

Declaration

ELLIS (**European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems**, <https://ellis.eu>) is a European AI network of excellence. It focuses on fundamental science, technical innovation and societal impact. Modern Artificial Intelligence technologies are based on *machine learning*. Like human intelligence, learning machines do not have to be explicitly programmed, but can learn from experience. Many fundamental ideas in this field were developed in Europe or by European researchers. However, Europe is now facing challenges when it comes to attracting and retaining the best talent. ELLIS is a grassroots initiative that addresses these challenges with a *three-pillar strategy* to maintain and foster *European technological sovereignty* in this competitive field.

The three pillars focus on *fellows*, *students* and *sites*. The aim is to invest in existing talent, foster new talent, and build a network of outstanding European innovation ecosystems.

The **first pillar** is the establishment of a broad range of **Fellow Programs**,¹ dedicated to topics ranging from basic research in theory and algorithms to applications in health and climate sciences and human-centric elements of AI.

The **second pillar** attracts, inspires, nurtures and connects the best PhD students in Europe through the **ELLIS PhD program**.

The **third pillar** consists in the creation of a network of ELLIS sites located at the leading existing institutions or created from scratch, performing modern AI research across Europe. An **ELLIS Unit** invests at least 1.5 Mio EUR per year, for at least five years, and requires a commitment to excellence through international peer review as well as a contribution of at least 300k EUR annually towards network activities, such as hosting exchange faculty and students, leading research programs and organizing workshops.²

The set of initial ELLIS units, as announced today, includes many of the strongest European hotspots for modern AI. Overall, they commit well above 50 Mio EUR of their own funding per year. However, significantly more needs to be done, as the ELLIS scientists outline in today's Call to Action. The undersigned hold that excellence in AI science, innovation and entrepreneurship are pivotal for Europe, and thus ask their governments and the European Union to support ELLIS in building it.

¹ <https://ellis.eu/de/news/ellis-programs-launched>

² <https://ellis.eu/de/news/ellis-sites-call-for-proposals>

Alicante, Amsterdam, Berlin, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Darmstadt, Delft, Edinburgh, Lausanne, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Genoa, Haifa, Leuven, Linz, Lisbon, London, Munich, Oxford, Paris, Prague, Nijmegen, Saarbrücken, Tel Aviv, Tübingen, Vienna, Zürich, 15 September 2020