

South Korea opens its AI Safety Institute in Pangyo, led by Kim Myuhng-joo

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Kim Myuhng-joo, the Inaugural chief of AI Safety Institute, speaks during an opening ceremony in Pangyo, Gyeonggi Province, Nov. 27. Yonhap Published Nov 27, 2024 4:31 PM KST Updated Nov 27, 2024 4:49 PM KST

Korea's artificial intelligence safety institute officially opened its doors Wednesday with an aim to respond to various risks associated with the fast-evolving technology, the science ministry said. The new AI Safety Institute comes as a follow-up to the AI Seoul Summit held here in May, where leaders from Korea, Britain and eight other nations adopted a joint declaration on promoting safe, innovative and inclusive AI, according to the Ministry of Science and ICT. The institute, located in Pangyo, just south of Seoul, will spearhead the country's research on risks involving AI, such as abuse and loss of control of the technology, while also serving as a network hub for the industry, academics and research institutes studying AI safety. It will also take part in the international network of AI safety institutes to promote global discussions on the agenda, the ministry said. Kim Myuhng-joo, an information security professor at Seoul Women's University, has been appointed as the inaugural chief of the institute. "The institute will play a role as an organization supporting local AI companies to minimize risk factors that can hinder the firms from strengthening their global competitiveness, rather than working as a regulatory body," Kim said during the institute's opening ceremony. In the ceremony, a consortium of AI-related firms, universities and institutes signed a memorandum of understanding to join hands for research, policymaking and evaluation of AI safety. A total of 24 entities, including leading tech firms like Naver, KT and Kakao, as well as top universities like Seoul National University, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, and Korea University, are initial members of the consortium, according to the ministry. After the ceremony, Kim told reporters he held discussions with European AI safety officials at the International Network of AI Safety Institutes in San Francisco last week on possible ways to help Korean firms to receive regulatory exemption when entering the European market for complying with local AI-related laws. Korea has also decided to join Japan and Singapore for research on the phenomenon of AI giving different answers to the same questions under different languages and cultural contexts, according to Kim. With regard to the international network of AI safety institutes, Kim said the United States has been named the chair of the network, with the vice chair yet to be decided. (Yonhap)