

The University of Freiburg joins the European ELIAS network for sustainable AI

The University of Freiburg is strengthening its European collaboration in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by having been accepted into the Virtual Centre of Excellence of the European AI initiative ELIAS – European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability. The ELIAS Virtual Centre of Excellence brings together leading European research institutions in the field of sustainable and trustworthy AI. The project builds on the Excellence Network for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS), founded in 2018, of which the University has been a member since 2019. At the University of Freiburg, ELIAS is supported in particular by the ELLIS Unit Freiburg at the Department of Computer Science within the Faculty of Engineering, as well as by the BrainLinks-BrainTools centre. The Freiburg researchers contribute their expertise to the European network in areas including machine learning, computer vision, robot learning, automated reasoning, intelligent systems and neurotechnologies, as well as responsible AI. ELIAS will be funded through the EU's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme.

As part of the network, Freiburg will collaborate even more closely with leading European AI centres in future. In addition to joint international projects, the plans include specialist workshops and mobility programmes for PhD students and postdocs. Furthermore, the alliance is committed to closely linking findings from fundamental AI research with societal applications and business innovation.

“The development of sustainable and trustworthy AI is one of the key challenges of our time and is a priority for our AI research at the University of Freiburg. We are very pleased to have been accepted into the ELIAS Virtual Centre of Excellence. This opens up further opportunities for academic exchange, international collaboration and the training of early-career researchers,” says Prof. Dr Abhinav Valada, Professor of Autonomous Intelligent Systems at the University of Freiburg, Head of the Robot Learning Lab and a member of the Freiburg ELLIS Unit.

Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for the Environment, Society and Individuals

ELIAS aims to further develop machine learning and AI methods to address socially relevant challenges. The Virtual Centre of Excellence forms the scientific core of the ELIAS initiative. The collaboration focuses on three key areas of sustainable AI: environmental protection, benefits for society, and the development of trustworthy AI systems for the individual. This includes, amongst other things, methods to support democratic processes and efficient resource planning, the development of hybrid climate and energy models, and research into data protection, fairness and the reliability of AI systems.

ELLIS

The European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS), founded in 2018, is a pan-European research initiative in the field of Artificial Intelligence, with a focus on machine learning. The aim of this decentralised network is to link leading AI centres across Europe in order to ensure the international competitiveness of European AI research. The initiative focuses on transnational research programmes, the promotion of scientific talent and the transfer of basic research into industry.

The EU project ELIAS utilises this existing structure and expands it to include a focus on environmental and social sustainability.

Further information

- ▶ University of Freiburg