

AI Governance Capacity in Public Administration: A Comparative Analysis of the EU and Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

This study compares artificial intelligence (AI) governance in public services in the European Union (EU) and Türkiye, focusing on institutional design and administrative capacity. Through a comparative institutional–legal analysis grounded in administrative capacity theory and a four-dimensional analytical framework, it examines the EU AI Act and Türkiye’s sectoral governance arrangements to assess accountability, transparency, and enforceability in practice. The findings show that the EU has established a horizontal, risk-based governance framework, whereas Türkiye’s approach remains characterized by sectoral fragmentation and a lack of a unified regulatory framework, with limited coordination and weak oversight capacity. The analysis identifies three main gaps: the absence of a formal risk classification system, unclear accountability arrangements, and insufficient institutional capacity for effective supervision. The study offers theoretically grounded recommendations to strengthen Türkiye’s public-sector AI governance capacity in line with international standards.

KEYWORDS

AI Governance, Public Administration, Administrative Capacity, EU AI Act, Türkiye, Risk-Based Regulation

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) as a transformative technology has created fundamental challenges for legal and administrative systems worldwide (Correia et al., 2024; Sobrino-García, 2021; Wirtz et al., 2020). AI is increasingly applied in rights-and risk-sensitive public domains, including healthcare (Busnatu et al., 2022; Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Kuwaiti et al., 2023; Shang et al., 2024), financial decision-making such as credit scoring and fraud detection (Ahmed & Iqbal, 2025; Ali et al., 2022; Černevičienė & Kabašinskas, 2024; Hafez et al., 2025), law enforcement and surveillance practices (Berk, 2020; Ersöz et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2024), public administration including welfare and resource allocation (Madan & Ashok, 2023; Zuiderwijk et al., 2021), and judicial decision-making processes (Kolkman et al., 2024; McKay, 2019; Nouri et al., 2024; Ryberg, 2024). These developments place public administration at the center of AI governance, as governments increasingly rely on algorithmic systems for service delivery and decision support. As

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AI becomes more embedded in rights-sensitive decision-making, the urgency of effective governance has intensified (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020; Levy et al., 2021; Motadi, 2024).

Public administration presents a particularly acute governance challenge in this landscape. Unlike private sector deployments, AI systems operated by public authorities directly mediate access to rights and entitlements—from immigration status and welfare eligibility (Beduschi, 2020; Enqvist, 2024; Nalbandian, 2022) to predictive policing and judicial decision support (De La Osa & Remolina, 2024; Dou & Dou, 2025; Fitzpatrick et al., 2018; Kolkman et al., 2024). State authority amplifies both the transformative potential and the governance risks of algorithmic decision-making: errors are not merely inefficient but may directly infringe on fundamental rights, while accountability mechanisms that function in commercial contexts—market competition, consumer choice, civil litigation—are structurally weaker in public-sector settings. These characteristics make the governance risks of bias, opacity, and accountability gaps especially consequential when AI is embedded in public institutions (Chiu et al., 2022; Vatamanu & Tofan, 2025).

The integration of AI into public-sector operations raises legal and institutional challenges, particularly in procurement and regulatory design (Licata, 2025). As a European Union (EU) candidate country, Türkiye faces additional governance complexities related to regulatory capacity and technological development (Can, 2022; Özlü, 2025). These dynamics highlight the importance of core good governance principles in public-sector AI adoption (Aldemir & Uysal, 2025). While Turkish policymakers have acknowledged the strategic importance of AI through the National AI Strategy 2021–2025 and its 2024–2025 Action Plan (Presidency’s Digital Transformation Office, 2021, 2024), the development of effective administrative systems and enforceable legal frameworks remains incomplete. The two legislative proposals introduced in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) in 2024 and 2025 represent important steps toward addressing regulatory gaps. However, significant questions persist regarding institutional design, regulatory scope, and enforcement mechanisms. More broadly, these challenges reflect recurring constraints on administrative capacity in AI governance.

The EU has developed a comprehensive AI regulatory model that provides a useful basis for comparison. The EU AI Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) constitutes the most comprehensive international horizontal framework for AI governance, introducing a risk-based classification system, dedicated oversight structures, and harmonized regulatory requirements across member states (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2024). This governance model reflects the EU’s broader regulatory approach (Bradford, 2020) and builds on existing legal frameworks, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and relevant sector-specific regulations (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2016).

This article addresses a gap in the literature on AI governance implementation in developing and candidate countries. By comparing Türkiye’s fragmented and evolving governance approach with the EU AI Act, it identifies institutional, regulatory, and enforcement challenges shaping the design of a practically enforceable AI governance model for Türkiye. These challenges reflect broader constraints on administrative capacity observed in developing and candidate-country contexts (Frimpong, 2025; Kampira & Mukonza, 2025). The analysis is guided by three research questions:

- How does the EU AI Act operationalize AI oversight through institutional design and risk-based regulation?
- What is the current state of AI governance in Türkiye, and where do gaps in coordination and enforcement persist?
- What lessons can Türkiye draw from the EU AI Act to strengthen its AI governance framework and regulatory capacity?

This study aims to make three contributions to public administration scholarship. First, it advances the application of administrative capacity theory to AI governance by developing a four-dimensional

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