Insights and Learning Needs Report: AI Act Application in the Creative Sector

Based on Focus Group Interviews and Stakeholder Responses

Navigating AI Regulations: Practical Guide

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1. Executive Summary

This report examines the learning needs of creative professionals in Bulgaria and Germany regarding the application of the AI Act and the broader integration of AI into creative workflows. It aims to identify the key competencies, skills, and knowledge required for AI adoption in creative industries.

Through two focus groups, each consisting of seven participants, including also expert interviews, the analysis identifies critical challenges, knowledge gaps, and training priorities for professionals navigating AI adoption and regulatory compliance.

The findings highlight a growing need for targeted training in AI literacy, ethical considerations, and compliance with evolving regulations. While AI presents significant opportunities to enhance creative efficiency and innovation, many professionals require further support in understanding its responsible use, mitigating risks, and aligning their practices with legal requirements.

Based on these insights, the report provides recommendations for a structured training program designed to strengthen AI-related competencies, enabling creative professionals to integrate AI effectively and responsibly while maintaining originality and ethical standards.

2. Introduction

2.1. AI's growing role in the creative sector

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping the creative sector, transforming how artistic content is produced, distributed, and experienced. From visual arts and design to music, film, and literature, AI is being integrated into creative workflows, offering both opportunities and challenges for professionals. While traditionally, creativity has been considered a uniquely human trait, AI is now playing a growing role as a tool that enhances, accelerates, and sometimes even generates creative outputs.

One of the most significant ways AI is influencing the creative sector is by enhancing efficiency and expanding artistic possibilities. AI-powered tools enable artists, designers, writers, and musicians to streamline their workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and experiment with new forms of artistic expression. For instance, generative AI models are capable of producing high-quality images, music compositions, and even written content based on textual or visual prompts. In fields such as graphic design, AI-driven software can assist in generating digital artwork, designing layouts, and optimizing color schemes. In music composition, AI-powered platforms can analyze existing music styles and generate original compositions tailored to specific moods and genres. Similarly, in literature and content creation, AI tools are being used to assist writers by suggesting text, refining drafts, and even generating entire articles or scripts.

Beyond enhancing efficiency, AI is also opening up entirely new creative possibilities. The use of AI in interactive storytelling is changing the way narratives are developed, particularly in the gaming and entertainment industries, where AI-driven characters and adaptive storylines create more immersive experiences. AI is also driving the personalization of creative content, where machine learning

algorithms analyze audience preferences and generate tailored recommendations for music, films, and digital artworks. These innovations are not just changing the way creative content is produced but also how audiences interact with and consume artistic works.

Despite these advancements, the integration of AI into creative industries also raises important challenges and ethical considerations. One of the most pressing concerns is the issue of copyright and intellectual property rights. As AI-generated content becomes more sophisticated, questions arise regarding ownership—should it belong to the individual using the AI tool, the developers behind the AI, or the organization providing the technology? Additionally, AI models often reflect biases present in their training data, leading to potential misrepresentations and ethical concerns regarding diversity, inclusivity, and fairness in creative outputs. Another key issue is the authenticity and integrity of artistic work, as AI-generated content blurs the line between human and machine-made creations, raising questions about originality and authorship.

As AI continues to evolve, the creative sector must find ways to balance innovation with ethical and regulatory considerations. Ensuring that creative professionals are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with AI is essential. Moreover, regulatory frameworks, such as the AI Act, will play a crucial role in defining the boundaries and responsibilities of AI in the creative industry. Understanding these evolving regulations and adapting to them will be critical for professionals who seek to leverage AI in a responsible and informed manner.

This growing role of AI in creativity highlights the need for a structured approach to understanding its implications, especially in light of emerging regulations such as the AI Act. The following sections will explore the specific learning needs of creative professionals regarding AI legislation and best practices, based on the findings from focus groups and interviews conducted as part of this research.

2.2. Overview of the AI Act and its implications for creative professionals

The Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) is the European Union's first comprehensive legal framework aimed at regulating the development, deployment, and use of AI systems. Proposed by the European Commission, the AI Act seeks to ensure that AI technologies are safe, transparent, and aligned with fundamental rights, while also fostering innovation within the EU. It was published as Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 on 12 July 2024. As AI become increasingly integrated into various industries, including the creative sector, it is essential for professionals to understand the regulatory landscape and its potential implications for their work.

At its core, the AI Act takes a risk-based approach, classifying AI systems into four categories: unacceptable risk, high risk, limited risk, and minimal risk. AI applications that pose an unacceptable risk—such as social scoring or real-time biometric surveillance—are strictly prohibited. High-risk AI systems, which include AI used in employment decisions, biometric identification, and critical infrastructure, are subject to stringent compliance requirements, including transparency, accuracy, and human oversight. Meanwhile, limited and minimal-risk AI systems, which encompass applications like AI-generated content and recommendation algorithms, are subject to fewer obligations but still require transparency measures to ensure users are informed when interacting with AI-generated outputs.

For creative professionals, the AI Act introduces several key considerations. First, AI-generated content, including text, images, music, and video, may fall under transparency obligations. This means that creators and businesses using AI tools to generate content must clearly disclose AI involvement to consumers. This regulation is particularly relevant in areas such as digital marketing, entertainment, and publishing, where AI-generated materials could influence consumer perception. Additionally, professionals working with AI in creative processes may need to assess whether the AI tools they use comply with EU regulations, especially if those tools involve data processing, biometric analysis, or automated decision-making.

Another major concern is intellectual property rights and copyright. While the AI Act does not directly legislate copyright issues, it intersects with ongoing discussions about AI-generated content ownership. Creative professionals must remain aware of how copyright laws evolve in response to AI, particularly regarding derivative works and the use of AI in generating artistic content. As AI tools become more sophisticated, the legal responsibility for ensuring that AI-generated works do not infringe on existing intellectual property rights may increasingly fall on users and organizations deploying such technologies.

Moreover, the AI Act promotes ethical AI use and accountability, requiring organizations to ensure that AI systems are free from bias and discrimination. This has significant implications for creative professionals developing AI-driven media, advertising, and design, as biased AI models could inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or exclude certain groups. Ensuring fairness in AI-generated creative content will become a key aspect of responsible AI usage within the industry.

While the AI Act aims to establish clear guidelines for AI deployment, one challenge for creative professionals is the lack of accessible information and guidance on how these regulations specifically apply to the creative sector. Many professionals are not yet familiar with the AI Act's provisions or how compliance may affect their day-to-day work. Given the rapid adoption of AI in creative industries, there is a growing need for targeted educational initiatives to help professionals navigate these legal requirements and integrate AI into their work in a compliant and ethical manner.

As the AI Act moves toward full implementation, creative professionals will need to adapt their practices, ensuring transparency, compliance, and ethical use of AI technologies. The following sections will explore the specific learning needs identified through focus groups and interviews, highlighting the gaps in knowledge and the support required to help creative professionals effectively integrate AI while adhering to regulatory standards.

2.3.   Purpose of the report

This report presents the findings of a needs analysis conducted through two focus groups with creative professionals in Bulgaria and Germany, along with a series of interviews with industry experts. The primary purpose of the report is to provide deeper insights into the challenges, knowledge gaps, and training needs of professionals in the creative sector regarding AI adoption and regulatory compliance.

As AI becomes an increasingly powerful tool in creative industries, professionals face both opportunities and challenges in integrating AI into their workflows. However, many lack sufficient understanding of how to use AI effectively, how to navigate regulatory requirements such as the AI Act,

and how to ensure ethical and responsible AI usage. By analyzing the perspectives shared by focus group participants and interviewees, this report identifies key areas where additional training and support are needed.

The insights gathered will directly inform the design of a targeted training program aimed at improving AI and data usage competence, enhancing digital skills for AI-driven creativity, and increasing awareness of the AI Act. The findings will help shape the scope, structure, and content of the training program, ensuring that it meets the specific needs of creative professionals and enables them to confidently integrate AI into their work while remaining compliant with evolving regulations.

2.4. Scope and Objectives

The scope of this report covers the current state of AI awareness, knowledge, and application among creative professionals in Bulgaria and Germany, with a focus on their understanding of AI regulations, digital skills, and the practical use of AI in creative work. The analysis is based on:

- Two focus groups conducted with creative professionals from different disciplines, providing first-hand insights into the opportunities and barriers they face when working with AI.
- Interviews with experts and practitioners to gain a broader understanding of industry needs and perspectives.

The specific objectives of this report are to:

1. Identify key challenges creative professionals encounter when working with AI, including technical, ethical, and regulatory concerns.
2. Assess the level of awareness and understanding of the AI Act and other relevant regulations within the creative sector.
3. Analyze the demand for AI-related training by exploring professionals' specific needs in AI literacy, data usage, and regulatory compliance.
4. Provide recommendations for the development of training videos that will effectively equip creative professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to work with AI in a compliant and innovative manner.

This report serves as a foundation for the upcoming training program, ensuring that it is tailored to the real needs of the creative sector.

2.5. Methodology

2.5.1. Research Approach

This research employed a mixed qualitative approach, combining questionnaire-based interviews with focus group discussions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the learning needs of creative professionals regarding AI adoption and regulatory compliance.

The questionnaire-based interviews served as an initial data collection step, allowing participants to individually express their views, challenges, and knowledge gaps before engaging in group discussions. This ensured that all voices were captured, even from participants who might have been less vocal in a group setting.

Following the questionnaire responses, focus groups were conducted to explore key themes in greater depth, clarify uncertainties, and encourage discussion among professionals with different perspectives. This two-step approach provided both structured individual input and interactive discussion, enriching the overall findings.

2.5.2. Participants

The study targeted two key groups:

- Creative professionals (e.g., designers, writers, writers, marketers, multimedia creators) who are already using or are interested in integrating AI into their work. These participants shared their experiences, challenges, and learning needs.
- Business developers and industry experts, including professionals with expertise in AI governance, compliance, and technology adoption in the creative industries. Their insights provided strategic perspectives on regulatory and practical AI applications.

A total of 14 participants took part in the study, equally distributed between two focus groups (one in Bulgaria and one in Germany).

3. Findings and Insights

3.1. Understanding of AI and Regulatory Implications

3.1.1. Awareness of the AI Act and its Implications for the Creative Industry

The analysis of responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups highlights a general awareness of AI regulations within the EU but reveals a significant gap in detailed knowledge of the AI Act and its specific impact on the creative industry.

- General awareness and understanding:

Among German respondents, there is a recognition that the AI Act is part of broader EU regulatory efforts, particularly in relation to GDPR, AI transparency, ethical considerations, and risk management. However, most participants admit to having only a basic understanding of the Act's provisions. While some are proactively researching its implications, many find it challenging to navigate the legal complexities and lack the time to engage with the full text of the regulation.

Conversely, Bulgarian participants demonstrated a lower level of familiarity with the AI Act. While they acknowledged the EU's ongoing regulatory efforts, the term "AI Act" itself was not widely recognized.

This suggests a need for more accessible communication and awareness campaigns regarding the Act and its relevance to different sectors, including the creative industry.

- Perceived implications for the creative industry:

Among German respondents, there is an understanding that the AI Act could influence various aspects of creative work, including AI-driven content creation, intellectual property rights, and design processes. Some see potential benefits, such as greater transparency and more trustworthy AI applications. However, uncertainty remains about how compliance requirements will affect industry partners and business operations.

Bulgarian respondents did not initially identify specific implications for the creative industry, primarily due to their limited familiarity with the Act. This indicates that more targeted information is needed to help professionals in the creative sector understand how the AI Act might impact their work.

Conclusion and Identified Needs

The findings highlight the need for clearer, more accessible resources to improve understanding of the AI Act, particularly for professionals in the creative industry. Key areas of support include:

- Simplified explanations of regulatory requirements and their practical implications for creative professionals.

- Industry-specific guidance on AI compliance, covering issues such as intellectual property, ethical AI use, and content creation.

- Awareness campaigns to increase recognition of the AI Act and its relevance to different industries.

While there is a growing recognition of AI regulations, the creative industry requires tailored resources and structured learning opportunities to bridge the knowledge gap and ensure informed compliance with evolving regulations.

3.1.2. Most Relevant or Challenging Aspects of the AI Act

The responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups highlight key challenges and concerns regarding the AI Act, particularly in understanding its practical implications, compliance requirements, and potential impact on businesses, employment, and personal liability.

- *Key challenges in understanding and applying the AI Act:*

German respondents identified several difficulties in interpreting and implementing the AI Act, particularly in distinguishing the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI and defining critical concepts such as harm, fairness, and explicability in daily business operations. A major challenge is determining whether specific AI tools—such as generative AI for content creation or marketing automation—fall under the "high-risk" category, which would require stricter compliance measures.

Intellectual property (IP) rights and transparency requirements for AI-generated content were also cited as major concerns. Respondents expressed uncertainty about ownership of AI-assisted creations and the legal implications of using AI-generated materials in creative and marketing workflows. Additionally, the compliance burden for SMEs, including costs, timelines, and necessary steps for adherence, was seen as a significant barrier.

There is also confusion about how the Act's human oversight requirements will affect AI implementation in various sectors, especially in areas where real-time decision-making is crucial, such as manufacturing and content moderation. Moreover, respondents emphasized the need for clearer, sector-specific compliance guidelines to help businesses and creative professionals understand their obligations and potential restrictions.

- *Concerns about AI regulation and employment:*

Bulgarian respondents, who were less familiar with the AI Act, were particularly surprised by its focus on areas such as fake CVs and application forms. Their primary concern was the potential for AI-driven automation to lead to job losses, making labor market regulation a priority issue. This perspective suggests a strong need for further clarification on how the AI Act will shape workforce dynamics and employment protections in AI-affected industries.

Need for Clearer Guidance and Support

The findings indicate a widespread demand for more accessible and practical information regarding AI regulations. Key support needs include:

- Clear definitions and classifications to help businesses understand whether their usage of AI tools falls under high-risk or other categories,

- Practical compliance guidelines tailored to different industries, particularly in creative fields where AI is extensively used, i.e., self-assessment tools,

- Legal clarity on intellectual property to address concerns about AI-generated content ownership,

- Insights into the AI Act's impact on employment to help professionals navigate potential job market shifts due to automation and to minimize liability risks.

Overall, while awareness of AI regulation is growing, there remains significant uncertainty about how businesses and individuals should adapt. Clearer guidance, industry-specific frameworks, practical case studies, and assessment tools will be essential in helping stakeholders navigate these evolving regulatory requirements.

3.1.3. Current Approaches to AI Risk Assessment and Management

The analysis of responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups reveals that while AI risk awareness exists, structured risk assessment and management practices are underdeveloped. Participants highlighted a range of concerns, from regulatory compliance to ethical considerations and the broader societal impact of AI technologies.

- *Informal and basic risk management practices:*

German respondents indicated that most AI risk management efforts are informal, with individuals primarily ensuring compliance with existing regulations such as GDPR and copyright laws. Many participants use AI cautiously, opting for trusted tools from established providers to mitigate risks. Some maintain data sources and seek advice from colleagues before integrating AI into their workflows, particularly in areas like market analysis.

Despite basic AI training among some respondents, there is widespread hesitation to fully embrace AI due to concerns over transparency, accuracy, and intellectual property risks. Additionally, frustration was expressed regarding AI-generated summaries and tools being implemented in workplace communications without proper oversight. A small portion of respondents do not use AI at all, either due to skepticism, time constraints, or a perceived lack of necessity.

- *Key AI-related risks identified:*

Bulgarian respondents, while less focused on structured risk management practices, identified several key risks associated with AI adoption, including:

- Loss of employment due to automation and AI-driven efficiencies,
- Fake news and misinformation, particularly in media and online content,
- Copyright infringement, with concerns over AI-generated materials violating intellectual property rights,
- Excessive data collection by technology companies, raising privacy and security concerns.

Need for a Standardized AI Risk Management Framework

The responses from both groups indicate that while there is a growing awareness of AI-related risks, there is a lack of a standardized and structured approach to managing these challenges. Participants highlighted the need for:

- Clearer guidelines on ethical AI use, including transparency, accountability, and bias mitigation,

- Better compliance frameworks to help businesses, particularly SMEs, navigate AI-related legal requirements,

- Industry-specific risk assessment tools tailored to sectors like creative industries, where AI-generated content plays a significant role,

- Training programs that provide practical strategies for mitigating risks such as misinformation, data privacy violations, and intellectual property disputes.

Overall, both focus groups emphasized the importance of developing a more comprehensive and accessible AI risk assessment framework. While some professionals are taking cautious steps to manage risks, the absence of clear regulatory guidance and best practices continues to be a major barrier to responsible AI adoption.

3.1.4. Confidence in Compliance and Support Needs

The analysis of responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups highlights a general lack of confidence in ensuring compliance with the AI Act. Uncertainty regarding specific requirements and practical implementation remains a significant challenge, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the creative industry. Participants expressed a strong need for accessible, structured, and industry-specific guidance to navigate AI regulations effectively.

- *Challenges in compliance:*

Respondents from both groups emphasized that their ability to comply with the AI Act depends on the availability of clear and practical resources. While some participants were aware of broader AI governance frameworks, they acknowledged the difficulties of keeping up with evolving regulations. The absence of a centralized European-level resource for compliance support further complicates efforts to understand and implement regulatory requirements.

- *Key support needs identified:*

To enhance confidence in compliance, respondents highlighted the need for:

- Self-assessment tools to help organizations evaluate their AI-related compliance status.
- Step-by-step checklists and compliance templates to simplify regulatory obligations.
- Industry-specific case studies and good practices that are demonstrating how similar businesses navigate compliance.
- Workshops and training sessions tailored to the creative industry, providing in-depth explanations of AI regulations.
- Quick-reference sheets summarizing key aspects of the AI Act in an accessible format.
- A centralized resource or advisory service where SMEs and independent professionals can seek regulatory guidance.

> **Need for Actionable and Accessible Guidance**
>
> Overall, the findings indicate that while awareness of AI regulations is growing, the lack of practical, easy-to-use compliance tools creates uncertainty. Both German and Bulgarian respondents stressed the importance of clear, structured, and industry-relevant resources to bridge the gap between regulatory requirements and real-world application. Strengthening support mechanisms and improving access to compliance guidance will be critical in helping businesses and professionals navigate the complexities of AI regulation effectively.

3.2. Current Use of AI in the Creative Sector

3.2.1. Impact on Creative Processes and Workflow

The responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups indicate that AI tools are playing an increasingly important role in the creative industry, primarily by enhancing efficiency and streamlining workflows. AI is widely recognized for its ability to automate repetitive tasks, accelerate content

generation, and support ideation, allowing creative professionals to focus more on strategic and innovative aspects of their work.

- *Enhancing workflow efficiency:*

AI-driven tools are widely used for text generation, data analysis, video storyboarding, and design. Many respondents appreciate AI's ability to speed up processes, reduce effort, and provide multiple creative variations in a short time. AI is particularly valued for assisting in brainstorming, automating routine tasks, and optimizing content creation workflows.

- *Varied approaches to AI utilization:*

While some respondents integrate AI heavily into their workflows, relying on it for efficiency and inspiration, others adopt a more selective approach. Tools like ChatGPT and Canva are commonly used for experimentation, but some professionals still prefer manual input for tasks requiring precision, originality, and creative depth.

- *Concerns about AI in creative work:*

Despite its benefits, concerns remain about over-reliance on AI-generated content, ethical considerations, and the potential impact on originality. Some respondents are cautious about AI's influence on creative decision-making, emphasizing the need for human oversight to maintain quality and authenticity.

Overall Perception of AI in the Creative Industry

Overall, AI is seen as a valuable aid rather than a complete replacement for human creativity. While it enhances efficiency and supports innovation, careful oversight and a balanced approach are essential to maintaining originality and ensuring ethical AI use in creative workflows.

3.2.2. Types of AI Tools Used and Their Impact on Creative Work

The responses from both the German and Bulgarian focus groups indicate that AI tools are widely utilized in the creative sector, primarily for text generation, content creation, and visual design. These tools significantly enhance efficiency by reducing manual effort, accelerating production timelines, and allowing creative professionals to focus on high-level strategic thinking and artistic refinement.

- *Most used AI tools:*

There are three types of AI tools that are most used by the respondents in the research:

a/ Text and content generation tools: ChatGPT is the most frequently used tool for tasks such as drafting, editing, summarizing, and brainstorming ideas. ChatPDF is also used for document analysis, and DeepL for translations.

b/ Visual and design tools: Built-in AI functionalities in Photoshop and Canva are commonly used for image generation and enhancement. Midjourney is recognized as a powerful AI tool for graphic design but is not widely adopted due to its complexity compared to other platforms.

c/ Video and other AI applications: AI-powered video creation tools and Adobe PDF's AI functionalities are mentioned, though some respondents have yet to explore their full potential.

- *Tools that enhance creativity and efficiency:*

AI tools are valued for their ability to streamline workflows, improve productivity, and assist with ideation. They enable creative professionals to experiment more freely, meet deadlines faster, and allocate more time to refining their work. The automation of repetitive tasks allows for greater focus on innovation and artistic expression.

- *Limitations and challenges:*

Despite these benefits, AI tools present several challenges:
- Lack of emotional and cultural depth: AI-generated content often lacks the emotional nuance and cultural sensitivity that human creators bring to their work.
- Bias and inaccuracy: Concerns exist about AI bias and the reliability of AI-generated outputs, requiring human oversight to ensure quality and fairness.
- Complexity of certain tools: While some AI platforms are user-friendly, others—such as Midjourney—are seen as too complex for widespread adoption.

Overall Perspective on AI in Creative Work

AI tools are considered as a powerful tool for enhancing creative workflows but are not seen as replacements for human originality, artistic expression, and critical oversight. Instead, participants emphasized the need for AI to be used as a complement to human creativity rather than a replacement. While many professionals actively integrate AI into their creative processes, some remain cautious about its limitations and ethical implications. The key to effective AI adoption in the creative sector lies in balancing AI's capabilities with human expertise.

These insights highlight the importance of developing training programs that not only focus on the practical applications of AI in creative work but also address the ethical, legal, and technical challenges associated with AI adoption in the creative sector.

3.2.3. Essential Skills for AI Integration in Creative Practices

The German focus group responses highlight several key skills necessary for effectively integrating AI into creative work. These skills ensure that AI is used efficiently, ethically, and in a way that complements human creativity rather than replacing it:

- *AI literacy and understanding AI capabilities:*

Creatives should understand what AI can and cannot do to prevent over-reliance or misuse. Familiarity with different AI tools and their applications is essential for optimizing workflows.

- *Prompt writing and effective AI guidance:*

Strong prompt engineering skills help users get high-quality outputs, making AI tools more effective and reducing the need for extensive editing.

- *Critical thinking and content evaluation:*

AI-generated content can contain biases, inaccuracies, or misleading information. Creatives must be able to assess and refine AI outputs to ensure accuracy and originality.

- *Ethical and intellectual property awareness:*

Understanding the legal and ethical implications of AI-generated content is essential, particularly in relation to copyright, data privacy, and transparency.

- *Practical AI application and learning resources:*

Many respondents expressed interest in learning resources, such as tutorial videos and step-by-step guides, to simplify AI tool usage and improve proficiency.

Overall Perspective

Successfully integrating AI into creative workflows requires a combination of technical proficiency, critical evaluation, and ethical awareness. As AI tools become more prevalent in the creative industry, professionals need structured learning opportunities to build these essential skills and maximize AI's benefits while mitigating potential risks.

3.2.4. Opportunities and Risks of AI in Creative Work

AI is increasingly shaping the creative sector by offering new opportunities for efficiency and innovation while also raising significant ethical, legal, and operational concerns. Respondents from both focus groups recognize AI's potential but emphasize the importance of balancing automation with human oversight to maintain originality and mitigate risks.

- *Opportunities of AI in creative work*

AI significantly enhances efficiency and productivity in the creative sector by accelerating tasks such as content generation, market analysis, and document summarization. By automating repetitive processes, AI allows creative professionals to focus on more strategic and high-value work, optimizing their overall workflow.

In addition to improving efficiency, AI fosters creativity and idea generation by suggesting unique concepts and unexpected combinations that might not have been considered otherwise. It also facilitates fast prototyping and user testing, enabling quicker iterations and refinements, which is particularly beneficial for innovation-driven industries.

Another key advantage of AI is its ability to enhance personalization and technological integration. AI enables content to be tailored to specific audiences, thereby improving engagement and relevance. Furthermore, its integration with other digital tools streamlines workflows and enhances collaboration, ensuring that creative professionals can work more effectively in a technologically advanced environment.

- *Risks of AI in creative work*

The use of AI in creative work presents several risks and challenges that must be carefully managed. One major concern relates to legal and ethical issues, particularly regarding intellectual property (IP) and copyright regulations. AI-generated content may conflict with existing laws, creating uncertainty for businesses and creators. Additionally, as AI regulations continue to evolve, compliance requirements remain unclear, posing difficulties for professionals in the creative industry.

Another significant risk is the potential loss of authenticity and over-reliance on AI. Since AI generates content based on pre-existing data, there are concerns that this could lead to a decline in creative originality. Moreover, excessive dependence on AI tools might diminish individual critical thinking and problem-solving skills, ultimately impacting the quality and uniqueness of creative output.

The impact of AI on employment is also a growing concern, with some fearing that AI-driven automation could lead to job displacement, particularly in roles centered on content production and design. As AI tools become more sophisticated, there is uncertainty about how the industry will adapt and whether job opportunities will shift rather than disappear entirely.

Confidentiality and data security risks also pose significant challenges. AI tools often process sensitive information, increasing the risk of data leaks and breaches. Businesses must exercise caution when using AI for proprietary or confidential content creation, ensuring that appropriate security measures are in place to protect valuable data.

> **Overall Perspective**
> While AI offers significant advantages in streamlining creative workflows, improving efficiency, and enhancing idea generation, it also presents challenges that need careful management. Ethical considerations, legal clarity, and maintaining human-driven creativity remain crucial to ensuring AI is a valuable support tool rather than a disruptive force in the creative industry.

3.3. Learning Needs and Future Competencies in AI

3.3.1. Topics or Areas Related to AI to Learn More About

The respondents from both Bulgaria and Germany express a strong need to develop skills and knowledge related to AI, particularly in compliance, risk management, ethical considerations, and practical AI integration. Their learning needs focus on ensuring responsible AI usage while maximizing its benefits for creative industries. The key learning areas identified are:

- AI compliance and regulations: Respondents seek clearer guidance on evolving AI regulations, particularly the AI Act, and how it impacts creative industries. They are interested in practical steps to meet compliance requirements, especially for SMEs.
- Risk management: The understanding of legal risks, data security, privacy concerns, and bias mitigation in AI-driven projects is a priority for many participants.
- Ethical AI use: There is a strong desire to explore responsible AI usage, including intellectual property protection, transparency in AI-generated content, and avoiding unethical outcomes.
- Human agency and oversight Respondents want to better understand human control over AI, accountability, and principles of fairness, non-discrimination, and social responsibility.
- Integrating AI into workflows: Many are interested in learning how to effectively incorporate AI tools into creative processes while maintaining originality and efficiency and how to leverage them for enhanced creativity and business operations.
- Internal AI solutions: Some respondents suggest exploring custom AI models, such as internal large language models (LLMs), to ensure data protection and workflow optimization.

3.3.2. Key Competencies for Creative Professionals in the Next 3-5 Years as AI Evolves

As AI continues to shape the creative sector, professionals will need to develop a combination of technical, analytical, and strategic skills to remain competitive. Respondents from both groups emphasize the following key competencies:

- Regulatory awareness to be informed about evolving EU regulations, including the AI Act, GDPR, and governance acts, to ensure legal and ethical AI use.
- Data interpretation – the ability to analyze AI-driven insights for decision-making, particularly in areas like market analysis and content optimization.
- Critical thinking - the ability to critically assess AI-generated content, avoid over-reliance on AI outputs, and recognize biases or inaccuracies is essential.
- Technical literacy and AI utilization – proficiency in using AI tools effectively, including prompt engineering, AI search techniques, and leveraging AI for research and content generation. Bulgarian respondents highlight the need for English proficiency, as AI tools often perform better in English than in Bulgarian.
- Creative and strategic decision-making – knowing when to delegate tasks to AI, how to integrate AI into workflows while preserving originality, and maintaining a balance between automation and human creativity.
- Adaptability and experimentation with AI tools to refine workflows and find the right balance between AI efficiency and human creativity.

3.3.3. Preferred Learning Formats for AI Training

Respondents from both groups emphasize the need for flexible, interactive, and practical learning formats to enhance their understanding of AI-related topics such as compliance, risk management, and ethical considerations. They expressed a preference for a variety of learning formats to enhance their understanding of AI-related topics, such as compliance, risk management, and ethical considerations:

German participants showed a strong preference for face-to-face workshops that offer real-life scenarios, hands-on exercises, and direct engagement with experienced professionals. This format allows for deeper learning through active participation and practical application.

Bulgarian respondents, on the other hand, favored online training and self-assessment tools due to their flexibility and the ability to follow structured learning paths at an individual pace. Preferred online formats include interactive courses featuring engaging content, exercises, and simulations; webinars that provide live sessions with industry experts for discussion and Q&A; and virtual workshops designed for the practical application of AI tools in creative workflows.

A blended learning approach, combining different formats, was seen as an ideal option by some respondents. This could involve starting with online modules followed by in-person workshops or integrating video tutorials with written materials and interactive elements to reinforce learning.

Additionally, video-based learning was considered useful, particularly for explaining AI compliance and risk management concepts in a visual and accessible manner. Learning from real-world AI applications through case studies and best practice examples was also highlighted as a valuable approach.

Finally, all participants emphasized the importance of clear and accessible learning materials. They stressed the need for structured, easy-to-understand content that can serve as an ongoing reference. Modular content, detailed explanations, and self-assessment tools were identified as essential for tracking progress and reinforcing knowledge.

4. Key Takeaways

4.1. Theme: Understanding of AI and Regulatory Implications

Limited Awareness of the AI Act in the Creative Industry:

While there is general awareness of AI regulations among German respondents, detailed knowledge of the AI Act and its specific implications for the creative sector is limited.
Bulgarian respondents demonstrated lower recognition of the AI Act, indicating a need for better communication and awareness initiatives.

Need for Clearer, Sector-Specific Guidance:

Creative professionals struggle to interpret the legal complexities of the AI Act and understand how it applies to their work. Many professionals lack the time or resources to engage with the full text of the regulation and require simplified, actionable explanations.

Concerns Over AI's Impact on Creative Work and Compliance:

German participants acknowledge the Act's potential to influence AI-driven content creation, IP rights, and transparency requirements, but uncertainty remains regarding compliance and liabilities.
Bulgarian respondents were less aware of specific implications, suggesting a gap in information dissemination for creative industries.

Need for Practical Compliance Resources:

Respondents from both countries emphasized the importance of accessible compliance tools, including:

- Step-by-step regulatory guides tailored to the creative sector.
- Industry-specific case studies, demonstrating best practices.
- Workshops and training sessions focused on AI governance and legal obligations.

Growing Demand for AI Literacy and Training:

Participants recognize the need to develop AI literacy, particularly in areas like ethical AI use, copyright considerations, and responsible AI adoption. The training course should focus on making compliance more manageable by providing self-assessment tools, structured learning modules, and real-world application scenarios.

4.2. Theme: Current Use of AI in the Creative Sector

AI's Role in Enhancing Creative Processes and Workflow:

AI is widely used to automate repetitive tasks, accelerate content creation, and enhance workflow efficiency, allowing creatives to focus on strategic and artistic aspects. Tools like ChatGPT, Canva, and AI-powered design software are frequently used for brainstorming, drafting, and refining creative work. While AI improves productivity, human oversight remains essential to ensure quality, originality, and authenticity.

Common AI Tools and Their Impact:

- Text and Content Generation: ChatGPT (for drafting, summarizing), ChatPDF (document analysis), and DeepL (translations) are widely used.
- Visual and Design Tools: Photoshop AI, Canva, and Midjourney assist with image generation and design, though some tools (like Midjourney) are seen as complex.
- Video and Other AI Applications: AI-powered video tools and Adobe AI features are used, but some professionals are still exploring their potential.
- Challenges: AI-generated content often lacks emotional depth, cultural sensitivity, and originality, requiring critical evaluation and refinement.

Essential Skills for AI Integration in Creative Practices:

- AI literacy: Understanding AI's capabilities and limitations to optimize workflows effectively.
- Prompt engineering: Crafting precise prompts to generate high-quality AI outputs with minimal revisions.
- Critical Thinking and Content Evaluation: Assessing AI-generated content for biases, inaccuracies, and ethical concerns.

- Legal and ethical awareness: Navigating copyright issues, data privacy regulations, and intellectual property challenges.
- Practical AI training: Demand for tutorials, step-by-step guides, and structured learning to enhance AI proficiency.

Opportunities and Risks of AI in Creative Work:

The opportunities identified are:

- Efficiency gains: Automates tedious tasks, accelerating production and freeing time for innovation.
- Enhanced creativity: AI-generated suggestions offer new perspectives and unexpected creative combinations.
- Personalization and integration: AI customizes content for audiences and integrates seamlessly with digital workflows.

Risks and challenges identified are:

- Legal and ethical concerns: AI-generated content raises IP, copyright, and compliance challenges.
- Loss of authenticity: Over-reliance on AI may dilute originality and critical thinking.
- Job displacement: Fear of AI replacing roles in content creation and design.
- Data security risks: AI's use of sensitive data raises concerns over privacy breaches.

Conclusion:

AI is a powerful enabler in the creative sector, enhancing efficiency and idea generation, but human oversight, ethical considerations, and skill development are essential to maximize its benefits while mitigating risks. Training and structured guidelines will be crucial for responsible AI adoption in the creative industry.

4.3.   Theme: Learning Needs and Future Competencies in AI

Priority Areas for AI Learning:

- AI Compliance and regulations: Strong demand for guidance on evolving AI laws, particularly the AI Act and GDPR, with a focus on practical compliance steps for SMEs.
- Risk management: Understanding legal risks, data security, and bias mitigation is crucial for responsible AI adoption.
- Ethical AI use: Creative professionals seek knowledge on intellectual property, transparency in AI-generated content, and ethical considerations.
- Human oversight: Interest in learning about accountability, fairness, and maintaining human control over AI decisions.
- AI integration into creative workflows: Professionals want practical knowledge on effectively incorporating AI into their creative processes without compromising originality.

- Internal AI solutions: Some respondents suggest exploring custom AI models (e.g., internal LLMs) for data security and workflow optimization.

Essential Competencies for the Next 3-5 Years:

- Regulatory Awareness: Keeping up with AI governance, GDPR, and evolving compliance standards.
- Data Interpretation: Analyzing AI-driven insights for market analysis and data-informed decision-making.
- Critical Thinking: Evaluating AI-generated content for biases, accuracy, and originality to avoid over-reliance on AI.
- Technical Literacy & AI Utilization: Mastering prompt engineering, AI research techniques, and tool optimization. Bulgarian respondents highlight the need for English proficiency due to AI's stronger performance in English.
- Creative & Strategic Decision-Making: Understanding when and how to integrate AI into workflows while preserving artistic vision.
- Adaptability & Experimentation: Being open to testing AI tools and refining workflows for the best balance between automation and human creativity.

Preferred Learning Formats for AI Training:

- Workshops & Hands-on Learning: German respondents favor in-person training with real-world applications and expert interaction.
- Online Training & Self-Paced Learning: Bulgarian participants prefer flexible, structured learning paths, including:
  - Interactive courses with exercises and simulations.
  - Live webinars for expert discussions and Q&A.
  - Virtual workshops for hands-on AI applications.
- Blended Learning Approaches: Combining online modules with in-person workshops, video tutorials, and interactive elements for deeper engagement.
- Video-Based Learning & Case Studies: Professionals value visual explanations of AI compliance and risk management and learning from real-world AI best practices.
- Clear & Accessible Learning Materials: Preference for structured, easy-to-understand, and modular content that serves as an ongoing reference.

Conclusion

Learning AI in the creative sector must be practical, flexible, and accessible, equipping professionals with regulatory knowledge, technical proficiency, critical thinking, and adaptability. A mix of interactive, case-based, and self-paced learning formats will be essential to ensure effective AI adoption while maintaining human oversight and creativity.

5. Next Steps

The research findings underscore the urgent need for clear guidance on AI regulations, industry-specific compliance resources, and targeted AI skills development for creative professionals. While AI offers numerous opportunities for efficiency and innovation, there are also critical challenges related to regulatory uncertainty, ethical concerns, and balancing AI with human creativity.

To address these identified needs, a structured AI training program will be developed, focusing on the following key areas:

- Regulatory Awareness and Compliance – Clear, sector-specific guidance on the AI Act and GDPR, including practical compliance steps, case studies, and self-assessment tools tailored to creative professionals.

- AI Literacy and Practical Skills – Hands-on training in AI tools, prompt engineering, content evaluation, and workflow integration to enhance efficiency while maintaining artistic integrity.

- Ethical and Responsible AI Use – Best practices for copyright protection, intellectual property rights, data privacy, and responsible AI adoption to ensure transparency and ethical compliance.

- Flexible and Accessible Learning Formats – A combination of self-paced online courses, interactive workshops, webinars, and real-world case studies to accommodate diverse learning preferences and professional schedules.

A dedicated report named *"Core Competencies for AI-Driven Creativity: Aligning with AI Act Regulations"* on core competencies and proposed training program will provide further details on the curriculum and implementation strategy.

Annexes

Annex 1: Focus Group Germany- Summary of the Answers

1. Focus Groups and Respondents in Germany and Austria

Partner organization	INI-Novation GmbH
Country	Germany
Date and hour:	1/ Interviews with participants no. 1, no. 2, and no. 3, in bilateral interviews between January 27th and February 14th. 2/ Interviews with participants no. 4, no. 5, no. 6, no. 7, in a group session on 18.02.2025 from 14:30 to 16:00.
Duration:	90 min.
Participants Profile	
Participant No	Participant's profile (role, expertise, field of experience)
No.1	Managing Director of a SME supporting CCI and Entrepreneurship, male >60y
No. 2	Business Developer of a SME supporting CCI and Entrepreneurship, female 50-60y
No.3	Business Creation Manager, male 30-40y
No. 4	CCI student assistant, female, 20-30y
No.5	Senior Communication Manager, female, 40-50y
No.6	Senior Business Development Manager, male, 30-40y
No. 7	Senior Communication Manager, female, 30-40y

2. Summary of the Interviews and Discussion

Block 1. Understanding of AI and Regulatory Implications

Questions:

- How familiar are you with the AI Act and its implications for the creative industry?
- What specific aspects of the AI Act do you find most relevant or challenging to understand in your work?
- How do you currently assess and manage risks associated with using AI in your creative work?
- Do you feel confident in ensuring compliance with regulations like the AI Act? If not, what support would help you feel more prepared?

Summary of Block No1

Familiarity with the AI Act and its Implications for the Creative Industry

The responses indicate a general awareness of the AI Act but a lack of in-depth knowledge about its specific provisions and implications for the creative industry. Most respondents recognize that the Act is part of broader EU regulations like GDPR and aims to address AI transparency, ethical use, and risk management. However, they admit to having only a basic understanding, with some explicitly stating they do not trust summaries but lack the time to study the full document.

Regarding its impact on the creative industry, there is acknowledgment that it may influence AI-driven content creation, intellectual property, and design. Some see potential benefits in increased transparency and trustworthy AI applications, but there is uncertainty about how it will affect industry partners. A few respondents are actively expanding their knowledge through research and practical experience, particularly in data-driven fields. Overall, familiarity with the AI Act varies, but a deeper understanding, especially in relation to the creative sector—is still developing.

Most Relevant or Challenging Aspects of the AI Act

The responses highlight several key challenges in understanding and applying the AI Act. A major difficulty is distinguishing the Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, particularly in defining concepts like harm, fairness, and explicability in daily business operations. Many respondents struggle with determining whether the AI tools they or their partners use—such as generative AI for creative content or marketing automation—are classified as "high-risk" under the Act.

Concerns also revolve around intellectual property rights, transparency requirements for AI-generated content, and the compliance burden for SMEs, including costs, timelines, and necessary steps. Some emphasize the challenge of ensuring GDPR compliance, particularly in handling sensitive data. Others are uncertain about how the Act's human oversight requirements will impact AI deployment in real-time decision-making, especially in manufacturing.

Another significant concern is assessing how the Act will affect partners and customers. Many seek clearer guidance on industry-specific compliance requirements and potential limitations on creative processes. Overall, there is a strong need for more precise, practical insights into how the AI Act will apply to different industries and business operations.

Current Approaches to AI Risk Assessment and Management

The responses reveal a mix of approaches to assessing and managing AI-related risks, with most relying on informal or basic methods. A primary concern is ensuring legal compliance, particularly with regulations like GDPR and copyright laws. Many respondents use AI cautiously, favoring trusted tools from established providers while acknowledging the need for clearer guidance on ethical concerns.

Some take a practical approach by keeping records of data sources and consulting with colleagues before using AI tools in market analysis. Others have had basic AI training but remain hesitant to fully integrate AI into their workflow due to concerns over imprecision, lack of transparency, and the risk of AI-generated content violating intellectual property rights. One respondent expressed strong frustration with AI summaries and AI tools being used without consent in workplace communications.

A few individuals do not use AI at all, either due to time constraints, skepticism, or a lack of necessity in their work. Overall, while there is a general awareness of AI-related risks, most respondents recognize the need for a more structured and comprehensive risk assessment framework.

Confidence in Compliance and Support Needs

There is a general lack of confidence in ensuring compliance with the AI Act, due to uncertainty about what is required. Respondents express a strong need for clear, practical guidance tailored to their industry. The requested support includes:

- **Self-assessment tools** for AI Act compliance,

- **Step-by-step checklists** and compliance templates,

- **Industry-specific case studies** and best practices,

- **Workshops and training sessions** explaining the Act in a creative industry context,

- **Quick-reference sheets** summarizing key facts,

- **A centralized resource or contact point** where SMEs can seek regulatory advice.

Overall, respondents recognize the growing importance of AI regulations but seek more accessible and actionable guidance to navigate compliance effectively.

Block 2. Integration of AI into Creative Practices

Questions:

- How has the use of AI tools impacted your creative processes or workflow?
- What types of AI tools or applications do you currently use, and how do they enhance or limit your creative work?
- What skills do you think are essential for effectively integrating AI into your creative practices?
- What opportunities or risks do you see in using AI for your creative projects?

Summary of Block 2

Impact of AI on Creative Processes and Workflow

The responses highlight that AI tools have generally improved efficiency in creative workflows, particularly for tasks like text generation, analysis, video storyboarding, and design. Many respondents find AI useful for speeding up processes, reducing effort, and providing multiple creative variations in a short time. AI-driven tools help streamline brainstorming, automate repetitive tasks, and assist in content creation.

However, perspectives vary on the extent of AI's usefulness. Some rely on AI heavily for routine tasks, allowing them to focus on more strategic work. Others use AI selectively, such as experimenting with ChatGPT or Canva but preferring manual writing when precision is required. There are also concerns about originality, ethical considerations, and over-reliance on AI-generated outputs.

One respondent does not use AI at all, while others appreciate it as a tool for inspiration and efficiency rather than a complete replacement for manual creative work. Overall, AI is seen as a valuable aid in creative processes but requires careful oversight to ensure quality and originality.

Types of AI Tools Used

The responses indicate a diverse range of AI tool usage, with ChatGPT being the most used for text-related tasks such as drafting, editing, summarizing, and idea generation. Other frequently mentioned tools include Canva's AI features, AI-powered video creation tools, ChatPDF for document analysis, DeepL for translations, and AI functionalities in Photoshop and Adobe PDF (though some respondents have not used these yet).

Many find AI tools helpful for improving efficiency, streamlining workflows, and assisting with ideation. They particularly enhance productivity in text creation, image generation, and data analysis. However, some limitations are noted, including a lack of emotional depth, cultural nuance, and flexibility. Concerns about bias and uncertainty in AI-generated outputs also arise.

While several respondents actively integrate AI into their creative processes, one explicitly does not use AI at all. Overall, AI tools are valued for their ability to speed up tasks and enhance creativity, but they are not seen as replacements for human intuition, originality, and critical thinking.

Essential Skills for AI Integration

The responses highlight several key skills necessary for effectively using AI in creative work. Understanding AI's capabilities and limitations is a recurring theme, with respondents emphasizing the importance of knowing what AI can and cannot do to avoid over-reliance or misuse.

Prompt writing skills are seen as crucial for guiding AI tools effectively, ensuring better output, and saving time. Respondents also stress the need for critical thinking to evaluate AI-generated content, recognizing that AI can produce inaccuracies, biases, or misleading information.

Other important skills include basic AI literacy, familiarity with AI tools, and an understanding of ethical and intellectual property concerns related to AI-generated content. Some respondents express interest in learning resources, such as tutorial videos, to simplify AI tool usage.

Overall, successfully integrating AI into creative workflows requires a mix of technical proficiency, critical evaluation, and ethical awareness to maximize its benefits while mitigating potential risks.

Opportunities and Risks of AI in Creative Work

Overall, while AI presents valuable opportunities for efficiency, ideation, and automation, respondents stress the need for critical oversight, ethical considerations, and human creativity to maintain originality and avoid over-dependence.

Opportunities
Respondents recognize several key benefits of AI in creative work:
- Increased efficiency and productivity: AI speeds up tasks like market analysis, content generation, and breaking down long documents into digestible summaries.
- Idea generation and inspiration: AI tools suggest creative ideas and unique combinations that might not have been considered otherwise.
- Automation of repetitive tasks: AI helps streamline processes, allowing creatives to focus on more strategic and innovative work.
- Enhanced personalization: AI offers new possibilities for tailoring content to specific audiences or contexts.

Risks
Despite the benefits, respondents express significant concerns, particularly regarding:
- Legal and ethical challenges: Intellectual property (IP) and copyright risks are key worries, with AI-generated content potentially conflicting with existing laws.
- Loss of authenticity and originality: AI draws from existing knowledge, raising concerns about dilution of creative distinctiveness and reliance on non-original material.
- Over-reliance on AI: Some fear that depending too much on AI may weaken personal creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to evaluate work independently.
- Data privacy and security: Using AI for sensitive business or market analysis tasks requires caution to prevent information leaks.
- Limitations in AI-generated content: The quality of AI output is only as good as the prompt, and some users struggle to articulate their needs effectively.

Block 3. Learning Needs and Future Competencies

- What topics or areas related to AI (e.g., compliance, risk management, ethical use) would you like to learn more about?
- What key competencies do you think will be critical for creative professionals in the next 3-5 years as AI continues to evolve?
- What type of training format (e.g., workshops, online modules, hands-on practice) do you find most effective for learning complex topics like AI compliance and risk management?

Summary of Block 3

Topics or Areas Related to AI to Learn More About

Respondents express a strong desire to **deepen their understanding** in several key areas related to AI:

1. Human Agency and Oversight: Interest in understanding human control, accountability, and the ethical implications of AI use, including non-discrimination, fairness, and social well-being.

2. Compliance and Regulations: A focus on AI compliance specifically for SMEs, with interest in learning practical steps to meet regulatory requirements and staying informed about current regulations and how to comply.

3. Risk Management: Understanding how to identify and mitigate risks, particularly in areas such as legal risks, data security, and privacy concerns in AI-driven projects.

4. Ethical AI Use: Respondents want to learn more about best practices for ethical AI use, especially in relation to copyright, transparency in AI-generated work, and avoiding unethical outcomes.

5. Integrating AI into Workflows: There is an interest in best practices for integrating AI tools effectively into workflows, ensuring they improve efficiency while preserving creativity and originality.

6. Internal AI Solutions: Some respondents suggest the idea of having a customized internal LLM to protect sensitive data and improve workflow processes.

7. AI Opportunities and Tools: There is curiosity about the wide range of AI tools available, their capabilities, and how to keep track of and use these tools effectively to enhance creativity and business processes.

In summary, respondents are particularly interested in compliance, risk management, and ethical practices surrounding AI, with a focus on ensuring AI tools align with regulations, mitigating potential risks, and maintaining a balance between efficiency and human creativity.

Key Competencies for Creative Professionals in the Next 3-5 Years as AI Evolves

Respondents highlight several **critical competencies** that will be essential for creative professionals as AI continues to evolve:

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1. Understanding regulations: Participants need knowledge of the new EU regulations, including the GDPR, governance acts, and supply chain act, to ensure compliance with legal requirements when using AI in creative processes.

2. Data interpretation and insights: The ability to interpret and leverage data-driven insights provided by AI tools to make informed creative decisions, particularly in areas like market analysis and business intelligence.

3. Critical thinking: Participants out a strong emphasis on critical thinking to assess AI-generated content, avoid blindly trusting AI outputs, and recognize its limitations, especially when distinguishing AI-generated content from original work.

4. AI utilization skills: Participant need to become proficient in using AI tools effectively, including writing clear prompts for AI and understanding how to use AI search capabilities for generating accurate and reliable results.

5. Creative and strategic decision-making: It became clear the importance of the ability to delegate tasks appropriately, make informed decisions on what tasks to automate, and maintain an open and alert mindset while integrating AI into creative workflows.

6. Adaptability and experimentation: The willingness to experiment with AI tools, play around, and adapt workflows based on the pros and cons of different AI applications to enhance creativity while maintaining originality.

Overall, the competencies highlighted focus on the need for regulatory awareness, strong analytical skills, and critical thinking to effectively integrate AI tools while ensuring creative integrity and compliance with evolving rules and regulations.

Preferred Training Formats for Learning Complex Topics like AI Compliance and Risk Management

Respondents express a strong preference for **interactive and practical learning formats** when it comes to complex topics like AI compliance and risk management:

1. Workshops and hands-on practice: A clear preference for workshops and hands-on practice, where participants can directly apply concepts to real-life scenarios and engage in experiential learning. These formats allow students to learn from experienced professionals and enable participants to grasp complex topics through active involvement.

2. Online modules and self-assessment tools: Several respondents also appreciate online modules and self-assessment tools, which provide structured content that can be accessed at one's own pace. This format is useful for foundational learning and self-paced evaluation.

3. Combination of formats: Some respondents find a combination of various learning methods most effective, such as starting with online modules, followed by in-person workshops, or integrating video content and written overviews with interactive components for deeper understanding.

4. Clear and accessible easy-to-understand materials: This need is highlighted, especially for ongoing reference. Modular content and detailed explanations help build foundational knowledge that can be revisited later.

3. Conclusion

The responses in Germany highlight a strong demand for practical, structured, and industry-specific AI training to help creative professionals navigate compliance, risk management, and ethical AI use while maximizing AI's potential for innovation.

- Professionals need clear, actionable guidance on AI regulations (e.g., AI Act, GDPR, IP laws) to ensure compliance, especially for SMEs.

- Practical tools like self-assessment checklists, case studies, and compliance templates will help them integrate legal requirements into their workflows.

- A systematic approach to AI risk assessment is needed, covering data security, misinformation, IP concerns, and transparency in AI-generated content.

- Training should emphasize critical thinking, human oversight, and ethical AI use to balance innovation with responsibility.

- Prompt engineering and AI literacy are essential to ensure efficient use of AI tools and better creative outputs.

- Participants need data interpretation skills to leverage AI insights without blindly trusting its results.

- Training should explore best practices for integrating AI while maintaining human creativity and strategic decision-making.

- Professionals must ensure originality and authenticity in their creative work.

- Respondents favor interactive and hands-on learning, particularly workshops, case studies, and real-world applications.

- Online modules, self-assessment tools, and clear reference materials provide flexible learning options.

- A blended approach, combining theoretical online learning with in-person practical sessions, is seen as the most effective.

The training should focus on practical applications, real-world compliance strategies, and advanced AI skills tailored to creative industries. It must provide accessible, structured learning formats to ensure that digital innovators can confidently and ethically leverage AI for creative success.

Annex 2: Focus Group Bulgaria- Summary of the Answers

1. Focus Groups and Respondents in Bulgaria

Partner organization	Budakov Films
Country	Bulgaria
Date and hour:	14.02.2025, 16:30
Duration:	60 min.
Participants Profile	
Participant No	34-year-old female, working as a marketing specialist
No.1	23-year-old female post-graduate student in graphic design and designer
No. 2	20-year-old female Public Relations student from the Romani minority in Bulgaria
No.3	20-year-old female Public Relations student, currently unemployed
No. 4	24-year-old male, working as a freelance photographer
No.5	27-year-old male graphic designer, working in an advertising agency, while also freelancing
No.6	25-year-old male junior account manager in an advertising agency
No. 7	34-year-old female, working as a marketing specialist
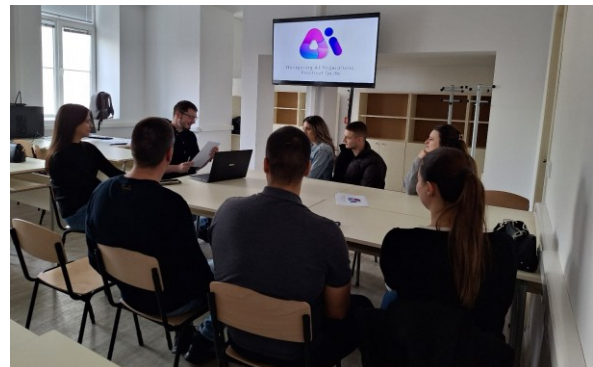
2. Summary of the Discussion

Block 1. Understanding of AI and Regulatory Implications

Questions:

- How familiar are you with the AI Act and its implications for the creative industry?
- What specific aspects of the AI Act do you find most relevant or challenging to understand in your work?
- How do you currently assess and manage risks associated with using AI in your creative work?
- Do you feel confident in ensuring compliance with regulations like the AI Act? If not, what support would help you feel more prepared?

Summary of Block No1

The participants were largely unfamiliar with the AI Act and – respectively with any implications it might have on the creative industry. Upon further discussions it was revealed that there is some awareness regarding the EU's efforts at introducing AI regulations, but the term "AI Act" itself is not popular or recognizable.

During the discussion it was revealed that most people were surprised to see AI regulations focusing on fake CVs and application forms. The most relevant topic is seen as potential job losses in the future, and this is the necessary regulation.

Existing risks include:

- Loss of employment
- Fake news propagation and misinformation
- Copyright infringement
- Too much personal information gathered by tech companies.

Participants commented that the capability for compliance depends on access to clear guidance and resources. Such are currently missing at the European level. Some are aware of AI governance frameworks; challenges may arise due to evolving regulations.

Block 2. Integration of AI into Creative Practices

Questions:

- How has the use of AI tools impacted your creative processes or workflow?
- What types of AI tools or applications do you currently use, and how do they enhance or limit your creative work?
- What skills do you think are essential for effectively integrating AI into your creative practices?
- What opportunities or risks do you see in using AI for your creative projects?

Summary of Block 2

The use of AI tools has significantly transformed creative processes in the workplace by streamlining workflows, automating repetitive tasks, and accelerating content generation. These tools allow creatives to focus more on ideation, innovation, and refining their work rather than spending excessive time on labor-intensive processes.

This is applicable to both generating text, designing visuals, or editing videos. This enhances efficiency by reducing manual effort and speeding up production timelines. As a result, creative professionals can meet deadlines faster, experiment with new ideas more freely, and allocate more time to high-level strategic thinking and artistic refinement.

The tools that participants report to using are focused on two main areas – generating text, content, and generating visuals. The most reported technologies are ChatGPT for text, and built-in AI tools in Photoshop and Canva for images. Midjourney is also popular as a brand but is not widely used in practice. The platform is seen as complicated to use, compared to others, even though it is exclusively used for graphic design.

In terms of opportunities, participants list the following:

- Saving time
- Allow for fast prototyping and user testing,
- Technological integration.

The risks however are also significant.

- Layoffs,
- Confidentiality of the generated information,
- Changing AI uses regulations and legal requirements for copyrights.

Block 3. Learning Needs and Future Competencies

- What topics or areas related to AI (e.g., compliance, risk management, ethical use) would you like to learn more about?
- What key competencies do you think will be critical for creative professionals in the next 3-5 years as AI continues to evolve?
- What type of training format (e.g., workshops, online modules, hands-on practice) do you find most effective for learning complex topics like AI compliance and risk management?

Summary of Block 3

Participants would like to learn more about AI compliance, particularly in relation to evolving regulations like the AI Act and how they impact creative industries. Additionally, gaining a deeper understanding of risk management strategies is noted as important. The participants outline the following:

- Including mitigating biases
- Ensuring intellectual property protection
- Maintaining data privacy.

Ethical AI use is another key area of interest, especially in terms of responsible content generation.

The competent use of AI requires skills such as critical thinking, technical literacy, and basic knowledge in English. The latter is reported by the focus group, because it is commonly perceived that AI generating tools are not as good at understanding/producing based on Bulgarian-language promotes. Indeed, some people would rather write a prompt in English and later translate the reply in Bulgarian.

Most participants in the focus group prefer online training as their primary method for increasing their knowledge of AI. This preference is explained by its flexibility, accessibility, and self-paced nature of online learning.

Online training also provides a wide range of resources, such as:

- Interactive courses
- Webinars,
- Virtual workshops.

These would suffice to enable participants to deepen their understanding of AI compliance, risk management, ethical considerations, and practical applications in their respective fields.

About the Project

The Erasmus+ co-funded project Navigating AI Regulations: A Practical Guide (Project Number: 2024-2-DE02-KA210-VET-000287096) aims to bridge critical gaps in AI knowledge, digital skills, and EU policy awareness among trainers and freelancers in the creative industry. Grounded in an in-depth Needs Analysis conducted during the preparation stage, the project adopts a targeted approach to support the digital transformation of this dynamic sector.

The project has three core objectives:

- Improving AI and Data Usage Competence: By delivering a tailored training program to 57 participants, the project will enhance understanding of AI Act provisions, including risk classification, compliance, transparency, and data governance. This knowledge will empower trainers to guide young entrepreneurs in leveraging AI for business innovation while adhering to regulatory standards.

- Enhancing Digital Skills for AI in Creativity: Participants will gain proficiency in AI-powered tools, data analysis, and AI literacy, enabling them to integrate cutting-edge technologies into creative processes. This objective focuses on fostering innovation, improving creative workflows, and building digital resilience in the sector.

- Boosting EU Policy and AI Act Awareness: By increasing familiarity with EU policies and ethical frameworks, the project will ensure participants operate responsibly and in compliance with the AI Act, fostering trust and sustainable growth in the creative industry.

The project's output will directly contribute to equipping trainers and freelancers with the tools and knowledge to thrive in an AI-driven future while aligning with EU regulatory and ethical standards.