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Amsterdam - London - Singapore

# EU AI Act

*Overcoming Technical Barriers to Trade*

November 2025

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# Executive Summary



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The report concludes that the EU AI Act is broadly compatible with WTO TBT principles and—if implemented with internationally aligned conformity assessments, mutual recognition, harmonised standards, regulatory sandboxes, and targeted capacity-building—can enable trade while maintaining proportionate, risk-based oversight.



## TBT alignment — non-discrimination & proportionality.

The report finds the EU AI Act is broadly consistent with WTO TBT principles: it promotes equal treatment of domestic and imported AI, insists regulations be no more trade-restrictive than necessary, and embeds transparency requirements.



## Conformity assessment & mutual recognition are trade enablers.

Robust, internationally-aligned conformity assessment procedures (and mutual recognition agreements for third-country bodies) are key to avoiding duplication and preventing unnecessary market access barriers for high-risk AI systems.



## Proactive cooperation, capacity building & proportional risk-based rules.

The report recommends harmonised standards, regulatory sandboxes, and targeted technical assistance for SMEs and developing countries to ensure compliance without stifling innovation.





# Introduction



Risk-based framework targeting AI systems that pose significant harm; prioritises fundamental-rights and safety while preserving clear, compliant pathways for cross-border market access.

## Purpose & scope — risk-based protection enabling market access.

Targets AI systems that present significant harm, prioritising fundamental-rights and safety protections while keeping pathways open for compliant cross-border products.

## Core features — concrete obligations and enforceable controls.

Sets mandatory risk management, documentation and data-governance for high-risk systems, plus transparency duties, active market surveillance and deterrent penalties.

## Trade alignment with WTO TBT —helping reduce duplicate barriers.

Both emphasise non-discrimination, use of international standards, and mutual recognition as mechanisms to avoid unnecessary trade barriers.

## Report focus & evidence base — practical, stakeholder-led analysis

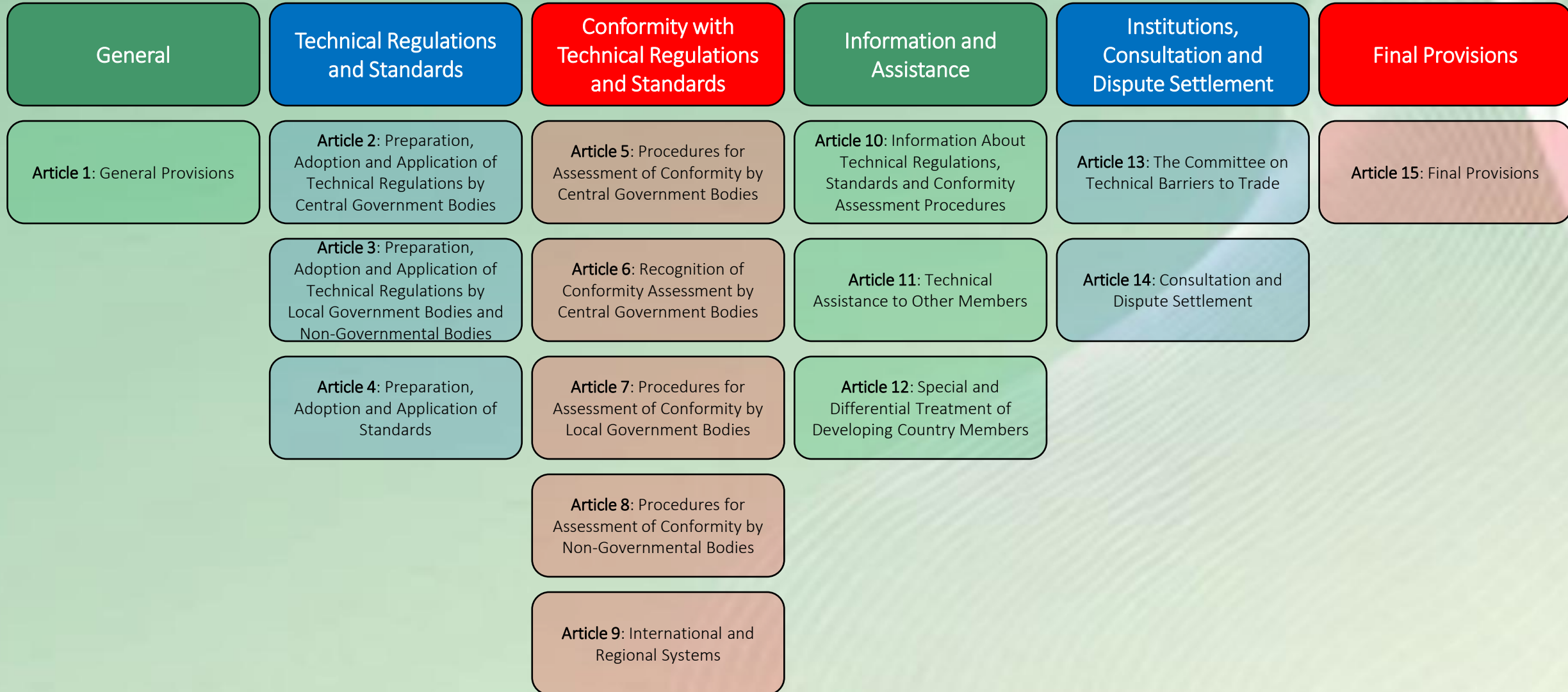
Evaluates how the Act meets TBT principles using regulatory texts, sector market data and interviews with regulators, conformity bodies and exporters.

# Technical Barriers to Trade



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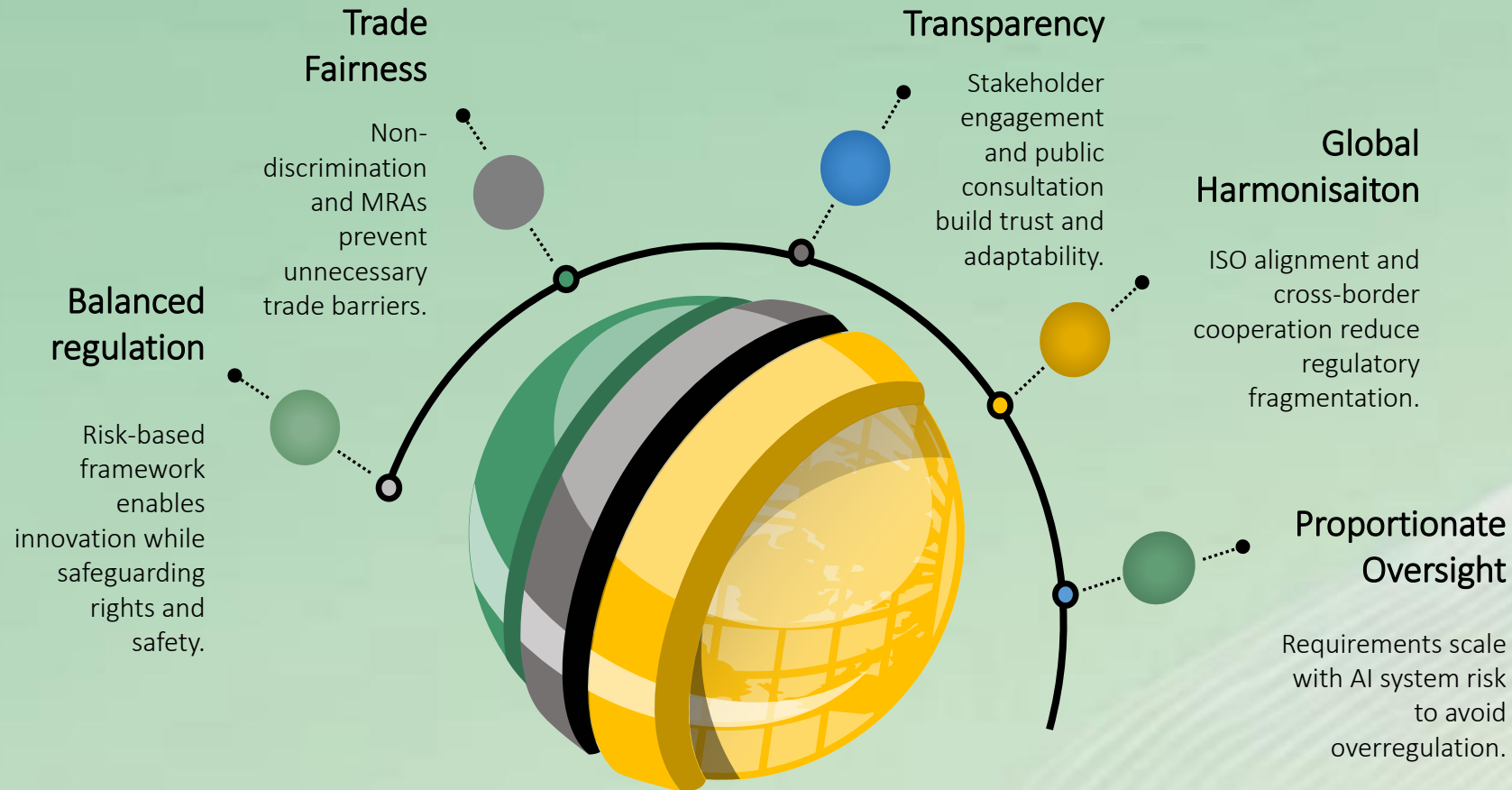


# Analysis

**Broadly TBT-consistent but depends on international-standards alignment, robust conformity routes (notified bodies + MRAs), targeted SME/third-country capacity building and active governance to avoid trade frictions.**



# Conclusion



**The EU AI Act demonstrates how risk-based, transparent, and globally aligned AI regulation can safeguard rights, enable innovation, and promote fair, inclusive international trade.**



# Feedback from our global network of experts



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## 1. Technical Barriers to Trade

### Article 1: General Provisions

*“Enabling international trade without restricted market access”*

*"The EU AI Act is shaping not only compliance requirements but also the flow of international trade. Technical barriers from data protection standards to transparency obligations can restrict market access if companies fail to align with evolving rules. Clear regulatory guidance fosters trust, interoperability, and responsible innovation. Commercial progress and regulatory oversight must therefore go hand in hand: businesses gain the confidence to scale globally, while regulators ensure AI systems are safe, ethical, and aligned with public interest."*

**Michael Boevink** *Founder, Boevink Group*



## 1. Technical Barriers to Trade

### Article 7: Procedures for Assessment of Conformity by Local Government Bodies

*‘Promoting inclusive international trade’*

*"The EU AI Act demonstrates how risk-based, transparent, and globally aligned regulation can safeguard rights, enable innovation, and promote fair, inclusive international trade while avoiding unnecessary technical barriers."*

**Lisa Ventura.** *Chief Executive and Founder, Cyber Security Unity*



## 2. Lessons to Learn: Good Regulatory Practice

### Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

*“Risk-alignment transforms compliance into growth catalyst”*

*"Aligning risk-based regulation with interoperable data ecosystems transforms compliance into a catalyst for innovation, enabling industries to embed trust and inclusivity at the heart of AI lifecycles while supporting equitable global market access."*

**Dr. Amritha Subhayan Krishnan,** *Founder, Smart Story Labs*



# Feedback from our global network of experts



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## Technical Regulations and Standards

*Article 2: Preparation, Adoption and Application of Technical Regulations by Central Government Bodies*

**'International standards critical for cross-border data flows'**

*"AI is a processing of data in high speed and cannot derivate any national border. International Standards are essential when we use AI globally and reduce technical barriers."*

**Ina Schöne**, Lead Auditor ISO/IEC42001 and Founder, Data Privacy & AI



## 1. Technical Barriers to Trade

*Article 14: Consultation and Dispute Settlement*

**'Regulation must evolve in sync with AI innovation'**

*"As AI technologies transcend borders, regulatory frameworks must evolve accordingly. The EU AI Act provides a blueprint for harmonizing innovation with trade integrity, ensuring global interoperability and accountability."*

**Hande Ocak Başev**, President, WSI London



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**Ademulegun Blessing James** is the Vice President and Chief AI Ethicist at the African Tech for Development Initiative, where he champions the ethical adoption of artificial intelligence across Africa. He is also the Founder and Executive Director of Grinwad Integrated Tech Hub, a technology innovation hub focused on developing premium technology solutions for emerging markets. His research centers on algorithmic bias detection and AI governance frameworks, specifically designed for Global South contexts with limited data infrastructure. James is a Research Fellow at the Center for AI and Digital Policy (CAIDP) and a Fellow of the Pan-African Center for AI Ethics (PACFAIE). He also holds distinguished positions as a Fellow at For Humanity and Partner at AI and Partners, while serving as a Contributor at All Tech Is Human and an active Member of the Responsible Artificial Intelligence Institute. Additionally, he volunteers with Open Ethics and Data Science Nigeria (DSN), reflecting his commitment to grassroots AI development initiatives. He is a member of the Internet Society of Nigeria (ISOCN) and serves as the Nigerian representative of the IEEE Future-Ready Workforce Africa Initiative. In this role, he contributes to the PC4DT Coalition, developing initiatives that advance technology in Africa with a strong emphasis on human-centered design, ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, and AI for social good. James also sits on the Executive Board of TechKids AI, where he drives AI literacy and responsible tech education for the next generation. James has been inducted as a strategic member of the Open Ethics AI Literacy Framework development team. As co-developer of VisionX Scan, he contributed significantly to creating a tool designed to identify systemic biases in AI systems. His scholarly contributions include coauthoring *The Truth Behind The Code*, a seminal work exploring AI ethics and diversity in technological systems. His policy expertise spans international frameworks such as the EU AI Act, the African Union Continental AI Strategy, the NAIS, and other emerging regulatory approaches. He frequently delivers keynote addresses at major international conferences, including the GatherVerse 2025 Summit and Responsible AgeTech '25, and participates in high-level policy discussions such as the National Artificial Intelligence Stakeholders Roundtable Conference and the Africa AI Village Paris Action Summit. Holding certifications in AI Governance (AIGP), Enterprise IT Governance (CGEIT), and Corporate Governance (CGPC), James bridges technical innovation with regulatory compliance, positioning ethical AI implementation as essential to sustainable technological advancement in emerging economies.

**Dr. Amritha Subhayan Krishnan**, is a cultural foresight researcher and creative industries policy advisor, specializing in AI governance, the Next Generation Internet, and technology-driven storytelling. She works at the intersection of creative and cultural industries, exploring how digital narratives, strategic leadership, and emerging technologies can foster trust, inclusivity, and innovation. As the founder of Smart Story Labs, she shapes human-centred futures in the digital ecosystem, bringing cross-sectoral insights into how cultural contexts influence data governance, ethical technology adoption, and audience engagement in rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

**Hande Ocak Başev**, AI Strategist, Entrepreneur, and President of WSI London, has over 20 years of experience in AI-driven business strategies, management consulting, and digital transformation. She has led 350+ transformation projects and 50+ business development initiatives. As the Founder of Quattro Business Consulting and a member of the WSI Global AI Leadership Board, she guides companies through digital transformation. Having completed AI programs at MIT and Oxford, she is also a Forbes Türkiye AI Columnist, a Global Chamber London Advisory Board Member, and the first woman to serve as CEO and Board Member at Galatasaray Sports Club. Additionally, she leads initiatives promoting women in leadership as Chair of the Strategy Committee at the Women on Boards Association.

**Ina Schoene**, Ina Schoene is a Lead Auditor ISO/IEC42001 and Founder of Data Privacy and AI. She follows the practice-oriented approach to understand the requirements of AI-Act and the measures to implement this requirements based of the ISO/IEC42001 & additional & guides the companies on the path to get the corresponding certifications.

**Lisa Ventura MBE**, Lisa Ventura MBE FCIIS is an award-winning cyber security specialist, published writer/author, journalist and keynote speaker. She is the Chief Executive and Founder of the AI and Cyber Security Association, a new membership body and trade association that has been set up as the global voice of AI and cyber security and to promote the safe, secure, responsible and ethical use of AI. In addition, she is the Founder of Cyber Security Unity, Neuro Unity and AI Unity.

# Thanking Our Individual Partners



**Majiuzu Daniel Moses** is the President of Africa Tech for Development Initiative-Africa4dev where he leads in driving innovative research and development in responsibly using tech and Artificial Intelligence for social good as well as bridging the inclusion gap for underrepresented and marginalized groups and communities. He has Mentored at the All Tech is Human Centre in USA, Deep Indaba Africa and was a Fellow at Emerging Tech for Emerging Markets (E4E). He is an Alumni of Soliya, J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI) as well as the U.S Department of State. He is a Member of the Digital Lawyers Association (DLA), Africa Law Tech Association (ALTA), International Future of Law Association (IFLA), International Association for Artificial Intelligence and Law (IAAIL), Member Int'l Group of AI (IGAI), Responsible Artificial Intelligence Institute (RAII), Global AI hub (GAH), AI & Equality Community, Catalyst Now and AI 2030, Internet Society (ISOC), Internet Society of Nigeria (ISOEN), Internet Society Netherlands. He has contributed to several international organizations such as the Global Digital Compact for the United Nations, the U.S call for Inputs for the Development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan for the U.S By the National Science Foundation On Behalf Of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and The NITRD NCO, the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs, the Council of Europe Steering Committee on AntiDiscrimination, Diversity and Inclusion and Gender Equality Commission, Call latest Draft for Committee of Ministers on Equality and Artificial Intelligence 2025, UNESCO's call on AI and the Future of Education; Disruptions, Dilemmas and Directions 2025, Office of the High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR)) Call For Input on Discrimination and Unequal Enjoyment of the Right to Privacy in the Context of Data Collection and Processing and UNESCO and LG's call for Best Practices – Global Mooc on Ethics of AI. Majiuzu serves also as an Advisory Board Member School of Computing (SoC) Montclair State University New Jersey, USA, Advisory Board Member Tech for Good Africa and has spoken at global, regional and national events like the Metaverse Global Summit UAE, AI Evolve Summit advancing education and the workforce USA, Gatherverse Safety Summit USA, YALI AI Symposium Summit on 'AI and You: Harnessing AI & Digital Skills at Work', Nigerian Youth Internet Governance Forum 2024 Summit.

**Matteo Jarrin Cuvi**, During his 20-year career, Mateo Jarrin Cuvi has played important roles in a wide array of industries, eventually landing in the financial services sector where he has focused on content creation and management and business writing geared towards the financial services industry. After dabbling in the oil and gas field, managing media relations for the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington DC, and working as a program manager for a Cypriot study abroad firm, Mateo served as Content Manager for Taxlinked, an international network for tax and law professionals, and Content Writer for FXPRIMUS, a Forex broker with a strong presence in southeast Asia. Today, he leads the charge for the Association of Governance, Risk & Compliance (AGRC) as Global Manager for Partners and Media, establishing strategic partnerships, promoting the association's work, and liaising with members and partner organisations. Mateo holds BAs in Foreign Affairs and Latin American Studies from the University of Virginia (UVA) and an MA in Latin American Studies with a focus on Sociology and Anthropology from the University of California in San Diego (UCSD).

**Michael Boevink**, Michael Boevink has more than 20 years management experience in the fintech and banking industry and is founder of his own investment company Boevink Group. Mr. Boevink specialises in capital raising, scaling and executing go-to-market strategies and business development growth in global markets and is engaged in companies as Raimac Financial Technology - Raimac.io - a programmable payment solution. He holds an MBA from the University of Bradford.

**Mitko Karushkov**, Mitko Karushkov has been providing legal, regulatory, compliance, transactional and business solutions to international companies for more than 20 years now. Focused on enterprise companies and their strategic (or daily) operations, Mitko has solved matters related to the digital, tech or electronic assets of such businesses. Active and involved also in bridging between traditional and technology markets, including to the application of the EU DSA, DMA, AI and other regulations. Media, Telecoms, IPRs, Corporate, M&As are also part of the service portfolio of Mitko. For further information: [www.karushkov.com](http://www.karushkov.com).

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**Tomer Jordi Chaffer**. Tomer Jordi Chaffer is an interdisciplinary researcher interested in the evolving relationship between AI, Web3, and society.



# Utilising top-tier research data

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