The report on the use of AI in Italy's civil justice system was highly interesting and and it was highly instructive for Japan. I would like to discuss the use of AI in Japan's civil justice system.

In Japan, AI utilization is most advanced in the private sector, but it is also progressing within the public administration. In May 2025, Japan enacted the "Act on Promotion of Research and Development and Utilization of Artificial Intelligence-Related Technologies" (Act No. 53 of 2025) (hereinafter referred to as the "AI Act"), which serves as a systematic basic law on AI. It came into full effect on September 1 of the same year. This law has a relatively weak regulatory character. As its name suggests, it emphasizes promoting research, development, and utilization, with its primary focus on establishing the necessary frameworks for these purposes. It does not include sanction provisions like those in the EU's AI Act. Based on this law, the "Basic Plan for Artificial Intelligence," was approved by the Cabinet on December 23, 2025, that establishes the fundamental principle of balancing the promotion of innovation in AI with risk management. It is based on the idea that building governance to ensure the appropriateness of AI and enhancing its reliability will lead to the promotion of AI utilization. The Digital Agency is developing "Government AI (tentative name)", a common AI platform for the government, and is advancing its deployment to various ministries and agencies. As part of the initiatives related to "Government AI (tentative name)," a generative AI environment called "Gennai," developed by the Digital Agency, is undergoing demonstration operations within the Agency. It is being used for tasks such as searching parliamentary responses, researching legal systems, summarizing web information and reference materials, and creating meeting minutes.

Japan has 47 large local governments called prefectures. Within each prefecture are smaller local governments called municipalities. As of fiscal year 2024, 87.2% of these prefectures had already introduced generative AI. Furthermore, large cities with significant populations are designated by ordinance to handle affairs similar to prefectures and are called Designated Cities. As of fiscal year 2024, 90.0% of Designated Cities had introduced generative AI. Among the designated cities, some, like Kobe City, have taken the lead by enacting ordinances establishing rules for AI use by employees, even before the national AI Act. In contrast, for cities other than designated cities and for wards and villages, the adoption rate of generative AI in fiscal year 2024 remained at only 29.9%.

What about the use of generative AI in the judiciary? The Supreme Court established a

study group in January 2026 to examine AI use in civil trials. This group comprises six mid-career judges with experience in civil litigation. Japan's Supreme Court fundamentally maintains that fact-finding and legal judgments must be performed by human judges and has no intention of delegating these tasks to generative AI. The Supreme Court of Japan has begun examining how generative AI can enhance efficiency in tasks such as: generating summaries of written submissions from plaintiffs and defendants; organizing evidence chronologically; assisting in checking for deficiencies in forms; transcribing audio data; and aiding in case law searches and issue summarization. For security reasons, the verification will use fictitious civil court records fed into multiple generative AI services. This reflects the Japanese Supreme Court's view that AI use in courts should focus on reducing the administrative burden on judges, judicial research officials, and court clerks. Fact-finding and legal interpretation by judges remain the exclusive domain of human judges and cannot be replaced by machine-based generative AI. The reason for conducting such empirical experiments and making careful judgments about the use of generative AI in civil trials is that generative AI faces numerous challenges that must be addressed, including security, data reliability, and issues related to copyright law.

On the other hand, what is the situation regarding lawyers' use of AI? In Japan, Article 72 of the Attorney Act prohibits persons other than attorneys or attorney corporations from handling legal affairs such as expert opinions or representation in legal matters like litigation for remuneration, except where otherwise provided by law. Consequently, it was unclear whether the paid provision of contract-related support services using AI violated Article 72, creating hesitation regarding its use. In August 2023, the Judicial Affairs Department of the Ministry of Justice clarified its position on this matter in writing ("Regarding the Relationship Between Providing Contract-Related Support Services Using AI and Article 72 of the Attorney Act").

Additionally, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations' AI Strategy Working Group has compiled "Precautions Regarding the Use of Generative AI in Attorney Practice" (February 2026 update).The documents state:① When inputting information into generative AI, if the information includes data subject to confidentiality obligations towards clients, other stakeholders, or third parties, or includes personal information/personal data, appropriate measures must be taken to avoid breaching confidentiality obligations, violating the

Personal Information Protection Act, or infringing on privacy.② When inputting information into generative AI that is subject to another party's copyright, the Copyright Act must be complied with.③ When using the output (generative content) from generative AI, lawyers must verify the output content (generations) while being mindful of the risk that it may contain falsehoods, errors, illegal, or inappropriate content, and must exercise their independent professional judgment regarding its appropriateness. In principle, the lawyer bears ultimate responsibility for the results arising from the use of the output content. ④ When utilizing generative AI for legal practice, it is necessary to acquire basic knowledge regarding its risks and appropriate countermeasures. Furthermore, lawyers are encouraged to strive to acquire the necessary knowledge for evaluating evidence and materials created, processed, analyzed, etc., using AI.⑤ As a law firm, it is recommended to ensure that affiliated lawyers and staff do not use AI inappropriately and to provide training and education opportunities regarding AI use for affiliated lawyers and staff.