# Demis Hassabis warns geopolitical divides hinder global AI regulation efforts



Demis Hassabis, the pioneering CEO of Google DeepMind and recipient of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, recently underscored the pressing need for international cooperation in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI). Addressing the AI Action Summit in Paris, he stated that achieving meaningful regulatory collaboration is becoming increasingly difficult amidst today’s fraught geopolitical landscape. His comments come at a time when AI is being woven into the fabric of numerous industries, raising profound ethical dilemmas ranging from misinformation to job displacement.

Hassabis emphasised that global cooperation is essential, particularly given the borderless nature of AI technology. “Many, many countries are involved in researching or building data centres or hosting these technologies. So I think for anything to be meaningful, there has to be some sort of international cooperation or collaboration,” he said. However, he noted that the current geopolitical context makes this cooperation seem quite challenging. His advocacy for “smart, adaptable regulation” reflects a recognition that any effective framework must evolve in line with technological advancements and emerging issues.

The complexities surrounding AI regulation are accentuated by divergent approaches from around the world. At the same Paris summit, 58 countries, including major players like China, India, and the European Union, rallied for enhanced coordination in AI governance. Yet, the United States and the United Kingdom declined to endorse the call for an "open", "inclusive", and "ethical" approach to AI, with U.S. Vice President JD Vance warning against "excessive regulation" for fear it could undermine a rapidly evolving sector. This ongoing tension highlights the stark contrast between the EU's precautionary policies and the more laissez-faire attitude exhibited by the U.S., which prioritises innovation over stringent guidelines.

Beyond the immediate regulatory concerns, Hassabis—reflecting on a topic he has tackled previously—spoke about the potential emergence of artificial general intelligence (AGI), a form of AI that could replicate and even surpass human cognitive abilities. He noted that this ambitious goal is not merely an academic exercise but could materially contribute to solving existential threats such as disease and climate change. However, he recognised the numerous ethical, technical, and geopolitical challenges that accompany the pursuit of AGI. Critics, however, are wary that commercial interests and military applications may eclipse ethical considerations, as DeepMind has already ventured into military contexts, challenging previous moral boundaries surrounding AI deployment.

In parallel, Amandeep Singh Gill, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, is spearheading efforts to modernise global governance frameworks in response to rapid advancements in AI technology. Gill aims to foster collaborative efforts that bridge the gap between the Global North and South. He has highlighted the necessity for a Global Digital Compact that seeks to establish common values for handling digital technologies, promoting inclusive governance and capacity building.

The discussion surrounding AI regulation is further complicated by ongoing debates over the most effective frameworks. The U.S. favours a light-touch, industry-driven approach, while the EU’s more rigorous stance could stifle innovation through bureaucratic constraints. For multinational corporations, these contrasting regulatory landscapes necessitate distinct compliance strategies. Collaborative efforts that focus on shared objectives—such as safety, privacy, and innovation—could pave the way for more harmonised global standards, allowing for the development of a cohesive governance framework that balances ethical concerns with technological advancement.

As the landscape of artificial intelligence continues to evolve rapidly, the emphasis on international collaboration appears more crucial than ever. Hassabis maintains a hopeful outlook, suggesting that with the right governance mechanisms in place, AGI could usher in an era of unprecedented prosperity. However, this optimism must be tempered by a robust commitment to ethical governance to navigate the potential pitfalls of this transformative technology.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.geo.tv/latest/607452-international-agreement-on-ai-hard-to-achieve-says-googles-ai-chief), [[4]](https://time.com/7277608/demis-hassabis-interview-time100-2025/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.geo.tv/latest/607452-international-agreement-on-ai-hard-to-achieve-says-googles-ai-chief), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/1d7826affdcdb76c580c0558af8d68d2), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/disconnected-rules-connected-world-ideas-ai-innovation-regulation-2024-07-09/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-ai-plus-1fbeee90-ea4e-11ef-9140-6dbc403a18ee), [[6]](https://time.com/7012779/amandeep-singh-gill/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.geo.tv/latest/607452-international-agreement-on-ai-hard-to-achieve-says-googles-ai-chief> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/1d7826affdcdb76c580c0558af8d68d2> - At the Paris AI summit, U.S. Vice President JD Vance criticised 'excessive regulation' of artificial intelligence (AI), warning it could stifle innovation. This stance contrasts with Europe's strict regulatory approach and China's state-backed expansion in AI. Over 60 countries, including China, signed an international pledge to promote ethical and accessible AI, but the U.S. and UK did not. Vance emphasised a free-market approach, cautioning against overregulation, which he believes could hinder progress. The summit underscored differing global perspectives on AI governance and highlighted efforts to form public-private partnerships to manage AI's societal impacts.
3. <https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-ai-plus-1fbeee90-ea4e-11ef-9140-6dbc403a18ee> - In an AI+ newsletter, Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis discussed the complexities of managing artificial intelligence (AI) on an international scale, emphasising the need for global cooperation on AI norms and rules at the AI Action Summit in Paris. Reflecting on the tougher climate for cooperation, he likened the challenges to those faced in addressing climate change and highlighted the need for involvement from diverse stakeholders. Hassabis also addressed Google's evolving stance on AI's military use, signalling greater involvement consistent with international law while cautioning against autonomous weapons.
4. <https://time.com/7277608/demis-hassabis-interview-time100-2025/> - Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google DeepMind, was awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry alongside John Jumper for creating AlphaFold, a revolutionary AI capable of predicting protein structures. Released freely to the public, AlphaFold has accelerated scientific advances in disease research and drug development. Yet, within the AI industry, AlphaFold is only a stepping stone toward a more ambitious goal: Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)—an AI capable of independent scientific discovery and problem-solving on par with or exceeding humans. Hassabis forecasts AGI may develop within five to ten years, emphasising its potential to solve major crises such as disease, climate change, and resource scarcity. However, the journey to AGI is fraught with significant ethical, technical, and geopolitical challenges. Critics question whether ideals can survive commercial and military pressures, especially as DeepMind's AI has already been used in military applications, dissolving previous ethical red lines. As AI progresses, concerns around societal disruption, labour automation, and the misuse of powerful technologies intensify. Hassabis advocates for international cooperation and robust safety measures to mitigate risks. Despite the uncertainties, he remains hopeful that AGI could lead to an era of abundance, though warns it will require new political philosophies and strong governance to protect democracy and humanity's future.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/disconnected-rules-connected-world-ideas-ai-innovation-regulation-2024-07-09/> - The rapid advancement of AI technologies offers significant potential but also presents challenges, especially concerning regulation. The US and EU have taken differing paths to deal with AI. The US adopts a light-touch, industry-driven approach that encourages innovation and agility but may undermine consumer trust due to insufficient regulatory guardrails. Conversely, the EU takes a precautionary principle, with its AI Act imposing stricter regulations to foster public trust yet potentially stifling innovation due to bureaucratic burdens. These contrasting methods complicate compliance for multinational companies, necessitating distinct strategies for different regions. Collaborative efforts between the US and EU, focusing on shared goals like safety, privacy, and fostering innovation while establishing global standards, could harmonize regulations. This might include standardising definitions, prioritising human-centred AI, maintaining open dialogue, leveraging existing frameworks, and encouraging education on AI's capabilities and limits. These measures aim to create a consistent and effective global AI governance framework that balances innovation with ethical and safety concerns.
6. <https://time.com/7012779/amandeep-singh-gill/> - Amandeep Singh Gill, the United Nations Secretary General’s Envoy on Technology, is a key figure in AI governance. He is responsible for coordinating digital cooperation among UN member states, the private sector, and academia. Gill highlights the urgent need to update global governance tools to address the rapid development of AI technologies. A 39-member 'High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence' was formed to provide guidance on global AI governance, aiming to avoid an AI arms race reminiscent of the Cold War. An interim report laid foundational recommendations for global AI governance, including bridging the tech gap between the West and the Global South. Gill emphasises the importance of inclusive governance, capacity building, and leveraging a mix of soft and hard norms for effective AI regulation. He advocates for the Global Digital Compact, a U.N. initiative to establish shared values for managing digital technologies, to ensure cooperative international engagement and responsible AI advancement.