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# THE TOP 20 EU DIGITAL LAWS THAT DIGITAL POLICY EXPERTS IN BRUSSELS SHOULD KNOW

Kai Zenner  
J. Scott Marcus

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## THE TOP 20 DIGITAL LAWS THAT ALL DIGITAL POLICY EXPERTS SHOULD KNOW

The complexity of EU laws and regulation for the digital world has been growing with dizzying speed. That's why CEPS has been publishing a series of datasets to help experts and policymakers hack their way through the thicket of new EU laws. This new legislative dataset provides:

- a curated list of the 20 most essential EU digital laws and regulations (table 1); and
- a curated list of some of the most important EU digital strategy documents (table 2).

It corresponds to the status quo as of September 2025 and is a complement to our July 2025 *Dataset of EU Legal and Policy Instruments for the Digital World*. We intend to include updated versions of these new tables in future editions of the larger dataset, which will be published on an as-needed basis, typically twice per year.

Table 1 provides a curated list of the 20 most essential EU digital laws and regulations that every policymaker, adviser or stakeholder in the digital field should be familiar with. The ranking is based on our professional activities, extended research and numerous conversations with digital policy experts, in Brussels and beyond. The listed legal frameworks seek to shape the EU's digital governance, innovation ecosystem and global technological positioning.

Table 2 provides a list of several horizontal EU strategies and work plans that are highly relevant to EU experts and policymakers who deal with digital policy. More narrow strategies, such as the Startup and Scaleup Strategy or the AI Continent Action Plan that only affect certain technologies or parts of the technology stack, were not considered. The last two entries in Table 2 should be viewed as influential 'blue ribbon' reports prepared by prominent externals at the EU's request.



Kai Zenner is Head of Office and Digital Policy Adviser for MEP Axel Voss (EPP) in the European Parliament. He focuses on AI and data policy but also promotes the EU's digital transition and Good Governance policies in Brussels. He is 'Fellow of Practice' at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), Member of the OECD.AI Network of Experts and Member of the 'AI Governance Alliance' at the World Economic Forum.

He received EAIF's 'European AI Award' in 2024 and was listed as one of the '14 movers and shakers to watch for in Tech policy' by Euronews in 2025.

J. Scott Marcus is an economist, engineer and public policy analyst. He is an Associate Senior Research Fellow in the Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation and Digital Economy (GRID) Unit at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and a Professor (part-time) and member of the Scientific Committee of the Centre for a Digital Society, European University Institute (EUI / RSCAS). He also works as an independent consultant dealing with (regulatory) policy regarding electronic communications.

All expressed views are personal and do not in any capacity represent the position of the European Parliament or the EPP Group.

**TABLE 1 - CURATED LIST OF THE 20 MOST  
ESSENTIAL EU DIGITAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

|   | LEGAL ACT   | WHY IT MATTERS   |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | <u>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</u><br>(EU) 2016/679 | Cornerstone of the EU's digital rights agenda. Sets the global benchmark for personal data protection and privacy enforcement.   |
| 2 | <u>AI Act</u><br>(EU) 2024/1689                                   | The first comprehensive AI regulation worldwide. Introduces risk-based obligations for AI system providers and deployers as well as rules for GPAI models. Seeks to shape global AI governance.  |
| 3 | <u>Digital Services Act (DSA)</u><br>(EU) 2022/2065               | Lays the foundation for online platform regulation. Establishes due diligence, risk management and transparency obligations across the online ecosystem. Obliges the most important online platforms to respect the fundamental rights of Europeans. |
| 4 | <u>Digital Markets Act (DMA)</u><br>(EU) 2022/1925                | Imposes ex-ante obligations on online digital gatekeeper platforms to enable competitive market entry and to safeguard market fairness and innovation.   |
| 5 | <u>Data Act</u><br>(EU) 2023/2854                                 | Unlocks industrial and Internet of Things (IoT) data for broader use. Mitigates cloud provider lock-in effects for cloud data. Central to Europe's data economy strategy and digital competitiveness.  |
| 6 | <u>Cyber Resilience Act (CRA)</u><br>(EU) 2024/2847               | Landmark regulation for connected products. Requires security-by-design and closes key cybersecurity gaps in hardware as well as software supply chains.   |

|    | LEGAL ACT  | WHY IT MATTERS   |
|----|--|--|
| 7  | <u>eIDAS Regulation</u><br>(EU) No 910/2014                        | Enables secure digital identity and trust services across the EU. Essential for cross-border access to public and private digital services. It was amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 (eIDAS 2.0) which seeks to correct serious cross-border interoperability problems.   |
| 8  | <u>Data Governance Act</u><br>(DGA)<br>(EU) 2022/868               | Introduces new data-sharing frameworks and trusted intermediaries. Complements the Data Act and supports the European data spaces.   |
| 9  | <u>NIS 2 Directive</u><br>(EU) 2022/2555                           | Expands the EU's baseline cybersecurity rules. Covers more sectors, adds stronger oversight, and harmonises incident response.   |
| 10 | <u>Chips Act</u><br>(EU) 2023/1781                                 | Builds Europe's semiconductor capacity. Seeks to mitigate external dependence. Links research, production and crisis preparedness in a key strategic technology.   |
| 11 | <u>European Health Data Space (EHDS)</u><br>(EU) 2025/327          | Obliges a wide range of healthcare providers to capture key data in electronic form. Ensures that patients have the right to have their electronic data conveyed to other providers for specialist care or second opinions (primary use). Makes anonymised or pseudonymised electronic health data available to researchers and public health authorities. |
| 12 | <u>Cybersecurity Act</u><br>(EU) 2019/881                          | Gives ENISA a permanent role and creates the EU cybersecurity certification scheme – foundational for trust and security.  |
| 13 | <u>Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA)</u><br>(EU) 2022/2554 | Mandates robust ICT risk management for the financial sector and third-party tech providers. A blueprint for sectoral cyber resilience.  |

|    | LEGAL ACT  | WHY IT MATTERS  |
|----|--|---|
| 14 | <a href="#"><u>Product Liability Directive (PLD)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2024/2853</u></a>              | Updates EU liability rules for the digital age. Covers defective software, updates and AI systems under strict liability.   |
| 15 | <a href="#"><u>General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2023/988</u></a>        | Overhauls EU product safety for online and connected products. Reinforces traceability, recalls and marketplace obligations.  |
| 16 | <a href="#"><u>European Electronic Communications Code (EECC)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2018/1972</u></a> | A harmonised EU framework for regulation of fixed and mobile network services. Complemented by the <a href="#"><u>Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2024/1309</u></a> , which seeks to hasten deployment. The EECC is to be replaced by a new Digital Networks Act (DNA), with submission anticipated in December 2025. |
| 17 | <a href="#"><u>European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2024/1083</u></a>              | Protects media pluralism and editorial independence. Responds to growing concerns about state influence and disinformation.   |
| 18 | <a href="#"><u>Political Advertising Regulation</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2024/900</u></a>                | Introduces transparency rules for political ads online. A key instrument for safeguarding democratic processes in the digital age.  |
| 19 | <a href="#"><u>Copyright Directive</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2019/790</u></a>                             | Modernises copyright rules for the digital environment. Introduces platform liability and new rights for authors and publishers. Unresolved issues remain regarding AI training data.   |
| 20 | <a href="#"><u>Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA)</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>(EU) 2023/1114</u></a>                | First comprehensive crypto regulation globally. Seeks to establish legal certainty for issuers, exchanges and consumers in digital finance.   |

**TABLE 2 - CURATED LIST OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL  
EU DIGITAL HORIZONTAL STRATEGIES AND  
WORK PLANS**

|   | STRATEGY DOCUMENTS  | WHY IT MATTERS  |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <a href="#"><u>Digital Decade Policy Programme (EU) 2022/2481</u></a> | Sets binding digital targets for 2030. Establishes a governance framework and supports coordinated Member State action.   |
| 2 | <a href="#"><u>Competitiveness Compass</u></a>                        | Calls for EU action to (1) reduce the gap with global competitors, especially the US and China; (2) decarbonise the EU economy; and (3) reduce dependencies on third countries. Key components include regulatory simplification, strengthening the EU single market and providing a better investment climate in the EU. |
| 3 | <a href="#"><u>Single Market Strategy</u></a>                         | Calls for EU action to address long-standing gaps in the EU single market by removing barriers, simplifying regulation, supporting SMEs and mid-caps, and more.   |
| 4 | <a href="#"><u>2025 Commission work programme and annexes</u></a>     | Sets out the key strategies, action plans and legislative initiatives that the Commission intends to launch in 2025.  |
| 5 | <a href="#"><u>Draghi Report</u></a>                                  | Seeks to support inclusive economic growth for the EU by strengthening EU competitiveness, investment, sustainability and regulatory simplification. Provides the intellectual underpinnings for the <a href="#"><u>Competitiveness Compass</u></a> .   |
| 6 | <a href="#"><u>Letta Report</u></a>                                   | Seeks to reinvigorate the EU's single market by reducing barriers, increasing investment, and simplifying regulation. Provides the intellectual underpinnings for the <a href="#"><u>Single Market Strategy</u></a> .   |