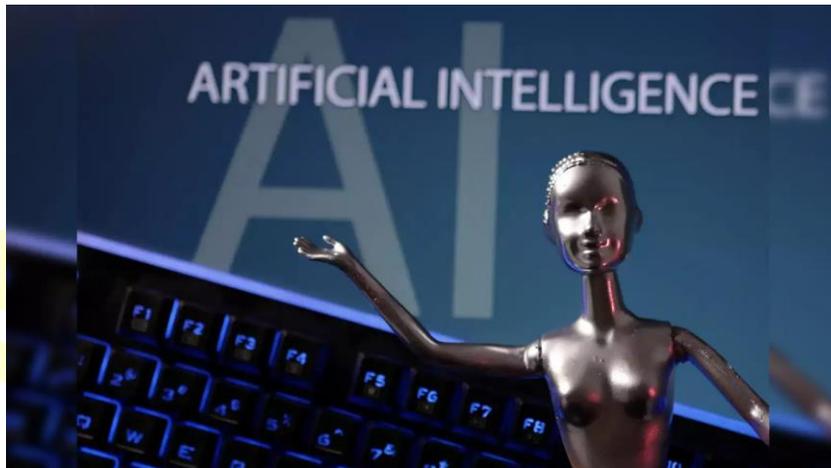


# US, Britain, EU To Sign First International AI Treaty

## Why In News

- **United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom (UK)** are expected to sign the Council of Europe's convention on artificial intelligence (AI), **the first "legally binding"** international treaty on the use of the revolutionary new technology.



## About The Treaty

- **AI Convention**, which has been in the works for years and was adopted in May after discussions **between 57 countries**, addresses the risks AI may pose.
- The treaty, officially known as the **Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law**, was opened for signature during a conference of **Council of Europe Ministers of Justice in Vilnius, Lithuania**.
- The treaty that was **drafted over the past 24 months** by more than **50 countries** adopts a risk-based approach to the design, development, use, and decommissioning of AI systems.



- It covers the use of AI systems in the **public sector** — including companies acting on its behalf — and in the **private sector**, and will be applicable across geographies.
- **Signatories will be accountable** for “any harmful and discriminatory outcomes of AI systems”, and will ensure that “outputs of such systems respect equality and privacy rights, and that victims of AI-related rights violations have legal recourse”.



- Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović said: “The Framework Convention on **Artificial Intelligence is a first-of-its-kind**, global treaty that will ensure that AI upholds people’s rights.
- It is a response to the need for an international legal standard supported by states in different continents which share the same values to harness the benefits of AI, while mitigating the risks.

- With this new treaty, we aim to ensure a responsible use of AI that respects human rights, the rule of law and democracy.”

## Obligations And Applicability

- Their AI systems are “consistent with obligations to protect human rights”;
- these systems are not used “to undermine the integrity, independence and effectiveness of democratic institutions and processes, including the principle of the separation of powers, respect for judicial independence and access to justice”.



- Measures are put in place “to protect...democratic processes in the context of activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems”, including individuals’ fair access to and participation in public debate, as well as their ability to freely form opinions.



- There are a **few exemptions in the scope of applicability** of the Framework Convention, such as national security and research and development. The treaty puts an obligation on parties to address the risks posed by activities within the lifecycle of AI by public and private actors.



- **The treaty comes at a time when sovereign governments and smaller multilateral groups have come up with a clutch of new regulations and agreements to oversee AI tools**, including the G7 pact on AI (October 2023), Europe's AI Act, and Bletchley Declaration signed by 28 countries

## Issues

- Even though the treaty is **being called “legally binding”**, there are concerns that it does not contain provisions for punitive sanctions such as penalties or fines. Compliance is primarily ensured through “monitoring”, which is not much of a deterrent from an enforcement point of view.

