

Press release – Parliament leads the way on first set of EU rules for Artificial Intelligence



The European Parliament is among the first institutions to put forward recommendations on what AI rules should include with regards to ethics, liability and intellectual property rights. These recommendations will pave the way for the EU to become a global leader in the development of AI. The Commission legislative proposal is expected early next year.

Ethics framework for AI

The [legislative initiative](#) by [Iban García del Blanco](#) (S&D, ES) urges the EU Commission to present a new legal framework outlining the ethical principles and legal obligations to be followed when developing, deploying and using artificial intelligence, robotics and related technologies in the EU including software, algorithms and data.

It was adopted with 559 votes in favour, 44 against, and 88 abstentions.

Future laws should be made in accordance with several guiding principles, including: a human-centric and human-made AI; safety, transparency and accountability; safeguards against bias and discrimination; right to redress; social and environmental responsibility; and respect for privacy and data

protection.

High-risk AI technologies, such as those with self-learning capacities, should be designed to allow for human oversight at any time. If a functionality is used that would result in a serious breach of ethical principles and could be dangerous, the self-learning capacities should be disabled and full human control should be restored.

Liability for AI causing damage

The legislative initiative by [Axel Voss](#) (EPP, DE) calls for a future-oriented civil liability framework, making those operating high-risk AI strictly liable for any resulting damage. A clear legal framework would stimulate innovation by providing businesses with legal certainty, whilst protecting citizens and promoting their trust in AI technologies by deterring activities that might be dangerous.

The rules should apply to physical or virtual AI activity that harms or damages life, health, physical integrity, property, or that causes significant immaterial harm if it results in “verifiable economic loss”. While high-risk AI technologies are still rare, MEPs believe that their operators should hold insurance similar to that used for motor vehicles.

The legislative initiative was adopted with 626 votes in favour, 25 against, and 40 abstentions.

Intellectual property rights

The report by [Stéphane Séjourné](#) (Renew Europe, FR) makes clear that EU global leadership in AI requires an effective intellectual property rights system (IPR) and safeguards for the EU’s patent system to protect innovative developers, while stressing that this should not come at the expense of human creators’ interests, nor the European Union’s ethical principles.

MEPs believe it is important to distinguish between AI-assisted human creations and AI-generated creations. They specify that AI should not have legal personality; thus, ownership of IPRs should only be granted to humans. The text looks further into copyright, data collection, trade secrets, the use of algorithms and deep fakes.

The report was adopted with 612 votes in favour, 66 against, and 12 abstentions.

[Press release – Digital: The EU must](#)

set the standards for regulating online platforms, say MEPs



MEPs approved tonight two separate [“legislative initiative”](#) reports calling on the Commission to address and tackle current shortcomings in the online environment in its Digital Services Act (DSA) package, due to be presented in December.

The current EU rules for digital services have remained largely unchanged since the e-commerce directive was adopted twenty years ago. With the upcoming package, the European Union aims to shape the digital economy at EU level as well as setting the standards for the rest of the world, as it did with data protection.

Stronger rules to tackle illegal content online

All digital service providers established in third countries must adhere to the DSA's rules when their services are also aimed at consumers or users in the EU, MEPs say.

A binding “notice-and-action” mechanism must be set up so that users can notify online intermediaries about potentially illegal online content or activities. This would help online intermediaries to react quickly and be more transparent regarding the actions they have taken on potentially illegal content. Users should be able to seek redress through a national dispute settlement body.

Parliament calls for a strict distinction to be made between illegal content and harmful content (the legal liability regime should concern “illegal content” only as defined in EU or national law).

Platforms should not use upload filters or any form of *ex-ante* content control for harmful or illegal content. The final decision on whether content is legal or not should instead be taken by an independent judiciary and not by private undertakings, say MEPs.

Harmful content, hate speech and disinformation should be dealt with through enhanced transparency obligations and by helping citizens to acquire media and digital literacy regarding the dissemination of such content.

A safer internet for consumers

The principle of “what is illegal offline is also illegal online”, as well as consumer protection and user safety, should become the future DSA’s “guiding principles”, says Parliament.

Platforms and online intermediation services will need to get better at detecting and taking down false claims and tackling rogue traders, e.g. those selling false medical equipment or dangerous products online, as happened during the COVID-19 outbreak.

MEPs also call for a new “Know Your Business Customer” principle to be introduced, requiring platforms to check and stop fraudulent companies using their services to sell their illegal and unsafe products and content.

Specific rules to prevent (instead of merely remedy) market failures caused by big platforms must also be tabled to open up markets to new entrants, including SMEs and start-ups, MEPs add. More information on the Internal Market Committee’s demands, backed by plenary with 571 votes to 26, with 94 abstentions, [here](#) and [here](#).

Making users less dependent on algorithms

MEPs want to provide users with more control over what they see online, including being able to opt out of content curation altogether, and to make them less dependent on algorithms. Targeted advertising must be regulated more strictly in favour of less intrusive, contextualised forms of advertising that require less data and do not depend on previous user interaction with content. MEPs also call on the Commission to further assess options for regulating targeted advertising, including a phase-out leading to a ban.

The upcoming DSA should also provide for the right to use digital services anonymously whenever possible. Finally, to ensure compliance with the new rules, the Commission should assess options for setting up a European entity to monitor and impose fines. For more details on the Legal Affairs Committee demands approved with 637 votes to 26, with 28 abstentions, [here](#) and [here](#).

Fundamental rights online

A third, non-legislative resolution by the [Civil Liberties Committee](#), approved by 566 votes to 45, with 80 abstentions, focuses on fundamental rights issues. It calls for content removal to be “diligent, proportionate and non-discriminatory” to safeguard freedom of expression and information, as well as privacy and data protection. MEPs also point out that microtargeting based on people’s vulnerabilities is problematic, as is the spreading of hate speech and disinformation, asking for transparency on the monetisation policies of online platforms.

Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee rapporteur: [Alex Agius Saliba \(S&D, MT\)](#)

Legal Affairs Committee rapporteur: [Tiemmo Wölken \(S&D, DE\)](#)

Civil Liberties Committee rapporteur: [Kris Peeters \(EPP, BE\)](#)

Media advisory – Environment Council, 23 October 2020



The **press briefing** ahead of the Environment Council will take place on **Thursday, 22 October at 10:00**. This briefing will be “off the record”.

Please note that this press briefing will take place remotely.

In order to participate and ask questions, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#).

Those who already registered for the previous briefings of Environment Council do not need to do it again.

- **Deadline for the registration: Thursday, 22 October at 09:00**

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants shortly after the deadline.

For more information, [visit the meeting page](#).

Press release – President Sassoli

press conference on COVID-19 developments and plenary votes



European Parliament President David Sassoli will hold a press conference today at 15.00 on the latest COVID-19 developments and major files on this week's plenary agenda. He will also share information on the Parliament's updated working procedures during the second wave of COVID-19 in Europe.

Follow the press conference LIVE on Parliament's [webstreaming](#) or [EbS](#).

Journalists can attend the press conference in person, respecting the precautionary measures in force (see below), but are, however, encouraged to participate remotely and ask questions via Skype.

Parliament will be using an interactive virtual press environment (with interpretation) based on Skype TX, in conjunction with the traditional EbS and web-streaming services.

If you wish to ask a question:

- You will need a SKYPE account;
- Connect to VOXBOXEP and write your name and media organisation in the chat box.

You only need to connect through Skype if you wish to ask a question.

Please use headphones and a microphone for better sound quality.

The system will be managed by Parliament's media services and you will be placed in a queue (virtual waiting room) before being invited to ask your question(s).

If you have any trouble connecting, you can contact: +32 22834220 or use the Skype chat box.

After asking a question / listening to the reply (and any follow-up), you should then disconnect from Skype so that the next journalist in line can be connected to the press briefing room.

REMINDER: working conditions in Parliament for journalists in light of Coronavirus

Due to the current public health situation, and in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Parliament is reducing the need for physical meetings on its premises. This is being done without compromising its role of democratic scrutiny and its ability to approve the necessary legislative measures to combat the virus and support the public, consumers, businesses and emergency services.

Parliamentary activities still taking place (including this week's plenary session) will be web-streamed and can be followed by the media without requiring your physical presence on EP premises.

You are therefore advised not to come in person unless necessary. If you do so, please respect the recommended guidelines on physical distancing and hygiene. Please refrain from coming to EP premises if you present any symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you have knowingly been in contact with an infected person.

- Although most Members of Parliament will be participating remotely, if you need to interview Members of Parliament, please give preference to telephone or online methods unless absolutely necessary.
- The Vox Box recording studio is open but must be booked in advance and physical distancing must be respected at all times.
- The press tribune in the hemicycle will be accessible (limited capacity).
- The press work room will remain open with clear physical distancing, and precautionary measures in place must be fully respected.

[Press release – Commission tries to secure Parliament's support to tackle a difficult year ahead](#)



The 2021 work programme has to help Europe move beyond the fragility created by the crisis and seize the opportunity to prepare for a green, digital and more resilient future for everyone, said Vice-President Šefčovič. He then listed the main points of the [2021 EC work programme](#), which was put together by Commissioners and EP committee chairs. To strengthen democracy and fundamental rights in the EU and “ensure that everyone has a say”, Šefčovič also insisted that the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) should start as soon as possible.

Time to deliver

All but one of the political group speakers welcomed the Commission’s plans for action, in particular on better health coordination, economic recovery and resilience. They called for social justice to accompany Europe’s digitalisation and green transition. For its plans to come to fruition, the Commission needs to fight alongside Parliament for a solid long-term budget (MFF) now, some insisted.

Next Steps

The Commission’s 2021 work programme is the result of close cooperation with the European Parliament, member states and EU consultative bodies. Public discussions began with the [State of the European Union plenary debate](#) with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 16 September. The Commission will now start discussions with the Parliament and Council to establish a list of joint priorities on which co-legislators agree to take swift action.