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Climate change: Parliament votes to reduce Member States' emissions by 40%

The 14th of March, the European Parliament has voted in favor of a Resolution that calls for a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by Member States. This is a significant move towards combatting climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for Europe. **The Resolution calls for Member States to take action to reduce emissions in all sectors, including transport, agriculture, and energy.**



The EU has already set a target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030, but this new Resolution goes even further.

The Resolution in question, which was adopted with 486 votes to 132 and 10 abstentions, sets binding annual reductions for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission for road transport, heating of buildings, agriculture, small industrial installations and waste management for each EU Member State.

It increases the 2030 GHG reduction target at EU level from 30% to 40% compared to 2005-levels. For the first time in fact, all EU countries must now reduce GHG emissions with targets ranging between 10 and 50%. The 2030-targets for each Member States are based on GDP per capita and cost-effectiveness. Member States will also have to ensure every year that they do not exceed their annual GHG emission allocation.

The text strikes a balance between the need for EU countries to be flexible to achieve their targets while ensuring a just and socially fair transition, and the need to close loopholes so the overall EU reduction target is met. **For this reason, there are limits on how many emissions Member States can save from previous years, borrow from future years, as well as on how much they can trade allocations with other Member States.**

In order to be able to hold Member States accountable, the Commission will make information public on national actions in an easily accessible form, as requested by Parliament.

After the vote, **the rapporteur, Ms. Jessica Polfjärd, MEP (EPP, SV) declared:**

"With this law, we take a major step forward in delivering on the EU's climate goals. The new rules for national emission cuts ensure that all member states contribute and that existing loopholes are closed. This allows us to send a clear signal that the EU is serious about being the global champion for a competitive and efficient climate agenda."

The text now also has to be formally endorsed by Council. It will then be published in the EU Official Journal and enter into force 20 days later.

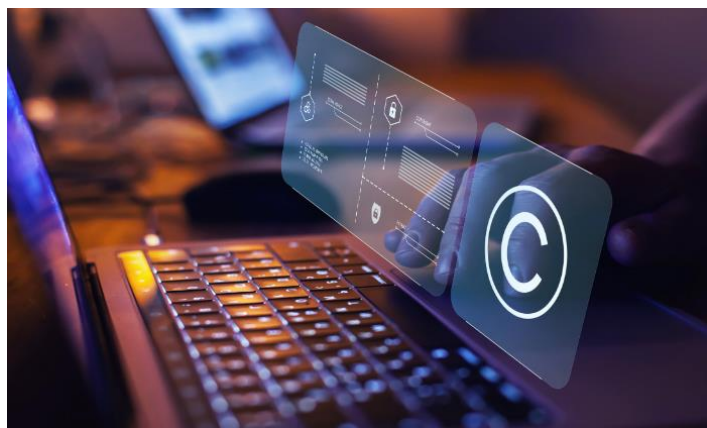
You may find further information [here](#).

European Commission to propose competence centre on essential tech patents

The European Commission is set to propose the creation of a **Competence Centre on Essential Tech Patents**. This new initiative aims to help European companies navigate the complex landscape of intellectual property rights and patents in the digital age.

The project stems from the **Commission's 2020 Action Plan on Intellectual Property**, which included a pledge to introduce measures to "improve transparency and predictability" in standard essential patents (SEP) licensing, given their centrality to the digital transformation of Europe's industry. The regulation proposes rules on licensing transparency, SEP registration, evaluation of SEP essentiality, and dispute resolution processes related to fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) terms. **According to the draft proposal, the SEP licensing system faces several issues, including insufficient transparency regarding SEPs, FRAND terms and conditions and licensing, and the unavailability of dispute resolution procedures suitable for resolving FRAND disputes.**

The proposal's centerpiece is creating a new Competence Centre housed within the existing European Union Intellectual Property Office. The centre will be tasked with supporting SEP licensing transparency and FRAND determination. It will carry out several specific functions, including establishing and maintaining a SEP register managing a roster of SEP evaluators, and constructing systems for assessing



the essentiality of SEPs and determining aggregate royalties. The body will also maintain a case-law library, enable access to SEP-linked rules in third countries and provide training and support to evaluators and SMEs. The SEP register, the centre's key function, contains information on topics such as standards, products and processes, identifying information on claimed SEPs and their owners, and on the technical reasoning behind their classification as essential.

The centre will also maintain an electronic database of information related to relevant case law, third-country SEP rules, competence centre studies and expert opinions. Data on individual SEPs is to be presented to the centre by their owners following formal decisions on essentiality by the Unified Patent Court or a national court. As part of its transparency provisions, the centre will also collect information on FRAND terms and conditions made public or disclosed by SEP owners. It will publish an annual report on the methodologies used for FRAND determinations.

According to the draft, the centre will be tasked to conduct checks on the claimed essentiality of SEPs, publishing the results in its register. There is also a peer evaluation element of annual essentiality checks.

The proposal also clarifies the rules surrounding FRAND determinations, which it says should be initiated by either the SEP owner or prospective implementer and should be concluded within a nine-month window. **The FRAND determination should be a mandatory step before patent infringement proceedings can be initiated by a SEP owner or an assessment of FRAND terms and conditions can be sought by an implementer, the document says.**

You may find more information [here](#).

European Digital Identity: Easy online access to key services

The European Parliament recently announced the launch of the **European Digital Identity (EDI)**, a new initiative aimed at providing easy and secure online access to key services for citizens across the European Union. **The digital identity system is set to revolutionize the way Europeans access important services, from government websites and banking to e-commerce and social media platforms.**

The EDI is expected to provide a single, secure and user-friendly way for people to access a wide range of digital services. **The initiative aims to enable citizens to prove their identity online without having to share sensitive personal data or provide a multitude of passwords and usernames for each individual service they use.** With the new system, EU citizens will be able to create a digital identity that is recognized across the bloc, using either government-issued documents, such as a national ID card or passport, or via a verified digital identity issued by a recognized private entity. The digital identity will be stored on the user's mobile device, enabling them to securely and easily access a wide range of services online.

One of the key advantages of the EDI is that it will make it easier for people to access services across different Member States, particularly for those who frequently travel or work across border. **The**



initiative aims to remove the need for citizens to register with multiple national digital identity systems and provide a single, streamlined solution for accessing services throughout the EU.

The EDI is being developed in close collaboration with Member States, private sector partners, and civil society organisations. It is expected to be launched by mid-2022 and will be available to all EU citizens, as well as to residents of non-EU countries with legal status in the bloc.

The initiative has received wide support from industry groups and consumer advocates, who see it as a **key step towards improving digital access and security for citizens across the EU.** The EDI is expected to facilitate greater competition and innovation in the digital sector, as well as improve consumer trust and confidence in online services. Overall, the EDI is a promising new initiative that has the potential to transform the way of access online services across the European Union. It will provide a secure and user-friendly solution that is recognized throughout the bloc, making it easier for people to access a wide range of services online. **With the launch of this initiative, the EU is taking an important step towards improving digital access and security for all its citizens.**

You may find more information [here](#).

Data act: Commission proposes measures for a fair and innovative data economy

The European Commission recently proposed a new regulation on artificial intelligence (AI), aiming to ensure that AI systems are safe and transparent, respecting fundamental rights and EU values.

The proposed regulation is part of a broader strategy by the EU to become a global leader in AI while ensuring that the technology is used in a responsible way.



The regulation aims to set out clear rules on the development, deployment, and use of AI systems, with the goal of ensuring that they are trustworthy, secure, and respect fundamental rights. The proposal covers a wide range of AI applications, from high-risk systems such as self-driving cars and facial recognition technology to lower-risk applications like chatbots and search engines. **One of the key elements of the proposed regulation is the establishment of a risk-based approach, where the level of oversight and requirements for transparency and human oversight increase with the risk level of the AI system.** High-risk AI systems will be subject to strict requirements, such as independent testing and certification, human oversight, and detailed documentation of the system's decision-making processes.

The proposal also includes a ban on certain AI applications that are considered incompatible with EU values, such as social scoring, where individuals are ranked and evaluated based on their behavior or characteristics, and AI systems that manipulate human behavior in a deceptive way. Another important aspect of the proposed regulations is the focus on transparency and explainability. **High-risk systems must be designed in such a way that the reasoning behind their decisions is understandable to humans. This will help to build trust in AI and ensure that people can understand how and why decisions are being made.**

The proposal has received support from various stakeholders, including industry groups and civil society organisations. The regulation is seen as an important step towards building a trustworthy and ethical framework for AI in Europe, one that prioritizes safety, transparency, and human rights. This is a significant development in the field of transparent AI. By taking a risk-based approach and focusing on transparency and explainability, the EU is setting a global standard for the responsible use of AI, one that prioritizes human rights and safety.

You may find more information about the Data act [here](#).

Eight out of ten firms pay men more than women

A recent article published by the BBC has highlighted the persistent gender pay gap in UK companies. According to the report, eight out of ten firms pay men more than women.

The article sheds light on the unequal pay practices that still exist in many UK workplaces. The findings are based on data from over 10,000 companies, which were required to report their gender pay gap figures to the UK government.

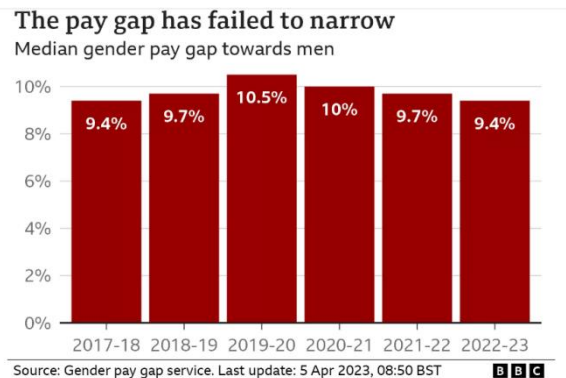
The data reveals that the median pay gap between men and women is 14.6%, which means that for every £1 earned by a man, a woman earns just 85p. The gap is even wider in some sectors, such as finance and insurance, where the median pay gap is 23.3%.

The article suggests that there are a number of factors contributing to the gender pay gap, including the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership roles and the overrepresentation of women in lower-paid, part-time positions. Discrimination and unconscious biases may also play a role in perpetuating pay inequality.

Despite efforts to address the gender pay gap, progress has been slow. The UK government introduced mandatory gender pay gap reporting in 2017, but three years on, little progress has been made in closing the gap. **The article, however, also notes that there are some positive signs of change. Some companies have implemented policies to address the gender pay gap, such as equal pay audits and transparency around salaries. In addition, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of flexible working arrangements, which could benefit women who are juggling work and caregiving responsibilities.**

While the gender pay gap remains a persistent issue in UK companies, there are steps that can be taken to address it. It is crucial for companies to take a proactive approach to identify and address pay inequality, and for individuals to advocate for fair and equal pay practices.

For more information click [here](#).



News from our Members

Victoria Ortega, re-elected president of Unión Profesional

Victoria Ortega, president of the Spanish General Council of Lawyers, was re-elected president of Unión Profesional by an absolute majority at the Extraordinary General Assembly held on 26 April in Madrid.

The tenth elections to the presidency of the state body that brings together 34 General Councils and National Bar Associations - in which the legal, health, scientific, social, economic, teaching, architecture and engineering sectors are represented - have validated, in turn, a new Executive Committee for the next five years.

The collegiate professions have endorsed the continuity of the project structured in the Strategic Plan, which began its outline in 2018 with the will to work on those common and transversal aspects that unite them, and whose ultimate objective is to guarantee the rights of citizens.



In the words of Victoria Ortega: *"The professions are facing an exciting time in a context of uncertainty that demands responsibility from us. There are many challenges ahead of us; we will tackle them with imagination, perseverance and rigour in line with the commitment demanded of us by society"*.

The Executive Committee of the Unión Profesional is organised as follow:

CHAIRPERSON:

Victoria Ortega, President of the General Council of Lawyers.

VICE-PRESIDENCIES:

- José Antonio Galdón, President of the General Council of Industrial Technical Engineering.
- Manuel Regueiro, President of the Association of Geologists.
- Alfredo Sanz Corma, President of the General Council of Technical Architecture.
- Tomás Cobo, President of the General Council of Medical Associations.
- Marta Vall-Ilossera, President of the Higher Council of Architects' Associations.

SECRETARY GENERAL:

- Juan Carlos Estévez, president of the General Council of Solicitors.

DEPUTY SECRETARIES:

- Jesús Aguilar, President of the General Council of Pharmacists' Associations.
- Francisco Santolaya, President of the General Council of Psychology.

TREASURER:

- Emiliana Vicente, president of the General Council of Social Work.

VICE-CHAIR:

- Maria Emilia Adán, dean of the Association of Registrars.

INTERVENTOR:

- Valentí Pich, president of the General Council of Economists.

Dr. Dan Manolescu elected president of the Romanian Union of the Liberal Professions

Since the 15th of March, the Romanian Union of the Liberal Professions (UPLR) has a new President in the person of Dr. Dan Manolescu. The latter holds a PhD in Economics, awarded by the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest and a bachelor degree from Faculty of Law - University of Craiova.



In 2007 he became a Certified Fiscal Consultant, member of the Romanian Chamber of Fiscal Consultants, where he currently also serves as President. He is also a Certified Financial Auditor since 2008. In January 2013 Dr. Manolescu was appointed Secretary of State in the Ministry of Public Finance where he led the efforts behind a major legislative revision enacted in January 2016 that restructured and simplified Romania's tax codes for corporations and businesses and established new anti-fraud provisions.

Dan Manolescu has occupied various positions in the corporate bodies of some banking institutions, such as member of the Board of Directors of CEC Bank SA within 2015-2016, member of the Board of Directors of the National Credit Guarantee Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises SA within 2013-2015, and was elected as member of the Supervisory Board of OMV Petrom in April 2016. In the same year, President Manolescu was awarded with the Eisenhower Fellowship for his achievements.