



Elpida Vamvaka
Co-founder and
President, Homo Digitalis

4. Fighting for the planet

Tech, social and environmental justice organisations are all taking a stand as the impact of AI data centres become more apparent. Tech giants are investing billions in the vast expansion of data centres across Europe to power their AI ‘race’, draining precious resources from communities and pushing up carbon emissions at a critical time for the planet.

In August 2025, Foxglove launched the UK's first legal challenge against the government for forcing through construction of a new hyperscale data centre in Britain. By January 2026, the UK Government admitted it had made a “serious error” in pushing through approval for the data centre, marking a breakthrough moment in the fight against Big Tech’s disastrous environmental impact.

"The European AI & Society Fund's support for Foxglove over the last few years has been invaluable. We've been able to act quickly, build powerful coalitions, file legal cases and respond to urgent issues. We've challenged Big Tech's growing monopoly power, supported tech workers to fight for better from Big Tech, and exposed the environmental costs of AI."



Martha Dark
Co-Executive Director,
Foxglove

In Ireland, data centres now use more than 20% of the nation's total electricity – more than all the urban homes in the country combined. In September 2025, **Friends of the Earth Ireland** brought together over 20 civil society organisations and community groups in the “Energy for Who?” protest, calling on the Irish Government to stop prioritising energy-guzzling data centres over protecting households from crippling energy bills.

5. Exposing Big Tech's grip on AI

With unprecedented amounts of money flooding into Big Tech companies through the year, the concentration of the AI market in the hands of a few players became increasingly acute. Understanding and challenging the ways that these companies exert their power is an important part of promoting AI that serves people, society and planet.

Our AI & Market Power Fellow **David Widder** released groundbreaking research on how the 'Big Cloud' companies – Microsoft, Amazon and Google – which provide two-thirds of the infrastructure tech products depend on, cement their power through huge numbers of investments in the startup ecosystem.

And Fellow **Margarida Silva** demonstrated how behind the 'AI race' of generative AI companies, in practice big tech controls the hardware, infrastructure and distribution of AI products. She warns that attempts to support 'national champions' can in fact exacerbate the environmental and social harm built into the Big Tech model.

Foxglove's submission in June to the European Commission prompted a formal antitrust investigation into whether Google has effectively stolen the work of news publishers to generate AI Overviews. The investigation will also focus on whether Google – with its 90% market share – is effectively removing news publishers from the internet if they refuse to allow the search engine giant to use their content for AI Overviews.

Panoptkypton Foundation and **Open Markets Institute** also shared their insight on the digital sovereignty debate during our funders' briefing which became an increasingly hot topic in 2025. Civil society has a crucial role to play in exposing Big Tech's grip on AI and potential leverages for digital sovereignty. But the debate is high politics, with few civil society groups accessing closed-door discussions between EU leaders, private investors. A new approach and narrative are needed to inform these debates.

6. Holding governments to account for their use of AI

While Big Tech dominates the direction AI is taking, too often public bodies deploy ill-considered AI without sufficient safeguards for the people and communities affected. Our grantees fight for accountability over the technologies that governments use.

Spanish journalists and campaigners **Civio** won a landmark algorithm transparency case in the Spanish Supreme Court in September. Their six-year long investigation into an automated welfare programme called Bosco exposed how errors in the system prevented eligible citizens from accessing energy subsidies. The Supreme Court ruling establishes that knowing the ins and outs of the programmes and algorithms used by public administrations is a democratic right.

"The European AI & Society Fund's support has been transformative for Civio's AI accountability work. Their funding helped us pursue the BOSCO case all the way to Supreme Court victory, setting a key legal precedent for algorithmic transparency. We're also learning how to navigate EU-level policy spaces from other grantees – that collective learning has strengthened our strategy and impact."



David Cabo
Director, Fundación
Ciudadana Civio

In the Netherlands, **Algorithm Audit** analysed the Dutch government's algorithm register, highlighting how the list could become a strong AI procurement and accountability tool. Recommendations include requiring high-risk AI systems and algorithms to publish their legal basis and an identification of risks; developing technology-specific requirements – such as accuracy specifications for facial recognition software; and creating national guidelines for complete and consistent classification.

"The European AI & Society Fund's ongoing support has enabled Algorithm Audit to grow during the past three years into a leading European knowledge platform. We share norms and methods for algorithmic fairness and ways to institutionalise democratic control of AI."



Ariën Voogt
Co-founder, Algorithm
Audit

Growing the community's collective power

The European AI & Society Fund doesn't just award grants. We play a unique role in galvanising our diverse community to work strategically together. We support our grantees so that collectively they can punch above their weight, have the skills they need to achieve their mission, and make sure their organisations are well managed and sustainable.

In 2025 they faced particular challenges, including increasing barriers to operation and risks in carrying out their work, reduced availability of funding, and a hostile and volatile political context. Here are some of the ways we responded:

1. Fostering a diverse public interest community

Through our grantmaking we support groups with expertise in both technology and social justice and a wide range of skills and backgrounds, building a community with the flexibility and resilience. Our funding cultivates both independent technology expertise as well as ensuring the perspectives of those most affected by the impacts of AI remain front and centre.

"Persons with disabilities experience the extreme benefits and harms of AI. This funding from the European AI & Society Fund enabled European Disability Forum to hire a full-time AI Policy Officer. Now, rather than relying on digital rights organisations, we actively contribute to AI policy, ensuring persons with disabilities are not left behind in the digital transition."



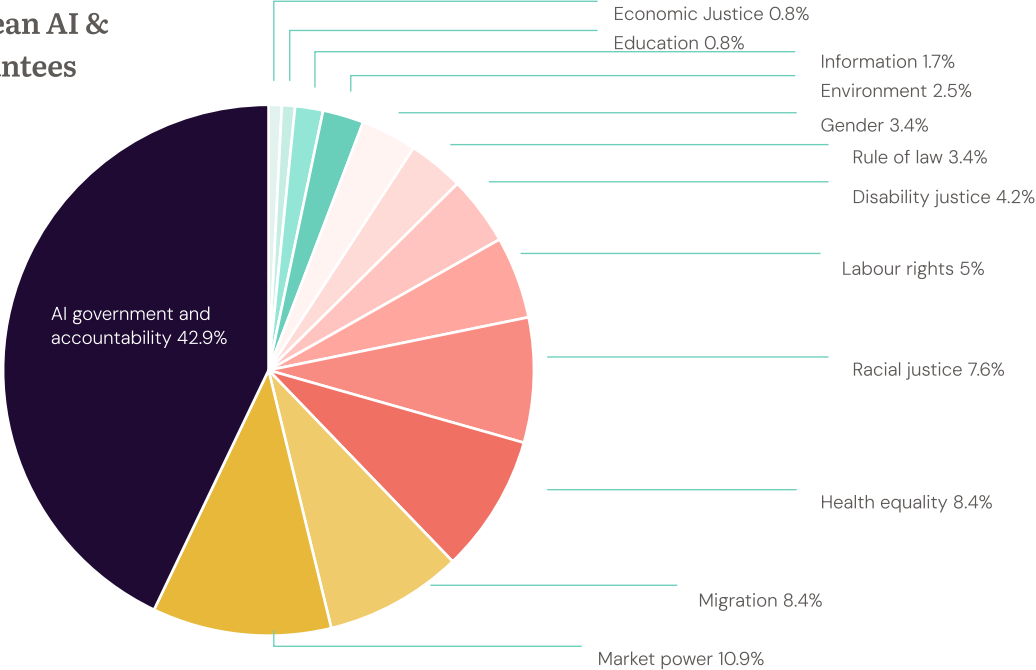
Catherine Naughton
Executive Director, European
Disability Forum

As well as continuing to fund grantees through our Build initiative, we awarded new funding to civil society organisations holding states and government to account for AI harms. Through our AI Accountability Grants, 35 new organisations from 13 countries joined our community in 2025 to explore how to challenge those misusing AI and causing harm in Europe. With grants totalling €2 million they have begun projects defending workers' rights, holding data centre operators accountable for environmental and social damage, and tackling AI-enabled profiling affecting black and migrant communities among other issues. They adopt a range of tactics including investigative journalism, strategic litigation, community building, and data requests.

These grantees were selected from a record 325 submissions to our open call for proposals, three-quarters of which were from organisations not already specialised in work on technology – a strong indication of the appetite across civil society to engage in shaping the direction of AI.

In 2025 we supported a total of 60 organisations and 14 Fellows in 27 countries. More than half our cohort are social and environmental justice organisations, which the pressing need for those most affected by AI to shape its future.

Causes of European AI & Society Fund grantees 2020-2025



"The funding from the European AI & Society Fund has been crucial to begin ENAR's work on digital rights. For us it was a natural step since digital oppression has direct links to colonialism and systemic inequalities such as racism. With this support we've created an active working group in our network and brought our members with us."



Oyidiya Oji
Policy and Advocacy Advisor,
European Network Against Racism

"The European AI & Society Fund's support has been transformative for ESWA. It allowed us to become the only sex worker-led organisation in Europe working deeply on AI and digital rights. Their trust-based funding helped us build credibility, create new alliances, and ensure that sex workers are no longer excluded from conversations shaping the digital future."



Yigit Aydinlalp
Senior Programme Officer,
European Sex Workers' Rights
Alliance (ESWA)

2. Providing flexible funding for effective collaboration

Our grantmaking offers our organisations flexibility to adapt to their fast-changing context and work together to be a strong voice for the public in AI policy. We have supported some of our grantees over many years and have seen them acquire skills, expertise and credibility in the AI debate, becoming an increasingly powerful and coordinated movement working for AI that serves people, society and planet. In 2025 we were able to offer some of these grantees unrestricted funding.

Critical to their success is the ability to work in coalition and we offer grants both to groups working jointly on projects, as well as to fund coordination between organisations. For example, in Italy our funding has supported The Good Lobby Italia to take on the establishment and maintenance of the Italian Digital Human Rights Network. This coalition of civil society organizations – including The Good Lobby, Hermes Center, Amnesty International Italy, Privacy Network, StraLi, and Period Think Tank – now work together on joint research and policy priorities.

Italy is a pioneer in adopting the European Union’s AI Act into national legislation. But Italian civil society is characterised by small, poorly funded groups that are not well placed to inform this important step. The Network has become a go-to voice in the legislative debate around AI in Italy. They have increased political debate around the independence of the institutions that oversee how AI is used, and highlight questions around privacy, surveillance and discrimination.

“The support we’ve received has been transformative for The Good Lobby’s work on digital rights and AI governance in Italy. Thanks to this funding, we’ve been able to strengthen the Italian Digital Human Rights Network—a coalition of Italian civil society organisations committed to advancing digital rights—expand our policy research and engage more effectively with institutions and civil society.”



Martina Turola
Head of Communications &
Institutional Fundraising at The
Good Lobby Italia

3. Offering practical support for rapid response

AI debates move at lightning speed, so we help our community to adapt to change, addressing knowledge gaps and providing accessible additional funding.

For instance, as the policy focus turned to deregulation through the European Commission's initiative to 'simplify' tech regulation, we commissioned analysis from an independent legal academic to help our community identify specific provisions to safeguard and ensure fundamental rights are not diminished. This equipped public interest with invaluable insight to go into negotiations with decisionmakers.

In 2025, we also opened our €10,000 Collective Action Grants designed to help groups work together to tackle emerging issues. For example in June 2025, European Digital Rights (EDRi), European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), and Civil Liberties Union for Europe (CLUE), and Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) investigated how Hungary was circumventing the AI Act to monitor LGBTQI+ activists at Pride marches using AI-powered biometric surveillance. This helped raise the issue with the European Commission and the use of this technology at other marches and events across Europe.

“The Collective Action Grant enabled us to act swiftly to an unforeseen development that seriously threatened the protection of fundamental rights. Splitting the grant between several organisations has also meant that we could create a strong coalition with different strengths that help us be more powerful together.”



Ella Jakubowska
Head of Policy, European Digital Rights

4. Learning and strategising together

A key part of building collective power is creating opportunities for our community to learn from one another, build connections and trust, and understand how they complement each other's missions.

In June, 80 people from across our grantee and funder community met to take stock of the new political context, and work together to challenge the trends towards authoritarian national security technologies and the unpicking of legal protections.

“Your community event was a really generative space that gave us many ideas on how to build on ongoing work. It’s been really wonderful connecting with projects we would otherwise not get so much exposure to. The academic landscape can often be such a silo, so this was a lovely counterbalance. I know it is not easy to do this connective work.”

Yung Au
AI & Market Power Fellow

We also established a Community of Practice for our grantees working on accountability. As they experiment with new approaches and test legislation for the first time, it's important to learn from successes and failures and identify effective tactics – whether working like **TASC** to curb the impacts of data centres on local communities; using litigation to fight the unfair treatment of delivery riders like **INTERET A AGIR**, **Observatorio TAS**, and **Reversing.works**; or pushing back against the growing surveillance of Black communities like **BLAM UK**. This facilitated peer support group meets both in person and online to share findings as people's needs, strategies and learning evolve.

5. Building resilience in a hostile climate

2025 was a tough year for civil society, with the drastic shrinking of funding sources, particularly due to the US's foreign aid cut, and volatile economic markets. In response, the European AI & Society Fund worked alongside our grantees to ensure they were financially and mentally resilient, as individual organisations, and as a collective cohort.

During our community event, grantees highlighted the impact these were having on their work. In response, we ran financial resilience and fundraising training for over 40 people with a range of organisational needs, interests, and fundraising experience.

We also saw record take-up of the €5,000 learning, development and wellbeing grants available to our grantees – an indicator of the difficult context they work in. Approximately one-fifth of all requests related to individual wellbeing at work, supporting initiatives focusing on mental and physical wellbeing and team culture. Examples include supporting an organisation to hire a professional grant writer, helping build practices to avoid burnout, as well as financing professional development such as a certification on AI Trust and Privacy. These activities create lasting benefits to organisations well beyond the activities funded.

How we worked with philanthropy

In just five years, the European AI & Society Fund has expanded to a community of 17 funders that pool their investments to shape AI that serves society, people and planet. Here are three ways we worked with philanthropy in 2025:

1. Joining forces for greater impact

The European AI & Society Fund enables funders with a wide range of priorities and strategic focus areas to invest in a diverse portfolio of organisations. In 2025 our partners provided more than €4.7 million to the Fund.

This allowed us to support work that investigates AI harms, challenges Big Tech's market power, informs EU legislation, and hold tech corporations and governments accountable for the impacts of their technologies.

We use open calls to identify promising work and our deep knowledge of the field to direct money quickly, efficiently and transparently to support carefully chosen actors with diverse, complementary skills and expertise. This both incubates new work and spreads the risk to any single funder in an emergent and fast-changing field.

“Participating in the European AI & Society Fund has helped us better understand global trends on AI and develop more sophisticated ways to situate Europe within our emerging AI grantmaking.”

Eli Sugarman

Director of Special Projects, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

2. Keeping funders up to speed on AI developments

AI development, adoption and legislation is moving fast so we support the philanthropic community to make sense of this complex and dynamic landscape, learning from our grantees, and from each other.

At our online funders' briefings, co-hosted with Ariadne Network, we explore key trends with expert input from our grantees and wider community. These meetings allow grantmakers at different levels of expertise to get a grounding in the most important issues and to understand directly from practitioners how philanthropy could usefully help. In 2025 we began publishing short written briefings following the meetings to reach a wider public. The topics we covered were:

1. Navigating EU tech policy and politics in the Trump era with Felix Kartte, Mercator Senior Fellow.
2. The human labour behind AI and how to build solidarity with data workers in the global majority featuring Foxglove (UK), Superrrr Lab (Germany) and Data Labelers' Association (Kenya).
3. How AI deployment in welfare systems is reinforcing bias and affecting the most vulnerable in society featuring Amnesty Tech (Netherlands) and Civio (Spain).
4. Digital sovereignty featuring Panoptikon (Poland) and Open Markets Institute (Belgium).

"Your latest funders' briefing on digital sovereignty has helped me a great deal to better evaluate our latest projects."

Oliver Bott

Programme Manager, Stiftung Mercator

We also work directly with funders to help their teams and networks learn about AI issues. For example, at Fondation de France's invitation, the Fund's team participated in one of their 'café numérique'. Aimed at their hosted foundations, we presented an overview of the AI policy debate, and what role philanthropy can play to support it. And almost 100 people joined our workshop on AI and social justice, showing funders' appetite to understand the implications of AI developments on their missions.

"At Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, we are on a mission to nurture 'AI for the common good', which means tapping into next-generation AI solutions to address societal challenges and improve the wellbeing of people and communities. Along this journey, we are thrilled to continue working with the European AI & Society Fund, which brings together like-minded foundations committed to helping civil society organisations build capacity around AI and shape the AI-related policy agenda in the public interest."

Michele Osella

Head of Innovation, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo

3. Weaving connections across diverse perspectives

Our funding partners actively contribute to shaping the work of the European AI & Society Fund, with each of them taking a seat on our Steering Committee.

In our regular meetings, foundations provided their unique perspectives on our work as well as exchanging ideas about strategies within their own institutions. Throughout 2025, we jointly worked to develop the Fund's next five-year strategy, identifying where the Fund's unique, collective approach can have the greatest impact.

“The European AI & Society Fund has enabled us to support and get to know a range of organisations that work at the intersection of technology and society that we would not have otherwise been able to fund, and doing this together with a group of funding partners has giving us the confidence to seek out new partnerships in a new field for us. Learning from this community has been greatly beneficial to gain a holistic understanding of all that AI encompasses and how its deployment impacts the societal issues we care about at the Oak Foundation.”

Patricia Meléndez

Programme Officer for International Human Rights programme, Oak Foundation

The Fund has attracted partners from both Europe and beyond, united by their belief that Europe is where there is the greatest opportunity to create policies that safeguard people's rights and interests and chart a new direction for AI. Alongside the 2025 Paris AI Action Summit, we brought that conversation to a wider group, co-hosting an event for 30 funders from the US and Europe to discuss approaches to AI for the public interest and identify common causes.

Many of our partners are exploring how AI intersects with their wider mission on social justice, democracy and human rights. The Fund helps them navigate these questions, acting as a strategic intermediary between philanthropy and civil society. Our unique events where funders and public interest practitioners can engage in open and trusting discussions are particularly helpful for grantmakers as they develop their own strategies in this field.

“The European AI & Society Fund enables us to support a diverse set of civil society organisations across Europe. The team leads the way in efficiently connecting efforts to let technology work for people.”

Rogier van der Weerd

Managing Director, Adessium Foundation

| What next?

The work of the European AI & Society Fund is to reclaim the direction of AI so that it serves people, society and planet. Through 2025 we have seen the urgency of this mission as the stranglehold of the tech giants over AI has tightened. But we have also seen the impact that our community can have by working together. And as we look ahead we see the need to steel ourselves to pursue this shared mission for the long-haul.

At the start of 2026 we launched our new five year strategy which sets out how we will do this.

Building on the past year, the work ahead is to fight to save the best of what we have now, and to boldly build the future we want. We must continue the battle to retain hard-won protections to our fundamental rights and demand justice for technology driven harms, centring the needs of those most affected by the impacts of AI. And we must lay the path that leads to the societies we want to live in, where AI is an enabler not an impediment to equality, dignity and a healthy planet.

At the core of the European AI & Society Fund's identity is our belief that together we are greater than the sum of our parts. That collective power is more important than ever if we are to wrest back control over our technological futures. Our new strategy puts even greater emphasis on supporting our communities to move faster and further together and making common cause with those that share our mission.

This work is only possible thanks to the steadfast support of our funding partners and the hard work and determination of our grantees. And it is because of their ongoing dedication that we face this new challenge with confidence.

Financial statement

Income 2025*

*where a funding partner is not listed, income was received in previous years

Adessium Foundation	€250.000,00
AI Collaborative	€1.010.441,23
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	€131.261,00
Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo	€90.000,00
Ford Foundation	€194.256,00
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	€218.000,00
King Baudouin Foundation	€225.000,00
Limelight Foundation	€250.000,00
Oak Foundation	€580.000,00
Open Society Foundations	€288.457,36
Porticus	€210.000,00
Robert Bosch Foundation	€265.000,00
Stiftung Mercator	€450.000,00
Carry forward used in 2025	€581.708,85
Total income	€4,744,124.44

Expenses 2025

Grants	€3.333.117,47
Collective Action Fund	€35.000,00
Learning & Development	€121.051,00
Total Grants	€3.489.168,47
Events, skills & capacity building for grantees	€194.959,10
Consultancy/Research	€182.235,23
Communication	€51.057,55
Total Fieldbuilding	€428.251,88
European AI & Society Fund staff	€490.994,06
Operations	€220.710,03
Total Operations	€711.704,09
Social reserve	€115.000,00
Total expenses	€4.744.124,44